



MAPPING THE PSALMS

LESSON TWO: A BOOK OF POETRY

Look for the answers to these questions:

1. Psalm 119:1 teaches about the way of God by comparing two things that are (a) the same, or (b) different. What are the two things?
2. Psalm 1:6 teaches about the way of God by comparing two things that are (a) the same, or (b) different. What are the two things?
3. In Psalm 100, what are the six reasons we should answer God's call?
4. What are the four things seen in nature that are used to describe a blessed man in Psalm 1:3?
5. Does God, who is Spirit, have physical eyes, ears, or feathers? Why is he described this way?

The Book of Psalms is a book of *poetry*.

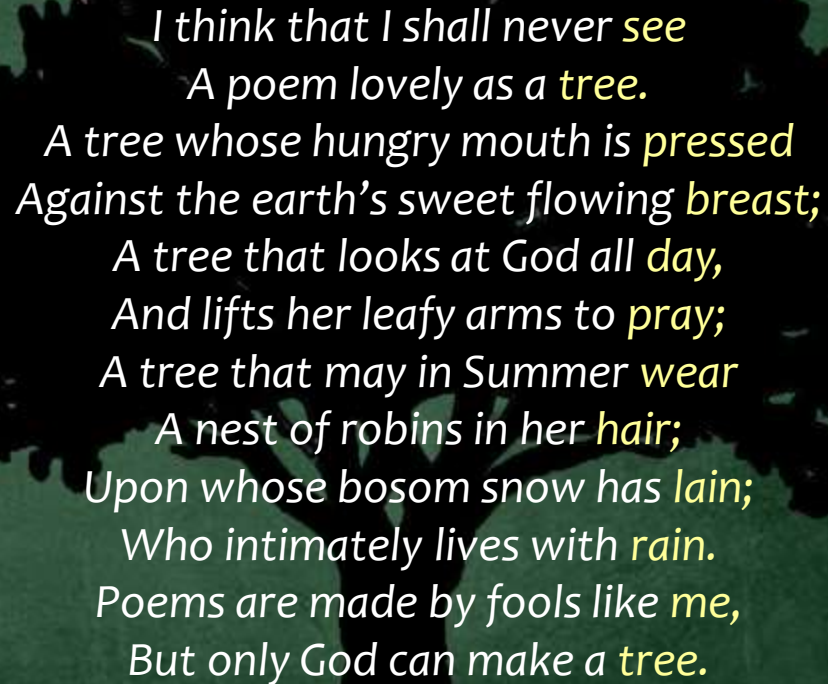


When you and I think of poetry,
we think of rhyming words.



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we think of rhyming words.

“TREES” by Alfred Joyce Kilmer



I think that I shall never *see*
A poem lovely as a *tree*.
A tree whose hungry mouth is *pressed*
Against the earth's sweet flowing *breast*;
A tree that looks at God all *day*,
And lifts her leafy arms to *pray*;
A tree that may in Summer *wear*
A nest of robins in her *hair*;
Upon whose bosom snow has *lain*;
Who intimately lives with *rain*.
Poems are made by fools like *me*,
But only God can make a *tree*.

When you and I think of poetry,
we think of rhyming *words*.

In biblical poetry,
we see rhyming *ideas* –
things that are the same,
or things that are opposites.



Comparing things that are the SAME:

In Proverbs 12:28,
we see the **same** truth stated
two **different** ways:

In the way of righteousness *is* life;

and *in* the pathway *thereof* there is no death.

Comparing things that are the SAME:

These truths are the same:
a “way” is also a “pathway”,
and “life” is “no death”.

In *the way* of righteousness is *life*;

and *in the pathway* thereof there is *no death*.

Comparing things that are the SAME:

These truths are the same:
a “way” is also a “pathway”,
and “life” is “no death”.

But put the two together, and
the truth is MAGNIFIED.

In *the way* of righteousness is *life*;

and *in the pathway* thereof there is *no death*.

Comparing things that are the SAME:

In Psalm 119:1, we again see
ONE truth stated TWO ways:

Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way,
who walk in the law of the LORD.

Comparing things that are the SAME:

The **WAY** of the LORD is
the **LAW** of the LORD.

Blessed *are* the undefiled **in the way**,

who walk **in the law of the LORD**.

Comparing things that are the SAME:

The **WAY** of the LORD is
the **LAW** of the LORD.

The way to be “undefiled in
the way” is to “walk in the
law of the LORD.”

Blessed *are* the undefiled **in the way,**

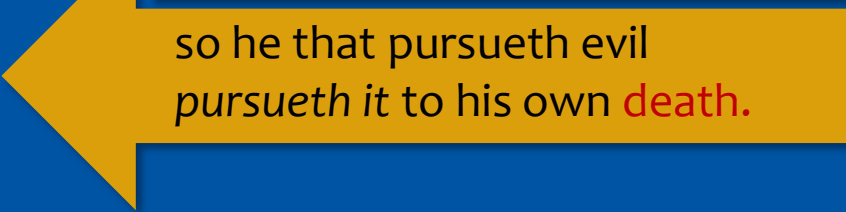
who walk **in the law of the LORD.**

Comparing things that are OPPOSITE:

In Proverbs 11:19, two
OPPOSITE ideas are used to
magnify the same truth:



As righteousness tendeth to **life**:



so he that pursueth evil
pursueth it to his own **death**.

Comparing things that are OPPOSITE:

The choice is made very clear!

Righteousness and Life,

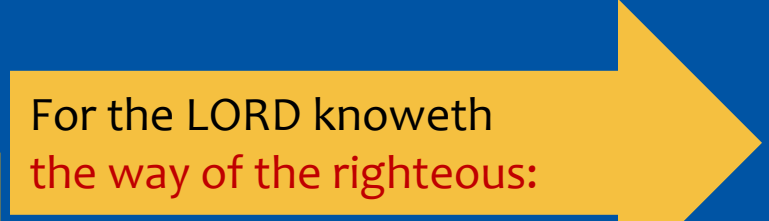
As righteousness tendeth to **life**:

so he that pursueth evil
pursueth it to his own **death**.

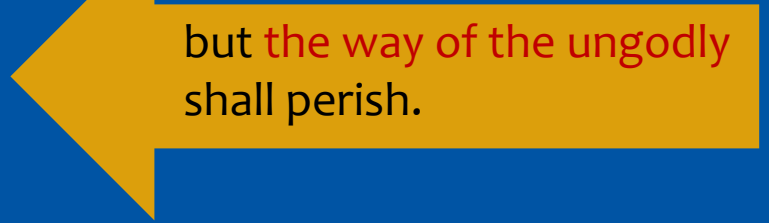
Or Evil and Death.

Comparing things that are OPPOSITE:

In Psalm 1:6, two OPPOSITE ideas declare the same truth:



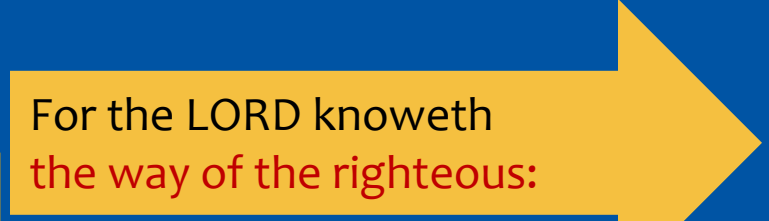
For the LORD knoweth
the way of the righteous:



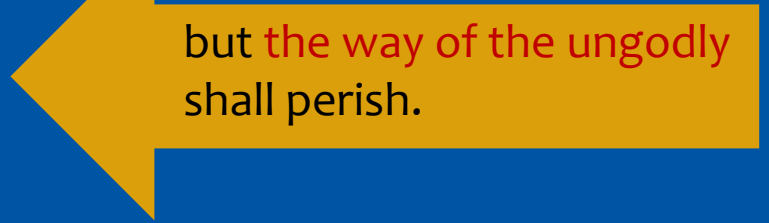
but the way of the ungodly
shall perish.

Comparing things that are OPPOSITE:

Those who walk in the way of the righteous will NOT perish like those who walk in the way of the ungodly.



For the LORD knoweth
the way of the righteous:



but the way of the ungodly
shall perish.

As we read the Psalms, we should keep in mind that these words were originally set to music. These are song lyrics – verses and a chorus.



The verses are often arranged in repeating patterns.

Three Calls

Three Reasons

Three Calls

Three Reasons

In Psalm 100, there is a cycle of *three calls* to the people of God, alternating with *three reasons for answering* those calls.

Psalm 100:1-5

Three Calls

- 1) Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.
- 2) Serve the LORD with gladness:
- 3) come before his presence with singing.

Three Reasons

- 1) Know ye that the LORD he *is* God:
- 2) *it is he that* hath made us, and not we ourselves;
- 3) *we are* his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Three Calls

- 1) Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, *and* into his courts with praise:
- 2) be thankful unto him,
- 3) *and* bless his name.

Three Reasons

- 1) For the LORD *is* good;
- 2) his mercy *is* everlasting;
- 3) and his truth *endureth* to all generations.

Psalm 100:1-5

Three Calls

- 1) Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.
- 2) Serve the LORD with gladness:
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Three Reasons

- 1) Know ye that the LORD he *is* God:
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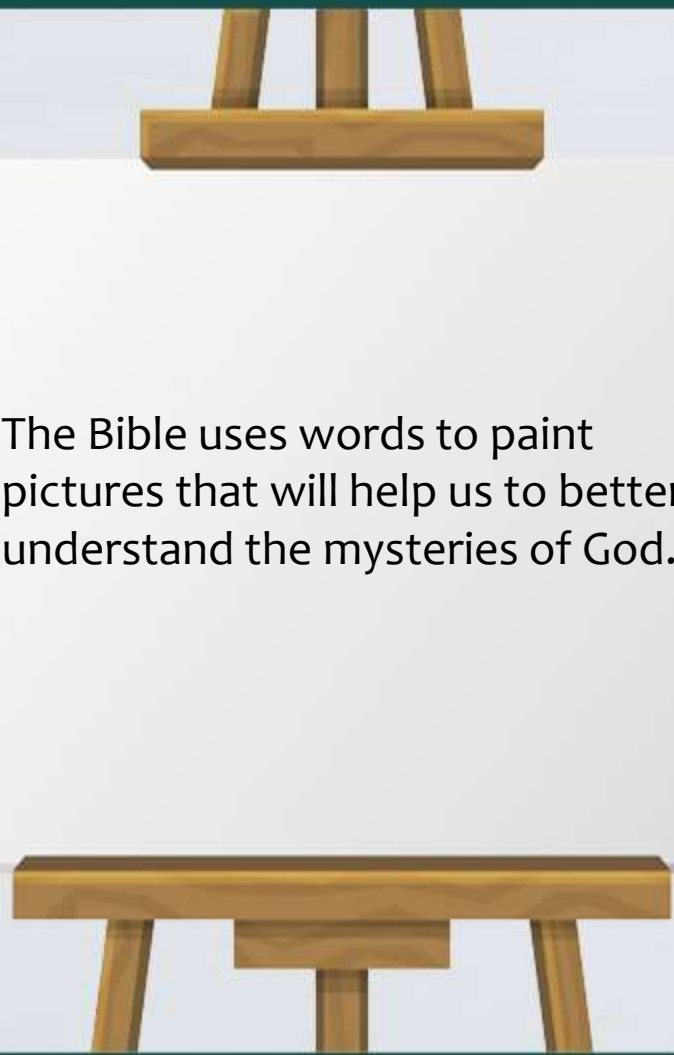
The closer you examine the Word of God,
the more you see its perfection!


Three Reasons

- 1) For the LORD *is* good;
- 2) his mercy *is* everlasting;
- 3) and his truth *endureth* to all generations.



The Bible uses words to paint pictures that will help us to better understand the mysteries of God.




A wooden artist's palette with a circular hole on the left side. It has several dollops of paint in various colors: white, yellow, orange, red, brown, green, black, blue, and dark blue. Two brushes with orange tips are resting on the left side of the palette.

In Psalm 1, a blessed man
is pictured as a great tree.

Psalm 1:3


And he shall be like a tree planted
by the rivers of water, that bringeth
forth his fruit in his season;
his leaf also shall not wither; and
whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

A wooden artist's palette with a circular hole on the left side. It has several dollops of paint in various colors: white, yellow, orange, red, brown, green, black, blue, and dark blue. Two brushes with orange tips are resting on the left side of the palette.

In Psalm 84, God is painted
as a sun and shield.

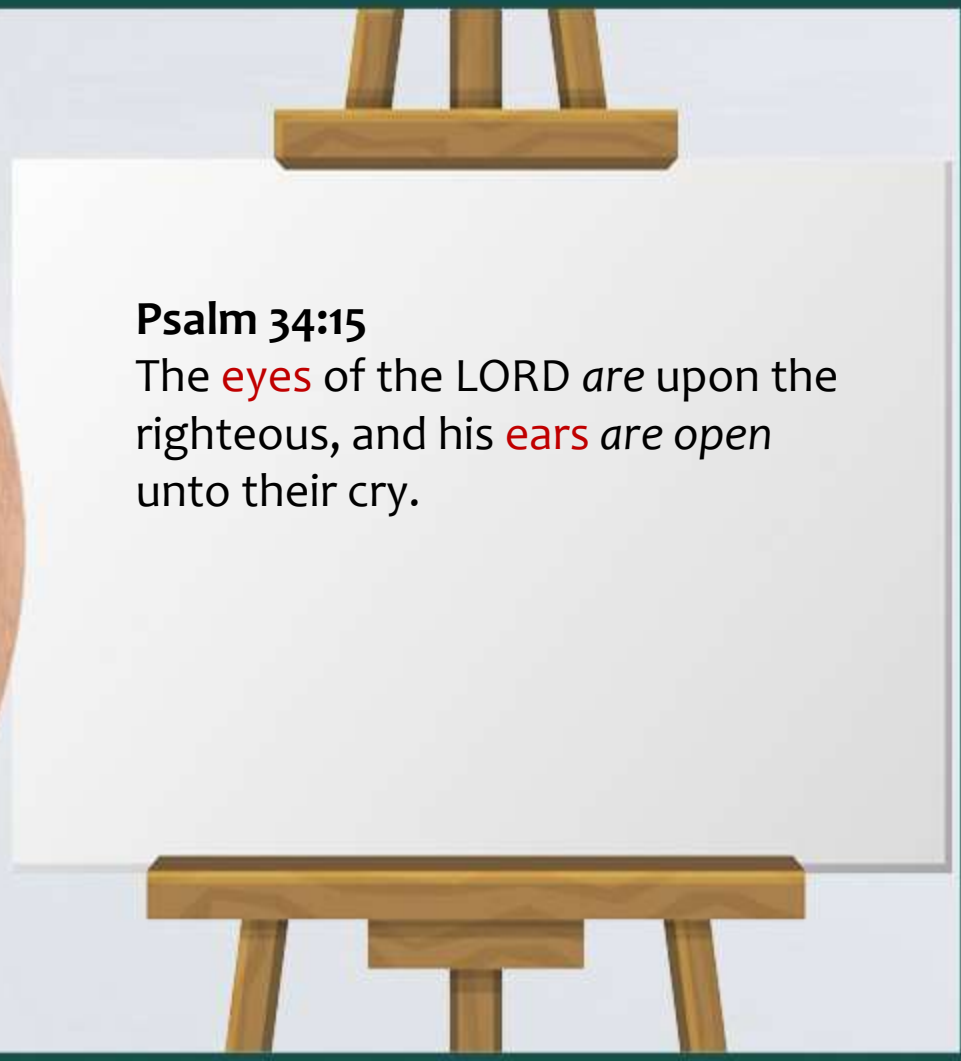
Psalm 84:11

For the LORD God *is a sun and shield*: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

A wooden artist's palette with a hole on the left side. It has several dollops of paint in various colors: white, yellow, orange, red, brown, green, black, blue, and purple. Two brushes with orange tips are resting on the left side of the palette.


God is a Spirit. A spirit has no flesh or bones (Jn 4:24; Lk 24:39).

But just to help us know him better, the Bible often paints God with the characteristics of a man.

A wooden easel with a blank white canvas. The easel is made of light-colored wood and has a simple, classic design.

Psalm 34:15

The **eyes** of the LORD *are* upon the righteous, and his **ears** *are open* unto their cry.

A wooden artist's palette with a circular hole on the left side. It has several dollops of paint in various colors: white, yellow, orange, red, brown, green, black, blue, and dark blue. Two brushes with orange tips are resting on the left side of the palette.

The ways of God are even
painted with features we
see in animals!

A wooden easel holding a blank white canvas. The easel has three vertical legs and a horizontal crossbar at the top and bottom.

Psalm 91:4

He shall cover thee with his
feathers, and under his **wings** shalt
thou trust: his truth *shall be thy*
shield and buckler.



All learning is done by COMPARISION.
God compares himself to things we
know so we can understand him
better. This helps us to get a picture of
“the invisible God” (Col 1:15).

A night sky filled with stars, with the silhouettes of trees visible at the bottom. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

The glory of God is not only seen in WHAT is written in the Bible, but also in HOW it is written. We will look for BOTH in our quest to Map the Psalms.

Questions to test your understanding:

1. Psalm 119:1 teaches about the way of God by comparing two things that are (a) the same, or (b) different. What are the two things?
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Each question is worth 20 points. Do NOT share your answers with other students.



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