

Divine Warrior Imagery in Ex 14:24-28, Josh 10:10-12 and Psalm 18:12-15: A Cognitive Linguistic Approach

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The conceptualisation of YHWH as a warrior has received quite some scholarly attention (Frederiksson 1945; Cross 1973; Miller 1975; Kang 1989). Recently, Martin Klingbeil has made several new contributions to the study of this metaphorical conceptualisation (1999; 2009; 2010). He briefly noticed that the Divine Warrior imagery is conceptually more complicated in a number of pericopes (so in Ex 14:24-28; Josh 10:10-12 and Ps 18:12-15) than the aforementioned scholars initially thought, i.e. the 'divine warrior metaphor' is combined with the 'God of Heaven' imagery in which YHWH functions either as a weather-god or sun-god and that it is extremely difficult to differentiate between both metaphors (Klingbeil 1999:304). In the present paper, I will turn to these texts to analyze this combination of mental images more deeply by paying attention to underlying cognitive mechanisms.

Informed by the model of 'Conceptual Blending' (Fauconnier & Turner 2003) – a cognitive approach to metaphor that analyses how daily conventional language is often determined by a combination of mental images - I will demonstrate that an amalgamation or 'blend' of mental images can be discerned in these texts. The cognitive conception that YHWH controls all natural phenomena, thus functioning as a weather or storm god, is combined with the YHWH IS A WARRIOR metaphor. The conceptual field of war (input space 1) is thus merged with the mental image of YHWH as storm-god (input space 2), resulting in a blended space in which YHWH fights Israel's enemies by thundering, lightening and throwing hailstones from heaven. A comparative study will subsequently show that this conceptualization of God is not typically Israelite, as we find the same blended image in various ANE texts from the first and second millennium BCE.