

Poetry in the Old Testament

Why are part of the Bible written in poetry?

- it stirs up the imagination
- it kindles the emotions
- it speaks to our wills

REPETITION or PARALLELISM:

A similarity between two lines so that the second line carries forward the thoughts of the first.

Synonymous: The two phrases use synonyms (words that mean the same thing). (Psalm 2:1)

Antithetic: The two phrases use antonyms (words that mean the opposite). (Psalm 30:5)

Emblematic: Uses words of comparison. (Psalm 42:1)

Repetitive: The phrase is repeated but carried further. (Psalm 29:1)

Chiasm: Ideas are laid out and then repeated in reverse order for a mirror effect. (Psalm 1)

OTHER POETIC DEVICES:

Divergence: A change from a set pattern emphasized a line.

Ellipsis: The second phrase omits part of the first although it is implied. (Psalm 88:6)

Inclusio: Repetition which opens and closes a poem. (Psalm 8:1,9)

Acrostic: The first letter of each line proceeds through the Hebrew alphabet. (Psalm 9,10,25,34,37,111,112,119,145)

IMAGERY:

Uses images to attract attention and stimulate the imagination. How are they alike?

Personification: Giving personality or body parts to something inanimate. (Psalm 114)

Simile: A comparison with the words like or as. (Psalm 37:1,2)

Metaphor: A comparison without the words like or as. (Psalm 23:1)

See if you can identify these types of poetry as you are reading.

