

Preaching the Psalms

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John Calvin famously begins his Psalms commentary with this opener: the book of Psalms is “an anatomy of all parts of the soul.”¹

I.

My alternative way of saying what I think is an equivalent to Calvin’s verdict is this: the Psalms are the voicing, in a highly stylized way, of the emotional extremities of our lives in the presence of God and in the presence of the congregation. The act of preaching, I propose, is the reperformance of this voicing:

* It is *a voicing*; it is for out-loud utterance in speech and song. It requires self-announcement.

* It concerns *the emotional extremities* of our lives, the heights of elation expressed in awe, wonder, praise, and thanks, and the depths of doubt, alienation, despair, need, and abandonment. The two great genres of hymn (with thanksgiving) and lament (protest and complaint) reach beyond the reasoned civility of Enlightenment rationality into our concealed recesses where our fear and hurts dwell, from which energy and courage may arise. These emotional extremities that are, in a reductionist technological society, an embarrassment are here known to be the real substance of life and rich grist for faith.

* The voicing is in a *highly stylized* way. Thus Psalm study is largely constituted by analysis of genres, of recurring patterns of speech. That is what makes the Psalms so repetitious. They consist in the regular, trusted ways of speaking that the community has found reliable and apropos for identifiable venues and circumstances of life. Attentiveness to the Psalms consists in the capacity to host these patterned speeches knowingly and imaginatively, so that the community that uses them faithfully becomes, in the phrasing of George Lindbeck, “a cultural-linguistic alternative”: “this is the way we talk in this circumstance.”² We know what to say and to whom to say it. This familiarity with the patterned way of speech helps to *voice* and to *form* raw emotion into a manageable, usable, transportable utterance to which repeated appeal can be made. Such stylized practice evokes familiarity and therefore some comfort, in such usage, the same familiarity and comfort that we find in the stylized usage of liturgy, in the stylized give-and-take of “therapeutic conversations,” and in the familiarity of television commercials.³ Mostly we do not have raw, undisciplined utterance in these Psalms; the patterns, however, assert the legitimacy and value of such utterance of extremity.

* This stylized voicing is *before God*.⁴ The Psalms may indeed serve a psychological function of catharsis and are often taken as such. But at bottom the Psalms are a theological transaction, a dialogic engagement in covenant that knows that God is on the other end of such song and speech. Thus emotional extremities are not only *voiced*; they are *submitted* as an offering of self to God. The voicing of elation before God (praise, thanks, wonder) is done in a conviction that God receives what we offer, wants such praise, and is pleased and enhanced by it. The voicing of anguish before God (lament, protest, complaint) is done in an awareness that God hears and

honors such utterances and answers them as the case may be. Thus the Psalms are a patterned way of giving one's life (and the life of the world) over to God. Such an offering of self and world is not unlike the offering of bread and wine in oblation. We are received by God and given back, blessed and broken, now infused with sacramental force. It is like that with our lives and with the life of the world. When our lives are honestly uttered over to God (in elation and in anguish), they are handed back to us with emancipated power and reconciled energy. God's very act of receiving and answering has transformative effect as, in a lesser key, does every interpersonal exchange that is done in honesty.

* This practiced, patterned speech is done in *the congregation*. It is obvious that the great doxologies are for congregational (temple?) use. It is entirely credible that the laments are not designed for the great congregation. They may have been for quite personal use or, as Erhard Gerstenberger proposes, for family or village "rituals of rehabilitation."⁵ But even in such "private" usage, the matter is still congregational. Even alone, one prays as a member of the congregation from whom the patterned speech (codes) has been appropriated. One never does a Psalm alone, but always in the company of those who share this patterned speech and therefore this faith.

The utterance and the singing of the Psalms is an act of participation in the ongoing work of the community that consists in the honest ceding of self and world, with all of our gifts and wounds, over to the mercy and majesty of God. In the full practice of the Psalter, nothing is withheld from God. Thus Calvin can say, "All parts of the soul," all parts of the self, all parts of the world, are given over to the mystery of God. Preaching is simply the act of making possible this reiterated work of giving our lives to God and so becoming fully ourselves in and through the act of yielding. I propose, for the preaching task, that we consider in turn *plot* and *character*, the two primary ingredients of a narrative rendering of reality.

II.

There is of course no tight, all-comprehensive plot in the book of Psalms, just as there is no tight, all-comprehensive plot for any of our lives. It is nonetheless useful to trace out in a rough way *a coherent plot-line* in the Book of Psalms that may roughly correspond to the plot-line of our lives. As we learn in Anatomy 101 (on which see Calvin above), there is a recurring commonality in the plot-line of human life; so it is in the Psalms. We each experience that plot-line in our lives in distinctive ways, but the commonalities are evident. Particular Psalms give voice to the plot differently, but the pattern persists and recurs. When we perform that plot-line in the book of Psalms (or any part of it) pastorally, liturgically, or in preaching, we are roughly performing, before God and the great congregation, the plot-line of our lives. I got the idea for this from Claus Westermann, the greatest of Psalm interpreters of the last decades. In his analysis of Songs of Thanksgiving (Ps. 30, 31, 40, 66, 116, 138), Westermann has observed that in the stylized practice of Israel, giving thanks eventuates in telling the story of the experience of the speaker, for which Psalm 30 is choice example.⁶ The speaker of that psalm tells in sequence:

how he was in a static condition of prosperity (vv. 6-7a)
how he was plunged into dismay by God's hiddenness (v. 7b)
how he made supplication to God (v. 8)

how he asked questions of God in an attempt to motivate God to act on
his behalf (v. 9)
how he addressed God in petition (v. 10)
how God turned his life to well-being (v. 11) and
how he arrived at his present new condition of praise and thanks (v. 12)

Westermann sees that Israel's characteristic way of giving thanks is to iterate the story of what has gone on in life and how that relates to God, that is, the God hidden, the God who hears, the God who turns! This is a) the pattern of the Psalms and b) the recurring story of our lives lived in faith.

Readers who are familiar with my own work may recognize that my way of rendering that recurring narrative is under the rubric of "orientation/disorientation/new orientation."⁷ Of this taxonomy I have suggested that some of us can maintain a status of well-being over time, but soon or late, we find ourselves moving into and sometimes out of disorientation.⁸ The practice of Israel in the Psalms is to tell that entire tale, including what is sometimes voiced as God's failure to maintain covenantal fidelity. The disorientation may have many causes (in the book of Psalms, not least the destructive work of "enemies"); but in any case, this is the truth of our lives in a recurring way, indicating Calvin's "all parts of the soul." This is the truth of all parts of our life, personal, interpersonal, in the larger community, and in the public life of the world. It is the plot-line we live out in various ways, a plot-line already scripted and given stylized expression in these poems. Given that we have this script that re-performs the common narrative of our lives, it is as though we know "before hand" the narrative path of our lives, give or take peculiar by-ways for each of us.

Of course the full narrative exposition does not occur in all of the Psalms or even in most of them. It is likely that Westermann has identified all of the best cases of the full story in the Psalter. What the Psalms do, rather, is tell this paradigmatic story of trouble and rescue in bits and pieces, just as most of us sense the move of our lives not in a grand sweep, but in bits and pieces over time. But the community has discerned that the bits concerning gifts and pieces concerning wounds amount to a coherent tale of our life in the world with God.

Thus I propose that, without forcing matters, it is of great heuristic value to treat each Psalm as though it were a part of the larger story that must be performed over and over. Thus sometimes we get only the complaint that sometimes remains unanswered, as in Psalm 88! Sometimes we get only praise and thanks without an acknowledgement of antecedent trouble. And sometimes, happily, we get only the glad affirmation of status of well-being.

Sometimes we get only *orientation*, the Psalms we most love.

Sometimes we get only *disorientation*, the Psalms the church tends to neglect in its denial.

Sometimes we get only *new orientation*, when we are taken by surprise, as in the ultimate surprise of Easter.

It is of immense importance in the life of a congregation to see that the Psalter is a script for this common reality. It will, moreover, be of great value in a congregation to recognize that in various ways at various paces, we are all (liberals and conserva-

tives) living through this. We are all living through it, according to this script, in the deep awareness that God is engaged with us in the plot-line, as in the congregation where I worship.

* Here is a well-off couple for whom all is well, and then granddaughter abruptly and unmistakably is marked by a disease that is more than an inconvenience.

* Here is a church leader, skilled in the mysteries of digital communication, who loses his home via unemployment.

* Here is a woman in our church, coming out of great loss in her life, who tenaciously oversees our regular engagement with homeless families whom we host.

* Here is an older guy who is bewildered by the strange emerging world and knows some sadness about it.

* Here is another older guy living in happy stasis, sending sermon notes to his grandchildren every week, having no doubt that the center will hold.

* Here is yet another older guy too long alienated from his beloved older son and can only grieve and hope.

* Here is a set of grandparents who have stood by while their tiny granddaughter undergone a series of surgeries for a brain tumor...and with great positive outcome!

* Here is a young man who went off to college after a high school rendezvous with drugs and alcohol and is now soaring in an excited education as the world comes freshly alive for him.

* Here is the mother whose sophomore in college had a psychotic break, who regrets having moved in with her mother-in-law, has lost her closest relative to untimely death, and wonders why God is “doing” this to her.

* Here is a widow who spent all she had to provide nursing care for her husband, who prepares for a second hip replacement and continues to love God and neighbor without resentment.

The list goes on; there is more than I know in our congregation, because I go to the “late” service that gathers mostly older people. The congregation is peopled by personal *tales of stasis* of well-being, by *plunges into dismay*, and by being *newly surprised by joy*. All of these narratives are brought to church each time we meet, wanting those tales to be honored and wanting them explicated in terms of gospel faith. Each of these persons is occupied with the specifics of “my” circumstance. For each of them, it is an important question, “What shall I do with this failure, with this hurt, with this gift, with this possibility?” The extremity has become defining (how could it not!). But one cannot just sit on it, because we are meaning makers. We are bound to wonder and then to interpret. One must process the reality and the extremity that comes with it, twist it and turn it to see what all is pertinent. The Psalms provide a script for a gospel exposition that honors specificity along with the discovery that we, as a community, have been here with this wound or this gift or this stasis before. We are part of the procession of story-tellers and story-performers.

The cases I have cited are personal and familial. But of course the Psalms are concerned with public issues as well, and members of my congregation are alert to

and engaged with public issues. The Psalter celebrates good “citizenship” and calls it “righteousness” (see Psalm 112). The Psalter knows about greed and bribes and war and poverty. It also knows about generosity and justice, and bids God to that task. It knows that the practice of economic justice for the needy and poor generates social stability and prosperity, as in Psalm 72. It knows that at every turn in the drama of personal and public life, the ups and downs are venues in which God is discerned as present or absent, as faithful or fickle. The plot is about open-ended dialogic interaction, of giving and receiving, of falling and rising, of dying and living. The capacity to process our life through this dynamic interactive plot permits us to be human in a blessed way. Without this plot repeatedly performed, we might end in a reductionist fanaticism or in a cold arrogant autonomy. This script tells us otherwise about ourselves. It is through this script that we may practice solidarity and express in common what we sense so acutely and directly about our lives:

Before our Father’s throne we pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.
We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear,
And often for each other flows, a sympathizing tear.

The pastor knows about this. I am always astonished at the intimacies of life that are shared with the pastor. The preacher’s task is to situate these particularities in the larger narrative that is the truth of our life, a life ceded over to God who receives, hears, and sometimes answers.

III.

Along with plot, the second ingredient for good dramatic art is *character*. Here I want to ask, “Who is the character who speaks in the Psalms?” Sometimes it is the voice of the community, and sometimes it is the voice of a single speaker, an unidentified “I.” In fact, the voices that spoke first in the Psalms are anonymous, despite much interpretive speculation. Given that anonymity that is lost in traditions that were not concerned with copyrights, we have a great deal of freedom to identify and characterize the voices of the Psalter. One strategy of interpretation that achieved canonical status is through the “superscriptions,” the notes that stand before Psalms that purport to identify the speaker. The most prominent of such superscriptions are those that assign Psalms to David (Pss. 3, 34, 51, 52, 54, 57, 59, 60, 63).⁹ Of these the best known and most used is Psalm 51, for which the superscription is, “A Psalm of David when the prophet Nathan came to him after he had gone in to Bathsheba.” The superscription draws the Psalm close to the narrative of II Samuel 11-12. Thus we are able to say that the Psalm presents David who has violated the commandments (on killing and adultery), who stands under severe divined judgment, and who here speaks a deeply moving and apparently deeply felt repentance. It is this tradition that has helped to establish the popular notion of David as the “author” of the Psalms.

It is, however, generally agreed that the superscriptions are “secondary.” That is, they are added much later in the tradition and do not provide clues to origin or to original speaker. Thus the on-going interpretive tradition has generated the “character” who speaks in the Psalm: “the Psalm titles do not appear to reflect independent historical tradition but are the result of an exegetical activity which derived its material

from within the text itself.”¹⁰ Two matters become clear as we ponder the interpretive move from an “original” anonymous speaker to an “historical” identified speaker in the superscription. First, the Psalms are *acutely specific*. They treat particular circumstances, particular crises, and particular verbal responses to circumstance and crisis. But second, that specificity is *transportable*. The Psalm could move from circumstance to circumstance, from emotional extremity to emotional extremity, from speaker to speaker. The poetry of repentance in Psalm 51 is quite specific, but it is belatedly transported to David.

In fact, when we read the Psalms liturgically or devotionally, we also engage in such transport, though we seldom reflect on the process. Thus with the beloved Psalm 23, we do know the original speaker of the poem. We easily assign it to David. In our reading, however, we do not linger over David; we readily transport the Psalm (without critical reflection) to our own circumstance, to our own valley of the shadow of death, to our cup running over, and to our own dwelling in the house of the Lord forever. The Psalms have identifiable genres. But they are not generic. They are specific, and we engage in agile interpretation in order to make them our own specificity.

Brevard Childs notes, “One senses the variety within the canonical process,” through which the Psalms are “often greatly refashioned for use by the later community.” I propose that the preacher contribute to “the variety of different hermeneutical moves” and continue the refashioning for later use.¹¹ By this I suggest that the preacher assign new superscriptions to the Psalms in order to give the Psalms new contemporary currency. Such a new specificity may pertain to someone in the congregation or someone outside it. The new superscription might be shared with the congregation, or if it is too intimate for that, it might be used only to free and feed the imagination of the preacher without public identification. I came to this awareness and possibility when, long ago, I was teaching Psalm 109, a Psalm of immense vengefulness. It was and is my pedagogical habit to ask the class, “Who is the speaker here?” I was not asking an historical-critical question, but rather was inviting pastoral imagination. Thus we read Psalm 109:8-13:

May his children be orphans, and his wife a widow.
May his children wander about and beg;
may they be driven out of the ruins they inhabit.
May the creditor seize all that he has;
may strangers plunder the fruits of his toil.
May there be no one to do him a kindness,
nor anyone to pity his orphaned children.
May his posterity be cut off;
may his name be blotted out in the second generation.

When I asked, “Who is speaking here?” Linda answered quickly and confidently, “This voice of the Psalm is a woman who has been raped.” Her answer caused a long pause in the room. Linda’s verdict of course is not historical-critical. It is personal, intense, and contemporary. And of course Linda is right, though I would not have thought of it. That is exactly the character who speaks here, one deeply offended and violated, but one with courage to speak out and demand that God’s punishment should be commensurate with the violation she has suffered. The Psalm, moreover,

ends with deep affirmation of the steadfast God who attends to our violations:

Because your steadfast love is good, deliver me....
For he stands at the right hand of the needy,
to save them from those who would condemn them to death. (vv. 21, 31)

The preacher may never tell the congregation about such a contemporary connection. But simply entertaining such an interpretive context will greatly illumine, because the preaching task is to tell the story reflected in the Psalm a) with *great specificity* and then b) to invite *transport* of that specificity to other specificities.

I believe that the heuristic generativity of such new superscriptions might be especially useful with some of the angry Psalms of vengeance.¹² Very many church people might say and genuinely affirm that they have never been that angry and would never pray that way. But then a very different superscription might transport the force of the Psalm away from us to someone else, perhaps a mother in Baghdad whose son has just been killed by a bomb...or an inner-city mother in the United States with the same loss through neighborhood violence. Such a transport might be an effective strategy for getting our minds off ourselves and transposing the Psalm into an intercession, to pray with and alongside those who require prayers that we would never utter for ourselves. Because the Psalter is the voicing of emotional extremity, the church has available here access to the deepest anguishes and highest elations that must be voiced, even if they are not always grounded in our own immediate experience. We do “share each other’s woes”; the scope of such sharing of woes is further opened by these poems beyond “our own kind.”

And of course the same applies to the great hymns of exultation and elation. Thus for example, the gladness of Psalm 65:9-13 celebrates the gift of rain upon which life depends:

You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it;
the river of God is full of water;
you provide the people with grain,
for you have prepared it.
You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges,
softening it with showers, and blessing its growth.
You crown the year with your bounty;
your wagon tracks overflow with richness.
The pastures of the wilderness overflow,
the hills gird themselves with joy,
the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,
the valleys deck themselves with grain,
they shout and sing together for joy.

Perhaps the superscription might be “a congregation in Texas after the breaking of severe drought.” Or perhaps the wonder of a coherent peaceableness would be reflected in Psalm 85:10-11 that might serve any reconciliation in a family or in a congregation or in a great national “Truth and Reconciliation Commission.” The superscription might be “when Peter and Andrew found a peaceable settlement of

their father's will:

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.

Or the familiar table prayer of Psalm 145:15-16 might serve "The Dedication of New Food Coop":

The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food in due season.
You open your hand,
satisfying the desire of every living thing.

In such a context, the sharp warning of verse 20b, "All the wicked he will destroy," is a wake-up call about environmental violence that will not be tolerated. I suggest that when interpretive transport teams with new characters in emotional extremity, the possibilities for the preacher are limitless. The preacher permits the Psalm to voice the great wounds and the great gifts of the day.

IV.

Plot and *character* are interpretive features that will do generative work for the preacher. *Plot* is the directional flow of life that we all have in common that moves willy-nilly from a stasis well-being to trouble and sometimes to new possibility. *Character* is the identification, in quite specific ways, of the endless stream of God's creatures who face the daily realities of gift and wound. The preacher is to narrate the plot, often only a bit or a piece of the entire narrative. The preacher's task is to draw the Psalm close to a specific character, or better, to draw our character close to the Psalm and thereby to have our own sense of self reconfigured and repositioned. The characters in these Psalms are rich in emotional extremity and are invited to enter as full participants in the plot at the appropriate access point.

But matters of plot and character cause us finally to notice that the Psalter is *God-occupied*. God is often addressed here as "thou," sometimes in glad doxology as we have seen in Psalm 65:9-13, sometimes in bitter denunciation over infidelity. Thus Psalm 44 might be read "National Rage after 9/11."

Yet you have rejected us and abased us,
and have not gone out with our armies.
You made us turn back from the foe,
and our enemies have gotten spoil.
You have made us like sheep for slaughter,
and have scattered us among the nations.
You have sold your people for a trifle,
demanding no high price for them.
You have made us the taunt of our neighbors,
the derision and scorn of those around us.

You have made us a byword among the nations,
a laughing stock among the peoples....
All this has come upon us,
yet we have not forgotten you,
or been false to your covenant. (vv. 9-17)

The plot draws our life and the life of the world into intense interaction with God. As in the model text of Psalm 30, God is everywhere in the sequence of the standard plot:

- * implied in the stasis of prosperity (vv. 6-7a);
- * hidden in dismay (v. 7b);
- * addressed in supplication (v. 8);
- * questioned as to motivation (v. 9);
- * petitioned to act as God is able (v. 10);
- * acknowledged as the agent of “turn” (v. 11);
- * praised for transformative action (v. 12).

Without God...no poem! And with the poem, only this particular God! Thus the plot is an artistic portrayal of the way life is performed in intense engagement with God.

The character of God is rich and supple. This is not a God who can be reduced to the certitudes of one-dimensional fundamentalism, nor is this a God who can be safe and “non-interventionist,” as some progressives prefer. This is a God who is an active agent, endlessly elusive, on occasion available, celebrated frequently as “faithful and steadfast,” but known as well to be unfaithful, not steadfast, fickle, absent, neglectful. This is a God who “can do all things,” so we hope for this God as an ally in the daily contest of our lives; but sometimes the same character is remote and indifferent, and so Israel (and we) may be relentless toward God. Even though there is no divine response in Psalm 88, the calling on God never quits. God’s hand must be forced! The Psalm might be entitled “The daily urgency of Sam who could not find a job”:

O Lord, God of my salvation,
when, at night I cry out in your presence,
let my prayer come before you,
incline your ear to my cry....
Every day I call on you, O Lord;
I spread out my hands to you....
But I, O Lord, cry out to you,
in the morning my prayer comes before you. (vv. 1-2, 9, 13)

This particular superscription is evoked by the recognition that unemployment is eventually ostracizing; I may be shunned by friend and neighbor (vv. 8, 18).

In *the performance of the plot* and in *the tracing of the character of God*, the preacher sketches out a *God-occupied world*. This is a God for whom no secret can be hid. This is a God who is near by and far off (Jeremiah 23:23). This is a God with

whom life is intense, wondrous, demanding, open-ended, and hope-filled. This is a God who is a compelling match for the emotional extremity of our life in the world. The wonder of God matches our elation; the absence of God corresponds to our anguish. This God makes possible and makes necessary the full disclosure of how it is with us.

All of this means that the Psalter has on offer a remarkable alternative to the flat, reductionist world of denial in which we are mostly expected to live. Such a world, we imagine, is manageable...or cannot be managed. We imagine that we are on our own and can do as we please...or we imagine we are on our own and must run the race in order not to fall behind. But the Psalms know better than that. The preacher knows better than that. And when the preacher knows, the church can know, and when the church knows, there can be a subversive, generative enactment of courage, energy, and freedom. It begins when our emotional extremities are honored and resituated in the presence of God from whom no secret can be hid. The dominant world all around us is like a maximum security intelligence community with reams and reams of well-kept secrets, secrets of elation and anguish. But such secrets kill! The telling gives life! That cage of lethal secrecy is interrupted every time we reperform our lives through a Psalm.

Notes

1. John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms volume first* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), xxxvi-xxxvii.
2. George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), 32-41. Lindbeck comments:
 Thus the linguistic-cultural model is part of an outlook that stresses the degree to which human existence is shaped, molded, and in a sense constituted by cultural and linguistic forms.... This stress on code, rather than the (e. g., propositionally) encoded, enables a cultural-linguistic approach to accommodate the experiential-expressive concern for the unreflective dimensions of human experience far better than is possible in a cognitivist outlook. (34-35)
3. See Walter Brueggemann, "The Formfulness of Grief," *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, ed. Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 84-97.
4. See the full exposition of this phrase by George W. Stroup, *Before God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Press, 2004).
5. Erhard W. Gerstenberger, *Der Bittende Mensch: Bitritual und Klagelied des Einzelnen im alten Testament* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980).
6. Claus Westermann, *The Living Psalms* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989), 166-200 and *The Psalms: Structure, Content & Message* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1980), 73-83.
7. Walter Brueggemann, "Psalms and the Life of Faith: A Suggested Typology of Function," *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, ed. Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 3-32.
8. Bernd Janowski, *Arguing with God: A Theological Anthropology of the Psalms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013) has provided a full exposition of the drama of the Psalms under a three-fold rubric: I. From Life to Death, II. Interlude: The Gate of the Abyss, III. From Death to Life. This study will be the reference point for subsequent discussion.
9. Brevard S. Childs, "Psalm Titles and Midrashic Exegesis," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 16/2 (Autumn, 1971): 137-150.
10. *Ibid.*, 143. See also Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 520-522.
11. *Ibid.*, 522.
12. On these Psalms, see Erich Zenger, *A God of Vengeance; Understanding the Psalms of Divine Wrath* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996).