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The Psalms Sung: The Power of Music in Sacred Worship

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There are two main ways in which Latter-day Saints might understand the formation of the Psalms in the Hebrew Bible and, particularly, those that contain pointed prophecies of Christ, such as Psalm 22. The first is that they were developed by a prophetic figure such as David, who was inspired to speak true doctrines that foretold precisely and clearly of Jesus Christ, such as in Psalm 22:16, "They pierced my hands and my feet."[1] The second, held by many biblical scholars, is that the Psalms were originally written by inspired authors to reflect the yearnings, experiences, and understanding of Israelites in their time. When the Gospel authors gave their accounts of Jesus' life and death, they saw in his life the culmination of all the experiences of Israel as expressed in the Psalms and organized their account in such a way as to show that he was the fulfillment of those yearnings and that profound understanding.[2] In other words, the experiences of Israel expressed beautifully the future experiences of their Messiah and became a foreshadowing of his life that was understood by the Gospel authors as representing him.

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For Latter-day Saints, these two viewpoints need not be seen as mutually exclusive. Since Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), writings that prophesy pointedly of Christ's life also reflect a pattern for the experiences of God's covenant people who seek to follow him. As indicated in the Beatitudes, it is not only Christ who is called upon to be reviled and persecuted (see Matthew 5:10–12). His followers should also expect similar persecution in their own lives. This combined understanding of the Psalms see them as prophesying of Christ in a way that also reflects the experiences of his people, and allows a more complete view of their potential meaning and usefulness in the lives of the early Israelites, who often did not clearly understand the prophecies of the suffering Messiah (see D&C 84:26–27). Without a clear concept of their future fulfillment in Christ, the Psalms would have disappeared if the Israelites did not find in them an expression of their own trials, longings, and religious desires.[3]

Although the Psalms teach important spiritual truths and many of these psalms prophesy of a future Messiah, this paper will demonstrate that psalms were often used in early Israelite practice and throughout time in the context of liturgical worship (what Latter-day Saints would understand as worship services centered on ordinances, such as the sacrament or temple ordinances). More specifically, we will show that psalms were set to music in order to enhance worship and will also show the various forms psalms have taken that would have functioned to teach lessons through music and to help draw the worshipper into a state in which she or he was prepared to commune with God. In order to demonstrate this, we will first discuss the various types of psalms, how most of these could have connected to worship in the ancient temple, and the evidence showing the importance of music in Old Testament times. We will show textually how psalms were designed to mirror important functions of the sacrificial ritual. Next, we will show some of the most widespread forms psalms have taken in music over time, and how those musical forms were designed to teach and mirror the progress of the soul into a state of communion. Finally, we will briefly discuss the use of psalms in Latter-day Saint worship and how an understanding of the temple tradition of psalms could enhance sacrament and temple worship in that community.

Psalms as Forms of Worship in Ancient Temples

Numerous biblical scholars see the existence and use of many of the psalms as connected to worship in the Temple of Solomon or later in the Second Temple that was built after the Jewish return from exile in Babylon.[4] First and Second Chronicles—likely written by a temple Levite around 350 BC during the time of the Second Temple—connect Israelite music directly to the office of the Levites and a temple setting. Although scholars disagree whether these accounts reflect an accurate understanding of the use of psalms in David's day or if they instead are more indicative of temple usage during the Second Temple, the connection with temple worship is not under debate.[5] First Chronicles 15 shows David leading a procession in song and dance as they brought the ark of the covenant, the most central symbol of God's presence in Israel, back among the Israelites to reside in the tabernacle. As the Levites made holy sacrifices and entered into the tabernacle or temple, David delivered a psalm of thanksgiving (see 1 Chronicles 16:4–36), and urged his people to "sing unto [the Lord], sing psalms unto him. . . . Glory ye in his holy name. . . . Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually" (1 Chronicles 16:9–11). David thus connected music with the temple activity of seeking the face of the Lord, as found symbolically at the ark. The backdrop for David's psalm includes the music of the Levitical priests, who had been appointed "to minister before the ark of the Lord" (1 Chronicles 16:37), "with psalteries and with harps, . . . with cymbals, . . . with trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God" (1 Chronicles 16:5–6). Asaph, whose name is recorded at the beginning of many of the psalms, was specifically mentioned as a musician there.

In 2 Chronicles 5:12–13, similar behaviors at the dedication of Solomon's Temple, when the Lord actually entered his temple, are recorded. The text makes clear that the Levites had been sanctified and were dressed in sacred temple robes of white. A number of them, including Asaph, played "cymbals and psalteries and harps," standing at the east end of the altar with one hundred and twenty priests playing trumpets. The "trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord . . . when they lifted up their voice . . . that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord" (2 Chronicles 5:12–14). This passage points to the music and singing itself as the behavior that directly led to the presence of God entering into the temple.

Although they may have been added later, subtitles such as those found in Psalms 83 and 84 connected various psalms to figures such as Asaph or the sons of Korah (see Exodus 6:24). These were Levitical priest-figures who served in the temple of God, again demonstrating the biblical connection between the psalms and the temple.[6] Many psalms also give directions for how to perform the music as the words are being sung, showing that the psalms were given in the context of musical performance. For example, although modern scholars cannot agree on the translation of the word *selah*, almost all are in accord that it indicated some type of instruction to the performers with the largest group believing that it indicated a pause in the music (see Psalm 3:2, 4, 8).[7]

Although written many centuries later, the Talmud supports the view that one of the most important roles of the Levites was to sing in the temple during the performance of sacred ordinances, as can be seen in the description of the Day of Atonement:

> They gave him the wine for the drink offering, and the high priest stood by each horn of the altar with a towel in his hand, and two priests stood at the table of the fat pieces with two silver trumpets in their hands. . . .When he stooped and poured out the drink-offering the lead priest waved the towel and Ben Arza clashed the cymbals and the Levites broke forth into singing. When they reached a break in the singing they blew upon the trumpet and at every blowing of the trumpet a prostration. This was the rite of the Daily Whole-offering. . . .This was the singing which the Levites used to sing in the temple.[8]

The Talmud even indicated that certain psalms were sung on each day of the week: Sunday, Psalm 24; Monday, Psalm 48; Tuesday, Psalm 82; Wednesday, Psalm 94; Thursday, Psalm 81; Friday, Psalm 93; and Saturday (the Sabbath), Psalm 92.[9]

The themes expressed by the psalms as mentioned below connect closely with the purposes of temple worship and animal sacrifice under the law of Moses: forgiveness, prayers of thanksgiving, pleas for aid in trials, holy festivals, the anointing and support of kings, songs to prepare for temple worship, and religious instruction.[10] These themes are also familiar to Latter-day Saints, who know the temple as a place for prayers of thanksgiving and requests for divine help, a place where they can contemplate and celebrate the

mercy and might of God over the history of his interactions with mankind, a place of gospel instruction, a place where they enter into covenants of holiness, and a place strengthening and upholding the royal priesthood of God. The poetic temple prayers set to music were designed to express the feelings of a wide range of the people, so that they could be sung alone or together and heighten the mood of worship in various circumstances. The psalms can be divided into seven groups, which will be described here in order to show how they connect with temple worship in various situations:[11]

1. *Psalms of lament or prayer.* These likely arose from times of national or personal crisis, when the community gathered (at the temple, if possible) in order to offer sacrifice and pray for deliverance: 12, 22, 23, 44, 60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 85, 90, 94, 108, 123, 129, and 137. Saul's desire to sacrifice before going to war (1 Samuel 13:8–10) is an example of the type of circumstance in which these psalms could have been performed. Many of these psalms exhibit a three-part division. After addressing themselves to God, the supplicants, first, describe their trial; second, plea for help; and third, express their complete confidence that God will deliver them. Sometimes they speak of God's help as if he has already saved them. This three-part division likely connects with the ritual of sacrifice and will be discussed further below.

2. *Psalms of praise*. These psalms often begin with a command or call to Israel to gather as a community (most importantly, at the temple) and praise the Lord: 8, 19, 29, 33, 47, 65, 66, 78, 93, 95–100, 103–6, 11, 113, 114, 117, 134, 135, 136, and 145–50. After the call to praise, the hymns describe the power and the mercy of the Lord, often describing what he has done for Israel in the past and emphasizing his role as the creator and his divine reign as king of Israel. These psalms, once thought of as synagogue hymns, are now thought to mark times of national festival gatherings, such as the festival at Rosh Hashanah, which commemorated God's creation of the earth, and the anointing of God as king (and the mirrored anointing of the king of Judah/Israel) at the temple.

3. *Songs of thanksgiving.* These psalms reflect the gratitude of an individual or community after they have been delivered from a trial by God: 18, 30, 34, 40, 66, 92, 116, 118, and 138. This gratitude typically would have been demonstrated with a sacrifice at the temple, and accompanied by the singing of a hymn or psalm. Although it predates the creation of the temple, Noah's

sacrifice after leaving the ark (Genesis 8:20–21) shows the connection between the offering of thanks and the sacrificial ordinances of the temple.

4. *Royal psalms*. These psalms celebrated important events in the lives of royalty, which for Christian readers often reflected the royal life and reign of the Messiah: 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132, and 144. These often combine the previous two categories—pleas for aid and psalms of thanksgiving—but are expressed in terms of royal favor and desire. Psalm 18, for example, could fit in category 3 in that it provides thanksgiving after a successful battle, while Psalm 20 could fit in category 1 in that it is a royal prayer for aid in war. Again, these types of prayers would frequently have been made in connection with some type of sacrifice at the temple. The example cited above, in which King Solomon dedicated the Temple to the accompaniment of psalms, demonstrates the connection between the temple and royal psalms.

5. *Songs of Zion*. These psalms celebrate the location of the temple at Mount Zion, rejoice that the Lord's presence is there, and express a longing to visit the temple that could have acted also as a call to worship: 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, and 122.

6. *Liturgies*. These psalms are clearly designed for antiphonal dialogue in a way that worshippers could respond to the call of a priest, or the Levites could perform a song in a call and response fashion, thereby strengthening the message of the psalm: 15, 24, 50, 68, 81, 82, 95, 115, and 132. Psalm 15, for example, appears to have functioned as a call and response that would allow the worshipper to enter into the temple.[12] The worshipper (or priest) would ask, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle?" and the priest (or worshipper) would respond with the qualifications for temple service, "He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness." Psalm 24 functions in a similar way, with the worshipper (or the priest) asking, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" (3). The priest (or the worshipper) would then respond, "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart" (4). Some Latter-day Saints consider this format to be similar to the temple recommend question demonstrating that there were worthiness requirements in order to enter into the temple.[13] Whether or not this is a valid connection, the call and response format of the psalm would have caused thoughtful reflection among the temple worshippers and helped lift their souls to higher levels of devotion. Psalm 50 appears to be appropriate in the context of the reinitiation of a covenant, including a reference to a list of covenant requirements in verse 16. Psalm 121 likely was

used as a liturgical hymn for the use of pilgrims on their way to the temple in Jerusalem.

7. *Wisdom and Torah psalms.* These psalms seem to function differently than the others, not serving as a prayerful petition to God, but rather discussing religious truths and providing advice on how to successfully live a godly life, similar to the advice found in Proverbs or Ecclesiastes: 37, 49, 73, 112, 127, 128, and 133. As such they do not connect inherently to the temple or worship in the same way as the other psalms, but they may indicate the importance of teaching groups that are gathered at the temple to be instructed by the Mosaic priesthood or similar gatherings at the home.

There is no way to know beyond educated guesses what form temple music would have taken. The form of some of the psalms themselves, however, such as the call and response feature discussed in connection with Psalm 24 above (known as *anah* or "reply" in Hebrew[14]), indicates that some of the music was likely responsorial or antiphonal (forms which will be discussed below). As it has been mentioned, other psalms show a type of three-part division. Biblical scholars describe these divisions as leading from one stage to another—from a lament to a plea for help and finally to an expression of triumph or a statement of trust.[15] Using different titles, modern anthropologists have also recognized the commonality of a threefold division in behaviors during rituals.[16] The connection made below between the threefold division of many psalms, the threefold nature of ritual suggested by anthropologists, and the threefold division in the ritual of sacrifice is in many respects unique to this paper. The tentative nature, however, of these proposed connections—meant to demonstrate one way in which the psalms could have assisted in temple worship—should not call into question the following: first, that a threefold division in many of the psalms exists; second, that the threefold division would have been reflected musically; and third, that many psalms were clearly connected with temple ritual.[17]

Using the wording of modern ritual theory to describe the threefold progression in the psalm and the sacrifice, many behaviors in rituals begin with a separation stage—the lament stage—that is designed to disconnect the worshipper from previous worldly associations, attitudes, and behaviors. The stage would be symbolized by the worshipper's entrance into the sacred precincts of the temple and movement towards the altar, where the sacrifice brought from the world would have hands laid upon its head to indicate its status as a proxy

for the worldly sinner. The animal would then be sacrificed in an ultimate symbol of separation (see Leviticus 1:3–4). The ritual then proceeds to a liminal (from Latin *limen* meaning "threshold") stage—the plea stage—in which the worshipper is moving from one state of being to another and is often characterized by new behaviors, orientations, and attitudes. This stage is reflected in the middle phases of the animal sacrifice, in which the blood of the animal is spilt with some of the blood sprinkled upon specific corners or horns of the altar. The animal is then skinned and divided into appropriate portions with the entrails removed and appropriately handled (see Leviticus 1:5–7). Finally, the ritual concludes in an aggregation stage—the triumph stage—in which the worshipper is brought into a state of holier communion with God and with his people. The connection with God is symbolized by placing various parts of the sacrifice upon the altar where God's priesthood accepts the sacrifice, and the smoke from the sacrifice ascends up into heaven and becomes a pleasing savor unto the Lord (see Leviticus 1:7–9). Worshippers are thereby forgiven of their sins or receive confidence that the Lord will help them to pass through their trials. They are separated from the world, and they and God become one in newly formed, sacred communion.

As has been stated, a similar threefold ritual process is reflected in many of the psalms and may indicate that the words and music of these psalms were designed to be sung by the Levites at each stage of the ritual process, indicating cues to move to the next stage. In this way, the worshipper would be carried emotionally from the distressing state of separation—the lament stage—through the liminal state in which he has not yet been accepted by God—the plea stage—and triumphantly into the new relationship of holiness—the triumph stage. The music and words act as an emotional and intellectual conduit throughout, strengthening the meaning of the behaviors in the ritual and solidifying the results in the heart of the participant. Psalm 22 demonstrates this type of three-part division. Verses 1–18 describe the challenging condition in the separation or lament stage in which the worshipper finds himself. He questions, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" (1) and states that he is "despised of the people" (6); "trouble is near" (11); his "strength is dried up like a potsherd" (15). Although it is unknown how the music would have been performed during the ritual, it is possible to imagine a sorrowful tune accompanying the above words as the lamb was being brought to the temple and then killed as a symbol of difficulty and separation. For Christian

readers, the images cited most powerfully portray the separation experiences of the atoning Christ that would lead up to his death, similar to the death of the innocent lamb. The second stage of the psalm is characterized by pleas for help, found in verses 19–21. The worshipper asks the Lord to "be not thou far from me" and "haste thee to help me" (19) and cries to the Lord to "save [him] from the lion's mouth" (21). During this liminal stage in which the worshipper is not yet defeated but has not yet been delivered from his affliction, it is possible to imagine the music of the psalm tending upwards or increasing in volume, reflecting the soul yearning for help and bringing the worshippers to be emotionally in tune with the ritual being performed as the blood of the lamb is being sprinkled upon the altar and the parts of the lamb are being washed and placed upon the altar. Finally the psalm enters the aggregation stage found in verses 22–31, in which the final success of the plea is anticipated as if it had already occurred. The Psalmist declares that God "hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him but . . . he heard" (24). The Psalmist states that his "praise shall be of [God] in the great congregation" (25), promising that he will continue to praise God for his successful deliverance as he is praising him now in singing the hymn. The music of the psalm would likely have reflected the triumphant conclusion of the sacrifice, in which God had accepted the offering, and the worshippers were rejoicing in the assurance of their deliverance, feeling the reality of deliverance as they participated in the sacred music of the psalm. For Christians who read this psalm, the effect that Christ's death had upon the temple, at which the veil was rent in two (Matthew 27:51), demonstrates that Christ's sacrifice was seen by Gospel writers as connected to the temple, granting eventual access to all—the successful conclusion of the aggregation stage—back into the presence of God.[18]

The Use of the Psalms by Jews and Christians after the Temple

As has been mentioned, performances of the psalms did not find their way immediately into Jewish synagogue services.[19] This was likely because of the sharp distinction that was seen between the temple, in which worshippers attended under the direction of priesthood authority to participate in ritual ordinances, and the synagogue, where priesthood authority did not officiate.[20] The Jews, who had participated in both forms of worship simultaneously,[21] may have been slow to adopt temple forms directly into synagogue worship. This

reluctance in the synagogues seems to have been directed more at the singing of the psalms rather than their reading, since reading scripture was one of the primary purposes of synagogue worship. Over time the synagogue adopted many psalms into their synagogue services, using them particularly during the *shacharit* or morning service,[22] likely reflecting the ancient temple practice of the morning sacrifice.[23] Many additional psalms are recited on the Sabbath,[24] and they also form an important part of other weekly services, such as the Friday evening service that begins the Sabbath, and many festivals, including Passover, Shavuot, Sukkot, Simhat Torah, and Hanukkah.[25] Additionally, certain psalms are recited as a tradition when someone is ill or when a certain blessing is desired. Further personalizing the use of the psalms, some Jews will recite a verse from the psalms during *Amidah*—the most central prayer of the Jewish faith—that begins with the first letter of the worshipper's Hebrew name, thereby connecting the worshipper's name with the sacred, temple-centered text.[26] Ancient temple practices from the Second Temple are mirrored in all of these usages (with the possible exception of the Amidah).

The Christian churches appear to have begun their use of the psalms in their worship services soon after the establishment of Christianity. Paul directed Christians to worship by "speaking to [them]selves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in [their] heart[s] to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19). Eventually in both the Eastern Orthodox Church and in the Roman Catholic Church, a cycle of psalm singing was designed that would allow all 150 psalms to be repeated every week, such as in the Eastern Orthodox *Kathismata*[27] or the *Roman Catholic Liturgy of Hours or Divine Office*.[28] In fact, in early centuries of Christian worship, a candidate for bishop was expected to recite all 150 psalms from memory.[29] Some Protestant churches continue to imitate this use of the psalms, reciting one psalm each day of the month. The Eastern Orthodox Church uses psalms in its rites of consecration and ordination, and the Eucharist and the Roman Catholic Churches use various psalms in rites of baptism, confirmation, Holy Communion, matrimony, funeral services, ordination, and consecration of churches. With their decreased emphasis on liturgy, Protestants often sing psalms in their worship services but do not always connect the psalms directly with specific ordinances. Some Protestant churches, such as the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, the Westminster Presbyterian Church in the United States, and the Free Church of Scotland, only allow biblical psalms to be sung during their

worship services. Individual uses of the psalms have always been important in Christianity, with favorite psalms being used as prayers during illness or times of trial, and other psalms used to express gratitude.[30] For example, Augustine designated Psalm 23 as the "Psalm for Martyrs," and it was often sung or recited by early Christians as they were being put to death.[31]

Early Forms of Psalm Performance: Chanting, Plainchant or Plainsong, Responses, and Antiphonal Music

Possibly because of Jews' reluctance to adopt temple practices into the synagogue, early reading of psalms in the synagogue would have simply used the cantillation marks—known as *te'amim*—currently found in the Hebrew text, which guides the reading of the scriptures in a heightened style of voice that resembled chanting or simple song forms, using pauses, lengthening certain syllables, and changing the pitch of the voice to emphasize the scriptural message.[32] This type of reading has many of the benefits of musical forms that use a wider variety of tones. The vibrancy of the voice tends to engage new parts of the brain to reading the words and aids in attention and memory while also signifying an entrance into sacred time.[33] The reading or chanting of texts, still practiced today and in which Jewish youth receive training before their *bar* or *bat mitzvah*, shows that the word of God should be treated differently than the mundane speech of every day. The use of this style of speech also emphasizes—by pauses, increased stress, raised and lowered pitch of the voice, and lengthened words—the message of the scriptures in a way that affects not just the mind but also the emotions.

This type of reading resembles the chant regularly used until the present day in Eastern Orthodox religions, which have preserved very early Christian adaptations of Jewish practices, and which in the Roman Catholic Church would develop into Plainsong chanting and later (in the eighth century) into Gregorian chant. The Plainsong chant, or Plainchant, uses different tones to emphasize certain words and syllables, typically by a higher tone and a longer note. Its rhythm is completely dictated by the needs of the text.[34] This form of singing without any type of meter—which would continue as the primary method of singing the psalms until the sixteenth century when metered forms were introduced during the Reformation—reflects the nature of Hebrew poetry, which exhibits a type of meter in the rhythmic rise and fall of the Hebrew words but has no form as rigidly metered as poetry such as iambic pentameter.

The chant was sung, at least for the first few centuries, in unison, although later developments witnessed the introduction of simple harmonies known as *organum*. The effects of this type of chanting, which sounds even more musical than the reading from cantillation discussed above, has similar advantages that move the congregation into a spiritual time and space in which the word of God is spoken with greater resonance than regular speech.[35] Additionally, the movement in Plainsong from one note to another, coupled with the emphasis on the absolute unity of the singers, emphasizes the unifying power of the word of God. As the worshippers listen, their bodies practically reverberating with the power of unified singing, the congregation is lifted into unity with the singers and the power of the word of God. They are separated from their worldly existence and are prepared for communion with God in an emotionally altered, heightened state.

There is early evidence in Jewish and Christian usage for both responsorial singing and antiphonal singing, two related forms of music, although both seem to have been used first in Christian worship.[36] In responsorial singing, the leader, cantor, or priest sings a phrase of scripture and then the phrase is repeated by the congregation, with the leader guiding the congregation through entire scriptural texts.[37] Responsorial singing can also contain a question from the cantor or leader and an appropriate response from the congregation. As mentioned above, some psalms such as Psalm 24 function well not with simple repetition, but in this question and answer format. The cantor calls out a phrase of the psalm such as, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" and the congregation then responds, "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart" (Psalm 24:3–4). In Psalm 24 the question and answer format continues throughout the psalm, allowing for call and response, although certain verses would have been sung in unison or sung only by the cantor in order to emphasize the message. The responsorial mode of singing not only allows the congregation to learn and participate in the singing of scriptural texts by repetition, but also brings disparate units—the priest, the worshipper, and the word of God—into unity as they sing the same words. Seen in a symbolic sense, the leader brings the worshipper through song into a higher level of holiness signified by the sanctified priest and his words. The repetition also emphasizes the authority of the priest and scriptural text, while it engages the congregation and allows them to reaffirm codes of morality or scriptural truths with their own mouths. The cantor (or the scriptures) is solidified in his

role as teacher, and the congregation acknowledges its role as disciple learners; each plays a part in the sacred enactment of God's word. The portions of unison singing allow the congregation to progress from a symbolic disunity, as indicated by the separate singing, into a state of oneness.

The call and response mentioned above is also found in antiphonal singing, a more complex form of responsorial singing that is typically sung by a choir while the audience listens.[38] With the ability to practice and prepare, the choir can develop many more intricate melodies with memorized lines that either mirror or contrast beautifully with each other, leading to eventual unity (whether in unison or in harmony). Psalm 124 offers another type of poetry that functions well with antiphonal singing, since it progresses by repeating portions of the preceding phrase. Verse 1 states, "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say," and verse 2 continues, using the same phrase but modifying the ending: "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us." Verse 3 then gives a new phrase stating, "Then they had swallowed us up quick," and verse 5 modifies the phrase, affirming, "Then the proud waters had gone over our soul." It is possible to imagine the effectiveness of these modified phrases being sung by opposite sides of a choir: progressing through the psalm, often taking turns, but then beginning to sing the various parts at the same time, and finally ending in unison. Indeed, the very parallel nature of Hebrew poetry allows antiphonal singing to work effectively with almost any psalm. Psalm 23:2 demonstrates the balanced, repeated messages that are constantly employed in the poetically parallel portions of the Old Testament. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures" opens the verse and is followed by a parallel concept, but using different imagery: "He leadeth me beside the still waters." Antiphonal singing serves to emphasize the repetition but with unique imagery that exists throughout the Psalms. It should also be noted that antiphonal singing can be used similarly to responsorial singing, in which the two sides of the choir repeat the same phrases, at first singing at different times then at the same time (or in close succession) and eventually building to unity. This practice was developed extensively later in what is known as the fugues, in which one portion of the choir musically chases the other portion through a series of harmonized, repeated lines until eventually evolving into unity at the end.[39]

Singing in the antiphonal mode exhibits the same advantages of responsorial singing with repetition and unification of the choir or the congregation

with the cantor. In the Catholic tradition, the beauty of this antiphonal singing is emphasized aurally and visually with the choir sometimes positioned in the two opposite transepts that form the arms of the cathedral's cross-shaped formation (although the choir is stationed often at the end of the nave in clear view of the worshippers). Additionally, some forms of antiphonal singing also provide a three-part division that can mirror the ritual process found at Solomon's temple and in some of the psalms. The choir's parts are divided and separated. This singing evolves into a liminal stage in which the choir sings similar parts, but the parts overlap each other in ways that are not completely unified. The singing ends in an aggregation stage in which the choir comes together in a beautiful unity of sound and timing. The congregation follows the pattern as they are listening. At first, they are confronted with feelings of isolation and then moved through a tense and exciting liminal stage before being brought, now emotionally prepared, into a state of union.

The Development of Meters; Harmonizing; Other Modern Adaptations

Since the psalms come from Hebrew poetry, which does not demonstrate strict meter, music that adhered faithfully to the text could not be metrical in the modern sense (such as the meter of iambic pentameter). For this reason, the music of the psalms continued without meter until the sixteenth century. At this point, influenced by the Reformation, it began slowly to adopt more popular, metered forms (although the traditional forms continued as well). A departure from long-held traditions with relation to the psalms began during the Reformation in connection with the translation of the scriptures into languages understandable to the laity and a growing distaste for the strict, liturgical, and ritual styles employed by the Roman Catholic Church. The popular, metered, and religious tunes that had previously been used for other hymns were now adopted for the psalms, and eventually tunes that had been used for nonreligious singing were even connected with psalms.[40] This, of course, necessitated a change in the words of the psalms, because they were adapted to the tune, rather than the tune adapted to the words. After the words were being altered to fit the meter of the tune, further alteration to create rhyme began, which had not formally existed previously since rhyme is not found in Hebrew poetry of the Bible. These types of tunes can be found

in the popular book *The Bay Psalms Book*, which rendered all 150 psalms into metered tunes with rhyming words.[41]

Two additional trends were reinforced in this shift. First, although harmonies had already been in use for hundreds of years in singing the psalms, the versification of the psalms allowed for greater creativity and diversity in harmonizing by a lay audience rather than just by the choir, because it made the psalms into recognizable tunes that were often repeated several times. Thus harmony in psalm singing became the norm for many Protestant churches while unison singing dropped into greater obscurity. Second, while dynamics had previously been employed to emphasize the meaning of specific words in the text, the importance of dynamics increased in order to focus on beautifully moving music. The usefulness of dynamics in order to understand the meaning of the psalm was not lost, but this understanding now was focused more on the general concepts rather than specific words since the overall message, rather than the individual words, was seen as sacred.[42]

Although there may have been some losses in meaning with these alterations, the memorability of the tunes enhanced the congregation's understanding of the overall meaning of the psalms and allowed these scriptural prayers to be called to mind more readily in times of personal need. Because the tunes were easy to learn, the congregation was able to participate more readily in the unifying process of worship through singing.[43] With the greater liveliness of some of the tunes, the body was inclined to respond with the heart and mind in an emotional, physical response. In this sense, the tunes helped prepare the congregation for connection with the divine. These forms differed from typical forms of speech in regards to the meter, rhythm, and rhyme of the psalms, yet they retained and possibly even enhanced the sense that the singers had entered into sacred time and space and that they were worshipping in orderly forms pleasing to God. The order and organization of a metered hymn mirrored the order and organization found in heaven. In other words, the harmonies bore witness of the natural order that had been restored and was made possible to Christians through the power of the Atonement. The beautiful harmonies gave the sense that the singers were each contributing in their own ways that, in the composite, became a unified plea or witness of God's love and power.[44] The audible wavelengths created by harmony compared with those of voices in unison emphasized the power of unity with God. The increased use of minor keys that resolved at the end of the hymn and leading notes that reached completion

at the end of the hymn mirrored the ritual feeling of a soul in a liminal state moving into a state of aggregation. The dynamics helped raise the soul of the singer into ecstatic or reverent communion with the divine, whichever the setting required. Thus sacred time was still marked by singing psalms, although it was in a different form than had been engaged in previously.

Further adaptations of the psalms have occurred in modern times, as their use outside of liturgical purposes has encouraged their presence outside of traditionally religious settings. Psalms have been adapted for use in the music of both religious and almost completely secular rock groups. A survey of modern usage of Psalm 23 includes such groups and singers as Kanye West ("Jesus Walks"), Coolio ("Gansta's Paradise"), Good Charlotte ("The River"), Notorious B.I.G. and Puff Daddy ("You're Nobody 'til Somebody Kills You"), Alice in Chains ("Sickman"), U2 ("Love Rescue Me"), Pink Floyd ("Sheep"), The Grateful Dead ("Ripple"), Megadeth ("Shadow of Death"), and Peter Tosh ("Jah Guide").[45] While ancient and modern worshippers might be shocked by the broad use in which the psalms are now placed, in another sense the truths taught by the psalms can be dispersed and also function to lift the spirits of those who are not completely prepared to worship in liturgical settings.

Latter-day Saint Use of the Psalms

Although Latter-day Saints often use unmetered, traditional versions of the psalms sung as interludes during their sacrament meetings, their organized use of the psalms in their weekly worship clearly follows the Protestant pattern of metered, rhymed, and altered versions of the Psalms that makes them more accessible to the congregation. The psalms that have been either put to music in the current Latter-day Saint hymnal or are somewhat reflected in the hymns are Psalms 5, 8, 16, 23, 25–33, 36, 37, 43, 47, 48, 55, 62, 68, 69, 73, 82, 84, 86, 87, 90–92, 95, 97–100, 104, 107, 119, 121, 126, 138, 143, and 145–50. Some of these psalmic hymns are traditionally used to open or close the weekly sacrament meeting, such as "We Love Thy House, O God,"[46] "For the Beauty of the Earth,"[47] or "Rejoice, the Lord Is King."[48] Other psalms are connected more closely with the sacred ordinance of the sacrament, such as "Father in Heaven,"[49] or "Precious Savior, Dear Redeemer."[50] The purposes of the psalms and of music is to create a sacred time and space and to bring the soul into communion with God. This can heighten the effectiveness of the hymns in sacrament meeting connecting with the ordinance of the sacrament. Understanding

that the psalms were sung and used anciently for this purpose of connection can increase the likelihood that those who participate can obtain the same goals now.

When Joseph Smith restored the practice of ancient temple worship, weekly Latter-day Saint worship services retained a feeling similar to Protestant worship, focused on preaching the word, singing, and celebrating the sacrament. More involved ritual ordinances were reserved for the holy precincts of the temple, which left behind Protestant practices to restore the temple practices to their proper place. Although temple practices do not include singing psalms today (besides temple dedications, where music is common), the nature of instruction might be considered as similar to singing in many ways: the call and response used in the temple, the physical engagement of the body in the temple ordinances, and the prescribed, orderly nature of these ritual behaviors all serve to mark the entrance into sacred space and time, with the actions marking the movement through the ritual stages of separation, liminality, and aggregation. If Latter-day Saint worshippers were to envision the teaching, actions, and covenant making of temple ordinances as a type of a song of worship that allows them to return to the divine presence and engage in a divine conversation with God, their worship in the setting of the temple could only be enhanced. This was the ancient purpose of the psalms, and it was the ancient purpose of temple worship as well.

Notes

I offer thanks for the excellent research assistance provided by Quinten Barney that made the writing of this article possible.

1. Although this Christ-centered meaning of Psalm 22:16 does not exist in the Masoretic text, it is a correct translation of the Septuagint, and is also found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. See Peter W. Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms*, ed. F. Garcia Martinez and A. S. Van Der Woude, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 17 (New York: Brill, 1997), 88; Shon D. Hopkin, "The Psalm 22:16 Controversy: New Evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls," *BYU Studies* 44, no. 3 (2005): 168.

2. For this viewpoint, which reflects the direction of much modern biblical scholarship, see Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll, *The Psalms of Lament in Mark's Passion : Jesus' Davidic Suffering*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). 3–9.

3. William L. Holladay, *The Psalms Through Three Thousand Years* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 37–39.

4. See, for a few examples, Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), 2:29–31; Svend Holm-Nielsen, "The Importance of Late Jewish Psalmody for the Understanding of the Psalmodic Tradition," *Studia Theologica* 14, no. 1 (1960): 1–53; Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms Part I: With an Introduction to Cultic Poetry* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1988), 108–13; Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1981), 64–79; Margaret Barker, *Temple Themes in Christian Worship* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2008); Laurence Paul Hemming, "With the Voice Together Shall They Sing," *BYU Studies* 50, no. 1 (2011): 25–45; Andrew Wilson-Dickson, *The Story of Christian Music: From Gregorian Chant to Black Gospel*, 1st ed. (Oxford, England: Lion Book, 1992). 20; Holladay, *The Psalms Through Three Thousand Years*: 17–18.

5. Holm-Nielsen, "The Importance of Late Jewish Psalmody for the Understanding of the Psalmodic Tradition," 1–53.

6. The Book of Mormon also indicates a connection between worship and music. Abinadi places singing in the realm of the prophetic office—with imagery that symbolizes union among the community of the prophets—in Mosiah 15:29: "Yea, Lord, thy watchmen shall lift up their voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion." Alma the Younger connects music with forgiveness of sin that, in a Law of Moses setting, would have connected with sacrifices at the temple: "Their souls did expand, and they did sing redeeming love" (Alma 5:9). Mormon connected music with covenant making at the sacred space of the waters of Mormon: "How blessed are they, for they shall sing to his praise forever" (Mosiah 18:30). Moroni demonstrated the importance of music in settings of worship: "For as the power of the Holy Ghost led them whether to preach, or to exhort, or to pray, or to supplicate, or to sing, even so it was done" (Moroni 6:9). In the modern day, the revelations of Joseph Smith have connected prayers with singing, reminiscent of the great Psalm prayers of the Old Testament: "Yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me" (D&C 25:12). Finally, in the Doctrine and Covenants, Abinadi's statement quoted above is connected to the prophetic ability shed forth upon all of God's people in the last days, creating a great community of the righteous: all "shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and shall see eye to eye, and shall lift up their voice, and with the voice together sing this new song" (D&C 84:98).

7. James Limburg, "Psalms, Book of," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:527.

8. Talmud 7:3.

9. Talmud 7:4.

10. Baruch A. Levine, "Leviticus, Book of," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:311–21.

11. In the creation of these categories, we have adapted information from Limburg, "Psalms, Book of," 531–34.

12. Wilson-Dickson, *The Story of Christian Music*: 21.

13. See, for example, Donald Parry, "Temple Worship and a Possible Reference to a Prayer Circle in Psalm 24," *BYU Studies* 32, no. 4 (1992), 57–62.

14. Wilson-Dickson, *The Story of Christian Music*: 21.

15. See *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 64–79.

16. For a description of this three-stage ritual process, see Victor Witter Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969), 94–96.

17. For the ritual nature of the Psalms, see J.M. Powis Smith, "Law and Ritual in the Psalms," *The Journal of Religion* 2, no. 1 (1922): 59–60.

18. Interestingly, the same threefold division can be seen in what is traditionally known as Nephi's psalm. 2 Nephi 4:17–19 details a separation stage, in which Nephi talks of his weaknesses and trials. Verses 20–33, the liminal stage, describe Nephi's memories of how God has helped him in the past, his commitments to increased obedience, and his pleas to the Lord for help. Finally, in the aggregation stage found in verses 34–35, Nephi rejoices in his assurance that God will help him and commits to praise him forever. This threefold separation of Nephi's psalm is reflective of many biblical Psalms and could suggest a temple or sacrificial setting for Nephi's prayer.

19. "Psalm-singing, or more specifically the singing of the daily psalms once used in the Temple, was one of the last elements of Temple worship to be taken up in the synagogue, to judge by its absence from documents of Jewish religious teaching before the sixth century." David Hiley, *Western Plainchant: A Handbook* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 485. See also note 3.

20. Wilson-Dickson, *The Story of Christian Music*: 22.

21. See Eric Werner, *The Sacred Bridge: Liturgical Parallels Between Synagogue and Early Church* (London: Schocken Books, 1970), 24–25.

22. During the morning service, Psalms 30, 100, and 145–50 are all recited (with some variations in different Jewish congregations, such as Reform or Conservative, Sephardic or Ashkenazi), and the Psalm designated by the Talmud for each day of the week (listed above) is also added.

23. For the information in this paragraph, see Holladay, *The Psalms Through Three Thousand Years*, 134–49.

24. Including Psalms 19, 33, 90–93, 98, 103, 121–24, 135, and 136.

25. The Hallel, a group of praise psalms including Psalms 113–18, is said on many of these occasions.

26. For Jewish usage of the Psalms, see Holladay, *The Psalms Through Three Thousand Years*, 48–52.

27. For the information regarding the Eastern Orthodox use of the Psalms found in this paragraph, see John Alexander Lamb, *The Psalms in Christian Worship* (London: Faith Press, 1962), 47–69.

28. For the information regarding the Roman Catholic use of the Psalms found in this paragraph, see Lamb, *The Psalms in Christian Worship*, 80–127.

29. Lamb, *The Psalms in Christian Worship*, 24.

30. Lamb, *The Psalms in Christian Worship*, 139–42.

31. Rowland E. Prothero, *The Psalms in Human Life* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1903), 22.

32. David C. Mitchell, "Resinging the Temple Psalmody," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 36, no. 3 (2012): 355–78. In this fascinating study, Mitchell reviews

the traditional understanding of the *te'amim* in the Masoretic text but proposes that these markings have been completely misunderstood, and they actually reflect an early Jewish notation system for singing the scriptures. Although Mitchell makes interesting arguments in support of his position, he currently stands almost completely alone in this viewpoint.

33. As Thomas Carlyle noted, "All passionate language does of itself become musical—with a finer music than the mere accent; the speech of a man even in zealous anger becomes a chant, a song." Quoted in Bruce Chatwin, *The Songlines* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 302. For discussions on the mental and emotional impact of music discussed here and other places in this paper, see Mantle Hood, *The Ethnomusicologist* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1982), xviii–xiv; Peter Michael Hamel, *Through Music to the Self* (Shaftesbury: Element Books, Ltd., 1986), 89–90; John Ortiz, *The Tao of Music: Music Psychology* (York Beach: Weiser Books, 1997); Suzanne Hanser, *The Music Therapist's Handbook* (St. Louis: Warren H. Green, 1988), 1–12.

34. Wilson-Dickson, *The Story of Christian Music*: 29–34.

35. See note 25.

36. Wilson-Dickson, *The Story of Christian Music*: 30, 35.

37. Winfred Douglas, *Church Music in History and Practice: Studies in the Praise of God*, Hale lectures (New York: C. Scribner's, 1937), 86.

38. Douglas, *Church Music in History and Practice*, 87–89.

39. Karl Kroeger, "Dynamics in Early American Psalmody," *College Music Symposium* 26 (1986): 103.

40. Walterus Truron, "The Rhythm of Metrical-Psalm Tunes," *Music and Letters* 9, no. 1 (1928): 29–33. See also Charles P. St-Onge, "Music, Worship and Martin Luther," (working paper, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN, 2003).

41. Henry Wilder Foote, *Three Centuries of American Hymnody* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1968), 51–54.

42. Kroeger, "Dynamics in Early American Psalmody," 100–03.

43. Kroeger, "Dynamics in Early American Psalmody," 105.

44. Kroeger, "Dynamics in Early American Psalmody," 105.

45. Karl Jacobson, "Through the Pistol Smoke Dimly: Psalm 23 in Contemporary Film and Song," *Society of Biblical Literature Forum*. http://www.sbl-site.org/publications/article.aspx?articleId=796.

46. William Bullock, "We Love Thy House, O God," *Hymns* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), no. 247.

47. Folliott S. Pierpoint, "For the Beauty of the Earth," no. 92.

48. Charles Wesley, "Rejoice, the Lord Is King!" *Hymns*, no. 66.

49. Angus S. Hibbard, "Father in Heaven," *Hymns*, no. 133.

50. H. R. Palmer, "Precious Savior, Dear Redeemer," *Hymns*, no. 103.