

Dr. Bruce Waltke, Psalms, Lecture 5

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This is Dr. Bruce Waltke in his teaching on the book of Psalms. This is session number five, Psalm 4 in Hebrew Poetry.

And in your notes, I divided it into some introductory material. And then on page 30, I began actually looking at the psalm, the exposition of the psalm on page 30. I looked at the superscript and the superscript means written above the poem, super above, and script written. And the superscript gives us the basic or historic background information that we need.

And we're told, first of all, its genre is a psalm. And a psalm basically means, it's a word study. The Hebrew word is mizmor.

I'll talk about that with Psalm 100. But basically, it means it's a song sung to the accompaniment of music. And so, this is what we're looking at often with inspiration and prophetic material, you have music that accompanies it.

And so, this psalm, this song, what we're looking at, we don't have the melody. In the Hebrew text, every word has an accent mark and it is thought by some, they were musical notations. In fact, there is a scholar, Susanna Hauk-Ventura, she produced a work in 1979, brilliant work, absolutely brilliant.

She was both a Semitic scholar and a musicologist, who taught music. She thought she could reconstruct the temple music from those accents. And they were actually, the accents she argued were hand signals.

And you can actually see on Egyptian reliefs from the first dynasty almost a little later, you could see that with each instrumentalist, lyre, flute, whatever it may be, there would be, instead of having, they didn't have written music. There was someone who would hand signals, and tell the musician what to play with hand signals. So, she argued that these accents originally were hand signals telling the musician what to play.

And so, she thought that she could reconstruct the music and the basis, the central note, instead of building it off the scale of C, she said it works off the scale of E. And so, she reconstructed temple music. It made a case convincing enough that at the most learned society of academia, which is the Society of Biblical Literature, they gave her a plenary session to present her music and actually played some of the music. I had a wonderful student and he gave me a record of her playing, of her music.

And I sat down with Psalm, I forget which one it was, and listened to it with her music. Of course, in music, we always say, I know what I like, but the truth is we like what we know. New music doesn't appeal to us particularly.

So, I figured, well, it's okay, but it's new to me. I'm not used to this, but it was okay. So, I put it on our record player and we were entertaining guests.

And I had on the background music on my record player, including the student who gave me this record, who had raved about it to me. Well, I forgot about it. The music was playing softly in the material.

And I had this record that would have to be at the bottom. We were now toward the end of the dinner. And this came on Elaine, not knowing what it was, she said to me, Bruce, turn off that horrible music.

Okay. We all had a good laugh. Well, anyway, that is a way of telling us it was sung to the accompaniment of music.

And that is what we get at the beginning. Most of those words, Vic Tom and so forth, we don't know what they mean. It's because we don't have enough context to determine what they mean.

So anyway, that's the superscript. It also tells us about the author. In 14 cases out of the 73, it tells us some incident in David's life that enables you to key it back into David's career in 1 and 2 Samuel.

And you can relate it to those incidences in the book of Samuel. So that's a superscript and that's in prose and it's above the poem itself. So, we looked at the superscript and then we said that I divided it up on page 30.

We have the address to God with introductory petitions. And then on page 31, where we ended, we have the address to the highborn apostates. You see the Roman numeral II addressed to the apostates.

Then we address the third part is on page 34. We have the petitions themselves. And then finally at the end on page 35, Roman numeral IV, we have the confidence and implicitly praise to God.

And those are the parts of the psalm. All right. Turning back then to page 30 on the address to God and introductory petitions, we already did, we divided that into two parts.

It is addressed to God. It's a petition to gain an audience and find God's favor. So, he's asking God for permission to come into his court, present his case, hear me with grace, do me a favor, and give me a response in the presence of God.

That was the A, address, and the petition to gain an audience and find favor. Then the request was to escape, give me relief from my distress. And then we go to the next part, to the highborn apostates.

And we begin to understand what his distress is. And as we read the whole psalm, we discovered that the distress is that his leadership has lost faith in him and lost faith in God. And that was the distress, which is now developed and now on page 31, he is now in poetry.

It's an apostrophe like he's been addressing God. And all of a sudden, he's addressing his apostates. Now, I think that's literary fiction.

It's a poem, a way of getting across his truth in his poem. So, he shifts in the imagery. He's no longer addressing God.

He's now addressing the feckless apostates to restore confidence in him. Whether he actually did that or not, I don't know. I'm dealing with poetry, which is filled with imagery.

And so, I don't read it in the same way as I do prose material. It's imaginative. That's how I basically see it, to get across his truths in his psalm.

So he's now addressing the apostates and I divide that up. In his address to apostates on page 32, he makes an accusation against them. How long will you turn my glory into shame? He makes an accusation.

And in addition, he says, the first admonition to them is know your king. And those were the two parts where we've been. So, we've been in addressing the apostates.

The first part was the accusation and his admonition to know the king. We discussed the accusation of turning away from him to false gods. His first admonition to them on page 33 was to know your king and yet God answers his prayer.

He's been addressed to God and he turns to them and he says, know who I am. And God answers my prayer. It may be gapped, but he will answer it because the son of God himself is praying and God delights in him.

Now he continues trying to build up their confidence, not only in know your king. And I ended the last hour in how did they know he was the king? And I suggested

three words, the word of the prophet, the word of God, the spirit of God, and the works of God. And I said, that's how we know we are the sons of God.

It's the word of God. It's the spirit of God. It has changed life that we're participating in a new covenant.

We're walking to a different town from thee. That was my suggestion. I think it's true to Scripture.

It's not just my suggestion, it's putting Scripture together for us. Now we're into the three pairs of admonition. I said, there were seven imperatives.

The first pair is to dread the consequences of apostasy. It will bring the judgment of God, tremble, and do not sin. Here I have a problem.

How do I translate the Hebrew word? And I give it to you there, *rigzu*. You can see it on page 33, on to dread the consequences of apostasy. I translated the word *rigzu*, which means literally to quake or tremble.

It means to shake, tremble, or shake. Now the problem is why are they shaking? Why are they trembling? It could be because they're angry. He's saying to them, be angry at this situation in which you find yourself.

And that's how it's translated in the Greek translation. That's how it's used by Paul in Ephesians 4. I said, Paul, I think knew the Psalms backward and forward. So he says to the Ephesians, be angry and sin not, which is what the Septuagint translated it as.

So, is that what the original meaning of the Hebrew is? See the New Testament, Paul uses the Greek translation in the same way that a minister today who has the King James will preach off the King James. He may not be concerned about the Hebrew text. He's going to use this because the people know it.

The same way a preacher may use the King James or any translation to present a truth. And so, it's possible Paul is simply using the Septuagint because that's what the people knew. And he presents the truth.

What he's saying is the truth. That doesn't necessarily mean that that's what David meant. Unless you're dealing with prophecy and you say, David being a prophet said this, that you have to take seriously.

But when you have something like this, an allusion to a text, I'm not bound by that to understand what it meant in the original Hebrew. At least that's a judgment on my part. It doesn't make much sense to me to tell these apostates to be angry, angry at what? Angry at your situation, but that would be moral indignation.

And that doesn't seem to fit them. So, I think it means more likely to tremble in fear at the consequences of apostasy. Tremble and do not sin by forsaking the King and God who is elect, the eternal God and his elect King.

So, he's saying to them, first of all, if you're going to go after another God, understand what you're doing. Fear God and don't sin because you're going to have terrible consequences. Now that's how I understand what he's saying here when he says tremble and do not sin would be the suggestion.

I give you all the data there and why I draw that conclusion. So, what I'm saying is on page 33, tremble, tremble out of fear of the consequences of sinning, quiver in face of the impending doom, and so forth. That's the first thing.

Now I've suggested keeping your translation in front of you. If you can go back to page 25 and I've taken the first imperative of verse three, know that I Am has set apart the godly for himself. I Am will hear when I call.

And now I'm at 4a. Tremble and do not sin. And now I'm at 4b.

And when you are on your beds, it says, search your hearts and be silent. What does that mean? Search your hearts and be silent, be still and lie on your bed. And that's what I'm really addressing on page 34, number 2, 4b.

I understand when you are on your bed, search your hearts and be quiet, be silent. I understand that to mean, let your conscience confirm your faith. Search your hearts and be silent.

I define the translation for search. That's beyond what we want to do in this course. It's your heart.

I'm trying to give you basic biblical vocabulary. What is your heart? And the heart is conceptualized as that part of the body that informs all of your activity, the way you think, the way you feel, your basic disposition, and what you do. So, for example, we're told that when Abigail told Nabal how she had befriended David and had provided him with food, we would say he had a stroke.

What the Hebrew says is his heart died because he was like stone. We would say he had a stroke. But for them, when your body didn't move, the heart had died.

So, his heart died. And then it says 10 days later, he's died. In our judgment, if the heart died, rigor mortis was going to set in.

But that's how they thought the heart was the locus from which all activity flows. So, when we talk about the heart, it's your basic disposition that determines everything you read, what you think, and what you do. So, he's saying that it's the locus of where you, the form where you make decisions and you act upon them.

So, he says, when you're on your heart, on your bed, the heart, search your heart, the place of your religious decisions, and be silent at the end, I suggest means out of dread, to tremble, keep quiet. But I understand the saying, let your conscience speak to you and confirm you. If you are within the covenant community, you really can't live worshipping a false God and denying the king.

I think he says, when you're on your beds, and I put that here, that's in quiet contemplation. In a group, one is inclined to think and act rashly and hypocritically. Whereas when off stage and in the privacy of one's own bed, one is more authentic and you can be your true self.

When you're alone and you don't act rashly and hypocritically to please other people, let your own heart confirm you in your faith. That's why I understand what he means. When you're on your bed, search your heart, say, keep quiet.

The third pair going back to verse five is offer the sacrifices of the righteous and trust in the I Am. We'll get into this in the liturgical approach. When they prayed, they would offer up a sacrifice.

And so, he's saying to them, trust I Am and offer him your sacrifice, not Baal. We today would say for us, the sacrifice of an animal is gone, but the prayer is not God, gone. So, we offer the sacrifice of praise without the animal because it's the praise.

So, our praise is like a sacrifice, a sweet savor into God's presence. So that's what he's saying is trust I Am and offer him a sweet sacrifice of your prayer in the midst of this crisis and your drought. So that's how I understand what he's saying.

First of all, know your King. Secondly, understand the consequences of your sin. Thirdly, let your heart confirm you or condemn you.

Fourth, trust in the Lord and offer him a sweet sacrifice. That's how he's restoring his leadership to himself. Now we have the petition by the people.

We've talked about that for the favor of I Am. We already talked about the main things. And now by the King, page 34, it was the petition by the people.

All that one would show us favor, remember to be favorable to us. Many are saying all that one would show us good. Let the light of your face shine upon us, I Am.

And then we have B, the King's prayer, fill my heart with joy when their grain and new wine abound. I talked about that during the last hour of that translation. The psalm ends and he goes to bed.

I will lie down and at once sleep in peace for you I Am make me dwell apart in safety. His prayer, the psalm ends with unanswered prayer, but he goes to sleep, not worried, not fretting, knowing that God will answer his prayer. He knows his God and he knows who he is.

And he's at peace. Now that's sound therapy exposition, but it's in the text itself. It's just good.

It's true. It's true. So the King resolves to go to sleep.

And I discussed the Hebrew words there. And the reason he goes to sleep, he's at peace. This is on page 36.

You I Am cause me to dwell in security and it should be apart in security. I argue the case for that translation. I'll end it.

I'll give you cross-references that I think support the same truths of this psalm of trusting the Lord with all your heart. So, Isaiah 26, for the King trusts in the Lord, and through the unfailing love of the Most High, he will not be shaken. And that's true of Jesus.

He was in every point human identifies with us. Psalm 21, the steadfast of mind, you will keep in perfect peace because he trusts in you. In Philippians, Paul says, do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

And if you do that, the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and mind, will protect you from false gods, will guard you and protect you. I end with, I got a letter from a former student who was in Vietnam. I've been teaching since 1958.

So, here's what he wrote. In one of the battles I fought in Vietnam, there were dead and wounded all around me. Having gone for three days without sleep, my ability to make wise decisions was at a dangerously low level.

At 3 AM, I found a hole in a jungle base, virtually under the battery of cannons. The heat of the jungle night combined with that of the cannons, which followed fired volleys about every 20 seconds was insufferable. The heat of the jungle night combined with that of the cannons, which fired volleys about every 20 seconds was insufferable.

Even in the stench of the gunpowder, the mosquitoes relentlessly pursued their bloody thirsty duty. As I lay there, this verse of Scripture came to me as audibly as any human voice. I will lie down in peace and I will sleep for you alone make me dwell in safety.

I think I had the best two-hour sleep of my entire life." That was his experience with this psalm. Okay. So that's Psalm 4 and how it still speaks to us today for the director of music.

So may I encourage our hearts in the midst of a drought. All right. Now it's wonderful to be in the text, but my job is to give you approaches and to be academic and not to be always theological and spiritual.

That's what we enjoy. But we've got to do hard academic work in this course. So that's what we're doing now.

We're going back to more dry bones. Now we're on lecture five, poetry. In each case, each one, I try to do a psalm because that is what we really like you can't beat the text.

Okay. First of all, then poetry. I give it, it's extremely important that we understand what our literature is about.

Nothing can be of greater avail to the proper understanding of any writer than a previous understanding of his general character and the peculiarities of his style and manner of writing. So, you have to understand, first, you have to understand the language and then you have to understand his style of writing. The second thing I discuss by way of introduction is the extent of poetry in the Old Testament.

And this is astounding. Half of the Old Testament is in poetry. All the prophets are in poetry.

Job is in poetry. Psalms is in poetry. Proverbs is in poetry.

It is half of the Old Testament. That's in contrast to narrative, which is in prose, like from Genesis through Kings and Chronicles, that's all prose. What it tells me is that God is aesthetic and he likes poems.

Most of my experiences, most people in the pew don't, but God does. So, it's worth a while to understand what a poem is. So, part two, what is Hebrew poetry? Often the most elementary things are the most difficult to define.

What is a poem? The best definition I've read is by Barbara Herrnstein Schmidt. In contrast to prose, poetry is a more restricted form of speech. It's a sustained rhythm and a continuously operating principle of organization.

So, for example, we like organization. We like rhyme. So, we might like, I take him at his word indeed.

Notice the rhythm, I take him at his word indeed. Christ died for sinners. This I read for in my heart, I find a need of him to be my Savior.

Okay. So, you can hear it's a sustained rhythm and we're used to that in modern poetry. It has its own way of restriction.

In Hebrew poetry, there's no rhyme. Hebrew words are inflected, masculine, and feminine. Rhyme is cheap.

It comes automatically. It's just natural to it. So, there's no rhyme and we don't really know what the meter is, but we know it's restricted in some way.

So, what are the restrictions of Hebrew poetry? And they are three. The first is called parallelism. You say a line and then you say another line.

So, for example, in Psalm 2, why do the heathen rage? In place of the heathen and rage and the peoples, imagine a vain thing. The kings of the earth gather together. The kings of the earth sit together.

They sit together against the Lord and his anointed one. Let us break their chains asunder, cast their cords far from us. He who sits in the heavens laughs.

The Lord has them in derision. Then he will speak unto them and the Lord has them in division and so forth. You can see, you say, why do the heathen rage? You back it up and the people's imagine a vain thing.

It's that repetition that we call parallelism. It's all the way through the Psalms, poetry, all poetry. That's the basic concept is parallelism and distinguishes.

It's not just true of Hebrew poetry. It's true of all Semitic poetry. I'll come back to that.

So I, according to Bishop Loth, the resemblance in grammar and its sounds, phonology, morphology, the way words are put together, syntax, and our sense between two verses. The primary operating principle of organization in Hebrew poetry, which also gives it a sustained rhythm is parallelism. It aims to give complex information in a unified way.

One hears the message stereophonically. It's like you had two speakers and you're hearing it in all of its depth and its richness by this parallelism. That's a way of thinking of it.

I'll come back to that. The second one is, it's very terse. It's omniscient, misses particles and gaps and the focus is on the paragraph.

So, in other words, instead of like in prose, you have a motion picture, in poetry, you have a slideshow, one picture after another. I don't want you to read your notes now. I just want to, I want you to listen.

This is it. This is the event of J.L. in Judges 4 with Sisera. And this is the prose.

And Sisera said to J.L., please give me a little water to drink because I'm thirsty. And she opened a milk skin and gave him some to drink. And she covered him.

Now, what did you get? You can interact here. What did you get? What did that tell you? Just let me read it again to you. And Sisera said to her, please give me a little water to drink because I am thirsty.

And she opened a milk skin and gave him some to drink and she covered him. What's the main point? What did you get out of that? He was thirsty. Does anybody else want to add to that? He was thirsty and she met his thirst.

But not what he asked for. Continue that. Say that again.

Don't look at your notes. I'll just read the poem. Go ahead.

She met his thirst, but not with what he asked for. He asked for water and she gave him milk. You're sharp.

Listen to this in poetry. That's exactly what you get in poetry. Here it is in a poem in Judges 5. Water he asked, milk she gave.

In a princely bowl, she offered him curds. That's poetry. Water, see how terse that is.

And she picks that out, what you just picked out. Water he asked, milk she gave to put him to sleep. And then to set him up in a princely bowl, she gave him curds, the very best.

Now it's terse, but it's powerful. That's poetry. Do you see the difference? It's not run on prose.

It's very terse and gets right to the point. That's the nature of poetry. It's powerful, but you're right.

You have to think about it. You have to think about it. It has a heightened style.

There are concrete images and all sorts of figures of speech. That's why knowing the nature of poetry, I had no problem with saying the address to the apostates was probably an apostrophe in literature and may not have been reality because it's full of these kinds of figures of speech. You have to be ready for figures of speech.

You don't read it the same way you read prose. Because of that, it's less clear. This has profound hermeneutical implications to it.

A turn with you, if you will, you'll see this in Numbers chapter 12. Now he's talking here about prophets, but notice the implications of this for the interpretation of Scripture. Numbers chapter 12 is about Miriam and Aaron contesting Moses' leadership.

He married a Cushite who was probably black and they didn't like it. So, they contest. By the way, I think Augustine was also from Africa, probably black.

We've gone through a horrible experience in this country that they didn't do in other countries. But anyway, Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. Has the Lord spoken only through Moses? They ask, hasn't he also spoken through us? And the Lord heard this.

Yet NIV puts this in parenthesis because we wonder if Moses really said this. That's a humble man. Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth, which is not what a humble man would say.

So, it's put in parentheses. That's not my point. At once the Lord said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, come out to the Tent of Meeting all three of you.

So, the three of them went out. Then the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud. He stood at the entrance to the tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam.

When the two of them stepped forward, he said, listen to my words. When there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, reveal myself to them in visions. I speak to them in dreams.

But this is not true of my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. With him, I speak face to face clearly and not in riddles.

He sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? In other words, Moses has a more direct revelation than the prophet. He sees God theophany and he doesn't have visions or additions.

Also, Moses speaks clearly and prophets speak in figures, imagery, and poetry. It's not as literal as prose. So, therefore, the prophet has to agree with Moses, which is clear.

What's interesting is when he says, Moses is a servant in all my house, that's picked up, as you know, in Hebrews. If Moses is a servant in all his house, Christ is over the house and he's building the house. So, if the prophet is subservient to Moses, and Moses is a servant in the house and Christ is over the house, whose interpretation has priority? Christ.

That's what changed a lot of my theology. I began with the New Testament and not with the Old Testament. That gives you a different picture.

In the New Testament, I couldn't find a third temple. I was told in John 16, the Spirit of God will guide you into all truth and show you things to come. I could not find in the teachings of Christ or the apostles of the millennium.

It just wasn't there. And where you do get the thousand years, that's in apocalyptic literature. We have the angel takes a chain and binds the serpent, the Satan, and puts him in a big pot, and puts a cover on it.

And he did that for a thousand years. We take the thousand years literally, but the rest of it, we don't take literally. We know it's symbolic.

Why is it a thousand years symbolic? It was that kind of thing. See, there's a lack of understanding of forms of literature where we take everything literally. But when you're dealing with apocalyptic, when you're dealing with poetry, you don't necessarily take it literally is what I'm saying.

We're usually taught to take it literally. I'm saying, when you're dealing with poetry, it's a different story. It's figures of speech and you have to be more sophisticated.

And that's why this discussion is fairly important for our understanding of the Psalms. We have to understand the full, like show us good. That's poetry.

That's a figure of speech. That's metonymy, for example. What it is not, on page 39, it is neither patterned, metered, nor rhyme.

And I show what's come. There's no consensus as to meter or rhyme. So, part four, page 40, I deal with parallelism.

And actually the one credited with the first scholarly work on parallelism is this Bishop Loth in 1732. And I give you the, he was both a bishop in the church of England and a professor of poetry at Oxford. Robert Loth was the first to draw attention to parallel structures in Hebrew poetry of the Bible.

And that's not really true. Some of the rabbis beginning with the 11th century, like Ramban, were also observing parallelism, but Loth is the beginning of modern scholarship on this subject. In 1753, he published the *Sacra Poesiae Hebraeorum*, On Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews, which has since influenced virtually all future scholarship in the poetry of the Bible.

So, everyone who works with poetry works with this parallelism. It's just fundamental to it, to our understanding of it. Now, this is how Loth defined parallelism.

The correspondence of one verse aligned with another like why do the heathen rage and the peoples imagine a very thing I call parallelism. When a proposition is delivered and a second is subjoined to it or drawn under it equivalent or contrasted with it in sense or similar to it in the form of grammatical construction. These I call parallel lines and the words or phrases answering one to another, like why do the heathen and the peoples conspire, imagine a vain thing to one another, I call parallel terms.

So that's where it begins. But notice how he thinks of it. It's subjoined to it.

It's added to it. It's drawn under it. He says it's subjoined to it, drawn under it, equivalent or contrasted with it.

In 1980, there's a revolution in our understanding of Hebrew poetry that contrasts with Loth. That dominated all poetry. That definition dominated until 1980.

I'll say more about it. Here's Loth's view of parallelism. The swan upon St. Mary's lake floats double, swan, and shadow.

So, the second line is like a shadow of the first line. Okay. And he has fundamentally three types of parallelism that I still find helpful.

What he calls synonymous parallelism. The parallel versets refer to the same linguistic reference. The two lines of the verse refer to the same thing.

He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, Psalm 2.5. See the parallelism. He rebukes them in his anger, rebukes is matched with terrifies and anger is matched with wrath. Okay.

You can see they're almost synonymous. Antithetical. We saw that in Psalm 1. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked perish.

This is chiasmatic. Notice that the first line ends with the way of the righteous. The next line begins with the way of the wicked.

And the Lord knows is the opposite of perish, which means not knows means life, opposite perish. And it helps us to understand when you understand the parallelism, we can understand what it means when it says, for the Lord knows, because the contrast to that is perish. And therefore, one is life and one is death.

But again, it's a figure of speech that you have to fill it in for the Lord knows. If the Lord knows, then he's present in this life. Now synthetic is there's no shadow.

It's just like prose. This should be, well, yeah, Psalm 1.2 is all right. Verse 2, who delights in the law of the Lord and meditates on his law, day and night.

Notice how the second line adds to it, day and night, and delights and meditates go together. Law of the Lord, his law, you could see what's reflecting going together, but now something has been added. A real synthetic is Psalm 2.6. I've set my King upon Zion, my holy hill.

Well, my holy hill matches Zion, but it's almost a run-on. Post-Lowthian refinements, I just commented. So, if you read on poetry, the terminology has never been standardized.

The lines like, why do the heathen rage? That's a line. People imagine a varying thing. That can be referred to as a stick.

It can be referred to as a colon. Those are the two common words. And when you put the two lines together, we refer to that as a bicolon.

When you have three lines together, like Psalm 1.1, blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked. Next line, stand in the way of sinners. Next line, sit in the seat of scoffers.

You've got three lines. We call that a tricolon. Now, if I talk about two bicola, I would say bicolon.

So, I'm on a seminary level and this is what students have to read about. They're going to read about bicolon and I have to explain what these terms mean. That's what I'm doing here.

I'm explaining what these terms mean so that when you're reading, you know, what's going on. But you're liable to read stick, you're liable to read a colon. You put two together, we're going to call them a bicolon or tricolon, put three together tricolon.

And if you're dealing with a whole verse, you're liable to call the first stick a hemi-stick. So, there's never been a standardized vocabulary in our field, in this field, which can lead to a lot of confusion for a student. So I'm trying to cut my way through the thick of that.

So, we know what's going on. Okay. Now that was the emphasis until 1980 with Robert Alter and James Kugel.

Kugel at the time was at Yale. He has since gone to Harvard. Alter is at the University of California, Berkeley.

And they have changed the way of thinking about Hebrew poetry. Instead of thinking of it as saying the same thing, they argue that the second line is emphatic, adds to it, and reinforces it. It's not a throwaway shadow.

The difference is significant and you read it very, very differently. Now what happened was this is back, back early eighties, I was asked to give a lecture someplace in California, forget the context, on Hebrew poetry. I was all primed with Lowth and everything that happened since then.

That was going to be my lecture on Hebrew poetry. I made a big mistake. I read Kugel on the airplane and he said, it's all wrong.

I knew he was right. I have to give a lecture. And everything I was going to say I knew was wrong.

That's the extreme. So now all I could do, I was flying by the seat of my pants. I explained to the auditor, I read this book.

I think it's right. It shipwrecked my lecture. I got to fly by the seat of my pants and make a lecture up as I go.

And I'll tell you what Kugel said. That was a memorable experience as you can imagine. But here's what they're arguing.

This is what, this is from somebody who's following Loath. So, he explained it. So, the poet goes back to the beginning again and says the same thing once more, though he may partly or completely change the actual words to avoid monotony.

Now that was his viewpoint of Hebrew poetry. He just changed the words to avoid monotony. Kugel went on to say, no, no, no.

The second verse is saying more and is saying it emphatically. It's either saying emphatically or it's adding to it. And in truth of the matter is there is no synonymous parallelism in truth because the different words mean different things and it adds something to it.

So, oh, I'm jumping here. Yeah, that was the emphasis. And then C, I deal with further types of parallelism.

And I'm going to skip that. I'm going to come over to page 43 to James Kugel and Robert Ault's rejection of Lowth's, his idea of restatement and synonymity. Okay.

So, this change of thinking now dominates the field of understanding Hebrew poetry. The definition of it was, it's now statement and related or emphatic statement, not restatement. You're not saying the same thing over again.

You're saying something enriches it. It expands it. It reaffirms it.

Let me quote from Kugel. I think he's a bit too extreme. He says, overall Lowth's view has had a disastrous effect on subsequent criticism.

Because of it, synonymity was imposed where it did not exist. Sharpness was lost. And the real nature of biblical parallelism was henceforth condemned to a perpetual flowing between two stools, by which he means synonymous parallelism and synthetic parallelism.

Rather the second verset strengthens and reinforces the first. He writes, the B verset was connected to the A, had something in common with it, but was not expected to be or regarded as mere restatement. It is the dual nature of B both to come after A and thus add to it, often particularizing, defining, or expanding the meaning and hearken back to A and in an obvious way to connect to it.

What this means is simply the B verset being connected to the A, carrying it further, echoing it, defining it, restating it, contrasting with it, it doesn't matter which, has an emphatic seconding character. And it is this more than any aesthetic of symmetry or parallelism, which is at the heart of biblical parallelism. To the state of the matter, somewhat simplistically, biblical lines are parallelistic, not because B is meant to be a parallel A, but because typically supports A, carries it further, backs it up, completes it, and goes beyond it.

Before that work, dissertations were written, trying to give a taxonomy of all the kinds of parallelism there are. There are so many, you couldn't do it because it's

simply the B verset in some way is emphasizing and adding to, giving you a different perspective on the A verset. So instead of thinking of them as saying the same thing, they're saying related things, but somewhat differently.

And you look for the differences between them. So if Loew's view was the swan upon St. Mary's lake floats double, swan and shadow, I would say Kugel's view is the swan upon St. Mary's lake floats double, goose and gander. In other words, the swan is now divided between the male and the female and you see them differently.

It's a related statement. It's not a restatement. That would be trying to help us understand the difference in these two viewpoints, which I think are fairly substantial in the way you read poetry.

Let me go back if I may. Let's go back to page 41. No, that's not it, where's the one I want?

Well, I don't see it offhand. I'll come to me. We'll come back to it.

The arguments are page 44. The argument in favor of Kugel over Lowth is synthetic adding to it is normal. And then if you go back to the rabbis who composed and developed Hebrew poetry, they thought of it as differentiation.

I don't know how much to go into here. Take, for example, Matthew 21. Let me start with John 19.24. This is the story where Jesus on the cross and they took his garments and divided among them.

And they took his cloak and cast lots for it. Now turn, that's actually a quote from Psalm 22. Turn with me if you will, to Psalm 22, what they're quoting.

Verse 18, they divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment. From Loew's viewpoint, clothes and garments are saying the same thing. From Kugel's viewpoint, they're saying different things.

And that's what John does. They divided his garments and cast lots for his cloak. There's a difference between garments and cloaks.

Instead of seeing them as saying the same thing, they're saying different things. And John so interprets it. They divided my garments among them, whatever clothing he had, they cut it up and everybody got an equal piece.

But for the basic Loew's, the cloak, like the shroud of Turin, the whole thing, that would be different. But anyway, the basic cloak, somebody wanted it, got the whole thing. And so, they cast lots for the cloak.

Who would get the cloak? They didn't divide the cloak as they did the other garments. You see the difference between reading it as saying the same thing as saying different things. Take another one.

And this is where almost all, take for example, Zechariah 9.9, where you have the king comes riding upon a donkey, upon the colt of a donkey. This is Zechariah 9.9. Rejoice greatly daughter Zion, shout daughter Jerusalem, see your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Okay.

Now the Hebrew says, and on a colt. So most understand it more synonymous that the donkey is now defined as the colt of a donkey. But Matthew doesn't read that way.

He came riding. Well, turn to Matthew and see how Matthew reads it in Matthew 21.1-5. As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethsaida on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples saying to them, go to the village ahead of you. And at once you will find a donkey tied there with her colt.

So, there are two animals, the donkey and the colt. It is not a donkey defined more narrowly as a colt. It's different.

If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them and he will send them right away. This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet, say to daughter Zion, see your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey and on a colt, the foal of a donkey. So, Matthew, in some way, pictures Jesus as both with a donkey and with a colt.

And they were distinguished. That's the difference, whether they're the same thing or they're different things. And you could see how, I remember when I was in class at Harvard, the professor laughed at Matthew for not understanding Hebrew parallelism, that they're the same thing.

But we now know they're not the same thing. Okay. Well, you see, listen to this difference.

Come and take a look at Psalm 2 and verse five of Psalm 2. Okay. In verse five, he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath. Now for Lowth rebukes and terrifies are saying the same thing.

But if you think about it, they're not the same thing. Rebuke is what the Lord does. Terrifies is what they fear.

Instead of looking at it as saying the same thing, you're looking at it and you're cutting with a much sharper knife. And you're saying to yourself, as you read the Scriptures and you meditate upon them, what's the difference between rebuke and terrifies? They're related, but how? And you begin to exegete much more finely when you understand Hebrew poetry. That's what helps to see the difference.

And there's always some difference, almost always some difference between them. That's the change. And I give the arguments in favor of Kugel over Lowth.

Page 45, I can't get into it. I'm talking about Hebrew accents and the principle of continuous dichotomy. And this is going to be too advanced.

Look at the diagram below and you can see the principle that every verse has two halves and is divided in Hebrew by a certain accent mark. It's called an athnac. I have to be simplistic.

But there's basically an accent mark that puts it into an A verse set and a B verse set. The A and B make the bicolon. Okay.

Now the accents go further. And so, you get the A and B divided and the A will be divided into an AA and an AB and a B will be divided into a BA and a BB. Or it could be A and AB, A and AA and AB.

And it could simply be B. Here's an illustration of it from Isaiah 53. He grew up before him like a tender shoot and like a root out of dry ground. That's the A with the AA and the AB.

So, in other words, the AA, the imagery is of what we would call a horticultural term of a sucker. It doesn't belong there. And that's what's meant by this yonik.

It's a sucker. And what you want to do in horticultural is you want to cut off the sucker because it takes off from the main plant. So he was growing up before him like that.

And more than that, in the other comparison, the AB, it was like a root out of dry ground. In other words, he had no promise and it looked as though he should be destroyed. And out of dry ground, he's not going to live.

It's an anomaly. Now the B, he had no beauty or magistrate to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. Notice the A is figurative, a shoot, a root out of dry ground.

Now the literal, he had no beauty, nothing that we should be attracted to him. He did not look like a king. In fact, going back to the donkey, he comes in riding on not a horse, like a Keizer Wilhelm out of Jerusalem.

He comes riding on a donkey and a fault of a donkey. That is a donkey about the size of a Great Dane dog with his feet dragging along the ground. What kind of king is this? Which shows us what we should be like, lowliness and humble.

He comes riding on in lowliness, nothing in him that we would do. This is not what you expect from a king. It was different, altogether different.

But notice that A is figurative, the B is literal. And when you learn to read poetry, you begin to think differently. And that's what I'm driving at in this course.

I'm giving you approaches, a way of thinking about it, a way of understanding what, you know, you see it in your Bibles, in the NIV, you've got a line and then you've got a second line. But now I'm trying to show you to think there's a difference between them. It's much more sophisticated than even that.

So, it's all broken up into all kinds of parallelisms. It's an absolutely fantastic system that overwhelms me and amazes me. And it can go into a third division here again from Isaiah.

This is the A, he was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth. As a sheep before her shears is silent, yes, he did not open his mouth. Now there you see, you have an AAA, he was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth.

Now we have the metaphor, as a sheep before his shears is silent. And then we have a climactic as a separate verse set entirely. He did not open his mouth.

He did not complain. This was his destiny, his moment of glory. Now we turn to Psalm 23.

I thought you couldn't do a course on the Psalms without looking at Psalm 23. Okay. First of all, the translation, some matters of introduction, translation, form, and structure, and so forth.

Okay. Translation, a psalm. And you now know that means a song with strings, with instruments.

I am, is my shepherd. I do not want. In green pastures, he allows me to rest.

By choice watering places, he leads me. Here I translated my soul he restores. The word soul in Hebrew does not mean the same thing as in English and in the New Testament.

In the New Testament, you have a soul, body, soul, spirit. In the Old Testament, you are a soul and soul means your desires, your appetites. And usually, it's with yearning.

My soul yearns for you, O God, and you hunger for thirst. It deals with your appetites. So that's the soul.

If you take that theological word book, I have several pages on what the soul is in the Old Testament. It's not the same as in the New Testament. It deals with your vitality.

A. R. Johnson defined it as a passionate vitality. You're alive and you have appetites and drives. It refers to your drives and appetites.

I translate it by vitality, he restores. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk in a dark ravine, I do not fear evil for you are with me.

Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare before me a table in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil, my head, my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy will pursue me all the days of my life. And I will return to dwell in the house of I Am for endless days. To cut the quick of it, I understand this psalm to have three vignettes, three scenes.

The first scene is that of a shepherd with his sheep. The second scene, verse five, is of a sheikh in his tent as a host. The psalmist is a guest with the sheikh who's living in a tent, who lives in a tent.

So the first scene is out in pasture land and the psalmist images himself as a sheep. He's exploiting what it means to be a sheep with Israel's covenant God as your shepherd. Then he shifts that scene and we're now in a tent with a table and a cup.

He's being entertained in the tent. The third scene is at the temple. We've left imagery.

We've left figurative. We've left the allegory of pasture and tent. We now come to reality.

What I'm talking about is the temple. That's the pasture. That's the tent.

That's where this happens. What I'm talking about, to put it in prose, I'm talking about God's goodness. I'm talking about God's kindness, his hesed.

That's what I'm talking about. This imagery is to teach me about God's goodness and God's faithfulness. So, he starts off with these pictures.

The first picture, I understand it to be that the shepherd would lead his sheep out into green pastures. A shepherd has to be very, very sensitive to sheep. They die easily.

They have to be well tended to. He leads them out to the green pastures and he allows them to rest. He gives them an abundant supply of water.

He says, by choice watering places, as I would translate it, he leads me. Then he brings them home. If the way home is through a dark ravine, I don't feel any evil because God is with me.

So, in other words, what he's saying is he provides for me. He restores me. He protects me.

That's the imagery I would get out of it. So, I'm so sated with his goodness. I can lie down in the midst of the best grace.

I'm lying down in it. I'm so refreshed by these quiet waters and I have no fear. Even go through the darkest ravine, you are with me and you're protecting me.

So, I walk securely. It's a song of trust. I walk securely through life.

But now when he gets back to the sheepfold where the shepherd would normally take care of the sheep, he doesn't want to go back to a sheepfold. So, he changes the imagery. Now he's in a tent with a sheep and he teaches the same thing.

You prepare a table before me. That's equal to the green pastures. It's all before my enemies.

That's the equivalent of, though I walk through the darkest ravines, you're with me, you protect me. So, he's having this banquet in the midst of all his enemies who are looking on. So, he's being protected.

So, he says, you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. Then as the water refreshes, you anoint my head with oil, my head, my cup is overflowing. I'm totally refreshed.

Then he says, surely goodness and kindness will pursue me forever. So, it's great to be a sheep on the pasture. It's better yet to be a guest in a tent, but how much better to be in the temple with the Lord?

And that's eternal forever, all my days, forever. So, I will return to dwell in the house of I Am for endless days. The full light of immortality has not been brought past, but he knows it's for endless days.

It's the best he could express it in that dispensation. Notice what happens here a bit. Notice how cleverly the psalm is put together.

Notice that in verses one through three, he's talking about the shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd. He's talking to the congregation that's gathered at the temple.

The king is speaking and he's telling them as the congregation, the Lord is my shepherd. I don't lack. He provides for me.

He's saying that's for his congregation. Then the next part in verse five, when he's in the tent, he's talking directly to God. And so you have you prepare a table before me.

So, he's no longer talking about God. He's talking to God. This is the nature of poetry.

You make these kinds of shifts. It's done so smoothly. But notice, and then verse six, he's talking again to the congregation.

What I'm telling you is that God is faithful. God is good. And it's at the temple here and it's for endless days.

Don't miss what I'm talking about by this imagery. And again, he's talking to the congregation. So, he talks to the congregation.

He talks to God. But notice, this is what we call a Janus. Notice how he makes the transition from talking to the congregation to talking to God.

He begins to talk to God under the imagery of the sheep in the pasture. So that's what you get in verse four. Even though I walk in a dark ravine, I do not fear evil.

And now he's already talking to God for you are with me. He actually made the switch in verse four from talking about God to talking to God. And he did it at the end of the verse of under the sheep and shepherd imagery.

We call that a Janus. It's a transition from one section to the next section. This is poetry.

It's brilliantly put together when we begin to understand what poetry is. That's basically what I wanted to share in all these notes. But I always like to bring it up to the New Testament because with Jesus, he is both the sheep who himself walked with his father as his shepherd, but he has now become our shepherd.

And so when I say the Lord is my shepherd, I'm thinking about the triune God. I'm thinking about the Son of God. He's the great shepherd.

He's the chief shepherd. He's the good shepherd who gave his life for his sheep. It's so much greater that he died for me.

That's my shepherd. And so I want to read it within the light of the New Testament. That's what we do at the end there in that section.

This is Dr. Bruce Waltke in his teaching on the book of Psalms. This is session number five, Psalm 4 in Hebrew Poetry.