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## Seeing Psalms as the Libretti of a Holy Drama

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## SEEING PSALMS AS THE LIBRETTI OF A HOLY DRAMA

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Janet Ewell

**Abstract:** *Psalms was the favorite Old Testament book at Qumran and in the New Testament; the Book of Mormon contains more than three dozen allusions to Psalms. While Psalms contains both powerful, poetic words of comfort and doctrinal gems, many psalms also seem to careen between praise, warning, comfort, military braggadocio, and humility, sometimes addressing the LORD, sometimes speaking in the voice of the LORD or his prophets. The texts that most strongly exhibit such abrupt shifts may yield greater meaning if they are read as scripts or libretti of a sacred, temple-based drama.*

Psalms was the favorite Old Testament book at Qumran,<sup>1</sup> as it was in the earliest centuries of the Christian Church.<sup>2</sup> The Book of Mormon contains more than three dozen allusions to Psalms,<sup>3</sup> and the New Testament quotes Psalms more than any other Old Testament book.<sup>4</sup> Psalms contains powerful, poetic words of comfort and doctrinal gems, but many psalms also seem to careen between praise, warning, instruction, comfort, military braggadocio, and humility; sometimes addressing the LORD, sometimes addressing assembled Israel; speaking in the voice of the LORD, or a prophet, or a priest, or as Israel, or a sufferer, or a victor; sometimes in the plural, sometimes in the singular; sometimes intensely introspectively and sometimes nationally — that is, dealing with the security of the country and the fertility of the land. The texts that most strongly exhibit these abrupt shifts may yield greater meaning to both readers and serious students of scripture when they are placed within the context of sacred drama, as Jeffrey Bradshaw suggests, and read as scripts — the libretti, if you prefer — of a sacred drama.

In his July 3, 2018 “Old Testament KnoWhy,” Jeffrey Bradshaw wrote a thoughtful, close reading of psalms 22, 23, and 24, a reading that focused on the use of these psalms in a proposed sacred drama, as a “ritual journey of the king.”<sup>5</sup> The outline of the ritual journey of

the king — and the reconstruction of larger sacred drama of which some suggest it is a part — remains a scholarly proposal, a hypothetical construct. The shape of sacred drama, in this view, follows a persistent pattern across a wide range of cultures. Included in this pattern may be the idea of the king as the incarnation of the national god.

Nibley supported this construct, pointing out that “the force of the evidence is cumulative and is based on extensive comparative studies.” He mentions 20 studies and identifies 36 ways in which King Benjamin’s Book of Mormon discourse at the temple follows the pattern of the “Great Assembly at the New Year,” a pattern widely spread across many cultures, including Israel’s neighbors. He notes, however, that in the Book of Mormon “everything takes place on a far higher spiritual plane than that implied in most of the Old World ritual texts.” Nibley writes that, according to this pattern, the “year rite” takes place at a temple and includes coronation and royal marriage, sacrifice and burnt offerings, thanksgiving, the “ritual descent of the king to the underworld — he is ritually overcome by death, and then ritually resurrected.” (This is part of the ritual journey of the king to which Bradshaw refers.) His people are promised victory and prosperity if they will be obedient. They are overcome: “*proskynesis* was the falling to the earth (literally, “kissing the ground).” The members of the assembled congregation make covenants and receive a “ritual begetting of the human race by a divine parent,” that is they become children of a divinity.<sup>6</sup>

Some scholars, noting similarities between the Hebrew psalms and the ritual poetry of neighboring cultures, have attempted to reconstruct the Israelite’s sacred festivals by looking at patterns seen elsewhere. The Psalms, they suggest, are tantalizing remnants of early temple worship and festivals.<sup>7</sup> Nibley’s outline of the sacred drama draws on the work of scholars who studied the ritual text and poetry of multiple cultures including those surrounding the ancient Israelites: the Babylonian, Sumerian, Hittite, Ugaritic, and Canaanite.

An example of this type of scholarship is proposed by Theodor H. Gaster who draws connections between the Hebrew Psalm 29 and ritual texts in five surrounding languages.<sup>8</sup> Gaster, however, is reticent to apply this scholarly construct without reservation to ancient Israelite practices. While pointing out Psalm 29’s numerous analogs in neighboring cultures, Gaster also addresses the tension between the idea of a unique Israelite religion and its similarity to neighboring practices. He writes,

[I]t would appear that Psalm 29 is a form of the ritual laudation of the victorious god which formed part of the seasonal pantomime of the New Year Festival. **It must be emphasized however, that it in no way implies that the seasonal pantomime actually obtained in official Israelitic cultus, as has been so frequently supposed.**<sup>9</sup>

He suggests instead that Psalm 29 is a “Yahwization of current pagan compositions” (p 64) and suggest that the psalm made its way into the “cult of YHWH” as “propagandists ... may frequently have tried to ‘fetch the public’ by adopting and adapting the songs and airs” of “primitive folk religion from the length and breadth of Palestine.” He cites an example of this process in a report of the children in India “enthusiastically singing” an adapted version of the mid-19th century children’s hymn “Jesus Loves Me” (Jesus loves me, this I know / For the Bible tells me so.) They sang: “Buddha loves me; this I know / For the Sutras tell me so!”<sup>10</sup>

Gary Rendsberg also doubts the Psalms’ importance in Israel before the Exile. Speaking at the Temple Studies Conference “Passion and Passover: Jesus and Temple,”<sup>11</sup> he suggests that psalms, even those of early composition, were later additions to the Jerusalem Temple, though they may have been used somewhat earlier at the temples at Arad and Bethel. He suggests, referencing two scholars — Yehezkel Kaufman (*The Religion of Israel*) and Israel Knohl (*The Sanctuary of Silence*) — that for most of the First Temple period, priests “went about their business in silence,” that is, without song, procession, musical accompaniment, or vocal prayer; this in contrast to the temple practices of their cultural neighbors and those of the Second Temple period, where the use of psalms, music, and processions are well-attested. He suggests these elements were added to temple worship because “the voices of the congregational people wanted to do more than simply bring their goat or their sheep and hand it to the priest. They did not want to do nothing but watch. They did not want to be observers. They wanted to be participants. The way they were able to do that as non-priests was through the use of the psalms in the temple rituals.” (Chronicles, written 350–400 BCE, he suggests, may have retrojected Second Temple practices back onto the First Temple.)<sup>12</sup>

Returning to Bradshaw’s reading of psalms 22, 23, and 24, Bradshaw indicates that these psalms serve as the “ritual journey of the king” where the king led the worshippers in procession and “ascended the steps to enter the temple” in a “sequence of events [that] is replicated in the ritual journey of the priest-king, the redemptive journey of the Messiah, and

the salvific journey of each one of the faithful.” He wrote, “In order to enter fully into the peace of Psalm 23, one must first journey through the distress of Psalm 22. This journey culminates in the joy of exaltation in the presence of God depicted in Psalm 24.” He added,

Of course, the entire liturgical sequence from heartrending lament to triumphal entry not only typifies the journey of the king of Israel from the place of his trials to the outer gates of the Lord’s earthly sanctuary but also foreshadows the humiliation of the coming Messiah on the cross (Psalm 22:1 (Mark 15:34): “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”) and His eventual ascent in glory to His Father within the innermost gate of the heavenly temple (Psalm 24:7, 9 (John 20:17): “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.”)<sup>13</sup>

Though some of this symbolic journey, scholars suggest, would have taken place in the closed and sacred spaces of the Temple or Tabernacle, much of it was narrated, sung, danced, or enacted in public spaces in the presence of the throngs of worshipers who came up to the Temple to “appear before the LORD God” (Exodus 23:17).<sup>14</sup> They were more than spectators waiting outside the temple gates. Sigmund Mowinckel explains that the festal drama was the “divine service”<sup>15</sup> of ancient Israel. It was a matter that “concerns both God and the congregation.” The congregation is “the real actor.” The “one in whose name the action and speaking takes place, is the congregation.” The king “is also man’s representative before the gods. In him the people is one. According to the corporate view of those times the people was somehow incorporated in him, and the strength and blessing which he receives from the gods were partaken of by the whole country and people.”<sup>16</sup>

The festival goers were participants in the drama not only vicariously but also because they were directly addressed by those leading in the drama: the priest, the prophet, the king, and the LORD. They responded in a manner Charles Thomson identified as a sort of Greek chorus, anticipating and reacting to what they saw and heard.<sup>17</sup> David Calabro, drawing on the work of Erving Goffman, notes the presence of *lamination* in ritual drama, saying, “*lamination* ... refers to instances where frames of discourse are overlapped in such a way that the narrator and the audience becomes part of the narrative, with the result that the distinction between frames becomes blurred ... This technique is frequently employed in ritual because it imparts efficacy and also makes

the ritual more exciting for the participants.”<sup>18</sup> In ritual, unlike theater, there is no fourth wall.

Many psalms, scholars suggest, are remnants of those festivals.<sup>19</sup> Almost a third of the Old Testament psalms appear to contain more than one voice or to be addressed to more than one audience, for instance, to the LORD and to the congregation in psalms 27 and 97.<sup>20</sup> Proportionally, a third or more of the Psalms quoted in the New Testament appear to contain more than one voice or to be addressed to more than one audience.<sup>21</sup> Yet few of modern readers’ most popular psalms have more than one voice or audience.<sup>22</sup> It is important to consider why.

Devotional readers — perhaps even serious students of the scriptures — may have felt disengaged from these multi-voiced psalms because they experience a “reader’s whiplash” when the Hebrew poetic texts seem to change tone, voice, or intention without apparent logic. However, the psalms become both more intelligible and more engaging if they are read as if they were libretti<sup>23</sup> from which the first two inches of left-hand side — the part that indicates the speakers and the stage directions — have been sliced off.

So thought Charles Thomson, the first English translator of the Septuagint.<sup>24</sup> Margaret Barker writes,

There are indications that Thomson imagined the writings of the prophets as the scripts of a Greek-style drama, in which there were only two or three characters on stage, and then a chorus of others — citizens perhaps, or slaves — who commented on the action or the debate they had just witnessed. Having received an education in the Classics, he would surely have known about the Greek dramas that were constructed in this way, and marks in his translation show that he was dividing up the writings of the prophets as though they were play scripts that had lost their character designations and stage directions. He marked up some parts of Isaiah, Amos and Micah, and large sections of Hosea and Jeremiah with J for Jehovah, P for prophet and C for chorus.<sup>25</sup>

Thomson did not mark the speakers in the Book of Psalms,<sup>26</sup> but his general approach when applied to other poetic texts can increase clarity and meaning. For instance, Psalm 95 is now generally acknowledged to be a temple psalm in both the Old Testament<sup>27</sup> and the Book of Mormon.<sup>28</sup> In the marked text below, each speaker is tentatively identified based on Old Testament scholarship, including what has been proposed as the action of the festival.<sup>29</sup> The transitions between speakers have been

identified by shifts in tone, *tone* being defined as the speaker's attitude toward the audience, toward the subject, and toward self. Pronoun shifts also suggest a change in speaker or audience.

The first part of Psalm 95 may be in the voice of two groups of temple-goers who are encouraging each other in their ascent to the temple.<sup>30</sup> The verses recount the LORD's mastery over creation, the purpose of their pilgrimage — to worship, to bow down, to kneel, that is, to make covenants — and His loving kindness toward Israel. In the middle of seventh verse, the tone abruptly changes, becoming stern, almost threatening. This is voice of a prophet<sup>31</sup> who cautions the temple-goers of the peril they face if they enter into covenants lightly; “Today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”<sup>32</sup> In midsentence (according to most renderings of the Greek and Hebrew texts into modern English), the prophet's voice becomes the voice of the LORD,<sup>33</sup> speaking sternly in the first person, “when your fathers tested *me*.” He warns that failure to keep these covenants carries a great penalty, to lose access to His rest.

### Psalm 95

Temple-goers (Group 1)	<p><b>1</b> O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.</p> <p><b>2</b> Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.</p> <p><b>3</b> For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.</p> <p><b>4</b> In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.</p> <p><b>5</b> The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.</p>
Temple-goers (Group 2)	<p><b>6</b> O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.</p> <p><b>7</b> For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.</p>
Temple prophet	<p>Today if ye will hear his voice,</p> <p><b>8</b> Harden not your heart,</p>

Voice of the LORD	<p>as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:</p> <p><b>9</b> When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.</p> <p><b>10</b> Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:</p> <p><b>11</b> Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.</p>
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Though scholars and readers may choose to identify the multiple voices in the psalm in various ways, acknowledging the psalm's possible role as the libretto of a participatory festal temple drama serves at least three purposes. For the reader of scripture, some confusion may be removed, thus making this psalm more accessible. For the teacher, it provides an avenue for student engagement with the scriptures and their historical milieu, especially if read aloud as reader's theater. For the serious student of the scriptures, interesting questions and possibly interesting answers may arise, including the role of warning before covenant-making in rituals. Questions concerning the roll of the cultic prophet are also brought into focus.

Building on Bradshaw's work, the same approach enriches psalms 22, 23, and 24, which he identifies as three consecutive psalms from the temple festival. He writes they are a unit that "might have provided fitting words for the entrance liturgy that would have been sung in ancient Israel as worshipers in procession, led by the king, ascended the steps to enter the temple mount at Jerusalem."<sup>34</sup> Other scholars have amplified the settings Bradshaw suggests. Mowinckel writes of festal processions with "various acts and scenes" that include "the way to the temple, before the gates, and when the procession winds in through the gates,"<sup>35</sup> "as well as the walking round about the city walls" and "the circumambulation of the altar."<sup>36</sup>

John Eaton writes, "As Yahweh came back to his city and Temple, good tidings of victory were brought by messengers (68:12; cf. 17) and celebrated by the singers and player who were part of the column (68:25-6 ) Perhaps birds were sent flying over the city with the message of triumphant kingship."<sup>37</sup>

Writing of the enthronement ritual he adds:

The most likely direction of the procession would be from the east via the Mount of Olives or Mount Scopus and the Kidron Valley as indicated by the orientation of the Temple (entrance

from the east, Ezekiel 8:16, etc.), the sacred sites on the east (2 Samuel 15:32, 1 Kings 1:33), and Ezekiel's vision of the exit and return of Yahweh's glory via the east gate and the Mount of Olives (10:19, 11:23; 43:1–5). The ancient cultic traditions reflected in Zechariah 14 include Yahweh's going forth to the Mount of Olives to conquer enemies and so to return to his city to begin his reign."<sup>38</sup>

A reader who is aware of the settings of psalms 22, 23, and 24 and reads them as Bradshaw suggests, such that these three psalms record the king's deepest distress, his delivery, and his exalted re-entry into the temple, may begin to identify those who have speaking parts in the sacral drama.

The first 21 lines of Psalm 22 are easily identified as the voice of the king who is speaking from the lowest point in his symbolic journey. Perhaps the congregation, led by temple singers, sang the tormentors' line in verse 8. Between line 21 and 22 of Psalm 22, a marked shift is apparent. Eaton suggests the first 21 lines were sung in the dark of the night, just before dawn.<sup>39</sup> The temple-goers in those dark hours could witness, identify with, and be moved by the king's distress.

Nothing in the psalm indicates what action took place at the end of verse 21, but Eaton suggests that the autumnal sun might have risen over the Mount of Olives just before verse 22, when the King's grief is changed to praise. He promises to witness his deliverer's goodness and praise him in the congregation, which could include those present at the festal reenactment. The Prophet then addresses the congregation in verses 23 and 24, commanding them to praise the LORD.<sup>40</sup> In verses 25 to 27, the King praises the LORD and makes reference to those near and then far: his brethren, then the "great congregation," (v. 22), then those that fear him (v. 25), and finally "all the kindreds of the nations" (v. 27). The prophet explains further that the scope of the King's redemption includes those who have died, "they that go down to the dust shall bow before him" (v. 29), and those who shall yet be born (v. 31).

**Psalm 22**

<p>The king</p>	<p><b>1</b> My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?</p> <p><b>2</b> O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.</p> <p><b>3</b> But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.</p> <p><b>4</b> Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.</p> <p><b>5</b> They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.</p> <p><b>6</b> But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.</p> <p><b>7</b> All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,</p>
<p>Chorus as Tormenters</p>	<p><b>8</b> He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.</p>
<p>The king</p>	<p><b>9</b> But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.</p> <p><b>10</b> I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.</p> <p><b>11</b> Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.</p> <p><b>12</b> Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.</p> <p><b>13</b> They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.</p> <p><b>14</b> I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.</p> <p><b>15</b> My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.</p> <p><b>16</b> For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.</p>

<p>The king</p>	<p><b>17</b> I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.</p> <p><b>18</b> They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.</p> <p><b>19</b> But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me.</p> <p><b>20</b> Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.</p> <p><b>21</b> Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.</p>
<p><b>Dawn comes over the Mount of Olives</b></p>	
<p>The king</p>	<p><b>22</b> I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.</p>
<p>Prophet</p>	<p><b>23</b> Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.</p> <p><b>24</b> For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.</p>
<p>The king</p>	<p><b>25</b> My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.</p> <p><b>26</b> The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.</p> <p><b>27</b> All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.</p>
<p>Prophet</p>	<p><b>28</b> For the kingdom is the LORD's: and he is the governor among the nations.</p> <p><b>29</b> All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul.</p> <p><b>30</b> A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the LORD for a generation.</p> <p><b>31</b> They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.</p>

Psalm 23, unlike the one before it and the one after it, may be spoken or sung by only one voice, which may contribute to its accessibility and popularity. However, the voices in Psalm 24 are much more complex; the psalm yields a clearer, richer reading if seen as an exchange between several voices, including an assembled company,<sup>41</sup> most likely led by temple singers. As Bradshaw suggests, it “would have been sung in ancient Israel as worshipers in procession, led by the king, ascended the steps to enter the temple mount at Jerusalem.”

Sigmund Mowinckel divides Psalm 24 “into three main parts which were used during the procession on the way to the Temple, before the gates, and when the procession winds in through the gates.”<sup>42</sup> The priest from within, or perhaps a priest serving as gatekeeper to the House of the LORD, specifies the entry requirements, clean hands, a pure heart, a soul devoid of vanity, and faithfulness to previous vows.<sup>43</sup> In response to the priest, the congregation identifies their purpose in coming and identifies the king of glory whom they accompany. The congregation joyfully go with their LORD into the temple mount and perhaps vicariously into His glory in the temple.<sup>44</sup>

### Psalm 24

Priest	<b>1</b> The earth is the LORD’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. <b>2</b> For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.
Chorus	<b>3</b> Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?
Priest	<b>4</b> He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. <b>5</b> He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
Chorus	<b>6</b> This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.
Priest	<b>7</b> Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. <b>8</b> Who is this King of glory?
Chorus	The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

Priest	<b>9</b> Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.
Chorus	<b>10</b> Who is this King of glory?
Priest	The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah

The Psalms suggest ancient Israelites were deeply engaged in the rituals of the temple, participating both emotionally and musically in the renewing of covenants and in celebrating their God. As modern readers view psalms as libretti to sacred dramas, they also have the opportunity to engage deeply and to celebrate.

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### Notes

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2. Larry W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 19.
3. John Hilton III, "Old Testament Psalms in the Book of Mormon," in *Ascending the Mountain of the Lord: Temple, Praise, and Worship in the Old Testament*, eds. David Rolph Seely, Jeffrey R. Chadwick, and Matthew J. Grey (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2013), <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/ascending-mountain-lord-temple->

praise-and-worship-old-testament/old-testament-psalms-book. Hilton identifies 43 allusions to Psalms in the Book of Mormon.

4. Harold W. Attridge, “Giving Voice to Jesus: Use of the Psalms in the New Testament,” in *Psalms in Community: Jewish and Christian Textual, Liturgical and Artistic Traditions*, eds. Harold W. Attridge and Margot E. Fassler (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 110, [https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Y82LLs5DP3AC&oi=fnd&pg=PA101&dq=attridge+Giving+Voice+to+Jesus&ots=sLzK4Pzw85&sig=dzexYTaPQYH\\_RCL9cWnEVZc6yIQ#v=onepage&q=attridge%20Giving%20Voice%20to%20Jesus&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Y82LLs5DP3AC&oi=fnd&pg=PA101&dq=attridge+Giving+Voice+to+Jesus&ots=sLzK4Pzw85&sig=dzexYTaPQYH_RCL9cWnEVZc6yIQ#v=onepage&q=attridge%20Giving%20Voice%20to%20Jesus&f=false).
5. Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, “Gospel KnoWhy OTL25A — Is there more to Psalm 23 Than Words of Solace and Comfort?” *The Interpreter Foundation*, July 3, 2018, <http://interpreterfoundation.org/knowhy-otl25a-is-there-more-to-psalm-23-than-words-of-solace-and-comfort/>.
6. See Hugh Nibley, “Old World Ritual in the New World,” in *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, rev. ed. (1957; repr. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), <https://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1107&index=26>.
7. See John Eaton, “An Outline of the Pre-exilic Festival and the Ideal of Kingship,” in *Festal Drama in Deutero-Isaiah* (London: SPCK, 1979), 8–37.
8. Theodor H. Gaster, “Psalm 29,” *Jewish Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (July 1946): 55–65, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1452551>.
9. *Ibid.*, 64; emphasis added.
10. *Ibid.*, 64–65.
11. “The Psalms as Hymns in the Jerusalem Temple—at Passover and throughout the Year,” *Passion and Passover: Jesus and Temple* (Provo, UT: Academy for Temple Studies, 2015), YouTube video, 49:05, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOgi8i-n1VE>. See also the question and answer session following the presentation, YouTube video, 10:13, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7iwXmiTcXw>.
12. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints may feel less discomfort from the idea of both a unique Israelite religion and similarities to widely-spread practices in neighboring

cultures because of the belief that sacred rituals were revealed to the earliest man; echoes and remnants of them would be expected to persist.

13. Bradshaw, "Gospel KnoWhy OTL25A."
14. Margaret Barker, "The First English Translation of the LXX Read to the Society for Old Testament Study," MargaretBarker.com, January 2016, <http://www.margaretbarker.com/Papers/SOTSCTLXX.pdf>. Barker points out in that Exodus 23:17 is more accurately translated as "to see the face of the Lord."
15. Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 37–38.
16. *Ibid.*, 51.
17. Barker, "The First English Translation of the LXX Read to the Society for Old Testament Study."
18. David Calabro, "Joseph Smith and the Architecture of Genesis" in *The Temple: Ancient and Restored*, eds. Stephen D. Ricks and Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Eborn Publishing, 2016), 168.
19. Eaton, "An Outline of the Pre-exilic Festival and the Ideal of Kingship," 25. Speaking of the Psalms, he wrote, "[T]he full range of these texts will not have been in use every year and in every period."
20. Of the 150 Psalms, 45 appear to contain multiple voice or be addressed to multiple audiences. Closer study may remove some psalms from the following list or add more to it. Psalms with multiple voices or multiple audiences include: 2, 4, 9, 12, 15, 20, 22, 24, 28, 30, 31, 32, 40, 41, 42, 43, 46, 55, 58, 60, 66, 67, 68, 75, 76, 78, 81, 82, 85, 89, 91, 93, 94, 95, 97, 99, 101, 104, 106, 108, 110, 115, 118, 125, 132. Psalm 97 for instance, addresses the congregation in the first six or seven verses, then addresses the LORD. Psalm 27 switches in a similar manner after verse 7.
21. The count of Psalms cited in the New Testament varies, from 39 in John Calvin, "Tables and Indices to the Book of Psalms," in *Calvin's Commentaries*, ed. Allan McNabb (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), [http://www.biblestudyguide.org/comment/calvin/comm\\_vol12/htm/xxxvi.htm](http://www.biblestudyguide.org/comment/calvin/comm_vol12/htm/xxxvi.htm); to 63 from A. F. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

- 1902), <http://www.jesuswalk.com/psalms/psalms-NT-quotations.htm>; but in both cases at least a third of the psalms cited as quoted in the New Testament are tentatively identified as containing more than one voice or addressing more than one audience, 16/39 for Calvin, 21/63 for Kirkpatrick.
22. Kevin Halloran, “The Most Popular Psalms in the Bible,” *Leadership Resources* (blog), May 26, 2014, <https://www.leadershipresources.org/the-most-popular-psalms-in-the-bible/>. Halloran lists only one multi-voiced psalm, Psalm 46, which is in one voice until the penultimate verse. See also BIBLE Registry, “Idea #20: The Most Popular Psalms, Starting with Psalm 23,” *Bible: For All Things Bible Online* (blog), January 19, 2015, <http://get.bible/blog/post/idea-20-the-most-popular-psalms-starting-with-psalm-23>. Idea #20 includes Google’s top ten searches for psalms, a list that includes only one multi-voiced psalm, Psalm 91. Surveys of the most popular *single* verses from psalms, such as a list included at Halloran, also slight multi-voiced psalms. Halloran includes three multi-voiced psalms in his top 20: two verses from Psalm 46 (see above), a verse from Psalm 24, and a verse from Psalm 110.
  23. Since much of the Temple festival psalms were sung or accompanied by musical instruments, it may be more accurate to identify a psalm as a libretto rather than a script, following Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, 76, who writes “Ps. 132 may be looked upon as the libretto of a holy drama.”
  24. Charles Thomson, trans., *The Holy Bible: containing the Old and New Covenant, commonly called the Old and New Testament* (Philadelphia: J. Aitken, 1808), <https://studybible.info/version/Thomson>.
  25. Barker, “The First English Translation of the LXX.”
  26. Perhaps Thomson did not see the Psalms in the context of temple-worship. He worked in scholarly isolation on his translation from 1789 until his work was published in 1809. Hermann Gunkel published his pivotal *The Psalms: a Form Critical Introduction* over a century later. The Ugaritic library that allowed scholars to see the Psalms in the context of the great enthronement and year-end festivals was not excavated until 1929.
  27. See Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, 121, and Aubrey R. Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet and Israel’s Psalmoday*

(Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1979), 18; Also, John Eaton, *The Psalms* (London: Continuum, 2005), 119.

28. David E. Bokovoy, “Ancient Temple Imagery in the Sermons of Jacob,” in *Temple Insights*, eds. William J. Hamblin and David Rolph Seely (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation, 2014), 171–85. Bokovoy has shown that Psalm 95 was part of a festal drama at the time of the Nephite Jacob’s sermon at the temple, between 544 and 421 BC. It was still a relevant and familiar reference in Alma’s time (about 82 BC) as he preached to the unrighteous people of Ammonihah. See Alma 12:35–37. The persistence of this psalm may have been aided by Nephite diligence in observing the ceremonies of the Law of Moses.
29. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, 76, includes Psalm 95 as a “complex liturgy” when he discusses Psalm 132. He writes “the congregation answers [the worthiness questions] by stating that it fulfills the demands and calls upon the gates to open.”
30. It is possible that the first “O Come” in verse 1 and the second “O Come” in verse 6 are poetic repetition by one group of singers rather than two. It is also possible we hear the voice of only a leader; the psalm itself does not provide such information, though certainly the psalm’s purposes included encouragement. But the setting we here suggest — the yearly (or thrice yearly) trips up the temple commanded of the faithful (and for those living outside of Jerusalem, it was indeed a climb up) provides clues. It is possible that these frequent trips helped create great familiarity with the song used during these treks. This suggestion of familiarity is reinforced by its use in the Book of Mormon, as noted by Bokovoy. We know that in the time of Christ, extended groups traveled together for several days to the Temple for Passover, as shown in Luke 2:41–45. Certainly, these groups must have converged as they approached the holy city. Perhaps this psalm served as an ancient “Come, Come, Ye Saints.”
31. Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet and Israel’s Psalmoday*, 3, argues that the voice is that of a prophet (rather than a priest). A prophet associated with the temple was “not only the spokesman of Yahweh; he was also the representative of the people in their approach to Him.” Eaton, *The Psalms*, 338, calls him a “prophetic voice.” Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, 71, lists Psalm 95 among those coming from “‘loyal’ temple prophets.” On p. 58, he

discusses the distinction between priestly and prophet utterance. The whole of Chapter 12, “The Prophetic Psalms,” is informative.

32. This suggests they *have* come to the Temple to *hear* His voice.
33. Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967), 68. Johnson writes “Then the personality of the speaker (possibly a cultic prophet) gives way, as it were to that of the Godhead so that acting as an extension of the divine Personality, he proceeds to address his hearers a Yahweh Himself.” See also Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet and Israel’s Psalmoday*, 7, 10, 20.
34. Bradshaw, “Gospel KnoWhy OTL25A”
35. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, 6.
36. *Ibid.*, 7.
37. Eaton, *Festal Drama in Deutero-Isaiah*, 13.
38. *Ibid.*, 14.
39. Eaton, *The Psalms*, 119. See also Johnson, *Cultic Prophet*, 23. Though Johnson did not speak specifically of Psalm 22, he notes “the eloquent symbolism of the rising sun which figured so prominently in the worship of the autumnal festival.”
40. This may be an example of Calabro’s (and Goffman’s) lamination, when the theatrical fourth wall is broken down and those observing the ritual are directly addressed.
41. Another potential example of lamination, as those observing the ritual are also those accompanying the king.
42. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, 6
43. *Ibid.*, 178
44. The Interpreter Foundation, “David Larsen on ‘Psalm 24 and the Two Yahwehs at the Gate of the Temple,’” 31:58, November 27, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QsZYxqniBPU>. Larsen sees evidence there may have been two Yahwehs, perhaps a “little Yahweh,” as in Third Enoch, who is seeking entrance to the Temple and a Yahweh inside the temple.









