

Building the Skill of Reading Biblical Poetry (Student)

The Skill Builders Podcast

Background Knowledge:

What is poetry, and what is its purpose?

What is poetry?

- Poetry = literature that evokes a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience or a specific emotional response through language chosen and arranged for its meaning, sound, and rhythm.
- Another definition of poetry, in my own words, would be
 - literal or nonliteral indirect communication designed to help the reader experience something in a more meaningful way than direct communication
 - Matt, you are a good friend vs. Matt I can always count on you.
- Metaphors for poetry
 - The overpacked suitcase of literary genres
 - The road trip you shouldn't ignore.

What is poetry designed to do?

- Provide layers of meaning to a situation
- Take you through an experience
 - The goal of a writer using figurative language is to push the reader or listener's understanding of a particular word or words. This makes the language used more memorable and more unique.
 - The Lord is my shepherd.

Other Relevant Definitions:

Figure of Speech = a word or phrase used in a non-literal sense for rhetorical or vivid effect.

Simile = a figure of speech **involving the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind**, used to make a description more emphatic or vivid.

Metaphor = a figure of speech in which a word or phrase **is applied to an object or action** to which it is not literally applicable.

Imagery = uses vivid descriptions that appeal to a readers' senses to create an image or idea in their head.

Examples of Each:

Examples of Figure of Speech	Examples of Similes	Examples of Metaphors	Examples of Imagery
I've got my eye on you.	She eats like a pig.	He is a shining star.	"And when you smile, the whole world stops and stares for a while..." (Bruno Mars, just the way you are)
I could hear you from a mile away	She ran like lightning.	The snow is a white blanket.	I Believe I Can Fly
The Lord poured out his spirit	He looks like a fish out of water.	She is an early bird.	Lean on Me
Lady Wisdom	She slept like a log.	The classroom was a zoo.	My head is pounding like a drum
All Similes	Life is like a box of chocolates.	He is a night owl.	As the deer panteth for the water so my soul longs after the
All Metaphors	The Lord will come like a thief in the night	The Lord is my Rock and my salvation	Behold, she will be the least of the nations, A wilderness, a parched land and a desert.
	The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed	The Lord is my shepherd	

The System for Reading Biblical Poetry:

1. Recognize
2. Read
3. Explore
4. Leave with a what

The Mechanics of Reading Biblical Poetry:

1. How do we recognize poetry in the bible?
 - a. Identify the book of the Bible you are reading
 - i. In poetry books, the majority of the book is written in poetry
 - ii. Job.
 - iii. Psalms.
 - iv. Proverbs.
 - v. Ecclesiastes.
 - vi. Song of Songs.
 - vii. Lamentations
 1. **Prophetic books:** expect anywhere between $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ of the book to be written in poetry.
 2. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel
 3. Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi
 - a. Pay attention to indentations and spacing
 - b. After a win or a loss
 - i. Take a look at Exodus 15. Notice the indentations around verses. Notice the spacing inside the poem.
2. Read
 - a. Self-explanatory
 - b. Remember the CONTEXT! Look at the heading above the poem for additional help.
3. Explore
 - a. Stop and go back to the beginning of the poem and begin to review it
 - b. Look for and ponder repetitions
 - c. Look for and ponder Figures of speech.
 - i. Simile
 - ii. Metaphor
 - iii. Imagery
4. How do you leave with a what?
 - a. Attempt to summarize the overarching idea of what the poet was trying to communicate
 - b. Looking at the first and last lines of a poem can generally give you an idea of the poet's main point.
 - c. Whatever the overabundance of mean you obtained, it can't deviate from the primary what the author wanted to communicate.

Rep #1 Recognizing Poetry:

Which books would you expect to see more poetry? Circle your answers.

1. Job
Psalms
Romans
2. Proverbs
Lamentations
Matthew
3. Isaiah
Joel
John
4. Jeremiah
Micah
Ruth
5. Hosea
Ecclesiastes
Genesis

When can you expect someone to break out in poetry? Circle your answer.

1. After waking up
Before they go to sleep
After they escaped from the Egyptian Army after being enslaved by them for the last 400 years
2. Before they brush their teeth
After they brush their teeth
After the Lord has given them a baby after being barren all your life
3. Before you make up your bed
After you make up your bed
After your entire country has been destroyed by the Babylonian army and you are left with basically nothing
4. Before tying your shoe
After tying your shoe
After the Lord has delivered the entire world from sin and you and all of your friends get to live with him forever in paradise

Identifying poetry in a chapter:

Review the chapters below and identify the verses which contain poetry. Feel free to write your answers in the space provided

Genesis 16: Hagar and Ishmael

16 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; **2** so she said to Abram, "The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her."

Abram agreed to what Sarai said. **3** So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. **4** He slept with Hagar, and she conceived.

When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. **5** Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the Lord judge between you and me."

6 "Your slave is in your hands," Abram said. "Do with her whatever you think best." Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

7 The angel of the Lord found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. **8** And he said, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?"

"I'm running away from my mistress Sarai," she answered.

9 Then the angel of the Lord told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her." **10** The angel added, "I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count."

11 The angel of the Lord also said to her:

"You are now pregnant
and you will give birth to a son.
You shall name him Ishmael,^[a]
for the Lord has heard of your misery.

12

He will be a wild donkey of a man;
his hand will be against everyone
and everyone's hand against him,
and he will live in hostility
toward^[b] all his brothers."

13 She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen^[c] the One who sees me." **14** That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi^[d]; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered.

15 So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne. **16** Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.

Where is the poem(s) located in this chapter? From what verse to what verse?

1. From verse _____ to verse _____

Isaiah's Commission

6 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. **2** Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. **3** And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory.”

4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

5 “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.”

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. **7** With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”

And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

9 He said, “Go and tell this people:

“Be ever hearing, but never understanding;
be ever seeing, but never perceiving.”

10 Make the heart of this people calloused;
make their ears dull
and close their eyes.^[a]

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts,
and turn and be healed.”

11 Then I said, “For how long, Lord?”

And he answered:

“Until the cities lie ruined
and without inhabitant,
until the houses are left deserted
and the fields ruined and ravaged,
12 until the Lord has sent everyone far away
and the land is utterly forsaken.

13 And though a tenth remains in the land,
it will again be laid waste.
But as the terebinth and oak
leave stumps when they are cut down,
so the holy seed will be the stump in the land.”

Where is the poem(s) located in this chapter? From what verse to what verse?

1. From verse _____ to verse _____
2. From verse _____ to verse _____

Revelation 19

Threefold Hallelujah Over Babylon's Fall

19 After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting:

"Hallelujah!
Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,
2 for true and just are his judgments.
He has condemned the great prostitute
who corrupted the earth by her adulteries.
He has avenged on her the blood of his servants."

3 And again they shouted:

"Hallelujah!
The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever."

4 The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried:

"Amen, Hallelujah!"

5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying:

"Praise our God,
all you his servants,
you who fear him,
both great and small!"

6 Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

"Hallelujah!
For our Lord God Almighty reigns.
7 Let us rejoice and be glad
and give him glory!
For the wedding of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready.
8 Fine linen, bright and clean,
was given her to wear."

(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people.)

9 Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God."

10 At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus."

The Heavenly Warrior Defeats the Beast

11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. **12** His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. **13** He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. **14** The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. **15** Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter."^[a] He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. **16** On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:

king of kings and lord of lords.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, **18** so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and the mighty, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, great and small."

19 Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against the rider on the horse and his army. **20** But the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed the signs

on its behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. **21** The rest were killed with the sword coming out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

Where is the poem(s) located in this chapter? From what verse to what verse?

1. From verse _____ to verse _____
2. From verse _____ to verse _____
3. From verse _____ to verse _____

Locating the thoughts in a poem:

Locate each section that contains a “thought” in the poem below.

Proverbs 2

- 2:1** My son, if you accept my words
and store up my commands within you,
2 turning your ear to wisdom
and applying your heart to understanding—
3 indeed, if you call out for insight
and cry aloud for understanding,
4 and if you look for it as for silver
and search for it as for hidden treasure,
5 then you will understand the fear of the Lord
and find the knowledge of God.
6 For the Lord gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.
7 He holds success in store for the upright,
he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless,
8 for he guards the course of the just
and protects the way of his faithful ones.
- 9** Then you will understand what is right and just
and fair—every good path.
10 For wisdom will enter your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.
11 Discretion will protect you,
and understanding will guard you.
- 12** Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men,
from men whose words are perverse,
13 who have left the straight paths
to walk in dark ways,
14 who delight in doing wrong
and rejoice in the perverseness of evil,
15 whose paths are crooked
and who are devious in their ways.
- 16** Wisdom will save you also from the adulterous woman,
from the wayward woman with her seductive words,
17 who has left the partner of her youth
and ignored the covenant she made before God.^[a]
18 Surely her house leads down to death

and her paths to the spirits of the dead.

19 None who go to her return
or attain the paths of life.

20 Thus you will walk in the ways of the good
and keep to the paths of the righteous.

21 For the upright will live in the land,
and the blameless will remain in it;

22 but the wicked will be cut off from the land,
and the unfaithful will be torn from it.

Where are the different “thoughts” located in this chapter? From what verse to what verse?

1. From verse _____ to verse _____
2. From verse _____ to verse _____
3. From verse _____ to verse _____
4. From verse _____ to verse _____
5. From verse _____ to verse _____

Rep #2

Build the skill of reading poetry by reading poetry

Numbers 23:18-24

18 Then he spoke his message:

“Arise, Balak, and listen;
hear me, son of Zippor.

19 God is not human, that he should lie,
not a human being, that he should change his mind.

Does he speak and then not act?
Does he promise and not fulfill?

20 I have received a command to bless;
he has blessed, and I cannot change it.

21 “No misfortune is seen in Jacob,
no misery observed[a] in Israel.
The Lord their God is with them;
the shout of the King is among them.

22 God brought them out of Egypt;
they have the strength of a wild ox.

23 There is no divination against[b] Jacob,
no evil omens against[c] Israel.

It will now be said of Jacob
and of Israel, ‘See what God has done!’

24 The people rise like a lioness;
they rouse themselves like a lion
that does not rest till it devours its prey
and drinks the blood of its victims.”

What is the context of the poem above?

What repeated words or phrases do you see?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How many times does each word or phrase repeat?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are the figures of speech you see?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What is the “what” you are leaving with?

Rep #3

Build the skill of reading poetry by reading poetry

Luke 1:46-55

46 And Mary said:

“My soul glorifies the Lord
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
48 for he has been mindful
of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed,
49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me—
holy is his name.
50 His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.
51 He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.
53 He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.
54 He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful
55 to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors.”

What is the context of the poem above?

What repeated words or phrases do you see?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How many times does each word or phrase repeat?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are the figures of speech you see?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What is the “what” you are leaving with?

Rep #4

Build the skill of reading poetry by reading poetry

Psalms 1

- 1 Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
2 but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
and who meditates on his law day and night.
3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers.
- 4 Not so the wicked!
They are like chaff
that the wind blows away.
5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
- 6 For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

What is the context of the poem above?

What repeated words or phrases do you see?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How many times does each word or phrase repeat?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are the figures of speech you see?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What is the “what” you are leaving with?

Rep #5

Build the skill of reading poetry by reading poetry

Proverbs 4:1-9

Get Wisdom at Any Cost

- 4:1** Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction:
pay attention and gain understanding.
- 2** I give you sound learning,
so do not forsake my teaching.
- 3** For I too was a son to my father,
still tender, and cherished by my mother.
- 4** Then he taught me, and he said to me,
"Take hold of my words with all your heart;
keep my commands, and you will live.
- 5** Get wisdom, get understanding;
do not forget my words or turn away from them.
- 6** Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you;
love her, and she will watch over you.
- 7** The beginning of wisdom is this: Get[a] wisdom.
Though it cost all you have,[b] get understanding.
- 8** Cherish her, and she will exalt you;
embrace her, and she will honor you.
- 9** She will give you a garland to grace your head
and present you with a glorious crown."

What is the context of the poem above?

What repeated words or phrases do you see?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How many times does each word or phrase repeat?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are the figures of speech you see?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What is the “what” you are leaving with?

Rep #6

Build the skill of reading poetry by reading poetry

Isaiah 53 (Only review verses 1-6)

53 Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

3 He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.

Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

4 Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

8 By oppression[a] and judgment he was taken away.
Yet who of his generation protested?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was punished.[b]

9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the Lord makes[c] his life an offering for sin,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

11 After he has suffered,
he will see the light of life[d] and be satisfied[e];
by his knowledge[f] my righteous servant will justify many,

and he will bear their iniquities.
12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,[g]
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,[h]
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

What is the context of the poem above?

What repeated words or phrases do you see (verses 1-6)?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How many times does each word or phrase repeat (verses 1-6)?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are the figures of speech you see (verses 1-6)?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What is the “what” you are leaving with (verses 1-6)?

Rep #7

Build the skill of reading poetry by reading poetry

Philippians 2:6-11

2:5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature[a] God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;**7**
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature[b] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

8 And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

What is the context of the poem above?

What repeated words or phrases do you see?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How many times does each word or phrase repeat?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are the figures of speech you see?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What is the “what” you are leaving with?

Rep #8 (Not in episode)

Build the skill of reading poetry by reading poetry

Psalms 37:1-9

Of David.

- 1 Do not fret because of those who are evil
or be envious of those who do wrong;
- 2 for like the grass they will soon wither,
like green plants they will soon die away.

- 3 Trust in the Lord and do good;
dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.
- 4 Take delight in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

- 5 Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him and he will do this:
- 6 He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn,
your vindication like the noonday sun.

- 7 Be still before the Lord
and wait patiently for him;
do not fret when people succeed in their ways,
when they carry out their wicked schemes.

- 8 Refrain from anger and turn from wrath;
do not fret—it leads only to evil.
- 9 For those who are evil will be destroyed,
but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land.

What is the context of the poem above?

What repeated words or phrases do you see?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How many times does each word or phrase repeat?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are the figures of speech you see?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What is the “what” you are leaving with?

Rep #9 (Not in episode)

Build the skill of reading poetry by reading poetry

Revelation 19:1-8

Threefold Hallelujah Over Babylon's Fall

19 After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting:

"Hallelujah!
Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,
2 for true and just are his judgments.
He has condemned the great prostitute
who corrupted the earth by her adulteries.
He has avenged on her the blood of his servants."

3 And again they shouted:

"Hallelujah!
The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever."

4 The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried:

"Amen, Hallelujah!"

5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying:

"Praise our God,
all you his servants,
you who fear him,
both great and small!"

6 Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

"Hallelujah!
For our Lord God Almighty reigns.
7 Let us rejoice and be glad
and give him glory!
For the wedding of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready.
8 Fine linen, bright and clean,
was given her to wear."

(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people.)

What is the context of the poem above?

What repeated words or phrases do you see?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How many times does each word or phrase repeat?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are the figures of speech you see?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What is the “what” you are leaving with?

Homework:

Write a poem 😊
