

Assignment 1

Read Psalm 15 (14 in LXX) in several different English versions. This will help you to become familiar with the flow of the ideas. It will also highlight expressions that are rendered differently. This will prepare you for a lexical examination of the Psalm. How would you preach this passage?

Sounds

Sounds are often one of the most neglected area in the pastor's study of Hebrew poetic passages. Practice reading the following passage. Repeat it several times until you can read it comfortably.

yəhōā^h
mî-yāgûr bə^ʔohôlēk_ā
mî-yiškôn bəhar qodšēk_ā

hōlēk_ā tāmîm
ûpō^ʕel šēdeq
wəḏōbēr ʾēmet_ā bilbābō

lō^ʔ-rāgal ʕal-ləšōnō
lō^ʔ-ʕāsā^h lərē^ʕēhū rā^ʕā^h
wəḥerpā^h lō^ʔ-nāsā^ʔ ʕal-qərōbō

niḅze^h bə^ʕēnāyw nim^ʔās
wə^ʔet-yir^ʔē yhw^h(ʔādōnāy) yəḵabbēd

nišba^ʕ ləhāra^ʕ wəlō^ʔ yāmîr
kaspō lō^ʔ-nātan bənešek_ā
wəšōḥad_ā ʕal-nāqî lō^ʔ lāqāḥ

ʕōšē^h-ʾēlle^h lō^ʔ yimmōt_ā lə^ʕōlām

What are some of the different kinds of recurring patterns of sounds?

In the first two lines above what are the aural similarities?

In the next 3 lines, the first words share a vowel pattern that is both acoustically similar, but is grammatically significant. Describe the vowel sequence that begins each verse?

The next 3 lines are tied to the previous 3 by similarities in the last line. Describe the similarities?

These same 3 lines each share a repeated pattern, what is it?

The next two lines and the 3 after them are held together by the sound of the initial words. Describe the similarity.

The last line has echoes of sounds in the body of the poem. Can you describe them?

Quantitative & Rhythmic Balance

An alternate English reading of this poem:

[LORD,] 1

[Who] [may sojourn] [in your tent],? 3

[Who] [may tent] [on your holy] [mountain]? 4

The one who walks blamelessly,
who does righteousness
who speaks truth in his heart

he does not slander upon his tongue
he does not do evil to his companion
he does not raise a reproach against his neighbor

the scorner is despised in his eyes
but the one who fears the LORD is honored

he pledges to damage and does not change.
he does not give his money for interest
and a bribe against the innocent he will not take

who does these will not be moved forever

Comparing the English to the transliterated Hebrew, group elements together so that the grouped elements numbers the same as each Hebrew line.

Do you see any patterns?

Grammatical & Lexical Devices

We will work with the same English text above for this next exercise. In the first stanza, the last 2 lines show a high degree of congruence. This can be classified as synonymous parallelism. Semantically each of these 2 lines has 3 units. Who + verb + a place. Discuss the relationships between verbs and places.

This arrangement really creates an internal unity to the stanza which would be a centripetal device. Compared to the effect of the sounds at the end of the 2nd and 3rd stanza that has an external cohesion, this keeps the movement linear. That would be a centrifugal device. Describe any other devices that are acting within stanzas or between stanzas.

Thematic Devices

Discuss the relationship thematically between the last line and the first stanza. The verbs are key to this. How are the places listed in the first stanza theologically significant? How are the verbs interlaced with the places, What are some New Testament uses of the idea of “sojourning” and “dwelling/tenting.”

Discuss the internal theme or controlling concept of each stanza.

How does each theme relate to the other stanzas?

How would you preach this passage now?