

Eternity In Motion Series

The Chiasms of The Apostle Paul

Broken Into Color Coded Parallelisms and Chiasms

The Book of Philippians

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The Chiasms of Paul Introduction

In this book, you will find many very clear parallelisms and chiasms (or chiasmus). The way these chiasms have been cut out are by no means a statement of finality as to doctrine and intent of the author, but, rather, an attempt to unravel what may have been the author's desired effect. Parallelisms and chiasms were a seriously needed element of internal organization in ancient writings, which did not make use of paragraphs, punctuation, capitalization and other such synthetic devices to communicate the conclusion of one idea and the commencement of the next.

Chiasmus can be defined most simply as an inverted type of parallelism. This is where two thoughts might be mentioned and then they are repeated in reverse order.

For MY thoughts are not YOUR thoughts, Neither are YOUR ways MY ways, saith the Lord. (Isaiah 55:8)

a b
X
b a

The name chiasmus, derived from chi (X), the 22nd letter in the Greek alphabet. A couple examples from English are: "Old King Cole was a merry old soul, and a merry old soul was he", and "He who fails to prepare, prepares to fail."

Whereas in languages such as Greek, Latin, and English, chiasms are most often composed of two elements, *in Hebrew there appears to be no limit to the number of terms or ideas that may be employed.* An illustration of this with five elements is found in Psalm 3:7-8;

- a. Save me
- b. O my God,
- c. For thou has smitten
- d. All my enemies
- e. On the cheek-bone
- e' The teeth
- d' Of the wicked
- c' Thou has broken.
- b' To Yahweh
- a' The salvation.

A second example comes from Isaiah 60:1-3:

- a. Arise,
- b. Shine,
- c. For thy light is come,
- d. And the glory
- e. Of Yahweh
- f. Upon thee is risen
- g. For behold, dimness shall cover the earth
- g' And gross darkness the peoples.
- f' But upon thee will arise
- e' Yahweh
- d' And his glory shall upon thee be seen
- c' And nations shall come to thy light
- b' And kings to the brightness
- a' Of thy rising.

This can show why Chiasmus was attractive to the ancient Hebrew. First, chiasms are easy to memorize and would be useful since the Hebrew

tradition was mainly oral. Second, chiasmus was in vogue. Just as 16th century English poets were fond of the sonnet, chiasmus seems to have been preferred by many of the ancient Hebrew writers. Third, the form can be very pleasing aesthetically.

Although the form was recognized and published as early as 1820 in London, it was not until 1854 in a study by John Forbes (*The Symmetrical Structures of Scripture*) that a full appreciation or understanding of chiasmus was developed. Nils Lund in 1942 published some of the rules that chiasmic forms followed. Three of these are particularly interesting for this study:

1. The center of the passage is always the turning point
2. Identical ideas will often be distributed so as to occur at the beginning, middle, and end of a chiasm but nowhere else.
3. There is often a mixture of direct parallel and inverted parallel lines in the same unit.

Others who have studied chiasmus in scripture insist there are no rules. In looking at these letters, it seems to me that Paul has left indicators, or clues, along the way to help us to most clearly divide the text according to his intent. Some of these clues are obvious, some are more obscure. The clues can be both identical words and or related ideas. Some words are in italics to help the reader see the relationship within the structure.

Ideally, it would be perfect to rightly divide these structures exactly the way the Apostle Paul wanted them to be divided. With the absence of any corroborating historical record as to Paul's intent, these divisions can be used at least for dividing the text by themes for study, and at most, to see even more deeply the intent of the Holy Spirit, and our blessed brother, Paul.

Remember as you study these structures and their color coded counterparts, the relationship can be direct (parallelism), or inverted (chiasmus). Both are valid, and both communicate meaning and understanding.

Philippians 1:1 ASV

Paul and Timothy, servants of *Christ Jesus*,
to all the saints in *Christ Jesus* that are at *Philippi*,
with the bishops
and deacons:
Grace to you and peace
from God our Father and *the Lord Jesus Christ*.

I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, always in every
supplication of mine on behalf of you all making my supplication with joy,
for your fellowship in *furtherance of the gospel*
from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing,
that he who began a good work in you will perfect it *until the day of*
Jesus Christ:

even as it is right for me *to be thus minded on behalf of you all*,
because *I have you in my heart inasmuch as*,
both in my bonds and in the defence
and confirmation of the gospel,
ye all are partakers with me of grace.

For God is my witness, *how I long after you all in the tender*
mercies of Christ Jesus.

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in
knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may approve the things that
are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offence *unto the day of*
Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through
Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto
me have fallen out rather unto *the progress of the gospel*;

so that my bonds *became manifest* in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest;

and that most of the brethren in the Lord, *being confident through my bonds,*

are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear.

Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife;

and some also of good will: the one do it of love,

knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel;

but the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely,

thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds.

What then? only that in every way, *whether in pretence or in truth,* Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

For I know that this shall turn out to my salvation,

through your supplication and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

according to my earnest expectation and hope,

that in nothing shall I be put to shame, but that with all boldness, as

always so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

But if to live in the flesh, -- if this shall bring fruit from my work,

then what I shall choose I know not But I am in a strait betwixt the two,

having the desire to depart and be with Christ;

for it

is very far better:

yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake.

And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide,

yea, and abide with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith; that

your glorying may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my presence with you again.

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ:

that, whether I come and see you or be absent,

I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel;

and in nothing affrighted by the adversaries: which is for them an evident token of perdition,

but of your salvation, and that from God;

because to you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also *to suffer in his behalf:*

having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

ASV Philippians 2:1

If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ,

if any consolation of love,

if any fellowship of the Spirit,

if any tender mercies

and compassions,

make full my joy,

that ye be of the same mind,

having the same love,

being of one accord,

of one mind;

doing nothing through faction or through vainglory,

but in lowliness of mind

each counting other better than himself;

not looking each of you to his own things,

but each of you also to the things of others.

Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped,

but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.

Wherefore also God highly exalted him,

and gave unto him the name which is above every name;

that in the name of Jesus

every knee should bow,

of things in heaven

and things on earth

and things under the earth,

and that every tongue should confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father.

So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only,
but now much more in my absence,
work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;
for it is God who worketh in you
both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.
Do all things without murmurings and questionings:
that ye may become blameless and harmless,
children of God without blemish
in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation,
among whom ye are seen as lights in the world,
holding forth the word of life;
that I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ,
that I did not run in vain neither labor in vain.
Yea, and if I am offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith,
I joy, and rejoice with you all: and in the same manner do ye also joy,
and rejoice with me.

But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you,
that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.
For I have no man likeminded,
who will care truly for your state.
For they all seek their own,
not the things of Jesus Christ.
But ye know the proof of him, that, as a child serveth a father,
so he served with me in furtherance of the gospel.
Him therefore I hope to send forthwith, so soon as I shall see how it will go
with me:
but I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall come shortly.

But I counted it *necessary to send to you Epaphroditus,*
my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier,
and your messenger and *minister to my need;*
since he longed after you all, *and was sore troubled, because ye had*
heard that he was sick: for indeed he was sick nigh unto death:
but God had mercy on him; and not on him only,
but on me also, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow.
I have sent him therefore the more diligently, that,
when ye see him again, *ye may rejoice,*
and that *I may be the less sorrowful.*
Receive him therefore in the Lord with all joy; and hold such in honor:
because for *the work of Christ he came nigh unto death, hazarding his life*
to supply that which was lacking in *your service toward me.*

ASV Philippians 3:1

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you,
to me indeed is not irksome, but for you *it is safe.*
Beware of *the dogs,* beware of the evil workers,
beware of *the concision:* for we are the circumcision,
who worship by the Spirit of God,
and glory in *Christ Jesus,*
and have *no confidence the flesh:*
though I myself might have confidence even in the flesh:
if any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh,
I yet more: *circumcised the eighth day,*
of the stock of *Israel,* of the tribe of Benjamin,
a Hebrew of Hebrews;
as touching the law, *a Pharisee;*
as touching zeal, *persecuting the church;*
as touching the righteousness which is in the law, *found blameless.*

Howbeit *what things were gain to me these have I counted loss for Christ.*
Yea verily, *and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the*
knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all
things, and do count them but refuse,
that I may gain Christ, and be found in him,
not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law,
but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is
from God by faith:
that I may know him,
and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his
sufferings,
becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means
I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.
Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect
but I press on,
if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on
by Christ Jesus.

Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do,
forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the
things which are before,

I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in
Christ Jesus.

Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded: and if in
anything ye are otherwise minded, this also shall God reveal unto you:
only, whereunto we have attained, by that same rule let us walk.

Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them that so walk even as
ye have us for an ensample.

For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping,
that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

whose end is perdition,

whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame,
who mind earthly things.

For our citizenship is in heaven;

whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed
to the body of his glory,

according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto
himself.

ASV Philippians 4:1

Wherefore, my brethren beloved and longed for, *my joy and crown,*
so *stand fast in the Lord, my beloved.*

I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, *to be of the same mind in the Lord.*

Yea, I beseech thee also, true yokefellow, help *these women,*
for *they labored with me in the gospel,*

with Clement also,

and the rest of my fellow-workers,
whose names are in the book of life.

Rejoice in the Lord always:

again I will say, Rejoice.

Let your forbearance be known unto all men.

The Lord is at hand. In nothing be anxious;

but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests
be made known unto God.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,
shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brethren,

whatsoever things are true,

whatsoever things are honorable,

whatsoever things are just,

whatsoever things are pure,

whatsoever things are lovely,

whatsoever things are of good report;

if there be any virtue,

and if there be any praise, think on these things.

The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me,
these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

But I rejoice in the Lord greatly,
that now at length ye have revived your thought for me;
wherein ye did indeed take thought,
but ye lacked opportunity.
Not that I speak in respect of want:
for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content.
I know how to be abased,
and I know also how to abound:
in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be
filled and to be hungry,
both to abound and to be in want.
I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me.
Howbeit ye did well that ye had fellowship with my affliction.
And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning
of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had fellowship
with me in the matter of giving and receiving but ye only;
for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need.

Not that I seek for the gift;
but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account.
But I have all things, and abound:
I am filled,
having received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you,
an odor of a sweet smell,
a sacrifice
acceptable,
well-pleasing to God.
And my God shall supply every need of yours
according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.
Now unto our God and Father be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.
Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren that are with me salute
you. All the saints salute you, especially they that are of Caesar's household.
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.