

Preface

SHARING ABOUT MY WORK on the topic of justice advocacy for the poor, marginalized, and disenfranchised in the post-9/11 world of Trump and COVID has elicited many responses from people across all walks of life. On one very meaningful occasion, a woman whom I had never met before overheard me talking to an acquaintance in a Barnes and Nobles bookstore about my work on poverty language in the Psalter and correlations in ancient religious perspectives about the poor. She sought me out afterward and told me how important my work is and she ‘just wanted to say thank you’ for my effort. I realize there is irony in working on a topic that encourages ambiguity, acceptance, and ethical reflection in an academic context, where academia has earned a reputation of siloed, isolationist and elitist perspectives. I anticipate and work toward a collaborative and interdisciplinary future in academic research. This thesis incorporates biblical, theological, and literary theories from global perspectives about psalms, ethics, and resistance theory. It is only the beginning.

Psalms 82 is a Hebrew Bible text with a reputation for being particularly difficult to interpret. The most significant published scholarship on the Psalm was a study by Julian Morgenstern in 1939. Since that time scholars have been theorizing about the meaning of the Psalm and its origins. In that Psalm 82 is often analyzed for its meaning as a Hebrew Bible text, the central issue has been generally limited to the translation and interpretation of אֱלֹהִים in verse one and its subsequent use in the composition, which continues to be a source of much debate and speculation. Meanwhile, scholarship has largely avoided giving adequate attention to the profound ethical themes in the psalm. Central ethical themes revolving around righteousness, wickedness and a response to poverty in Psalm 82 have not been adequately recognized as an intentional contribution of the psalm.

This study develops a holistic approach to interpreting Psalm 82 by examining characteristics of the text that may uncover implicit ethics and

social concerns about justice, and a concern for the poor and marginalized in the ancient Near Eastern world. Following Zimmermann's model for discovering implicit ethics in an ancient biblical text, this study explores multiple features of Psalm 82 that support an ethical reading. These features include its probable Northern Israelite compositional setting, intentional ambiguity, linguistic focus on the poor and marginalized in society, a mythological heritage, and its reception in the Second Temple Period as resistance literature.

SAMPLE

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I AM ETERNALLY GRATEFUL to have loved and known the love of a generous and supportive life partner. My research has been significantly impacted by my journey as a married woman, mother, daughter, and sister.

Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
ApOTC	Apollos Old Testament Commentary
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BCOTWP	Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
BHQ	Biblia Hebraica Quinta
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BWA(N)T	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten (und Neuen) Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBSC	Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
DCH	<i>Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HBT	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HS	<i>Hebrew Studies</i>
HSCL	Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature

<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HTS</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Studies</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>ICC</i>	International Critical Commentary
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>IRT</i>	Issues in Religion and Theology
<i>IVP</i>	InterVarsity Press
<i>JSCE</i>	<i>Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBR</i>	<i>Journal of Bible and Religion</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JRE</i>	<i>Journal of Religious Ethics</i>
<i>JSCE</i>	<i>Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>KAI</i>	<i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften</i> . Herbert Donner and Wolfgang Röllig. 2nd ed. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1966–1969
<i>KTU</i>	<i>Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit</i>
<i>LHBOTS</i>	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
<i>NCBC</i>	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
<i>OBT</i>	Overtures to Biblical Theology
<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
<i>OTL</i>	Old Testament Library
<i>OtSt</i>	<i>Oudtestamentische Studien</i>
<i>PBM</i>	Paternoster Biblical Monographs
<i>R&T</i>	<i>Religion & Theology</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RBS</i>	Resources for Biblical Study
<i>SBL</i>	Society of Biblical Literature
<i>SBLDS</i>	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series

SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBL SBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study
SBLStBibLit	Society of Biblical Literature Studies in Biblical Literature
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SCM	Syro-Mesopotamia Studies
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SPCK	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
STI	Studies in Theological Interpretation
SubBi	Subsidia Biblica
SWBA	Social World of Biblical Antiquity
UCOP	University of Cambridge Oriental Publications
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WAW	Writings from the Ancient World
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZKT</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>