Studies in Biblical Poetry

The Collected Notes of C.A. LaRue
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INTRODUCTION:

The Poetic Writings

Approximately one-third of the Old testament is written in poetry. The three main divisions-- the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings - contain poetry in successively greater amounts. Only seven Old Testament books - Leviticus, Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, and Malachi - appear to have no poetic lines. Several books in the OT are written either totally (Psalms, Lamentations and Song of Songs) or predominantly in poetry (Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes). Moreover, many parts of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Minor Prophets also contain poetic writings.

While each of these Old Testament books has its own unique tone and style, in general, the poetry they contain can be grouped into 5 basic types:

Worship:
- Hymns praising God. (Psalm 8)
- Psalms of thanksgiving for deliverance. (Psalms 30,124)
- Psalms of supplication, voicing complaints and requests. (Psalms 44,64)

Teaching:
- Proverbs (Ecclesiastes10:18),
- Riddles (Proverbs 30:4),
- Wise advice (Proverbs 4),
- Narrative poems about traditions (Psalms 78, 132),
- Narrative poems with a moral (Proverbs 7),
- Hymns praising wisdom (Job 28),
- Wisdom on the futility and fragility of human life (Ecclesiastes 1:4-9).

Prophecy:
- Prophecies of reproof and warning (Isaiah 34),
- Prophecies of consolation (Isaiah 35).

Weddings:
- Processionals (Song 3:9-11),
• Songs for the bride's preparation (Song 4:1-7),
• Epithalamiums outside the wedding chamber (Psalm 127),
• Dawn songs greeting newlyweds after the wedding night (Song 6:9-10),
• Blessings (Psalm 128).

Notable events:
• Songs of victory (Judges 5),
• Dirges mourning someone's death (II Samuel 1:19-27) or destruction of a city (Lamentations 1), Death-bed testaments of leaders (Genesis 49).

With that said, we will examine each of these books in turn and then dive briefly into the New Testament to explore why poetry might not be as scarce there as previously thought.

Also keep in mind that while Hebrew poetry occurred throughout Old Testament history, there were three primary periods of poetic literature.

I. The Patriarchal period—Job (c. 2000 B.C.)
II. The Davidic period—Psalms (c. 1000 B.C.)
III. The Solomonic period
   A. Song of Solomon—a young man’s love
   B. Proverbs—a middle-aged man’s wisdom
   C. Ecclesiastes—an old man’s sorrow (c. 950 B.C.)

And a brief note on:

The Nature of Hebrew Poetry

Hebrew poetry, so characteristic of the wisdom literature of the Old Testament (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon), is unlike English poetry which emphasizes rhyme and meter. Hebrew poetry relies on other characteristics for its impact. Parallelism is the chief characteristic of biblical poetry, but it has other features that distinguish it from the typical prose or narrative we find in the rest of Scripture. First, there a relatively greater conciseness or terseness of form, and second there is a greater use of certain types of rhetorical devices. These are parallelism, rhythm, a rich use of imagery, and figures of speech.

In general, there are three broad categories of Hebrew poetry: (1) lyric poetry, which was originally accompanied by music on the lyre (the Psalms); (2) didactic poetry, which, using maxims, was designed to communicate basic principles of life (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes); and (3) dramatic poetry, which used dialog to communicate its message (Job and the Song of Solomon).
SECTION ONE:

PSALMS
We start with the Psalms because it is the largest single collection of Hebrew poetry. In Hebrew, the title of the book is *Tehillim*, meaning "songs of praise," and the individual psalms are referred to as *Mizmorim*: Mizmor Aleph (Psalm 1), Mizmor Bet (Psalm 2), and so on. Under the Jewish organization, the Psalms are counted among the wisdom literature of the *Ketuvim* ("Writings").

Traditionally, the Tehillim are divided into five books, corresponding to the five books of Torah or the Pentateuch. Just as Moses gave the five books of Torah to Israel, so did David gave the five books of Psalms. It is said that "Moses gave the path, but David gave the directions".

The 5 Books and their authors----->

**Book One/Sefer Rishon: Psalms 1-41**

All 41 of these psalms are ascribed to King David. Psalms 9, 10, 25, 34, and 37 have acrostic elements.

**Book Two/Sefer Sheni: Psalms 42-72**

Of the 31 psalms in this section, David wrote 18, Solomon wrote 1 (Psalm 72), and the rest were written by Korach (or anonymously)

**Book Three/Sefer Shlishi: Psalms 73-89**

Of the 17 psalms in this section, Asaph appears to have written most of them, David wrote Psalm 86, Heman the Ezraite wrote Psalm 88, and Ethan the Ezraite wrote the 89th

**Book Four/Sefer Revi'i: Psalms 90-106**

Of the 17 psalms in this section, Psalm 90 is ascribed to Moses, and Psalms 101 and 103 are ascribed to David:

**Book Five/Sefer Chamishi: Psalms 107-150**

Of the 44 psalms in this section, 15 are ascribed to David, one (Psalm 127) to Solomon, and the rest are anonymous.

Additionally, **Psalms 113-118** constitute the Hallel, which is recited verbatim on the three festivals of Pesach, Shavu'ot, and Sukkot. The Hallel is also recited at Rosh Chodesh (the new moon) and during the eight days of Chanukah. Psalm 136 is generally called "the great Hallel." The Hallel is usually recited after the shacharit (morning) service after the Amidah.
Psalms 120-134 are referred to as "Songs of Degrees," and are thought to have been used as hymns of approach by pilgrims to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Of the acrostic Psalms, 119 is the longest, with each set of 8 pesukim (verses) beginning with one of the 22 Hebrew letters. Other psalms that have alphabetical arrangements are Psalm 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, and 145.

InTotal the Sums by Author--->
- David – 73 (estimates range from 68 to 88).
- Asaph – 12.
- Solomon – 1.
- Heman – 1.
- Ethan – 1.
- Moses – 1.
- Unknown – 49 (most likely that David penned the majority)

*from lectures at Augusta State Univ. by Dr. Prinsky

The words Psalms and Psalter come from the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, where they originally referred to stringed instruments (such as harp, lyre, and lute), and then to songs sung with the accompaniment of these instruments.

Bible scholars have devised many different schemes for categorizing the 150 Psalms (though this number is tricky, since two of the Psalms are actually parts of one Psalm, and the Eastern Orthodox church recognizes a different number).

Another system besides the book grouping, divides them into the following twelve (12) categories:

1. prayers of the individual
2. praise from the individual for God's saving help
3. prayers of the community
4. praise from the community for God's saving help
5. confessions of confidence in the Lord
6. hymns in praise of God's majesty and virtues
7. hymns celebrating God's universal reign
8. songs of Zion, the city of God
9. royal psalms -- by, for, or concerning the king, the Lord's anointed
10. pilgrimage songs
11. liturgical songs (used in worship service; often antiphonal)
12. didactic or instructional songs.

As stated earlier, Hebrew poetry usually lacks rhyme (though rhyme can be found in the Hebrew of Psalm 8 and Psalm 23) and regular meter; rather, its most distinctive and pervasive feature is
parallelism. Most poetic lines are composed of two or sometimes three balanced segments, though the balance is often loose, with the second segment commonly somewhat shorter than the first. The second segment echoes (synonymous parallelism), contrasts (antithetic parallelism), or syntactically completes (synthetic parallelism) the first segment. Often English translations that set poetry off as lines, which they should, indicate this subordination in the parallelism by different indentations of the lines in a poem.

Many English Bible translations use echeloning of lines to indicate a main element followed by a modifying element that is parallel, contrasting, developing, etc. Such use may be found in the following examples, drawn from the book of Psalms (most of them from Psalm 1):

(a) **Synonymous parallelism** (similarity in the two elements):

But his delight is in the law of the LORD
   And in His law he meditates day and night. (1:2)

(b) **Antithetical parallelism** (contrast or opposition of the two elements):

For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
   But the way of the ungodly shall perish. (1:6)

(c) **Synthetic parallelism** (development of something in the preceding line):

Blessed is the man
   Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
   Nor stands in the path of sinners,
   Nor sits in the seat of the scornful. (1:1)

(d) **Climactic parallelism** (first member is incomplete, and the second member or next members partially repeat the preceding member, and then complete the preceding member):

Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
   Give to the LORD glory and strength. (96:7)

(e) **Emblematic parallelism** (first line or member contains a figure of speech, and the following lines explain the figure by expansion or explanation):

He shall be like a tree
   Planted by the rivers of water,
   That brings forth its fruit in its season,
   Whose leaf also shall not wither;
   And whatever he does shall prosper. (1:3)

Sometimes Hebrew poetry has a stanzaic structure indicated by refrains. Often the poetry has more of a content-structure or thought-structure indicated by verse paragraphs in English translations. The
Psalms and other Hebrew poetry (e.g., the overall category of "the poetic books") use, as in all poetry, figurative language (metaphor, simile, metonymy, pun, imagery, etc.), acoustic effects (assonance, alliteration, consonance, very occasionally rhyme), and sometimes even alphabetical acrostics (each successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet is given one line segment, as in the Hebrew of Psalms 111-112 -- one of the many instances not conveyed in English translation).

MORE FACTS ABOUT PSALMS

1. Of the 283 New Testament quotations from the Old Testament, 116 are from Psalms.
2. Psalm 119 is the longest Psalm and the longest chapter in the Bible.
3. Psalm 117 is the shortest Psalm and the shortest chapter in the Bible. It is also the middle chapter in the Bible.
4. Psalm 118:8 is the middle verse in the Bible.
5. The word “Selah” is found 73 times in the Psalms.
   A. It is a musical term that is supposed to mean silence or pause.
   Martin Luther said that it gave the Jew time for reflection.

*From Grace Communion
International study sessions on Psalms

In the picture above, David plays the kinnor, or lyre. This is the most frequently mentioned instrument in the Bible, found in 42 places. It is often called a harp (1 Samuel 16:23) and was the favorite instrument of the Hebrews. It was played mainly in worship services, but also at banquets and celebrations for government occasions (1 Samuel 10:5). It was not played during times of national calamity (Isaiah 14:11).

Exploring PSALMS Further

There are several reasons that the Hebrews used poetry: 1) much of the Torah was sung and it was easier to sing and memorize these poems rather than prose, and 2) poetry is a form of human language that seeks to transcend the limitations inherent in non-poetic speech, in other words to give expression to that which is ultimately inexpressible" (N.H. Ridderbos and P.C. Craigie, "Psalms," in The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, vol. 3, p. 1037).
Again, in the Hebrew Bible, you will see the book of Psalms divided into five smaller books that correspond in number with the five books of the law/Torah:

- **Book 1**: Psalms 1 – 41
- **Book 2**: Psalms 42 – 72
- **Book 3**: Psalms 73 – 89
- **Book 4**: Psalms 90 – 106
- **Book 5**: Psalms 107 – 150

The last psalm in each of the first four books has a concluding doxology (an expression of praise repeated by the congregation during worship services), such as "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen" (41:13; see also 72:18-19; 89:52; 106:48). The whole of Psalm 150 forms a doxology for all five books of the Psalms, just as Psalms 1 and 2 form an extended introduction.

There is also another grouping called the "Elohistic Psalter" (Psalms 42 – 83). In the Elohistic Psalter, God is usually referred to as *Elohim*, whereas God is normally called *Yahweh* in the other psalms. When the same psalm has been included in two collections (such as Psalm 14 and 53 or Psalm 40:13-17 and 70), the version in the Elohistic Psalter will often use *Elohim* instead of *Yahweh*. This can be seen in most English Bibles, since they are usually translated 'Elohim as "God" and *Yahweh* as "Lord." For example, compare Psalm 14:7 with the parallel verse, Psalm 53:6; or Psalm 40:16 with its parallel, Psalm 70:4.

*from the ESV Literary Study Bible's Introduction to the Psalms*

Psalms can also be called a collection of lyric poems. Since these poems were also sung and recited liturgically, we can view the Psalter (the title given to the collection of 150 poems) as Israel's hymnbook. Further, since they were particularly associated with worship in the temple in Jerusalem, they are also referred to as “a Temple collection” (C. S. Lewis) or Israel's prayerbook.

**More About Lyric Poems:**

A lyric poem is either emotional or reflective, meaning that the dominant content is a series of feelings or a series of thoughts. A lyric poet ordinarily speaks in the personal, first-person mode (both singular and plural), and the result is a subjective expression of experience.

A lyric poem is then:

1. unified around a central idea, feeling, or motif
2. usually grouped as a series of variations on the central theme/motif.
3. not about telling a story, although often life experience provides the occasion

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*from the ESV Literary Study Bible's Introduction to the Psalms*
divided into two categories based on the predominant subject matter (see note below)

an overall three-part structure, consisting of introduction–development–conclusion or closure.

in the middle part, developed using as many as four techniques: repetition, listing or catalog, contrast, and association (in which the poet branches out from an initial idea to a related idea).

Of the two main subcategories (mentioned above):

1. Lament psalms (also called complaints):
   1. have five main ingredients (which may appear in any order and may appear more than once in a psalm):
      1. invocation or cry to God
      2. the lament, or definition of the crisis
      3. petition
      4. statement of confidence in God
      5. vow to praise God
   2. are occasional poems arising out of a specific event or situation in the poet's or nation's life
   3. are created in a certain pattern:
      1. poet undertakes a quest to master crisis and find peace in the midst
      2. author paints a heightened and often figurative picture of the crisis
      3. poet protests about the situation to God and perhaps to himself and his reader
      4. author attempts to persuade God to act
      5. poet finds a satisfactory solution to the problem.

2. Praise psalms have the following traits:
   1. They praise God (poems in praise of people go by other names)
   2. They have three main parts:
      1. a call to praise (which may occur more than once in the poem),
      2. list of the praiseworthy acts and attributes of God
      3. a note of resolution (such as a concluding prayer or wish).
Also, we know that the master story of the Bible is a record of what God does and what people do in history. The psalms then assert directly, and imply indirectly, what God does in the three arenas of nature or creation, history, and the personal lives of people. The primary actions of God that the psalms record are his acts of creation, providence, judgment, and redemption/rescue. Psalms also tells the story of what people do in history (including within that the individual poets’ testimonies to their own experiences). Additionally, many of the psalms express messianic expectations.

Expanded Outline for Study Purposes:

**Book I: Psalms 1-41**

- Psalm 1: The Blessed Man: The Two Ways of Life Contrasted: that of Word and the World
- Psalm 2: The Messiah King: The Confederacy Against God and Christ
- Psalm 3: Quietness Amid Troubles: Protection in Danger
- Psalm 4: An Evening Prayer of Trust in God
- Psalm 5: A Morning Prayer of God’s Confidence in God’s Presence
- Psalm 6: A Prayer of a Soul in Deep Anguish
- Psalm 7: A Prayer for Refuge
- Psalm 8: The Glory of the Creator and Man’s Dignity
- Psalm 9: A Prayer of Thanksgiving for God’s Justice
- Psalm 10: A Prayer for the Overthrow of the Wicked
- Psalm 11: The Lord as a Refuge and Defense
- Psalm 12: A Prayer for Help Against Lying Tongues
- Psalm 13: A Prayer for Help in Trouble
- Psalm 14: A Description of the Folly and Wickedness of Man
- Psalm 15: A description of the Godly Man
- Psalm 16: The Lord as the Refuge of the Saints
- Psalm 17: A Prayer for Deliverance through God’s Justice
- Psalm 18: A Prayer of Praise for Deliverance
- Psalm 19: God’s Revelation in His Creation Work and Written Word
- Psalm 20: Prayer for Victory Over Enemies
- Psalm 21: The Lord as the Strength of the King
- Psalm 22: A Portrait of the Cross: a Psalm of Anguish and Praise
- Psalm 24: A Psalm of the King of Glory
- Psalm 25: An Acrostic Psalm: a Prayer for Deliverance, Guidance, and Forgiveness
- Psalm 26: The Plea of Integrity and for Redemption
- Psalm 27: A Prayer of Fearless Confidence in the Lord
- Psalm 28: Prayer for Help and Praise for its Answer: the Lord My Strength and My Shield
- Psalm 29: The Powerful Voice of God
- Psalm 30: A Prayer of Thankfulness for God’s Faithfulness in a Time of Need
- Psalm 31: A Prayer of Complaint, Petition, and Praise
- Psalm 32: The Blessing of Forgiveness and Trust in God
• Psalm 33: Praise to the Lord as the Creator and Deliverer
• Psalm 34: Praise to the Lord as the Provider and Deliverer
• Psalm 35: A Prayer for Vindication and Rescue from Enemies
• Psalm 36: The Wickedness of Men Contrasted with the Loving Kindness of God
• Psalm 37: A Plea for Resting in the Lord
• Psalm 38: A Prayer for Reconciliation Acknowledging the Heavy Burden of Sin
• Psalm 39: A Prayer Acknowledging the Frailty of Man
• Psalm 40: Praise for the Joyful Experience and Expectation of Salvation
• Psalm 41: Praise for God’s Blessings in Adversity

Book II: Psalms 42-72

• Psalms 42-43: Longing For God and Hoping in the Lord’s Salvation
• Psalm 44: National Lament and Prayer for Redemption
• Psalm 45: The Wedding Song of a Son of David
• Psalm 46: God is Our Refuge and Strength
• Psalm 47: The Lord Is the Victorious King
• Psalm 48: Praise for Mount Zion, the Beautiful City
• Psalm 49: The Emptiness of Riches Without Wisdom
• Psalm 50: The Sacrifice of Thanksgiving
• Psalm 51: Confession and the Forgiveness of Sin
• Psalm 52: The Futility of Boastful Wickedness
• Psalm 53: A Portrait of the Godless
• Psalm 54: The Lord as Our Help!
• Psalm 55: The Lord Sustains the Righteous!
• Psalm 56: Trust in the Midst of Our Fears
• Psalm 57: The Exaltation of the Lord in the Midst of Alienation
• Psalm 58: The Righteous Shall Surely Be Rewarded
• Psalm 59: Prayer For Deliverance From Enemies
• Psalm 60: Prayer For Deliverance of the Nation
• Psalm 61: Prayer From a Fainting Heart
• Psalm 62: Waiting On the Lord
• Psalm 63: Thirsting God’s Love
• Psalm 64: Prayer for Protection
• Psalm 65: God’s Bounty for Earth and Man
• Psalm 66: Remember What God Has Done
• Psalm 67: A Call for All to Praise God
• Psalm 68: God Is a Father to the Oppressed
• Psalm 69: Prayer for Deliverance According to God’s Compassion
• Psalm 70: Prayer for the Poor and Needy
• Psalm 71: Prayer for the Aged
• Psalm 72: The Glorious Reign of Messiah
Book III: Psalms 73-89

- Psalm 73: Prayer for an Eternal Perspective
- Psalm 74: Plea for Help in a Time of National Adversity
- Psalm 75: Justice Is the Lord’s
- Psalm 76: The Victorious Power of the God of Jacob
- Psalm 77: In the Day of Trouble, Remember God’s Greatness
- Psalm 78: Lessons From Israel’s History
- Psalm 79: A Plea for the Lord to Remember the Sheep of His Pasture
- Psalm 80: Israel’s Plea for God’s Mercy
- Psalm 81: A Plea for Israel to Listen to the Lord
- Psalm 82: Unjust Judges Rebuked
- Psalm 83: Prayer for Judgment on Israel’s Enemies
- Psalm 84: A Deep Longing for the Presence of God
- Psalm 85: Prayer for Revival
- Psalm 86: Prayer for Mercy on the Nation
- Psalm 87: The Joy of Living in Zion
- Psalm 88: A Prayer in the Darkness of Despair
- Psalm 89: Claiming God’s Person and Promises in Affliction

Book IV: Psalms 90-106

- Psalm 90: Teach Us to Number Our Days
- Psalm 91: In the Shelter of the Most High
- Psalm 92: In Praise of the Lord
- Psalm 93: Yahweh Reigns Gloriously
- Psalm 94: Yahweh Is the Judge of the Earth: Vengeance is His
- Psalm 95: Let Us Kneel Before Our Maker: a Call to Worship
- Psalm 96: Worship the Lord Who Will Judge the World in Righteousness
- Psalm 97: Rejoice! The Lord Reigns
- Psalm 98: Sing a New Song to the Lord
- Psalm 99: Exalt the Lord Who Reigns
- Psalm 100: Serve the Lord With Gladness: He is the Lord and He is Good
- Psalm 101: Commitment to a Holy Life
- Psalm 102: Prayer of a Saint Who is Overwhelmed
- Psalm 103: Bless the Lord: His Compassions Never Fail!
- Psalm 104: The Lord’s Care Over All Creation
- Psalm 105: The Lord’s Faithful Acts in Salvation History
- Psalm 106: A Remembrance of Yahweh’s Love and Israel’s Disobedience

Book V: Psalms 107-150

- Psalm 107: Praise for God’s Deliverance from Manifold Troubles
- Psalm 108: Praise and Prayer for Victory
- Psalm 109: An Imprecatory Prayer for Vindication and Judgments Against Enemies
• Psalm 110: Messiah Pictured as the Priest King Warrior
• Psalm 111: Celebration of God’s Faithfulness
• Psalm 112: The Triumph of Faith
• Psalm 113: Praise to the Exalted Lord Who Condescends to the Lowly
• Psalm 114: Praise for the Exodus
• Psalm 115: The Impotence of Idols and the Greatness of the Lord
• Psalm 116: Praise to the Lord for Deliverance
• Psalm 117: The Praise of All People
• Psalm 118: Praise for the Lord’s Saving Goodness
• Psalm 119: In Praise of the Scriptures
• Psalm 120: Prayer for Deliverance from Slanderers
• Psalm 121: The Lord is My Guardian
• Psalm 122: Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem!
• Psalm 123: Plea for Mercy
• Psalm 124: Our Helper is the Maker of Heaven and Earth!
• Psalm 125: Peace Be on Israel
• Psalm 126: Praise for Restoration!
• Psalm 127: Praise for Children, a Gift from the Lord
• Psalm 128: The Family Blessed by the Lord
• Psalm 129: The Prayer of the Persecuted
• Psalm 130: Waiting for God’s Redemption
• Psalm 131: Childlike Trust in the Lord
• Psalm 132: Prayer for the Lord’s Blessing on Zion
• Psalm 133: The Blessedness of Brotherly Unity
• Psalm 134: Praise to the Lord in the Night
• Psalm 135: Praise for the Wondrous Works of God
• Psalm 136: Praise for God’s Mercy Which Endures Forever
• Psalm 137: Tears Over Captivity
• Psalm 138: The Lord Answers Prayer and Delivers the Humble
• Psalm 139: The Lord Knows Me!
• Psalm 140: Prayer for Deliverance: You Are My God!
• Psalm 141: May My Prayer Be Like Incense!
• Psalm 142: No One Cared but the Lord; He Alone Is My Portion
• Psalm 143: Prayer for Guidance; Lead Me on Level Ground
• Psalm 144: The Lord is My Rock and My Warrior
• Psalm 145: Praise for the Lord’s Greatness and Wonderful Works
• Psalm 146: Praise to the Lord, an Abundant Helper
• Psalm 147: Praise to the Lord Who Heals the Brokenhearted
• Psalm 148: Praise to the Lord, the Wise Creator
• Psalm 149: Praise to the Lord Who Delights in His People
• Psalm 150: Praise to the Lord
SECTION TWO:

LAMENTATIONS
THE HOLY DAY ASSOCIATION: Tish B'Av

Over the course of the Jewish year, there are five books that are associated with specific holidays. These megillot (scrolls) relate the event that took place on the particular holiday or reflect the message of the occasion. The most of familiar is the scroll of Esther, which is read on Purim. The book of Eicha (Lamentations) is read on the Ninth of Av. The book begins with the word "eicha," meaning "how"--the first word of the opening verse, "How lonely sits the city once full of people." This refers to Jerusalem after the destruction of the Temple. Lamentations is traditionally attributed to the prophet Jeremiah who witnessed the destruction of the first Temple.

The Book of Lamentations is an intricate set of dirges and descriptions of Jerusalem under siege and of the destruction of the First Temple. The elegy bewails Jerusalem, once teeming with life and now sitting abandoned and alone like a solitary widow. It captures the horror of the siege: children pleading for water and bread in vain; cannibalism on the part of hunger-maddened mothers ("those who died by the sword were better off than those who perished by hunger"); nobles hanged; women raped; priests defiled.

The prophet basically blames Jewish immorality and idolatry for the tragedy. Yet there is a fascinating outburst in Chapter 3 in which the believer, as it were, accuses God of being the enemy--like a lion lying in ambush to destroy his victim. The prophet comes close to losing his faith ("I thought my strength and hope in the Lord had perished") before the memory of God's past kindnesses restores it--barely.

The Book of Lamentations is read softly at first. The volume of the reader's voice builds to the climax, which is sung aloud by the entire congregation: "Turn us to you, O Lord, and we will return. Renew our days as of old."

Also, at the Wailing Wall in the Old City of Jerusalem, "the Jews assemble every Friday afternoon to bewail the downfall of the holy city, kissing the stone wall and watering it with their tears. They repeat from their well-worn Hebrew Bibles and prayer-books the Lamentations of Jeremiah and suitable Psalms.

The book itself consists of five separate poems (chapters 1-5). In chapter 1, the prophet dwells on the manifold miseries oppressed by which the city sits as a solitary widow weeping sorely. In chapter 2, these miseries are described in connection with national sins and acts of God. Chapter 3 speaks of hope for the people of God. The chastisement would only be for their good; a better day would dawn for them. Chapter 4 laments the ruin and desolation that had come upon the city and temple, but traces it only to the people's sins. Chapter 5 is a prayer that Zion's reproach may be taken away in the repentance and recovery of the people.

The first four poems/chapters) are acrostics, which like some of the Psalms (25, 34, 37, 119), start each verse with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet taken in order. The first, second, and fourth chapters
each have twenty-two verses--the number of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The third has sixty-six verses, in which each three successive verses begin with the same letter. The fifth is not acrostic, but also has twenty-two verses. In the second, third and fourth chapters, the order of the 16th letter (ע) and the 17th (פ) is reversed.

**An Overview of the Structure of *Lamentations***:

I. Desolation of Zion (chapter 1)
   A. the people mourn loss of the land (1-11a)
   B. Zion’s lament (11b-22)

II. The Anger of God (chapter 2)
   A. destruction and judgment (1-10)
   B. the pain of the people (11-22)

III. Turn toward Hope (chapter 3)
   A. recounting pain (1-20)
   B. affirmation of trust in God (21-51)
   C. petition and curse.

IV. Judgment and Justice (chapter 4)
   A. remembering the destruction (1-11)
   B. God’s judgment (12-16)
   C. justice on Edom (17-22)

V. Concluding Prayer (chapter 5)
   A. petition (1-18)
   B. doxology (19-22)
SECTION THREE:

SONG OF SONGS

*Plate from Flint's 1909 Song of Solomon*
The Song of Solomon/Song of Songs is a collection of love poetry. Though some critics reject King Solomon as the author and take 1:1 to mean, “which is about Solomon,” the internal evidence supports the traditional belief that Solomon is its author. The contents of the book agree with all that we know about the abilities and wisdom of Solomon, and there is no compelling reason not to regard him as the author. Solomon is mentioned seven times (1:1, 5; 3:7, 9, 11; 8:11-12), and he is identified as the groom. Verse 1 asserts that Solomon wrote this song as one of many (in fact the best of the many) songs which he wrote (1 Kings 4:32 tells us he composed 1,005 such songs). Note that the text does not simply say, “The Song of Solomon” but “The Song of Songs, which are Solomon’s.”

MAIN FACTS:

Date:
About 965 B.C.
The Song was probably written early in Solomon’s career, about 965. At this point, Solomon had sixty queens and eighty concubines (6:8), but later in his life, he would have seven hundred queens and three thousand concubines (1 Kings 11:3).

Title of the Book:
Regarding the title of this book Ryrie writes:
This book has been titled several ways: the Hebrew title from verse 1, The Song of Songs, which means “the most superlative, or best, of songs”; the English title, also from verse 1, The Song of Solomon, which designates the author; and the Canticles, meaning simply “songs,” derived from the Latin.

Theme and Purpose:
The Song of Solomon is a love song filled with metaphors and imagery designed to portray God’s view of love and marriage: the beauty of physical love between man and woman. The book which is presented as a drama with several scenes, has three major player: the bride (Shulamite), the king (Solomon), and a chorus (daughters of Jerusalem).
The theme of Canticles is the love of Solomon for his Shulamite bride and her deep affection for him. This love affair is understood to typify the warm, personal relationship which God desires with His spiritual bride, composed of all redeemed believers who have given their hearts to Him. From the Christian perspective, this points to the mutual commitment between Christ and His church and the fullness of fellowship which ought to subsist between them.

The book has three major players: the bride (Shulamite), the king (Solomon), and a chorus (daughters of Jerusalem).
OUTLINE OF THE SONG OF SOLOMON

I. Title Statement (1:1)

II. The First Declaration of Regret (1:2-2:7)
   1. The Absentee Lover (1:2-4)
   2. The Maiden's Inquiry (1:5-8)
   3. The Memory of Words and Acts of Love (1:9-2:5)
   4. The Lament (2:6-7)

III. The Second Declaration of Regret (2:8-3:5)
   1. The Lover Summons the Maiden (2:8-17)
   2. The Maiden Seeks her Lover (3:1-4)
   3. The Declaration (3:5)

IV. The Third Declaration of Regret (3:6-5:8)
   1. The Procession of the King (3:6-11)
   2. A Description of the Maiden's Charms (4:1-15)
   3. The Eloquent Plea of the Shepherd (4:16;5:1)
   4. The Maiden Seeks her Lover (5:2-7)

V. The Fourth Declaration of Regret (5:9;8:4)
   1. The Maiden's Defense of her Lover (5:9;6:3)
   2. The Second Description of the Maiden's Charms (6:4-10)
   3. The Impulsive Maiden (6:11-3)
4. The Third Description of the Maiden's Charms (7: 1-9)

5. The Invitation of Love (7:10;8:4)

VI. The Unique Powers of Love (8:5-14)
   1. The Awakening of Physical Love is recalled by the Maiden (8:5)
   2. The cost of the Maiden's Love (8:6-7)
   3. The worth of the Maiden's Love (8:8-10)
   4. The intent of the Maiden (8:11-12)
   5. The Maiden Awaits her Lover (8:13-14)
SECTION FOUR:

JOB
The Books of Wisdom include: Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. The writing of Job is in a class of its own. Several types of biblical material are found in Job:

Laments--Job repeatedly bewailed what had befallen him. 3:1-26, 6:2-7, 10:1-12.

Hymns of Praise --Job often praised God for his power and righteousness 5:9-16 26:1-14.

Proverbs --Pithy statements of wisdom and metaphor appear in Job 5:2, 6:56.

Prophetic Speech --The friends sometimes claimed to have had prophetic experiences, and they preached as the prophets did. 4:12-14, 11:13-20, 32:8.

Wisdom Poems --Job has several lengthy poems on the value of wisdom and right behavior. Compare Job 28 to Proverbs 30:2-4 and Job 8:11-22 to Psalm 1.


Apocalyptic Passages --Job has some features in common with books like Daniel and Revelation. (Dockery, Holman Bible Handbook, pp. 311-312)

Job is a kind of epic poem, very much like Homer's Iliad and the Odyssey. It may have been presented at times as a drama in which actors recited the parts of the different characters in the book. Most of the book is poetry but it begins and ends with prose sections which are like program notes given to an audience.
While we know the title of this book obviously comes from its main character, Job, and that he was an historical person (Ezek. 14:14; James 5:11), the author is unknown and there are no textual claims as to the author’s identify. Commentators have suggested Job himself, Elihu, Moses, Solomon, and others.

**Outline:**

I. The Prologue: the Disasters (Afflictions) of Job (1-2)
   A. His Circumstances and Character (1:1-5)
   B. His Calamities and their Source—Satan (1:6-2:10)
   C. His Comforters (2:11-13)

II. The Dialogues or False Comfort of the Three Friends (3:1-31:40)
   A. First cycle of debate (3:1-14:22)
      1. Job’s lament (3:1-26)
      2. Eliphaz’ reply (4:1-5:27; and Job’s rejoinder, 6:1-7:21)
      3. Bildad’s reply (8:1-22; and Job’s rejoinder, 9:1-10:22)
      4. Zophar’s reply (11:1-20; and Job’s rejoinder, 12:1-14:22)
   B. Second cycle of debate (15:1-21:34)
      1. Eliphaz’ reply (15:1-35; and Job’s rejoinder, 16:1-17:16)
      2. Bildad’s reply (18:1-21; and Job’s rejoinder, 19:1-29)
      3. Zophar’s reply (20:1-29; and Job’s rejoinder, 21:1-34)
   C. Third cycle of debate (22:1-31:40)
      2. Bildad’s reply (25:1-6; and Job’s rejoinder, 26:1-31:40)

III. The Words of Elihu (32:1-37:24)
   A. First speech: God’s instruction to man through affliction (32:1-33:33)
   B. Second speech: God’s justice and prudence vindicated (34:1-37)
   C. Third speech: the advantages of pure and consistent piety (35:1-16)
   D. Fourth speech: God’s greatness and Job’s guilt in accusing God of unfairness (36:1-37:24)

IV. God’s Revelation from the Whirlwind (38:1-42:6)
   A. The First Revelation: God’s omnipotence proclaimed in creation; Job’s self-condemning confession(38:1-40:5)
   B. The Second Revelation: God’s power and man’s frailty; Job’s humble re-response (40:6-42:6)

V. The Epilogue: God’s rebuke of the false comforters; Job’s restoration and reward of a long and blessed life (42:7-17)
SECTION FIVE:

PROVERBS
The book of Proverbs is a collection of aphorisms teaching lessons from life.

An aphorism is defined as an original thought, spoken or written in a laconic (concise) and memorable form. Aphorism literally means a "distinction" or "definition", from Greek ἀφορισμός (aphorismós), which is from ἀπὸ (apo) and ἱρίζειν (horizein), meaning "from/to bound".

The original Hebrew title of the book of Proverbs is "Mishlē Shlomoh" ("Proverbs of Solomon"). When translated into Greek and Latin, the title took on different forms. In the Greek Septuagint (LXX) the title became "paroimai paroimiae" ("Proverbs"). In the Latin Vulgate the title was "proverbia", from which the English title of Proverbs is derived.

In terms of the text itself, there are at least eight specific instances where authorship is mentioned:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proverbs</th>
<th>Authors/Collectors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>Solomon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:1</td>
<td>Solomon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:17</td>
<td>Wise Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24:23</td>
<td>Also Wise Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25:1</td>
<td>Also Solomon (as copied by Hezekiah's men)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30:1</td>
<td>Agur son of Jakeh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31:1</td>
<td>Lemuel (or his mother)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three different types of parallelism are used in the book:

1. Synonymous Parallelism

This is a feature where the second line repeats the thought of the first line but in different words. The repetition intensifies the thoughts and feelings being expressed.

“A false witness will not go unpunished,
And he who speaks lies will not escape” (Proverbs 19:5).

2. Antithetic Parallelism

In this feature the second line is the opposite of the first. In the book of Proverbs, this type of construction the most common of the different types.

“He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul,
But he who is careless of his ways will die” (Proverbs 19:16).

3. Synthetic Parallelism

In this poetic style the second line advances the thought of the first. Each line is synonymous but each additional line adds to the thought of the first making it more specific.

“The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger,
And his glory is to overlook a transgression” (Proverbs 19:11).

The Proverbs also make use of literary devices such as:

Simile - Comparison using the words like or as:

“But the path of the just is like the shining sun,
That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.
The way of the wicked is like darkness;
They do not know what makes them stumble” (Proverbs 4:18,19).

Metaphor - Comparison made not using like or as:

“A wholesome tongue is a tree of life,
But perverseness in it breaks the spirit” (Proverbs 15:4; cf. Prov. 25).
Synecdoche - A part of something stands for the whole:

“The eye that mocks his father,
And scorns obedience to his mother,
The ravens of the valley will pick it out,
And the young eagles will eat it” (Proverbs 30:17).

Personification - Inanimate things are given characteristics of living things: The most familiar of these sections is found in chapter eight where wisdom is personified.

“Does not wisdom cry out,
And understanding lift up her voice?
She takes her stand on the top of the high hill,
Beside the way, where the paths meet.
She cries out by the gates, at the entry of the city,
At the entrance of the doors:
‘To you, O men, I call,
And my voice is to the sons of men’” (Proverbs 8:1-3).

Mathematical Emphasis - Numbers are used for emphasis and as an aid to memorization:

“These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him...” (Proverbs 6:16)

The book closes with an acrostic poem in which the initial letters of 22 couplets follow the order of the Hebrew alphabet. The poem embodies the virtues of a good wife or woman. Most likely all the virtues of this chapter are not likely to be embodied in one woman, but a combination of them makes a strong and wise wife.
SECTION SIX:

ECCLESIASTES
The **Book of Ecclesiastes** was originally called *Qoheleth* (Hebrew: קהלת, literally, "Preacher"). The literal sense of the Greek translation, "Member of the Assembly," approaches "Preacher," using the root ekklesia for "assembly," or "church," to maintain similarity with Qoheleth. In English, the book is commonly referred to simply as **Ecclesiastes** (abbreviated "Ecc.").

The main speaker in the book, identified by the name or title Qoheleth (usually translated as "teacher" or "preacher"), introduces himself as "son of David, king in Jerusalem." Authorship of the book is usually attributed to King Solomon. The work consists of personal or autobiographic matter, at times expressed in aphorisms and maxims illuminated in terse paragraphs with reflections on the meaning of life and the best way of life. The work emphatically proclaims all the actions of man to be inherently "vain", "futile", "empty", "meaningless", "temporary", "transitory", "fleeting," or "mere breath," depending on translation, as the lives of both wise and foolish men end in death. While Qoheleth clearly endorses wisdom as a means for a well-lived earthly life, he is unable to ascribe eternal meaning to it. In light of this perceived senselessness, he suggests that one should enjoy the simple pleasures of daily life, such as eating, drinking, and taking enjoyment in one's work, which are gifts from the hand of God.

*from the ESV Literary Study Bible

The proverb is the basic building block of this book. Although the book is not primarily structured like a story, the underlying “quest motif” gives it a narrative effect—an effect heightened by the continuous presence of a first-person narrator. Many of the negative, under-the-sun passages, are voiced as a protest, so that the genre of protest literature comes into play. While all the wisdom literature tends to make use of the resources of poetry, including the verse form of parallelism, the book of Ecclesiastes flaunts its poetic medium much more than ordinary the wisdom literature. The author, identified as King Solomon, is a master of image, metaphor and simile, and his forthrightness is one of his most attractive traits.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passage</th>
<th>Subject Matter</th>
<th>Dominant Mood</th>
<th>Literary Forms and Motifs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:1–3</td>
<td>Introduction to author and theme</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Superscription</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:4–2:23</td>
<td>Life under the sun: meaningless cycles; pursuit of knowledge, pleasure, wealth, work</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Lyric meditation; brief narrative; quest motif</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:24–26</td>
<td>Life above the sun: the God-centered life</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Declarations by the wise man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:1–22</td>
<td>Two views of time</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Lyric meditation; declarations by the wise man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:1–5:17</td>
<td>Life under the sun: how life fails to satisfy</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Catalog of observations; commands to the reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:18–20</td>
<td>Life above the sun: the God-centered life</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Declarations by the wise man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:1–9:6</td>
<td>Life under the sun: the disappointments and disillusionments of life</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Observations and exhortations by the wise man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:7–10</td>
<td>The enjoyment of life</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Commands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:11–10:20</td>
<td>Life under the sun: disillusionment and folly</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Observations by the wise man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:1–12:8</td>
<td>How to live well despite the limitations that are inevitable parts of life</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Commands by the wise man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:9–14</td>
<td>Wrap-up: concluding thoughts</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Rituals of closure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION SEVEN:

THE PROPHETS and
OTHER HEBREW WRITINGS

"THE BRANCH" Isaiah 11: 1
God spoke through His prophets largely in poetic form. People were used to poetry, and they could remember it much better than prose. The prophets often used what may be called “poetic prose,” a special, formal style employing the same characteristics as poetry, though less consistently. Because it is so much more regular and stylized than colloquial prose, it too was better remembered.

It is not surprising then that poetry overshadows prose in the Latter Prophets, for most of the prophetic books contain poetic verse exclusively or predominately; *Jonah* and *Ezekiel* stand out as exceptions. In the Former Prophets, poems punctuate the narrative account of Israel's history in Judges 5 (Song of Deborah), I Sam. 2:1–10 (Hannah's Prayer), II Sam. 1:19–27 (David's eulogy for Saul and Jonathan), II Sam. 22 (David's Song), and II Sam. 23:1–7 (David's last words). Some of the smaller poetic passages include Jotham's fable (Josh. 10:12–13) and Solomon's declaration to God (I Kings 8:12–13).

Additionally, the Torah preserves several lengthy poems in other books, including the Testament of Jacob (Gen. 49:2–27), the Song of the Sea (Ex. 15:1–18), the Song of Moses (Deut. 32), and Moses' Blessing (Deut. 33). We also find a number of shorter poetic compositions or fragments, such as the Song of Lamech (Gen. 4:23–24), Miriam's Song at the Sea (Ex. 15:21), the Song of the Ark (Num. 10:35–36); the Song at the Well (Num. 21:17–18), the Victory Song over Moab (Num. 21:27–30), and the Oracles of Balaam (Num. 23:7–10, 18–24; 24:3–9, 15–24). In some instances, often in the course of a dialogue, a few poetic verses interrupt the surrounding prose narrative, as when the man names the woman (Gen. 2:23), God speaks to Cain (Gen. 4:6–7), or Rebekah's family bids her farewell (Gen. 24:60).

**Recap of Types of Poems Seen in the Old Testament:**

- **PSALM (SONG OF PRAISE)**
  - Psalms, Lamentations, Song of Songs
- **LYRIC**
  - Psalms
- **LAMENT**
  - Lamentations
- **APHORISM**
  - Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job
- **ACROSTIC**
  - Lamentations
- **EPIC/NARRATIVE**
  - Job
- **LOVE**
  - Song of Solomon
SECTION EIGHT:

NEW TESTAMENT
Very little poetry is found in the New Testament, except poetry quoted from the Old Testament or hymns which were included in the worship services of the early church. The Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-10; Luke 6:20-26) have a definite poetic form. The Gospel of Luke contains several long poems: Zacharias' prophecy, known as the Benedictus (Luke 1:68-79); the song of Mary, known as the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55); the song of the heavenly host, known as the Gloria in Excelsis (Luke 2:14); and the blessing of Simeon, known as the Nunc Dimittis (Luke 2:29-32).

Examples of parallelism may be found in the New Testament. For instance, synonymous parallelism occurs in Matthew 7:6: "Do not give what is holy to the dogs, nor cast your pearls before swine." Antithetic parallelism occurs in Matthew 8:20: "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." Synthetic parallelism occurs in John 6:32-33: "Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of GOD is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

In the writings of the apostle Paul several poetic passages may be found: his lyrical celebration of GOD's everlasting love (Rom. 8:31-39); his classic hymn to love (I Corinthians 13); his glorious faith in the triumph of the resurrection (I Cor. 15:51-58); and his thoughts on the humbled and exalted Christ (Phil. 2:5-11).

Who can deny the poetic passion in Paul's words to the Corinthians? "We are hard pressed on every side, yet not cruched; / we are perplexed, but not in despair; / persecuted, but not forsaken; / struck down, but not destroyed" (II Cor. 4:8-9).

If only writing marked by rhyme or meter is classed as poetic, it must be said that the NT contains very few fragments of poetry. But if, in accord with most of modern literary criticism, poetry is defined as the expression of intense experience or thought in creative and connotative language with or without rhyme or meter, then much more of the NT is poetical than most readers realize.

In accord with this broader concept of poetry, five kinds of poetical passages may be identified in the NT: (1) quotations from ancient poets; (2) quotations of unidentified poetical material—e.g., fragments of ancient hymns; (3) passages in the form of Heb. OT poetry (cf., Hebrew Poetry) or NT quotations of OT poetry; (4) passages that, although lacking rhyme or meter are genuinely poetical by reason of exalted and intense expression; (5) apocalyptic imagery (Rev and Matt 24 ; cf. Mark 13 ; Luke 21:5-36 ).

1. NT quotations from ancient Gr. poets are confined to Acts and the Pauline epistles. In his sermon on Mars Hill (Acts 17:22-31 ), Paul quoted (v 28) from three poets: Epimenides of Crete, from whom “For in him [thee, in Epimenides] we live and move and have our being” comes; Aratus of Cilicia and the Stoic Cleanthes, who both have the words, “For we are also his offspring.” From the same passage

*from My Redeemer Bible Dictionary

*from biblicaltraining.org
in Epimenides that he drew upon in Acts 17:28, Paul quoted in Titus 1:12: “The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy, gluttons.” In 1 Cor 15:33, the apostle used the aphorism of Menander, an Athenian comic poet: “Evil communications corrupt good manners” (KJV).

2. In addition to these quotations, the Pauline epistles contain several poetical fragments that may well have been 1st-century Christian hymns (cf. Eph 5:19). 1 Tim 3:16 seems certainly to be of such a nature, although it is unknown whether it is by Paul or some unnamed author:

He [God] was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated in the Spirit,
seen by angels,
preached among the nations,
believed on in the world,
taken up in glory.
The balanced character of this passage suggests antiphonal usage. Similar in nature is Tim 2:11-13, which likewise suggests hymnic use. Another possible hymn fragment is Eph 5:14. The great Christological passage in Phillipians 2:5-11, is clearly poetic in form and may reflect very early Christian hymnody.

Aside from quotations mentioned under 1 and 2 above, the epistles contain outstanding poetic passages. Portions of the epistle of James (the Lord’s brother) resemble the Sermon on the Mount. The other epistles include passages of stirring poetical power (e.g., Rom 8:35-38; 11:33-36; 1 Cor 13; 1 Cor 15:51-57; Heb 11:32-38 in particular; Jude 24, 25). Whereas it must be admitted that the beauty and cadence of the KJV may color the reader’s judgment about what is poetical, nevertheless the Gr. text generally confirms the poetical nature of this kind of NT eloquence.

In the Gospels that of Luke gives us our best examples of poetry. "No sooner have we passed through the vestibule of his Gospel than we find ourselves within a circle of harmonies" (Burton, in the Expositor’s Bible). From the poetic utterances of Mary, Elisabeth, Zacharias, Simeon, and the Angels, the church gains her Magnificat, Beatitude, Benedictus, Nunc Dimittis and Glorias.

The utterances of John the Baptist are filled with a rugged desert vision and an expression which reveals a form of poesy in no wise to be mistaken for prose.

Paul presents many of his ideas in harmonious and beautiful forms. He knew the secular poets of his day, and has immortalized Cleanthes’ Hymn to Zeus (Acts 17:28). He also quotes from Epimenides and the Athenian dramatist Menander (1 Cor 15:33). Paul knew the poetry of the Hebrews, and enriches his own message with many quotations from it. He was acquainted with the Christian hymnology of his own times, as is seen in Eph 5:14 and 1 Tim 3:16. He offers also original flashes of poetic inspiration and utterance, a good example of which is found in Romans 8:31-37.

Who could doubt the poetic imagery of James? He might almost be called the poet of social justice and of patient waiting under affliction for the will of God to come to men.

When one comes to the words of Jesus he discovers that in a very true sense His speech answers to the
requirements for Hebrew poetry. Examples of synonymous, antithetic, synthetic and causal parallelism are the rule rather than the exception in the utterances of Jesus. For the synonymous form see Matt 10:24; for the antithetic see Luke 6:41; for the synthetic and causal forms see Luke 9:23 and Matt 6:7. Not alone are these forms of Hebrew poetry found in the words of Jesus, but also the more involved and sustained poetic utterances (Luke 7:31-32).

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