

The Metaphor of “Yahweh As Refuge” in the Psalms

Melinda Cousins

Abstract

This article discusses the portrayal of God in the Psalms by metaphor, and in particular the metaphor of refuge. Metaphors have sometimes been seen as purely decorative and therefore their ability to convey meaning questioned. This article begins by discussing what a metaphor is, and how it functions to evoke connections with experience. It then examines the use of metaphors in the Psalms and how they function to reveal God's character by use of concrete images familiar to an ancient Israelite. It also notes the connections between metaphors, and particularly “root-metaphors,” and the invitation of these biblical metaphors to respond to the God whom they reveal. This article then examines the metaphor of refuge in detail by discussing the vocabulary used, and investigates various proposals for the origins of the metaphor. This research leads to the conclusion that connections between the refuge metaphor and the presence of Yahweh amongst his people in the tabernacle/temple are worthy of further consideration. This provides an important contribution to the theology of the Psalter, taking this image out of the realm of subjective, individual experience and locating it more objectively in the covenant presence of Yahweh and his calling upon his people to live with him. Finally, this article concludes with the theological invitation of the metaphor to respond to the God who has so revealed himself.

I. Metaphors

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines metaphor as “the figure of speech in which a name or descriptive term is transferred to some object different from, but analogous to, that to which it is properly applicable.”¹ Therefore, *all* language about God is somewhat metaphorical. By its very nature, it attempts to describe the divine using human words and the supernatural in natural terms.

However, it is usually in poetry that metaphors are explicitly observed. And too often poetic language has been treated as less creditable in terms of conveying meaning and teaching truth. In fact, the converse can be argued: here, language is used in a way which invites us to engage with our imaginations and emotions; to question and ponder; to delight and enjoy. Poetic language is far more than decorative. By its nature it takes the reader on a journey. It is an invitation to understanding and, ultimately, response.

The basic feature of a metaphor is comparison. By juxtaposing a known image with what is being described, a metaphor invites us to deliberate on possible connections between the two. The reader is left the task of discerning which associations are intended and which are not.² Meaning is not obvious; it must be pursued. Metaphors by nature invite reflection and meditation.

¹ *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 676.

² This assumes that meaning resides with the author's intention. More recent reader-response hermeneutical theories would argue that any meaning the reader can gain from the metaphor is legitimate.

Unlike metonymy, where there is an obvious relationship between image and referent, metaphors are clearly not intended to be understood literally.³ However, exactly *how* the image and the referent are related is not always immediately observable. Metaphors cause the reader to examine new possibilities and thereby gain new insights. “[A] metaphor begins with something common and lets it expand into immeasurable glory.”⁴

Metaphors are deliberately evocative. They choose emotional connection over technical accuracy. Landy speaks of the sense of “danger, adventure, and above all play” that metaphors provide.⁵ However, Reese goes too far when he argues that metaphors *prefer* play to truthfulness.⁶ It is better to say that metaphors seek to convey truth by means of this linguistic “play.” Furthermore, if truth is to be *experienced* rather than merely expressed propositionally, metaphors engage with the whole person in a way propositional statements cannot. For the reader to discern this truth there must be a guiding hermeneutical principle which guards against misuse or violation of the metaphor. Here, it is the biblical context, with the understanding that meaning ultimately resides within authorial intention.⁷

There are various types of metaphors, not to mention similes and other rhetorical devices. Landy argues that metaphors for God are subject to “infinite displacement” and thus distinguishes between “propositional” metaphors and “imaginative fiction.”⁸ Others use the terms “root” and “subsidiary” metaphors.⁹ These distinctions may be useful in understanding how the biblical writers use various images to describe God. Reese distinguishes demi-perceptual from perceptual metaphors — those where the characteristics of the image are seen in the referent continuously as opposed to those where they are seen only transiently.¹⁰ This may be helpful for understanding some of the more provocative metaphors for God in the Psalms. For example, God is *always* King, but he is only a “drunken soldier” in a specific action.¹¹

Vos notes that metaphors have often been denigrated by philosophers who see them as useless decoration at best, unsuitable for the expression of truth.¹² In his PhD thesis, Bob Stallman looks in great depth at ancient and modern understandings of metaphor. Perhaps most useful for our purposes is his discussion of the cognitive nature of metaphors. That is, they are not merely ornamental but actually function to convey meaning.¹³ Rather than merely saying “poetically” something already known, metaphors can be used to teach new insights. For the student, the task becomes not just to appreciate metaphor, but to understand and learn

³ See Andy L. Warren-Rothlin, “Body Idioms and the Psalms” in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, ed. David Firth and Philip S. Johnston (Downers Grove: IVP, 2006), 200-201 for a helpful clarification of the differences between metonymy and metaphor.

⁴ Eugene H. Peterson, *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer* (San Francisco: Harper, 1989), 78.

⁵ Francis Landy, *Beauty and the Enigma and Other Essays on the Hebrew Bible* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 312; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 254.

⁶ William L. Reese, “Religious ‘Seeing-as,’” *Religious Studies* 14 (1978): 76, emphasis mine.

⁷ “Ultimately, then, the context for a biblical metaphor is the whole Bible as a discourse. But beyond that observation, there is yet another consideration. If metaphor resists definition, it does so partly because there is a speechact distinction between what a sentence means and what a speaker means.” Bob Stallman, “Divine Hospitality in the Pentateuch: A Metaphorical Perspective on God as Host,” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1999), 36.

⁸ See Landy, *Beauty and the Enigma*, 264-65.

⁹ For example, Stallman.

¹⁰ Reese, “Religious ‘Seeing-as,’” 74.

¹¹ Psalm 78:65.

¹² Cas J. A. Vos, *Theopoetry of the Psalms* (London: T & T Clark International, 2005), 321.

¹³ Stallman, “Divine Hospitality,” 10ff.

from it. For the reader of the Psalms, the task extends to responding to the real expression of the character of God. “The interpretation of a theological model as it surfaces in metaphors throughout the whole of biblical discourse is therefore an exploration into the very real nature of God, especially in relation to human beings.”¹⁴

II. Metaphors in the Psalms

Given that God created all that exists; anything in creation could be used as a metaphor for God in some way. However, in the Bible we find inspired and authoritative pictures based on the historical-redemptive revelation of God to his people. The pictures the Psalmists use reinforce what they have experienced of him, and then lead us into new experience and understanding of his nature. “The God in the psalms is not a God whom we can take for granted. God in psalms is really God, not a creation of our own desires.”¹⁵

Psalmic metaphors connect the sacred and the everyday in a way that invites us to respond. Peterson is correct when he notes that not only do we learn more about God, we learn more about our world by seeing the connections between the everyday elements of a rock or a shepherd and God’s character.¹⁶ “Well-chosen metaphors assert the existence of analogies that God has placed in the world, not merely analogies that we impose on an unformed or chaotic world.”¹⁷

However, the biblical revelation does not come to us in modern Western terminology. The metaphors used are everyday, but everyday to the time and place of ancient Israel. We need to understand the metaphors of the Psalms as they would have been understood then if we are to correctly interpret them. We may even need to bracket out years of traditional applications of the images if they cloud our understanding of their original intent.¹⁸

Importantly in their Ancient Near Eastern context, Psalmic metaphors for God only ever work one-way. While the Hebrew Psalmists maintain that their concrete realities can and do point to God, they are equally insistent that God is not and cannot be represented by these concrete realities. Despite their focus on immanent language, the Psalmists never lose sight of Yahweh’s transcendence.

We also need to note that Hebrew thinkers were more familiar with maintaining multiple pictures, even those that seem logically contradictory, rather than dominated by Western notions of rationality. Witvliet speaks of the different metaphors “correcting” one another,¹⁹ and Stallman of reading them “in concert,”²⁰ as they call us to hold the many different pictures in tension without over-reading their references.

¹⁴ Stallman, “Divine Hospitality,” 62.

¹⁵ Moira O’Sullivan, *God in Psalms*. (Strathfield: St Pauls, 1998), 13.

¹⁶ See Peterson, *Answering God*, 77.

¹⁷ Stallman, “Divine Hospitality,” 88.

¹⁸ See Lawrence S. Cunningham, “Praying the Psalms” *Theology Today* 46 (1989): 43 for a good example of this as he describes the way hundreds of years of church art and teaching on shepherds influence our reading of this biblical metaphor.

¹⁹ John D. Witvliet, *The Biblical Psalms in Christian Worship: A Brief Introduction and Guide to Resources* (Calvin Institute of Christian Worship Liturgical Series; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 18.

²⁰ Stallman, “Divine Hospitality,” 72.

There are some pervasive metaphors in the Psalms which serve to aid our interpretation of other, less common, images. Many have noted that kingship is a root biblical metaphor.²¹ All other metaphors are therefore in some way connected to this one. Another common metaphor for God is that of a warrior,²² and many other metaphors take their imagery from battle contexts. Brueggemann also contends that *yhwh mlk* is a root metaphor; but that this is not so much an expression of what *is* as a declaration of what we are seeking to make so.²³ That is, the purpose of the Psalms is not to convince us of facts; it is to confess faith and elicit this same faith in response.²⁴ The Psalmists’ metaphors for God are never merely descriptive of God simply as He is, but always convey something of who He is in relationship to His people. Thus they seek to impact not only our theoretical conception of God, but our active response to Him.²⁵ The metaphors of the Psalms intend to make statements about what is “truly real,” and even more importantly, what is “theologically compelling.”²⁶ Hustad’s caution is important: “The Psalms were not written to be analysed and discussed. Most of them were intended to express the personal and emotional response of the Hebrews in worship.”²⁷

III. The Refuge Metaphor

“I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” (Psalm 91:2)

The metaphor of Yahweh as a refuge is common and consistent throughout the Psalter. Yet defining what this metaphor means, how it is used, and what it contributes to the Psalter’s theology is not as straightforward a task as it may initially seem.

Jerome Creach’s 1996 work takes a new direction in Psalter studies.²⁸ He advances the recent focus on the shaping of the Psalter a step further. Rather than studying the placement of particular Psalms, he looks at the book’s vocabulary and argues for a theological/thematic shaping based on the use of this metaphor. While his overall thesis depends on an understanding of the editorial process which is beyond the scope of the present discussion, many of his findings are useful for our purposes.

A. Vocabulary

There is a range of terms used to create this metaphor. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the use of a metaphor is not always limited to the specific words used — a common metaphor can be evoked without being explicitly mentioned.²⁹ Nevertheless, vocabulary is important.

²¹ See for example James L. Mays, *The Lord Reigns: A Theological Handbook to the Psalms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 6-7; and James L. Crenshaw, *The Psalms: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 69.

²² Although Marc Brettler, “Images of YHWH the Warrior in Psalms” *Semeia* 61 (1993): 146, sees this as a “sub-metaphor” of Yahweh as king.

²³ Walter Brueggemann, *Israel’s Praise: Doxology against Idolatry and Ideology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 34.

²⁴ See Tremper Longman III, *How to Read the Psalms* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1988), 62.

²⁵ See Marvin E. Tate, “The Interpretation of the Psalms,” *Review and Expositor* 81 (1984): 370-71. See also Dale Patrick, *The Rendering of God in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), xxiii.

²⁶ William P. Brown, *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 2.

²⁷ Donald Hustad, “The Psalms as Worship Expression: Personal and Congregational,” *Review and Expositor* 81 (1984): 407.

²⁸ Jerome F. D. Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement 217.; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

²⁹ See Brettler, “Images of YHWH,” 148, who notes that the warrior metaphor stands behind many of the images in Psalms 56 and 83 despite not being stated.

The most common terms come from the verbal root *hsh*, which is used thirty-seven times.³⁰ The Semitic root, common to Babylonian and neo-Assyrian words, denotes covering or hiding, and Psalm 104:18 is an example of this “secular” meaning. More commonly, the verb is used theologically for the action of seeking refuge in Yahweh; and the noun as a description of him. Creach argues these words have their own particular function in the Psalter. Psalm 11:1 contrasts seeking refuge with merely fleeing to the mountains. Thus it is a positive action, a confident seeking of security rather than a desperate attempt to escape.³¹ This seems to cohere with the idea of seeking the security of the temple, which although never specifically called refuge, is the place from where God protects His people (11:4-7).³²

Given the recent scholarly interest in the shaping of the Psalter, many have not only noted that the first use of *hsh* is found in Psalm 2:12, but seen this as definitive or programmatic for its meaning.³³ However, McCann seems thereby to reduce the idea of taking refuge to a vague, general idea of “trusting” which empties the metaphor of any real cognitive power.

Nominal forms used with *hsh* of Yahweh include *str* and *šl* which are almost interchangeable.³⁴ From the roots *str* and *šl* respectively, they literally denote “hiding place” and “shadow.” Another group of nouns is *mšwd*, *mšgb* and *m'wz*, ultimately derived from roots related to hunting, being high, and being strong. All refer to a place of safety, whether a natural defensive position or a humanly constructed fortification.³⁵ Finally, the synonyms *šwr* and *šl'* denote rocky crags or hideaways which again are places of security.³⁶

There are also verbs which have little semantic connection to *hsh* but are commonly used in conjunction with it, thereby becoming significant. For example, *bth*, which occurs in the Psalter fifty-two times and can simply mean “to believe,” when connected with *hsh* seems to indicate “inner security and trust.” That is, the physical action of taking cover in a refuge becomes the spiritual activity of trusting God in life, which is the character of the ideal believer.³⁷ Creach argues that the action includes the idea of making a decision to choose Yahweh. “‘To seek refuge’ means, at least in part, to recognize that no one or nothing is analogous to the God of Israel.”³⁸

Interestingly, Creach observes that the refuge metaphor is never semantically linked to Yahweh’s historical intervention in Israel’s past, which is usually linked instead to the separate metaphors of deliverer or helper.³⁹ While he does not draw any conclusions from this observation, the argument to be made here is that it is perhaps another indicator that refuge

³⁰ Twenty verbal forms (7:2; 11:1; 16:1; 18:3; 25:20; 31:2; 34:9; 36:8; 37:40; 57:2 (x 2); 61:5 (x 2); 64:11; 71:1; 91:4; 118:8; 118:9; 141:8; 144:2; six participles (2:12; 5:12; 17:7; 18:31 (x 2); 34:23) and eleven nominal forms (14:6 46:2; 61:4; 62:8; 62:9; 71:7; 73:28; 91:2; 91:9; 94:22; 142:16).

³¹ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 26.

³² See the discussion below on the provenance of the metaphor and my suggestion of strong links to the presence of Yahweh in the temple.

³³ See for example Brown, *Seeing the Psalms*, 18 and J. Clinton McCann Jr., *A Theological Introduction to the Book of the Psalms: The Psalms as Torah*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 136-37.

³⁴ Each is used six times (*str* 27:5; 31:23; 32:7; 61:5; 91:1; 119:114 and *šl* 17:8; 36:8; 57:2; 63:8; 91:1; 121:5).

³⁵ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 27.

³⁶ *šwr* is used sixteen times (18:3; 18:32; 19:15; 27:5; 28:1; 31:3; 61:3; 62:3; 62:7; 62:8; 71:3; 73:26; 78:35; 89:27; 92:16; 94:22) and *šl'* four (18:3; 31:4; 42:10; 71:3).

³⁷ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 31-36.

³⁸ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 46-47.

³⁹ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 34.

vocabulary focuses on Yahweh’s ongoing presence with his people rather than his specific actions in history.

B. Provenance

It is one thing to look at the etymology of words themselves, another at the origins of a metaphor. The most common scholarly assumption seems to arise from the connection of “refuge” and “rock” in the Psalter, which are seen to be linked most naturally in the context of battle.⁴⁰ Psalm 91, replete with refuge language, certainly fits this context. Smick further notes that comparative religionists have attempted to tie the language of this Psalm to magical incantations from seventh century Arslan Tash. But he submits the key distinction that God responds to his people and thereby actively becomes their refuge and protection rather than the people merely wearing an amulet in hope that he might be so.⁴¹

Creach investigates further. Based on the fact that the available non-biblical material is almost devoid of this language whereas the Psalms are replete with it, Begrich argued that it arose distinctively in Israel due to the geographical landscape. That is, it refers to natural hiding places in the rocky Palestinian hill country.⁴² Creach agrees with two cautions: that this is an argument from silence; and that there are some Akkadian names which incorporate divine titles like “rock” and “refuge.”⁴³ He does refer to two other possible origins of the metaphor: the temple sanctuary as a place of safety and asylum; and the protection of a mother bird.⁴⁴ Although he acknowledges that there is room for further study in this area, ultimately he dismisses these possibilities. With respect, there may be some subtle implications to these ideas which he has overlooked.⁴⁵

Many scholars have noted the common association of the refuge metaphor with the image of Yahweh’s wings, but most have looked for its significance in either Egyptian iconography where the king is represented as a bird,⁴⁶ or in the Deuteronomy 32:11 picture of Yahweh as a mother eagle.⁴⁷ However, Broyles’ study on the symbolism of the cherubim-ark postulates that the picture of Yahweh’s wings is not merely imaginative, but, like all Psalmic imagery, rooted in liturgy and temple symbolism. He argues convincingly that the picture of Yahweh’s wings for the ancient Israelite would have called to mind the cherubim-ark in the Holy of Holies.⁴⁸ More than merely symbolic, this was the actual place where the physical presence of Yahweh dwelt amongst his people. The idea that it is here that the Israelite worshipper finds true refuge seems to fit extremely well with the theological focus of the Psalter.

⁴⁰ See for example O’Sullivan, *God in Psalms*, 30-31.

⁴¹ Elmer B. Smick, “Mythopoeic Language in the Psalms,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 44 (1982): 94.

⁴² Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 54.

⁴³ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 58.

⁴⁴ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 60.

⁴⁵ To be fair, Creach does mention the idea of wings as an allusion to the ark, but he discusses it purely in the legal context of the temple as a place to which one accused of a crime could flee for judgement. He notes that this confuses Cities of Refuge (*mqft*) with the Psalmic idea of Refuge (*hsh*). While this point is well made, he does not consider the wider idea of the Holy of Holies as the place where the presence of God dwells amongst His people (*Yahweh as Refuge*, 61).

⁴⁶ So Brown, *Seeing the Psalms*, 20.

⁴⁷ For example, Ronald W. Goetsch, “The Lord is my Refuge: Psalm 91,” *Concordia Journal* 9 (1983): 142.

⁴⁸ Craig C. Broyles, “The Psalms and Cult Symbolism: The Case of the Cherubim-Ark,” in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, ed. David Firth and Philip S. Johnston (Downers Grove: IVP, 2005), 152. Contra O’Sullivan, *God in Psalms*, 35, who says the association of wings with angels comes purely from later Christian iconography. This is patently false given the description of the ark in Exodus 25:17-22.

Creach and others see the wings as purely figurative, particularly based on Ruth 2:12 where the application of refuge under Yahweh’s wings is his concern for the poor widow.⁴⁹ However, this could also be read as a reference to the Moabite Ruth coming to Israel, the place where Yahweh dwells amongst his people (in the tabernacle/temple). In fact this view seems to be indicated by the context, where verse 11 specifically refers to Ruth leaving her homeland.

As Crenshaw notes, the refuge metaphor is also explicitly linked to Zion in the Psalms, and it is then given “cosmic nuance” as Zion becomes the place where all nations ultimately come to worship.⁵⁰ Again, the associations with the temple and presence of God dwelling among his people are hard to escape. It is therefore worth considering the possibility that the refuge metaphor arises not from an individual soldier finding a neat hiding place in battle; nor from the subjective experience of an individual feeling Yahweh’s comfort;⁵¹ but from the objective reality that Yahweh dwelt physically and visibly amongst his people.

If kingship is a root metaphor for not only the Psalms, but the whole Scriptures, then the connections between Yahweh as refuge and Yahweh as king are also significant for correct understanding. Creach notes that the semantic field of *hsh* is sometimes used in relation to the human king even though he is never called a refuge. More importantly, the idea of Yahweh as both refuge and king is found in Psalm 9:7-9 and throughout Psalms 46 and 48. Both of these are also linked to Zion. In his discussion of Psalm 91, Goetsch compares the shelter or refuge to the tent of the commander of the army, thereby linking the metaphor to both king and warrior images.⁵² Recalling the symbolic location of the tabernacle at the centre of the camp throughout the wilderness wanderings, it is again hard to escape the links with the visible and actual presence of Yahweh amongst his people.

C. Theological Meaning and Purpose

The refuge metaphor is used across a wide variety of Psalm “types,” which have been the focus of much of modern Psalmic studies. This contributes to our theological understanding by demonstrating that the circumstances of the worshipper, while significant, are neither the starting point nor the conclusion for our understanding of the Psalter. The Psalms seek to provide us with an understanding first and foremost of who God is, and only then who we are in relationship to him.

The general ideas of security, protection and trust are clearly evoked by the refuge metaphor. But this is more than a lovely picture of Yahweh. It functions to convey meaning — to teach us something about the kind of God that he has revealed himself to be. In the context of the Psalms, there are many indications that the refuge metaphor points to an objective reality in Israel’s historical experience — the presence of God dwelling in her midst and all that this implied. The refuge metaphor is thus another way of expressing the fundamental theological truth of God’s covenant with Israel: “I will be your God and you will be my people.”

Having Yahweh as their refuge also serves to make Israel a distinctive people. From Leviticus on, it is clear that in order for Yahweh to dwell amongst them, Israel must be a holy people. In the Psalms, this is shown in that those who make Yahweh their refuge are seen to have a distinctive moral character; they reflect his concern for the poor and oppressed in their own

⁴⁹ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 61.

⁵⁰ Brown, *Seeing the Psalms*, 23.

⁵¹ This certainly seems to be the way most contemporary Christians understand it!

⁵² Goetsch, “The Lord is my Refuge,” 141.

lives. Yahweh as refuge is not merely about personal safety, but about a choice to dwell with him and therefore to live in obedience to him.⁵³ So as Brueggemann emphasises so well, the Psalms are “world-making.”⁵⁴ There is a social dimension to the theology developed by this metaphor. If God is a refuge, then his people who seek to take refuge in Him must similarly be concerned for the poor and the oppressed, and must seek to demonstrate not only righteousness but compassion and generosity.

The picture that emerges from the Psalms is consistent with the entire Hebrew Scriptures, and far deeper than many modern readers imagine when they speak of a “warm fuzzy feeling” of God as their personal refuge. Verhulst speaks of the danger of “de-fanging” God,⁵⁵ and it is easy to do the same to this image. The wide vocabulary of refuge and its associations with temple imagery converge to make it a powerful picture of the holy and righteous God who dwells amongst his people. For the Israelite, this presence is never entered into lightly. The safety and protection that He provides from the enemies and dangers of life come at the cost of risk to one’s own life if his presence is ever taken for granted.⁵⁶

Ultimately, the refuge metaphor as a picture of God is neither individual nor subjective. It speaks more of God’s actual presence amongst his people than of our feelings about it. However, like all good metaphors, the idea of Yahweh as a refuge is also an invitation to respond. The emphasis on refuge is designed to encourage the reader actively to seek Yahweh as such — to choose him as their source of protection and sustenance. Although he objectively is a refuge, the individual worshipper must choose to allow him to be so in their daily life. And so Brueggemann is not wrong to focus on the refuge metaphor connoting the intimacy of personal faith.⁵⁷ The metaphor is made “efficacious” by trusting God.⁵⁸ God *is* a refuge; but He also *becomes* our refuge when we put our trust in him. And so the physical presence of Yahweh amidst Israel in the tabernacle/temple is a demonstration of his desire for an intimate relationship with his people which is hinted at in the Psalms and fully revealed in the coming of his Son.

⁵³ See Brown, *Seeing the Psalms*, 27-28.

⁵⁴ See Brueggemann, *Israel’s Praise*, 11 and 30.

⁵⁵ Kari Jo Verhulst. “The Dangers of De-fanging God,” *Sojourners Online* (1999).

⁵⁶ For example, Achan in Joshua 7 and Uzzah in 2 Samuel 6.

⁵⁷ Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 156. Contra. Cunningham, “Praying the Psalms,” 42, who contrasts metaphors of closeness (e.g. shepherd) with refuge which he calls a “metaphor of distance.”

⁵⁸ Brown, *Seeing the Psalms*, 25.