

In 1949 Bro LG Sargent wrote an article in the Christadelphian Magazine about poetic parallelism in Matthew 7:6 -

a **Give not / the holy thing / to the dogs**
b Neither cast / your pearls / before swine,
b' Lest they trample them under their feet,
a' **And having turned they rend you.**

Bro Sargent pointed out that “**the parallelism appears to show a crossing over of the sense (technically a chiasmus), the fourth line being the counterpart of the first, and the third of the second.** That is, it is the dogs who rend, and the swine who trample”.

What The Apocalypse Is All About

Accepting the basic interpretation of the Apocalypse as expounded in Eureka, the Book of Revelation, is divisible into ten sections, so designed as to suggest a parallelism of ideas similar to that found in ***introverted Hebrew poetry***. Hebrew poetry represents a parallelism of ideas rather than of rhyme or rhythm. One idea builds upon another until the completed thought, or picture, is revealed. ***In introverted Hebrew poetry, which is frequently found in Scripture, the first line is answered by the last, the next by the second to last, and so on.***

The Apocalypse Epitomised, HP Mansfield

The example HP gives is from Psalm 135:15-18.

Bullinger summarises the pattern as follows:

A. v15a. The idols.

B. v15b. Their fabrication.

C. v16a. Mouth without speech. (Sing.) -

D. v16b. Eyes without sight. (Pl.)

D'. v17a-. Ears without hearing. (Pl.) -

C'. v17b. Mouth without breath. (Sing.)

B'.v18a. Their fabricators.

A'. v18b. The idolaters.

Matthew 8:2-3

A. And, behold, there came **a leper** and worshipped him,

B. saying, Lord, **if thou wilt**, thou canst make me **clean**.

C. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him,

B'. saying, **I will; be thou clean**. [*And immediately was cleansed*]

A'. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed

Psalm 67

A. 1. God be merciful unto us, **and bless us;**
and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah.

B. 2. That thy way may be known upon **earth**,
thy saving health among all nations.

C. 3. **Let the people praise thee, O God;**
let all the people praise thee.

D. 4. O let the **nations** be glad and sing for joy:

E. for thou shalt judge the people righteously,

D'. and govern the **nations** upon earth. Selah.

C'. 5. **Let the people praise thee, O God;**
let all the people praise thee.

B'. 6. Then shall the **earth** yield her increase;

A'. and God, even our own **God, shall bless us.**

7. God shall bless us;

and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

Psalm 8

A **O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

(Ps 8:1a)

B **You have** set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babies and infants, **you have** established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger (Ps 8:1b-2)

C When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? (Ps 8:3-4)

B' Yet **you have** made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour. **You have** given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas (Ps 8:5-8)

A' **O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!** (Ps 8:9)

Isaiah 28

A. 14 Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. 15 Because ye have said,

- i. We have made a covenant with death,
- ii. and with hell are we at agreement;
- iii. when the overflowing scourge shall pass through,
- iv. it shall not come unto us:

B. for we have made lies our refuge,
and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

C. 16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD,
[building materials] Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation:

D. [inscription] he that believeth shall not make haste.

C'. [building tools] 17 Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet:

B'. and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies,
and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

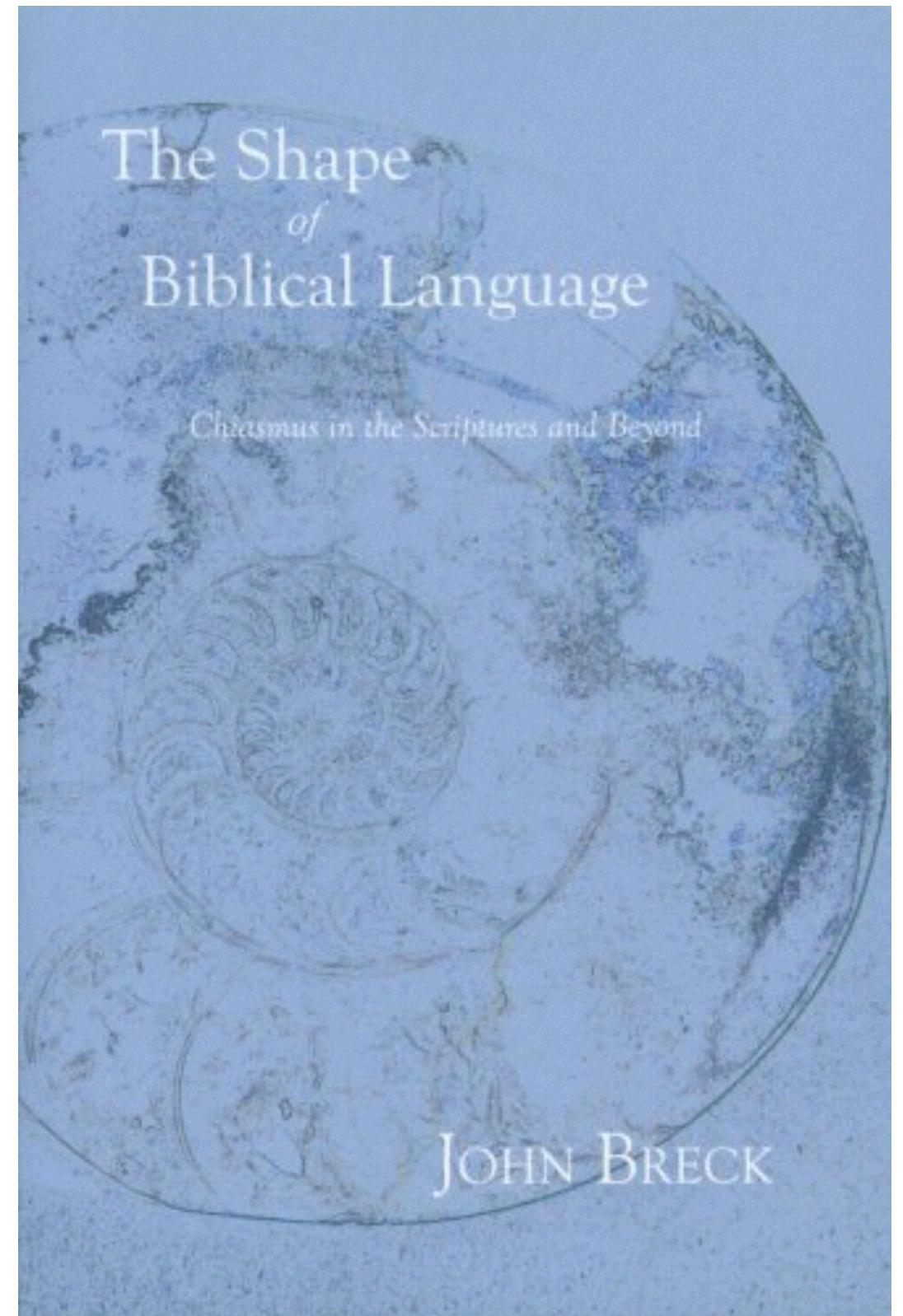
A'. i. 18 And your covenant with death shall be dis-annulled,
ii. and your agreement with hell shall not stand;
iii. when the overflowing scourge shall pass through,
iv. then ye shall be trodden down by it.

Clues to Chiasmus

- The section of scripture is defined by repetition of key words/phrases i.e. bracketed or book-ended.
- The pattern is characterised by repetition of keywords, and phrases or by opposites (chiasmus based only on concept rather than exact repetitions are more difficult to agree on).
- the greater the number and specificity of of correspondences the more convincing
- if key phrases are inverted ("heaven and earth" v "earth and heaven", "our father Abraham", "Abraham our father") this is strong evidence.
- The chiasm has a balanced symmetrical shape.
- The centre - often a regular parallelism - is highly significant.
- the whole unit makes sense.
- parallel pairs in a chiasm to make sense when read together.
- the unit respects other textual features.
- Broken patterns may nonetheless be significant.
- The pattern becomes clearer in the original language.

- it can't be right - it can't be common - because ...
 - its different
 - I've been studying the Bible for 40 years and I didn't know about it
 - I can't find them myself
 - Its too academic
 - Its imposed on scripture
 - I will have to revise my talks
- Bullinger has done it all in the Companion Bible!
- The Holy Spirit has shown me!

“A quiet revolution is presently underway in the field of biblical studies. For the past several decades, small numbers of scholars have been exploring the shape or literary structure of scriptural passages in order to determine more precisely and more fully the author’s intended meaning. Their investigations have led to exciting and promising discovery about the way in which major sections of the bible were composed” [2008].



Notes of Caution

- There may be more than one pattern overlapping.
- Imbalance in the size/length of parallel units may suggest that we have not quite got the structure right.
- Using summary statements i.e. headings to define units within a chiasm, can lead to selective reading.
- Using common words to form chiasms is unconvincing.
- It is possible to force patterns by ignoring some repetitions and highlighting others.
- If the centre is not the “centre” think again.
- All the words are important
- Keep the scripture the focus of attention not the pattern.
- Revise as necessary.
- Do not rearrange the text unless it is to follow the original.
- Respect other grammatical features.

Ephesians 2

A (1-2a) And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once **walked**,

B (2b) following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at **work** in the sons of disobedience—

C (3) among whom **we all** once lived in the passions of **our flesh**, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were **by nature** children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

D (4) But God, being **rich** in mercy, because of the great love with which he **loved us**,

E (5a) even when we were dead in our trespasses, **made us alive together with** Christ

F. (5b) —**by grace you have been saved**—

E' (6) and **raised us up with** him and **seated us with** him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

D' (7) so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable **riches** of his grace in **kindness** toward **us** in Christ Jesus.

C' (8) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not **your own doing**; it is the gift of God,

B' (9-10a) not a result of **works**, so that no one may boast. For we are his **workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus for good **works**,

A' (10b) which God prepared beforehand, that we should **walk** in them.

A (11a) Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the **flesh**,
B (11b) who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the **flesh made by hands**;
C (12a) That at that time ye were without **Christ**,
D (12b) being **aliens from the commonwealth** of Israel,
E (12c) and **strangers** from the covenants of promise,
F (12d) having no hope, and **without God** in the world:
G (13) But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were **far off** are **made nigh** by the blood of Christ.
H (14) For he is our **peace**, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;
I. (15a) Having abolished in his flesh the **enmity**, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances;
J (15b) for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;
I' (16) And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the **enmity** thereby:
H' (17a) And came and preached **peace**
G'.(17b) to you which were **afar off**, and to them that were **nigh**.
F' (18) For through him we both have **access by one Spirit unto the Father**.
E' (19a) Now therefore ye are no more **strangers and foreigners**,
D' (19b) but **fellowcitizens with the saints**, and of the household of God;
C' (20) And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, **Jesus Christ** himself being the chief corner stone;
B' (21) In whom all the **building fitly framed** together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:
A' (22) In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the **Spirit**.

Exodus 3

F (13a) And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, **The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you;** and they shall say to me,

G (13b) What is his **name?**

H (13c) **what shall I say** unto them?

I (14a) And God said unto Moses,

J (14b) **(I will be *who* I will be)**

I' (14c) and he said,

H' (14d) **Thus shalt thou say** unto the children of Israel,

G' (14c) **I AM** (I will be) hath sent me unto you.

F' (15) And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **The LORD God of your fathers,** the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, **hath sent me unto you:** this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

A. (3:10) For as many as are of the works of **the law are under the curse**: for it is written, **cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law**

B. (3:10) **to do them.**

C. (3:11) But that no man is justified by **the law** in the sight of God, it is evident:

D. (3:11) for, The just shall live by faith.

C'.(3:12) And **the law** is not of faith:

B'.(3:12) but, The man that **doeth them** shall live in them.

A'. (3:13) Christ hath redeemed us from **The curse of the law**, being made **a curse** for us: **for it is written, cursed** is every one that hangeth on a tree:

A.(3:14) That the blessing of **Abraham** might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the **promise** of the Spirit through faith.

B.(3:15) Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's **covenant**, yet if it be confirmed, no man **disannulleth**, or addeth thereto.

C.(3:16) Now **to Abraham and his seed** were the promises made.

D. He saith not, 'And to seeds', as of many; but as of one, C'. "And to thy seed", which is Christ.

B'.(3:17) And this I say, that the **covenant**, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot **disannul**,

A'. that it should make the **promise** of none effect. (18) For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more **of promise**: but God gave it to **Abraham by promise**.

Romans 4

A (1) What shall we say then that **Abraham our father**, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if **Abraham** were justified by works ...

B (3) ... Abraham believed God, and it was **counted** unto him for **righteousness**.

C (4) Now to him that worketh is the reward not **reckoned** of grace, but of debt.

D (5) ... **his faith is counted for righteousness**.

E (6) Even as David also describeth **the blessedness of the man**, unto whom God **imputeth** righteousness without works,

F (7) Saying, **Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.**

E1 (8) **Blessed is the man** to whom the Lord will not **impute** sin.

D1 (9) Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say **that faith was reckoned** to Abraham **for righteousness**.

C1 (10) How was it then **reckoned**? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

B1 (11) And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the **righteousness** of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised ... that **righteousness** might be **imputed** unto them also:

A1 (12) ... but who also walk in the steps of that faith of **our father Abraham**, which he had being yet uncircumcised. (13) For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to **Abraham** ...

Romans 4

A (11a) that he might be the father of all them that **believe** ...

B (11b) **that righteousness might be imputed** unto them also:

C (12-16a) And the father of circumcision ... who also walk in the steps of that **faith** of our father Abraham, ...

D (16b) to the end the promise might be sure to all the **seed** ...

E (17a) (As it is written, I have made thee a **father of many nations**.)

F (17b) before him whom he **believed**,

G (17c) I even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

F' (18a) Who against hope **believed** in hope,

E' (18b) that he might become the **father of many nations**,

D' (18c) according to that which was spoken, So shall thy **seed** be.

C' (19-21) And being not weak in **faith** ...

B' (22-24a) And therefore **it was imputed to him for righteousness.**

A' (24b-25) if we **believe** on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead ...