

Grasping
GOD'S WORD

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O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. ² From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. ³ When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴ what is man that you are mindful of

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him, the son of man that you care for him?

⁵ You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. ⁶ You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: ⁷ all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, ⁸ the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. ⁹ O LORD, our Lord, how



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majestic is your name in all the earth!
(Psalm 8, NIV)

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a **refrain:** “O Yahweh, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” (8:1a [8:2a])

b **question:** “in light of Yahweh’s glory (הוד) in his creation of the heavens and in the works (מעשי) of your fingers, of what value is humankind to Yahweh? (8:1b-4 [8:2b-5])

b’ **answer:** humankind is valuable because Yahweh has given them glory (וְכָבוֹד) and has put them in charge of “the works (בַּמַּעֲשֵׂי) of your hands” (8:5-8 [8:6-9])

a’ **refrain:** “O Yahweh, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” (8:9 [8:10])

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“Yahweh” – denotes the fundamental promise that God had made to Moses when He sent him to free the Israelites from Egyptian subjugation and said, "I will be their God, and they will be my people" (Exo 6:7); thus "Yahweh," "faithful presence," is God's testamentary nature, or name (Exo 6:2, 4; Deut 7:9; Isa 26:4).

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“Adonai” – refers to God in the manner in which ANE Kings would be addressed, and its emphasis is on the universal authority of God.

To speak of Yahweh as "Lord" was an ascription of kingship in the OT, or, put differently in the context of this Psalm, the Redeemer-King of Israel is the Creator!

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“Majestic” – a royal attribute denoting his victories (cf. Ex. 15:6), his might in judgment (cf. 1 Sam. 4:8; Ps. 76:4), his law (Isa. 42:21), and his rule over creation (Ps 8:1, 9; cf. 93:4).

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“Name” – sometimes means reputation, bad or good, sometimes fame and honor even rank. God gives Abraham and David “great” names. Greatest of all is God’s name in Israel and worldwide, inspiring respect and even worship. What Yahweh’s fame rests on is faithfulness in keeping covenant (Ps. 138:2) and power demonstrated on behalf of the nation.

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I. God Proclaims His Glory to Us (vv. 1-2)

a. In all of Creation

- i. On the Earth (v. 1a)
- ii. All of Heaven (v. 1b)

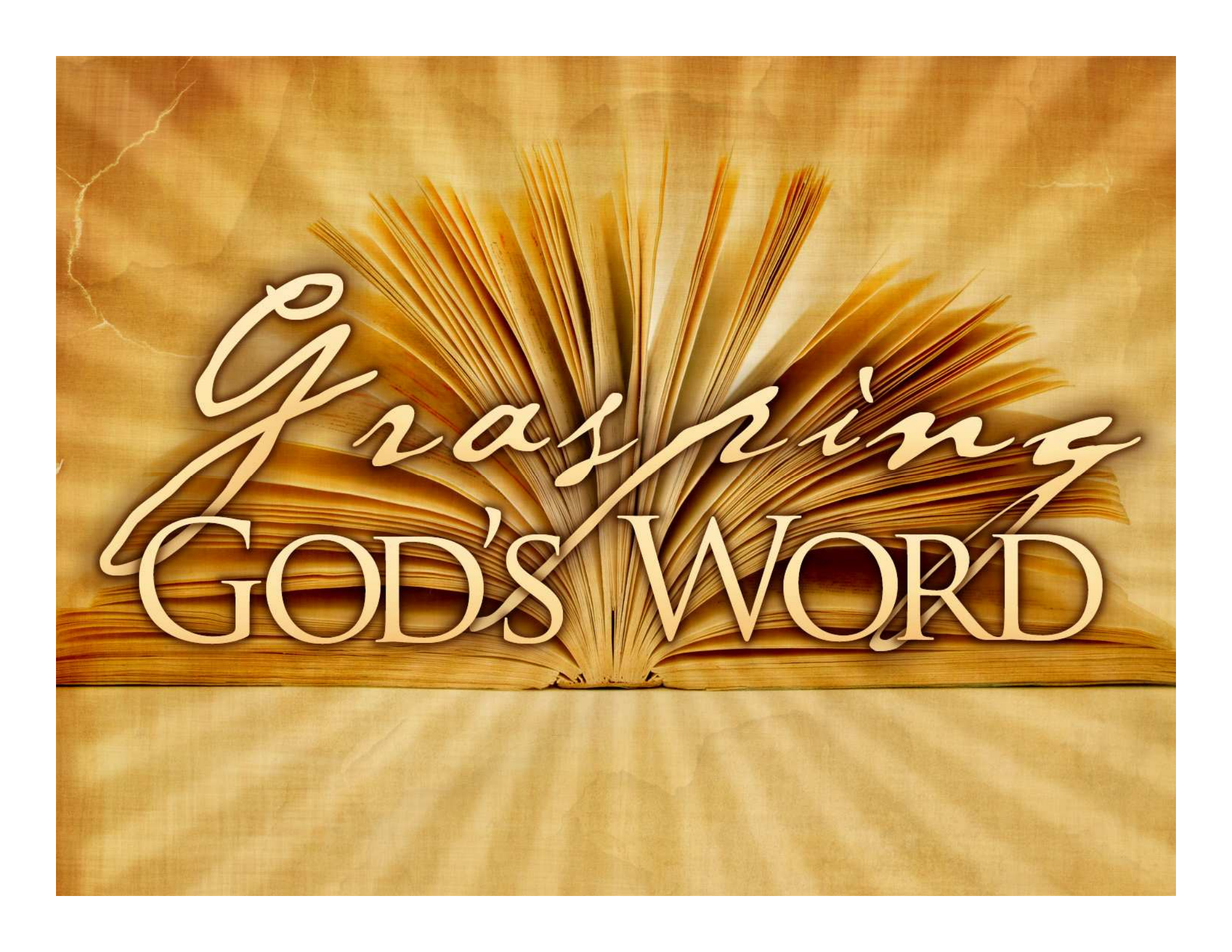
b. In our protection

- i. Within our families (v. 2a)
- ii. Despite our enemies (v. 2b)

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II. God Proclaims His Glory in Us (vv. 3-8)

- a. We are created in God's Image (vv. 3-5)
 - i. Our ability to communicate with God
 - ii. Our resemblance to the Creator
- b. We are created to control all of creation (vv. 6-8)
 - i. Our call to bring all of life into submission
 - ii. Our ability in Jesus Christ (Rom. 16:20, 1 Cor. 15, Rev. 3:9)



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Unit 5

Interpretive Journey Old Testament

18. Narrative

19. Law

20. Poetry

21. Prophets

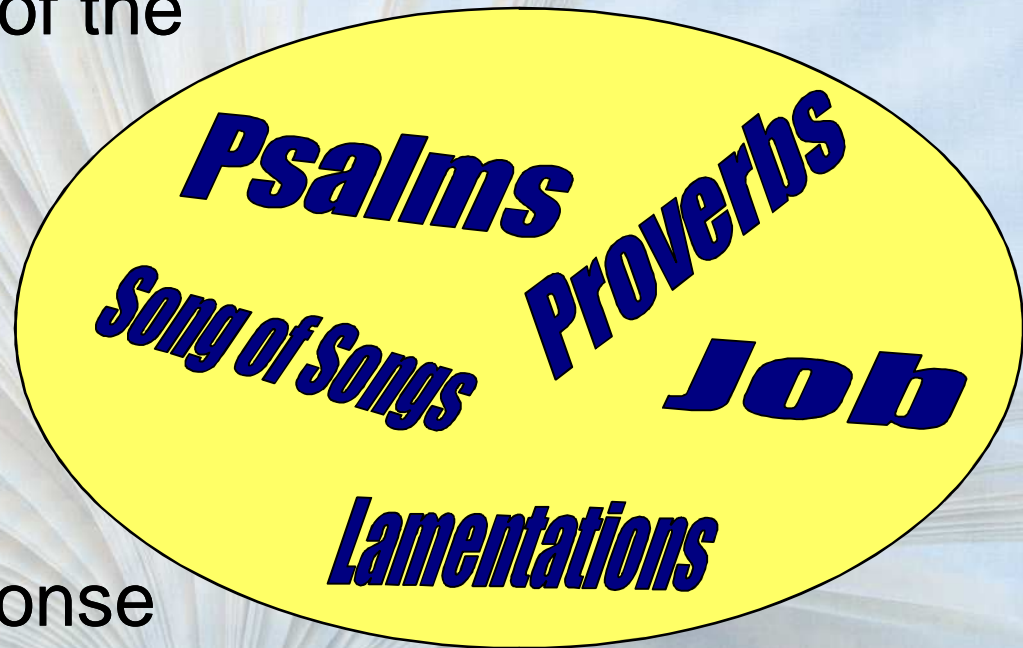
22. Wisdom

OT – Poetry

- Introduction

- Over one third of the Bible is poetry.

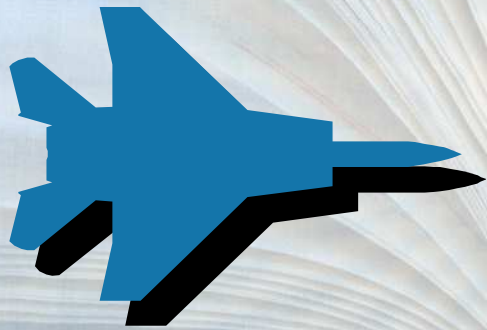
- OT poetry focuses on our emotional response to God. It connects with us down deep, both in joy and in despair.



Jet engines and paintings

- Different literary genres of the Bible are like different museums.

Air and Space Museum



Appeals to logic, rational arguments are central, analyze grammar and syntax

National Gallery of Art



Appeals to emotion, images are central, analyze figures of speech

Elements of OT poetry

- Terseness → uses few words to enhance their impact and power

Show me your ways, O Lord,
Teach me your paths.
– Psalm 25:4

- Structure → the most obvious is *parallelism* where lines represent thought units and are usually grouped in units of two or three:
 - Synonymous – second line repeats idea of first line
 - Developmental – second line further develops idea of first line
 - Illustrative – second line illustrates first line
 - Contrastive – second line contrasts with first line
 - Miscellaneous – other types of parallelism not easily classified

– Figurative language

- OT poetry is more like a painting than an essay
- Literal, historical truth expressed in picture language
- Figures of speech involving *analogy*:

- Simile – comparison using “like” or “as”

“As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, O God.”

– Psalm 42:1

- Metaphor – direct comparison

“The Lord is my shepherd.”

– Psalm 23:1

- Indirect analogy – comparison without stating it

“Roaring lions tearing their prey open their mouths wide against me.” – Psalm 22:13

- Hyperbole – exaggeration for the sake of effect

“My tears have been my food day and night.”
– Psalm 23:1

- Personification/anthropomorphism/zoomorphism – attributes to one entity the characteristics of a totally different entity

“Life up your heads, O you gates.” – Psalm 24:7

“Your face, Lord, will I seek.” – Psalm 27:8

“He will cover you with his feathers, And under his wings you will find refuge.” – Psalm 91:4

- Figures of speech involving *substitution*:

- Effects and causes – substitutes the effect for the cause

“Let me hear joy and gladness.”

– Psalm 51:8

- Representation – substitute a part of an entity for the whole

“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.”

– Psalm 23:1

- Miscellaneous figures of speech:

- Apostrophe – when they address as if present a person or entity not actually present

“Therefore, you kings, be wise;
Be warned, you rulers of the earth.”
– Psalm 2:10

- Irony – when the writer says the exact opposite of what he really means (as in God’s use of sarcastic irony below)

“Have you comprehended the vast expanses
of the earth? Tell me, if you know all this.
– Job 38:18

- Wordplays

Interpreting OT poetry

As with any text in the OT we need to make the five steps in the Interpretive Journey. Here are a few guidelines for the poetry genre related to Step 1:

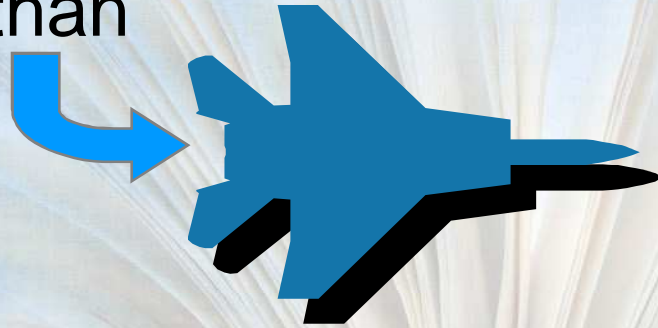
- In your observation, look closely for parallelism. Read the two or three lines of parallelism as one thought.
- Locate and visualize figures of speech. Identify the kind of figure you have in the passage. Also, try to enter into the emotional world of the image.

Unique aspects of the Psalms

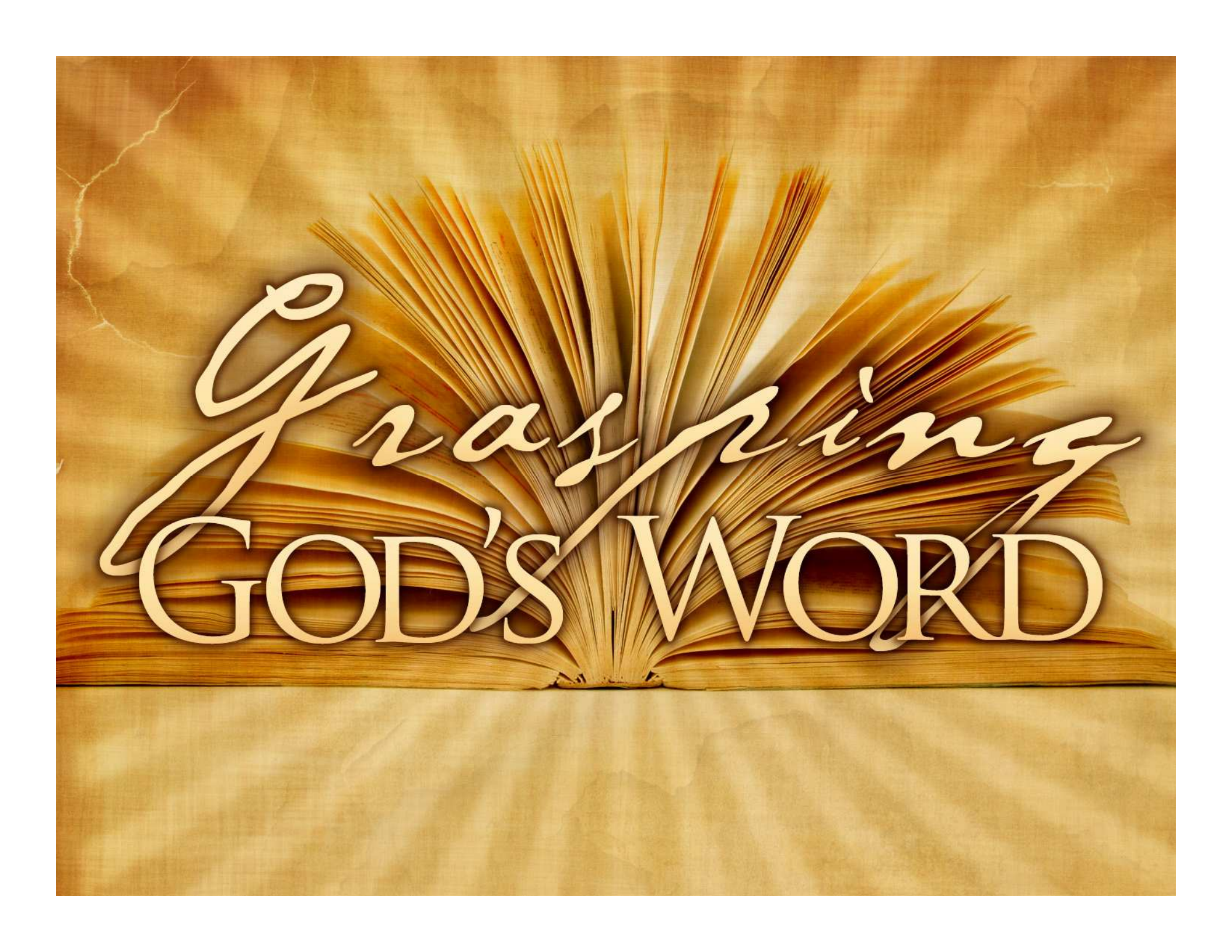
- Does not present doctrinal guidelines so much as examples of how to communicate our deepest emotions and needs to God.
- When we find ourselves in deep despair or in jubilant celebration, Psalms teaches us to be honest and open with God.
- God wants us to pour out our hearts to him and he wants to connect with us in the depths of our emotional being.

Conclusion

- In OT poetry we are dealing with rather than



- Poetry is characterized by terseness, a high degree of structure (parallelism), and figurative language.
- OT poetry shows us how to communicate our deepest emotions to God.



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