

Waltke, Psalms, Session 16, Resources from Notebooklm

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

1. Abstract of Waltke, Psalms, Session 16 Psalm 22, Lament, Petition, Prophecy, biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. Bruce Waltke **analyzes Psalm 22**, a petition psalm categorized as an individual lament. He **examines the psalm's structure**, noting its distinct sections of lament, petition, and praise, and **highlights its messianic significance**, connecting its imagery to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Waltke also **discusses the statistical differences** in the use of divine names between different sections of the Psalter, suggesting a shift in emphasis between Psalms 42-83. Finally, he uses the example of Psalm 22 to **illustrate the interplay of lament and confidence in the face of suffering**.

2. 18-minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Waltke's, Psalms, Session 16 – 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).



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3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Bruce Waltke's lecture on the Psalms, specifically focusing on the Elohist Psalter and Psalm 22.

Briefing Document: Dr. Bruce Waltke on the Elohist Psalter and Psalm 22

I. Introduction

This document summarizes Dr. Bruce Waltke's lecture on the Psalms, specifically focusing on the "Elohist Psalter" (Psalms 42-83) and his detailed analysis of Psalm 22, a lament psalm with significant messianic implications. Waltke highlights the unique characteristics of the Elohist Psalter and then explores Psalm 22 in its structure, literary devices, and prophetic significance related to Jesus' crucifixion.

II. The Elohist Psalter (Psalms 42-83)

- **Distinctive Use of Divine Names:** Waltke emphasizes the striking difference in the usage of "I Am" (YHWH) and "Elohim" (God) between Psalms 1-41 & 84-150 and the Elohist Psalter (Psalms 42-83).
- **Data:** Psalms 1-41 & 84-150: "I Am" used 584 times, "Elohim" used 94 times.
- Psalms 42-83: "I Am" used 45 times, "Elohim" used 210 times.
- **Significance:** This reversal of frequency suggests a shift in focus from the covenant-keeping God ("I Am") to the transcendent God ("Elohim"). Waltke says, "it's very legitimate to recognize that Psalms 42 through 83, for some reason are changing and giving priority to the transcending God over the covenant-keeping God."
- **Parallelism:** The typical parallelism between the two names is also reversed in the Elohist Psalter.
- **Regular Pattern:** In Psalms 1-41 & 84-150, "I Am" is typically in the A verse set, and "Elohim" in the B verse set.
- **Reversed Pattern:** In Psalms 42-83, "Elohim" is in the A verse set, and "I Am" is in the B verse set.
- **Synoptic Material:** Waltke uses Psalm 14 (outside the Elohist Psalter) and its counterpart Psalm 53 (within the Elohist Psalter) as an example of this change in divine name usage. "There is no God" is stated in both, but Psalm 14 says "the

Lord looks down" and Psalm 53 says "God looks down," showing the switch in terminology.

- **Number 42:** The Elohistic Psalter contains 42 psalms and begins with Psalm 42. Waltke points out that the number 42 appears in the Old Testament in the context of "judgment, of premature death" citing various examples such as the Ephraimites and children being killed, as well as relatives of Ahaziah. He suggests this may relate to the exile of Jerusalem, implying a sense of premature death. He also highlights a sense of hope as God forgives the nation that repents.

III. Psalm 22: A Lament and Messianic Prophecy

- **Context:** Psalm 22 is presented as an individual lament psalm, but with strong messianic overtones, being directly quoted by Jesus on the cross ("My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"). Waltke notes, "It was clearly on the lips of our Lord as he was dying" and it is the fourth of the "seven words of our Lord upon the cross."
- **Structure:** Waltke divides the psalm into three main stanzas, and then further analyses the sub-structures within them:
- **Stanza 1 (Verses 1-10):** Mixture of lament and confidence and praise.
- **Sub-Stanza A (Verses 1-5):** Lament over God's abandonment. "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"
- **Sub-Stanza B (Verses 6-10):** Lament over abandonment by people, but confidence in God's past faithfulness to his fathers and then to himself. "Surely you are the one who brought me out of the womb."
- **Transitional Verse (Verse 11):** "Do not be far from me for trouble is near; surely there is none to help."
- **Stanza 2 (Verses 12-21):** Intense lament and description of suffering and petition. This is the heart of the prophetic and physical depiction of the cross.
- **Description:** He is surrounded by enemies (bulls, lions, dogs) who are likened to animals, experiencing intense physical suffering (bones out of joint, heart like melted wax, parched mouth, hands and feet pierced), and mocked and taunted by others. The taunting includes mocking his reliance on God. "They split open their lips. They shake their heads. Commit yourself to I Am. Let I Am rescue him. Let him deliver him. Surely, he delights in him."

- **Petition:** The psalmist cries out for help, reversing the imagery from the lament. "But you I am, do not be far off. My help come quickly to help me..." He asks for deliverance from the sword, dogs, lions, and wild oxen.
- **Stanza 3 (Verses 22-31):** Shift to praise and declaration of God's name, first to the Jewish community, and then universally to the ends of the earth.
- **Praise to the Congregation (Verses 22-26):** "I will declare your name to my brothers in the congregation. I will praise you."
- **Praise to the Nations (Verses 27-31):** "May all the ends of the earth remember and turn to the Lord." The praise culminates in the declaration of God's actions and righteousness, passed down through generations.
- **Typological and Prophetic Nature:** Waltke argues that while some psalms are typical of Christ (David as king), and some are purely prophetic (Psalm 110), Psalm 22 is "typically prophetic" meaning it uses language and details that transcend David's own experience and directly match the suffering and circumstances of Christ's crucifixion.
- **Key Details Matching the Crucifixion:** The feeling of abandonment by God.
- The mocking and taunting by enemies.
- The physical suffering including bones out of joint, thirst, and being pierced.
- The distribution of clothing and casting lots for his garments.
- **Theological Significance:** Waltke states that the psalm shows how Christ experienced the full range of human emotions, including feeling abandoned by God while remaining faithful. He highlights that the psalm concludes in praise, which is the essential difference between lament and complaint. He also suggests that those who truly accept Christ and then reject Him are beyond help. He says, "I think once you've tasted the things of God and you turn your back on it, I don't think there's any hope for you."

IV. Conclusion

Dr. Waltke's lecture provides a deep understanding of both the literary structure of the Elohistic Psalter and its unique theological emphasis. His analysis of Psalm 22 demonstrates how lament can be interwoven with confidence and praise. The Psalm's prophetic fulfillment in Christ's crucifixion provides a profound and compelling affirmation of the scriptures. Waltke uses the story of the Battle of Waterloo to illustrate how the full message of Christ's suffering and victory might only be revealed when the "fog lifts." He concludes that the scriptures give a "more sure word of prophecy" as we see its fulfillment in Christ.

4. Psalms Study Guide: Waltke, Psalms, Session 16, Psalm 22, Lament, Petition, Prophecy

Psalm 22 Study Guide

Quiz

1. What is the Elohistic Psalter, and what is a key difference in the use of divine names within it compared to other sections of the Psalms?

The Elohistic Psalter refers to Psalms 42-83. A key difference is the more frequent use of "Elohim" and less frequent use of "I Am" in this section compared to Psalms 1-41 and 84-150. This indicates a focus on God's transcendence over his covenant relationship.

1. What is the significance of the number 42 in the context of the Psalms, according to the lecture?

The number 42, particularly within the Elohistic Psalter which contains 42 Psalms, is often associated with judgment, premature death, and tribulation based on its use elsewhere in the Old Testament. This suggests a dark tone, possibly reflecting the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile.

1. Why is Psalm 22 considered a Messianic psalm, and what is its connection to the crucifixion?

Psalm 22 is considered a Messianic psalm because its language transcends David's experience, matching the details of Jesus' crucifixion. Jesus himself quoted the first line of this psalm on the cross, and the psalm contains many accurate prophecies about the crucifixion, including the piercing of hands and feet and the division of garments.

1. How does the speaker in Psalm 22 express his abandonment by God and people in the first section of the psalm (verses 1-10)?

In the first section, the speaker expresses abandonment by God through the lament, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" He also expresses abandonment by people through mocking, scorn, and being treated as less than human as a worm.

1. How does the psalmist in the first section find confidence in God despite the feelings of abandonment?

The psalmist finds confidence in God's past faithfulness to his ancestors and to himself. He recalls God being enthroned on Israel's praises and having been the one who caused him to trust from the womb.

1. Describe the two cycles of lament and zoomorphic imagery in verses 12-18 of Psalm 22?

The first cycle describes the enemies in zoomorphic terms as strong bulls and lions. Then the psalmist expresses his own physical suffering like water being poured out, bones being out of joint, and his heart melting like wax. Then the zoomorphic imagery returns with enemies like dogs, and his physical suffering is continued as he can count all of his bones.

1. What specific details in verses 12-18 of Psalm 22 align with the events of Jesus' crucifixion?

Verses 12-18 depict a death with bones out of joint and the sensation of thirst. It also shows the enemy as dogs, and his hands and feet are pierced which accurately match what occurred at the cross. Additionally, the distribution of clothes and casting lots are specific details.

1. How is the petition in verses 19-21 of Psalm 22 structured in relation to the preceding lament?

The petition reverses the order of the zoomorphic imagery and torments described in the lament. It goes backward through the images, starting with sword and dogs, then lions and wild oxen, creating a chiasm which ties together the lament and petition.

1. How does the speaker shift from lament and petition to praise in verses 22-31 of Psalm 22?

The speaker shifts to praise as he declares he will proclaim God's name and praise him to his brothers in the congregation. This is a communal call to worship and celebration of God's deliverance. This message of praise then goes universally as he proclaims God will be remembered to the ends of the earth.

1. What is the significance of the ending of Psalm 22, and how does it connect to the Christian understanding of Jesus' victory?

The end of Psalm 22 speaks of a universal victory of God, his righteousness being proclaimed to all generations, connecting to the Christian understanding of the resurrection and how Jesus defeated the ultimate enemy which is death. This universal reach is then brought back into all of time as the message is passed down from generation to generation, validating a hope that will extend into eternity.

Answer Key

1. The Elohist Psalter refers to Psalms 42-83. A key difference is the more frequent use of "Elohim" and less frequent use of "I Am" in this section compared to Psalms 1-41 and 84-150. This indicates a focus on God's transcendence over his covenant relationship.
2. The number 42, particularly within the Elohist Psalter which contains 42 Psalms, is often associated with judgment, premature death, and tribulation based on its use elsewhere in the Old Testament. This suggests a dark tone, possibly reflecting the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile.
3. Psalm 22 is considered a Messianic psalm because its language transcends David's experience, matching the details of Jesus' crucifixion. Jesus himself quoted the first line of this psalm on the cross, and the psalm contains many accurate prophecies about the crucifixion, including the piercing of hands and feet and the division of garments.
4. In the first section, the speaker expresses abandonment by God through the lament, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" He also expresses abandonment by people through mocking, scorn, and being treated as less than human as a worm.
5. The psalmist finds confidence in God's past faithfulness to his ancestors and to himself. He recalls God being enthroned on Israel's praises and having been the one who caused him to trust from the womb.
6. The first cycle describes the enemies in zoomorphic terms as strong bulls and lions. Then the psalmist expresses his own physical suffering like water being poured out, bones being out of joint, and his heart melting like wax. Then the zoomorphic imagery returns with enemies like dogs, and his physical suffering is continued as he can count all of his bones.
7. Verses 12-18 depict a death with bones out of joint and the sensation of thirst. It also shows the enemy as dogs, and his hands and feet are pierced which accurately match what occurred at the cross. Additionally, the distribution of clothes and casting lots are specific details.
8. The petition reverses the order of the zoomorphic imagery and torments described in the lament. It goes backward through the images, starting with sword and dogs, then lions and wild oxen, creating a chiasm which ties together the lament and petition.

9. The speaker shifts to praise as he declares he will proclaim God's name and praise him to his brothers in the congregation. This is a communal call to worship and celebration of God's deliverance. This message of praise then goes universally as he proclaims God will be remembered to the ends of the earth.
10. The end of Psalm 22 speaks of a universal victory of God, his righteousness being proclaimed to all generations, connecting to the Christian understanding of the resurrection and how Jesus defeated the ultimate enemy which is death. This universal reach is then brought back into all of time as the message is passed down from generation to generation, validating a hope that will extend into eternity.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the structure of Psalm 22, paying particular attention to the shifts between lament, confidence, petition, and praise. Discuss how this structure contributes to the psalm's overall message and emotional impact.
2. Discuss the significance of the use of zoomorphic imagery in Psalm 22, and explain how this imagery enhances the psalm's depiction of both the psalmist's suffering and his enemies. How do the animals relate to his personal suffering?
3. Explore the concept of abandonment as it is expressed in Psalm 22. Compare and contrast the abandonment by God with the abandonment by people, and discuss how the psalmist finds hope and confidence despite these feelings.
4. Explain how Psalm 22 functions as both a personal lament and a prophetic depiction of the Messiah's suffering. How does the psalmist's personal experience relate to the suffering of Christ in this Messianic reading?
5. Examine the theological themes in Psalm 22, including God's sovereignty, the nature of suffering, and the promise of salvation. How does the psalm's ending provide a message of universal hope and victory, and how does this impact the understanding of Jesus as the Messiah?

Glossary

Elohistic Psalter: Refers to Psalms 42-83, characterized by a statistically higher use of the divine name "Elohim" and less frequent use of "I Am."

I Am (YHWH): The personal covenant name of God in the Old Testament, often translated as "the LORD."

Elohim: A Hebrew word for God, often used to emphasize His transcendence, power, and sovereignty.

Messianic Psalm: A psalm that speaks prophetically about the person or work of the Messiah, often containing details that align with the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

Lament Psalm: A psalm that expresses grief, sorrow, and complaint over personal or communal suffering. It often includes a petition to God for help.

Typology: A method of biblical interpretation where a person, event, or thing in the Old Testament foreshadows a corresponding person, event, or thing in the New Testament.

Zoomorphic: Characterized by the use of animal imagery or characteristics.

Chiasm: A literary structure where elements are presented in an ABCCBA pattern. In Psalm 22, this is seen in the structure of the petition after the lament.

Doxological: An expression of praise, reflecting the nature of God. Psalm 22 is a doxological comment in that it ends in praise.

Semaphore: A system of sending messages by flags, lights, etc.

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

Frequently Asked Questions about the Psalms, focusing on Psalm 22 and the Elohist Psalter

1. **What is the "Elohist Psalter" and why is it significant?**
2. The Elohist Psalter refers to Psalms 42-83. It's significant because it shows a marked statistical difference in the use of divine names compared to the rest of the Psalter (Psalms 1-41 and 84-150). In the Elohist Psalter, "Elohim" (God) is used far more frequently than "I AM" (Yahweh or Lord), whereas the opposite is true in the rest of the Psalms. This shift indicates that these psalms give priority to the transcending nature of God over the covenant-keeping aspect. Furthermore, there is a reversal in the parallelism, so that Elohim appears in the A verse set, while I Am is in the B verse set in the Elohist Psalter, the opposite of the rest of the Psalter. This suggests a deliberate theological emphasis on God's transcendence and perhaps a context of judgment or crisis.
3. **What does the number 42 have to do with the Psalms, particularly the Elohist Psalter?**
4. The number 42 appears in the ancient Near Eastern collections of poetry, and there are 42 Psalms in the Elohist Psalter, which begins with Psalm 42. The number 42 is often associated with judgment, premature death, and tribulation in the Old Testament. For example, 42,000 Ephraimites were killed for not being able to say "Shibboleth" and there are 42 children who were killed in an Old Testament account. This use of 42 within the Elohist Psalter may allude to a period of darkness, potentially linked to the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile. The salvation and restoration following exile would thus be the other side of this theme of judgment.
5. **What is the significance of Psalm 22?**
6. Psalm 22 is a significant psalm in the Christian tradition because it is a Messianic psalm, deeply connected to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It expresses deep lament and anguish, which Jesus quoted from while on the cross. Many details within the Psalm, including the mocking, piercing of hands and feet, and the casting of lots for clothing, align with the events of the crucifixion. It is a psalm that transitions from lament and petition to confidence and praise which fits the story of the cross and resurrection.

7. Why is it important that Jesus quoted Psalm 22 on the cross?

8. When Jesus quoted the opening line of Psalm 22 ("My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"), He was not just expressing despair but also alluding to the entire psalm. This highlights that Jesus' suffering was not random but was part of a divine plan prophesied in scripture. By using these words, Jesus demonstrated that His death was a fulfillment of prophecy, validating His role as the Messiah and revealing a deep connection between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The whole psalm is relevant, with the details matching Jesus' experience on the cross and a triumphant ending.

9. How is Psalm 22 structured and what are its key themes?

10. Psalm 22 is structured into three main stanzas with a transitional verse. The first (verses 1-10) mixes lament and confidence and praise, showing the psalmist's feelings of abandonment by God and people. The second (verses 12-21), following a transitional verse (11), is a deeper lament using zoomorphic imagery and detailing his suffering. The third (verses 22-31) transitions into praise for the believing Jews and, ultimately, all the ends of the earth and also details the victory of God in the resurrection. The overall structure follows this pattern: Lament, Lament and Petition, followed by Praise. The key themes are: abandonment, suffering, trust, divine faithfulness, and ultimate deliverance.

11. How does Psalm 22 portray both the suffering and the triumph of the afflicted?

12. Psalm 22 portrays intense suffering using graphic language (e.g., bones out of joint, heart melted like wax, tongue stuck to the roof of the mouth) and images of enemies likened to bulls, lions and dogs. The afflicted experiences not only physical pain but also feelings of abandonment by both God and people. However, the psalm also reveals the afflicted's trust in God's past faithfulness, both to their ancestors and personally, from the time of their birth. The transition to praise in the latter part of the psalm demonstrates that even in the deepest suffering, there is hope of deliverance and ultimate triumph. This hope leads to a proclamation of God's righteousness to all nations, demonstrating that suffering is not the end.

13. What role does faith play in Psalm 22, especially when feelings of abandonment are present?

14. Faith plays a vital role in Psalm 22, even in the presence of feelings of abandonment by God. The psalmist's faith is grounded in both the past actions of God for his people ("You are the Holy One, the one enthroned on the praises of Israel. In you our fathers put their trust.") and the past faithfulness of God toward himself since his birth ("You are the one who brought me out of the womb, the one who caused me to trust at my mother's breast."). This recollection and acknowledgment of God's character allows the psalmist to maintain trust even amidst profound suffering and feelings of abandonment. It demonstrates that even when God feels distant, faith can be a foundation for hope and petition.

15. How does Psalm 22 connect to a Christian understanding of suffering and redemption?

16. Psalm 22 provides a powerful framework for understanding Christian concepts of suffering and redemption. It reveals that suffering can be an experience of feeling abandoned by God, mirroring the experience of Christ on the cross. However, it also teaches that this experience can lead to deeper trust in God, and ultimately, to triumph and praise. This message of overcoming suffering through faith and divine action is central to Christian theology. It offers hope and meaning to those who endure hardship, as it promises that suffering can be part of God's redemptive plan, with the victory of the resurrection following the agony of the cross.