

Understanding Hebrews Parallelism in the Psalms

Parallelism involves using relatively short sentences usually made up of two brief clauses that 'parallel' one another in some way. "Robert Lowth was a Professor of Poetry at Oxford 1753. He was credited as being the first to teach that Hebrew poetry was not identified by rhyme but rather by the arrangement of phrases of approximately the same length arranged so that the second phrase answers or completes the thought of the first. He called it "parallelism of members". He identified three different kinds of parallelism...

1. _____ **parallelism**: In which the second line _____ the idea of the first:

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

Psalm 18:4 The cords of death encompassed me;
the torrents of destruction assailed me;

Psalm 36:5 Your lovingkindness, O LORD, extends to the heavens,
Your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

Psalm 15:1 O Lord, who may abide in Your tent?
Who may dwell on Your holy hill?

2. _____ **parallelism**: Here the first line is emphasized and then by comparison the second line contains a _____ thought.

Psalm 18:27 For you save a humble people,
But the haughty eyes you bring down.

Psalm 20:8 They have bowed down and fallen,
But we have risen and stood upright.

3. _____ **parallelism**: Not repetition not contrast but continuation. It advances or the thought of the first line or makes a _____.

Psalm 2:6 "But as for Me, I have installed My King
Upon Zion, My holy mountain."

Psalm 103:13 As a father shows compassion to his children,
so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.

Psalm 19:8 The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart:
The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

Lowth limited himself to these three. Some have suggested other categories.

4. _____ **parallelism**: the second line _____ the thought of the first line.

Psalm 29:1-2 Ascribe to the LORD, O sons of the mighty,
Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to His name;
Worship the LORD in holy array.