

## The Old Barn

**Ohio Barn** (upon discovering a barn on an ancestor's forgotten homestead)

Fingers run down bent beams  
To touch twisted nails;  
Tracing swirled wood grain scenes  
Revealed in faded paint by wind's assail.  
Eyes pursue sagging timber  
Upward through broken stairs;  
Searching vainly the chamber  
For some trace of former owner's care.



Ears bend to creak and groan  
Of tired gates and door;  
Swinging on hinges like lone  
Leaves grasping limbs midst storm's roar.

Fivefold senses contemplate  
Wood, steel, corrugated roof;  
But long for only sensate  
Touch, glance, voice, tangible proof  
That ancient photos are true roots.







# The Psalms

The Beauty of Poetry



# Figures of Speech



# Figures of Speech

- Figures of speech add color or vividness. – Ps. 18:1-3
- Figures of speech attract attention. – Phil 3:2
- Figures of speech make abstract ideas more concrete. – Deut 33:27
- Figures of speech add to retention. – Matt 23:27
- Figures of speech abbreviate an idea. – Ps 23:1
- Figures of speech encourage reflection. – Isa 5:1-3

# Figures of Speech

Simile: Resemblance, an explicit comparison (using “like” or “as”) between two things of unlike nature that yet have something in common.

- “He shall be like a tree planted by rivers of waters.” (Ps. 1:3)
- “All flesh is like grass.” (1 Pet. 1:24)

Metaphor: Representation, an implicit comparison between two things of unlike nature that yet have something in common; a declaration that one thing is or represents another.

- “The LORD God is a sun and a shield.” (Ps. 84:11)
- “The LORD is my shepherd.” (Ps. 23:1)

# Figures of Speech

Anthropomorphism: An comparison of God to some aspect of mankind. By this comparison the author does not intend to be evocative but to be didactic, *viz.*, to communicate a truth about the person of God.

- “Incline your ear to me.” (Ps. 31:3)
- “His eyes behold, his eyelids try, the sons of men.” (Ps. 11:4)

# Figures of Speech

Zoomorphism: An explicit or implicit comparison of God (or other entities) to the lower animals or parts of the lower animals.

- “In the shadow of your wings I used to rejoice.” (Ps. 63:8)
- “If I take the wings of the dawn, and settle in the remotest part of the sea.” (Psalm 139:9)



## Introduction

- Authorship: One hundred and one (101) psalms have in their headings the name of some specific person or group of persons. Those mentioned are: David (73 psalms), Asaph (12), the Korahites (11), Solomon (2), Moses (1), Ethan (1), and Heman (1).
  
- The problem with interpreting the Psalms arises primarily from their nature—what they are:
  1. Because the Bible is God's Word, most Christians automatically assume that all it contains are words *from* God *to* people. Thus many fail to recognize that the Bible also contains words spoken *to* God or *about* God, and that these words, too, are God's Word.
  
  2. Hebrew poetry, particularly the Psalms, is addressed to the mind through the heart. They are emotive in language. They are visual and visceral. One must read with both head and heart engaged.

## English Poetry

- **The Nature of Poetry**

English Poetry: American/English poetry is easily identified by rhythm, rhyme and meter:

I never saw a purple *cow*.  
I never hope to *see one*,  
But, I can tell you *anyhow*,  
I'd rather see than *be one*!

My true love hath my heart and I have his,  
By just exchange one for the other given.  
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,  
There never was a better bargain driven.

# Defining Hebrew Poetry

1. Terseness: statements that are short and to the point
  - Blessed is the nation who God is the Lord (Psa 33:12).
  - The fool has said in his heart, “No God” (Psa 14:1).
  - I will set no wicked thing before my eyes: I hate the work of those who turn away (Psa 101:3).

## Defining Hebrew Poetry

2. Figures of Speech: symbolic language used to communicate thoughts.
3. Parallelism
  - Synonymous Parallelism: The second line repeats or heightens the statement in the first line. The second line “seconds” the first line.
    - The heavens declare the glory of God  
The firmament shows his handiwork (Psa 19:1).
    - Wash away all my iniquity,  
And cleanse me of my sin (Psa 51:2).
    - Like those forsaken among the dead  
Like the slain that lie in the grave (Psa 88:5).

# Defining Hebrew Poetry

- **Opposing Parallelism (Antithetical):** The second line relates to the first in a negative way.
  - A wise son causes a father to rejoice,  
A foolish son is a pain to his mother (Pr 10:1).
  - The wicked borrows and cannot pay back,  
But the righteous is generous and gives (Psa 37:21)
- **Advancing Parallelism:** The first line serves as a theme on which the author then continues to build his concept.

# Forms of the Psalms

## ■ **Laments** - Illustration: Psalm 3 - A Lament

- Address. The psalmist identifies the one to whom the psalm is prayed. This is, of course, the Lord.
- Complaint. The psalmist pours out, honestly and forcefully, a complaint, identifying what the trouble is and why the Lord's help is being sought.
- Trust. The psalmist immediately expresses trust in God. (Why complain to God if you don't trust him?) Moreover, you must trust him to answer your complaint in the way he sees fit, not necessarily as you would wish.
- Deliverance. The psalmist pleads for God to deliver from the situation described in the complaint.
- Assurance. The psalmist expresses the assurance that God will deliver. This assurance is parallel somewhat to the expression of trust.
- Praise. The psalmist offers praise, thanking and honoring God for the blessings of the past, present, and/or future.



# Forms of the Psalms

- **Thanksgiving - Psalm 138**
  - Introduction. Here the psalmist's testimony of how God has helped is summarized.
  - Distress. The situation from which God gave deliverance is portrayed.
  - Appeal. The psalmist reiterates the appeal that he or she made to God.
  - Deliverance. The deliverance God provided is described.
  - Testimony. A word of praise for God's mercy is given.

## Forms of the Psalms

- **Hymns of Praise**
- **Salvation History Psalms**
- **Psalms of Celebration and Affirmation**
  - **Royal Psalms:** There are nine psalms in the Psalter that deal especially with the Kingship (2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 144).
  - **Enthronement Psalms:** It is likely that these psalms celebrated the enthronement of the king in ancient Israel, a ceremony that may have been repeated yearly (24, 29, 47, 93, 95-99).
  - **Zion Psalms:** These psalms celebrate the holy city (46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 87, 122).
- **Wisdom Psalms**
- **Songs of Trust**

## ■ **Concluding Thoughts:**

- The Psalms are a guide to worship.
- The Psalms were written within a historical context for the children of Israel.
- The Psalms demonstrate to us how we can relate honestly to God.
- The Psalms demonstrate the importance of reflection and meditation upon things that God has done for us.