

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

The Bible consists of two books. The first book is called the Old Testament. The other book is called the New Testament. The Old testament is written in Hebrew language while the New Testament is written in Greek language.

Many people consider that almost all of the content of the Old Testament of the Bible are poetry. Metzger (1993:598) expressed his opinion that close to one-third of Old Testament is poetry. Capps (1971:158) also said that when the early English translators labored with ancient Bible transcripts, they did not suspect that much of the book was poetry. In line with them, Elwell (1988:1729) stated that much of the Old Testament is poetic in spirit and structure. Furthermore he said,

“In the former are found passages of elevated poetry, studded with brilliant gems of imagery. The movement is rhythmical, with meter, parallelism, and strophic arrangement, as in the poetry books. ... The Hebrew language was an ideal instrument for expressing poetic speech. Its simplicity of form combined intensity of feeling and pictorial power and allowed great play of imagination, figures, metaphors and hyperboles are extremely common. In its powerful imagery the genius of Hebrew poetry comes to finest expression.”

The Book of Psalms is a book of poetry in the Old Testament. Psalms, according to Elwell (1988:1794), are poems sung to musical accompaniment, originally the harp. There are one hundred and fifty psalms in the book of Psalms. King David writes seventy-three psalms. It means that he wrote almost half of the content of this book. The other psalms are written by Asaph (Pss. 73-83), Korahites (Pss. 42, 44-49), Moses (Ps. 90), Solomon (Pss. 72, 127), and so on.

Psalms convey the aspects of poetry. They are imagery and figurative language. However, psalms have an aspect that cannot be found in other literary works. It is parallelism, the recurrence of thought.

The writer realizes that there are many versions of the Bible. Some of them are King James Version (KJV), New International Version (NIV) and New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). However, the writer only focuses on the book of Psalms of the King James Version. The reason is although never formally authorized by King James VI or Parliament, it became known as "the Authorized Version" (Metzger, 1993:760).

The writer of this study is challenged to study on the poetry in the Bible, in this case psalms, because it is the root from the American and English poetry. The purpose of this study was to identify the parallelism, to analyze and interpret the imagery and figurative language to find the meaning of the book of Psalms. Hopefully, this finding will make the

readers of the Psalms understand more the meaning than just read this book. Beside that, the writer tries to help the readers to feel the beauty and poetic spirit of this wonderful book.

1.2 The Statement of the Problem

Since the writer is concerned with the parallelism, imagery, and figurative language in King David's psalms, the questions that she would like to put forward are:

1. What words of imagery are found in David's psalms?
2. What figurative language is found in David's psalms?
3. What meaning does the figurative language used in David's psalms convey?
4. What kinds of parallelism are found in David's psalms?

1.3 The Objective of the Study

In line with the problem statement, the purpose of this study is analyzing the biblical poem, in this case psalm, to find out words of imagery and figurative language in David's psalms, analyze the meaning of

the figurative language and identify the kinds of the parallelism in David's psalms.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

The writer hopes that the findings of the study and the way the study is conducted will motivate the reader to read and analyze biblical poems, especially Psalms, so it can make the readers of the Psalms understand the meaning better. The writer also tries to help the readers to feel the beauty and the poetic spirit of the book of Psalms.

1.5 The Scope and Limitation of the Study

In this study, the writer only limits her discussion to the King David's psalms since David is the major psalmist. The psalms she wants to analyze are psalms 23, 29, and 133. She chooses those psalms because they are the three of David's famous psalms.

The writer also limits the version of the Bible. She chooses the King James Version because it is known as "the Authorized Version."

1.6 Definition of the Key Term

To avoid misunderstanding in reading the thesis, there is an important term that should be noticed:

a. Psalm

- One of the kinds of Biblical poetry
- Sacred song or hymn, especially those in the Bible. (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 1987)
- Poems sung to musical accompaniment, originally the harp. (Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible J-Z, 1988)

b. King James Version Bible

There are two kinds of King James Version Bible. They are the King James Version and the New King James Version Bible. For this study, the writer chooses the old version because it conveys the poetic spirit more than the new one.

1.7 The Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I deals with the Introduction consisting of the background of the study, the statement of the

problem, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation of the study, definition of the key term, and the organization of the study. Chapter II is concerning with the Review of the Related Literature such as: poetry, imagery, figurative language, parallelism, and related study. Chapter III is dealing with the Methodology. In this study, the writer uses analytical method (content analysis). Chapter IV contains the Analysis of the Study and chapter V is the Conclusion.