

Dr. David Emanuel, Exodus Psalms, Session 2, Psalm 78 – God Chose David Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Emanuel, Psalms, Session 2, Psalm 78 – God Chose David, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Emanuel's lecture focuses on Psalm 78, which recounts Israel's history and God's interactions with them. The Psalm emphasizes the importance of remembering God's deeds and avoiding the mistakes of past generations. Emanuel highlights the wisdom framework of the Psalm, its complex structure, and the repetition of key ideas like teaching children and remembering miracles. He explores the unfaithfulness of Ephraim, potentially drawing on extrabiblical traditions, and analyzes the recital of plagues, noting deviations from the Exodus account. The lecture concludes with the rejection of Ephraim and the selection of Judah and David, underscoring David's role as God's chosen leader.

2. 18 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Emanuel, Session 2 – 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
sion02.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Emanuel, Exodus Psalms, Session 2, Psalm 78 – God Chose David

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from Dr. David Emanuel's lecture on Psalm 78:

Briefing Document: Dr. David Emanuel on Psalm 78 ("And God Chose David")

Source: Excerpts from "Emanuel_EN_Session02_Psalm78.pdf" (Dr. David Emanuel, Session 2, Exodus Psalm 78, © 2024 David Emanuel and Ted Hildebrandt)

Overview:

This lecture focuses on Psalm 78, the second longest psalm in the Psalter, and its engagement with the Exodus motif. Dr. Emanuel emphasizes that while Psalm 136 is structured within a liturgical framework, Psalm 78 is established within a wisdom framework, drawing parallels to Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. A key point is the psalm's complex redactional history and its prioritization of teaching a message over strict chronological order.

Main Themes:

- **Learning from History:** The psalm strongly emphasizes the importance of remembering the actions of ancestors and avoiding repeating their mistakes.
- **Selection of David and Judah:** The psalm culminates in the selection of David and Judah (representing the Southern Kingdom) for the establishment of the temple and Jerusalem, alongside the rejection of Ephraim (symbolic of the Northern Kingdom).

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Wisdom Literature Framework:** The psalm employs wisdom vocabulary and literary devices, connecting it to works like Proverbs. Examples include:
- The use of "Torah" in verse one to mean "instruction" rather than just "law." Dr. Emanuel states, "Oftentimes in wisdom literature, we find that the word Torah is translated as instruction. That's probably a better meaning than what we have in Torah. It's about guiding. It's about leading. It's about instructing someone in the way in which they should, they could go."
- The title "maskil," derived from the root "sekal" (wisdom, understanding).
- Expressions common in Proverbs, like "the words of my mouth."

- The use of "mashal" (proverb) and "chida" (riddle).
- **Sacrifice of Chronological Order:** The psalmist prioritizes the message over strict chronological accuracy. As Dr. Emanuel notes, "Just because X comes after Y, it does not necessarily mean to say chronologically it occurred in that particular way." This is exemplified by the placement of the plagues after the splitting of the sea, even though the plagues occurred earlier chronologically.
- **Redactional Layers:** The psalm has a complex history, with different layers contributing to its current form. This explains the presence of the two main themes, which at times seem to obfuscate the narrative flow.
- **Structure:** The structure is significant, with the central portion (Psalmist's summary) and the ending (selection of David and Judah) being particularly emphatic. The central position acts as a warning, emphasizing that "forgetting his miracles is a sure way to walk into his punishment and his judgments." The conclusion, the selection of David, is the "flavor you're left with." Dr. Emanuel describes the structure of the psalm including chiasmic elements where ideas and concepts are mirrored: "So, you'll see in this particular case, you'll see in A, B, you'll have X and then you'll have B and then you'll have A here."
- **Ephraim's Unfaithfulness:** Verses 9-11 refer to an unrecorded event where the sons of Ephraim retreated in battle. The Targums suggest this might be related to a tradition of them leaving Egypt prematurely. The Targum states, "Whilst they were living in Egypt, this is the Israelites, whilst they were in Egypt, the sons of Ephraim became arrogant. They calculated the appointed time and erred. They went out 30 years before the appointed time...With weapons of war and warriors bearing bows, they turned around and were killed on the day of battle."
- **Emphasis on Miracles:** The psalm focuses on God's "niflaot" (wondrous works, miracles), particularly those related to the Exodus. The poetic language often exaggerates the miraculous aspects compared to the prose accounts (e.g., manna as "bread of angels").
- **Heavenly Storehouses:** The psalm alludes to the ancient conception of heaven with a solid firmament ("rakia") and storehouses for wind, rain, and provisions, from which God opened the "windows of heaven" to provide for the Israelites.
- **Bread of Angels:** The manna is described as "bread of angels," hinting at a tradition where the food provided to the Israelites was the same food eaten by

angels in heaven. The Targums supports this, stating: "The sons of men ate food that came down from the abode of angels."

- **Plague Narrative:** The psalm recounts the plagues, but the order and number (seven vs. the ten in Exodus) differ. The term "arov" (swarm) is interpreted not necessarily as flies but as a "mixed multitude of wild beasts" in some Jewish traditions, like the Targums, which stated, "I will stir up among thee and thy servants and thy people and thy house a mixed multitude of wild beasts."
- **Absence of Moses and Aaron:** Unlike the Exodus narrative, Moses and Aaron are largely absent, emphasizing God's direct role in performing miracles. "Moses and Aaron do not appear in any of these renditions of the Psalm. When we're talking about poetry in most of the renditions of the plagues, it is God who does it directly."
- **God as Shepherd:** God is portrayed as Israel's shepherd, leading them through the desert and into the promised land. This is significant as it sets the stage for David taking on this role later. "God is Israel's shepherd as he takes them through the desert, out of Egypt, and through the desert. That's important to remember."
- **Rejection of Ephraim, Selection of David:** The climax of the psalm is the rejection of Ephraim and the selection of David as God's leader, highlighting the importance of this individual, whose name is the only one explicitly mentioned. "So, all of a sudden we see here the name David, it's a big deal because now the psalmist is revealing the importance of this particular individual."
- **Sleeping Deity:** "Then the Lord awoke as if from sleep." This is an example of imagery which suggests the people believed God was overcome by wine and in a drunken stupor, emphasizing the need for divine intervention and a call for God to awaken and act.
- **Lost Traditions:** The psalm hints at traditions not explicitly recorded in the Bible (e.g., the bread of angels, Ephraim's retreat), potentially suggesting an early date for the psalm's composition.

Omissions and Emphasis:

The lecture highlights omissions from the psalm, such as the giving of the Torah (law giving) and the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram. The emphasis is primarily on the relationship between God and the nation of Israel, rather than individual actors. The selection of David and Judah for the establishment of the temple, alongside the rejection of Ephraim, is the prominent emphasis.

4. Study Guide: Emanuel, Exodus Psalms, Session 2, Psalm 78 – God Chose David

Psalm 78: A Study Guide

Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What two prominent themes are identified in Psalm 78 by scholars?
2. What literary device is used to emphasize the Psalmist's summary of events in Psalm 78, and why is this device effective?
3. How does Psalm 78 use the word "Torah" in verse one, and why is this significant for understanding the psalm's message?
4. Why might the Psalmist include the story of Ephraim's unfaithfulness in battle, even though it is not explicitly mentioned elsewhere in the Bible?
5. How does Psalm 78 portray God's provision of manna differently than the account in Exodus, and what does this difference emphasize?
6. Explain the significance of the phrase "doors of heaven" in Psalm 78 and its connection to ancient Near Eastern cosmology.
7. In Psalm 78, what is "Arov" typically translated as, and what evidence is there to suggest a different interpretation?
8. What is the significance of God being described as awakening from sleep (or a drunken stupor) in Psalm 78, and how does this relate to other biblical passages?
9. How does the ending of Psalm 78, with the selection of David, relate to the overall themes of the psalm and the omission of other key figures from the Exodus narrative?
10. How does the presentation of the plagues in Psalm 78 differ from the account in Exodus, and what might this variation signify?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The two prominent themes are learning from history (remembering ancestors' mistakes) and the selection of David and Judah (establishment of the southern kingdom). These themes highlight the importance of historical awareness and God's chosen lineage.

2. The literary device used is a chiastic structure. This is effective because it places the Psalmist's summary in the central, most emphatic position, highlighting the key message of rebellion and sin.
3. The word "Torah" is used as "instruction," not "law," which is better suited for wisdom literature. This highlights the psalm's aim to provide guidance and understanding rather than strict legal codes.
4. The Psalmist includes it to reference an ancient tradition, possibly known to his audience but unrecorded in Scripture, which provides a historical context for the northern tribes' unfaithfulness and subsequent rejection. It might serve as a cautionary tale, emphasizing the consequences of disobedience.
5. Psalm 78 portrays the manna as divine "bread of angels," while Exodus describes it as a more natural residue on the ground. This exaggeration in Psalm 78 emphasizes God's power and magnificence in providing for His people.
6. The phrase "doors of heaven" reflects the ancient Near Eastern cosmology that perceived a firmament above the earth with storehouses for wind, rain, and provisions. The opening of these doors signifies God's miraculous provision and blessing.
7. "Arov" is typically translated as "flies," but its Hebrew meaning is simply "swarms," suggesting other possibilities. The Targums and contemporary Jewish literature interpret it as a swarm of wild beasts, which aligns better with the psalm's description of devouring.
8. The sleeping deity imagery suggests a perception of God's inactivity or absence, prompting calls for Him to awaken and intervene. This highlights the tension between God's eternal nature and the human experience of feeling abandoned, requiring renewed faith and divine action.
9. The selection of David emphasizes the importance of divinely chosen leadership and the establishment of the Davidic line. This contrasts with the omission of Moses and Aaron, suggesting a shift in focus from the Exodus event to the enduring legacy of David and his kingdom.
10. The presentation of the plagues in Psalm 78 differs in order and number (seven versus ten), suggesting varying traditions or perspectives. This might signify different theological emphases or symbolic representations of divine judgment and redemption.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the structure of Psalm 78, focusing on how the chiasmic arrangement and the placement of key themes contribute to the Psalm's overall message.
2. Compare and contrast the presentation of God in Psalm 78 with that in Psalm 136. Consider the emphasis on miracles versus other divine attributes and explore the implications of these differences.
3. Discuss the role of historical memory in Psalm 78. How does the psalm use narratives of the past to shape the present and future of the Israelite community?
4. Explore the relationship between wisdom literature and Psalm 78. In what ways does the psalm draw upon the themes, language, and conventions of wisdom traditions, and what is the effect of this influence?
5. Examine the omissions in Psalm 78. What key events or figures from the Exodus narrative are absent, and how do these omissions shape the psalm's particular perspective on the relationship between God and Israel?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Exodus:** The mass departure of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt under the leadership of Moses, a foundational event in Jewish history and theology.
- **Psalter:** The collection of Psalms in the Hebrew Bible, traditionally attributed to King David and others, used in worship and reflection.
- **Redactional History:** The process by which a text is edited and revised over time, often resulting in multiple layers or strata of composition.
- **Ephraim:** A prominent tribe of northern Israel, often used to represent the northern kingdom after the split from Judah.
- **Judah:** The southern kingdom of Israel, centered around Jerusalem, which remained loyal to the Davidic dynasty after the split.
- **Chiasmic Structure (Chiasmus):** A literary device in which elements are arranged in a mirrored pattern (A-B-B-A), often used to emphasize a central idea.
- **Torah:** The Hebrew word for "instruction" or "teaching," often translated as "law," referring to the first five books of the Hebrew Bible or to divine guidance more broadly.

- **Maskil:** A Hebrew term found in the titles of some Psalms, possibly indicating a type of song or instruction associated with wisdom.
- **Mashal:** A Hebrew word for "proverb" or "parable," a short saying or aphorism that teaches a lesson.
- **Chida:** A Hebrew word for "riddle" or "enigma," often used in wisdom literature to challenge and stimulate thought.
- **Niflaot:** A Hebrew word for "wondrous works" or "miracles," often used to describe God's extraordinary acts, especially during the Exodus.
- **Targums:** Aramaic paraphrases or interpretations of the Hebrew Bible, often providing additional context or commentary.
- **Arov:** A Hebrew word meaning "swarms," often translated as "flies" in the context of the Egyptian plagues, but potentially referring to other types of animals.
- **Rakia:** A Hebrew word for "firmament," the solid dome believed in ancient cosmology to separate the heavens from the earth.
- **High Places:** Elevated locations where altars were built and sacrifices were offered, sometimes to the God of Israel and sometimes to other deities.
- **Ark of the Covenant:** A sacred chest containing the tablets of the Ten Commandments, representing God's presence among the Israelites.
- **Delayed Identification:** A poetic technique where the psalmist describes something extensively but does not explicitly name it until the end of the verse or section, creating suspense and emphasis.

5. FAQs on Emanuel, Exodus Psalms, Session 1, Session 2, Psalm 78 – God Chose David, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided source:

FAQ on Psalm 78

- **What is the significance of Psalm 78 within the Psalter, and what type of literature does it resemble?**
- Psalm 78 is the second longest Psalm in the Psalter, with Psalm 119 being the longest. It is framed within a wisdom literature context, resembling books like Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, as indicated by its wisdom vocabulary and focus on instruction.
- **What are the two main themes or messages emphasized in Psalm 78?**
- The two primary messages are the importance of learning from history, particularly the mistakes of the ancestors of Israel, and the selection of David and Judah, representing the southern kingdom and the establishment of the temple in Jerusalem, over Ephraim, symbolizing the northern kingdom.
- **How does Psalm 78 deviate from chronological order, and why?**
- The psalm sacrifices chronological order to emphasize specific points and teachings. For instance, the plagues, which occurred before the splitting of the sea and the wilderness traditions, are mentioned later in the psalm. The author prioritizes the message and impact over strict historical sequence.
- **What structural elements are used to emphasize key messages within Psalm 78?**
- The psalm utilizes chiasmic structures and emphatic positions, such as the central position for the Psalmist's summary of Israel's rebellion and the ending for the selection of David and Judah. These structures highlight the core messages and leave a lasting impression on the reader.

- **How does Psalm 78 portray God's actions during the Exodus, and what is notably absent in this portrayal?**
- Psalm 78 emphasizes the miraculous power of God during the Exodus events, focusing on miracles like splitting the sea and providing manna. Notably absent are significant roles for Moses and Aaron, as the psalm elevates God as the direct performer of these acts. Also, there is no mention of the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai.
- **What is the significance of Ephraim's unfaithfulness as described in Psalm 78, and where might we find more information about it?**
- The psalm references an event where the sons of Ephraim retreated in a day of battle. While not explicitly detailed in the Bible, echoes of this tradition may be found in the Targums and other early Jewish literature, suggesting a tradition that was known but not fully captured in Scripture.
- **How are the plagues depicted in Psalm 78, and how does this differ from the account in Exodus?**
- The psalm presents a seven-plague tradition, differing from the ten plagues in Exodus. The order of the plagues is also different. Furthermore, some plagues, like the plague of swarms, might be interpreted differently, potentially referring to wild animals rather than just flies, as suggested by Targumic traditions. The emphasis is on the miraculous and destructive power unleashed by God.
- **What is the climactic ending of Psalm 78, and what does it signify about leadership in Israel?**
- The climax involves the rejection of Ephraim and the selection of Judah, with David chosen to shepherd Jacob. This signifies a shift in leadership, where God's role as shepherd is symbolically handed over to David, emphasizing David's importance and responsibility as God's chosen leader for Israel.