

Dr. David Emanuel, Exodus Psalms, Session 5, Psalm 135 – The LORD's Supremacy Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Emanuel, Psalms, Session 5, Psalm 135 – The LORD's Supremacy, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This excerpt is from a lecture by Dr. David Emanuel on Psalm 135, focusing on its classification as a hymn of praise emphasizing God's supremacy. The lecture analyzes the psalm's structure, highlighting its unique reliance on biblical intertextuality, drawing heavily from other scriptures including Psalms 104, 105, 106, and Jeremiah 10, and even employing direct quotations. Emanuel contrasts God's omnipotence with the impotence of idols, noting the psalm's purpose of discouraging idolatry. Finally, the lecture emphasizes the psalmist's role as a biblical interpreter creatively adapting existing texts to convey a specific theological message.

2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Emanuel, Session 5 – 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
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3. Briefing Document: Emanuel, Exodus Psalms, Session 5, Psalm 135 – The LORD's Supremacy

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, which is Dr. David Emanuel's lecture on Psalm 135:

Briefing Document: Dr. David Emanuel on Psalm 135 and the Exodus Psalms

Overall Theme: Dr. Emanuel's lecture focuses on Psalm 135, which he titles "The Lord's Supremacy," and uses it as a lens to understand the broader themes and functions of the Exodus motif within the Book of Psalms. He emphasizes the psalm's unique features and its place within the larger collection of Exodus psalms.

Key Points on Psalm 135:

- **Genre and Purpose:** Psalm 135 is identified as a hymn of praise, a genre that calls people to come together and praise God.
- The primary purpose of the psalm is to demonstrate the omnipotence of God, particularly in comparison to the impotency of other idols. As Dr. Emanuel puts it, "The primary use of the Exodus in this particular psalm is a means of demonstrating the omnipotence of God."
- **Unique Characteristics:** The psalm is heavily reliant on existing biblical literature. Emanuel states, "I don't think there is a single verse within this text that is not connected to another place in biblical literature," suggesting it is a later psalm.
- It omits negative aspects of Israel's history, maintaining a positive tone like Psalm 105.
- **Structure:** The psalm follows a structured pattern: Introduction (invitation to praise), Description of God's omnipotence (creation and Exodus), Praise intermission, Description of the impotency of idols, and an Exhortation to praise (verses 19-21).
- The structure is symmetrical, with a parallel between the introduction and the exhortation, both using the term "Hallelujah."
- A key feature is the direct comparison between God's omnipotence and the impotence of idols.

- **Key Themes: God's Omnipotence:** Demonstrated through acts of creation (controlling the weather, etc.) and the Exodus (plagues, defeating kings, giving land). As Emanuel notes, "God creates the world and he continues making things turn...He continues to be active and involved in the world."
- **The Divine Resume:** The psalm presents a picture of God through his actions, similar to a resume that outlines his power and role. Emanuel says, "What the Psalmist is doing is he is portraying a picture of the God of Israel. Who is this God? What does he do? Well, here's his resume. He runs the world."
- **The Impotence of Idols:** Idols are described as having features but lacking function, in stark contrast to the God of Israel, who is described as having no features but being all function. Emanuel states, "The idols of the nations basically have features, but no function... This is in direct comparison because if you know the God of Israel, he has no features, but is all function."
- **God's Special Possession:** The term "segula," which means "special possession," emphasizes the unique relationship between God and Israel. Emanuel notes, "it's not any possession, but it is a very special possession" when discussing the meaning of the word "segula".
- **Literary Borrowing:** Psalm 135 is described as a "Frankenstein psalm" because it directly borrows and reuses phrases and verses from other parts of the Bible, such as Jeremiah, Deuteronomy, and other psalms.
- Emanuel gives specific examples, demonstrating how the psalm almost verbatim repeats material from Jeremiah 10:13, Deuteronomy 32:36, Psalm 136 and Psalm 115, pointing out even minor translation inconsistencies. He remarks, "the psalmist has been so careful as to copy words from one place into the other, why can't the translators do the same thing?"
- Despite the borrowing, Emanuel argues that the Psalmist's creation is still creative and has its own unique structure. He notes, "...he does nevertheless create something new, something very new from these old bits and pieces... there is still a great deal of creativity in the way in which he has ordered his parts."

Broader Themes of the Exodus Psalms

- **Exodus as a Central Motif:** Emanuel argues that "the Exodus is the most influential biblical tradition in the Bible," permeating all parts of scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

- **Conversion from Prose to Poetry:** The transition from prose to poetry in the psalms results in a more flamboyant and exaggerated portrayal of events.
- **Diverse Genres:** The Exodus theme appears in various genres within the psalms, not limited to salvation narrative. As Emanuel explains, "The Exodus occurs in different genres... it appears in many different ways and it's used in many different ways."
- **Elevation of God's Role:** The Psalms consistently elevate God's direct role in the Exodus events, minimizing human agency. Emanuel notes, "There is a repetitive theme throughout the Psalms... the deeds of men are pushed down and minimalized and the acts of God are elevated."
- **Purposeful Tailoring:** Psalmists are presented not just as songwriters but as "biblical exegetes" who interpret the Exodus narrative for specific purposes and to communicate particular messages. Emanuel says, "when we are looking at the Psalmists who deal with the Exodus motif, we are dealing with people who tailor it for specific purposes... they are making it work for specific purposes to teach a particular point."

Key Takeaway: The Psalmist was not just a songwriter, but a skilled interpreter of scripture, re-shaping and re-purposing traditional narratives to convey theological and spiritual truths. This approach requires a close study of the texts and consideration of how a particular passage might be used to communicate meaning to a specific audience. Emanuel concludes, "it is very important to remember that the Psalmist is a biblical exegete."

This briefing document should provide a thorough overview of Dr. Emanuel's lecture on Psalm 135 and the broader context of the Exodus Psalms.

4. Study Guide: Emanuel, Exodus Psalms, Session 5, Psalm 135 – The LORD's Supremacy

Psalm 135: The Lord's Supremacy - Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is the primary purpose of the Exodus narrative within Psalm 135?
2. How does Psalm 135 demonstrate its dependence on biblical literature, and what does this suggest about its date of composition?
3. Describe the structural elements of Psalm 135 as presented by Dr. Emanuel.
4. What does the Hebrew word "segula" mean, and how is it used in the context of Psalm 135?
5. How does Psalm 135 present the concept of God's omnipotence in creation?
6. How does the psalm contrast the omnipotence of God with the impotency of idols?
7. Explain the significance of the "praise intermission" within the structure of Psalm 135.
8. What is the significance of the phrase "Hallelujah" in the psalm, and how is it used to frame the text?
9. Explain the concept of the "divine resume" as it applies to Psalm 135.
10. What does Dr. Emanuel mean when he calls Psalm 135 a "Frankenstein Psalm"?

Answer Key

1. The primary purpose is to demonstrate God's omnipotence, particularly in comparison to the impotency of idols. The Exodus is used to showcase God's power in historical events.
2. Psalm 135 has almost no original verses, borrowing heavily from other biblical texts. This dependence strongly suggests that the psalm is relatively late in composition.
3. The psalm starts with an introduction of praise, describes God's omnipotence in creation and Exodus, includes a praise intermission, discusses the impotency of

idols, and ends with an exhortation to praise. This creates a clear thematic structure.

4. "Segula" means a special possession or personal treasure. In Psalm 135, it emphasizes the unique and treasured relationship between God and Israel, not just a general possession.
5. The psalm shows God's power in creation as an ongoing, active force in maintaining the world, not just as a one-time event of the six days. This includes causing vapors to ascend and sending rain.
6. God is shown as having no features, but all function, while idols have features but no function. This highlights the uselessness of idols in contrast to the active power of God.
7. The "praise intermission" serves as a literary hinge, connecting God's "resume" to the negative "resume" of idols. It emphasizes the everlasting name and remembrance of God.
8. "Hallelujah" which means "praise the Lord" is used at the beginning and end, encapsulating the psalm as a song of praise. It serves as both an introduction and conclusion to the text.
9. The "divine resume" is a portrayal of who the God of Israel is and what He does. It lays out that God runs the world, fights for his people, and distributes land.
10. Dr. Emanuel calls it a "Frankenstein Psalm" because it appears to be pieced together from various other biblical texts, yet the psalmist has created something uniquely new from those bits and pieces.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Write an essay response for each question.

1. Analyze the literary structure of Psalm 135, paying particular attention to the relationship between its beginning and ending sections and the significance of the central "praise intermission." How does this structure contribute to the psalm's overall message?
2. Discuss the significance of the psalm's dependence on existing biblical texts. How does this borrowing of material affect our understanding of Psalm 135's role within the canon? Consider the psalmist's role as a biblical "exegete."
3. Examine the ways in which Psalm 135 blends the themes of creation and Exodus. How do these combined themes contribute to the psalm's central message about God's supremacy?
4. Compare and contrast Psalm 135 with other Exodus Psalms discussed in the lecture, especially Psalm 136. How do these psalms use the Exodus narrative in different ways, and what does this tell us about the diverse applications of the Exodus motif in the Psalter?
5. Discuss the ways in which Psalm 135 uses imagery and language to portray the omnipotence of God and the impotence of idols. What specific rhetorical devices or literary techniques are utilized to make this contrast?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Hymn of Praise:** A type of psalm that celebrates and praises God for his attributes and deeds.
- **Exodus:** The biblical story of the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt led by Moses.
- **Omnipotence:** The quality of having unlimited or very great power.
- **Impotency:** The state of lacking power or ability.
- **Segula:** A Hebrew word meaning a special possession or treasured property, used to describe Israel as God's chosen people.
- **Elohim:** A Hebrew word often translated as "God" or "gods", depending on context.
- **Niflahot/Gedolot:** Hebrew words referring to "miracles" or "great acts" that are hints of what is to come in the psalm.
- **Inclusion:** A literary device where the beginning and end of a section or text share similar phrasing, creating a literary frame.
- **Literary Hinge:** A literary device that serves as a pivot point or transitional section within a larger text that links different themes or ideas.
- **Divine Resume:** A description of God's acts and attributes, much like a resume outlines an individual's accomplishments, as portrayed within a text.
- **Biblical Exegete:** Someone who studies and interprets biblical texts with careful attention to their context and meaning.
- **Frankenstein Psalm:** A term used to describe Psalm 135 due to its extensive borrowing of language and ideas from other biblical texts.
- **Psalter:** Another name for the book of Psalms in the Bible.
- **Am Segula:** A term used to describe a people, which is a special possession (in this case, Israel).
- **Hallelujah:** A Hebrew word meaning "praise the Lord" that is used in the introduction and conclusion of Psalm 135.

5. FAQs on Emanuel, Exodus Psalms, Session 5, Psalm 135 – The LORD's Supremacy, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Exodus Psalms and Psalm 135

- What is the main theme of Psalm 135, and how does it relate to the other Exodus Psalms?** Psalm 135, subtitled "The Lord's Supremacy," focuses on God's omnipotence, particularly in contrast to the impotence of idols. While other Exodus Psalms touch on different aspects like lament (Psalm 106) or the historical journey (Psalm 78), Psalm 135 uses the Exodus narrative primarily to demonstrate God's unmatched power. Unlike some other Exodus Psalms, Psalm 135 omits negative aspects of Israel's history, maintaining a positive theme of God's supremacy and power. This emphasis on God's power and action marks the psalm's unique approach to the Exodus narrative.
- How is Psalm 135 structured, and what are its key sections?** The psalm begins with an introduction that invites communal praise of God. This is followed by a section illustrating God's omnipotence in creation and the Exodus. There's a "praise intermission," a brief section that recalls the initial call to praise, followed by a contrasting section highlighting the impotence of idols, and finally ends with an exhortation to praise. The structure emphasizes the direct comparison between God's power and the uselessness of idols, framing the psalm's message.
- What is the significance of the term "segula" in Psalm 135?** The term "segula" is used to describe Israel as God's special possession or treasure. This word, which also appears in Ecclesiastes, signifies a unique and cherished personal property, adding a layer of importance to God's chosen relationship with Israel that a simple "own possession" translation might miss. It highlights the covenantal bond and special status of Israel, linking it to the Exodus motif.
- How does Psalm 135 use the Exodus narrative to demonstrate God's omnipotence?** Psalm 135 utilizes the Exodus events, like the plagues and the smiting of the firstborn, to showcase God's power and control over events. In addition to the Exodus narrative, it ties that to his control over the natural world. It also emphasizes how God smote kings to claim territory for his people, which are all parts of a divine resume meant to show who God is and what He does. This direct action of God stands in contrast to other Exodus Psalms where it may appear that Moses and/or Aaron are agents of God.

- **How does the psalm contrast God with the idols of the nations?** The psalm establishes a direct contrast between God's power and the idols' helplessness. God, without features but with all function, actively intervenes in the world, whereas idols, made of silver and gold, are depicted as having features (mouths, eyes, ears) but lack the ability to act or respond. This contrast serves to discourage idolatry, demonstrating the futility of worshiping lifeless, powerless objects.
- **Why is Psalm 135 described as a "Frankenstein psalm," and what does that reveal about its composition?** Psalm 135 is called a "Frankenstein psalm" because it is heavily reliant on direct word-for-word borrowing from other biblical texts, particularly Jeremiah, Deuteronomy, and other Psalms (like Psalm 115 and Psalm 136). Despite this heavy reliance, the psalmist has still been able to create something new and original, skillfully ordering the borrowed parts into a cohesive message. This practice demonstrates the psalmist's role as a biblical exegete, crafting a unique message with existing tradition.
- **What does the study of Exodus Psalms reveal about the relationship between prose and poetry in the Bible?** The Exodus Psalms illustrate how prose narratives are transformed into poetic form within the Bible. The transition from prose to poetry includes embellishments, exaggerations, and the incorporation of additional details. These changes are not to be seen as distortion but rather as a necessary artistic transformation to convey a theological message and elevate God's role in the Exodus narrative.
- **What is the most significant role of the psalmists, as revealed through the study of the Exodus Psalms?** The psalmists should be seen more than just songwriters, but as biblical exegetes. They read, interpreted, and repurposed stories such as the Exodus. They were not just passive writers but active interpreters who crafted specific messages using existing traditions, tailoring the Exodus narrative to teach particular points to their audiences. This understanding underscores the importance of recognizing their role as interpreters of Scripture, shaping and creating new works from existing material.