

WORD PICTURES IN THE

Psalms

In addition to parallelism (see page 25), you will discover figures of speech in the Psalms—words or phrases used in a picturesque way to provide comparison, contrast, emphasis, or clarification.

These word pictures serve to convey abstract concepts and difficult ideas through concrete images.

Among the many kinds of figurative language in the Psalms, you'll find:

SIMILE: A stated comparison between two things that resemble one another. *"He is like a tree planted by streams of water"* (1:3; implying the godly man is sturdy, long lasting, immovable). Other examples: 1:4; 5:12; 17:8.

METAPHOR: A comparison in which one thing is declared to be another. *"For the LORD God is a sun and shield"* (84:11; implying God guides and protects). Other examples: 23:1; 91:4.

HYPERBOLE: The use of exaggeration to emphasize a point. *"All night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears"* (6:6; implying "I am deeply saddened"). Other examples: 78:27; 107:26.

ANTHROPOMORPHISM: The assigning of an appropriate part of a person's body to God's being. *"He turned his ear to me"* (116:2; implying "He is listening"). Other examples: 11:4; 18:15; 32:8.

PERSONIFICATION: The assigning of the characteristics of a human being to lifeless objects. *"My whole being will exclaim, 'Who is like you, O LORD?'"* (35:10; implying "I praise You from my innermost being"). Other examples: 77:16; 96:11; 104:19.