

## Chapter 4: The Nature of Hebrew Poetry – Parallelism

Grace Christian Fellowship of Dayton / Sunday Bible Study Prepared by Gregory A. Weis / August 4, 2019

### I. Review from the Past 3 Messages:

#### A. Chapter 1 of “A Guide to the Psalms Series”: (4 Weeks Ago.) 4 Pages of Quotes.

##### 1. Use of Psalms in the N.T. (Chapter 1 of “A Guide to the Psalms Series”

Our Lord Jesus & the N.T. Apostolic Writers Testify Frequently that the Psalms are About the Christ.

##### 2. The Birth of the Apostolic Hermeneutic: (Regarding Biblical Studies - It is Always All About Jesus)

**(Luke 24:36-49)** <sup>44</sup> Then He said to them, “These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

<sup>45</sup> Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ... (ESV)

**Although Eternal, this is the Incarnation (Birth) of the Apostolic Hermeneutic in Human (Christian) History.**

**“The Apostolic Hermeneutic is Both Correct & Christocentric.”** (Grace Christian Fellowship Dictum: Memorize

##### 3. God’s Sovereign Christological Purpose in Compiling Psalms in Postexilic Period.

#### B. Chapter 2 of “A Guide to the Psalms Series”: (2 Weeks Ago.) Intro to the Wisdom Literature (5 Books)

##### 1. Anthropomorphic Wisdom in Scripture is Jesus – See Proverbs 8 for example.

**(Colossians 2:1-3)** ... <sup>2</sup> that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love,

to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ,

<sup>3</sup> in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (ESV)

**(1 Corinthians 1:30)** But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, (NASB)

##### 2. “Wisdom” in Proverbs 8 is clearly the Person of the Eternal Son of God.)

(Proverbs 8:1-30-31-36) (“Rejoicing” in NASB & ESV = “Playing” in CJB; “Played” in WYC & “Laughing in EXB.)

##### a. A Biblical & Relational Definition of Wisdom. (Biblical Life-Skills in Fear of God. Practical Areas.)

Blessing vs. Curse Realms; Living in Harmony w/ God’s Righteous Order; Every Part of Life.

No Deception, No Blame shifting, Cover-Ups; Etc. (e.g. Proverbs 1 & / or Ecclesiastes 12.)

##### b. Two (2) Paths: The Path of the Wise (Righteous) vs. the Path of Fools (the Wicked); Etc.

##### c. Future Example (Forthcoming in Weeks to Come - Analysis of Psalm 1.)

#### C. Chapter 3 of “A Guide to the Psalms Series”: Biblical Imagery

##### 1. Rhyme & Rhythm in World Poetry vs. Imagery (aka Word Pictures) (Sovereign Translation Purpose)

##### 2. Biblical Imagery (Word Pictures): Not Lost in Translation – God’s Providential Foresight.

(Note : Avoid Dynamic Equivalence Translations When Considering Biblical Imagery.

[https://ancienthebrewpoetry.typepad.com/ancient\\_hebrew\\_poetry/2008/07/the-imagery-of-Psalm-8.html](https://ancienthebrewpoetry.typepad.com/ancient_hebrew_poetry/2008/07/the-imagery-of-Psalm-8.html).)

(Psalm 114:1-4) <sup>3</sup> The sea looked and fled; Jordan turned back.

<sup>4</sup> The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs. (Type of Imagery: *Personification*.)

(Psalm 23:1) The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. (Type: *Metaphor*)

(Psalm 37:1) Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers!

<sup>2</sup> For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb. (ESV) (Type: *Similes*)

(Psalm 74:12-14) Yet God my King is from of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.

<sup>13</sup> You divided the sea by your might; you broke the heads of the sea monsters on the waters.

<sup>14</sup> You crushed the heads of Leviathan; you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness.

(Type: *Mythological Allusions*. Mock the Nations False Gods. Eg. Canaanites & Babylonians vs. YHWH.)

**Notes on Biblical Imagery:** The Use of Many Dozen Images w/ Regard to God’s Nature & His Christ help us get a better “feel” for His Majestic Greatness. Also Note the frequent use of Hyperbole regarding Non-Divine.)

## II. Today: Chapter 4: Intro to the Nature of Hebrew Poetry – Parallelism(s)

### A. Building Blocks of Hebrew / Biblical Poetry: Words; Cola; Lines; & Strophes (aka Stanzas)

1. **Cola:** A brief, short or terse idea or thought in a Line of Hebrew Poetry. (Cola aka “Stich.”)  
(Proverbs 27:17a) Iron sharpens iron, .... (Psalm 23:1a) The LORD is my shepherd.
  - a. Bicola or Bicolon (aka “Dystich.”): Two Cola intentionally juxtaposed in a conceptual relationship.  
 (“Couplet” in gw terminology. Not a recognized term in Biblical Studies Literature.)
  - b. Tricola or Tricolon (aka “Tristich.”): Three Cola intentionally juxtaposed in conceptual relationship.  
 (“Triplet” in gw terminology. Not a recognized term in Biblical Studies Literature.)
2. **Lines:** Often a sentence. Usually made up of a Cola, **Bicola** (Couplet) or on occasion a Tricola (Triplet.)  
(One, Two of Three Parallel Phrases that form a single Statement.)
3. **Strophes** (aka Stanzas): A Grouping of Cola and Lines that usually contains one main (often as a Refrain or Chorus) idea or concept and in modern Bible Translations is usually set apart by indentations or space between lines.

### B. Biblical (Hebrew) Parallelism Defined: The relationship, interdependence, correspondence, connection, affinity or contingency that intentionally exist between two juxtaposed lines, segments (cola) in a poetic line. (See the numerous examples provided below.)

These corresponding connections can be by rhyme, word-play or grammar (does not come through in translation); or by imagery or meaning (which comes through when translated.)

#### Examples:

(Proverbs 26:11) Like a dog that returns to its vomit Is a fool who repeats his folly. (Emblematic Parallelism.)  
(Emblematic Parallelism is when a Figure of Speech, Image or Word Picture in Line 1 illustrates the 2<sup>nd</sup> Line.)  
(Emblematic Parallelism is also known as “Comparative” Parallelism)

(Proverbs 10:1b) ... A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish son is a grief (sorrow ESV) to his mother.  
(Psalm 103:3) Just as a father has compassion on *his* children, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.  
(Synonymous Parallelism - 2 examples above – same thought repeated twice with different words.)

(Psalm 42:1) As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. (ESV) (Emblematic)

(Psalm 23:1) The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. (Synthetic Parallelism.)

(Synthetic Parallelism is when the 2<sup>nd</sup> line builds upon or progresses / proceeds out of the 1<sup>st</sup> line.)

(Psalm 19:1) The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.  
(Static, Synonymous, Emphatic Parallelism.)

(Psalm 11:5) The LORD tests the righteous and the wicked, And the one who loves violence His soul hates.

(Psalm 34:10) Evil shall slay the wicked, And those who hate the righteous will be condemned.

(Psalm 37:16) Better is the little of the righteous Than the abundance of many wicked.

(Psalm 37:21) The wicked borrows and does not pay back, But the righteous is gracious and gives.

(Psalm 45:7) You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You  
With the oil of joy above Your fellows. (Quoted of Jesus in Hebrews 1:9) (Contrast “Empire Strikes Back.”)

### C. Parallelism Types or Categories: Next Week (Many Parallelisms are more than one (1) Type.)

## IV. Upcoming Messages:

More on the Nature of Hebrew Poetry – Parallelism Types or Genres; More Literary Features

An Overview of the Bible & the Place of the Wisdom Literature in General; Intro to Biblical Numerology;

The Psalms in Church History; Various Psalm Favorites Explored; Etc.



(Listen to Series at <http://gcfdayton.org/podcasts/sunday-school/>) (Request Outlines at [steven@gcfdayton.org](mailto:steven@gcfdayton.org))