

## Parallelisms

### **Exodus 15: 1-21.**

As poems are frequently embedded in the Old Testament narrative and as they form the oldest sources for the knowledge of Old Testament history, it is well to pause and consider the character of Hebrew poetry.

The fifteenth chapter of Exodus is the first really great poem in the Bible...

With the possible exception of some folk poems, which will be discussed in connection with the wisdom element, the Hebrews used neither blank verse nor rhyme; yet their poetic form is no less real than ours. It consists of parallelism, of which there are three kinds:

**(1) Synonymous parallelism**, where the second line repeats in other words the thought of the first:

"The heavens declare the glory of God;  
And the firmament showeth his handiwork."

(Ps. 19: 1.)

**(2) Antithetic parallelism**, in which the second member is in contrast with the thought of the first:

"For the arms of the wicked shall be broken;  
But the Lord upholdeth the righteous."  
(Ps. 37:17.)

**(3) Synthetic parallelism**, where the second member completes the thought of the first:

"As the hart panteth after the water brooks,  
So panteth my soul after thee, O God."  
(Ps. 42: 1.)

Sometimes, too, a more intricate form is found, as, for example, where the sense of two synonymous lines is completed by two other synonymous or antithetic parallelisms:

"The Lord is my strength and my shield;  
My heart hath trusted in him, and I am helped:  
Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth;  
And with my song will I praise him."  
(Ps. 28: 7.)

(An Outline for the Study of Old Testament History by Frank Seay, Nashville, Tennessee: Publishing House of the M. E. Church - South, 1917, 45-46, e-book, Text and Paragraph Structure Modified)