

Dr. Bruce Waltke, Psalms, Lecture 23

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This is Dr. Bruce Waltke in his teaching on the book of Psalms. This is session number 23, Rhetorical Approach, Poetic Techniques.

We've looked at various methods or approaches to interpreting the Psalms in order to get into the mind and heart of the inspired poet.

So, we've looked at the spiritual approach. We looked at having the right attitude, the right spirit, toward God and his inspired writer. We looked at the historical approach and the importance of the king in the interpretation of the Psalms.

We looked at the forms of Psalms and therefore we batched the Psalms according to the common form. We looked for what was typical between a cache of Psalms. So that the Psalms of praise had the mood of praise, grateful songs had a mood of gratitude.

They had a vocabulary of praise like Hallelujah, or praise the Lord, or we will give thanks to the Lord. They had distinct motifs. We looked at common motifs so that in the hymns, there was a call to praise and there was cause for praise and then a renewed call to praise very often.

In the laments, they had distinct motifs. They had invocation. As soon as you read, O Lord, O God, O Shepherd of Israel, you knew you were dealing with a lament or a petition psalms.

They had the motif of confidence. They had the motif of lament. They had the motif of petition and they always had a motif of praise.

So, we looked at them, batching them broadly as they would fit these different kinds of categories. We also considered the temple setting in which these psalms were recited. In this lecture, we will be looking at how an individual psalm is constructed, not for its form and as typical of other psalms, but the poetic techniques that made it a unique psalm and that the poet employed the kinds of techniques they used to put their material together.

So, I introduced it by this quote from Phyllis Tribble, who definitely defines by contrast, form, and rhetorical criticism. She says, that whereas form criticism studies the typical and so groups literature according to its genre, rhetorical criticism studies the particular within the typical. So, as we approach the psalm, we're not only aware of its form and its similarity to other psalms, but we must be aware of how the psalm is put together.

What were the techniques that the poet used? We call this also poetics from the Greek word to make or to work. How did they actually compose? What were some of their techniques by which they put their literature together? I'm not going to go into levels of signification again. I don't want to get bogged down in that.

We discussed the levels of signification in the syllabus. We saw that when we're dealing with the text, there is some that pertain to lexicons, some that pertain to grammar, and some that pertain to poetry. But we're really looking now at the whole poem and its stanzas within it.

And within the stanzas, we have strophes. So usually a poem has, as we saw in Psalm 110, a stanza. So, there were two stanzas.

And within the stanzas, that is the introduction, recitation, reflection done twice, two stanzas. There were strophes and the parts of that, the smaller units within it are called strophes in the literature. So, you have the poem, then you have the stanzas, then you have the strophes.

And then sometimes you have units within the strophes. And we're looking at how the strophes are put together to form stanzas, how the stanzas are put together to form a poem of the psalm itself. So, this is called poetics and we're going to be looking at different techniques.

So when I went through my university training, I was given the lenses by which I could identify sources I could atomize my material, and break it apart into a J document or E document or P document or D document. I was given that kind of a lens. I knew source criticism.

It wasn't until really the work of Robert Alter in about 1980, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, that he began to open our eyes to view things holistically and to see how the material was put together. He also came out with *The Art of Biblical Poetry*. James Kugel did something similar too with *The Art of Poetry*.

So, literature since about 1980 has been concerned about this holistic way of viewing the literature. So, I've had to learn to put on lenses, a new way of looking at my material. I kind of meant to encourage students, I kind of jokingly said, it wasn't until I was about 55 that I began to learn how to read the Bible and became ever more skillful at it until by about the age of 65, I began to feel I had a little bit of confidence in knowing how to read the poem according to poetics and understanding how it's put together.

I meant to encourage the students when I said at about the age of 65, I'm beginning to know how to read the Bible. They said, Oh, great. So anyway, I'm not going to, I'm going to give the techniques of poetry.

On page 299, we'll be talking about the keyword that may hold material together. On page 300, I talk about refrains and how, see all of this really is various forms of repetition. So, you have a repetition of a keyword.

You have a repetition of a refrain that puts it together. I'm going to illustrate that from Psalm 49, the importance of a refrain. On page 302, this should be C. Contrast that you learn to look for contrast.

And D. you learn to look for comparisons between the material. You watch for logic and you watch for climax and you look for various kinds of structure. So that's the kind of material we're going into in this lecture.

Having introduced broadly this subject, part two is poetic, which means how is it put together? And the definition is the literary devices that an author uses to construct his composition and to communicate his evaluative point of view. In other words, like the narrator, the poet has a point of view. He has a message and he communicates his message through aesthetics, through artistic forms, and artistic ways.

And we're looking at the artistry by which he puts the poem together to communicate his message. Usually, in the literature, it's referred to as an idea, but since the message has a moral imperative about it, since the idea has a demand of response to truth, I'd rather talk about its message than I would about an idea. Says Adele Berlin in her book on Poetics, it's an inductive science that seeks to abstract the general principles of literature from many different manifestations of those principles as they occur in actual literary texts.

So, it's by the comparison of a number of texts that we learn to abstract the techniques by which the poet wrote and composed his material. Its essential aim of poetics is not to elicit meaning from a text, but rather to find the building blocks of literature and the rules by which they are assembled. She says elsewhere, we do not know what a text means until we know how it means.

And we'll be looking at these building blocks that enable us to understand how it means in order to get at what it means. She says, thus poetics is to literature as linguistics is to language. That is, poetics describes the basic components of literature and the rules governing their use.

Poetics strives to write a grammar, as it were, of literature. And so I paraphrase here, we must first know how a text means before we can know what it means. I'm going to skip those other quotes.

The idea that they're authors and not redactors is more appropriate for narrative than for poetry. I'm now jumping down on page 299 and I'll look at the techniques

themselves of how the literature is put together and what we should be looking for. One of the techniques is a keyword that runs through the material and holds it together.

And the key word also contributes to understanding the message. Martin Buber coined the word *leitwort*, which means the leading word that guides the literature. He defines it as a word or word root that is meaningfully repeated within a text or a sequence of texts or a complex of texts.

He continued, those who attend to these repetitions will find a meaning of the text revealed or clarified or at any rate made more emphatic. So, for example, in Psalm 2, the keywords are the Lord and the King. Every stanza talks about the Lord and the King.

The rebellion of the heathen is against the Lord and the King. It's the Lord who sets his King upon Zion. The King recites the decree of the Lord to set him upon Zion.

The psalmist exhorts the Kings to serve the Lord and kiss the sun. And once you see that, that begins to open that psalm a little bit more clearly. It's about the Lord and his King and their relationships.

Another thing you watch for is not only a keyword, but you watch for a refrain that is repeated. So, for example, we've already seen this in Psalms 42 and 43. The refrain is that this King is in exile.

He longs to get back to the temple. But three times he says, why my soul are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. So, all three times, with all three stanzas, he ends with that refrain that yes, we're discouraged.

Yes, we're away from the temple. I long for it. I hate the situation in which I find myself.

Nevertheless, my soul, wait for the Lord, hope for the Lord. And he finds healing for his distraught state. I'm now going to look at a wisdom psalm to show the importance of a refrain.

So, I invite you to turn with me to Psalm 49. I think I've written, I don't think I wrote the whole thing out here. So, we need to read it.

I'm reading from the NIV and Psalm 49. This is by Sons of Korach. Anyway, this is a wisdom psalm.

So, we're going to be taking up wisdom psalms in a lecture or two, but let's taste one ahead of time, which will illustrate the importance of a refrain. Let me read the psalm first. It belongs to the Sons of Korach and it was sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument, instruments.

Hear this, all you peoples, listen, all who live in the world, both low and high, rich and poor alike. My mouth will speak words of wisdom. The meditation of my heart will give you understanding.

I will turn my ear to a proverb. With the harp, I will expound my riddle, literally open my heart. Why should I fear when evil days come when wicked deceivers surround me? Those who trust in their wealth and boast of their great riches.

No one can redeem the life of another or give God a ransom for them. The ransom for life is costly. No payment is ever enough.

So that they should live on forever and not see decay. For all can see that the wise die, that the foolish and senseless also perish, leaving their wealth to others. Their tombs will remain their houses forever, their dwellings for endless generations, though they had named lands after themselves.

People, despite their wealth, do not endure. They are like the beasts that perish. This is the fate of those who trust in themselves and of their followers who approve of their sayings.

They are like sheep and are destined to die. Death will be their shepherd, but the upright will prevail over them in the morning. Their forms will decay in the grave, far from their priestly mansions.

But God will redeem me from the realm of the dead. He will surely take me to himself. Do not be overawed when others grow rich, when the splendor of their houses increases, for they will take nothing with them when they die.

Their splendor will not descend with them. But while they live, they count themselves blessed. People praise you when you prosper.

They will join those who have gone before them and will never again see the light of life. People who have wealth, but lack understanding are like the beasts that perish." The psalm has three stanzas. The first stanza is the introduction.

We learned that it is a wisdom psalm. These four verses have two strophes. First of all, in verses one and two, he introduces us to the addressees.

In verses three and four, he introduces us to himself as the author. He's clearly a sage who is teaching the people. So, by way of introduction, by way of the addressees, he begins by addressing all peoples.

This is true of wisdom literature. Hear this all you people, listen all who live in this world. And then after that broad statement, he thereupon narrows it down to a merism of two different kinds, the low and the high, the rich and the poor.

So, he's going to have but one proverb, as we shall see, one lesson, but readers will respond differently. In other words, we all hear the text differently according to our own situation. It's not that the text changes meaning, it's that the audience differs in the way they hear the text.

So, for example, here, the low, whatever the situation may be, they're going to be comforted. The high in an exalted position, they're going to be warned. The rich will be sobered and the poor will be consoled.

So, some will be comforted and some will be warned. Some will be sobered and some will be consoled depending on your state. You're going to hear the proverb differently.

So that's why it's very hard for me to say, what do I expect to occur among students when I'm lecturing? Because I know the Spirit will apply it differently to each individual. My responsibility is to teach the truth of the text and then allow the Spirit to apply it appropriately to the audience. But now we're introduced to the author, having said we have these extremes of people, but it's to all people.

Then he says of himself that I will speak words of wisdom. The meditation of my heart will give you understanding that will be the substance, but the form of it is going to be in the form of a proverb. I will turn my ear to a proverb with the harp.

I will expound my riddle. So, it's going to be a proverb and the proverb is going to be somewhat enigmatic. It's going to force us to think about it, to tease out of it, its meaning.

Having introduced his poem in the first stanza, we now come to the two stanzas that are divided by refrain. The refrain is found in verse 12 and verse 20. You can see it, it's almost replicated.

People, despite their wealth, do not endure. They are like the beasts that perish. And again, in verse 20, people who have wealth, but lack understanding are like the beasts that perish.

The word translated, are like, is the same word for proverb. The Hebrew word for proverb is mashal. This is a verbal form. It's nimshal. And so, the proverb is a comparison. And so, he's comparing people to beasts, the beasts that perish, but he's going to play with that.

And this refrain is crucial. This is the proverb. It's repeated twice.

It divides the poem into two halves. And so, you have eight verses for the first stanza, that is from verses five through 12, that's eight verses. And then you have eight verses for the second stanza, which is from 13 through 20.

Now what he does is he's going to elaborate upon this comparison of people to animals that perish. And in the first stanza, his point is that everyone dies like an animal. They all perish.

And you notice, he says, this is true in verse 10, for all can see that the wise die, that the foolish and senseless also perish, leaving their wealth to others. So, it's very similar to Kohelet that death is a leveler and that everyone is going to die like the beasts. But the second stanza is limited to the wicked.

Everyone dies, but the wicked die permanently, but not the righteous. In the Hebrew text, there's one difference between verse 12 and verse 20. And everything is the same except where it says people despite their wealth.

And then it says, do not endure. I give you this on page 301. I think a better translation, mankind in his pomp will not remain or endure.

And the Hebrew word for will not remain or not endure is the Hebrew bal yalin. Bal is a form, it's an ancient form found in Ugaritic, means not. They will not and yalin means endure.

He is like the beasts that perish. Now, if you turn to the next line, the second refrain in verse 20, this is now on page 302 at the top of the page, whereas it is man in his pomp, but now it changes from yalin to yavin. To highlight it, it uses a different adverb for no, instead of bal it uses lo, but they are synonymous.

The real difference is one letter. This is why it's enigmatic. There's a riddle.

This is the way the sage works that will not endure, yalin that refers to everybody, but not understand that's the fool. That's the lo yavin. So in the Hebrew, you could see this very clearly, this pun that's going on.

Everyone does not endure, but the ones that die permanently are those without understanding. And so that's the difference. All die, but not all die forever.

Now, once we get that refrain, then we can understand the proverb that what is going to develop in the first stanza is that all people die like animals. On page 301, I give my own translation. What happens is here that a God is that which gives you security and significance.

That's how I would understand a God. Whatever in your life gives you security and gives you significance, that is your God. That's what you live for.

That's what you trust in. And for most people, it's money. It's money that gives them security.

It's money that gives them significance. When you're younger, it's sex appeal that gives you security and significance. If you don't have sex appeal, you don't have security within your group and you don't have significance in the group.

That's how it works in the world. If you're like me, and you have no money and you have no sex appeal, then you might find your security and significance in preaching and in teaching. That can become your God and that gives you your security.

But he's talking here about making money, which is the world, I would say 99.9% will say, if you're rich, you were successful. He did well in life. That's how the world judges it.

That's what he's dealing with. This is really theodicy. How do we handle this when rich people succeed as the world defines success? So, he says, why should I fear in times of trouble when the iniquity of those who cheat me surround me, those who trust in their wealth and boast of the abundance of their riches.

So, they see their trust and you see their significance, their boast, and they're willing to sell their souls to get it. Then he goes on to say, truly no man can ransom another or give to God the price of his life for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice. So, if the sun was a coin of gold in one pocket and the moon, a coin of silver in the other, was a Milky Way, pearls of necklace around your neck, or were they bright stars, constellations, diamonds in a crown or in a tiara, the day of death, it's got no value.

It's unrighteous mammon. It cannot save us from our greatest enemy, which is death. So, no amount of money is going to save you that you should live on forever and see the pit.

This is true of everybody. For he sees that even wise die, the fool and the stupid, all alike must perish and leave their wealth to others. Their graves are their homes

forever, their dwelling places to all generations, though they call lands by their own names.

You might just as well write your name on water. It has no permanence in this world. And so, he comes to the refrain, man in his pomp will not remain. He is like the beast that perishes. But now the fool dies forever. All die, but the fool dies forever.

He has no life. This is the path of all those who have foolish confidence. Yet after them, people approve of their boasts.

Then you have this tremendous metasymbolism. They are like sheep that are appointed for Sheol and death shall be their shepherd. Picture that death is your shepherd, leading you to corruption, death, decay, and no life.

That's your shepherd. But now note, the upright shall rule over them in the morning. And here we have the distinction.

The upright in a new day will rule over them. He has no clear revelation of resurrection yet that is brought to light by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. But he knows there is a better day coming when the upright, those who conform their lives wholly to the word of God, they will rule over them in the morning.

But then he goes back to the wicked. Their form shall be consumed in Sheol with no place to dwell in. But now note, whereas the third line, 5, 6, and 7, and he says, truly no man can ransom another.

Now in the third line, he says, but God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol. So, no man can save us from death, but God can save us out of Sheol, out of the realm of the dead. When the glory of his house increases from the power, for he will take me.

This is the word used for Elijah that the Lord took him. And so he has Sarah. So, he says, do not be afraid when a man becomes rich, when the glory of his house increases.

For when he dies, he will carry nothing away. His glory will not go down after him. For though while he lives, he counts himself blessed.

Though you get praise when you do well for yourself, his soul will go to the generation of his fathers who will never again see the light, which is the light of life. And so, man in his pomp without understanding is like the beast that perishes. So, the refrain, and I'm saying this, you do not know what a text means until you know how it means.

And this refrain as in Psalm 42, 43, put your hope in God. This refrain is the key to understanding the psalm that we all die, but those without understanding die forever. And God will redeem, ransom my soul from the grave itself.

So that's the importance of the refrain. So, I've talked about techniques and you watch for refrains that give you insight into the meaning of the psalm. They are very important.

Page 302, this should be C and you have contrast. It associates or juxtaposes things that are dissimilar or opposite. So, for example, all of this can be illustrated in narrative and in prose as well as in poetry.

One of my favorite illustrations of contrast and comparison is at the end of the book of Judges, followed by 1 Samuel. We have, it's the time of the Philistine superiority over Israel. And the last judge of Judges is Samson.

His father is Manoah. His mother is only known as Manoah's wife. Manoah's wife is being contrasted and compared to Hannah.

Hannah is the next generation after Samson. Note the comparison. Here is Manoah's wife.

She has no children. She's barren. She can have no children.

And here is Hannah, the next generation in the Philistine occupation or superiority, hegemony. And she has no children, but note the difference. Manoah's wife doesn't pray.

In fact, she probably doesn't want a child. Hannah prays. Manoah's wife has the most charismatic judge that Israel knew.

Single-handedly he could defeat the Philistine army. He did it with Goliath. He did it again.

No, David did it with Goliath. I mean, he did it that with the jawbone of an ass, he slew thousands of the Philistines. In his death, when he pulled down the temple, he killed the leaders.

He killed thousands of Philistines. There was no one as charismatic as Samson. So, you have Manoah's wife with no prayer, rather an angel of the Lord appears to her.

It's a true miracle. She has this most charismatic figure and he does not deliver Israel. And then we have Hannah, no angel of the Lord, no miracles, simply prayer.

She wants a son and she prays for a son related to the king. You listen to her prayer in 1 Samuel 2. She's praying for the Lord's anointed, for the king. Her son is going to install Israel's first king and install kingship.

Well, there you see the comparison and contrast of two mothers in the same situation. One mother has a miracle. She has great charisma, but she and her husband are failures as parents.

Then you have, on the other hand, Hannah, no miracles, simply prayer. Samson is a prophet. What he has is not the great strength for Samson.

All he has is the word of God. His is moral strength and he saves Israel. So that comparison and contrast gives you tremendous insight into how the kingdom of God comes.

So, you watch when you're reading your material for comparison and contrast. So the very first psalm was filled with contrast. We said there were three stanzas, the cause for happiness or blessedness.

Then we had the picture of the prosperity. So, the cause was against the wicked in contrast to the word of God. The illustration was the tree of life versus the chaff.

The consequence was that the righteous will not stand in the judgment. They will perish, but there will be the righteous who will stand for the Lord knows the way of the righteous. So, you see the tremendous comparison and contrast that's going on there.

That is very typical of poetics that you should put on the lens looking for comparison and for contrast. We saw a comparison in Psalm 23. We saw the three different settings which the Lord is likened to a shepherd.

As a shepherd, he provides for his sheep. He restores his sheep. He protects his sheep.

Then in the fifth verse, he becomes like a sheik in a tent and it's all repeated, but escalated. Now he provides them with a table spread before them. He restores them.

He pours oil upon his head and all of this is protected. All of this is in the presence of his enemy. Then he moves climatically to the final scene.

It's good to be a sheep in the pasture, better yet to be a guest in a tent. But the reality is I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever with eternal life. So we have this comparison for developing the material.

Also, we should watch for the logic of how the material is developed as in Psalm 2, when we pointed out the logic of how these stanzas hold together. Also, we watch for intensification. Normally there is an intensification as in poetry within the lines.

The formula is X minus one, three transgressions, and then comes the reality that there's always escalation. So, you can see that in Psalm 23, there is escalation and you watch for escalation. So, you have in the Psalms, one, it ends triumphantly that the Lord knows the way of the righteous.

Therefore, they are in harmony with the eternal one, but the way of the wicked alienated from God, they perish. So, one watches almost always there's a climactic moment at the end of your psalm that you want to watch for. Now we talk about structures or some patterns of structure.

There are three typical patterns by which the material was put together. There can be an alternating pattern as we saw in Psalm 110, you get ABC, A prime, B prime, C prime. You can have a concentric pattern and that is you go ABC, CBA.

And you can have a chiasmic pattern. You go ABC, X, C prime, B prime, A prime. So I liken that to water imagery the alternating pattern ABC, A prime, B prime, C prime.

They are like the waves coming in and one wave on top of another. And the next wave is always more intensive than the wave before it. So the tide is coming in.

We saw that in Psalm 110. So finally, he ends up conquering the entire earth and he will not fail. He's going to pursue it, even though it's going to be refreshed with water until he reaches the end of his triumphant march, for example.

A chiasmic pattern is like a concentric pattern. I liken it to a tide, tide in, tide out. It comes in, it goes out.

And then you have a chiasmic pattern. That's like throwing a rock into a pond and then it ripples out from there. So, the beginning and the end matching on down the line.

But the critical moment is where the rock hits the pivot. And this is really important for the interpretation of all of the Bible. For example, let me illustrate symmetrical alternating pattern.

As for example, the famous story of Elijah at Mount Horeb. Like Moses, he's in a cave and he's going to get a revelation from God. Notice the alternating pattern that interprets what the vision is.

It starts off that Elijah is at a cave and the word of the Lord, we're told, came to him. That in turn is followed by the Lord's question. What are you doing here, Elijah? And then he answers, I've been very zealous for the Lord of hosts.

And then he ends by trying to take my life away. Then the Lord comes back to him and says to him, speaks to him. And then we have the scene.

We have the wind that tore the rocks apart, but God was not in the wind. Then there was the earthquake and God was not in the earthquake. And then there was the fire and God was not in the fire.

But then we have this oxymoron of the sound of sheer silence. It was so sound you actually could hear it, so to speak, a whisper. The question is, what does the fire, the earthquake, what does the wind, the earthquake, the fire, and the sheer silence symbolize? What's the point of it? We get it in the alternating parallelism.

For we read again, now the story continues, the setting, we're told he's at a cave when the voice came. The question is, what are you doing here, Elijah? The answer is, I've been very zealous for the Lord. And now they're trying to take my life away.

Then the Lord said, and then we have the anointing of Hazael, king of Syria, the Arameans, anointing Jehu, king of Israel. And then we have the anointing of Elisha and they are destructive because parallel to that, we're told that Hazael is going to kill. What Hazael doesn't kill, Jehu will kill.

And what Jehu doesn't kill, Elisha will kill as he killed the 42 children, for example. Yes, the 42 children at Bethel, for example. By the parallelism, I think it's quite clear that the wind of destruction is Hazael.

The earthquake of destruction is Jehu who brings death. The fire is Elisha who is characterized by fire. But now we have what's the sheer silence of God, the 7,000 who have never bowed to Baal.

And what happens is people just read the story and they make up a connotation. This is your still small voice. But if you study the literature, this is not what it is.

It's not your conscience. It's the silent majority, the silent minority. And seven is the number of completion.

It's the divine number. It's the perfect number. And a thousand is an innumerable number.

It's a large number, a perfect large number. And that I understand by the alternating parallelism is the interpretation of the still small voice. So, you don't know what a text means until you know how it means.

And what they're doing here in narrative, we also get in the poems that we've been looking at. I've been pointing out alternating parallelism. Or take another one, take a concentric parallelism, no, a chiasmic.

I illustrate this in prose in 1 Kings 1-11. Notice how it begins with A, a prophet who intervenes in the royal succession. That is, Nathan intervenes.

So, it's not Adonijah who's king, but it is going to be Solomon who's king. But notice the A' on page 305, that at the end of Solomon's reign, a prophet intervenes and determines the royal succession. A prophet is going to take away 10 of the tribes from Solomon.

And he's going to appoint the successors to Solomon, namely, Rehoboam. Chapter two, was chapter one, where we have the prophet intervene in the royal succession. Then in chapter two, Solomon eliminates threats to his security.

And the key word there, the refrain is, as Solomon's throne was established. So, he removed the threat of Joab. He removed the threat of Abiathar.

He removed the threat of Adonijah and his throne was established. Notice the B' in chapter 11, before a prophet determines the royal succession, Yahweh raises up threats to Solomon's security. He raises up Jeroboam.

He raises up the Assyrian king and they disestablish his throne as being undone. Instead of being established, it's being disestablished. He raises up threats to Solomon's security.

Notice the C, the early promise of Solomon's reign when he prays for wisdom. C' the tragic failure of Solomon's reign when he marries the foreign wives and he trusts in money and he violates the Deuteronomic legislation of not to multiply wives and horses to yourselves. D, again chapter three through chapter four, Solomon uses his gift for the people.

D', Solomon uses his gift for himself. He lives luxuriously as illustrated by the Queen of Sheba and all he has on his table to eat. E, you have the preparations for the building of the temple.

E', Solomon dedicates the temple and he's warned by God in chapter eight. F, Solomon builds the temple. F', Solomon furnishes the temple.

So, you could see the chiastic pattern. Notice the X, it's 1 Kings 7.1 through 12, Solomon stopped building the temple. That's where he builds the palace for the Egyptian queen and he builds his own palace.

He didn't put God first. The turning point of Solomon is not marrying foreign wives, as it's normally said. The turning point for Solomon is when he stopped putting the temple first and he put his house first.

From there on in, it's more or less downhill for Solomon. That's chiastic parallelism and chiastic structure rather. And we saw this in Psalm 92.

We could see the chiastic structure that at the center, God is ruling overall and on either side of that in a tricolon, God eliminates through his king, his enemies. And we illustrated it there. So, we look for keywords.

We look for refrain. We look for different kinds of structures, namely alternating, concentric, or chiastic. And another thing you look for is a genus.

If you're outlining material and if you don't know whether it goes with the stanza before or the stanza after or the material before or the material after, that's very deliberate. That's a genus. It can go either way.

And the genus is from the God of doorways, one head that looked two different ways. It's a month of January that looks back to the old year, to the new year. And normally there is a transition period that's looking back and looking ahead.

As for example, we saw it in Psalm 24 under the motif of God is a shepherd and it's all, it's in the third person. The Lord is my shepherd and he leads me beside quiet waters and so forth. But then he shifts to the second person.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me. He's no longer talking about God. He's now talking to God and that makes it so smooth.

So that when he now presents God as a sheikh in a tent, he says, you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemy. And so at the end of the shepherd motif, he shifts to the second person to transition you into the second stanza, which is, he's the guest in the Lord's tent. That's a genus.

It's very, very common to have these kinds of transitional moments in the Psalms. Another technique they use is generalization and particularization. So, the generalization would be praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

And that's the generalization. Then he lists all his benefits, who heals all your diseases, and so forth. There's also preparation and foreshadowing.

That is, for example, often in the Lament Psalms, he will have an introductory petition and then he will develop that. This was seen in Psalm 51, for example. He says, blot out all my transgressions and launder me, cleanse me and make me clean.

That was the introductory petition. But then in the main petition, he asked God to cleanse him with hyssop and make him clean. And he asked for forgiveness.

So, you could see that. Well, let's just take a look at Psalm 51 to make the point more clear. You can see the introductory petition.

Then he says, after having mercy, the petition is blot out all my transgressions. And verse two, cleanse me from my impurity, descend me, make me pure. And then we have his main petition in verse seven, cleanse me with hyssop and I will be clean, wash me and I will be righted in snow.

So, he asked for cleansing. And then also for forensic forgiveness, he says, hide your face from my sin and blot out all my iniquity. So, he had an introductory petition and then in preparation for the main petition.

Again, these are all techniques that you find throughout literature, the biblical literature. There are summarizations as we saw in Psalm 73, that there's a summarization. This is what the liquid is like.

They're always carefree and so forth. You can have an interrogation. That is, you start with a question and then you answer the question.

We saw that in Psalm 15. You have inclusios that you begin and end as an envelope. This is very, very common.

So, we had it in Psalm 8, O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. And that frames the entire psalm. You have intercalation.

That is, you can be on one track and then just stop and introduce entirely new material. For example, in the story of Judges and Hannah, that it's presenting the six major judges ending with Samson. Then it's going to move on in chapter seven with the next judge, who is Samuel.

But in between, you get an intercalation to give you more insight into the material. The book of Judges ends with the real problem. It's not only the judges who have feet of clay, as Gary Enrig would put it, but it's the real problem is the priesthood.

So, you have two stories of the failure of the priesthood. You have the apostate priest, who is the grandson of Moses, who establishes the false cult, and Dan. Then you have the callous, wicked priest with his concubine and he murders her.

He leads the whole nation into a civil war that decimates, and almost destroys the entire tribe of Benjamin. The real problem is the priesthood because they're not gatekeepers. They're not upholding the word of God.

So, you have the apostate priest, Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses. Then you have this wicked callous priest who has a concubine, murders her, and leads the nation into civil war. Then you go on into 1 Samuel and we can end up back with a judge, the last of the judges, who is Samuel.

And you have that kind of intercalation. This is common in the Psalms. Many times source critics want to say we have two Psalms.

I'm not convinced of that. Take a look, for example, at Psalm 24. This will make more sense in light of what we said about the Enthronement Psalms and God's rule.

Famous Psalm, Psalm of David, the earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it. For he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters. See, that sounds an awful lot like Psalm 93 to me, where the Lord is robed in majesty and might.

He established the earth. And it's at that point where the Lord has been victorious and established the world and the creation. And he founded it on the seas, the symbol of chaos, and he's mightier than the waters.

I'd expect at that point that the King of Glory would go into the city and be crowned. Verse seven, lift up your heads, you gates, be lifted up you everlasting doors. But it doesn't do that.

It stops that and introduces a whole new scene. And now not only is the Lord entering triumphantly into a city, but now his people are also entering with him. But who are the people who enter, who may ascend the mountain of the Lord, who may stand in his holy place, the one who has clean hands, that's behavior, a pure heart in his motives, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false God.

They will receive blessings from the Lord and vindication from God their Savior, such as the generation of those who seek him or seek your face. O God of Jacob. So he stops about the Lord and his triumph and he matches it with the people going into a city.

And then he comes back with lift up your heads, you gates. I could just stop here a moment. I'm trying to figure out where I discuss the meaning of lift up your heads, oh, you gates.

Let's see, where did I discuss that? Oh, yeah, I discussed it earlier. It would be under enthronement, under Psalm 110. We've got to go back to that lecture on Psalm 110.

I think that's where I discuss it. I'm trying to find it. It's on page, yeah, page 296 of your notes.

It's there that I discussed this, what it means to lift up his head, and what the significance is that he's a victor. I'm illustrating this from Psalm 24. Let's talk about intercalation.

So going back to Psalm 24, after the intercalation of the people ascending the mountain of the Lord and triumph with the Lord, because they keep covenant with him and they receive blessing. And they are the ones that seek your face. He goes back to the king coming in and he says, lift up your heads, you gates, be lifted up you ancient doors.

The king of glory may come in. So the question is, what does this have to do with gates with heads? They didn't know in the ancient East, they didn't know doors that lifted up as they do today. I forget what you call that kind of gate, but they lifted up the gate.

You'd see pictures of it. That did not exist in David's day. The door swung on hinges.

He's not talking about the lintels of a gate. He's personifying the gates and he's using imagery from the Ugaritic material, I assume. So, I discuss this, what it means to lift up your heads, you gates, be lifted up you everlasting door doors, that the king of glory may come in.

This is on page 296 of your notes. The circle of gate towers are personified, which like a council of elders sat waiting for the return of the army and of its great warrior gone to battle and which sat bowed and anxious. In the Ugaritic text, we find a picture of the council of the gods assembled in the mountain of El, that is Zephon.

On the approach of the emissaries of Baal's arch-foe, Prince C, the gods are bowed and fearful, quote from the Ugaritic text, dropping their heads onto their knees down on their princely throne, sitting in fear and despair. And then Baal, the young king enters and they shout, his emissaries shout, lift up, O gods, your heads. So, in the Ugaritic text, it likens Baal entering his holy mountain and his council of other gods, they're dispirited because they think he's gone down to defeat before Prince C, the symbol of chaos and death.

But now comes the announcement, Baal has been victorious. And they say, lift up your heads, which refers to the council. And I take it, of course, is right here by Professor Harvard, that the city gates that surround the city are personified as a council.

The king has gone out to battle and they fear that he's gone down in defeat. But now he's been victorious. And he says, lift up your heads, you gates, and they are being personified to welcome.

And it goes on in Psalm 24, that the king of glory may come in. Who is this king of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, you gates, lift them up, you ancient doors, that the king of glory may come in.

Who is this king of glory? The Lord almighty. He is the king of glory. He is the one that defeats all of his foes.

And so you have this intercalation between God who has been victorious in creation. And then you have the intercalation of the army entering with him. And then the gates are told to be lifted up, personified.

They've been drooping, discouraged. But here comes the king of glory in all of this victory. This is normal.

This is normal to have intercalation in the midst of hymnic material. It's not unusual. And that would illustrate.

You had Psalm 100 and Psalm 100, be joyful in the Lord, all you lands. Serve the Lord with gladness and come into his presence with a song. So, you're invited to come in and be joyful in the Lord.

But then he stops before you enter, know this, the Lord himself is God. And we, Israel, are his people. We are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

And having intercalated that confession that the Lord, the God of Israel is God and that Israel is his people through whom he mediates his kingdom. Then he continues, not only be joyful in the Lord. Now he says, enter his gates with thanksgiving, go into his courts with praise, be thankful, and call upon his name for the Lord is good.

His mercy is everlasting and his faithfulness endures from age to age. Again, there's kind of an intercalation there between entering to worship. But then before you enter, know this, confess Israel's confession that the Lord himself is God.

On page 307, another technique is intertextuality. They make allusion to other material. So that is as we saw in Psalm 8, it's almost Genesis 1 put to music, put to poetry.

He said to mankind rule over the cattle and the herds and even the wild animals and so forth. He recites Genesis 1 as we've seen. There's also attention to scenic depiction.

So that, you know, what was it in scenic depiction? I was just thinking you have, for example, in Shakespeare, in Henry IV, and it starts out, you have the King of Wales and the King of Scotland rebelling against Henry and his son, Harry. How does Shakespeare begin that scene? It's been leading up to a climactic battle between these Dukes and Henry and his son, Harry. The way he begins, it begins with looking at the sun and it's blood red.

The wind is howling through the trees. It says, like a trumpet sound. It's all being set up for the battle day, bloody sun, wind sounding like a trumpet, and battle.

It's a day of gloom. It's a day of storm and that's in his imagination. But God orchestrates, not in his imagination, but in real history.

In Providence, he sets the appropriate setting. So, for example, when David flees from Absalom and he meets three people, he meets Hushai, he meets Ziba, and he meets Shimei. This is all in 1 Samuel 15 and 16.

Hushai is a loyal friend. Ziba is mixed. He's loyal to David by being disloyal to his master, Mephibosheth.

And he lies about Mephibosheth. And then the third one is Shimei. Now Hushai is a loyal friend and he's sent to defeat the council of Absalom.

He's to defeat the council of Ahithophel. And so Hushai is sent back. Ziba, I say, is mixed loyalty.

He comes to David with donkeys laden with raisins and bread and wine and food to sustain them. But he does it by betraying his master Mephibosheth because David asked him, where's Mephibosheth? And he says he's hoping that the kingdom will return to him. It's a straight-out guy as you study the story.

And then the third one is Saul's descendant Shimei who curses David and throws rocks at him and calls him a bloody tyrant because of what he did to his ancestor Saul. But notice how God stages all this. Hushai is on the top of the mountain closest to Gide.

Zimai is down the slope. He's mixed and at the bottom of the mountain is Shimei. And so, it's definitely orchestrated to show who is closest to God and who is totally removed from God because Shimei is basically off the mountain entirely.

And so, you have scenic depiction, very deliberate. There's nothing in here that's just an accident. And so, you have David, he's going to where does, in Psalm 5, where does he pray? It's in the morning.

I will wait in the morning like a sentry waiting for the answer to a prayer. And so he's praying in the morning. And the morning in the ancient Near East was the day of time of judgment after the night.

The God of justice in the ancient Near East was Shamash, which is the sun. And so the setting is the morning sun, which gave hope for justice in the light of a new day. And you watch for naming as well, finally, as in Psalm 91, he uses four names from God, the Most High, the Almighty, the Lord, and El, God himself.

So, these are some of the techniques by which they embed and hide their meaning. All right. So that gives you some insight into what poets do in order to compose.

And it really has a hidden meaning that you have to be aware of these techniques. You have to put these lenses on by which you're able to see it. Until you have these lenses, you don't see it any more than I think I saw it in 1 Kings 7, and that was the turning point of the whole story because I learned to look for chiasms.

All right. Lord bless you all.

This is Dr. Bruce Waltke in his teaching on the book of Psalms. This is session number 23, Rhetorical Approach, and Poetic Techniques.