

## STUDY PACK 17

### HEBREW POETRY

"Prose was inadequate to express the deep yearnings of the soul, and poetry as an emotional, deep expression of faith and worship become a necessity."

~~ Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutic Spiral*, p. 181 ~~

#### I. THE OLD TESTAMENT CONTAINS LARGE AMOUNTS OF POETRY

Examples: Psalms  
Proverbs  
Job  
Song of Solomon  
Ecclesiastes  
Lamentations  
Large sections of the prophets.

#### II. FEATURES OF HEBREW POETRY

A. Parallelism - Hebrew poetry is distinguished by a rhythm of thought called parallelism. Poetry is written \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Occasionally, there is a rhythm of 3 or 4 lines.

1. Two lines (couplet), Ps. 51:2.
2. Three lines (triplet), Isa. 41:5.
3. Four lines, Ps. 27:1.

B. Kinds of Parallelisms.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (synonymous parallelism) - two lines that each have the same thought, Ps. 33:2.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ (antithetic parallelism) - two lines express contrasting thoughts, Prov. 15:1.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (synthetic parallelism) - the second line adds information to the first lines, Ps. 9:10.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ (climactic parallelism) - the second line repeats part of the first line but also adds new information, Ps. 34:4.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ (emblematic parallelism) - one line is literal, the other is figurative, Ps. 42:1.

- C. Imagery - the Bible is full of figures of speech, e.g. Job 6:26.

Paul Lee Tan comments:

"Moreover, the prophets frequently use legitimate figures of speech - sometimes quite extensively - in their prophecies. Since figures of speech (such as hyperboles, personifications, and metaphors) are very common in poetry, prophecy naturally appears to be poetic. When the prophet Isaiah writes that "then shall the moon be confounded and the sun ashamed when the Lord reigns in Mount Zion" (Isa. 24:23), he is using legitimate figures of speech."

~ ~ *The Interpretation of Prophecy*, p. 146 ~ ~

- D. Metrical Patterns - in Hebrew poetry, a rhythmical pattern is established based upon \_\_\_\_\_.

Paul Lee Tan writes:

"To determine whether prophecy is poetic, one should be acquainted with the nature and character of Hebrew poetry. Hebrew poetry differs radically from modern English poetry. The Hebrews were not concerned about rhythm and rhyme as we are today. They based their poetic rhythm \_\_\_\_\_."

~ ~ *The Interpretation of Prophecy*, p. 145 ~ ~

### III. THE HEBREW POETRY OF THE BIBLE FEATURES MANY SONGS

- A. \_\_\_\_\_, Ex. 17:16, 15:1-8; Judg. 5, 7:18-20.
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ - Song of Solomon.
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ - over 60 Psalms and Lamentations.
- D. \_\_\_\_\_ (songs of praise) - are common in Psalms and Isaiah.
- E. \_\_\_\_\_ of thanksgiving are common in the Psalms.

### IV. THE IMPRECATORY PSALMS

- A. Sometimes, people are shocked by the harsh language used in the imprecatory psalms.

Examples: Psalms 58:6-11  
59:5, 13  
69:22-23  
109:6-15  
137:8-9  
139:19-22  
143:12

- B. Some do not believe that this language should be interpreted literally.
- C. Others believe that the Bible is only recording David's sinful attitudes.
- D. However, there is no reason to accept any of these attempts to evade the language of the imprecatory psalms. Judgment is often delayed, \_\_\_\_\_ and it \_\_\_\_\_.