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I. Introduction

Psalms 1, 19, and 119 are of great significance in terms of their central message—i.e., the greatness of Yahweh’s torah. The three psalms are also of critical importance in terms of their canonical placement. Psalm 1, the first psalm of the whole Psalter, plays an introduction role, and Psalms 19 and 119 appear in the middle of the first book and of the last book of the Psalter respectively. Why are the three torah psalms placed right there? Is their placement accidental or intentional? These questions play a decisive role in making the decision of how we should understand the whole Psalter. Since many scholars

have already dealt with the canonical function of Psalm 1,¹⁾ this paper will focus mainly on the analysis of why Psalms 19 and 119 are placed in the middle of the first book and of the last book of the Psalter respectively. In this paper I will refer to the two psalms as the ‘macro-torah frame’ in that they support the whole Psalter like the core pillars of the building. Their canonical placements will demonstrate that the Psalter, along with Psalm 1, should be read through the lens of the torah motif. To this end, I will briefly introduce the wisdom frames of Gerald Wilson to lay the foundation of my argument and then focus on analyzing the function of the canonical placement and import of psalms 19 and 119.

II. Gerald Wilson and the Wisdom Frames

Since the publication of Gerald Wilson’s masterpiece,

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- 1) John T. Willis, “Psalm 1: An Entity”, *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 91 (1979); Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 513–14; Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (SBL Dissertation Series 76; Chico, CA: Scholars, 1985), 204–07; Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms Part 1 with an Introduction to Cultic Poetry* (The Forms of the Old Testament Literature; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988); Beat Weber, “Psalm 1 and Its Function as a Directive into the Psalter and Towards a Biblical Theology”, *Old Testament Essays* 19 (2006), 237–60; Phil J. Botha, “Intertextuality and the Interpretation of Psalm 1,” D. J. Human(ed.), *Psalms and Mythology* (*Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies*; New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 58–76; Robert L. Cole, *Psalms 1-2: Gateway to the Psalter* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2013). As to the function of Psalms 1 and 2 as an introduction, see Gerald T. Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct: A Study in the Sapientializing of the Old Testament* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), 136–44; Robert L. Cole, “An Integrated Reading of Psalms 1 and 2,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 98 (2002); idem, *Psalms 1-2: Gateway to the Psalter*; idem, “The Psalms: Language for All Seasons of the Soul”, A. J. Schmutzer and D. M. Howard(ed.), *Psalms 1-2: The Psalter’s Introduction* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013); Patrick D. Miller, “The Beginning of the Psalter”, J. C. McCann(ed.), *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (*JSOTSup*; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 83–92.

The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter (1985), the canonical understanding of the Psalter has developed and expanded at a rapid pace. In his essay, “Shaping the Psalter: A Consideration of Editorial Linkage in the Book of Psalms,” Wilson argues that the five-book division of the Psalter is a “purposeful indication of editorial organization.”²⁾ He also points out several other organizational techniques that the editors might have used: the doxologies at the end of each book (Pss. 41:13; 72:19; 89:52; 106:48; 150:6), the author and genre designations in the superscriptions, the strategic placement of royal psalms at the juncture of the first three books (Pss 2, 72, 89), the presence of the introduction (Ps. 1) and the conclusion (Pss. 146–150), etc.³⁾ In addition to these organizational techniques, Wilson provides a series of editorial frames that establish each of the Psalter’s units. According to him, the Psalter is structured by two main frames: the “royal frame” which consists of Psalms 2, 72, and 89,⁴⁾ and the “wisdom frame” which is composed of Psalms 1, 73, 90, 107, and 145.⁵⁾

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- 2) Gerald H. Wilson, “Shaping the Psalter: A Consideration of Editorial Linkage in the Book of Psalms”, J. C. McCann(ed.), *Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1993), 72; idem, “Evidence of Editorial Division in the Hebrew Psalter”, *Vetus Testamentum* 34 (1984), 337–52.
 - 3) idem, “Shaping the Psalter: A Consideration of Editorial Linkage in the Book of Psalms”, 72–75.
 - 4) Psalm 2 is related to the institution of the Davidic covenant, Psalm 72 to the transmission of the covenant from David to Solomon, and Psalm 89 to the failure of the covenant. See idem, “The Use of Royal Psalms at the ‘Seams’ of the Hebrew Psalter”, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 35 (1986), 85–95; idem, “Shaping the Psalter: A Consideration of Editorial Linkage in the Book of Psalms,” 78.
 - 5) idem, “Shaping the Psalter: A Consideration of Editorial Linkage in the Book of Psalms”, 81.

1. The First and Second Wisdom Frames

For Wilson, the wisdom notes play a decisive role in identifying the wisdom frames. For instance, notes such as the torah instructions, the contrast between the righteous and the wicked, the fear of Yahweh, etc. serve as criteria. What is interesting is that he suggests only two wisdom frames throughout the whole Psalter: the wisdom frames of Psalms 1 and 145 and of Psalms 107 and 145.

The first wisdom frame is structured by Psalms 1 and 145. As an introduction, Psalm 1 deals with the significance of meditating on the torah, two ways of living, and the contrast between the righteous and the wicked. Psalm 145, especially verses 19–20, provide the same wisdom notes, highlighting ‘the fear of the Lord’ and ‘the contrast of the righteous and the wicked’ (“He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them. The Lord preserves all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy”).⁶⁾ In this point, it can be argued that Psalm 145:19–20 resonates with Psalm 1:3–6 and that, as Wilson argues, Psalms 1 and 145 play a role in holding the whole Psalter together.

The second wisdom frame is formed by two psalms in Book V: Psalms 107 and 145.⁷⁾ Psalm 107 shows Yahweh’s steadfast love (*hesed*) that delivers four kinds of people in crisis: wanderers in the desert (vv. 4–9), prisoners (vv. 10–16), sick

6) Cf. Patrick D. Miller, “The End of the Psalter: A Response to Erich Zenger”, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 80 (1998), 105–07.

7) Wilson, “Shaping the Psalter: A Consideration of Editorial Linkage in the Book of Psalms”, 78–79.

people (vv. 17 – 22), and sailors on the sea (vv. 23 – 32). Verses 42 – 43, in particular, pronounce that the wise are those who understand Yahweh’s steadfast love. Who is the wise one? He is the one who understands Yahweh’s steadfast love. Psalm 145, as mentioned above, highlights the contrast of the righteous and the wicked (Ps 145:19 – 20). In this respect, the two wisdom frames embrace Book V as well as the whole Psalter.

2. Third Wisdom Frame

Here the point can be raised that Wilson paid no attention to the existence of the wisdom frame in Book I, which is formed by Psalms 1 and 40 – 41. Of course, he noticed the fact that Psalm 1 emphasizes the delight of meditating on the torah, and Psalm 40 highlights the delight of doing Yahweh’s torah (vv.7 – 8);⁸⁾ however, he did not move further to the point that just as Psalm 1 begins with the Ashurei(’*ašre*)-formula, so the formula appears in Psalms 40:4 and 41:1, forming a wisdom frame. That is, Psalm 1 affirms that the blessed one is whoever delights in and meditates on the torah, and Psalm 41 also pronounces that the blessed one has regard for the poor, which is one of the torah instructions.⁹⁾ In this respect, Psalms 1 and 40/41 form a

8) Without any specific note, the English translation in this paper is from the English Standard Version (ESV).

9) Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms* (EBC 5; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 80–81; J. Clinton McCann, “The Shape of Book I of the Psalter and the Shape of Human Happiness”, P. W. Flint et al(ed.), *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 340–48; Sora Kang, “Happiness Manifested in Book I of the Psalter”, *Scripture and interpretation* 3 (2009), 33–35. Psalms scholars such as James Mays, Willem VanGemeren, and J. McCann, have rightly noticed the inclusio structure of Psalms 1 and 40 – 41, but they did not pay enough attention to the wisdom motif within the psalms.

neat wisdom frame.

If we include the frame of Psalms 1 and 40/41, the three wisdom frames are identified. First, Psalms 1 and 145 form a wisdom frame, which hold tight the whole Psalter. Second, Psalms 107 and 145 shape a neat wisdom frame by which the fifth book is bound tight. And third, Psalms 1 and 40/41 envelop all the psalms in the first book where the torah and wisdom are highlighted. As seen above, the wisdom frames are found in the first and the fifth books of the Psalter. It implies that one has to read the whole Psalter through the lens of the torah motif.

(Diagram 1: Three Wisdom Frames)

Book 1		Book 5
Pss. 1—40/41		Pss. 107—145
Wisdom frame 3		Wisdom frame 2
Ps. 1	Wisdom frame 1	Ps. 145

III. Psalm 19 and Its Canonical Placement

As identified above, there are three wisdom frames in the whole Psalter, and each frame plays a role of binding its collections tightly (Pss 1 – 40/41, 107 – 145, and 1 – 145). From now on we will delve into the canonical functions of Psalms 19 and 119 placed in the first and second wisdom frames. Before we examine the canonical placement of Psalm 19 and its function as a torah pillar, let us first look into its significance.

1. One Message, not Two Messages

Ostensibly, it seems that Psalm 18 shares God's glory revealed in creation with Psalm 8 and the greatness of the torah with Psalm 1. In this respect, Psalm 18 is a composite psalm with two disparate messages. Yet Psalm 19 does not convey two disparate topics such as God's glory manifested in cosmic phenomena and the integrity of God's torah. Rather, the psalm speaks out one topic—the wholeness of God's torah. In that sense, McCann is right when he said that if we try to divide the psalm into two parts (vv. 1–6 and 7–14) to grasp its central message, it would be a big mistake.¹⁰⁾ That is, Psalm 19 conveys one topic—the wholeness of God's torah. As McCann rightly says, “to discern the unity between 19:1–6 and 19:7 is to begin to appreciate the psalmist's daring claim and the psalms' radical implications.”¹¹⁾ In that sense, it can be said that God's glory manifested in nature (vv. 1–6) is utilized to uncover the wholeness of the torah (vv. 7–14).

2. Significance of the Torah in Psalm 19

In particular, Psalm 19:7–9 display the significance of the torah. It is clearly uncovered by five synonymous terms for torah in the three verses (six 3+2 lines): “law” (*torah*), “testimony” (*‘edūt*), “precept” (*piqqudim*), “commandment”

10) J. Clinton McCann, *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms: The Psalms as Torah* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 28. Cf. James L. Mays, “The Place of the Torah—Psalms in the Psalter”, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106 (1987), 5.

11) McCann, *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms: The Psalms as Torah*, 29.

(*mišwah*), and “rules” (*mišpēṭ*). All of the five terms also appear in Psalm 119, in which all verses contain one of those torah terms. It is interesting to note that the integrity of torah is revealed by the five synonymous terms, while that of Psalm 119 is disclosed through an acrostic pattern. Here it is not significant to draw a semantic nuance among the terms. What matters is that the terms are, as Goldingay suggests, indicative of “Yahweh’s instruction about behavior.”¹²⁾ Thus they should be regarded as synonyms for torah. And as Walter Brueggemann explains the meaning of the term torah in Psalm 1, the connotation of the torah is “all of God’s instruction.”¹³⁾

In addition to the five synonymous terms including torah, which means “any instruction flowing from the revelation of God as the basis for life and action,”¹⁴⁾ the integrity of the torah in Psalm 19 is reinforced by the number of the words used in six lines of the verses 7 – 9. Each line that starts with the torah terms consists of five Hebrew words. Jean-Luc Vesco argues that the placement of those five terms is reminiscent of the five books of the Pentateuch.¹⁵⁾ Line 7a starts with “law” (*torah*), followed by four words. Line 7b starts with “testimony” (*‘edūt*),

12) John Goldingay, *Psalms 1-41* (Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 291.

13) Walter Brueggemann and William H. Bellinger, *Psalms* (New York: Cambridge University, 2013), 29.

14) Gordon J. Wenham, “The Ethics of the Psalms”, D. Firth and P. S. Johnson(ed.), *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2005), 178; idem, *Psalms as Torah: Reading Biblical Song Ethically* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 86; VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 220-22.

15) Wenham, *Psalms as Torah: Reading Biblical Song Ethically*, 80; Jean-Luc Vesco, *Le Psautier De David Traduit Et Commenté* (Paris: Cerf, 2006), 209.

followed by four words as well. This pattern continues till verse 9, in which line 9b starts with “testimony,” followed by four words. It seems clear that this arrangement of five words in each line might have been suggestive of the five books of the Pentateuch.¹⁶⁾

3. Canonical Placement of Psalm 19

With the significance of Yahweh’s torah in mind, let us turn to our main topic—the canonical placement of Psalm 19. Of course, Psalm 19 in itself brings the significance of torah into relief; however, the consideration of its canonical placement will further show its significance and integrity. In this short paper it is useless to analyze the whole of Book I to uncover the canonical placement of Psalm 19. Suffice to examine Psalms 15–24 located in the middle of the third wisdom frame (Pss 1–40/41), the pinnacle of which is Psalm 19. To that end, Patrick Miller and William Brown should be first mentioned,¹⁷⁾ since they have attempted to analyze Psalm 19 from its contextual and literary perspective and then explore the psalm and its neighboring psalms (Pss 15–24) according to their form-critical

16) The effect of *torah* in Psalm 19 is not illustrated in detail as much as Psalm 119, but the psalmist of Psalm 19 announces that the enduring and true torah (v. 9) renews life, makes wise the simple (v. 7), rejoices the heart, and enlightens the eyes (v. 8). All of these derivative effects flowing from the torah show that for God’s covenant people the recovered life, wisdom, rejoice of the heart and spiritual perception can be obtained only through torah.

17) Patrick D. Miller, “Kingship, Torah Obedience, and Prayer: The Theology of Psalms 15–24”, K. Seybold and E. Zenger(ed.), *Neue Wege der Psalmenforschung* (Freiburg: Herder, 1994); William P. Brown, “Here Comes the Sun! The Metaphorical Theology of Psalms 15–24”, E. Zenger(ed.), *Composition des Psalters* (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 98.

genres.

Psalms 15 and 24 fall under the genre of entrance liturgy; both psalms ask about who can be qualified for entering Yahweh's holy place. Psalm 15 starts with the question ("O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill?" [v. 1]), and then it is followed by torah-based ethical requirements (vv. 2-5). The psalmist of Psalm 24 also shouts, "Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place?" (v. 3) and the question is followed as well by the torah-based ethical requirements (24:4). In other words, this collection starts with the ethical life based on Yahweh's torah, reminiscent of the torah-based life of Psalm 1.

Psalms 16 and 23 are both trust psalms. The psalmist of Psalm 16 confesses his trust in Yahweh's protection and provision in the midst of crisis, either past or present, and its thematic flow moves from petition to a closing confession of trust: "I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure" (Ps 16:8-9). Psalm 23 is also a trust psalm where God is metaphorically described as both a good shepherd (vv. 1-3) and gracious host (v. 5). There the psalmist confesses his trust: "[E]ven though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me" (v. 4). Likewise, Psalms 16 and 23 is colored with the confessions of trust and additionally have the same image ("cup") in common to demonstrate God's provision (Pss 16:5 and 23:5).

Psalms 17 and 22 are laments. Both psalms move from petition to praise. The psalmist of Psalm 17 who seems to have been falsely accused (vv. 3–5) cries out for help in the middle of the oppression of the wicked/the rich (vv. 1–2, 6–9, 13–14) and ends up with the resolution to stay in righteousness (v. 15): “As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness” (Ps 17:15). Psalm 22, cited in the Passion narrative in Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34, is regarded as the representative lament. Its thematic flow also moves from the complaint of the psalmist in trouble (vv. 1–21a) to praise and thanksgiving (vv. 21b–31).

Psalms 18 and 20–21 are royal psalms where the psalmists sing of kings who gain a military victory against their enemies with the help of Yahweh (Pss 18:37–42; 20:5; 21:1, 13). Psalm 18 is almost the same as Second Samuel 22 whose first verse is converted into the superscription of Psalm 18.¹⁸⁾ The literary structure of the psalm is still controversial; however, I suggest the nine stanzas (vv. 1–3, 4–6, 7–15, 16–19, 20–29, 30–36, 37–42, 43–45, 46–50). Their central stanza is verses 20–29 (Yahweh’s faithfulness to the faithful people) and it is surrounded by Yahweh’s salvation (vv. 16–19 and 30–36), which implies that the salvation comes from the obedience of Yahweh’s torah. Psalm 20 and 21 are interrelated. The psalmist of Psalm 20 cries out to deliver his king (“O LORD, save the

18) The final editor(s) of the Psalter might have changed the first verse of Second Samuel 22 into the superscription of Psalm 18. See John Eaton, *The Psalms: A Historical and Spiritual Commentary with an Introduction and New Translation* (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 104.

king! May he answer us when we call,” v. 9) and Psalm 21 praises for Yahweh’s salvation of the king (“O LORD, in your strength the king rejoices, and in your salvation how greatly he exults!” v. 1).

As briefly elucidated above, psalms 15 and 24, psalms 16 and 23, psalms 17 and 22, psalms 18 and 20/21 are paired respectively in terms of genre and theme. And then Psalm 19—the pinnacle of this collection as well as the torah psalm—is placed right in the middle. It seems clear that this canonical structure emphasizes the perfection and integrity of Yahweh’s torah (vv. 7–10) and the significance of obedience to it (v. 11), which echoes the crucial point of the beginning and ending of the third wisdom frame (Pss 1 and 40/41). Miller was right when he said, “The focus upon Yahweh’s torah and obedience to it is the touchstone for this collection. Delight in the torah and obedience to it stand at the beginning and end of this collection in the torah entrance liturgy, Pss 15 and 24.”¹⁹⁾ In his essay “Here Comes the Sun!: The Metaphorical Theology of Psalms 15–24,” William Brown also rearranges all of these psalms on the basis of concentric structure and argues, “the concentric arrangement gives rise, not fortuitously, to a literary configuration shaped by ascent and descent.....Together, Pss 15–24 form a theological ‘tell,’ whose horizontal and vertical cross section reveal an abundance of layered connections.”²⁰⁾

19) Miller, “Kingship, Torah Obedience, and Prayer: The Theology of Psalms 15–24”, 127.

20) William P. Brown, *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 264; idem, “Here Comes the Sun!: The Metaphorical Theology of Psalms 15–24”.

What matters here is that this collection stands in the middle of the third wisdom frame, and Psalm 19 is placed right in the middle of the collection. This demonstrates that Psalm 19 is intentionally placed to stress the importance of Yahweh's torah. Thus we can argue that the psalm serves as an important pillar to support the third wisdom frame (Pss 1 and 40/41).

IV. Psalm 119 and Its Canonical Placement

In what precedes, we have intended to investigate the canonical placement of Psalm 19. The psalm, which is placed right in the middle of Book I, seems to serve as a pillar to support the third wisdom frame formed by Psalms 1 and 40–41, highlighting the importance of obedience to Yahweh's torah. Now it is time to turn our attention to Psalm 119, which is known for its placement halfway in the middle of Book V. In connection with the canonical arrangement, what does Book V look like? Since this paper intends to focus on the canonical placement of Psalm 119 as a pillar in Book V, let us first consider the psalm and its significance before we study its canonical placement in the entire Book V.

1. Psalm 119 and Its Features

As it is well known, Psalm 119 is the longest psalm in the Psalter, which is called “The Great Psalm,” a torah psalm in genre and an acrostic psalm in style. Each of the eight verses of the psalm begins with the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet,

consisting of 176 verses.²¹⁾ The acrostic pattern seems to have been the strategic decision by the psalmist for didactic instruction. DeClaissé-Walford writes, “Acrostic poems were the works of highly-skilled literary artists and functioned in ancient Israelite literature in a number of ways. Acrostics were most likely memory devices to aid in private and public—individual and corporate—recitation.”²²⁾ Adele Berlin also notes the literary function of the acrostic pattern as follows:

The poet praises God with everything from A to Z: his praises all-inclusive. More than that, the entire alphabet, the source of all words, is marshaled praise of God. One cannot actually use all of the words in a language, but by using the alphabet one uses all potential words.²³⁾

The major goal of Psalm 119 does not seem clear since its plot movement is not consistent but rather repetitious. That is, although Psalm 119 is a torah psalm, it contains various features of genres such as the lament psalm (vv. 25 – 32, 145 – 152,

21) David N. Freedman, *Psalm 119: The Exaltation of Torah* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999). This book focuses on analyzing the literary features of the alphabetic psalms in the Psalter, including their similarities and differences. For a detailed stylistic analysis of Psalm 119, see pages 19 – 87.

22) Nancy L. DeClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2014), 870.

23) Adele Berlin, “The Rhetoric of Psalm 145”, A. Kort and S. Morschauer(ed.), *Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1985), 18.

169 – 176),²⁴⁾ the wisdom psalm (vv. 9 – 16, 17 – 24, 97 – 104),²⁵⁾ the trust psalm (vv. 41 – 48), and the praise psalm (vv. 169 – 176).²⁶⁾ The psalm inconsistently develops various issues such as wisdom, the importance of remembrance (vv. 49 – 56), the characteristics and wondrous deeds of God (vv. 113 – 120, 129 – 136). Also, various synonyms for torah are repeated. The five terms among the six torah terms used in Psalm 19 are also used in Psalm 119 except for “fear” (*yīr’â*): “law” (torah [25x]), “testimony” (*‘edūt* [23x]), “precept” (piqqudim [21x]), “commandment” (*mišwah* [22x]), and “rules” (*mišp̄t* [23x]). The terms including “statue” (*hōq* [21x]), “word” (*dābār* [26x]), and “word” (*imrah* [19x]) are interchangeably used as synonyms for torah. In any case, both the acrostic pattern and the repetition of these synonymous terms demonstrate the characteristic and significance of Yahweh’s torah.

2. Significance of the Torah in Psalm 119

As stated above, the acrostic pattern is the prominent feature of Psalm 119. Wilfred Watson sums up the function of the acrostic: “to convey the idea of completeness” and “to display

24) As to some characteristics of Psalm 119 as a lament, see Will Soll, *Psalm 119: Matrix, Form, and Setting* (CBQMS 23; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1991).

25) Philip Johnston and David G. Firth, *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2005), 299; Arnold A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 806.

26) Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 246–52; C. Hassel, Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms: A Literary and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 221.

the author's skill."²⁷⁾ The function related to the author's skill has to do with DeClaissé-Walford's remark above. That is, the acrostic pattern must have been used for memorization by skillful psalmists. The first function of the acrostic pattern is to demonstrate the completeness of the message or topic. Watson writes: "By using every letter of the alphabet the poet was trying to ensure that his treatment of a particular topic as complete. At the same time, the reader gained the impression that the poem he was reading covered every angle."²⁸⁾

If so, what is the major message of Psalm 119? Though its plot movement, as mentioned above, is not consistent, Psalm 119 praises the completeness of Yahweh's torah for its primacy and efficacy. First, the acrostic pattern itself, as stated above, supports the completeness of Yahweh's torah. Second, Psalm 119:1 – 8, the first stanza, suggest its underlying message of the entire psalm—that is, the obedience of torah is the beginning of Yahweh's blessing.

Psalm 119:1 – 2 are reminiscent of Psalm 1, which highlights that the prosperous life of Yahweh completely depends on the torah obedience. For both psalms, obeying the torah instructions and keeping them with all one's heart are the practical keys to the affluent life. In particular, the repetition of three synonymous terms in verses 1 – 8 throughout the entire psalm, emphasizes the significance of action: "walk" (*hlc* [vv. 1,

27) Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques* (JSOT Supplement Series 26; Sheffield: JSOT, 1984), 198.

28) Ibid.

3, 45]), “keep” (*ntzr* [v. 2, 22, 33–34, 56, 69, 100, 115, 129, 145]), and “keep” (*shmr* [vv. 4–5, 8–9, 17, 34, 44, 55, 57, 60, 63, 67, 88, 101, 106, 134, 136, 146, 158, 167–168]). Also some verses demonstrate the wisdom motif where the torah instructions keep one’s way pure (v. 9), gladden one’s heart (v. 24), and make one wise (v. 98–104, 130).

Yet, Psalm 119 does not focus on the wisdom motif of Yahweh’s torah but rather highlights the function of the torah as the ground for God’s deliverance, protection, and guidance. Brueggemann contends that Psalm 119 highlights the fact that the adherence to the torah is suggested as “the alternative to a life of autonomous self-serving and self-sufficiency that can only end in self-destruction.”²⁹⁾ However, it seems to me that he is a little off the target. Rather, the features of promise permeate Psalm 119. In actuality, Will Soll’s remark is right: “Torah constitutes the ground of hope for God’s deliverance.”³⁰⁾

3. Views on the Composition of Book V

With the characteristics of the torah in Psalm 119 in mind, let us turn our attention to its canonical placement. As Wilson outspokenly remarks, the structure of Book V is relatively complicated and controversial.³¹⁾ In his article “The Composition

29) Brueggemann and Bellinger, *Psalms*, 520.

30) Wenham, *Psalms as Torah: Reading Biblical Song Ethically*, 90; Soll, *Psalm 119: Matrix, Form, and Setting*, 82–83.

31) Wilson, “Shaping the Psalter: A Consideration of Editorial Linkage in the Book of Psalms”, 78–79. He states, “The fifth book is possibly the most diverse and difficult to sort out, partially because there are so few road signs and landmarks in these predominantly untitled psalms.”

and Theology of the Fifth Book of Psalms, Psalms 107–145,” Erich Zenger also provides slightly different proposals of Wilson, Klaus Koch, Reinhard G. Kratz and his own proposal, which demonstrates how difficult it is to analyze the whole structure of Book V.³²⁾

Let us take a quick look at their proposals. Wilson noticed that the fifth book of the Psalter is composed of four major segments: (1) Psalms 108–110 (the first Davidic collection), (2) Psalms 111–117 (hallelujah psalms), (3) Psalms 118–135, which bind Psalms 119 and 120–134 (the so-called the Songs of the Ascents), and (4) Psalms 136–145 (the second Davidic collection). Considering that Psalms 146–150 (halleluiahs psalms) to be the conclusion of the entire Psalter, he argues that Psalms 118–135 is the center segment of Book V³³⁾ and Psalm 119 is the center of the center.³⁴⁾ Klaus Koch divides Book V into three parts: (1) Part 1 (Pss 107–118), (2) Part 2 (Pss 120–136), and (3) Part 3 (Pss 138–150). Each part contains hallelujah psalm collections (Pss 111–118; 135–136; 146–150). He argues that Psalms 119 and 137 might have been added later.³⁵⁾ Like Koch, Reinhard Kratz proposes a three-part division of Book V, but Kratz’s proposal is slightly different. He divides Book V into (1) Psalms 101–117, (2) Psalms 118–135,

32) Erich Zenger, “The Composition and Theology of the Fifth Book of Psalms, Psalms 107–145”, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* (1998), 77–102.

33) Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 188–89, 220–28.

34) idem, “Shaping the Psalter: A Consideration of Editorial Linkage in the Book of Psalms”, 79; idem, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 223.

35) Zenger, “The Composition and Theology of the Fifth Book of Psalms, Psalms 107–145”, 84–85.

and (3) Psalms 136-150.³⁶⁾ And Zenger proposes seven parts: (1) Psalms 107, (2) Psalms 108 – 110, (3) Psalms 111 – 112, (4) Psalms 113-118, (5) Psalms 120 – 134, (6) Psalms 135 – 136, and (7) Psalms 138 – 145.³⁷⁾ Likewise, the composition of the fifth book of the Psalter is not neatly organized.

4. Alternative View on the Composition of Book V

In contrast to the proposals of Wilson, Kratz, Koch, and Zenger, I propose that Book V is to be divided in accordance with the superscriptions, not some key words such as hallelujah or hodu. If we divide Book V on the basis of the superscriptions, a kind of pattern is found: it shows the consistent movement from the untitled psalm(s) to the titled psalm(s).

[Diagram 2: Alternative View on the Composition of Book V]

Book V								
Untitled Ps. (1)	First Davidic Col. (3)	Untitled Pss. Col.(9)			Songs of the Ascents (14)	Untitled Ps. Col. (3)	Second Davidic Col.(8)	Untitled Pss. (5)
107	108 – 110	111 – 118		119	120 – 134	135-137 ³⁸⁾	138 – 145	146-150
Introduction		111-112 Acrostic	113-118 Liturgies	119 Acrostic	Liturgies			Conclusion

36) Ibid., 85-87.

37) Ibid., 88-98.

38) Though Psalms 135 – 137 are not the Songs of Ascent, they are thematically connected with Psalms 120-134.

	Reliance on YHWH alone	Hallelujah Pss.	Torah Ps.	Zion Pss.	Reliance on YHWH alone	Hallelujah Pss.
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(Ps. = Psalm; Pss. = Psalms; Col. = Collection)

If that is the case, Book V begins and ends with the untitled Psalms (Pss 107 and 146 – 150), in the middle of which the first Davidic collection (Pss 108 – 110) is followed by nine untitled psalm collection (Pss 111 – 119), the Songs of the Ascents (Pss 120 – 134),³⁹⁾ three untitled psalms (Pss 135–137), and then the second Davidic collection (Pss 138 – 145). Here, Psalms 111 – 119 (the untitled psalms) fall into two parts, Psalms 111 – 118 (hallelujah psalms) and Psalm 119 (torah psalm), and Psalms 111 – 118 again can be divided into two parts: Psalms 111 – 112 (acrostic psalms) and Psalms 113 – 118 (liturgy). As seen above, Psalm 119, which is both a torah psalm and an acrostic psalm, is placed between the liturgies (Pss 113 – 118 and 127 – 137).

5. Canonical Placement of Psalm 119

Now it is time to look into the significance of the canonical placement of Psalm 119. To that end, we will pay attention to the core messages of each segment or collection, which will help uncover the canonical import of Psalm 119. A good place to start would be Psalms 107 and 145.

39) Psalm 137 is exceptional. It seems that the psalm was later inserted between the Great Hallel psalms and the second Davidic collection.

1) Psalms 107 and 145

As Wilson rightly pointed out, Psalms 107 and 145 form a wisdom frame. Psalm 107 starts with the proclamation that Yahweh's goodness and steadfast love (*hesed*) will endure forever (v. 1), which is the theme of both Psalm 107 and the entire Book V. As illustrated below, Yahweh's steadfast love is one of the crucial theological term in Book V. Yahweh's steadfast love is exposed as a savior who delivers four kinds of people in crisis related to desert (vv. 4–9), imprisonment (vv. 10–16), disease (vv. 17–22), and waters (vv. 23–32). Psalm 107 once again confirms that the wise are those who consider this saving power of Yahweh based on his steadfast love (v. 43). Psalm 145 deals with the goodness and greatness of Yahweh, the great king of the world and with His everlasting kingdom and reign: "Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations" (v. 13). In this respect, Psalms 107 and 145 envelop the whole of Book V.

2) The First and Second Davidic Collections

The first and second Davidic collections (Pss 108–110 and 138–145), the psalms in which all bear a Davidic superscription,⁴⁰⁾ address the Davidic figure in a positive tone. (1) First Davidic Collection. The psalmist of Psalm 108 praises Yahweh's steadfast love (*hesed*) and faithfulness (*'emet*),

40) Fifteen of forty-four psalms in Book V have a Davidic superscription, and the whole content of Psalm 132 is closely related to the Davidic figure and his monarchy although it has not a Davidic superscription.

confessing that he would gain a victory from his foes (vv. 4, 12 – 13). The psalmist of Psalm 109, whose middle section is full of the imprecatory petition (vv. 6 – 20), cries for help in the middle of crisis (vv. 1 – 5, 21 – 31) and petitions for deliverance according to Yahweh's steadfast love. Psalm 110, a royal psalm, portrays the victory of the Davidic figure based on Yahweh's help. This collection makes it obvious that the salvation of Israel totally relies on Yahweh's steadfast love and goodness.

(2) The Second Davidic Collection (Pss 138 – 145). First of all, this collection is enveloped by Psalms 138 and 145. Psalm 138 praises the name of Yahweh (v. 2), and Psalm 145 begins and ends with His name (vv. 1-2, 21). This collection also indicates that the Davidic figure sometimes implores Yahweh for rescue in the midst of desperate need and other times praises Yahweh as king. The psalmist who was delivered from crisis gives thanks to Yahweh for his steadfast love (*hesed*) and faithfulness (*'emet*): "I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness" (v. 2). He confesses that he was delivered by Yahweh's right hand (v. 7). Psalm 139 falls into three sections: verses 1 – 18, 19 – 22, and 23 – 24. The first section, which is full of hymnic features, deals with the divine attributes and actions (omniscience, omnipresence, guidance, and protection, etc.), while the second section portrays the psalmist who was falsely accused petitions to Yahweh for deliverance. Seemingly, the two sections (vv. 1 – 18 and 19 – 22) have nothing to do with each other; however, the petition of the psalmist in verses

19 – 22 totally relies on the divine attributes expressed in verses 1 – 18. Psalms 140 – 143⁴¹⁾ are a series of individual lament psalms. Psalm 140 portrays the psalmist petitioning to Yahweh for protection and deliverance from the enemies: “I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and will execute justice for the needy” (v. 12). Psalm 141 portrays the psalmist who cries for help (v. 1) and asks Yahweh to help him not to fall into the enticement of the wicked (vv. 3 – 4) and Psalm 142 also describes the psalmist who appeals to Yahweh for deliverance from the oppression by the persecutors (v. 6): “Attend to my cry, for I am brought very low! Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me!” Psalm 143 also petitions to Yahweh for deliverance from a crisis according to Yahweh’s steadfast love (*hesed*): “In your steadfast love you will cut off my enemies, and you will destroy all the adversaries of my soul, for I am your servant” (v. 12). In Psalm 145, the Davidic figure exclaims, “I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever” (v. 1), drawing our eyes to Yahweh himself.

The Davidic figure in the first and second Davidic collections (Pss 108 – 110 and 138 – 145) is similar to the Davidic figure in Books I, II, and III in that he experiences various crisis and asks for Yahweh’s help; however, the Davidic figure in the first and second collection (Pss 108 – 110 and 138 – 145) is different

41) Psalms 140–142 are verbally related. See J. Clinton McCann, *The Book of Psalms: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflection* (The New Interpreter’s Bible; Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1996), 1243.

from the Davidic figure in Books I, II, and III in that the former points the eyes of readers toward Yahweh himself (“I will extol you, my God and King”), while the latter fails to obey the torah of Yahweh. Especially, Psalm 89 shows that the failure of the Davidic covenant was due to the Davidic figures’ disobedience of the torah (vv. 30–37).

But the Davidic figure in these collections praises Yahweh, not a human, in times of joy and relies totally on Yahweh’s steadfast love in desperate need (Ps 108:3; 109:26–32; 110; 138:4–5). In particular, Psalm 107:43, asks “Who is the wise one?” and Psalm 108 answers to it: “Oh grant us help against the foe, for vain is the salvation of man! With God we shall do valiantly; it is he who will tread down our foes”(Ps 108:12–13). In other words, the psalmist of Psalm 108 describes the Davidic figure as the one who shows his loyalty to Yahweh and thinks of him as king.

3) The collection of Nine Untitled Psalms (Pss 111–119) and the Songs of the Ascents (Pss 120–134).

(1) The collection of nine untitled Psalms (Pss 111–119). This collection (Pss 111–119) falls into two: Psalms 111–118 and Psalm 119. The collection depicts Yahweh as the ruler of all things and all nations, continually emphasizing the significance of trusting Yahweh (112:1; 115:5). Being regarded as one literary unit in that both are connected by their alphabetic acrostics (acrostic psalms), Psalms 111 and 112 deal with the significance of fearing Yahweh who did mighty acts (Ps 111)

and with the importance of how his covenant people should respond to His acts (Ps 112).⁴²⁾ Psalms 113–118, known as “the Egyptian Hallel,” seem to have been recited, especially during the Passover. This sub-collection is full of the Exodus motif and in particular Psalm 114 is dominated by the motif (vv. 1–2). Psalm 113 praises Yahweh enthroned on high: “The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens! Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high” (vv. 4–5). Psalm 114 describes Yahweh who delivered the Israelites out of Egypt in a narrative form and Psalm 115—the central point of this collection—illustrates His power and steadfast love: “Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases” (Ps 115:3). The psalmist of Psalm 116 also expresses praise and thanksgiving for deliverance from crisis being symbolized by “snares of death” and “the pangs of Sheol” (v. 3). Finally, Psalms 117 and 118 portray Yahweh as the one who should be praised by all nations (Ps 117) and by His steadfast love (Ps 118). That is, in this collection, Yahweh is portrayed as a deliverer of his covenant people and all nations (cf. Ps 117:1–2).

(2) The Psalms of the Ascents (Pss 120–134). It has been said that this collection would have long existed independently⁴³⁾

42) As to the interrelationship between Psalms 1 and 112, see James L. Mays, *Psalms* (Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching; Louisville: John Knox, 1994), 360; McCann, *The Book of Psalms: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflection*, 1135–136.

43) As to the literary unity of Psalm 120–134, see J. P. Brennan, “Some Hidden Harmonies of the Fifth Book of Psalms”, R. F. McNamara(ed.), *Essays in Honor of Joseph P. Brennan* (Rochester: Saint Bernard’s Seminary, 1976), 137. Childs and Westermann argue that the presence of the small collections like Psalms 120–134 “reflects a long history of development in both its oral and literary stages.” See Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 511–12; Claus Westermann,

and that it might have been sung going up to the temple or recited at the Feast of Tabernacle.⁴⁴⁾ Either way, the message of the collection has to do with Jerusalem (Zion theology) and the royal theology. DeClaissé-Walford sums up the crucial message of the collection as follows: “[T]he message of the collection as a whole is that Jerusalem is the place for the coming together of the people of God for celebrations and commemorations and for acknowledging the goodness and help of the God of the Israelites.”⁴⁵⁾ It seems, however, that her recapitulation above is not enough, since this collection mainly highlights Zion as the place of blessing and salvation.

The point is revealed by the structural analysis of the collection. As Erich Zenger rightly analyzed, the Psalms of the Ascents are divided into three subgroups: Psalms 120 – 124, Psalms 125 – 129, and Psalms 130 – 134. Each subgroup consists of five psalms in the middle of which there is a psalm “influenced by royal theology and the theology of Zion.”⁴⁶⁾ That is, Psalm 122 focuses on Jerusalem, Psalm 127 on the temple, and Psalm 132 on David.⁴⁷⁾

Praise and Lament in the Psalms (trans. K. R. Crim and R. N. Souten; Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), 252.

44) DeClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 887–88.

45) *Ibid.*, 887.

46) Zenger, “The Composition and Theology of the Fifth Book of Psalms, Psalms 107–145”, 92.

47) *Ibid.*

(Diagram 3: Psalms Influenced by Royal Theology & the Theology of Zion)

Pss 120 – 24		Pss 125 – 129		Pss 130 – 134	
	Ps 122		Ps 127		Ps 132
	Jerusalem		Temple		David

And then he suggests the central message of the collection as follows: “[T]hese three psalms produce a coherent theological view which acclaims Zion as the place of blessing and salvation to which Israel should go in ‘ascent’ or a ‘pilgrimage.’”⁴⁸⁾

It is to be further mentioned that the collection demonstrates that Yahweh, as ‘the creator of heaven and earth,’ is enthroned on Zion, and bless his people (cf. Pss 121:2; 123:1; 124:8; 134:3). In other words, in this collection, Yahweh is pictured as the one enthroned on Zion where he provides his people with protection, salvation, and blessings, and where his people celebrate and commemorate the goodness and help of Yahweh.

Psalms 135 – 137, though they do not have the superscriptions, have some topics in common with the Psalms of Ascent. Psalm 135⁴⁹⁾ deals with Yahweh’s goodness and greatness that delivered Israel out of Egypt (vv. 1 – 12). Verse 5 says, “For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.” Psalm 136 also praises the goodness, greatness, and steadfast love of Yahweh who created the universe (vv. 1 – 9) and delivered Israel out of Egypt (vv.

48) Ibid.

49) As to the verbal connection of Psalms 134 – 135, refer to Psalm 134:1 and Psalm 135:1 – 2, both of which are almost identical.

10–26). Psalm 137 laments the destruction of Zion, petitioning Yahweh to take revenge on Babylon.

As illustrated above, the structure of Book V is not neatly organized as much as Books I–IV. However, if we analyze Book V on the basis of the superscriptions, it is uncovered that Book V has a kind of pattern: movement from the untitled psalm(s) to the titled psalm(s). Book V begins and ends with the untitled Psalms (Pss 107 and 146–150), followed by the first Davidic collection (Pss 108–110) and the nine untitled psalm collection (Pss 111–119), followed by the Songs of the Ascents (Pss 120–134) and three untitled psalms (Pss 135–137), and then by the second Davidic collection (Pss 138–145).

Thematically speaking, the first and second Davidic collections (Pss 108–110 and Pss 138–145) focus on the reliance on Yahweh alone, turning our attention to Yahweh, not a human Davidic figure. And the nine untitled psalm collection (Pss 111–119), the Songs of the Ascents (Pss 120–137), and three untitled psalms (Pss 135–137) picture Yahweh as the one who delivers Israel and all nations and as the one who is enthroned on Zion, the place of Yahweh's salvation and blessing. And then Psalm 119 is canonically placed between them in order to remind the first readers and thereafter of the fact that the torah is the ground for such salvation, protection and guidance of Yahweh, which supports the second wisdom frame (Pss 107 and 145).

V. Conclusion

As we observed above, Psalms 19 and 119 are of great significance in their canonical placement. Their canonical placement is identified by the analysis of the genre and content of Psalm 19 and its neighboring psalms (Pss 15-24), and of the superscriptions and content of Psalm 119 and its macro-neighboring psalms (Pss 107 – 145). Psalm 19 supports one wisdom frame (Pss 1 and 40/41) and Psalm 119 backs up another wisdom frame (Pss 107 and 145). For me, Psalms 19 and 119 form a ‘macro-torah frame’ to support the whole Psalter where I call both ‘torah pillars.’ As I illustrated above, their canonical placements of Psalms 19 and 119—the centers of the first and last Books of the Psalter—seems very intentional in that they encourage readers to read the whole Psalter through the lens of the torah motif. It is reinforced by the fact that the Psalter named t̄hillim (“praises”) begins with Psalm 1, the torah psalm.

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Keywords

Psalm 19

Psalm 119

Canonical placement

macro-torah frame

Gerald Wilson

거시적 토라 프레임으로서의 시편19편과 119편의 정경적 기능

방정열

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트리니티 복음주의 신학교 Ph.D.

본 논문의 목적은 시편19편과119편의 정경적 기능을 확인하는 것이다. 율법을 강조하는 시편1편, 19편, 119편 가운데서 시편1편의 서론으로서의 정경적 기능은 많은 학자들에 의해 이미 충분히 입증되었지만, 시편19편과119편의 정경적 기능에 관해서는 아직도 미진한 상태에 머무르고 있다. 따라서 본 논문은 시편19편과119편의 정경적 배치를 분석하여, 이 두 시편이 시편 전체를 떠받들고 있는거시적 토라 프레임' 기능을 수행한다는 주장을 전개할 것이다. 이 주장은 시편 전체를 율법 모티프 차원에서 읽어야 한다는 시편 학계의 기존 입장을 더욱 뒷받침하게 될 것이다. 이 결과를 도출하기 위해 논자는 제랄드 윌슨이 제시한지혜 프레임”(wisdom frame)을 살펴보고, 시편19편과119편, 그리고 그들의 인접 시편의 장르와 주제 전개(thematic development)를 정경적 차원에서 분석하게 될 것이다.

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검색어

시편19편

시편119편

정경적 배치

거시적-토라프레임

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