

## Dr. David Emanuel, Session 2, Exodus Psalm 78

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This is Dr. David Emanuel in his teaching on the Exodus Psalms. This is session number two, Psalm 78, God chose David.

Now, in this video, we move on from Psalm 136, which was the last in the Psalms of the Exodus Psalms.

We're going to go back and try and follow the order of the Psalms by looking at Psalm 78, which I've entitled, And God Chose David. This is Psalm 78. This is the second longest Psalm in the Psalter.

Many people know what the longest Psalm in the Psalter is. You can identify that as 119, but not many people know what the second longest Psalm is. So, if anybody asks you that in a quiz, you can claim to know it.

It's Psalm 78, which is dedicated to the Exodus motif, the second longest. We saw that Psalm 136 was set in the framework, in a liturgical framework that was meant to be recited together in some kind of a ceremonial, some kind of festival. Here we find a Psalm that is established in a wisdom framework.

As we look at the introduction, you'll see many words and a lot of wisdom vocabulary that certainly brings us to think about literature such as the book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. The psalmist here has sacrificed chronological order. Chronological order is something that we have baked into our minds as being the guiding force in the arrangement of biblical literature, of literature generally.

But it's something that the ancients were certainly less concerned with. For them it was more important to teach a point, to teach a message, to encourage people to good works, to know God. These are the aspects that they were more important with.

If that meant that they had to sacrifice chronological order, then so be it. They were happy to do that so long as people got the message of what they were trying to teach. That's a very important principle we need to understand.

It's an important principle that you need to keep at the forefront of your mind when you're reading biblical literature generally. Just because X comes after Y, it does not necessarily mean to say chronologically it occurred in that particular way. This psalm has a complex redactional history, which is to say that there are layers of this psalm that it was developed, and that the version that we have today was probably not the first version that was originally written.

Now how you identify redactional layers in the psalm, that's not for this particular series of lectures, but this is something that has been identified by many scholars. For our purposes, what this means is that the psalm has, there are definitely two strata within it that kind of point towards two different messages, two different points to its composition. The first of them is learning from history.

So, as we read the psalm, you will see a very strong movement towards teaching people how important it is to remember what your ancestors have done and not to repeat the same mistakes. That is something we'll see as we go through the psalm. That's a prominent theme within it.

The second one is the selection of David and Judah. We find that at the end of the psalm, as we will look at the structure of the psalm in just a moment and you will see how these two points are emphasized within the psalm itself. But the selection of David and Judah is basically the selection of the southern kingdom of Israel for the establishment of the temple and Jerusalem, the holy city.

That is something as well, which is taught and the rejection of Ephraim, which is symbolic of the northern kingdom of Israel. So we see these two aspects within the psalm and it kind of obfuscates a lot of the narrative flow within it. But if you keep these two things in mind, you should be able to make some sense of it.

So, let's look at a brief look at the structure, a very brief look at the structure. The importance 1 to 8, the importance of recounting the deeds of the Lord, remembering the deeds of the Lord. That's something that is critical to the psalm, but more so to that first message, remembering what God has done for Israel, particularly his miracles.

We then have Ephraim's unfaithfulness in 9 to 11. We'll talk about that a little bit more because the notion of Ephraim switches a bit from the tribe to the northern kingdom, the northern tribes. Ephraim was very big and influential.

There were many members of that tribe and so oftentimes the northern kingdom of Israel was known and referred to as Ephraim. Then we have a series of recitals about the faithlessness of Israel against the kindness of God. That's a series of different incidents from history and from the Exodus in which this is drilled through.

God is kind by doing things. Israel responds by rebellion, by rebelling. God is kind and does not punish them to the extent, but he does punish them, but then he's merciful to them.

He's kind to them and they rebel against him. That's a recital and that idea or that pattern goes throughout that particular recital. Then we have a Psalmist summary, from 34 to 41 approximately, where the Psalmist basically emphasizes the point.

It's not enough just to mention examples. It's always important as well to specify in explicit words what your point is and that's what's going on here. We see this idea in parables.

When Jesus tells a parable, he won't just mention the parable, but frequently he will say, so don't be like this. So don't do that. So, you give the example, but then you make sure to be explicit, that you're explicit and say exactly what your point is.

We then have a second recital of faithfulness in light of God's kindness. Here we go down to the plagues. A lot of it is down to the plagues and the initial entry into Israel.

This second recital kind of parallels the first one here. You'll notice as well that because the plagues are mentioned in this recital here, the plagues, well that occurred before the splitting of the sea and the wilderness tradition. So for the Psalmist, this example here, even though it's chronologically before this one, he places it.

He reverses the order and it's not a problem because this is the point that he wants to emphasize. That's the direction in which he wants to go in right there. Then at the end, there's a conclusion, which is the rejection of Ephraim and Judah and David selected Judah as God's shepherd for Israel, taking over God's responsibilities.

Now in this psalm, in this structure, it's worth noting a couple of things. One of them is this central position here and we'll see that it's bracketed by the two recitals. Then it's bracketed again by the mention of Ephraim.

I can draw this out. It's called chiasm, but strictly speaking, it's not exactly that, but we'll see this elsewhere as well. So, we'll see in this particular case, you'll see in A, B, you'll have X and then you'll have B and then you'll have A here.

So, you'll have these corresponding positions here, then these corresponding positions here. This X is usually what we call an emphatic position, an emphatic location. It's a place where the heart of or an important part of your message is saved and it's reserved for that particular part of the psalm.

For us, it's the psalmist's summary of events of rebellion and constant sin, which we find here. So that's one thing we have to remember. The second or another very important emphatic position within a psalm comes at the end.

Frequently psalmists and not just psalmists, we find this in biblical prose as well. When they want to make a very important point, they leave it until the end. So, when you finish reading that composition, that is the flavor you're left with.

So, they want to make it emphatic. They want to make it very strong. So you are leaving with the important message that they seek to portray.

Good. So, let's look at some individual parts. We're not going to be able to look at all of it.

It's a very long psalm. Time is limited. So I'm going to take from certain sections, I want to look at some of the interesting points within the psalm itself.

We begin here with this expression, listen to my instruction. This is one of the phrases that we have, which links to the idea, not phrases, let's say, it's one of the interpretations that we have that links with the notion of wisdom. Listen to my instruction, which occurs in the first verse.

I'm sorry, I haven't actually put it up there. The word for instruction in this particular location is the Hebrew word, Torah. We find this in verse one, which I said I hadn't actually mentioned there.

But Torah is the word for instruction. Now this is most people, when you ask them, what does the word Torah mean? The first thing they say is it means law, but that's not the way we should be translating it all the time. Oftentimes in wisdom literature, we find that the word Torah is translated as instruction.

That's probably a better meaning than what we have in Torah. It's about guiding. It's about leading.

It's about instructing someone in the way in which they should, they could go. So that's the first hint we find of wisdom literature in this particular psalm. But we find other examples as well.

I'd mentioned before, how do I identify wisdom literature? By the vocabulary. We have these phrases and expressions. We have the psalm, the initial psalm, the title is called a maskil.

A maskil is from a root, sekal, sin, kaf, lamed. That's the root, which means wisdom, understanding, intelligence. It has those types of meaning to it.

Whoops, let me just change that. That's sekal. I mean, sekal, it's a sin.

Sorry about that. So that's very much a word that implies wisdom. But we also have these expressions to the words of my mouth found in Proverbs 4.5 and 5.7. That's an expression frequently used in Proverbs.

We find the word proverb, *mashal*, in verse two. I'm sorry I don't have that up here now, but it's another word that is frequently used in wisdom literature. *Mashal*, a short saying, an aphorism that teaches the reader.

We also have this word *chida*, which is a riddle. That's one way of understanding it. But once we go into the world of poetry, we have to always be very careful with applying meanings of words because oftentimes you will simply have, if a psalmist uses the word proverb in one part, in one half, in a colon, in order to balance that he needs another word that has a similar meaning.

So, he might choose the word *chida*. It doesn't necessarily mean to say that we have to understand the pure meanings. It just means to say that these two are related words and he's using one to balance the other one out.

That occurs in biblical parallelism. Again, this is not a course on Hebrew poetry, so I won't go into too much detail, but it's something that you need to be aware of. We have over here repetition which occurs and that's what I wanted to show you in this particular slide.

We see the idea of telling and instruction repeated in various ways. We have, our fathers have told us, it says there, to teach them and to tell them. That is repeated throughout the psalm.

We also have the idea of children, children, children, children, four times just in these verses here. I've got verses from three to seven. So, in this small section, relatively short section, we have this emphasis on teaching children.

It's something as we read psalms generally, we need to be very, very cognizant of. If we see ideas repeated, then it means that the psalmist is insisting that we listen to this particular thing, that it's an important point in the whole of his creation. So we have that repetition and we also have this word *niflaot* in verse four, praise the Lord, the strength, and his wondrous works.

That's how it's translated here, but that is the Hebrew again, *niflaot*, back to that word *pele*, which we saw in Psalm 136, which basically means that it's a deed, a work that is greater than a man could actually do. It's a miracle terminology. I'll say even further that oftentimes when we find the word in this particular format, which is a *niflaot* participle, it means specifically the exodus, the miracles wrought at the exodus, whether it was the plagues, whether it was the splitting of the sea, whether it was the provision of food.

All of these are counted as *niflaot*, things which are too great for man to do. We then have the next section, a very peculiar section, a very peculiar content, which deals with Ephraim's unfaithfulness. The text seems to be speaking of a mysterious event that we don't know much about.

The sons of Ephraim, at some stage, we have nothing in the Bible that specifically speaks of this. They turn back in a day of battle. They retreat in a day of battle and it's about in connection with a refusal to obey or to follow the laws of God.

We do not have any evidence of this in the Bible at all. So, we have to begin to ask the question, well, where does it come from? It's unlikely that he's just made this stuff up to fit in his psalm. He's trying to create a work that's going to have appeal or going to have a degree of understanding to his contemporaries.

So, it has to be something that they know about and he knows about that he could therefore reference. So, the likelihood is that there is a high likelihood that he's dealing with an ancient tradition that we do not have recorded in Scripture. Let me just take some time to explain that notion.

We know that the Bible has been written and obviously covers a historical period, a huge historical period, a couple thousand years. It's often thought or it's easy to think that within the Bible we have all of the historical traditions captured and nothing else was going on around it. But that's not the case.

There were many other traditions around the Bible, some of them paralleling the events that we have recorded that are very similar, but not exactly the same. There were many of these things around that everybody knew about. Oftentimes psalmists, poets, but also other biblical writers would draw upon some of these traditions.

Now they never knew that these other traditions were not going to be crystallized in Holy Writ. So, they were able to draw and touch upon some of these other traditions. We have that if you think of the New Testament, we have that in the Gospel of Thomas, which is not in our Bibles, but it was another gospel that was written that people would have known about in the Gospel of Judas.

We have these things around, so it's not a totally unfamiliar idea. So, in this case here, it would appear as though many people think that there is a tradition involving Ephraim which is not in the Bible. Now in order to find out or to dig up where these other traditions might appear, a nice place to go is the Targums.

The Targums, the early rabbinic writings, and the early Jewish literature as well from the second temple period, are the places that we need to go to see if we find echoes of it. In Targum Psalms, we find this mentioned here, while they were living in Egypt,

this is the Israelites, whilst they were in Egypt, the sons of Ephraim became arrogant. They calculated the appointed time and erred.

They made a mistake. They went out 30 years before the appointed time. That's before Moses led them.

With weapons of war and warriors bearing bows, they turned around and were killed on the day of battle. So, we have an echo. Now there's always the very big question concerning, is the author of Targum Psalms, is he reflecting the same tradition that is recorded here in Psalm 78 or is he creating his own Midrash? He sees that this is not in the Bible and so he generates this story as well.

Now that's a big question. We can't be a hundred percent certain, but I do want us to be aware of the possibility of another tradition echoed in this Psalm because later on in the Psalm, we may see signs of another tradition too. So, we have to be aware of it.

There are two possibilities that we just need to be cognizant of as we go through the Psalm. I've mentioned here other instances. I think there are other instances of traditions that seem to be seeping into the Psalm, which are not recorded explicitly in biblical literature.

So look at the first recital that begins with the sea splitting and it speaks of, he divided the sea. He made the water stand up like a heap. This is simply wording that echoes Exodus 15.8. We know that Exodus 15, the Song of the Sea, was highly influential in poetic renditions of the Exodus.

It seems as though rather than the prose tradition the Psalmist has used or adopted the poetic tradition from Exodus rather than the prose. Throughout this Psalm, you'll see as well, that the emphasis is very much on miracles, on magnificent works that God actually does that are really, really impressive. These are the things as though God is working overtime for the sake of the Israelites in order to really encourage them to respond correctly to the things he is asking of them.

What of Pharaoh? We don't hear about Pharaoh in this particular Psalm. He goes back to the Exodus. Remember in Psalm 136, Pharaoh was destroyed.

He's mentioned it. God is portrayed as this warrior, this king-type figure, but here it's the miracle. It's the magnificent work of God that's being emphasized.

So, we don't hear about Pharaoh. We don't hear about the destruction of his army into the sea because it's about the miracle. It's about the miraculous power of the God of Israel.

We move on to the provision of bread and we see again this idea, another idea of the doors of heaven. It's an example of God's response, his merciful response to disobedience. I mean, prior to this in verses 17 to 20, the Psalmist says that they sinned against God, testing him in their hearts.

So even though they have this sinful response to his miracle, God is still merciful and he wants to provide them with bread. We have this, this is obviously a rendition of the manna tradition. There's one in Numbers 11 and there's another in Exodus 16, which speaks of God providing a miraculous provision of bread.

But the rendition, I would argue, in this poetic case is far more, I wouldn't say exaggerated, but it's more miraculous. It's more exaggerated. He rained down manna upon them to eat and gain them food.

When you read that, it's as though they're walking and this manna is falling down from the sky. That's the way he's portrayed it. But when we look at the story in Exodus, it's much more basic.

A mist would rise and there's this kind of stuff on the ground that they had to pick up and do various things with. So, the way in which it occurs is really quite different. So, we've got the power, the magnificence of God is being emphasized in all of this.

Here as well, we see this idea, where is it? He did not trust in God. He rained down things. He opened the doors of heaven.

We've got this idea of the doors of heaven being opened. I just want to say a couple of words about this. There is an idea in biblical literature that up in heaven, the perception of the world was not quite as we would have it.

But up in the firmament, if I draw this out, the perception of the world was such that there were rivers here and mountains and this is the world and this land here. But there was a perception that up in the sky, there was something firm. There was something hard and concrete, which is called in Hebrew, the *rakia*, which in English, they call the firmament.

It was a solid thing here, which occasionally would open up. It would open up briefly and rain would come down from it and then God would shut it down again. That's the way in which they perceived the ancient world.

In addition to that, there was also the idea that up here, so if you go back here, there were various storehouses. So, there were storehouses for wind, there were storehouses for rain, and in addition to that, there was a storehouse for other things, for provisions that God wanted to provide people. So, there was the idea of the doors of heaven being open to provide things, the windows in heaven.



We see this idea echoed in 2 Kings 7.2 Behold, if the Lord should make windows in heaven, could this thing be? This was in regard to a famine in the days of Elisha. So, they had an idea that in heaven, there could have been windows that would open up and just pour down all of these supplies. We see it in Malachi as well.

Test me now in this, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven. So, we've got this idea of heavenly windows opening up and food just coming down. Those notions which the psalmist obviously would have known about, we see being applied in this particular situation with the Israelites.

Something else concerning this food is the manna, which is described in a relatively peculiar way. I'd mentioned before in the book of Numbers, manna, well, it's a type of natural seed. It's a residue.

It's something that comes from the ground. It's something that is, I want to say plausible, something that we can easily understand. You pick up from the ground and you bake it, you crush it, you roast it, you do whatever you want with it.

That's the way in which it's perceived in Numbers. For the psalmist, it becomes more than this. It becomes almost a divine food and it is described as food, divine food, the bread of angels.

He sent them food from heaven, the bread of angels. And here there's the notion or there's at least hints of a tradition that what's being eaten is the same food that angels eat. So there's a suggestion, there is a tradition out there that in heaven they eat food and it's from this supply, this heavenly food that we then find God giving to man.

This idea of angels' food being given to man, it's an idea we see it again. Targum Psalms mentions, and hints at it as well. The sons of men ate food that came down from the abode of angels.

He sent them provisions unto Saity. We see this idea here, but we also see this same idea with Elijah. When Elijah is fleeing from Jezebel, he runs in the desert he throws himself under a broom tree, and says, let me die, let me die, Lord, let me die.

And then he is woken up and an angel comes and gives him this with bread. He takes this bread and he eats this bread. It sustains him all the way to Mount Sinai.

So, this idea of angels' food coming to men, seems to be an idea, a notion, a tradition that was out there during the days of the psalmist and it's being tapped into right here at this particular point. The provision of meat, which comes afterwards, it seems more in keeping with the tradition in numbers. We have both of them

mentioned the wind and east wind here, which is modified with the direction from which it comes.

But we have the idea of a wind bringing the quail at this particular time as well. So, in this case, there isn't a whole load of similar wording between the two, but the allusion is quite clear as to where he's coming from. But we also see an omission because we have all of these cases.

We have the provision of food, but the law giving at Sinai is not mentioned. Neither is the rebellion of Miriam and Aaron against Moses. None of these find any kind of a mention.

They're not part of the psalmist's plan. For the psalmist, his main enemy or the main conflict occurs between the nation of Israel on the whole or even the tribe of Israel and God himself. So, this is one psalm where God's enemy is more aptly described as the people, the nation of Israel, as opposed to any other people or nation.

The psalmist's summary, I mentioned this before, it occupies this central position, which was very important. It's an emphatic location. So, he basically speaks out or summarizes the behavior of the Israelites making statements such as, God was gracious.

Israel ignored him and rebelled against him. They paid him lip service. They faked repentance towards him.

Most importantly, they forgot his miracles. That's what they did. If we go back to the beginning and that emphasis of telling and of sons, we see that forgetting his miracles is a sure way to walk into his punishment and his judgments.

So, all of this is done in a central position, again, as a warning to future generations. From there, we go back into the second recital and here it's mainly taken up with the plagues. Now up here I've got a list of the plagues as they appear in Exodus and as they appear in the psalm, the orders.

You will see that there is a difference. Lots of the plagues are the same, but the order is different and the number of psalms is different as well. We'll be addressing that in just a moment.

But let's take a brief look at the plagues first of all. We have blood, which is in the first place. Both plague traditions begin with that, with God striking the water.

He strikes the water and it fills with blood. The water becomes undrinkable. Then we have the plague of swarms.

Now I'm specifically saying swarms, which come, you'll notice as well, before frogs. You've got blood, swarms over here and swarms is down here. I have to qualify that by saying swarms of what? Now in the Hebrew Bible, as many people are familiar with, the plague being referred to here is in fact, usually called flies, the plague of flies.

The Hebrew word though, is in fact, arov, which literally means swarms. It is undefined. It does not have to necessarily mean flies.

The reason why we find flies in most of the English translations of the Bible is because they take their interpretation from the Septuagint which reads dog fly. So that's why we see it there. But it's very important to remember that the idea of swarming is undefined.

What is interesting here is that these swarms in the Psalms, have the power to devour. They have the power to eat and they have the power to consume, which begins to suggest that it may not be flies that he's actually talking about. It may be, but it may not actually be the flies he is actually talking about.

When we go to a different tradition of this in the Targums, when it talks about the plague of arov, this is what it says. I will stir up among thee and thy servants and thy people and thy house a mixed multitude of wild beasts. And the houses of Mitzri, which is Egypt, shall be filled with a swarm of wild beasts and they shall be on the land also.

So here in this Jewish tradition in the Targums, the swarms are not flies, but the swarms are wild animals, a swarm of wild animals taking over the land. This kind of seems more in keeping with the idea of devouring because if you have wild lions, wolves and everything else, then they are more likely to perform an action like devouring. So that could be one way of explaining it.

This tradition as well, it's worth mentioning is the tradition or the understanding of arov, which we find in contemporary Jewish literature as well. So, I was actually dismayed to see this when I was looking at it. But the first time my daughter was in grade school, she came back during Passover.

When it came to the plague of what I knew was flies, it was a group of wild animals. It's because that's the interpretation that they had, which differed so much from the Christian tradition. The next plague is that of frogs, which in Exodus are a nuisance, but here we've got frogs which destroyed them.

So, they cause some type of damage. Now what kind of frogs were they? Very difficult to know what's going on, but you kind of wonder as well if there is a bit of

thinking of revelation in this. Because if we look at the book of Revelation, I said before that the Exodus motif is everywhere.

But in the book of Revelation, we find animals with weird locusts with huge teeth that devour people and cause people a great deal of suffering. So we may find this type of hyperbole in the description of the plagues and the damage that they do. So that's potential for frogs, which we have there.

We then have the plague of locusts, which is here in Psalm number eight. Again, difference in order and it comes directly from God. He sends them.

This introduces an idea that we see in the Exodus Psalms quite a lot. The role of men is frequently pushed down and the role of God is elevated. He is the one that directly performs a lot of the plagues and the miracles and we see much less of Moses and Aaron.

There's a degree of repetition here in this particular Psalm. We have locusts and young locusts. I'd mentioned before, that we can't make too much of this, but in biblical parallelism, we have to have word pairs that balance each other out.

So, we have that in this particular case. Then we have the plague of hail in which two verses are dedicated to it and it affects both plants and animals. You'll see why that's significant in just a moment.

At this particular point, we've got the plague of hails in verse 47. He destroyed with hail stones their vines and their sycamore trees with frost. This is another one of those emphatic patterns, a chiasmic pattern I go to the board again, just to schematize it.

It's basically normal Hebrew parallelism would look like this, A, B, A, a parallel A, and then a parallel B like this, where these two words would correspond. They would have the same semantic plane. So, you'd use, in this case, locusts and young locusts in the B portion of it.

But what's happening here in this verse is we move to an emphatic form in which we have an A and a B and then it's switched around and then we have a B corresponding and an A. This is something which is called a chiasmus. I don't know how different people refer to it differently, but it's an emphatic structure. We see it not just used here, it's used in a number of other places.

But I would argue, and I am arguing in another paper, which I'm writing, that this is a very important controlling structure in the psalm, in the whole of the psalm itself. Good. Moving on, we have this phrase that comes on an insert.

So, he kind of devotes a verse for each plague. Then he doubles it and then he speaks about God's burning anger. He's not talking about a plague, but he's building up to the last plague.

He speaks of a band of destroying angels. He leveled the path for his anger. He didn't spare their soul from death, gave over their life to the plague.

That's what he does here. This is pestilence. This is the plague of pestilence right here.

But there's an added build-up towards it, a dramatic build-up for emphasis. We have something else as well, which is another poetic form, which is called delayed identification. What's happening is the psalmist would describe and talk about something and not mention it specifically until the last word or at the very end of the sentence, the verse, or the actual section.

So, he'd build up and he will talk about it and then he will mention it finally and be explicit about it. It's called delayed identification. It can create a degree of emphasis.

We'll see another example of it. In this case here, it's the whole description of him becoming angry, and destroying angels. But the plague itself, he's emphasizing, this doesn't come until last.

It's only mentioned finally. Men seem to be affected in this plague of pestilence. Although in Exodus, it's more of a cattle plague, and on the beasts, but this seems to be slightly different.

I'm looking at the plagues here as well. Darkness is not included. Boils are not included and neither are lice.

So, we've got the plague of the firstborn has the ultimate position in both of these renditions. So, he has maintained something of what we know as the original, though, whether it is or not is a different story. Some general comments on the plague.

One is we notice a seven-plague tradition in Exodus versus a ten-plague tradition in the book of Exodus. A seven in the Psalms, sorry, ten in Exodus. The two numbers seven and ten are, I want to say, basically the same because they're both numbers that represent completeness.

If you look at these two examples of how they're used, there was a popular expression amongst the Israelites, which uses this number. One instance of that expression occurs here in 1 Samuel. Well, Karnas says to her husband, her husband said to Hannah, this is the mother of Samuel, why do you weep and why do you not

eat? Why is your heart sad? Am I not better to you than ten sons? So, it's a complete number.

I'm not better to you than ten sons. But we find in Ruth, we've got a similar or the same expression, who loves you is better to you than seven sons. So we've got the idea of completeness expressed in ten in one case and seven in another.

So, it's not really a huge surprise that in one tradition it's seven and in the other it's ten. They are both numbers that represent and express the same thing. Is there a question of increasing severity? Possibly.

Certain scholars have argued for this. It's very general to see. It's not that explicit moving from the blood in the waters, which doesn't actually kill anybody.

It just causes more of a discomfort to the swarms, but they then begin devouring people. So, it's harder to argue here. Certainly, once we get to the idea of pestilence, the buildup is greater and we have God speaking about his anger and his band of angels he's going to send out against them.

Then we come to the plague of the firstborn, which is definitely the most severe plague suffered. So, some would argue that there is a question of increasing severity. But when we look at Psalm 105, we'll see, I think there's a clearer picture of that possibility.

Something else we need to bear in mind is Moses and Aaron do not appear in any of these renditions of the Psalm. When we're talking about poetry in most of the renditions of the plagues, it is God who does it directly. The heroic deeds are performed by God and for the most part, men only sin against God, rebel, and complain.

That's a pattern that we see expressed in most of the psalms in different ways. After that, we find God leading, God as shepherd. This is very important for the remainder of the psalm.

He led them forth. He led them safely. He brought them to his holy land.

So God is Israel's shepherd as he takes them through the desert, out of Egypt, and through the desert. That's important to remember. It's probably for this reason that we find the change in order because we've already seen the desert events, but now he's focusing on this aspect of God leading Israel.

He is their shepherd. It's basically a summary of the wilderness activity, but the details were given earlier, all of the sin, all of the testing of God for bread and for other things. After this, we have a rebellion and punishment whereby the Israelites,

once they entered into the promised land, they didn't learn anything from the desert and they rebelled against God.

So, he punishes them. They continue to test God once they get into the land. These are general references to the high places and the idols.

The high places were hills upon which altars were built and which people worshiped God as well as the God of Israel. They would worship other idols and other deities as well. As a result of this, God kind of abandons his people and the psalm makes a reference to the destruction at Shiloh.

This is probably an allusion to 1 Samuel 4 in which the Israelites went out to war with the Ark of the Covenant. They were defeated by the Philistines and the Philistines stole the Ark. They took it away.

This is probably a reference here. He gave up his strength to captivity. The word here is oz, which in other contexts is a direct reference to the Ark of the Covenant.

So that's probably the allusion that we've got here. More so here, you've got his priests fell by the sword. This is probably an allusion to Hophni and Phinehas being dead.

So those were two of the high priest's sons, Eli's sons, who went out to war and they were killed. So, we've got priests falling by the sword right here. In all likelihood that's the reference being made.

So, you've got the priests, Hophni and Phinehas dying, but then you've also got another reference being made to his widows could not weep. In this particular place after our dead person there, we've got the instance of Phinehas' wife who was unable to mourn because as she was giving birth, she died after she gave birth. So, she wasn't even able to mourn because she died and she gave birth early as a result of finding out the Ark was taken, her husband was dead, Eli was dead, and all of these things had happened.

So, she died and was not able to mourn and his widows could not weep. So this is probably a reference to this whole incident right here. Then we have something, God gives up his people.

Then we have something which is very rather daring imagery. It says, then the Lord awoke as if from sleep. So, the question is, not just sleeping, but it's overcome by wine.

So, the picture here very much is of somebody who's not just in a deep sleep, but somebody who's in a drunken stupor that he is totally out through alcohol. As a

result, it seems like this that God is not doing anything. But as we know from Scripture, as we know in certain places, God does not sleep.

Psalm 121.4 says he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. That's an image that we have, which is later. But certainly before that in the days of the monarchy, the early monarchy, there was a notion of the sleeping deity.

There was a notion that God, it would seem at least to the people that he did sleep. So, we have passages where Isaiah says, awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord. He's saying, he's actually kind of telling God, wake up as in the days of old and do something.

We see here as well in Psalm 44, a clear example, arouse yourself. Why do you sleep, O Lord? Do not reject us forever. So, it's a perception that we have or a perception that's created that God is asleep and that he needs to be stirred through prayers and intercession and shouting and whatever it is into action once again.

That's the image that we have here, that of the sleeping deity who awakes and then he comes to the rescue of his people, Israel. Here we've got our climactic ending in which I'd said, we've mentioned the first important part of passing information down. Now we come to the second part, the second important part, which is the rejection of Ephraim.

Ephraim is rejected. The Northern Kingdom and the people of the North are not selected for the housing of God's holy city and the holy Tabernacle as well. So, Ephraim is rejected.

Instead, Judah is chosen for the temple. The tribe is the location approximately of Judah where the temple was actually built up in Jerusalem. More importantly than that, David is selected as God's leader, if you like.

The important thing here to remember is that throughout the psalm, it is conspicuous the omission of any individuals' names. We don't have Moses. We don't have Aaron.

We don't really have, I'm going to put it about Pharaoh. Names aren't mentioned. So, all of a sudden we see here the name David, it's a big deal because now the psalmist is revealing the importance of this particular individual.

More than just revealing him, if you remember a few slides back, we saw God was leading Israel, guiding them as their shepherd. But now it's like God takes the reins of leading and guiding Israel and he hands them over to David. It says here, he brought him to shepherd Jacob.



So, he shepherded them and he guided them. All of this is language of leading and guidance, which once belonged to God, but now it goes down to David and it's his responsibility to be God's man. With that said, let's just summarize before we close up this psalm with a few points.

First of all, Psalm 78, it's long. I know I haven't done it justice. It would take a few more weeks to do that, but it focuses on God's miracles for Israel.

Less on people, but more on the miraculous power of God. It also focuses on the rebellion of Israel in light of his goodness, in light of his going above and beyond to help them out. They rebel against him.

They don't act appropriately to what his great power deserves. Then the other emphasis also was learning from the past. In this sense, as I said before, it was connected with wisdom traditions that you would learn from it.

Some omissions, the giving of Torah, are not mentioned again. I'm not sure why it would seem as though there would be a good instance to talk about the rebellion because whilst they were waiting for Moses to come down the mountain, they got Aaron to create this golden calf, but that's not mentioned. We also have the words Torah mentioned in the Psalm, but it's the incidence of the giving of the Torah.

The law giving is not specified. An individual rebellion, so the rebellions of Dathan and Abiram, these are not mentioned either. It's mainly the Ephraimites and the Israelites who do battle with God and become his enemy.

Something else I would mention too is the hints of lost traditions, the bread of angels and the Ephraimites' retreat when they pulled back in battle. We don't have clear evidence of that in biblical literature. So, it seems as though, and in my view at least, the fact that we have these other traditions kind of hints towards the earliness of this particular psalm.

I don't want to get into dating in this case because there's a lot of controversy about it, but I think it kind of hints to the earliness, the early nature, the early feel of this particular psalm. Then we have the elevation of God. Moses and Aaron are absent.

God does everything directly. He splits the sea. It's God who provides the bread.

It's God who provides the quail. He does all of these. He sends the plague and there's no sign of God.

So, we have the elevation of God. The other thing, as I'd mentioned before, only David is named. In all of the Exodus tradition, if you think about it, what the psalm so

much focuses on, speaking about the Exodus, there's nothing mentioned of Moses, nothing mentioned of Aaron, but David is recalled.

That should, again, really emphasize the central point of this psalm. So that's Psalm 78, the longest psalm that we have in the Bible dedicated to the Exodus tradition. This is Dr. David Emanuel in his teaching on the Exodus Psalms.

This is session number two, Psalm 78, God chose David.