

Psalms and Proverbs Assignment

Name _____ Instructor _____ Date _____

Hebrew Poetry

The Psalms and Proverbs are written in poetic form. Understanding the characteristics of Hebrew poetry will help you better understand thousands of poetic passages in the Old Testament. The two most important features to be aware of when reading Hebrew poetry are PARALLELISM and REPETITION.

PARALLELISM: This term refers to the frequent repetition of identical, similar or related ideas. Two lines in a Hebrew poem may say the same thing using different sets of words, or they may contrast each other, or build on one another. Here are a few types of parallelism that you will encounter in the Psalms and Proverbs.

1. Synonymous parallelism. The second or subsequent line repeats or reinforces the sense of the first line as in Psalm 44:2...

“I have swept away your offenses like a cloud,
your sins like the morning mist.”

2. Antithetical parallelism. The second or subsequent line *contrasts the thought* of the first, as in Proverbs 10:1...

“A wise son brings joy to his father,
but a foolish son grief to his mother.”

3. Synthetic parallelism: The second or subsequent line provides *more information about* or *completes* the thought in the first line. Notice each new line of Obadiah 1:21 provides additional information...

“Delivers will go up from Mount Zion
To govern the mountains of Esau
And the kingdom will be the Lords.”

REPETITION: Like modern songs, many Psalms have a “refrain” or repeated phrase that emphasizes key ideas. Repetition helps readers identify what the author wants to emphasize.

Read Psalm 107 on the last page of this handout.

1. Circle at least two examples **synonymous** parallelism. Make sure you label each example.
2. Look for one or more repeated refrains. Underline phrases that are repeated throughout the Psalm.

Psalms of Gratitude

Psalms of gratitude focus on what God has done. Psalms of praise focus on who God is.

Read Psalm 107 again. List a few reasons why the author is grateful to God. Cite reference for each observation.

- *He saves people who cry out to him. (107:19)*
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How does the Psalmist describe God? What is he like?

How would your actions/attitudes be different if you really believed God was this way?

What observations about human beings could you make from this Psalm?

Of all the truths in this Psalm, which one catches your attention most?

What can you do (be specific) to express your gratitude to God for what he has done?

Psalms of Lament

A lament is a cry of despair. Psalm 42 & 43 are treated as one Psalm because they share a common theme of lament and are joined together by the repeated refrain in 42:5, 42:11, and 43:5. Read both Psalms below and write down 4 observations about the situation of the author and why he is upset. Cite a reference for each observation you make. Here's an example of what we're looking for:

- *He has suffered oppression at the hands of his enemies. (42:9; 43:1)*
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42: 1 As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God.

2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?

3 My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all day long, Where is your God?

4 These things I remember and I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go along with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God, With the voice of joy and thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival.

5 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me?¹ Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him For the help of His presence.

6 O my God, my soul is in despair within me; Therefore I remember You from the land of the Jordan And the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

7 Deep calls to deep at the sound of Your waterfalls; All Your breakers and Your waves have rolled over me.

8 The LORD will command His lovingkindness in the daytime; And His song will be with me in the night, A prayer to the God of my life.

9 I will say to God my rock, Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

10 As a shattering of my bones, my adversaries revile me, While they say to me all day long, Where is your God?

11 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.

43:1 Vindicate me, O God, and plead my case against an ungodly nation; deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!

2 For You are the God of my strength; why have You rejected me?¹ Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

3 O send out Your light and Your truth, let them lead me; Let them bring me to Your holy hill And to Your dwelling places.

4 Then I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy; And upon the lyre I shall praise You, O God, my God.

5 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.

How does the author turn his hope toward God?

What tips from this Psalm would you pass on to someone who is going through a difficult time in their life?

Proverbs

Read Proverbs 10 & 11. In the space below, list five characteristics of a fool and cite the verse where you find each characteristic.

Which one of these characteristics is most true of you? Why?

Psalm 107

<p>1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.</p> <p>2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say this those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,</p> <p>3 those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south.</p> <p>4 Some wandered in desert wastelands, finding no way to a city where they could settle.</p> <p>5 They were hungry and thirsty, and their lives ebbed away.</p> <p>6 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.</p> <p>7 He led them by a straight way to a city where they could settle.</p> <p>8 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men,</p> <p>9 for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.</p> <p>10 Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains,</p> <p>11 for they had rebelled against the words of God and despised the counsel of the Most High.</p> <p>12 So he subjected them to bitter labor; they stumbled, and there was no one to help.</p> <p>13 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.</p> <p>14 He brought them out of darkness and the deepest gloom and broke away their chains.</p> <p>15 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men,</p>	<p>16 for he breaks down gates of bronze and cuts through bars of iron.</p> <p>17 Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities.</p> <p>18 They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death.</p> <p>19 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.</p> <p>20 He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave.</p> <p>21 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men.</p> <p>22 Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy.</p> <p>23 Others went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty water.</p> <p>24 They saw the works of the LORD, his wonderful deeds in the deep.</p> <p>25 For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves.</p> <p>26 They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away.</p> <p>27 They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their wits' end.</p> <p>28 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress.</p> <p>29 He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed.</p>	<p>30 They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven.</p> <p>31 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men.</p> <p>32 Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the council of the elders.</p> <p>33 He turned rivers into a desert, flowing springs into thirsty ground,</p> <p>34 and fruitful land into a salt waste, because of the wickedness of those who lived there.</p> <p>35 He turned the desert into pools of water and the parched ground into flowing springs;</p> <p>36 there he brought the hungry to live, and they founded a city where they could settle.</p> <p>37 They sowed fields and planted vineyards that yielded a fruitful harvest;</p> <p>38 he blessed them, and their numbers greatly increased, and he did not let their herds diminish.</p> <p>39 Then their numbers decreased, and they were humbled by oppression, calamity and sorrow;</p> <p>40 he who pours contempt on nobles made them wander in a trackless waste.</p> <p>41 But he lifted the needy out of their affliction and increased their families like flocks.</p> <p>42 The upright see and rejoice, but all the wicked shut their mouths.</p> <p>43 Whoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the great love of the LORD.</p>
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Synonymous

Synthetic

Antithetical