

CHRONICLES of the END TIMES:

**Using an Ancient Reading Method
To Better Understand
the End of the Age**

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Chapter 3

Stumbling Upon This Different Method

In *Daniel Revisited*, I presented a new interpretation for Daniel 7 and 8 that is quite different from what you have probably encountered. When we examine the text of those chapters, there are verses in both chapters that tell us directly that the visions of the four beasts and the vision of the ram and goat are to be fulfilled in the end times, and were not fulfilled in ancient times.

Popular premillennial end-time theology teaches the Rapture or the Tribulation is the next event, and then the second coming. This means the Rapture or Tribulation is imminent. Preterists and amillennials, on the other hand, believe the second coming itself is next and is imminent.

In both cases, no great hardship for Christians is expected, but only a whisking away of the saints by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The problem is Scripture doesn't really support either of these positions. Please don't misunderstand me—the Rapture and the Tribulation will occur, but not before other biblical events happen first. Here in the West, the idea of a specific and troublesome prophetic series of events prior to the Rapture and Tribulation and second coming is not on most Christians' radar.

The *signpost* interpretation of Daniel 7 and 8, written about in *Daniel Revisited*, shows there will be four events to occur prior to the Rapture and Tribulation. The first event has occurred, and the next event is to be the great Iranian invasion of the Middle East as fictionalized in the prologue. A summary of the signpost interpretation is given in Appendix A. The method of reading concentrically does indeed confirm the Signposts.

If you've never heard of the signpost interpretation of Daniel 7 and 8, and don't know what it is, rest assured you do not need to know about it to continue on in this book. The only reason I mention this at all is because it was this view of Daniel 7 that caused me to stumble upon this different method of reading.

In researching and writing *Daniel Revisited*, Daniel 7 was showing hints that it might actually be a master timeline or frame of reference for all end-time events. After all, if Daniel 7 starts with the democratization of modern Babylon (Iraq), and ends with the arrival of Christ and the destruction of the Antichrist, it

is indeed showing us an end-time progression of events. So, it is potentially a frame of reference since it might at least be a complete timeline.

I began to seek an answer to the following questions: Is there another way of looking at Daniel 7, something that might show authoritatively that it is indeed a master timeline? Or, could Daniel 7 be something else entirely? Then I noticed the similarities between Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, both showing a progression of kingdoms. No, the statue and four beasts are not showing the same historical progression; one is historical and the other is end-time. Exploring the true but hidden difference between Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 was the key that motivated me to begin work on this book.

What I Discovered

The dream of the statue in Daniel 2 seems to parallel Daniel's vision of four beasts in Daniel 7. You are perhaps well aware of this curiosity; many prophecy teachers point this out. Each of the two chapters portrays a succession of kingdoms, but Daniel 2 shows them as metals in a statue and Daniel 7 shows them as beasts.

Have you ever noticed that other stories in some of the chapters in Daniel repeat themselves, or run parallel to each other? The stories of the fiery furnace in Daniel 3 and the lion's den in Daniel 6 are one example. There is a parallel there. In those two stories, Daniel, or his three friends, are punished by pagan governments, putting them into a place that means certain death, but God rescues them. The order of events in each story is also identical.

Consider Daniel 4 and Daniel 5, the stories of two kings. One of them, Nebuchadnezzar, yields to the living God and repents; Belshazzar his grandson, in the story of the writing on the wall, rejects God.

These six chapters, Daniel 2 to 7, seem to show parallels, or a mirroring, within their chapter narratives. From the beginning and end chapters, to the center chapters, all six chapters seem paired. These six chapters of Daniel require a concentric reading.

These six chapters were also written originally in Aramaic, which is unusual for the Old Testament. Most of the Old Testament is written in Hebrew except for some verses in Ezra and one in Jeremiah. Yet, fully half of Daniel is written in Aramaic.

Until very recently, I thought of both the presence of Aramaic as the language of some of the chapters of Daniel, and the paired story structures of those chapters as mere curiosities. In the past, I would toss aside the fact that

those chapters had parallels and were written in Aramaic. I had concentrated on finding deeper meaning in these chapters' word meanings alone (like all of us) and had failed, not realizing the *parallel stories* and *the Aramaic* indeed *are* the keys to deeper meaning.

The chapters of Daniel written in Aramaic are written the way they are to set those six chapters aside as a separate unit from the rest of Daniel, with their pairs of mirrored chapters. This separate unit of Daniel written in Aramaic highlights the content of its six chapters. It seems the different language and paired chapters go hand-in-hand. God has something important to tell us that we have been missing with these six chapters. They are concentrically constructed and we have not been reading them that way. We will see this message fully developed in Section II.

For the remainder of this book, for convenience, I will call the chapters of Daniel written in Aramaic—chapters 2 to 7—“Aramaic Daniel.” The remainder of Daniel—chapters 1 and 8 to 12—I call “Hebrew Daniel.”

As will be shown in Section II on Aramaic Daniel, the vision of the historical kingdoms in Daniel 2 actually *supports* and *clarifies* the vision of the end-time kingdoms in Daniel 7. Finally, I realized the paired chapters of Daniel 3 and 6, and Daniel 4 and 5, also contribute to understanding the relationship between Daniel 2 and 7, and henceforth assist in understanding prophecy.

Once I realized the chapters of Aramaic Daniel mirrored each other, I began to search for more information on this topic. This new path of research began the same way as it did for *Daniel Revisited*: with a prayer asking God for his wisdom, and then a word search on Google.

The Chiasmus

After entering a few key words about Daniel, Aramaic, and mirroring chapters, one word came up that was completely off my radar up to that time and took me down an unexpected path of research. I hadn't a clue that the word even existed, or the field of study it represented had been initiated and fairly well developed in the past century. The word is “chiasmus” (pronounced kī-az'-mes), and is derived from the Greek letter “chi.” According to Breck,¹ the term “chiasmus” is based on the Greek letter “chi” which is written like the Roman letter “x.”

If you feel a bit intimidated by an academic-sounding word, there is no need. It may be a complex-sounding word, but the process of reading a chiasmus is easy to understand. Finding the word “chiasmus” was important because there

was already a body of literature pointing out its guidelines, its features, and its importance. The study in this book is built on, and extends from, these earlier works.

A chiasmus, in its simplest and shortest form, is two or more phrases or sentences in which the second phrase's or sentence's words are either a reversal or a repetition of the words in relation to the first phrase or sentence. It is the reversal or the repeating of words and phrases itself that reveals greater meaning than either of the two parts by themselves. A simple example is found in the words of Jesus where He said, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." (Mark 2:27 NKJV) In that verse we see the reversal of key words, and the reversal itself teaches us a truth.

A chiasmus can be as short as a single verse or cover an entire book of the Bible. A passage that is a chiasmus is said to be *chiastic*. The examination of a text passage to see if it is a chiasmus is called *chiastic analysis*.

Believe it or not, the Bible is filled with chiastic passages. Reading a passage chiastically, and thus concentrically, is the different method of reading the Bible presented in this book. When I realized I was looking at one great chiasmus covering all of Aramaic Daniel, a whole new world of Bible prophecy understanding opened up to me. This is an important tool we have all been missing to obtain a fuller meaning of prophetic Scripture.

Chapter 4

The Chiasmus: God's Highlighter

An Introduction to the Chiasmus

Theological scholars in seminaries have written extensively about the subject of the chiasmus. I do not intend to get into a lengthy and deep discussion of chiasmatics in this book. There are already many books on the subject, and the reader is referred to some of them in the Bibliography. I am more interested in showing the reader how chiastic reading can be applied to the Bible, how to recognize a chiasmus, and how it can change one's view of Bible prophecy interpretation.

From the literature, I will be passing along the definitions, and guidelines of chiasmatics, as well as borrowing basic chiastic structures of Bible books already presented by other authors. A few of the chiastic readings given in this book are built on general outlines as needed.

To some, delving into a whole new area of academia might sound foreboding. Rest assured I will keep the definitions and concepts as simple as possible. Also, the "work" of reading and finding the words will be done for you. My intention is to acquaint the reader with the concept of the chiasmus enough to allow the reader to properly recognize a chiasmus when it exists in a text, and to hopefully experience the "aha!" moments that come with the increase in understanding of a text.

This new way of looking at Bible prophecy will likely change your view and understanding of the end times (even if you know the Signposts from *Daniel Revisited*). It might even change the way you read the Bible. It has for me. Additionally, if you enjoy word games, such as word searches and associations, you might even find this new way to study the Bible provides an extra element of enjoyment. It may sound complicated, but it's not.

Some may ask, "Haven't we all been getting along fine reading the Bible linearly, verse by verse, and chapter by chapter, all these centuries?" Yes, of course, for straightforward text that gives us a saving knowledge of Christ, such as the Gospels and Epistles. Yet chiastic structures still exist in those texts too. Therefore, a fuller understanding of the Gospels, Epistles and the wisdom books may also be possible. On the other hand, haven't you read through some

prophecy passages and been completely mystified or lost? When it comes to prophetic Scripture, chastics can be immensely helpful in our understanding.

For example, John 3:16 seems fairly clear on its own without any need of a chiastic structure. However, what about the eight visions Zechariah recorded in the first six chapters of his book? Do you know what the four craftsmen and four horns represent in Zechariah 1:18–21? What about the horses in Zechariah 6? Chastics can shed a new light on these passages.

Convergent and Parallel Structure

At the end of the last chapter I mentioned the chiasmus exists in the Bible. There are actually two types of divided structures in a chiasmus. One is the “parallel text.” The other type is the “*inverted* parallel text,” also known as *convergent*. Below are examples of both.

An example of a parallel text is Proverbs 9:10 (NASB), shown in Figure 1.

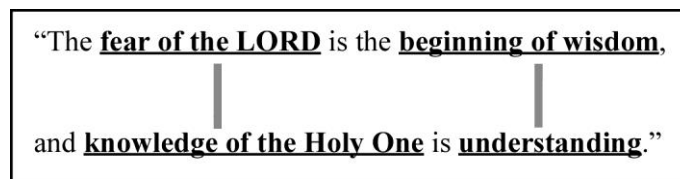
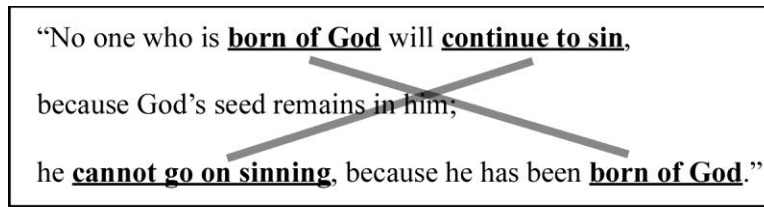


Figure 1. The parallel structure of Proverbs 9:10

Figure 1 shows the verse has two halves. The first line of the verse is one half and the second line is the other half. Both halves have the same literary structure. In this verse, “fear of the Lord” is understood to be a modifier of “knowledge of the Holy One,” and vice versa. Likewise, “beginning of wisdom” is understood to be a modifier of “understanding,” and vice versa. Each phrase in one half modifies its corresponding phrase in the other half, using the same word order. As you can see in Figure 1, a line connects each phrase of the two sets of repeated ideas. These two lines are parallel to each other, hence, the use of the term “parallel” to describe this verse’s structure.

An inverted parallel text—also known as a convergent text—is different. An example of an inverted parallel verse is 1 John 3:9 (NIV 1984) as shown in three lines of text in Figure 2.



“No one who is born of God will continue to sin,
because God’s seed remains in him;
he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.”

Figure 2. The inverted parallel, or convergent, structure of 1 John 3:9

You may already see from Figure 2 why the verse has an “inverted” parallel structure. The repeated words and phrases are not in the same order as we saw with the parallel passage of Proverbs 9:10, but in opposite order. The third line of 1 John 3:9 has phrases that are in reverse order relative to the phrases in the first line. Note the two gray lines connecting the common sets of phrases. Instead of being parallel, they are crossed like an “x.” This x seen overlaying the passage gives the chiasmus its name as we saw in the last chapter.

Both an inverted parallel text, and a parallel text, are divided, chiastic, texts. The words of Proverbs 9:10 in parallel order, and the words of 1 John 3:9 in an inverted or *convergent* order, show the division of each verse. The text in 1 John 3:9 is seen as a convergent text because the phrase “born of God” appears on each of outer edges of the verse, and the phrases concerning sinning are towards the inside of the verse, pointing to a central message.

The structures of these two verses lend easily to being rightly divided; their structures are very simple.

We can now formally define a chiasmus:

Definition: Chiasmus

A chiasmus is a passage of text of any length, in which its first and second halves are assembled so the words and phrases in the first half of a passage reflect the words and phrases in the second half of the same passage, either in the same order, i.e. parallel, or in reverse order, i.e. inverted parallel, or convergent.

To make this concept clearer, and to learn its associated jargon, we will look at some simple examples. Let’s look at the short chiasmus in 1 John 3:9 again. This time, the verse is presented below in five parts written in five lines, with the style associated with chiastic analysis:

A—No one who is *born of God*
B—will *continue to sin*,
C—because ***God's seed remains in him***;
B'—he *cannot go on sinning*,
A'—because he has been *born of God*.

Note three features of this verse over the five lines. The first feature is the single letters at the start of each line. Second is the indentation of the lines in a sideways V-shape. The third feature is that some of the words are italicized or written in bold text. These are all the written notations of chiasmic features, which we will discuss next.

Panels

The text of 1 John 3:9 above is divided into five parts (or, five lines), which are called “panels” and are each designated by a leading, single, bold capital letter. In the chiasmus above, the panels are written with increasing levels of indentation: the outer edges (the first and last panels) have the least indentation, and the center has the greatest indentation. In a sentence (such as this one), the panel designations are written as **A:B:C:B':A'**. The first part and the last part of 1 John 3:9 are contained in two panels, designated with the letter “**A**” in the first half of the verse, and its mirrored text panel, **A'**, read as “A-prime,” in the second-half of the verse. The parts of the verse next toward the center, the **B:B'** panels, are paired like the **A:A'** panels. What remains is the center panel, **C**.

We can now formally define a panel:

Definition: Panel

A panel is a piece of a convergent or parallel text, which is either the center piece of text, or one of a pair of texts located symmetrically on either side of the center of the passage. A panel can be identified by the unique words or theme it contains within the greater passage, and is reflected, or echoed, by a twin panel with the same unique words or theme.

In 1 John 3:9 above we see five panels, dividing up the text of the verse, and the five panels form the chiasmic structure of the verse. There are two pairs of panels, and the single central panel. Each pair of panels, as well as the center panel, has its own unique words and phrases.

For chiasmic texts that are parallel rather than convergent, such as Proverbs 9:10, that verse is written as follows.

A—The *fear of the Lord*
B—is the *beginning of wisdom*,
A'—and *knowledge of the Holy One*,
B'—is *understanding*.

The indentation is not V-shaped as with a convergent (inverted parallel) passage, but is repeating in a parallel fashion, where the indentation begins again with the A' panel with no indenture. The four panels of the verse are written as A:B:A':B'.

Whether in convergent or parallel chiasmic structures, a panel pair will always have a panel labeled as a letter, and as a letter with the prime notation.

There is one last feature of panels to be stated here. Panels are not essential when finding a chiasmic structure in a text, the words and phrases are. Panels, though, act as a convenience in collecting like markers or themes in one area of text, to help us visualize and write out a text's chiasmic structure.

Markers and the Central Message

The italicized text in the example of 1 John 3:9 above are words and phrases shared between the panels of the text. These shared words and phrases are called “markers.” Markers are said to be *echoed* between twin panels. It is the markers themselves that tell us if two parts of a text are twin (or paired) panels. These markers also indicate to the reader that the text is a chiasmus, while defining the panels. The italicized text of panel A (*born of God*) is a marker mirroring—or echoing—the marker in italicized text of A' (also, *born of God*). Both italicized texts are markers, and are echoed, in this case, verbatim.

Panel B has italicized text that is a mirror of B', i.e. *continue to sin* versus *cannot go on sinning*. The italicized texts of B and B' are similar in topic and words, but have opposite meanings. These two phrases are also markers that are echoed.

Finally, the italicized and bolded text in C is the central message of the passage. The central message of the passage in C is “God's seed remains in him.” In this book, the texts of central messages are in bold type.

We know panel C contains the central message because the markers of the other two pairs of panels converge on, and therefore point to, the middle panel.

This is how the location of the words of the Bible highlights the main theme of a chapter or verse.

Also, just as the markers point to the central message, the central message of the passage places the outer pairs of text into better perspective. Therefore, the texts of the panels preceding and succeeding the central message modify each other, and the central message itself modifies all the other texts. For example, “One who is born of God” (in **A**), “has been born of God” (in **A'**). The two phrases modify the subject of one who has God’s seed planted in him. And why can’t someone born of God go on sinning as it says in panel **B'**? The answer in the middle panel (**C**) is that God’s seed, the Holy Spirit, remains in that person.

As Breck² simply states regarding an **A:B:A'** chiasmus, panel **A** intensifies the meaning of **A'**, and vice versa, and the primary meaning is **B**.

For parallel texts, the markers echo between paired panels, except instead of converging on a center, the markers are in the same order in each text panel. The markers show where the division is between two mirrored panels. In the example given above of Proverbs 9:10, the markers are again the italicized phrases. The markers of the **A:A'** panels echo each other, as do the markers in the **B:B'** panels. However, there is no central message in Proverbs 9:10, as there is in 1 John 3:9. This is not to say there can be no central message between two parallel halves of a text; this example simply has no central message.

If a convergent or parallel passage is long enough, markers will be seen to repeat. In other words, they will not only echo between paired panels, but will repeat many times in a pair of panels. We will see examples of this later.

We can now formally define a marker and a marker set:

Definition: **Marker**

Markers are repeated and echoed words, phrases and themes in a pair of text passages that show us (a) a parallel or convergent structure exists and so a deeper meaning for the overall text also exists, (b) the text panels are paired and therefore modify each other, and (c) the location of the central message, or theme, of the entire passage if there is one.

Definition: **Marker Set**

A marker set is a pair of markers echoing each other, where each marker is located in one of two panels mirroring each other in parallel or in convergence.

Markers themselves may or may not allow a greater understanding of the text directly. Markers may sometimes be only “trail markers” showing word associations leading the reader to the central message of a text. We will see examples of such things as we get in to the next sections.

We can also formally define the central message:

Definition: Central Message

A central message is typically at, or near, the center of a text passage. Identified by pairs of markers in a convergent or parallel text, the central message states the theme and most important idea of the entire passage. In a narrative, the central message can also be a turning point between the first and second halves of a story.

The two passages in 1 John 3:9 and Proverbs 9:10 have been given as only simple examples. Lund,³ Dorsey,⁴ and others, show us chiasmic structures exist throughout the Bible and can be used to reach a better understanding of the text being read. Bible scholars have shown whole books like James and 1 John each forms their own chiasmus. Also, major parts of longer books, such as the life of Abraham in Genesis (Gen. 12–24), and the Exodus from Egypt (Ex. 1–13) each form their own chiasmus.⁵

In this book, we will be studying the chiasmic structures of Daniel, Revelation, half of Zechariah, and a part of Matthew.

Care and Objectivity are Essential in Chiasmic Reading

Welch⁶ wrote that chiasmi definitely exist in Scripture. There is a growing awareness of chiasms in academia such that skepticism of chiasms’ existence ended decades ago. The next questions were how important or significant is it to properly read a passage chiasmically, and how do you interpret a passage chiasmically? Those have been the topics of many books and articles on chiasms in the Bible.

In my research, I have found it to be true that there are real benefits to paying attention to the chiasmic structure of a text, i.e. reading chiasmically. Radday wrote about this.⁷

Chiasmic structure, it will be seen, is more than an artificial or artistic device. If it were nothing else, it would hardly warrant

more than a passing illustration of a few exemplary passages. It is rather, and most remarkably so, a key to meaning. *Not paying sufficient attention to it may result in failure to grasp the true theme.* (emphasis added.)

If a text is written as a poem, it needs to be read as a poem or its full meaning is missed. Likewise, if a text is written as a chiasmus, it needs to be read as such or the full meaning of the text will be missed. You will witness this in the upcoming sections of this book.

Like Welch, Breck⁸ also wrote: “Written chiastically, biblical works must be read chiastically if they are to reveal the primary message the author wanted to convey.”

A chiasmus teaches us more meaning because, as Welch⁹ notes, “When chiasmus achieves the level of ordering thoughts . . . the form itself merges with the words for message and meaning. Indeed, what is said is often no more than how it is said.” The analogy with music works here. The ordering of the notes is just as important as the notes themselves.

Welch¹⁰ also wrote about the chiasmus: “. . . these structures may add novel perspectives and unexpected dimension to the texts in which they appear.”

This is so true! After you finish this book, this quote from Welch might seem like an understatement. To this end, chiastic analysis yields many surprises. As we go through each prophetic book and chapter, discoveries will be highlighted.

Markers, panels, and central messages are indeed highlighters God has placed in the Bible, pointing to and highlighting passages and verses He wants us to understand. It’s all in his Word! The words of the text are there. This is a truly exciting prospect. By reading linearly as we have done all our lives, we have passed up and been ignorant of, God’s highlighter.

However, to read the Bible chiastically also requires an obligation to be objective, as Welch¹¹ also warns. The reader must simply note the words that echo and repeat in the text to find the panels and the central message.

It is also easier to find a true chiastic structure in a text if there is significant repetition of words, or several words being echoed in the text. The more obvious the markers, the more easily a chiasmus is recognized, and therefore, the passage being read will likely have more to teach us. A text that is chiastic has much more to teach us, and a true chiasmus will teach us something closer to the truth of the text. A forced chiasmus will not.

Guidelines for Identifying Markers

The following guidelines are to help readers recognize a proper, or “stronger,” set of markers. These guidelines are used in this book and the reader can use them in his or her own studies. A general rule regarding markers is: the more obvious the markers are to readers, the more likely a convergent or parallel structure exists. Therefore, a deeper meaning only attainable from a chiasmic reading is more likely.

1. *Markers should be echoed using the same words or words of similar meaning and repeated as often as possible.* Verbatim or near-verbatim repetition of words and phrases between two proposed panels in a convergent or parallel text marks the presence of a chiasmic structure. Markers do not have to be echoed verbatim or nearly verbatim, but they are stronger if they are. The phrase “born of God” we see in 1 John 3:9 is echoed verbatim between that verse’s A:A’ text panels. The marker “born of God” is not repeated within each panel, however, since the verse is short. Longer passages can and will exhibit repeated markers.

2. *Markers should be unique to each panel pair.* Markers should be words and phrases that are *unique* to specific mirror-paired text panels. For example, Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 reflect “iron” uniquely. The word is not reflected between the chapters of Daniel 3 to 6. Daniel 3 and 6, though, uniquely reflect places of punishment: a kiln and a pit (den). No other chapter in Daniel mentions these words. Finally, Daniel 4 and 5 uniquely reflect the phrase “the mind of an animal.” Of course, these paired chapters reflect other unique words and phrases between themselves—these are only single examples. The idea here is that the uniqueness of the words and phrases to a particular pair of panels contributes to the panels being identified in a chiasmus, whether they are convergent to each other or parallel to each other.

3. *Markers can share a common theme.* An example is the case with “kiln” and “pit” in Daniel 3 and 6. In the chapter on Zechariah we will see a pair of markers that are a question and its answer. In other places we will see markers have a common theme like body position, but the exact words might be “stand” with the reflecting word being “sit.”

4. *Inverted markers are more powerful.* Echoed markers can have directly opposite meanings such as the example in 1 John 3:9 where we saw “continue to sin” and “cannot go on sinning.” According to the academic literature, the strongest and most effective chiasmic texts have markers of opposite meanings,

due to the contrast making the parallel structure more obvious, and therefore standing out more to the reader.

5. *Keep the original language in mind.* Our English Bibles, in most instances, are good enough, but keeping the *Strong's Concordance* handy is a good idea. For example, in Daniel 3 one of the reflected and repeated markers is the word "image." The word appears in our English Bibles several times, but in the NIV in Daniel 3:3, the word "it" is used to refer to the "image." One must be careful not to miss markers this way.

6. *There will almost always be a central message*, a place in one continuous text where the echoes of the markers converge in the middle. The central message identifies the theme for the entire chiasmus. If a central message seems unimportant, it is possible the markers chosen led you to an incorrect parallel structure. Choosing other markers may lead you to the correct solution. We will see an example of this in Section II regarding Daniel 4 and 5.

A text can be analyzed to yield many outcomes of convergent or parallel structure. This is a risk that exists in chiasmic analysis. If one uses weak markers such as those that are non-unique to a pair of mirrored panels, such as the word "God" or "Lord" which are words that are used everywhere, the central message might be meaningless and the text will yield a mock chiasmus that will not help in understanding. Worse still, it could yield a meaning that is steered by the analyst to support his or her presuppositions.

An easily recognized chiasmus with obviously repetitive words and phrases unique to each pair of text panels progressing to the middle, yields a beautiful literary form and more readily catches the reader's eye. A more easily seen chiasmus will also more likely lead to increased understanding of the text as it readily identifies a central message that makes sense and rightfully modifies each panel of text progressing to the outside edges. The measure of the power of the markers is the relative ease for the reader to find a chiasmus.

One scholar, Dorsey,¹² has a couple of "don'ts" that are helpful in identifying markers so one doesn't go down a wrong path trying to identify a chiasmus.

First, don't use creative titling of a theme of two prospective panels to force a match. For example, just because Genesis 1 speaks of creation and Malachi 4 speaks of destruction does not make those two chapters paired panels.

Second, do not force the outside edges of a text passage which are outside of a beautiful chiasmus, to be part of the chiasmus. In other words, if an eight-chapter passage has a beautiful chiasmus from chapters 2 to 9, and chapters 1 and

10 don't seem to be a pair of panels, don't force it. Those outer chapters may indeed not be part of the chiasmus.

And third, and this one is mine, do not move text or chapters around, out of order, to fit your supposed chiasmus. I witnessed this in one of the books I was researching. The author had a preterist view, and the result he found in his chiastic analysis made him think he had to rearrange a couple chapters in the Bible in a different order. However, with my premillennial view, and with the knowledge of the signpost interpretation, the chiasmus he derived actually made perfect sense to me without rearranging chapters.

The Bible has been compiled in the order it is compiled, and, I believe in the order God would have it. If chapter 6 needs to move to a place between chapters 3 and 4 to fit your derived chiasmus, chances are greatest that either your chiasmus is not correct or you do not understand what the chiasmus is trying to tell you.

On the other hand, what *can* be allowed is the places chapters begin and end in reference to verses. By this I mean chiastic structure can show how verses of one chapter may be relabeled as part of another. Chiastics may show, for example, how the first verse of a chapter really belongs to the end of the chapter before it. This can be a legitimate proposal because chapters and verses were defined ten centuries after the era of scrolls ended.

Scholar and Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton, is credited as giving us our Bible's chapter divisions. He did this between AD 1207 and AD 1228. He would have had to use bound books instead of scrolls, since scrolls stopped being written over one thousand years earlier. Though Langton is credited by most as doing a fine job, and his work has been an immense help in Bible study over the centuries, chiastics will show us that perhaps some slight adjustment of the start and end of an occasional chapter is proper. We will see examples of this in the sections ahead.

You Have Probably Noticed Markers Before

Chiastic structures exist almost everywhere in the Bible. You have likely run across them in your own Bible reading. One manifestation you may have noticed is that many passages in the Old Testament have the following pattern: 1) the text says God tells someone to do something, 2) they do it, and 3) the narrative finally says the person did it. This is indeed a characteristic of a parallel text.

A second example is in Revelation and relates to the word "church." Many have noted that the word "church" does not appear from Revelation 4 to 18, but

only in the first and last chapters of Revelation. This is actually a manifestation of the chiastic structure of Revelation, for the entire book is one great chiasmus. The word “church” is a marker for the first panels of Revelation, chapters 1–3, and the last panels of Revelation, chapters 19–22, and is a unique word to those panels.

Chiastic Analysis in this Book

It is my prayer and my goal that the chiastic readings of the Bible presented in this book are true and valid, yielding a fuller meaning of each text, guiding us to greater truth.

According to Dorsey¹³ there have been several works like this book in the literature over many decades, in which whole books of the Bible have been chiastically analyzed. What makes this book different is that the chiastic readings across the prophecy books analyzed and presented here remarkably create a single and coherent interpretation of what the Bible may be saying about the end times. This book also explores chiastic structures existing across texts of several Bible books.

The purpose of this book as a work of chiastic analysis is to show the Bible reader that the chiastic structure of prophetic passages is real, is useful, and indeed opens up the meanings of Bible passages in ways never before seen.

There could be some who might accuse me of creating something that is not there. However, I only used the text of the Bible, pursuing what I thought were the most obvious word trails and echoes. True, I did have a preconception of an interpretation, the Signposts (in Appendix A), but I simply explored and defined the chiasmi I saw, one after the other, and they supported the interpretation I presented in *Daniel Revisited*, and so I continued until I reached the conclusions of all the prophecy books studied. This motivated me to continue to all of Daniel and Revelation and the other books. If the chiastic structures I first saw made no sense to me, with my perspectives, I would not have written this book.

What I found in Revelation and Daniel and Zechariah go beyond the initial four events in the Middle East to give us a picture of the end times of all events leading up to the beginning of the Millennium and it also gives us an extended picture of events across the world extending out beyond the Middle East. Frankly, as far as I know, the interpretation I wrote of in *Daniel Revisited* has not been presented elsewhere. The signpost interpretation seems to be unique, one of a countless number of interpretations that have been presented by authors and

teachers. It might be possible that a chiastic reading of prophetic Scripture is truly compatible with the signpost interpretation.

I will leave the determination of whether I was on the right track, pursuing and finding truth, or not, to my brothers and sisters in Christ. This work has been accompanied by much prayer, and I hope my readers will also accompany their own study of this work with prayer.

Finally, the reader will note in the chiastic readings of the Bible in this book, that I used a few translations: the NIV 1984, NASB, and NKJV. The reason for this is two-fold. First, Bible translation publishers limit authors to quoting 500 verses, and this book goes way over that number, so more translations were called for. Secondly, and rather serendipitously, it also shows that any translation, or combination of translations, can be used for chiastic study. So using your own Bible, whatever the translation, is fine.

Summary

To quickly recap:

- Concentric reading of the Bible texts, watching for parallel or convergent literary structures is a key to open up more truth in those Bible texts.
- We have been introduced to what a convergent or parallel text is: a series of paired sections of a text passage, symmetric about its middle.
- We have seen the basics of convergent structure using 1 John 3:9, and of parallel structure using Proverbs 9:10 as examples.
- We have been acquainted with the panel and the marker.
- We have seen how panels and markers are notated in writing.
- We have seen some “do’s” and “don’ts” when identifying markers.
- The most trusted chiastic structures are those in which the markers are obvious.
- Chiastic reading is concentric reading. We should learn to read chapters and books of the Bible concentrically, not just from start to finish.
- The conclusion of a text is not its end, but its center.

Most likely, this concentric or parallel reading technique is new for you. This whole experience has been new for me too.

Before moving on to applying chiasmatics to Daniel and the other Bible books, we will take a quick look at both the discovery of chiasmatics and the nature of chiasmatics. Chiasmatics is more basic to the wiring of our brains than you may realize. Also, God has even arranged history itself to unfold as a chiasmus.

Chapter 5

Chiaistics: Studies, Our Wiring, and History

The study of chiastic forms in biblical passages has been slowly gaining recognition over the last two centuries. Unfortunately, it seems to still be just a curiosity of seminary scholars or a secret among some pastors. I say this because almost all the lay brothers and sisters I know who have studied the Bible for a major part of their lives have never heard of a “chiasmus.” I had never heard of it either.

According to Nils W. Lund,¹⁴ the chiasmus was a lost literary form until J.A. Bengel, a Lutheran clergyman, published his *Gnomon Novi Testamenti* (*Exegetical Annotations on the New Testament*) in 1742. Bengel named the literary form of inverted parallelism, as well as parallelism, “chiasmus.” (Scholars after Bengel tend to apply the term of chiasmus to inverted parallels only; however, I choose to define chiasmus as Bengel did, applying the term to both types of literary structure. See the definition of “chiasmus” in chapter 4.)

John Wesley himself used Bengel’s landmark work as a reference in his own exegesis of the New Testament.

Lund, having published his landmark work, *Chiasmus in the New Testament*, in 1942, is considered the father of modern chiastic analysis. His book started with Bengel’s treatment of the topic, and then went on to provide the guidelines for identifying a chiastic structure, and showed that much of the New Testament is written chiastically.

Following him were Breck, Dorsey, Shea, and others who, along with Lund, have shown specifically how books of the Bible have chiastic outlines. The Bible has an untold number of convergent and parallel passages. They are ubiquitous from Genesis to Revelation.

So far in the history of these chiastic studies, these structures have been considered interesting curiosities, but very few conclusions have been drawn.

Chiastic structures have even been found in the texts of Sumerian and Akkadian cuneiform cylinders and in various Aramaic writings outside of the Bible.¹⁵ Apparently, the chiasmus is everywhere in ancient Middle Eastern writing.

There are several reasons for the ubiquity of the chiasmus in ancient texts. First, texts were written on scrolls. A scroll typically had two wooden rods

attached in parallel to each other via a series of sheets, which was the medium—papyrus or parchments (animal skins)—on which the text was written. The medium was wrapped around each of the wooden rods for storage. When a scroll was opened, it was typically opened somewhere in the middle, and then read toward the ends—forward or backward. In ancient writings, there were no paragraphs, verses or chapters. The chiasmic structure of a text—identified by its markers—told the reader or listener that a passage was complete, i.e., where the start and end were and what the central message was.

Bound books, as we have today, have the advantage of making it easy to find a section of text, and of being more portable. Indeed, that was why Christians invented the bound book in the second century AD to deal with all the texts of the Bible.

But what was lost was the chiasmus, and with it the ability to completely grasp the full meaning of a text. Yes, the “baby was thrown out with the bathwater.” As mentioned earlier, Breck said if a text is a chiasmus, the chiasmic structure must be given attention to get the full meaning.¹⁶ I can’t help but wonder if one of the ways God used to seal the book of Daniel was through bound books replacing scrolls.

We Think Chiasmically

It seems our very brains are wired for the chiasmus. People memorize by repetition and by mnemonic devices. The convergent or parallel structure allows one to hear the text as it progresses to the center where there is a turn in the narrative, and then, as the text goes to the end, familiar words and phrases or themes are repeated but in different ways, adding more meaning, and helping us to remember the passage.

We can use the example of a child’s fairy tale here. Remember the story of “Goldilocks and the Three Bears”? The overall story is a chiasmus, with two parallel panels. The structure of the story starting where Goldilocks arrives at the bears’ house can be written as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 shows us not only how a piece of text such as a familiar fairy tale can be broken down into a chiasmus, but we can also use this exercise as an example of how chapters in the Bible will appear when chiasmically analyzed.

Note the italicized words are the markers and the numbers in squares individually label the marker sets.

Figure 3. Sample Chiasmus Using the Story of Goldilocks

A Goldilocks Arrives at the Bears' House.

- [1] Seeing no one and being tired *she sees herself in*

B Goldilocks Makes Herself at Home.

- [2] She sits on all *three chairs*; the *last one* is just right
[3] She eats from all *three bowls*; the *last one* is just right
[4] She lies on all *three beds*; the *last one* is just right

C The Three Bears Come Home.

- [5] The three bears come back from their walk

B' The Bears Discover Goldilocks Made Herself at Home.

- [2] They see all *three chairs*; the *last one* is broken
[3] They see all *three bowls*; the *last one* is all eaten
[4] They see all *three beds*; she is still sleeping in the *last one*

A' Goldilocks Flees From the Bears' House.

- [1] Seeing the three bears *she sees herself out*

The start of the story when the bears decide to go for a walk to let their porridge cool is not part of the chiasmus shown above. However, Goldilocks' arrival at the bear's house, and then her fleeing from the house at the end of the story, are the starting and ending mirrored panels (A:A') of the chiasmus. Marker set one includes seeing herself in, echoing seeing herself out. The central message, the turning point, is when the bears come back home (in panel C). The two paired panels before and after the central message are panels B:B', each having a parallel structure relative to the other, as evidenced by the two panels' markers.

In the B panel of the story, Goldilocks arrives at the bear's house and sits on the three bears' three chairs, eats from each of the three bowls of porridge and lies on all three beds. These are the second, third, and fourth marker sets. In each group of three, the last—the third—is mentioned because it is just right. In the B' panel of the story, after the central message, the bears note someone has been using their three chairs, eating their three bowls of porridge, and sleeping on their three beds. The number three is a repeated and echoed marker. The household items, i.e. the chairs, bowls, and beds, are also echoed markers. Always, the third item of each set of three that Goldilocks found “just right” is also the one the bears find most used or broken. These chairs, bowls, and beds in the B' panel are the echoing markers of the second, third, and fourth marker sets.

This may be subtle, but there were two responses you may remember having if you heard this story as a child. *These same responses will hopefully be present*

when reading Scripture chiastically. First, when the bears come home in the middle of the story, we then expected something to change; the dynamic was different. It left us anticipating a change in events because the bears and Goldilocks will meet. What was going to happen now? This also confirms for us the proper central message or turning point has been identified.

Second, regarding the echoed markers, when you heard the story, and you heard the three bears' responses to what happened to their things (chairs, bowls, and beds), your mind tended to jump back and remember the same three things that Goldilocks originally tried.

Anticipation of a change in direction of the narrative, and hearkening back to the first half of the story, should be common reactions when hearing or reading a chiastic text.

We also see a form of chiasmatics today when writing reports and technical papers. What is the basic structural rule of a piece of writing? Is it not to first tell the reader what you are going to tell them, then tell them, and finally tell them what you told them? This is the basic introduction, body, and conclusion of a modern paper or report. The introduction and conclusion are mirrored panels, and the body of the report is the central message.

History Itself Can Be a Chiasmus

In addition to a text passage being a chiasmus, many places in the Bible show history itself can unfold chiastically, woven and controlled by God.

For instance, Abraham's life, the Exodus, and the kings of Judah from Solomon to Josiah all unfolded chiastically, and were written that way in the Bible. As an example of history shown as a chiasmus, the events of the Flood are listed in Figure 4 as told in Genesis 6 to 9 (adapted from Dorsey,¹⁷ and Welch¹⁸). The literary structure of the text is convergent.

Figure 4. The Flood's Chronology as a Chiasmus

- A** *Noah had three sons* Shem, Ham, and Japheth (6:9–10)
- B** *God covenants* with Noah: he and family to go into ark (6:18–20)
- C** *Food* was brought into the ark (6:21)
- D** *God commands* to enter the ark (7:1–3)
- E** *7 days* to wait; after *7 days* Flood started (7:4, 10)
- F** *God shut the ark* (7:16)
- G** 40 days Flood came and water increased (7:17–18)
- H** *Mountains* covered (7:19–20)
- I** *150 days* waters flooded earth (7:21–24)
- J** ***God remembered Noah and sent a wind* (8:1)**
- I'** *150 days* end; water receded (8:3)
- H'** *Mountaintops* visible (8:4–5)
- G'** 40 days after mountaintops seen, water recedes (8:5–6)
- F'** *Noah opens window of ark* (8:6)
- E'** *7 days* and *7 days* waiting for waters to subside (8:10–12)
- D'** *God commands* to leave ark (8:15–17)
- C'** *Food* to eat after the Flood (9:2–4)
- B'** *God covenants* with Noah: Flood never again (9:8–17)
- A'** *Noah and his three sons* came out of the ark (9:18–19)

Note the echoing of each italicized marker, between twin panels (a pair of twin panels is marked with the same capital letter). As an example, note the repeat of “7 days” echoed between the twin **E:E'** panels.

This is all truly remarkable to me. God weaves history in such a way that history itself becomes easier for us to remember. What an amazing God we serve.

End-time history will be shown to be structured the same way. We will see in this book that the end-time events themselves also form a chiasmus by themselves.

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END NOTES

Endnotes for Section I

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- ¹ John Breck, *Scripture in Tradition: The Bible and Its Interpretation in the Orthodox Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 96.
- ² *Ibid.*, 97.
- ³ Nils Wilhelm Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in Formgeschichte* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1970), 30–35.
- ⁴ David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999), 25.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 56, 67.
- ⁶ John W. Welch, ed., *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis, Research* (Provo: Research Press Publications, 1981), 9.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.
- ⁸ Breck, *Scripture in Tradition*, 98.
- ⁹ Welch, *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 11.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 13.
- ¹² Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, 33.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 18–20.
- ¹⁴ Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament*, 25, 35.
- ¹⁵ Welch, *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 17, 169.
- ¹⁶ Breck, *Scripture in Tradition*, 98.
- ¹⁷ Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, 52.
- ¹⁸ Welch, *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 99.