

Dr. David Emanuel, Session 1, Exodus Psalm 136

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This is Dr. David Emanuel in his teaching on the Exodus Psalms. This is session number one, Introduction, Psalm 136, Antiphonal Liturgy.

Hello, I'm Dr. David Emanuel. I teach here at Nyack College, this wonderful setting, and Alliance Theological Seminary. My background is originally in computer science, but after a while, I gave that up and I came to study the Bible. I studied 11 years at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in what is called the Bible, but obviously is the Old Testament.

Today I'd like to begin taking you through part of what I dedicate a great amount of time to at the Hebrew University. That's looking at the Exodus motif in the Psalms. That's basically my background.

So, I've done a lot of biblical Hebrew. I've done a lot of Hebrew poetry as well as basic understanding of the ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible. So we're going to be looking basically at the next few videos, we're going to be looking at the Exodus motif in the Psalms.

In order to do that, I want to begin really just by talking a little bit about the Exodus motif. If I take you all the way back to as I started my doctoral studies, when I began looking at it, I knew what my topic was. I knew I was going to study the Exodus motif as it appears in the Psalter.

So, I began looking at the Exodus motif itself. As I read through the Bible, both the Hebrew Bible as well as the New Testament, I began to come to a conclusion, come to the conclusion that perhaps the Exodus motif was the most dominant and the most influential tradition in the whole of the Bible. That's the feeling which I began to have as I read through the Bible.

The more I read about the motif, the more I saw it reflected in so many different texts, all the way from Genesis, even identifiable in the book of Revelation. So, I saw that going on and I became so convinced that this was the most dominant tradition in the whole of the Bible. When it came to my introduction to my dissertation, I wrote this statement here.

That's as I opened it up. The Exodus motif is one of the most dominant motifs in the Hebrew Bible. I basically wrote that because of my English reserve, I didn't feel quite comfortable saying that it was the most dominant motif, although that is what I absolutely believed.

I handed the first draft of the introduction into my advisor and he looked at it and he made one correction to that. That was the correction he made. The Exodus motif is the most dominant motif in the whole of the Bible, not one of the most dominant, but the most dominant motif.

That's what I found. So, there's no real surprise at all that it appears in the book of Psalms. So, before we actually look at how it appears in the Psalms, we're first going to look at the motif itself.

We'll look at a few which Psalms it affects and then we're going to look at the motif itself. Then we're going to begin looking at Psalms, the five Psalms, which I've selected for this particular set of lectures. So, concerning the Exodus in the Psalms, one of the things we have to remember is that it is basically a cross-genre, which is to say there is no one particular genre.

If you're familiar with the genres as originally defined by Hermann Gunkel, laments, songs of praise, hymns of thanksgiving, all of those, which I'm sure you've learned in other videos in Psalms class. But there was not one single genre to which the Exodus motif actually applies, but it's what we call cross-genre and it affects a whole variety of them. I need to mention as well concerning the Psalter that there are a number of places where small mentions of the Exodus appear such as Psalm 66, 77, 95 and 114.

These Psalms will not be covered in this lecture series. There are even a couple more places we can think of places such as Psalm 23, a Psalm that many people know, which has been connected to the Exodus because it has this idea of leading, which is reflective of the desert period and also settling at the end of the Psalm in the last two verses, which is an idea or reflection of settling into the promised land. So there are echoes of the Exodus tradition in other Psalms other than these.

But in these places, there's probably at least one or two in Psalm 14. A lot of it addresses or deals with the Exodus motif. For our studies, the most dominant content is going to appear in these Psalms here.

Psalm 7, Psalm 78, 105, 106, 135 and 136. Those are the Psalms that I'm going to be focusing on in this lecture series. How are we going to approach each of the Psalms? There are a number of things that I want to provide for each Psalm in order to help give us some kind of structure to this series.

The first thing I want to provide for each Psalm is an outline. So, I want to just give you a basic overview of the contents, which we're going to look at first. So, you can provide some kind of a roadmap so we can see what we're going to be looking at.

The second thing I want to speak about is the purpose. I want to cover that at some stage. We have to look at why the Psalm was actually written.

That's very important because it's only when we understand why a Psalm was written, what was the Psalmist trying to achieve? It's only when we understand that, that we can then understand why he selects certain elements of the Exodus motif into his particular composition. We will see that there are certain things if they don't fall into his structure, his rubric, these things are going to be neglected, even though we may think they are central themes in the actual motif. We're then going to look at, and this is not going to be something I'm going to be able to do at all to as much satisfaction as I'd like to because it would involve a lot more original language knowledge.

But we will nevertheless look at the connections that the Psalm has to the Exodus motif, particularly Exodus and the book of Numbers. But you'll see that there are going to be other places as well. So, we'll be looking at those, we'll be comparing some of those aspects as well.

The question of notable omissions is going to be addressed too. Those are places where there are key elements. We'll talk about the Exodus motif in just a moment.

But there are key elements of the Exodus motif that really I think are important in the book of Exodus at least or appear in the book of Numbers, which are ignored, which may be ignored. I want to raise some of those, bring some of those, and mention some of those things as we deal with the individual Psalms. Another aspect I want to look at concerns the poetics of the Psalms.

This is an area, this is one of my pet peeves, which I have. Oftentimes the Psalms that we've mentioned, particularly Psalm 105, 106, Psalm 78, these are Psalms that have been criticized in the past because they tell a story and because they have a plot and a narrative. These are Psalms that have been criticized as being less poetic somehow.

That's really an arbitrary judgment on the actual Psalms themselves. So, I know this is not a class or a series of lectures that's going to focus on Hebrew poetics, but it is something that I like and very fond of. So, I do want to talk about some of the poetic features that we find within these Psalms, particularly some of the emphatic structures.

So, I do want to go over the certain poetics within these Psalms. Then there's the question of reuse, interpretation, and reuse. Here what we want to look at or begin to look at are those instances where what certainly appears to be the author's source doesn't quite match up with what he's placed in his work.

I want to just explore some of the relationships between the psalm itself and the source to understand, well, why is this change being made? What is the change? You'll see as we go through some of these Psalms, the source may not actually be

directly from the Pentateuch, but the psalmist may have taken a different text, an older tradition or something from another psalm or another piece of literature and woven that and used that to tell his story because it suits his purpose so much better. So, we're going to be looking at that question of interpretation or reuse from the biblical psalmist. For the most part, I'm going to be using the NASB, the New American Standard Bible in my quotations.

I'll say that now. I'm saying that for the most part, but there will be times I need to deviate from that because we find, and this is going to come up a number of times, that sometimes the English translators tend to mess about a little bit with the poetics in order to make the text more readable. So, you may see certain changes in words here and there.

It's not an ideal situation, but it's something that we nevertheless have. So I'm going to be adapting certain texts and I'll try to make you aware of when I'm doing that and what the actual point is for that. So that's basically how we're going to be looking at each of the psalms.

So, the next thing we have to do is begin to try and define the Exodus. What events are we looking at? This is just another overview so we can have an understanding of the components within the Exodus that we are going to be thinking about. The first one is this, is the move from clan to the promised land.

Here I'm referring to the end of the book of Genesis, beginning with the book of Exodus when it was Jacob and his extended family, which is described as 70 souls in all. They go down to Egypt to meet with Joseph in order to escape the famine, the harsh famine, which has come across the land of Canaan as it was at the time. So, we've got them going in and they are just a clan.

Then from there they obviously multiply and become a people and that's when they become slaves in Egypt. A new king arises who doesn't recognize Joseph and he enslaves them because they multiply so much. We see that this is also something which is reflected in some of those psalms.

A very important part of the motif is the deliverance from slavery, particularly the plagues. You'll see there are 10 plagues mentioned in the book of Exodus culminating in the death of the firstborn of the Egyptians. That's a very common motif, although the plagues, as we'll see, are represented slightly differently across these Exodus psalms.

We also have the miraculous sea crossing, which we have a picture of here in which the sea is split. There are various aspects to that in which there's a degree of rebellion that takes place because the people are accusing Moses of taking them

from slavery, leading them to death in the beginnings of the wilderness or by the sea. So, there's a bit of rebellion there, but that's when God performs this miracle.

That's a concept we'll be talking about later on in splitting the sea allowing them to cross it. Then there's the story of provisions in the wilderness. There's a provision of water.

There's a provision of bread, the manna, which is a very popular tradition, and also the provision of meat with quail as well. Along with the provision, there is the sin which takes place in the wilderness as the Israelites complain in various levels. They complain against Moses.

Small groups complain against Moses. Even his sister Miriam and Aaron complain against him. There's this constant work of Moses having to intercede for the people and to bring their needs up to God and bring God's needs down to them.

Then there's what I think is a very important part of the story, which is the giving of Torah when Moses ascends Mount Sinai and God instructs his people on how they should be living if they are to be a covenant people. Obviously, we have whole books like Deuteronomy is dedicated to a lot of the exposition of the Torah as is Leviticus 2. So we're moving beyond the narrative, but there's also the aspects of law giving that takes place as well. Then if we follow the pattern in the Torah itself, we will see that there's also the initial conquest of the Transjordanian regions.

Here we're looking at the territories of Og, king of Bashan and Sihon, king of the Amorites. There's that initial conquest before they actually enter into the promised land. If I just draw this up real quick over here, this is normally how I would draw the nation of Israel with the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea there.

This is the Jordan. This is the area that was pretty much marked out for Israel. Israel comes to this point here at the end of Deuteronomy, approximately that sort of region.

But all of this area here, which was originally not allotted to the Israelites belonging to the Amorites because the Amorites, Og and Sihon did not let the Israelites cross their territory. They conquered it and they were able to sequester a large region before they actually crossed the Jordan into this land over here that was promised to them. So those are the constituent parts of the Exodus motif.

As we look at the Psalms, we're going to see how these parts are reflected and how they've been woven into other biblical traditions as well and how they've been woven into the fabric of Hebrew poetry too. So that said, we're going to begin with Psalm 136. I'm beginning with Psalm 136 simply because it's one of the shorter Psalms.

Because of this introduction and the time limit I have on the first video, I'm going to need to fit a shorter Psalm in, in order to squeeze in the introduction too. So, it is one of the short ones and it's the last one in the actual book. The next one we do will be Psalm 78, which will be the first one.

So, a quick introduction to the Psalm itself and we'll see that it is basically a liturgical hymn, an antiphonal hymn, in which after each line, that is each verse that is said that tells the story that kind of contains the plot. We find the phrase, *ki leolam hazdo*, the Hebrew phrase, for his love, for his covenant love, for his grace, for his mercy is everlasting. So, it's an antiphonal hymn.

It seemed to be an antiphonal hymn in which it was set most probably, and I know this from living in Israel during the Passover. This is definitely a Psalm that's sung every year whereby the leader would say one particular verse and then everybody else would take part by saying, *ki leolam hazdo*, for his love is everlasting. Now I've mentioned just here, the response being non-organic with a question mark.

That's simply because there are questions arise, certainly among scholarship, as to whether that secondary line *ki leolam hazdo*, for his love is everlasting. There are questions as to whether that actually is original to the Psalm or whether it was inserted to a different work in order to create a liturgical composition. There is a relatively good reason to assume that there is a, in the Psalm scroll at Qumran, for example, we have a copy of Psalm 145, which exists with an antiphonal line, which appears all of the time after each verse.

Now that's not the copy that we have in the Masoretic text, but it would suggest that at least the Israelites, early Israelites at some stage saw certain compositions and wanted to move them more into a liturgical context. So, they would add a line in which the audience or the participants could recite in order to participate as well. So, there's a possibility that that's non-organic.

There's another reason why, and we're going to see that when we look at Psalm 135. So, I'll hold off on that until then. There are approximately 13 verses that deal with the Exodus, 10 to 22.

We're going to see those in just a moment. We also have to note what's worth me noting now that the juxtaposition is notable. The fact that we have Psalm 135 as well as it comes after 136.

We'll see a little bit later that there seems to be some kind of attraction between Exodus Psalms, which speaks something towards the editorial activity of the arrangers of the Psalter or the composers or the editors and redactors of the Psalter. But we will talk about that a little bit later. Something that we see or one aspect that

we see or we should notice in this Psalm is that God is very much portrayed as a warrior.

He's somebody who fights for Israel and that seems to be the main thrust. It seems to be the reason why this Psalmist has grabbed onto or taken and adopted certain elements of the Exodus. The Exodus was a known story.

Everybody knew it and it can tell many different things. You can gain or you can prove many points from it. But this particular author seems to have grabbed onto the idea of God as a warrior, somebody who fights, somebody who is Israel's king and does battle with other kings.

We'll see that in just a moment. So, let's look at the structure of the Psalm itself. It begins with introductory praise and worship, which most Psalms begin with.

Even though the Exodus Psalms, if they have anything to do with praise, then you'll find an introductory part that will just kind of bring the audience into a spirit of song, a spirit of praise and worship. So, we have that in verses one to three. Then we have God's work in creation in four to nine.

We'll talk a little bit about that when we go into it in more detail. But the idea of creation we have to think is more than just the initial act of creation, but it's about sustaining and maintaining the world as well. We're going to come to that a little bit later on.

Then we have God's work in the Exodus. Two main aspects, there's deliverance from Egypt and then there's the defeat of the Transjordanian kings. Those are the two primary aspects of which the Psalmist focuses on.

Then we've got a praise summary that summarizes God's deliverance. We'll talk about that as to what exactly it relates to. But for now, let's continue and look at, let's take each of these sections or take a part of some of these sections and talk a little bit more about them.

I won't read through all of the verses. They'll be up there for you to take a look at, but I have highlighted certain parts of it. This phrase, give thanks to Hodula in Hebrew, Hodula Adonai is a phrase that repeats at the beginning of each of the three verses.

That helps organize it and that helps tell us that this should be viewed as one particular section. We have the idea of hesed, which is introduced, the Hebrew word, which is introduced, ki leolam hasdo. Here we have the Hebrew word hesed, which I will put up here because it's a very important idea as to how it's interpreted.

Hesed, something like that in Hebrew. If I write as well, I guess it looks a bit like that in English. It's a word that is difficult, kind of difficult to explain in one go, but it's to do with grace.

It has to do with mercy. It has to do with covenant love in certain contexts, but not necessarily all of them. I wonder if grace is probably the best phrase to use, but even those phrases or words by themselves don't fully do this word enough justice.

We find this *ki leolam hasdo*, it's repeated. The fact that it is repeated is kind of like an echo in the same sense that God's mercy is everlasting. So we keep repeating it in this everlasting fashion as well.

So, the fact that it is repeated reflects the idea of God's eternal covenant love. There are a couple of qualifications to that, which we're going to find out about in just a moment. We also have here, give thanks to the God of gods.

Then we have this phrase *Elohei Elohim* in Hebrew. *Elohim* is another one of these key components. I know this is not a Hebrew class, but you have to talk about these words.

It's a word, a common word for God. It would be *Elohim* like this, written something like that, pronounced like that. It's a word that's used very often to describe the God of Israel.

But what many people don't realize as well is that it's a word that is also used to describe other deities. In the ancient Near East, even amongst the Israelites, there was the idea of God, but the idea of other deities, angelic-type figures, and celestial beings was also very much prominent. So, they use this word *Elohim* in certain contexts to describe these other gods as well as the God of Israel.

That's a very important idea. It's only when we see the name of the Lord, the Tetragrammaton, *Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh*, that we know for sure, a hundred percent that we're dealing with the God of the Israelites. So here we've got to give thanks to the God of gods, which is kind of like almost suggesting as well that they had a recognition that God, the God of Israel was above any other god.

Now whether that was, whether they recognized it was God, whether they thought it was angels, that's a different story. We'd need to look at those in different contexts. But there was nevertheless some kind of recognition of other beings as well as the God of Israel.

There's an allusion, a biblical allusion here, I believe, which goes down to Deuteronomy. So, we have this idea of *Elohim* meaning, describing a god other than

the God of Israel. Now there's potential allusion, which is what I was saying here, between Deuteronomy 10.17 and the Psalmist here.

This will introduce the idea of something that happens a great deal in biblical literature in which there is very seldom, I say very seldom, again, it's my English reserve kicking in. There is no book in the Bible that ever existed by itself. We often have a notion that biblical books kind of exist like this.

In many ways, we've been taught to read scriptural books and sections as though they exist as independent units written totally separately. But that's never the case. Throughout all of the books in the Bible, there is always, I mean absolutely every book in the Bible, there is a very complicated network of connections in which the biblical authors were influenced either subconsciously or purposefully by other texts in the Bible.

They would borrow phrases from different places and they would bring those phrases into their particular text. That happens all of the time. That's an important way in which we should be viewing all of Scripture, not just these Exodus Psalms.

I'm talking about the New Testament as well as the Old. We have to understand that people were immersed in Scripture. They knew verses and words and phrases all the time and they were incorporating that into their texts.

So this is just one instance of it here in Deuteronomy, for the Lord your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great mighty and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. Because this particular wording is quite unique to these two places, that's one of the signs that there is a high chance of scriptural borrowing in which the author is consciously or unconsciously knows of something and he's pulling it into his work. So, we then have God's work in creation verses four to nine.

We speak of God's great wonders, his great wonders. This is another interesting idea because we're introduced to the idea or the language of miracles. In Hebrew, there's a root *pele* like this.

I'll just write it like that as a root. This word *pele*, I should probably write out the English as well, shouldn't I? This word *pele* is a concept that describes something that is too difficult for people. The ancients would separate the jobs, work, and tasks of individuals.

So you would have work which a man could do like a man can chop down a tree, a man can build a house. These things are within the realms of man. But when it comes beyond that, then we have the concept of *niflaot*.

These are highly, unfortunately, but these are words that describe what we know as miracles, ideas of miracles. In the ancient world, miracles were things that only God could do, things that were basically too difficult for man. So, this word here niflaot and this other word gedolot as well, when we see these words in the word pele, we are talking essentially about miracles, things which only God can do.

Again, I need to just talk a little bit about this because when we're dealing with this concept of the miracle, the ancients have a very different idea to what a miracle is than what we do today. Today we think in terms of three strata, I think. We think in terms of what men can do, what people can do, or what people do.

People can build houses and people can chop down trees. But in contemporary society, we have another layer which may be described as Mother Nature. Then we see things that nature takes care of, such as healing.

If we get a cut or a scratch, we're healed. It comes down and this is ascribed to Mother Nature, the natural process in which we are healed. Then we have the idea of a distant God who sometimes comes in and we think of this in terms of a miracle when God comes in to do something on top of that.

But in biblical days, there were only two layers. There was an idea of a creator and created. So, everything that we couldn't do is ascribed therefore to God who maintains his creation.

He doesn't just do it, but he maintains it. So, if we do cut ourselves and are healed, it's not Mother Nature, but it's God who heals us because we cannot do that ourselves. So, we have to keep in mind that's what the ancients were thinking of.

There was no concept of nature. In fact, when I actually mentioned that once to my advisor, he jumped out of his chair and he looked at me and said, nature, there is no such thing as nature in the biblical world. So that's when we think, when we read this word, niflahot, gedolot, we see it translated as wonders.

It might be translated, I don't know, with signs. We need to think in terms of difficult deeds that only God can actually do. These are biblical, this is biblical miracle language.

More than that, we'll find that the word pele and this word niflahot is often assigned to the Exodus and the miracles wrought during the Exodus period. In modern Hebrew, they use a different word for miracle. They use the word nes, which is a word that means banner.

It does not have that word of anything kind of like, not supernatural, but magnificent in biblical terms. But that's maybe a slightly different story. We find here that the

pattern being adopted in this particular Psalmist work is general to specific in that he first of all mentions a general principle and then he knuckles down into the detail of what he actually means.

Because you've got here, let's take here, it says, to him alone who does great wonders. Then after that, he goes and explains what these wonders actually are. So you've got this general to a specific pattern, which we don't find in all of the Psalms.

There's a question here and every time I put a question mark by one of my statements here, there's maybe a degree of debate about it. But there is a potential wisdom influence here because we have he who spreads out the earth. Where are we? To him who made the heavens with skill.

Here it's got the heavens with skill. This word skill has a root, it's *tevunah binah*, which is translated elsewhere as understanding. So, this is the type of thing again, which we see not reflected well in biblical translations.

I can see why the translator used the word skill, but I wonder if the idea of understanding, which introduces the notion of God creating the world with wisdom. There's this tradition that wisdom was present with God in the creation of the world. So we begin to see that reflected here, definitely in Hebrew, even if it's not so apparent in the English translation.

So, we have a specific mention here too, one more thing about the sun and the moon. This is something that doesn't really cause much of a stir. Okay, we understand that the sun and the moon were created, but in relationship to the Hebrew text, we find that there is a need for the Psalmist to be explicit because in the Genesis text at the creation of the world, the sun and the moon are never explicitly mentioned.

All we have in the Genesis text are the greater lights being created and the lesser lights being created. Now there are reasons for that, which I won't go into, but here the Psalmist reading, presumably from a Genesis text, wants to be specific and say, no, the sun and the moon were created at that particular time. So, it sheds light on what was going on in Exodus.

We then have the section dealing with God's work in the Exodus. The first thing which we see is the mention of God striking the Egyptians' firstborn. This raises the question we have in the chorus, for his love is everlasting.

But when we read this, we have to qualify what the Psalmist means. Yes, he's saying for his love is everlasting, but really what the Psalmist is saying is for his mercy towards Israel is everlasting. Because if you were an Egyptian at that time and your firstborn was struck, the last thing you were going to think is his love is everlasting.

Yes, it is, but not to us because we're suffering under it. So that is an undertone. It's not explicitly said, but it's clearly implied in this particular Psalm.

We have he smites the Egyptians and we also have dividing the sea asunder. The wording here is a little bit strange because it says that he splits the sea. L'xor bexarim is the expression that's used.

This is nowhere else found in any of the Exodus Psalms to describe the splitting of the sea by God. So why would the Psalmist choose such strange words? He may have just chosen them out because they came into his mind, but he may also have chosen them under the influence of this text in Genesis 15.17, which is the story of the torch between the pieces where Abraham makes this sacrifice to God. And it came about when the sun had set, it was very dark and behold there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch that passed between these pieces.

If you go into that text, you look at that text, you will see that it's a text which many people believe is a text that foretells the Exodus. It foretells the Israelites with the sea splitting and them following after the pillar of fire, which goes before them and leads them through it. You'll see even in Genesis 15, when you read further on, this prediction of what will happen to Abraham's forefathers is indeed mentioned at that time.

So, we've got this text, which is a probable, I'm going to say a probable illusion. Or if I had to gamble, I'm not a gambling man obviously, but if I had to gamble, I would say that this text in Genesis was influencing his thoughts when he wrote this particular text as he wrote this Psalm out. The plagues are only roughly abbreviated here.

We have the firstborn, as I said, it's the most popular one that's picked on and then the others are kind of alluded to but abbreviated and they're not specifically detailed at all. But we do have the specific mention of Pharaoh's destruction. So here, even when you read this text, the emphasis seems to be more on God smiting, God hitting Pharaoh and attacking Pharaoh.

That seems to be the biggest emphasis and we'll see this as we go through the other Psalms. It's more on that than it is on the deliverance or on anything else that God does. It's about the attack and the destruction of this particular king and we'll see that echoed elsewhere in this particular Psalm.

So, we have the next section after the Exodus, God then takes his people, glossing over the desert events. He then takes his people through the desert. So here we're skipping over the 40 years of wandering around in the desert of the wilderness era.

We jump particularly to the Transjordan kings where God destroys the two kings Og and Sihon. Those are mentioned. As I said before, the emphasis in this in the short excerpt is not on the disobedience of the Israelites, but it is on the destruction of God almost fighting as a king, almost being compared to the other kings.

God defeated Pharaoh, he defeated Og and he defeated Sihon. He was their warrior. He was their king during the desert period.

That is the perception of the Israelites that God was their king during this time. A question arises, why stop at the Transjordanian conquest? Why haven't we gone any further? Like even the initial conquest of the land and the most popular reason for this in contemporary scholarship is that the Psalmist was predominantly working with the Torah, the first five books of Moses and that's as far as it goes. The end of Numbers, the beginning of Deuteronomy only stops at the Transjordanian conquest and doesn't go any further.

So, this may lend towards the idea that the Torah at the time of the Psalmist was somehow a collection. I want to say inspired, but that's a bit anachronistic, but it was seen as being very important and seen as being a collection of books at the time. Then we move to the distribution of land.

This pattern that we see here, it's a poetic pattern. It's an emphatic structure. It's called a terraced pattern.

I'm going to just mark it out. I know this is not a poetry course, but it's schematized as A, B, B, C where this B element is repeated for emphasis. So, in this particular case, we see and gave their land as a heritage.

Then we have a heritage repeated again to Israel, his servant. So, we've got, and he gave their land would be the A part of this. A heritage would be the B, which repeats twice.

Then we have to his servant Israel C right here. The fact that there is this, for his loving-kindness is everlasting, is inserted in between. It kind of destroys the terraced pattern.

That's just another reason for many people to assume that this chorus line is in fact a later addition to the psalm because it breaks up the poetry and it doesn't read quite as well. But in any event, this is the text that we have before us. We then have a summary of praise of God's deliverance.

To finish the psalm, the time frame is difficult to establish. It speaks about God remembering Israel in their lowly estate. But we don't really know, is this talking, is this a reference to the Exodus when he delivered the slaves from Egypt? Or is this, in

fact, a reference to something that the Israelites or the Psalmists had gone through, such as the exile in 587? So, it's difficult to determine for sure which one of these, or maybe it was written in a particularly dubious way in that either one of those scenarios could be attributed to it.

We have again this word, give thanks to, *hodule*, which appears here. As you remember, as I said at the beginning of the psalm, we've got three times that phrase was used. So this creates kind of like an inclusion for the psalm and it reminds us of the beginning.

But we'll be talking about that concept later on. Juxtaposition, I'd mentioned this before. So let me just say a few words about it now.

There seems to be an attraction of Exodus Psalms. Psalm 77, which contains some Exodus material, appears next to Psalm 78. Psalm 105, which again, Exodus dominates it, appears right next to Psalm 106.

Here we have Psalm 135, which is before our psalm. We've just looked at 136. So there appears to be some kind of cognizant effort by an arranger to group things together.

We know that this is true elsewhere in biblical literature. It's something called the principle of association, which I deal about, I discuss in my dissertation and in other forums. I will not go into this right now due to time constraints, but the content of the material of the Psalms does dictate to a certain place what psalms are placed next to each other.

They're not just thrown together entirely randomly. So, this was just my question. How did this situation come about? The two ideas, one is that it is random and coincidental.

I don't know how many people think about this type of stuff, but some people just think they were randomly put together. But I would argue that there is editorial activity and that the editors of the Psalter were aware of each psalm, the content of each psalm, keywords within it, how one ended, how one begins when they put things together. That is evident here and also elsewhere, although we won't go into that just now.

So, for summary, what can we say about this first psalm we've looked at, Psalm 136? The first of all is it's taking the idea of the Exodus and it's using it to describe or portray God as a warrior or a warrior king. The second thing is it has a liturgical purpose. So, it's taken, it's something which was deliberate, it had a setting, a very particular setting.

In all likelihood, the Passover, I don't want to swear to that, but in all likelihood, it would have been the Passover, but it would have functioned as part of a greater ceremony. Israel in this psalm is totally passive. They don't do anything.

They don't make any decisions. They don't rebel. They don't think.

They're only there to be delivered by an almighty God. That's not always the case, but it is in this particular psalm. It's the way in which the psalmist has chosen to portray God's people.

It lacked, as far as the Exodus went, there was not much in the way of direct allusions. We're going to see how this changes later on where there'll be many more places in a psalm where we can say, yes, he's looking at this particular place in all likelihood or no, he's not, or he's summarizing this particular place. We didn't have this so much.

The psalmist seems to be more general in his reference to the Exodus events. Then we have the question of chronological order. There seems to be a little bit of a change where the firstborn was mentioned first and then all of the plagues got used to deliver Israel.

So, this is a small example of it. We'll see more later, but it introduces the idea or the notion that even though we have the Exodus as a set sequence of events for the psalmist, it's more important to teach something or to create poetry. So the chronological order becomes far less important.

So, we're going to be discussing that as well in some of the other psalms. Then there's this question of qualification of loving-kindness. Even though the psalmist repeats this idea of *ki leolam hasdo*, for his love is everlasting, the idea of loving-kindness is really geared towards Israel.

What the psalmist really means is, for his love is everlasting to Israel or to his people. So that's the summary of the psalm. That's the first psalm that we've completed.

The next one we're going to look at is Psalm 78. This is Dr. David Emanuel in his teaching on the Exodus Psalms. This is session number one, Introduction, Psalm 136 antiphonal Liturgy.