

## ***Intertextuality in The Book of Psalms: The Death and Coming Back to Life of The Just Man.***

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**ABSTRACT:** This research paper is a study on intertextuality. Its main goal is to test the effectiveness of the methodology of intertextuality when applied to poetic texts of the OT, specifically to a few texts of the book of Psalms. After laying out a few notions on interpretation of words and texts and their openness to metaphorical meaning from the standpoint of semantics and pragmatics, the principles of intertextuality are explained and applied to those texts as means to come up with valid interpretations.

**KEY WORDS:** Intertextuality, intertextual network, meaning, metaphor, interpretation, psalms.

**1. INTRODUCTION.** As readers of the book of Psalms in the 21st century, as soon as we start reading many questions arise: Who is the protagonist of this book? What happens to him? Who is he praying to? The first answer to these questions that comes up to mind is King David, who is in trouble of war against the nations around Israel, and he is praying to YHWH; but, could it be possible that the book of Psalms is talking not only about King David but also someone else? As a matter of fact King David didn't die in battle as the protagonist of the book of Psalm does. Indeed, the protagonist of the book of Psalms is crashed down to the ground (Ps 143,3), his bones are out of joint (Ps 22,14) and he can see them (22,16-17), which contradicts King David's peaceful death in his palace (1 Kings 2,10) due to old age and being unable to stay warm (1 Kings 1,1). If it is possible

that the book of Psalms is talking about someone else, who could it be? What would be a fitting methodology we can use to get to the extended meaning of the book of Psalms? Do texts have an extended meaning? The purpose of this article has to do with the searching and finding of the wider meaning of a few texts of the book of Psalms, which is gained from its placement within the canon of the Bible, as Brown explains<sup>1</sup>, because, indeed, a text acquires “*new meaning from its relationship to other books in that canonical collection*” (Brown 1997:24). Therefore, I will interpret a few texts of the book of Psalms taking into account that those texts are part of the Bible (OT and NT) as a unity. The Bible was shaped as a unity when the canon was closed. As Childs says: “*The reason for insisting on the final form of Scripture lies in the peculiar relationship between text and the people of God which is constitutive of the canon.*”<sup>2</sup> The methodology of intertextuality will be the framework of this research. For now it’s enough to say that intertextuality is the shaping of a text's meaning by another text. How is it possible that a text can shape another text’s meaning? In part, because a text has infinite contextual meanings, as Marcial Morera says<sup>3</sup> and I will explain later. A few concepts about the meaning of words and texts from semantics and pragmatics will be useful to understand it better.

## **2. METAPHORICAL SENSE OF WORDS AND TEXTS.**

*Metaphor* is figurative sense or extended meaning in a given word—or in a text, as I will explain later—. For instance, Isaiah speaks about the servant of God and says: “*He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, / in the shadow of his hand he hid me; / he made me into a polished arrow / and concealed me in his quiver*” (Is 49,2). The servant of God is a sword and an arrow.

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 42.

<sup>2</sup> Brevard Springs Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 75.

<sup>3</sup> Marcial Morera, “*La Palabra como Texto*”, *REVISTA DE FILOLOGÍA*, 23, (2005): 206.

There are two things I would like to point out now about this metaphor; first, the reader will never know who the servant of God is unless he comes up with a valid interpretation of the metaphor; second, this metaphor can be interpreted in many different ways: for instance, the person this text is talking about can be a person that speaks very well; or can be a person that is going to be sent—as arrows are sent in a specific direction—, but that is not happening yet because that arrow is going to be kept. In other words, a metaphor is open to multiple interpretations. An important part of the work of exegesis consists of finding a valid interpretation of this metaphor and to explain why that interpretation is valid, arguing always from biblical text. In order to do so, the scholar has to find a text that describes someone who matches Is 49,2. That text will shape the meaning of Is 49,2. The scholar has to explain the connection between both texts, according to the principles of intertextuality that I will lay out later.

Why are words and texts open to different interpretations? Words and texts are open to different interpretations because they have not only literal, but also figurative meaning. In his article *Understanding Word as a Text*, Marcial Morera speaks (from a semantics perspective) about the infinite referential capacity of both words and texts. Words and texts alike have the capacity to mean infinite concepts (extended meanings), because the connection between words and texts and their meaning is arbitrary (Morera 2005:206). Indeed, I can use any given word and make connections between its main meaning and different realities in such a way that I will come up with new extended meanings for that given word, even if they are not yet registered in the vocabulary. Vocabularies do not register all the possible meanings, only the ones that are coined by their frequent use by the community of speakers. That's how metaphor works. For instance, I can use the word "*drug*" to refer to "my morning coffee" and I can say or write "*my drug is the healthiest thing in the world to the point that sets me free and keeps me going*" and nobody would be surprised when I say or write that in a specific context. Again, as Morera says, words

and texts alike (especially poetic texts) have infinite contextual meanings (Morera 2005:206).

Other authors have explained it in a different way from a pragmatics perspective. Graciela Reyes states that the reader extends the context of the literary text in such a way that he comes up with new implications (even implications not meant by the writer) which explains that a poetic text contains different possible interpretations.<sup>4</sup> This is how poetic texts work. A given poet might write a love song dedicated to someone specific and say something along the following lines: “*the stars of the darkest night and the diamonds of the deepest ocean are nothing compared to your sweet kisses*”. The fact that one century from now someone in love will read those words and feel related to them explains that a new context allows a reader to come up with new interpretations of a given poetic text. That explains that even though Isaiah never met Jesus of Nazareth, he could have written about him. Readers of the NT extend the context of the literary text of the OT and come up with new implications that allow them to get new interpretations never thought of by the authors of the books of the OT. Plus, according to Reyes, texts have an inferential meaning which is different from the meaning of the linguistic signs. The meaning of the linguistic signs comes from the rules of the grammar, whereas the inferential meaning comes from arguments the reader gets from the data of the context (Reyes 2018:175). If a text is poetic, its extended meaning is wider and the reader will need to extend the context in order to make a satisfactory interpretation. Oftentimes, the way the reader extends the context is by means of finding connections between texts. Poetic images of poetic texts are not a proposition which can be evaluated in terms of true or false. Instead, they gain values that can expand or change. When one interprets a poetic image it is not about the meaning; it is about interpretation, and one comes up with a valid interpretation by means of exploring

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<sup>4</sup> Graciela Reyes, *Palabras en Contexto: Pragmática y otras teorías del significado*, (Madrid: Arco/Libros, S.L., 2018), 105.

possibilities which are open and can be reevaluated. A metaphor causes the interpreter to make an imaginative effort of thinking of something as if it were something different and the context here plays an important role (Reyes 2018:253).

I will come back later to these principles. For now, it is enough to keep in mind two things: first, metaphor keeps words and texts open to new interpretations; second, to find connected texts in the Bible will help readers to extend the context and to come up with valid interpretations for the older texts.

### **3. PRINCIPLES OF INTERTEXTUALITY.**

Intertextuality is the shaping of a text's meaning by another text. Before applying intertextuality to a few texts of the book of Psalms it is important to lay out its main principles when applied to the study of the Biblical text:

*—The Bible (like any other book) is one text made of texts and there are different forms of intertextuality in it. Explaining intertextuality in the Bible is part of the work of exegesis, because it helps to come up with a valid interpretation of a given text.*

*—There's intertextuality between texts when they are reasonably connected through reference.*

*—There is implicit reference when a text alludes to other text through ideas. There are three forms of implicit reference: allusion, echo, and dialogical intertextuality.*

**ALLUSION.** In *allusion*, a text refers to other text by means of repeated words that allow us to make the connection between texts. Most scholars agree allusion is intended. For instance, Jl 3,10 alludes to Is 2,4 and Mi 4,3. Being aware of this case of intertextuality is very helpful to come up with a valid interpretation of Joel 3,10. Loader was right when he said:

*“Whatever the final form of the text, we should draw its preceding stages into the equation”<sup>5</sup>.*

**ECHO.** In *echo*, a text contains the same ideas of other text without repetition of words. Most scholars agree *echo* is not intended yet derives from a specific predecessor.<sup>6</sup> For example, Lk 23,46 echoes J1 2,11 and Lk 19,33-38 echoes Zech 9,9.

**DIALOGICAL INTERTEXTUALITY.** There is *dialogical intertextuality* when two texts are telling you the same story with different words. It might happen that different texts repeat the same story with new bias, and that would be enough to consider those texts connected (Loader 2008:396). Therefore, it is not necessary for texts to be considered as connected that they repeat the same words, as Moyise says: *“Intertextual studies suggest that under the right conditions, allusions and echoes might be just as important as explicit quotations for an understanding of a text.”*<sup>7</sup> Indeed, there is a connection between texts when someone writes a new version of an old theme with new words. For instance, according to Cair: *“Wherever the Old Testament says ‘Lion’, read ‘Lamb’”. Wherever the Old Testament speaks of the victory of the Messiah or the overthrow of the enemies of God, we are to remember that the gospel recognizes no other way of achieving these ends than the way of the Cross.*<sup>8</sup> This is what has been named *dialogical intertextuality*. Moyise was right when he said there is *dialogical intertextuality* in the case of the lion and the lamb because both texts deal with the same ideas but they use different images and different words, so both texts suggest two ways of influence: the new text affects the old and the old affects the new (Moyise

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<sup>5</sup> James Alfred Loader, *“Intertextuality in Multi-Layered Texts of the Old Testament”*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament OTE, 21/2, (2008): 395.

<sup>6</sup> Christopher Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians*, (Boston: Brill, 2008), 24.

<sup>7</sup> Steve Moyise, *“Intertextuality and Biblical Studies: A Review”*, VERBUM ET ECCLESIA JRG, 23(2), (2002): 429.

<sup>8</sup> G. B. Caird, *The Revelation of St John the divine*, 2nd Ed, (London: A & C Black, 1984), 75.

2002:424). That two way street of influence between texts is possible because words and texts have the capacity to mean infinite concepts —extended meanings or metaphorical meanings— as we know. As St. Augustine said about the psalms: you get to a better understanding of a given psalm “*by similitudes, not in the proper sense of the words.*”<sup>9</sup>

—*There is explicit reference* when a text quotes previous material using the exact same words (*quotation*). It is a direct reference to another text with an acknowledgement of its composer. This happens in the Bible often when prophets quote other prophets; for instance, Mi 4,3 quotes Is 2,4.

In the following pages I will show an intertextual network of specific texts in the book of Psalms, their openness to a metaphorical meaning, and their connection with texts of the NT. As Kim says: “*If the same patterns and types of discourse are found in texts, then intertextual relations can be posited.*”<sup>10</sup> In the new context of the intertextual network texts both of the OT and the NT will shape each others’ meaning and the reader of the Bible will have access to valid interpretations of them.

#### **4. INTERTEXTUAL NETWORK IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS: THE DEATH AND COMING BACK TO LIFE OF THE JUST MAN.**

A significant number of texts of the book of Psalms are interconnected because either they allude to other texts which often deal with the same theme or they echo the same ideas. That theme is the death and coming back to life of a just man. The fact that these ideas are repeated means that this theme is relevant. Some examples of these forms of intertextuality in the book of Psalms are the following:

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<sup>9</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994), 683.

<sup>10</sup> Doosuk Kim, “*Intertextuality and New Testament Studies*”, *Currents in Biblical Research*, 20(3), (2022): 250.

**4.1. The just man is in trouble surrounded by his enemies and prays to God to be saved.** One of the problems that the protagonist of the book of Psalms faces is that he is surrounded by his enemies (Ps 3,1-2 and Ps 17,12), and his enemies are deadly (Ps 17,9) because they seek his life (Ps 70,2). Indeed, they want to rend him (Ps 7,1-2) because they are evil (Ps 27,3). The metaphor of waters is used to refer to these enemies (Ps 69,1; 88,17; 124,1-5). As a result, the protagonist is groaning (Ps 5,1; 22,1-2) and in distress (Ps 4,1). Nevertheless, the protagonist knows that God is more powerful than his enemies; therefore, he hopes to be saved (Ps 77,16; 93,3-4; 118,10-14). However, as one reads through the psalms one comes to the conclusion that the trouble the protagonist of the book of psalms is dealing with is his own death. The form of intertextuality of these texts is echo.

**4.2. The just man's trouble is his own death.** The protagonist's death is described in different texts which allude to each other or echo each other. There are a few themes related to the protagonist's death.

—*He is surrounded by death:* The cords of death are around him (Ps 18,4-5) and the terrors of death have fallen upon him (Ps 55,4).

—*He is surrounded by the shadow of death and darkness:* he walks through the valley of the shadow of death (Ps 23,4); he is left alone in darkness (Ps 88,18) that comes over him because he is shut in the grave (Ps 88,8). Indeed, he has gone down to the pit, where he is forsaken like the slain that lie in the grave (Ps 88,5) and his soul draws near to Sheol (Ps 88,3), where he is shut in and his eyes grow dim through sorrow (Ps 88,8-9). Before dying he lies awake considering his days like an evening shadow (Ps 102,7) and finally he is gone like a shadow in the evening (Ps 109,23), because he has been crushed to the ground by the enemy and now he sits in darkness like those who are dead (Ps 143,3), and he is very low, in prison (Ps 142,6-7).



—*His life fades gradually*: His life and his spirit fail (Ps 73,26; 143,7) and his spirit faints (Ps 77,3).

—*He feels physical pain in his bones*: He is languishing and his bones and soul are in trouble (Ps 6,2-3); indeed, his bones are out of joint (Ps 22,14) to the point that he can see them (Ps 22,16-17). His bones burn (Ps 102,3), his heart is smitten and withered (Ps 102,4), he is groaning and his bones cleave to his flesh (Ps 102,5); his knees are weak and his body has become gaunt (Ps 109,24); he experiences the the pain of death (Ps 116,3) and he undergoes the strewing of his bones in Sheol, which is splitting of bones and breaking of bones (Ps 141,7).

#### **4.3 The just man hopes for deliverance from death.**

Although the protagonist of the book of Psalms knows he is going to die, he has hope for deliverance from death. A few texts that deal with this idea echo each other: The protagonist of the book of Psalms knows that if he dies he will wake again because the Lord sustains him (Ps 3,5) and at the end he will dwell in safety (Ps 4,8). Besides, the protagonist hopes that he will not remain in Sheol for ever (Ps 16,10), because from there he cannot fulfill his mission of praising God for ever (Ps 6,5 and Ps 30,9); plus, the protagonist knows that God will show him the path of life where he will enjoy with God forever (Ps 16,11), which is why he knows that he will make it to the land of the living (Ps 27,13), where he will walk with the Lord (Ps 116,9) and the Lord will be his portion there (Ps 142,5).

The protagonist experiences real death, but the expectation of being delivered from it by the Lord is always present. As the psalm goes: “*he would have gone to the silence of death had it not been for the Lord.*” (Ps 94,17).

#### **4.4. The just man is delivered from death.**

A few metaphorical expressions in the book of Psalms deal with the passage of the just man from death to life. The form of intertextuality between the following texts is echo:

The protagonist knows that God will redeem him from the realm of death and will take him to be with God (Ps 49,15). Indeed, the protagonist has been delivered from suffering (tears) and death and his feet have stopped stumbling (Ps 116,8); now he has started to walk on a level path (life) (Ps 143,10) as opposed to the path where he was stumbling on (death). He actually gets out of a desolate pit because God has drawn him out of there (Ps 40,2) and his soul has been delivered from Sheol (Ps 86,13). Through fire and water the protagonist is brought to a place of abundance (Ps 66,12).

The same idea is expressed through a different metaphor: the protagonist moves from a snare to freedom. He escaped from the snare (Ps 124,7) and we know that it was God who helped him to escape because he asked for it in prayer (Ps 141,8-10).

There is still another metaphor to express the same idea of passing from death to life: the protagonist moves from sleep to awaken (Ps 3,5 and Ps 17,15). Ps 3,5 refers to that passage to life from death, because in principle you don't need God to wake up in the morning, but you definitely need Him to take you from death to life.

#### **4.5. The just man experiences the contrast between night and day.**

Again, in the context of a metaphor that means death and life, the just man experiences that in the evening his enemies come like dogs to do him harm (Ps 59,14), but he will celebrate in the morning the loving protection of God (Ps 59,16). He is in the shade of the grave (Ps 88,10-11), but in the morning his prayer will come before God (Ps 88,13). He is in darkness, beaten by the enemy (Ps 143,3), but he hopes to see God's steadfast love in the morning (Ps 143,8). The form of intertextuality in this case is echo.

#### **4.6. God saves the just man by means of an upward motion.**

The way God saves the protagonist of the book of Psalms is expressed in different ways, which, however, come down to an upward motion. The explicit references to this upward motion are the following: the protagonist is drawn out of many waters from on high (Ps 18,16). Other texts deal with the same idea, for example, God has saved him from his enemies by drawing him up, by bringing up his soul from Sheol and by restoring him to life from those who were gone down to the Pit (Ps 30,1-3). God is called the upholder of the life of the protagonist (Ps 54,4), and the idea of the protagonist reviving again by being brought up is explicit in Ps 71,20. That upward motion occurs as well in Ps 113,7 where God raises up the poor from the dust, and the needy from the ash to be with the powerful ones. The verb used here is ἐγείρω which means 'to raise'.

There is one implicit reference to this upward motion in Ps 116,6. If the just man was brought low and God saved him, that salvation must have been about bringing him high again. All these texts are connected by echo and a few of them have a metaphorical meaning.

#### **4.7. The protagonist is saved from the waters.**

High waters surround the protagonist (Ps 18,15), but he is drawn out of them from on high (Ps 18,16). Same idea is expressed by Ps 77,19 where God steps on the waters to save his chosen people in the Red Sea. Finally, the chosen people go through fire and water (Ps 66,12). The form of intertextuality of these texts is echo. Finally, it is not by chance that Moses means "I drew him from the waters."

#### **4.8. The protagonist is taken to a broad place.**

He is taken to a broad place (Ps 31,8) and to a spacious place (Ps 66,12) where there is abundance. This spacious place is opposed to the pit, which is a narrow place in which there is dust (Ps 30,9). According to Gen 3,3 and 3,19, "dust" suggests

death, because dying is about going back to the dust. In this biblical context of the word *dust*, “to be taken out of the pit”, where there is dust, is most probably a metaphor meaning “being redeemed from death”. The same idea is expressed by Psalm 18,15-19 where God saves the protagonist and takes him to a broad place as opposed to the narrowness of the underworld of Sheol (Ps 18,5). The form of intertextuality of these texts is echo.

All these texts are interconnected, which points to the fact that the theme these texts deal with is relevant in the book of Psalms. What would be a valid interpretation of the metaphorical meaning of these texts? The next step in the methodology is to find connections with texts of the NT.

## **5. INTERTEXTUAL NETWORK IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT: JESUS OF NAZARETH'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION.**

What's the connection between the texts of the book of Psalms we have been working with so far and the NT? What's exactly the link that allows us to state that they are connected? The form of intertextuality present in the texts I will deal with henceforth is echo. Specific texts of the NT echo the texts of the OT I just went through in paragraph 4 and amplify their context. Understanding that intertextual network will be useful to interpret in a valid way the texts of the book of Psalms which deal with the death and coming back to life of the just man.

### **5.1. The just man is surrounded by death and by people who want him dead.**

The just man the book of Psalms is talking about has been crushed to the ground by the enemy and now he sits in darkness like those who are dead (Ps 143,3). According to commentators, the literal meaning of this line may have to do

with David being pursued by Absalom<sup>11</sup>, but there's also an extended meaning, because words and texts are open to it. It is the openness of texts and words to metaphorical meaning that empowers them to be interpreted in a new way.

There are expressions in the NT which refer to a just man who is being crushed to the ground; for instance, *crucify him!* (Jn 19,6) and similar expressions like Lk 23,21-23; Mk 15,12-15; and Mt 27,22. These texts of the NT echo Ps 143,3.

Another example of intertextuality is the following: The just man says in Ps 3,1-2: "*many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him"*" (Ps 3,1-2). There are expressions in the NT which refer to a just man who seemed not to be saved by God when he was in trouble like "*the rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him"*" (Mt 27,49) and other similar expressions: Mk 15,31; Lk 23,35. These texts of the NT echo Ps 3,1-2.

Therefore, texts of the NT give the reader of the Bible new context which allows him to come up with new and valid interpretations of the metaphors contained in the texts of the book of Psalms, because both texts are connected.

## **5.2. The just man's life comes gradually to a close.**

In the book of Psalms we find expressions like *my flesh and my heart may fail* and *my spirit fails* (Ps 73,26; 143,7) and *my spirit faints* (Ps 77,3) which are the expressions of the just man sensing his death coming, and as a consequence he stretches out his hand to God in prayer.<sup>12</sup> However, those expressions are

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<sup>11</sup> *The Navarre Bible: The Psalms and the Song of Solomon*, (New York: Scepter Publishers Inc., 2005), 458.

<sup>12</sup> R. E. Brown, J. A. Fitzmayer, and R. E. Murphy, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1991), 539.

open to new interpretations due to their openness to metaphorical meaning. A valid interpretation of that metaphorical meaning is given to us in the NT. Indeed, Jesus faints (Mt 27,34.48; Mk 15,35-36) and as his life fails he says “*I thirst*” (Jn 19,28). Again, a few texts in the book of Psalms are telling us the story of a just man who suffers and dies and a few texts of the NT echo that story and shape the meaning of the texts of the OT.

### **5.3. The just man feels physical pain.**

There’s a very painful event in the NT: Jesus’ crucifixion. Texts like Mt 27,35; Mk 15,24; Lk 23,33; and Jn 19,18 deal with the suffering and death by crucifixion of a just man named Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore, these texts are useful for the reader of the Bible to come up with a valid interpretation of the metaphorical meaning of lines in the book of Psalms like *all my bones are out of joint* (Ps 22,14). All these texts deal with the same theme: the punishment of the just man. The ones of the NT play a twofold role: first, they echo the ones of the OT; and, second, they provide new context to interpret in a new and valid way the ones of the OT. As I mentioned before, the reader expands the context of the text of the OT by making the connection with the text of the NT and comes up with new interpretations not even meant by the writer, but valid enough based on the text provided by the writer (Reyes 2018:105).

The same methodology I used to interpret Ps 22,14 applies to expressions like “*I can count all my bones*” (Ps 22,17). Here it is how it works: Jn 19,1-3; and Jn 19,34 echo Ps 22,17 and provide context to make it possible for the reader to come up with a new and valid interpretation of the metaphorical meaning of Ps 22,17.

### **5.4. The just man gets out of the pit.**

According to Matthew, the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life, and after Jesus’ resurrection they went

to Jerusalem, and appeared to many people (Mt 27,51-53). The form ἠγέρθησαν of the verb ἐγείρω is used by Matthew to refer to the resurrection of the bodies of saints in Mt 27,52. Forms of the same verb are used in Ps 113,7 meaning an upward motion from dust (being nothing, being poor) to life (to sit with princes). The form of intertextuality here is echo. Plus, the use of this verb in Ps 113,7 has a metaphorical meaning: in that psalm the poor man is raised to be with princes. Mt 27,52 is connected to and expands the context of Ps 113,7 and allows the reader to come up with a new valid interpretation of that line of the book of Psalms. Finally, the upward motion of the verb ἐγείρω in Mt 27,52 has to do with that passing from the dust of death to the eternal life that Jesus experienced. I will come back to these ideas later when I deal with the theme “*the upward motion*”.

### **5.5. The just man escapes from the snare.**

In Ps 124,7 the snare where the just man was trapped in is broken and in Ps 141,8-10 he prays to pass by the snares laid out by his enemies in safety. What would be a valid interpretation of these texts with metaphorical meaning? What's a valid interpretation of the metaphorical meaning of the word *snare* in this context? There are texts in the NT that refer to a just man trapped in the snare laid out by his enemies, and at a certain point the snare is broken so that the just man is not inside anymore (Mt 28,2; Mk 16,14; Lk 24,2; Jn 20,1). It is not a temerity to state that these texts of the NT echo Ps 124,7 and 141,8-10 and expand their context. Once and again, these texts of the NT shape the meaning of those texts of the OT.

### **5.6. The just man experiences a contrast between the day and the night.**

Ps 59,14:16 deals with the suffering of the just man who is persecuted by his enemies in the evening but hopes to be set free from them in the morning. Ps 143,3:8 brings up again the contrast between darkness (when the just man is defeated) and the light of the morning (when he will get the word of God's

unfailing love). According to commentators, morning is the moment of the day when divine help unfolds (Brown 1991:551). There are texts in the NT that echo this contrast the psalms deal with. According to Matthew from noon until three in the afternoon there was darkness over the land (Mt 27,45) and it was dawn when the women went to the tomb to see that it was empty (Mt 28,1). There are similar records in the gospel according to Mark (Mk 15,33 and Mk 16,2) and in the gospel according to Luke (Lk 23,44 and Lk 24,1). As an exception, the gospel according to John mentions that it was dark when the women went to the tomb (Jn 20,1) and he doesn't say anything about the darkness during the passion of the Lord. What happens between this darkness and this light is Jesus' passing from death to eternal life. These texts of the NT echo Ps 59,14:16 and Ps 143,3:8; expand their context, and allow the reader to interpret them in a new and valid way.

### **5.7. The just man experiences an upward motion.**

In the book of Psalms the phrasal verbs *draw up* (Ps 30,1) and *bring up* (Ps 30,3) suggest that there is an upward motion which saves the just man from death. These phrasal verbs have a metaphorical meaning of "restoring someone to life" after experiencing that "upward motion" as Psalm 30 states in verse 3: "*You, Lord, brought me up from the realm of the dead.*" The phrasal verb *bring up* has the metaphorical meaning of "reviving" in Ps 71,20. Moreover, God is called the upholder of the life of the protagonist of the book of Psalms (Ps 54,4). Lastly, the form ἐγείρω of the verb ἐγείρω meaning "raise" occurs in Ps 113,7, which is connected to Ps 113,4. According to commentators, Ps 113,4:7 deals with YHWH's elevation of the just man from ashes to be with princes (Brown 1991:546). What would be a valid interpretation of that metaphor?

According to *The Online Greek Bible*, ἐγείρω means "to arouse, cause to rise". Extended meanings of this verb are "to arouse from sleep, to awake"; "to arouse from the sleep of death, to recall the dead to life"; "to cause to rise from a seat or bed etc.";



“to raise up, produce, cause to appear”; “to bring before the public”; “to raise up i.e. cause to be born”; and “of buildings, to raise up, construct, erect”. Most of these meanings come down to the idea of “experiencing an upward motion” which is the way the NT refers to the resurrection of the Lord by using forms of the verb ἐγείρω: ἠγέρθη (Mt 28,6; Mk 16,6; Lk 24,6); ἐγερθήσεται (Mt 20,19); and ἐγερθῆναι (Mt 16,21).

On one occasion St. Mark uses the term ἀναστῆναι (Mk 8,31) which is a form of the verb ἀνίστημι that means “to cause to rise up”, “raise up”. According to *The Online Greek Bible*, a few extended meanings of this verb are “raise up from laying down”; “to raise up from the dead”; “to cause to be born”; “to cause to appear”; “bring forward”; “to rise”, “stand up”. Again, most of the meanings of this verb come down to the idea of “experiencing an upward motion” which is the way the Mark refers to the resurrection of the Lord.

St John uses the form ἀναβέβηκα of the verb ἀναβαίνω, that means “ascend” in Jn 20,17. According to *The Online Greek Bible*, extended meanings of this verb are “to go up”; “to rise”; “mount”; “be borne up”; “spring up”. All these meanings share the idea of “experiencing an upward motion”.

Therefore, it is not a temerity to say that the “upward motion” that is present in the book of Psalms (for instance, 30,1:3 and 113,4:7) to refer to the protagonist’s coming back to life is connected with the “upward motion” from the tomb to a broad place experienced by the Lord which we read about in the NT. A significant number of forms of the verb ἐγείρω in the NT echo, expand the context, and shape the meaning of texts like Ps 30,1:3 and probably Ps 113,4:7 (and others I mentioned in paragraph 4.6) and allow the reader of the book of Psalms to come up with new and valid interpretations.

## 5.8. The just man is taken to a broad place.

The word οὐρανόν is used in the NT to refer to the broad place where the Lord was taken up on his ascension (Lk 24,51 and Acts 1,10). According to *The Online Greek Bible*, οὐρανόν means “sky”, “the region above the sidereal heavens”, “the seat of order of things eternal and consummately perfect where God dwells and other heavenly beings”. Lk 24,51 and Acts 1,10 echo texts like Ps 31,8; 18,19; 66,12; expand their context, and allow the reader of the book of Psalms to come up with new and valid interpretations.

**6. CONCLUSIONS.** A few conclusions can be drawn after having applied the methodology of intertextuality to a few texts of the book of Psalms:

- For someone who read the book of Psalms when it was written, those poetic texts deal with the suffering of a just man and his coming back to life after suffering all sorts of problems including death. However, for us readers in the 21st century it is not obvious that these poems refer only to King David, although King David’s sufferings most probably were present in the poet’s back mind (as a matter of fact, 68 psalms are assumed to have been written by King David.)<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, it could be that they refer to any just man, because a poetic text is open to infinite interpretations, and because poetic texts can make sense in infinite contexts.
- A relevant number of psalms make sense in the context of the narrative of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth which we find in the NT. I found 45 psalms that make sense in that context and I commented on them along this paper, specifically in paragraf 4 and 5.
- The reason why those psalms make sense in the context of the narrative of the passion, death, and resurrection of the

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<sup>13</sup> Daniel A. Murray et al., *Every Catholic’s Guide to the Sacred Scriptures* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990), 161.

Lord is because those texts of the OT and the NT are connected. I have tried to prove the connection of those texts applying intertextuality.

- The benefits of applying the methodology of intertextuality are the following: first, it proves an existing connection between texts; second, it helps to build up an intertextual network, which expands the context of texts that seem to be not related to each other, but they are; and finally, it allows readers to come up with new and valid interpretations of the interconnected texts.
- These new and valid interpretations find solid grounds in the principles of intertextuality, semantics, and pragmatics.
- It is a valid interpretation to say that approximately 45 psalms tell the same story of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. 45 psalms and a few texts of the NT are telling the same story in different ways. When I say that the book of Psalms is telling us the story of the passion, death, and resurrection of the Lord, I am talking about a possible interpretation of the book of Psalms, not intended by the author, but grounded in intertextuality, semantics, and pragmatics.
- It is not a temerity to say that there is a form of *dialogical intertextuality* between 45 psalms and the narrative of the passion, death, and resurrection of the Lord. Wherever the book of Psalms talks about the death and coming back to life of the just man, interpret the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
- It is not a temerity to say that there are already in Holy Scripture micro-studies of intertextuality. For instance, St. Peter said—and he was right—that Ps 16,8-11 refers to the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2,25-31).

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