Regarding Storm Theophany Imagery in the Psalms
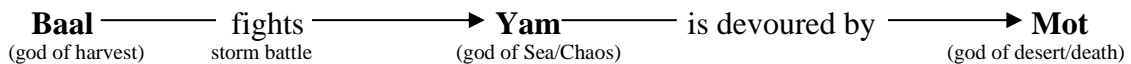
Ancient Canaanites Mythology

Rains provide Life in the Desert

      Baal – god of rain (therefore, god of harvest, life & fertility)
          (manifested in lightning/thunder/shaking of the earth)
      Yam – god of the sea/abyss (therefore, god of darkness & chaos)
          (manifested in leviathan/sea serpent ***Rahab***/*Lotan*)
      Mot – god of desert (therefore, god of death)

Baal ⟶ fights ⟶ **Yam** — is devoured by ⟶ **Mot**
(god of harvest)   storm battle   (god of Sea/Chaos)   (god of desert/death)

- Storm comes over the sea who fights to keep it back – Yam fights Baal
- Storm comes ashore and provides the rain – Baal is declared king.
- Banquet is declared – Spring harvest
- Storm is swallowed by the desert as it moves further eastward – Mot swallows Baal
  (Cycle repeats itself in a cyclical view of the cosmos)
  *See also **1 Kgs 17-18** – Elijah preaches against the cult of Baal*

Yahweh replaces Canaanite gods after occupation of the Promised Land

Yahweh ⟶ fights ⟶ **Chaos** — *devours* ⟶ **Death**
       storm theophany

- Yahweh rides in on the clouds (See Psalms 18 & 29).
- Conquers the sea bringing order to chaos
- Banquet is declared celebrating victory over enemies – See Isa 25:6-9
- Yahweh, unlike Baal, swallows death – is not swallowed by death.
  (Early apocalyptic prophecy portrays God's ultimate victory over death; no cyclical pattern – See Isa 25:8)

_____

Psalm #18 – Panel I (*vv. 5-20*) vs. Panel II (*vv. 30, 33-46*)

1st {
I – Generic description of enemies; action and description is very connected
II – No identification of enemies

2nd {
I – Threatened by an enemy; more powerful enemy; agent of death
II – the enemy is fleeing; no longer intimidating

3rd {
I – God listens and Saves
II – **v. 42** Enemies cry to the Lord, not to their gods, but to YHWH.
    The Lord does not save them, will not listen.

4th {
I – Enemy is the aggressor; David is the object of persecution
II – David takes the initiative toward the enemy

5th {
I – God is described audaciously – subliminal glimpses; behind a cloud, veiled
II – Conventional description of God – shield, right hand, etc.