

CLASS NOTES -- THE POETICALS

INTRODUCTORY

The historical books are **narrative**, are concerned with the **nation**, and have to do with the **Hebrew** race.

The poetical books are **experiential**, are concerned with **individuals**, and have to do with the **human** race.

Inter-relationship of the poetical books in practical application:

- * **JOB** -- speaks of the death of the self-life.
- * **PSALMS** -- Presents the new life in God.
- * **PROVERBS** -- Learning a heavenly but practical wisdom for life on earth.
- * **ECCLESIASTES** -- Reveals the emptiness of the earth-life to satisfy the heart -- the emptiness of that which is "**under** the sun"!
- * **SONG OF SOLOMON** -- Portrays that which does satisfy the heart -- a personal love from (and to) the Lord of Glory, who is far **above** the sun.

HEBREW POETRY -- Adapted from "Explore the Book" by J. Sidlow Baxter. ¹

The basics for all true poetry are: insight, imagination, analogy, and expression. Traditional English poetry, in addition to the above, depends on rhyme and rhythm. Hebrew poetry utilizes the above basics and in addition depends on parallelism of ideas. There are three kinds of parallels:

- * **Completive.** As in:
"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree;
He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon" (Psa. 92:12).
- * **Contrastive.** As in:
"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart;
And lean not upon thine own understanding" (Prov. 3:5).
(OR)
"Faithful are the wounds of a friend;
But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Prov. 27:6).
- * **Constructive.** As in:
"The eye that mocketh at his father,
And despiseth to obey his mother;
The ravens of the valley shall pick it out,
And the young vultures shall eat it" (Prov. 30:17).

There are combinations of the above also. In the following passage two **completive**

¹Most of the material in this study is taken from "Explore the Book" by J. Sidlow Baxter, and must not be sold or used for profit. It is strongly advised that a copy of brother Baxter's book be available, as it is of great value in Bible study. It is published (six volumes in one) by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan

parallels are joined in **contrastive** parallel:

"Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be;
Thou shalt look for his place and it shall not be found;
But the meek shall possess the land,
And delight themselves in abundant prosperity" (Psa. 37:10, 11).

Some feeble attempts at Hebrew type poetry in English:

* **Completive** parallel:

The sun dies at end of day,
Its blood bathes the cloud;
It sinks then into its somber grave,
Its shroud the shadows of the night.

(OR)

* **Contrastive** parallel:

Planting rice is never fun,
But he who does not plant cannot harvest;
The back aches for a week
So the stomach will not ache for months

-- William P Heath

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