PSALMS CONCERNING THE LITURGIES OF TEMPLE ENTRY

CRAIG C. BROYLES

I. TEMPLE ENTRY LITURGIES: PSALMS 15 AND 24

Psalms 15 and 24 (especially vv. 3-6) have long been recognized as liturgies for worshipers entering the temple. They, along with Isaiah 33:14b-16, follow a set pattern: (a) a double question of who may visit Yahweh’s holy hill, (b) a reply consisting of the qualifications for worshipers, and (c) a promise. In the chart below underlined words denote parallel terminology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psalm 15</td>
<td>Pos: 3 ptc: דוד, נד, וב (qal, v. 2) • integrity, righteousness, truth • with his heart Neg: 3 אול + pf + ל (v. 3) • slander with tongue, do evil (רעה), reproach against neighbor Neg: nip ptc + rejected one, &amp; Pos impf + Yhwh-fearers (v. 4a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalm 24:3-6</td>
<td>Pos: 2 adj + bodily part (in construct) • innocent, pure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 33:14b-16</td>
<td>Pos: 2 ptc: דוד, הלח (qal) • righteous acts, equity Neg: 4 ptc of refusing participation • extortion, bribes, bloodshed, evil (רעה)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The ideas in this article have undergone their own pilgrimage. They were first presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in 1992, and developed further in my *Psalms* (NIBC 11; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999).

2 Abbreviations in this chart: Adj = adjective, Impf = imperfect, Neg = negative, *Nip* = *Nip*al, Pf = perfect, Pos = positive, Ptc = participle. For a more detailed analysis of the poetics of Psalm 15 and the “different ways of reading or speaking the psalm that are there in the text,” see Patrick D. Miller, Jr., “Poetic Ambiguity and Balance in Psalm XV,” *VT* 29 (1979) 416–24.
He swears (Nip) & does not change (impf, v. 4b)

Neg: 2 ל + pf (v. 5a)
• giving with interest
• taking bribe

Promise

- Recipient
  Ptc: doer of these things (v. 5b)
- Action
  Impf
  • stability

Ptc: seekers of Yhwh’s face

Personal pronoun + 3 pron. suffixes

Nominal clause
2 Nip ptc
• security and provision

Bodily Parts

(3)

heart (לבּ)

hands (כּ)
soul

tongue (לָבֵן)

ears

eyes (עֵינָי)

Questions. The interrogative המ is searching not for a particular individual but for a character description — in other words, “what kind of person?” The verbs indicate the notion of a pilgrimage journey (on דר cf. 61:5, and on שבח cf. 65:5). In Psalm 24 the verb שלֹח is particularly suited to the context of the ark’s processional ascent up Yahweh’s “hill” (cf. 2 Sam 6:2, 12, 15). The particular attribute of Yahweh associated with his locale (whether המלך, וּדָו, or מִקְדַּשׁ) is his holiness.

Qualifications. In Psalm 15 this question is posed to Yahweh himself, implying it seeks an oracle of instruction or “torah.” The answer should thus be regarded as an oracle delivered by a priest or temple prophet. (Although v. 4 does refer to Yahweh in the third person, it is part of a phrase that identifies a certain class of persons, namely “Yahweh-fearers.”) This “torah” lists ten qualifications. Three positive character descriptions (v. 2) are matched by three negative actions related primarily to speech (v. 3). The positive descriptions focus on integrity, and the negative statements on not abusing people verbally. There follow two qualifications (each with a Nip’al verb and

need not imply pre-temple origins for this expression. See, for example, 27:4-6, where it is collocated with בָּלָק, and 61:5, 7, where it is collocated with a reference to the “king.” Its use here suits the notion of sojourning and echoes the ancient custom of the traveler who comes under the protection of the host, whose “tent” he has entered. In 61:5 “Let me sojourn in your tent” is paralleled by “Let me take refuge in the hiding place of your wings.” Cf. also Psalm 23.