

# **Dr. David Emanuel, Exodus Psalms, Session 1, Introduction, Psalm 136 Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

## **1. Abstract of Emanuel, Psalms, Session 1, Introduction, Psalm 136, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

This excerpt is from the first session of Dr. David Emanuel's lectures on Exodus motifs in the Psalms. He argues that the Exodus is the Bible's most dominant tradition, influencing texts from Genesis to Revelation. The lecture focuses on six Psalms (7, 78, 105, 106, 135, and 136), analyzing their structure, purpose, and poetic features, particularly in relation to the Exodus narrative. Dr. Emanuel examines how the Psalmists selected and adapted elements of the Exodus story to convey their theological points, emphasizing the role of God as a warrior king. The analysis of Psalm 136, a short antiphonal hymn, serves as a case study for this approach.

**2. 12 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Emanuel, Session 1 – Double click icon to play in Windows  
media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and  
click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Psalms &  
Wisdom → Psalms).**



**Emanuel\_ExPss\_Ses  
sion01.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Emanuel, Exodus Psalms, Session 1, Introduction, Psalm 136

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, Dr. David Emanuel's lecture on Psalm 136 and the Exodus motif in the Psalms:

#### **Briefing Document: Dr. David Emanuel on Psalm 136 and the Exodus Motif**

##### **Introduction:**

Dr. David Emanuel, a scholar with a background in computer science and extensive biblical study at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, introduces his lecture series on the Exodus motif within the Psalms. His central premise is that the Exodus motif is the *most dominant* influence in the entire Bible, extending from Genesis to Revelation. This series focuses on analyzing how this motif is expressed in select Psalms, aiming to provide a deeper understanding of the texts through the lens of the Exodus narrative.

##### **Key Themes and Ideas:**

##### **1. The Dominance of the Exodus Motif:**

- Emanuel argues that the Exodus is the "most dominant motif in the whole of the Bible," a conclusion he reached through extensive study of both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament.
- He originally expressed this with "English reserve" as "one of the most dominant motifs," but his advisor corrected it to "the most dominant motif," solidifying his conviction.
- The Exodus motif isn't confined to the book of Exodus, but permeates the entire Bible, including the Psalms, Genesis, and Revelation.

##### **1. Cross-Genre Application of the Exodus Motif:**

- The Exodus motif is not limited to a single genre of Psalms (e.g., laments, praise, thanksgiving) but is present across multiple genres.
- While there are small mentions of the Exodus in Psalms 66, 77, 95, 114 and even echoes in Psalm 23, the core focus of this series will be on Psalms 7, 78, 105, 106, 135, and 136.

## 1. Methodology for Analyzing Psalms:

- For each psalm, Emanuel will provide:
- **An Outline:** A basic overview of the psalm's content to create a "roadmap."
- **Purpose:** The reason why the psalm was written and what the psalmist was trying to achieve with his selection of elements from the Exodus motif. This helps understand why certain elements are highlighted or neglected.
- **Connections to the Exodus Motif:** Analysis of the connections between the psalm and specific passages in Exodus and Numbers and other relevant texts.
- **Notable Omissions:** Identification of key elements from the Exodus narrative that are ignored in a particular psalm and discussion of why.
- **Poetics:** Exploration of the poetic features, such as emphatic structures and terraced patterns, in order to challenge previous criticisms of the narrative aspects of the Psalms.
- **Reuse and Interpretation:** An investigation of instances where the Psalmist's sources don't align perfectly with the final text. Examination of how and why the Psalmist might alter the original sources.
- He will primarily use the NASB translation but will sometimes adapt texts to better reflect the original Hebrew poetics and meaning.

## 1. Defining the Exodus Motif:

- The Exodus motif is composed of key elements:
- The move from a clan to a people, starting with Jacob's family going to Egypt and then multiplying.
- Deliverance from slavery through plagues (particularly the death of the firstborn).
- The miraculous sea crossing.
- Provision in the wilderness (water, manna, quail).
- Sin and rebellion in the wilderness.
- The giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai.
- Initial conquest of Transjordanian territories (Og, king of Bashan, and Sihon, king of the Amorites).

## 1. Analysis of Psalm 136:

- **Liturgical Antiphonal Hymn:** Psalm 136 is a liturgical hymn with an antiphonal structure. A leader recites a verse, followed by the congregation's refrain: "ki leolam hazdo" ("for his love is everlasting").
- **Non-Organic Response:** There's a scholarly debate on whether the response, "ki leolam hazdo" is original to the psalm, or added later for liturgical purposes. Evidence includes a copy of Psalm 145 from Qumran with an antiphonal response.
- **God as Warrior:** The psalm primarily portrays God as a warrior, fighting for Israel and defeating other kings. This is the core theme the Psalmist has adopted from the Exodus.
- **Structure:**Introductory praise (verses 1-3).
- God's work in creation (verses 4-9).
- God's work in the Exodus:
- Deliverance from Egypt (including striking the firstborn)
- Defeat of the Transjordanian kings.
- Praise summary (verses 23-26)

## 1. Specific Insights on Psalm 136:

- **Key Words:** The phrase "Hodula Adonai" is repeated, marking the beginning of a new idea within the text. The word "Hesed," (grace, mercy, covenant love) is explained as being difficult to translate but a key concept. Elohim (God) is also explored, noting its usage for both the God of Israel as well as other deities. "Niflaot" and "Gedolot" (wonders or miracles) are described as things only God can do, which are often connected with the Exodus.
- **Allusion to Deuteronomy:** There appears to be a textual borrowing between Deuteronomy 10:17 and Psalm 136, reinforcing the idea that biblical authors were influenced by other texts.
- **Miracles and Divine Agency:** The ancients did not have the modern concept of "Mother Nature." Miracles, to them, were direct acts of God, the only agent of creation and sustenance.

- **Terraced Pattern:** The psalm uses a terraced poetic pattern (A, B, B, C), where an element (B) is repeated for emphasis and impact. However, the inclusion of the “ki leolam hazdo” refrain disrupts this pattern, providing additional evidence that this phrase was a later addition to the Psalm.
- **Limited Plague Detail:** The psalm abbreviates the plagues, highlighting the death of the firstborn, but not detailing the other plagues. The focus is on God’s smiting of Pharaoh.
- **Emphasis on God’s Actions:** The psalm emphasizes God's actions and power, rather than the actions or experiences of the Israelites. Israel is portrayed as passive, wholly dependent on God for deliverance.
- **Transjordanian Conquest:** The Psalmist focuses on the Transjordanian conquest, potentially because of the structure of the Torah, which at the time was seen as a set of canonical texts.
- **Specificity in Creation:** Unlike the Genesis account, the psalm explicitly mentions the sun and the moon as being created by God.
- **Limited Allusions:** Psalm 136 does not have as many direct allusions to specific places in the Exodus narrative as other Psalms may have.
- **Chronological Flexibility:** The chronological order of the Exodus events is not always maintained, as poetic and thematic needs take precedence over an accurate linear timeline.
- **Qualification of God's Love:** The "everlasting love" (ki leolam hasdo) is implied to be directed primarily toward Israel, not all peoples (especially not the Egyptians).

#### 1. Juxtaposition of Exodus Psalms:

- There's a pattern of clustering Exodus Psalms, suggesting a deliberate effort by editors of the Psalter. This could have been based on the principle of association, where Psalms were grouped based on content, keywords, and thematic connections.
- Examples include Psalms 77 and 78, 105 and 106, and 135 and 136.

#### Summary of Psalm 136:

- Portrays God as a warrior king.
- Has a clear liturgical purpose, most likely used during Passover.

- Depicts Israel as completely passive recipients of God's actions.
- Contains general rather than specific references to the Exodus narrative.
- Reorders certain events to suit a poetic or thematic purpose.
- Implies that God's loving-kindness is reserved for Israel.

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Emanuel's initial lecture provides a strong foundation for understanding the importance of the Exodus motif throughout the Bible. He establishes his methodology and sets the stage for a detailed examination of the selected Psalms. The analysis of Psalm 136 exemplifies how the Exodus story can be utilized in a liturgical setting to emphasize God's power, faithfulness to Israel, and enduring love. His presentation underscores the significance of considering the historical and literary context when interpreting biblical texts.

## 4. Study Guide: Emanuel, Exodus Psalms, Session 1, Introduction, Psalm 136

### Exodus Motif in the Psalms: A Study Guide

#### Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is the Exodus motif and why does Dr. Emanuel consider it significant in the Bible?
2. What does it mean for the Exodus motif to be "cross-genre" in the Psalms? Give an example.
3. What are the five specific Psalms that Dr. Emanuel will focus on in his lecture series regarding the Exodus motif?
4. What are some of the key elements of the Exodus motif that may be notably omitted in certain Psalms?
5. What is the meaning of *hesed* and why is it important for understanding Psalm 136?
6. Why does Dr. Emanuel believe there is a potential allusion between Deuteronomy 10:17 and Psalm 136?
7. How did the ancient understanding of "miracles" (*niflaot*) differ from the modern understanding?
8. In Psalm 136, what evidence suggests that God is portrayed as a warrior?
9. What is an "antiphonal hymn" and how does Psalm 136 exemplify this structure?
10. What is the significance of the juxtaposition (placement side-by-side) of Exodus Psalms in the Psalter?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. The Exodus motif refers to the story of the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt, their journey through the wilderness, and the giving of the Torah. Dr. Emanuel considers it significant because he believes it is the most dominant and influential tradition in the whole of the Bible, reflected in numerous texts from Genesis to Revelation.
2. Being "cross-genre" means the Exodus motif isn't confined to one specific type of Psalm, such as laments or hymns of thanksgiving, but appears across various genres. This means the themes of Exodus can be found in different types of songs, expressing different emotions and purposes.
3. Dr. Emanuel focuses on Psalms 7, 78, 105, 106, 135, and 136.
4. Key elements that might be omitted include the plagues (aside from the death of the firstborn), specific details of the wilderness wanderings, and the giving of the Torah.
5. *Hesed* is a Hebrew word that encompasses grace, mercy, and covenant love, and it describes God's enduring faithfulness and kindness, a love and loyalty God extends to those in covenant.

relationship with Him. The phrase *ki leolam hasdo*, "for his love is everlasting," is a refrain that echoes God's constant grace and mercy.

6. The similar wording in both texts, specifically regarding the "God of gods and Lord of lords," suggests a conscious or unconscious borrowing of phrases. This is a common practice in biblical literature where authors draw upon existing texts to enrich their own writings.
7. Ancient people believed that God maintained his creation, so when someone was healed, it was God who was doing the work of healing. Today, many think that nature is in charge of healing the body.
8. God is described as smiting the Egyptians, dividing the sea, and defeating the Transjordanian kings, Og and Sihon. This portrayal emphasizes God's power and his active role in fighting for Israel's deliverance and establishing their land.
9. An antiphonal hymn involves a call-and-response structure, with a leader reciting a verse and the congregation responding with a refrain. In Psalm 136, each verse recounting God's acts is followed by the refrain, "for his love is everlasting."
10. The juxtaposition of Exodus Psalms suggests a deliberate editorial effort to group similar themes and content together. It is based on the principle of association, where related material is intentionally placed side-by-side to create a cohesive narrative or thematic unit.

## Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of the Exodus motif as the "most dominant" tradition in the Bible, according to Dr. Emanuel, providing examples from the source material.
2. Analyze Psalm 136 as an example of an antiphonal hymn, exploring the potential origins and impact of the recurring refrain, "for his love is everlasting."
3. Compare and contrast the ancient and modern understandings of miracles, as explained by Dr. Emanuel, and how this impacts our interpretation of the Exodus narrative in the Psalms.
4. Examine the portrayal of God in Psalm 136 as a warrior king, and discuss how this imagery is used to convey God's relationship with Israel during the Exodus.
5. Explain the concept of scriptural borrowing and allusion in biblical literature, using examples from Psalm 136 and Deuteronomy 10:17, and discuss its significance for interpreting the Psalms.



## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Antiphonal Hymn:** A song or hymn sung in a call-and-response manner, where a leader or choir sings a verse, and the congregation responds with a refrain.
- **Cross-Genre:** The presence of a motif or theme across multiple literary genres, not confined to a single type.
- **Editorial Activity:** The intentional arrangement and organization of texts by editors or redactors, often based on thematic or content connections.
- **Elohim:** A Hebrew word meaning "gods" or "God," often used to refer to the God of Israel, but also sometimes used to describe other deities or celestial beings.
- **Exodus Motif:** The narrative of the Israelites' deliverance from slavery in Egypt, their journey through the wilderness, and the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai.
- **Hesed:** A Hebrew word encompassing grace, mercy, and covenant love. It describes God's enduring faithfulness and kindness.
- **Juxtaposition:** The placement of two or more things side-by-side, often to highlight a contrast or connection.
- **Ki leolam hasdo:** A Hebrew phrase meaning "for his love is everlasting," often used as a refrain in liturgical contexts.
- **Motif:** A recurring theme, idea, or element in a literary work.
- **Niflaot:** A Hebrew word meaning "miracles" or "wonders," referring to acts that are beyond human capability and attributed to God.
- **Principle of Association:** The idea that texts or ideas are grouped together based on shared themes, keywords, or content.
- **Psalter:** The book of Psalms in the Hebrew Bible.
- **Scriptural Borrowing:** The practice of biblical authors drawing upon and incorporating phrases, ideas, or narratives from existing texts into their own writings.
- **Terraced Pattern:** A poetic structure where an element is repeated for emphasis.
- **Transjordanian Regions:** The territories east of the Jordan River, including the lands of Og, king of Bashan, and Sihon, king of the Amorites.

## 5. FAQs on Emanuel, Exodus Psalms, Session 1, Introduction, Psalm 136, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### FAQ on the Exodus Motif in the Psalms (Based on Dr. Emanuel's Lecture)

#### 1. What is the Exodus motif, and why is it significant in the Bible?

The Exodus motif refers to the story of the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt, their journey through the wilderness, and the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, culminating in the initial conquest of Transjordanian territories. Dr. Emanuel argues that the Exodus motif is one of the most, if not *the* most, dominant and influential traditions in the entire Bible, appearing in texts from Genesis to Revelation. It serves as a foundational narrative for understanding God's relationship with his people, his power to deliver them from oppression, and the covenant relationship established through the giving of the Law.

#### 2. Which Psalms will be the primary focus of this lecture series, and what is the approach to analyzing them?

The lecture series will primarily focus on Psalms 78, 105, 106, 135, and 136. The approach to analyzing each Psalm involves: (1) providing an outline of the Psalm's content, (2) determining the purpose of the Psalm (why it was written), (3) examining the Psalm's connections to the Exodus motif (particularly in Exodus and Numbers), (4) identifying notable omissions from the Exodus story, (5) exploring the Psalm's poetic features and emphatic structures, and (6) analyzing the interpretation and reuse of source material by the Psalmist.

#### 3. What are some key elements or components that make up the Exodus motif according to the lecture?

The key components of the Exodus motif include: the move from clan to nation in Egypt, the deliverance from slavery (including the plagues), the miraculous sea crossing, provisions in the wilderness (water, manna, quail), the sin and complaining of the Israelites in the wilderness, the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, and the initial conquest of the Transjordanian regions (Og and Sihon).

#### 4. How does Dr. Emanuel address criticisms about the poetic quality of Psalms like 78, 105, and 106, which tell a story or narrative?

Dr. Emanuel acknowledges that Psalms like 78, 105, and 106 have been criticized for being "less poetic" due to their narrative structure. He considers this an arbitrary

judgment and aims to highlight the various poetic features within these Psalms, particularly their emphatic structures, arguing that they possess significant poetic artistry despite telling a story.

### **5. What does Dr. Emanuel mean by "interpretation and reuse" in the context of analyzing the Exodus Psalms?**

"Interpretation and reuse" refers to the way the Psalmists adapt, modify, and reinterpret the Exodus tradition and other biblical texts (or older traditions) to suit their specific purpose and message. This involves examining instances where the Psalmist's source material doesn't directly match the final composition, and exploring the reasons for these changes or adaptations. It may involve using sources beyond the Pentateuch.

### **6. What is Psalm 136, and how does it fit into the Exodus motif?**

Psalm 136 is a liturgical hymn with an antiphonal structure, where each verse recounting God's acts is followed by the refrain "For his love is everlasting" (*ki leolam hazdo*). The Psalm incorporates elements of creation, deliverance from Egypt, and the defeat of the Transjordanian kings. In the Psalm, God is portrayed as a warrior king who fights for Israel. While it covers central themes of the Exodus motif, it focuses on God as a deliverer and emphasizes his power and everlasting love for Israel.

### **7. What does the lecture suggest about the arrangement of the Psalms in the Psalter?**

The lecture suggests that the placement of Psalms with Exodus themes next to each other (e.g., Psalms 77 and 78, 105 and 106, 135 and 136) is not random. Dr. Emanuel argues that there was likely editorial activity involved, where the editors of the Psalter consciously grouped Psalms together based on shared content, keywords, and thematic connections. This is referred to as the principle of association.

### **8. What is the significance of understanding the ancient concept of miracles (*niflaot*) when interpreting the Exodus Psalms?**

Understanding the ancient concept of *niflaot* is crucial because it differs significantly from the modern understanding of miracles. In the ancient world, there was no concept of "Mother Nature". Everything that was beyond human ability was attributed directly to God, who not only created the world but also sustained and maintained it. Therefore, events like healing or extraordinary acts of deliverance were seen as direct actions of God, not as natural occurrences or interventions in an otherwise natural process. Recognizing this helps us appreciate the Psalmists' perspective on the Exodus events as demonstrations of God's power and active involvement in the world.