

# LESSON FIFTEEN. POETRY - HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

## INTRODUCTION:

- 1) TODAY WE WILL CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF UNDERSTANDING GENRES BY LOOKING AT POETRY

## THINGS WE WILL LOOK AT IN THIS LESSON:

- 1) KEYS TO INTERPRETING POETRY: HISTORICAL CONTEXT, PARALLELISM, AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE
- 2) KEYS TO INTERPRETING PSALMS: TYPES AND FORMS
- 3) A UNIQUE PSALM

## PART 1 – KEYS TO INTERPRETING POETRY: HISTORICAL CONTEXT, PARALLELISM, AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE:

### EXAMPLE 1) BOOKS OF PSALMS...

	<b>Book 1: Psalms 1–41</b>	<b>Book 2: Psalms 42–72</b>	<b>Book 3: Psalms 73–89</b>	<b>Book 4: Psalms 90–106</b>	<b>Book 5: Psalms 107–150</b>
<b>Author(s)</b>	Mostly David	Mostly David and sons of Korah	Mostly Asaph	Mostly unknown	Mostly unknown or David

**Q 1) WHAT ARE SUPERSCRPTIONS AND WHAT INFORMATION DO THEY GIVE US?**

**A)**

---

---

---

---

### EXAMPLE 2) PSALMS 142...

**Psalm 142 A maskil of David. When he was in the cave. A prayer.**

1 I cry aloud to the Lord; I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy. 2 I pour out before him my complaint; before him I tell my trouble. 3 When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who watch over my way. In the path where I walk people have hidden a snare for me. 4 Look and see, there is no one at my right hand; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life. 5 I cry to you, Lord; I say, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living." 6 Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me. 7 Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me.

## LESSON FIFTEEN. POETRY - HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

**Q 2) HOW MANY PSALMS DID DAVID WRITE?**

---

---

**Q 3) WHAT IS THE TIME FRAME THAT THE PSALMS WERE WRITTEN IN?**

---

---

---

**Q 4) WHAT ARE THE TWO SETTINGS THAT MANY OF THE PSALMS HAVE?**

---

---

---

**Q 5) WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS TO DISCOVERING THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF POETRY?**

---

---

---

**Q 6) WHAT FIVE TYPES OF PARALLEL THOUGHTS EMERGE IN HEBREW POETRY?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## LESSON FIFTEEN. POETRY - HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

### EXAMPLE 3) SYNONYMS IN PARALLEL LINES...

The heavens declare the glory of God;

*the skies proclaim the work of his hands.*

—Psalms 19:1

Parallel Lines:	A	B
Line 1:	The heavens	declare the glory of God;
Line 2:	the skies	proclaim the work of his hands.

**LINE 2 REPEATS LINE 1, IN DIFFERENT WORDS.**

**WE CALL THESE PATTERNS AB, AB.**

### EXAMPLE 4) SYNONYMS IN PARALLEL LINES IN REVERSE ORDER...

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;

*according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions*

—Psalms 51:1

	A	B
Line 1:	Have mercy on me, O God,	according to your unfailing love;
	B	A
Line 2:	according to your great compassion	blot out my transgressions.

**THE LAST THOUGHT (B) OF LINE 1 IS THE FIRST THOUGHT OF LINE 2.**

**WE CALL THIS PATTERN AB, BA.**

### EXAMPLE 5) CONTRAST IN PARALLEL LINES...

For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,

*but the way of the wicked will perish.*

—Psalms 1:6

Line 1:	For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
Line 2:	but the way of the wicked will perish.

**THE SECOND LINE USES A CONTRAST, TO CLARIFY THE FIRST LINE.**

## LESSON FIFTEEN. POETRY - HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

### **EXAMPLE 6) COMPARISON IN PARALLEL LINES...**

*As a father has compassion on his children,*

*so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; —Psalms 103:13*

**Line 1:** *As a father has compassion on his children,*

**Line 2:** *so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.*

**THE FIRST OFTEN BEGINS WITH "AS", AND SECOND LINE BEGINS WITH "SO".**

### **EXAMPLE 7) COMPLETION IN PARALLEL LINES...**

*You prepare a table before me*

*in the presence of my enemies... —Psalms 23:5a*

**Line 1:** *You prepare a table before me*

**Line 2:** *(Where?) in the presence of my enemies.*

**THE SECOND LINE COMPLETES THE FIRST LINE BY EXPLAINING**

**"HOW", "WHEN", "WHO", "WHERE", "WHY".**

**Q 7) WHAT IS THE GOLDEN RULE FOR INTERPRETING A PSALM?**

---

---

---

---

---

# LESSON FIFTEEN. POETRY - HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

## EXAMPLE 8) FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE...

3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
which yields its fruit in season and  
whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers.

4 Not so the wicked!  
They are like chaff  
that the wind blows away. —Psalms 1:3-4

The righteous	The wicked
He is <i>like</i> a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.	Not so the wicked! They are <i>like</i> chaff that the wind blows away.

### IN THE PSALMS WE SEE FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE OR WORD PICTURES THAT COMPARE AND CONTRAST THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

**Q 8) WHAT QUESTION SHOULD YOU ASK YOURSELF TO DETERMINE THE EMOTIONS A PSALM WRITER IS EXPRESSING?**

---

---

---

### PART 2 – KEYS TO INTERPRETING PSALMS: TYPES AND FORMS:

**Q 9) HOW MANY TYPES AND FORMS ARE THERE IN THE PSALMS?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

# LESSON FIFTEEN. POETRY - HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

## EXAMPLE 9) PSALMS WITH THREE PARTS...

<b>Form of a Psalm with Three Parts</b>
1. Introduction: theme (that unites the psalm), mood, people, occasion, etc.
2. Development of theme: repetition, a list, examples, comparisons, or contrasts
3. Conclusion: promise, summary, praise, and prayer

## Q 10) WHAT ARE THE NINE TYPES OF PSALMS WITH THREE PARTS?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## EXAMPLE 10) PSALMS WITH FIVE PARTS...

Parts 1–5 of some psalms	Common Statements
1. Cry for help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am hurting;</li> <li>• You do not care;</li> <li>• You do not answer;</li> <li>• The enemy is winning.</li> </ul>
2. Description of the problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am hurting</li> <li>• You are not answering</li> <li>• They are winning.</li> </ul>
3. Prayer for help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver me;</li> <li>• Defeat my enemies.</li> </ul>
4. Statement of confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surely God is my help;</li> <li>• You are my refuge;</li> <li>• God will save me.</li> </ul>
5. Promise to give thanks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I will go before the great congregation;</li> <li>• I will declare;</li> <li>• I will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving.</li> </ul>

## LESSON FIFTEEN. POETRY - HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

**Q 11) WHAT ARE THE FOUR TYPES OF PSALMS WITH FIVE PARTS?**

---

---

---

---

---

**PART 3 – WRAPPING UP: A UNIQUE PSALM:**

**Q 12) HOW MANY VERSES ARE IN PSALMS 119?**

---

---

**Q 13) HOW MANY LETTERS ARE IN THE HEBREW ALPHABET?**

---

---

**Q 14) WHAT IS THE METHOD OF BEGINNING EACH VERSE WITH A CERTAIN LETTER CALLED?**

---

---

---

