

Waltke, Psalms, Session 9, Resources from Notebooklm

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

1. Abstract of Waltke, Psalms, Session 9, Hymn, Pagan Imagery, Zion, Psalm 100, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. Bruce Waltke analyzes Psalm 100, exploring its structure, language, and theological significance within the broader context of the Psalms. He examines the psalm's calls and reasons for praise, discussing the use of pagan imagery as literary allusion rather than endorsement of pagan beliefs. Furthermore, the lecture contrasts Mount Zion, the dwelling place of God, with Mount Zaphon, the abode of the Canaanite god Baal, highlighting the theological implications of this comparison. Finally, Waltke connects the psalm's themes to Christian theology and liturgy, emphasizing the importance of exuberant praise and the centrality of Jesus Christ.

2. 17-minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Waltke's, Psalms, Session 9 – 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 → Waltke).



Waltke_Psalms_Session09_PaganImager

3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Bruce Waltke's lecture on Psalms:

Briefing Document: Dr. Bruce Waltke on Psalms - Lecture 9

Date: October 26, 2024

Subject: Analysis of Pagan Imagery in Psalms, the Significance of Zion, and Exposition of Psalm 100

Source: Excerpts from "Waltke_Psalms_EN_Lecture09.pdf"

Overview: This lecture explores several key themes within the Psalms, focusing on how the psalmists used imagery from surrounding pagan cultures, the theological importance of Mount Zion, and a detailed analysis of Psalm 100. Waltke emphasizes that the psalmists deliberately used familiar pagan concepts to highlight God's unique power and sovereignty. He also underscores the importance of understanding the context and structure of the psalms to fully appreciate their theological message.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Pagan Imagery in Psalms:

- **Literary Allusion, Not Syncretism:** The psalmists used pagan myths (e.g., battles against Rahab, Leviathan, or the sea) not to incorporate pagan beliefs but to illustrate God's superior power over chaos and darkness. These are purely literary allusions.
- **Creation and Chaos:** Drawing from Genesis, Waltke explains the creation account as a triumph of God over the primordial chaos ("tehu vabohu"). The imagery of darkness and water ("tehum") relates to the Akkadian word "tiamat," symbolizing the pre-creation state.
- **Light vs. Darkness:** Waltke emphasizes that darkness has no inherent power; light overcomes it. This metaphor represents God as the source of light, triumphing over the darkness of chaos. He states, "Darkness represents just the native statement, without God, there's no light."
- **In-Between Time:** The current world is seen as an "in-between" time, a mixture of land and sea, light and dark, reflecting a tension between the created order and the eschatological vision of a world with no more sea or darkness, as

described in Revelation. "We're in an in-between time, which represents a tension between the two. But finally light ends, life overcomes death."

- **No Fear of Pagan Myths:** Israel's secure understanding of their covenant with God allowed them to use these pagan images freely, without the fear of syncretism.

1. The Significance of Zion:

- **Zaphon vs. Zion:** Waltke draws a contrast between Mount Zaphon, the dwelling place of Baal in Canaanite mythology, and Mount Zion, the chosen dwelling place of Yahweh. This highlights God's deliberate choice and the sanctity of Zion, not as a natural wonder, but as a place chosen by God. He emphasizes, "So they celebrate Mount Zion because God chose it for his city. It was not some nature force or something. God just simply chose Mount Zion for his dwelling place."
- **Holiness:** He explains "holy" (kaddish) means "set apart" for God and in contrast to the profane which is "before the temple," or outside the holy area.
- **Polemic Against Baal:** The exaltation of Zion is a direct polemic against the Canaanite worship of Baal, whose mountain (Zaphon) was seen as the dwelling place of the gods. Zion is the true "holy place".
- **Rejection of Pagan Deities:** The contrast underscores the fundamental difference between the violent and immoral Canaanite deities like Baal and his wife Anat and the righteous God of Israel. Waltke notes of Anat "she's filled with sex and violence...the heads of her enemies are bracelets around her hands. I mean, this is a very violent woman."

1. Detailed Exposition of Psalm 100:

- **Purpose:** Psalm 100 is a psalm for giving grateful praise, intended to be accompanied by a sacrifice.
- **Structure:** The psalm follows an alternating structure of call to praise and cause for praise in two stanzas, with a chiasm of imperatives. The call is expressed in the imperatives: shout, serve with rejoicing, come before him, enter his gates, give praise and bless his name.
- **The Pivot:** The central point or pivot of the psalm is the confession "Know that I Am, he is God" and "we are his people." "The main point is, you know that I am our God. He is God. And you know that we, Israel, the seed of Abraham, as I discussed it, we are his people." Waltke argues the "we today is the church."

- **Call to Praise:** This includes shouting to God with enthusiasm and exuberance, serving God with rejoicing (not merely inward joy, but outward expression of joy like dancing and shouting), and coming before him with a joyful shout. "Worship should not be like a funeral and everybody should be involved."
- **"I Am":** Waltke notes the name "I Am" (Yahweh) as a sentence name which reveals God as the eternal and unchanging one who also is continuously revealing Himself through acts of salvation. It is both "I Am" (eternal being) and "I Am Who I Am" (always revealing himself).
- **"All the Earth":** The call for "all the earth" to worship indicates that God chose Israel to include all people through His grace, not to exclude. "God did not choose Israel to exclude people. He chose Israel to include everyone."
- **Service:** Service to the Lord means recognizing Him as master and rejecting other loyalties. "To praise is to reject alternative loyalties and false definitions of reality. Praise is relentlessly polemical."
- **God's Presence:** God is both ubiquitous and uniquely present at the temple, the place where He is present through praise and worship.
- **Cause for Praise:** The cause for praise is knowing that "I Am" (Yahweh) is God (Elohim) and that Israel is His chosen people. The name "Elohim" signifies the divine essence and power.
- **Knowing God:** God is known through experience, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, prophecy, and the testimony of the people, through the word of God, and by the work of the Holy Spirit.
- **Nationhood:** God made Israel a nation by electing Abraham's descendants, giving them the law, a land, and a common ruler (God), and that, in the new dispensation, that nation is now the Church.

Key Quotes:

- "Darkness represents just the native statement, without God, there's no light."
- "We're in an in-between time, which represents a tension between the two. But finally light ends, life overcomes death."
- "So they celebrate Mount Zion because God chose it for his city. It was not some nature force or something. God just simply chose Mount Zion for his dwelling place."

- "Worship should not be like a funeral and everybody should be involved."
- "God did not choose Israel to exclude people. He chose Israel to include everyone."
- "To praise is to reject alternative loyalties and false definitions of reality. Praise is relentlessly polemical."
- "The main point is, you know that I am our God. He is God. And you know that we, Israel, the seed of Abraham, as I discussed it, we are his people."

Conclusion: Dr. Waltke's lecture provides valuable insight into the literary, theological, and historical context of the Psalms. By understanding the psalmists' use of pagan imagery, the significance of Zion, and the structure and message of individual psalms like Psalm 100, we can gain a richer appreciation of their theological depth and relevance. The lecture emphasizes the sovereignty of God, the importance of worship, and the unique identity of God's people. He makes a point that the "we" of Psalm 100 now encompasses the Christian church. This lecture serves as a helpful foundation for further study of the book of Psalms.

4. Psalms Study Guide: Waltke, Psalms, Session 9, Pagan Imagery, Zion, Psalm 100

Quiz

1. According to Waltke, what is the significance of the phrase "tehu vabohu" in relation to Genesis 1? *Tehu vabohu*, meaning "formless and void," describes the chaotic state of the earth before God's creative acts in Genesis. It represents the opposite of the organized universe.
2. How does Waltke interpret the use of pagan myths in the Psalms? The poets use pagan myths as literary allusions to dramatize God's power over chaos, not as a belief in those myths. These allusions highlight God's triumph over darkness and disorder.
3. What is the significance of Mount Zaphon in relation to Mount Zion? Mount Zaphon, the dwelling place of Baal, is contrasted with Mount Zion, the dwelling place of God. Mount Zion was chosen by God, not by some nature force.
4. What does the term "profane" mean according to Waltke, and how does it relate to the term "holy"? Profane, from the Latin *profanum*, means "before the temple," or outside the temple, while holy means that which is set apart for God, like a temple. These are opposites that define the concept of what is sacred.
5. According to Waltke, what are the two main structural components of Psalm 100? Psalm 100 has an alternating structure composed of two stanzas, each with a call to praise and a cause for praise. This structure helps to emphasize its primary message.
6. What is the significance of the phrase "I Am" in Psalm 100? "I Am" is a sentence name of God and signifies God's eternal existence and continuous self-revelation. It refers to the eternal nature of God and to His continuing acts of salvation throughout history.
7. What is the difference between *simcha* and inward joy, according to Waltke? Simcha refers to an outward expression of joy, such as leaping, dancing, and shouting, which is distinguished from a sustained inward joy. It reflects the enthusiastic way of expressing praise to God.
8. According to Waltke, in what way is God ubiquitous and uniquely present? God is ubiquitous in that he is present everywhere in the universe, but he is uniquely

present at the temple (and by extension with believers through Christ) where his blessing is found. This means that God's blessing is unique for those who worship him.

9. What are the two essential doctrines one must know before entering God's presence, as mentioned in the Psalm? One must know that the God of the Bible is the one true God and that Israel is his chosen people. In the present-day application, this would mean we must know God through Christ and the Church.
10. How does Waltke explain the concept of God forming his people, and what does that entail? God formed his people by electing the patriarchs, promising them a nation, and ultimately creating the church. This involves a common people, common law (written on the heart), a common ruler, and a common place of dwelling.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the ways in which Psalm 100 uses contrasting themes (e.g., chaos/order, darkness/light) to convey its message. How do these contrasts tie back to broader theological themes, including the use of pagan myths as literary allusions?
2. Discuss the significance of Mount Zion in the context of the Old Testament and how it serves as a polemic against other religious traditions. How does this understanding impact our understanding of the nature of God?
3. Explain the importance of knowing and understanding God's name (specifically "I Am") in the Psalms. How does this name inform our understanding of God's character and relationship with humanity?
4. Explore Waltke's view on worship, as exemplified in Psalm 100. How does he argue for a balance between reverence and enthusiastic expression in worship? How does the structure of the psalm support his position?
5. Discuss Waltke's concept of the people of God, and how this changes between the Old and New Testaments. How does the common land get "replaced" by Christ, and how does this impact our understanding of the role of the church today?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Tehu vabohu:** Hebrew for "formless and void," describing the chaotic state of the earth before creation in Genesis 1.

- **Tehum:** Hebrew term related to the Akkadian *Tiamat*, referring to the chaotic abyss or deep waters of the sea.
- **Eschaton:** The end times or the final state of history as described in theological contexts.
- **Zaphon:** Mountain in Northern Syria, considered the dwelling place of the Canaanite god Baal.
- **Mount Zion:** The mountain in Jerusalem chosen by God as his dwelling place in Israel.
- **Profane:** From the Latin *profanum*, meaning "before the temple" or outside of the sacred. It refers to what is not holy.
- **Holy:** Set apart for God, consecrated to God, like a temple; *kaddish* means "set apart"
- **Psalms:** A song accompanied with musical instruments, often used in worship.
- **I Am:** The sentence name of God, signifying His eternal existence and self-revelation.
- **Simcha:** Hebrew word meaning "rejoicing," which entails an outward expression of joy, such as leaping and shouting.
- **Ubiquitous:** Existing or being everywhere at the same time; a term used to describe God's universal presence.
- **Elohim:** Hebrew for God, a plural form that emphasizes the quintessence of divine nature and eternal power.
- **Mediatorial Kingdom:** The concept of a group or entity (Israel in the OT, the church in the NT) serving as a bridge between God and humanity.
- **Chiasm:** A literary structure where elements are arranged in a mirrored or inverted pattern, often with the main point at the center.

5. FAQ on Themes from Dr. Bruce Waltke's Psalms Lecture

- **How do the Psalms utilize pagan myths, and what does it reveal about God?**
- The Psalms sometimes use imagery from pagan myths (like chaos monsters such as Rahab, Leviathan, or the Yam - sea) to illustrate God's power over the forces of chaos and darkness. These allusions aren't meant to validate pagan beliefs but rather to highlight how much greater God is. For example, the chaos and darkness depicted in these myths are used as a backdrop against which God's triumph is revealed as he brings light and order. God's creation is portrayed as a victory over chaos, emphasizing his power. The poets use pagan imagery to communicate the greatness of God, similar to how Milton might use Muses in his poetry, not as actual deities, but as literary devices to emphasize a point. This shows that the Israelites had confidence in the Mosaic covenant and were secure in their knowledge that there are no other gods.
- **What is the significance of Mount Zion in contrast to Mount Zaphon?**
- Mount Zaphon was the dwelling place of the Canaanite god Baal and his pantheon, a location considered "holy" in the sense of being set apart for a deity. In contrast, Mount Zion is the place God chose for his dwelling, his temple, and his city in Israel. The Psalms often reference Mount Zion as God's chosen and holy place, not due to any inherent nature but because God decided it to be. This establishes a polemic against Baal and his holy mountain, and elevates Mount Zion as the dwelling place of the true God. The contrast emphasizes that God's holiness is real and absolute while Baal's is simply a place set apart, not that he is truly holy (as he is characterized by violence and sexual immorality).
- **What is the main structure of Psalm 100, and what does it emphasize?**
- Psalm 100 has an alternating structure of two stanzas, each with a call to praise and a cause for praise. The call to praise involves commands to shout, serve, and come before God with joy. The cause for praise is recognizing that God is God and that we are his people. A chiastic structure is present within the calls to praise, with a major focus on the knowledge that I AM is God, and that we are his people. This emphasis is the pivotal point, highlighting that worship comes from understanding who God is and who we are in relation to Him. The chiastic nature of the psalm also highlights the importance of both the internal recognition and external expressions of praise.

- **What does it mean to "shout" to the Lord in Psalm 100, and how does that relate to worship?**
- The word "shout" in Psalm 100 signifies enthusiasm and exuberance, similar to a blast of a trumpet or a loud alarm. It's compared to the shout of a crowd at a sports game when their team scores. This is to say that worship should not be somber but rather a spontaneous and energetic outpouring of joy. It indicates that praise should be enthusiastic, involving the whole person, not merely an internal feeling. The concept of a "shout" is also connected to the idea of worship being an act of total commitment and exuberant participation.
- **What does it mean to "serve the Lord" in the context of Psalm 100?**
- "Serving the Lord" involves acknowledging him as master and committing to loyalty and devotion. It entails rejecting false idols and alternative loyalties. Serving God is not simply an internal feeling but rather an active choice to labor in prayer, praise, and live in accordance to His will. It involves recognizing that one is always serving something greater than oneself, whether it is a god or something else, and so this phrase calls for a deliberate choice to serve the true God and reject other gods. The act of serving is also linked to worship in the temple as priests who labor for their master.
- **How does the concept of God's "I AM" name relate to his identity and actions?**
- God's name "I AM" means "I Am Who I Am." It signifies both His eternal and unchanging nature and His active involvement in history. He is always the same, but He is also revealing Himself through new acts of salvation. Jesus' own use of the term "I AM" demonstrates that he is the eternal God. God shows Himself through historical events, revealing his character more clearly and fully over time. This name emphasizes that God is both constant and dynamic. It also shows how the Father wants to be known through the Son, Jesus Christ.
- **How does the concept of "all the earth" in Psalm 100 relate to God's plan for Israel and the world?**
- The phrase "all the earth" indicates that everyone is invited to worship God. It emphasizes that God's plan with Israel is to bless and include all nations, not to exclude anyone. God chose Israel as a mediatorial kingdom through which He would spread His knowledge to the world. This suggests that the invitation to worship is universal, and Israel is the vehicle through which God's truth and

blessing are meant to reach all people. The idea of the whole earth worshipping also demonstrates that ultimately, God is sovereign over all of the earth.

- **How does Psalm 100 inform our understanding of the relationship between God's omnipresence and unique presence?**
- God is omnipresent, meaning He is everywhere (Psalm 139). However, God has a unique presence at the temple (or within worship) where He is specifically accessible with His blessings. While God is universally present, His blessing is not universally accessible. This highlights the importance of coming before Him with praise and worship to experience His unique blessing. The example given is that when people touched the garments of Jesus, they were healed by faith as he is uniquely present. This means that it is not just that God is everywhere, but that He is specially present to those who truly seek and worship Him.