



Active Reading Tip #5b

Read the Bible *Purposefully* (Part 2)

The author uses Grammatical and _____ structure to accomplish his purpose.

Just as many of today’s murder mysteries are all presented with virtually the same structure —intro to the characters, commitment of the crime, investigation, evasion, crisis (like a shoot-out, or car-chase), and resolution (the good guy gets the girl, the bad guy goes away in handcuffs) — the Bible uses literary structure as well.

Different Types:

Biographical Structure builds on the key persons in the story. Judges, for example, focuses on each of Israel’s leaders, as does the books of Kings. This structure is most common in narratives.

Geographical Structure emphasizes the place. The book of Exodus takes us on a journey with Israel as they wander through the wilderness in “search” of the Promised Land.

Historical Structure focuses on key events. In John’s Gospel, we are presented with seven different miracles that promote one declared purpose: *that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name* (20:30-31).

In Revelation, we are taken from one (future) historical event to another, in a well-ordered sequence of events culminating with the New Heaven and New Earth.

Chronological Structure a type of historical structure, but with more of an emphasis on time. Mark employs the word *immediately* to take us chronologically through the events in Christ’s life.

Ideological Structure emphasizes ideas and concepts. Most of the New Testament books are written in this form. Romans, for example, is structured around the *idea* of faith.

Hebrew Poetry employs parallelism. One line is related, somehow, to the next — sometimes the relationship is similarity and sometimes its more contrasting. For example:

*The Lord is my light and salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the defense of my life;
Whom shall I dread?*

Psalm 27:1

*For the Lord knows the way of the righteous
But the way of the wicked will perish.*

Psalm 1:6

More to follow on Hebrew Poetry along with another structure, called *Chiasms*.



Active Reading Tip #6

Read the Bible *Imaginatively* and *Acquisitively*

Read not only to receive it but to retain it by taking personal involvement, even ownership, in the text. Make the text come alive, so that you'll never forget it. Who cares if you've read the page, and even underlined portions of it...if you just put the Bible on the shelf and never remember it. Make it live so you'll never forget it. "Not just you through the Bible, but the Bible through you."

Some silly, fun tips:

- Try reading from varied translations and/or paraphrases.
- Have someone read it aloud to you, or read it aloud to someone else...in a dramatic, interesting fashion. • Vary your setting.
- Try rewriting/paraphrasing texts, such as Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 ("everything there is a season"), Luke 19:1-10 (Zaccheus), or 1 Cor. 13 ("Love" Chapter).
- Try a concentrated, month long biographical study on a particular Bible character. Look up every reference to him/her in the Bible. Get a Bible dictionary, and read about the cultural/ historical background in which he or she lived. Locate these places on an atlas.
- Develop a psychological profile of a person. What attitudes and feelings, biases, ambitions, family background, motivations, etc...did the person have?

HOMWORK

Due 11/30/99

Read numbers 13, the story of the spies sent by Moses into the promised land. Read this account carefully, using all the principles of good reading we've discussed thus far. Then write the following to be presented, **informally**, to the class:

a) Your own paraphrase of the story

- Use a particular angle.. Choose one of the following examples, or make your own: a task force for Israel, Inc. (a business angle); a tribal council (a Native American angle); a political contest between two factions (a political or governmental angle); a travel agency (a touristy angle). The point is, choose something that fits the situation and will make this incident memorable to you (and the class).
- Rewrite the story according to this angle. Use language that fits the motif. Make the characters sound real-to-life. Change names and places to fit the style.

b) What is the main point of the story. What happens? Why is this significant?

c) What are any parallels you can think of between what happens here in the history and that of your own family, church, nation, or own life history.

d) Draw a map of the land, and using a Bible atlas and/or dictionary, be sure to indicate all the locations you can which are listed in this chapter (some will be unknown).

e) Do a basic study of what you can find out, using only information from the Bible (no dictionaries or commentaries) about the people they were afraid of, listed in vs. 29. (look up these names in a concordance and run them down and write out what info you find about each).

Hebrew Poetry

One word best characterizes Hebrew poetry: _____.

The nice thing about Hebrew poetry, as opposed to most other forms of poetry is that you can more easily capture the essence of the poem in a translation. Not all of the poem can be brought over into English — things like sounds, words, and sentence structure are sometimes lost — most of the idea, and even much of the beauty has been captured.

Kinds of Parallelism:

Synonymous — The idea of the first line is **repeated** in different words in the second.

Psalm 27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation;
 Whom shall I fear?
 The Lord is the defense of my life;
 Whom shall I dread?

Psalm 113:7 He raises the poor from the dust,
 And lifts the needy from the ash heap

Antithetic — The idea of the first line is stated in **opposite terms** in the second line.

Psalm 1:6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
 But the way of the wicked will perish.

Psalm 20:7 Some boast in chariots, and some in horses;
 But we will boast in the name of the Lord our God.

Synthetic — The idea of the first line is **developed** in the second line.

Psalm 89:49 Where are Thy former lovingkindnesses, O Lord,
 Which Thou didst swear to David in Thy faithfulness?

Psalm 110:1 The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand,
 Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet."

Climactic — The idea of the first line is **added** to in several succeeding lines.

Psalm 29:1-2 Ascribe to the Lord, O sons of the mighty,
 Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name;
 Worship the Lord in holy array.

Psalm 65:4 How blessed is the one whom Thou dost choose, and bring near to Thee,
 To dwell in Thy courts.
 We will be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house,
 Thy holy temple.

Emblematic — An idea in one line is **explained** by a figure of speech in the other line.

Psalm 1:4 The wicked are not so,
 But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.

Psalm 42:1 As the deer pants for the water brooks,
 So my soul pants for Thee, O God.

The Classes of If Clauses

More “iffy” than Santa Clauses. There’s more than one way to say “If” in Greek, and a little lesson will help you distinguish the differences.

There are 3 Classes of “IFs” that appear in the Greek New Testament. (Taken from *Basics of Biblical Greek*, William Mounce, pg. 330).

But first, a couple of terms. (Not that these terms are important, but I mention them in case you run across them.) The term *protasis* refers to the “if” part, and *apodosis* refers to the “then” clause.

1) First Class (assumed true for argument sake)

Also called “conditions of fact.” These sentences are saying that if something is true, and let’s assume for the sake of the argument that it is true, then such and such will occur.

About 1/3 of the time the result of the if (the apodosis) is clear enough that its best translated “since,” as in “Since such and such, then such and such.” At other times, the protasis (“if part”) is not so obvious, and then a “since” is not appropriate.

Example: 1 Th 4:14 For **if** we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

2) Second Class (Contrary to fact)

These sentences are saying that if something is true, even though it is not, then such and such would occur. The falseness of the protasis (*if part*) is assumed in the argument.

Example: Luke 7:39 **If** this man were a prophet, he would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, that she is a sinner.

John 5:46 **If** you believed Moses, you would believe me.

The idea is, “If you believed Moses—but you do not”

3) Third Class (Uncertain of fulfillment, but still likely)

Presents a condition that might be true in the future, or is generally true at all times. It does not necessarily suggest that it is likely to occur; sometimes the protasis (*if part*) is hypothetical.

Example: Matt 4:9 And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You **if** You will fall down and worship me.”

Mark 5:28 for she said, “**If** only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.”

The short and skinny of Chiasms

What's a Chiasm, and is that a good thing to have?

Contrary to popular belief, a *chiasm* is not a disease, malady, or intestinal disorder. The term *chiasm* comes from the Greek name for our equivalent of the letter "X" — *Chi*. That is, the letter that looks like an X in Greek is called Chi. (Why they name their letters, I'll never understand, but had they not, then when Jesus is called the "Alpha and the Omega" we would not know what that meant, so maybe its a good thing.)

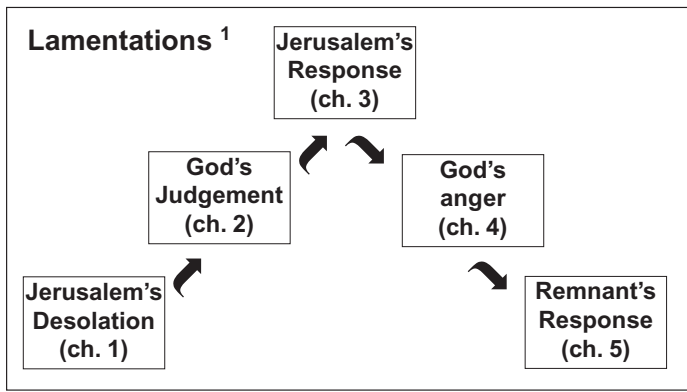
Anyhow, a *chiasm* is a **visual** literary structure that looks like an X. Well, actually, it looks like the left part of an X, something like a "⌢", or another words, a greater than sign, ">". It is an arrangement of information in such a way that the climax, highlight, or even central idea of the passage, chapter or book is in the center of a progression of thoughts arranged so that they lead up to and back down from this central idea. Each parallel point on the upswing matches, in concept or word, the point in the same place on the downswing.

Here's a fictitious example:

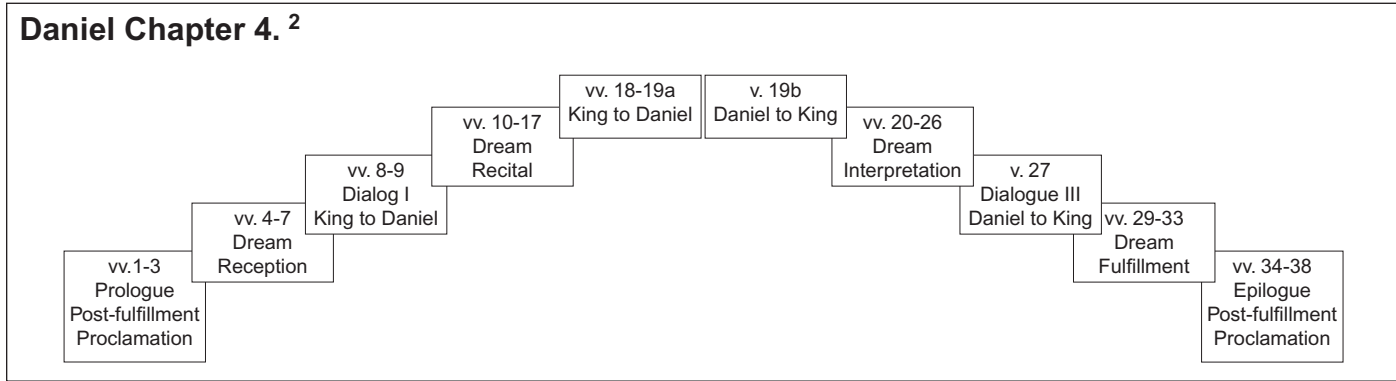
- A John ate yesterday.
- B He ate a big meal
- C it was an entire horse
- B' the meal was large
- A' John ate it on Monday.

Note that the Points A and A' (A Prime) match, as do B and B'. Point C then stands out, and is the focus, or main point of the idea here presented.

Some Biblical Examples:



- Daniel, chs 2-7**
- A. Prophecy concerning Gentile nations (2)
 - B. Supernatural Persecution & Deliverance (3)
 - C. God's Revelation to a Gentile King (4)
 - D. Recognition of God's sovereignty (4:37)
 - C'. God's Revelation to a Gentile King (5)
 - B'. Supernatural Persecution & Deliverance (6)
 - A'. Prophecy concerning Gentile nations (7)





Active Reading Tip #7

Read the Bible *Telescopically*

Sony corporation, in manufacturing their camcorders, for example, allows only 1 in 100 units to be defective. That number doesn't seem too impressive, except when you consider that the average unit contains 2,000 parts. That means that to meet the 1 in 100 completed unit failure ratio, you can only allow 1 in a million or so in the individual parts.

So it is with the Bible. The Bible is not just a collection of thousands of parts, it is rather an integrated message with, ultimately one Author. Each piece of the Bible does its part to present the total package. Yet what happens in most Bible study, is that we break it down and down and down, into its smallest parts, until we have nothing but baskets of components, and not the whole. **Reading Telescopically** requires that we put those parts back together and view it as a whole. Every time you study, and take it apart, you've only completed half the job. The last half is to put it back together.

How to put it together?

Look for the connectives.

Again... Pay attention to *but*, *and*, and *therefore*.

Pay attention to the context.

Ask, "What do the neighbors have to say about this verse?" In this case, the neighbors are the surrounding verses, paragraphs, and book.

Evaluate the passage in light of the book as a whole.

For example, as you read the book of Mark, verse by verse, you'll enjoy the narrative, and direct approach that Mark utilizes, but just reading verse by verse, you'll miss the point, the author's message: Jesus. But the other 3 gospels are also about Jesus... what makes this one unique?

Style: short, terse, direct.

Purpose: to present the person of Christ (Mk. 1:1 - 8:26), and the purpose of Christ (Mk. 8:31 - 16:20). With 8:27-30 as the hinge, in which he answers the question, "Whom do people say that I am?"

Audience: Primarily Roman gentile.

Look at the historical context.

When you read the Christmas story, you see that during the days of "Caesar Augustus... there went out a decree that all the world should be taxed" (Luke 2:1).

Did you know that Caesar Augustus was the first emperor of Rome? Previous to this, Julius Caesar, the first real dictator of Rome, after years as a republic (much like the

(Continued on next page)



Active Reading Tip #7, Continued

U.S.), was murdered in 44 B.C.. After his death, a power struggle ensued, and a man named Octavius emerged as the victor—a mere 30 years before the birth of Christ, and he gave himself the title, Caesar Augustus.

Also of interest, is the fact that in 6 B.C., (two years before Christ's birth), Rome annexed Judea, the birth place of Christ.

So, when Luke opens chapter 2 with this reference to Caesar Augustus, he's reminding the history buff of the extraordinary political changes underway.

Whenever you come to a book of the Bible ask:

Where does this book fit historically? When was it written? When did the events take place? What was happening elsewhere in the world at that time? Also, Where does this book fit in the flow of the Bible—before or after Christ? How much of the Bible was completed when this was written (i.e., how much did the writer and the people in the book know about God?)?

Look for themes, ideas, and concepts — then compare with the rest of Scripture to see what it has to say.

This is in a way, the most important step. “No Scripture is on any private interpretation,” (1 Pet. 2:20), meaning that it is not an island. It must be interpreted in light of other Scripture.

For example, Read Acts 8:9-18. From this passage, when does, and what does it take for one to receive, the Holy Spirit? How does this compare with the rest of Scripture?

Mark 16:16 “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

An invaluable tool to use for this kind of study is the *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*. If its available as an add-on for your Bible program, then get it, if not, get the paper version! It allows you to pull up all other topical references based upon the topics of any particular verse. So, for example, Mk. 16:16 has three topics, 1) who believes, 2) is baptized will be saved, 3) he who does not believe will be condemned. Under each of these, is a list of 10-20 verses with similar topics.

