

LANGUAGE SOPHISTICATION  
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

CHAPTER 7 OF THE BOOK  
*THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS:  
WHY THEY WROTE HOW THEY WROTE*

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## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
COGNITION AND COMMUNICATION	3
TIME AND TENSE	6
USE OF RECURSION AND CHIASTIC STRUCTURES	10
SAMPLES OF CHIASTIC SOPHISTICATION	15
SUMMARY	18

## INTRODUCTION

Before examining the concept of language sophistication in the NT, it is useful to note that the term sophistication here will connote extraordinary complexity. This “complexity” may be contrasted to “confusing.” For a fair understanding it is useful to note the perception of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi who ascribes complexity to a high level of organization. He makes the distinction as he explains that, “usually when we call something complicated we are reacting to its being hard to figure out [or] unpredictable”. These, he says, “are traits of something that is differentiated but not well integrated—hence that lacks complexity. A complex system is not confusing, because its parts, no matter how diverse, are organically related to one another.”<sup>1</sup>

Language sophistication indicates the development of language that incorporates differentiation or diversity that is constrained by integration that facilitates organization or unity. Csikszentmihalyi is merely reflecting the words of the Ephesians Epistle writer:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; <sup>12</sup> For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: <sup>14</sup> That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; <sup>15</sup> But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: <sup>16</sup> From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love (Eph. 4:11-16).

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<sup>1</sup> Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *The Evolving Self: A Psychology for the Third Millennium* (New York, NY: HarperPerennial, 1994), 157.

The pericope itself is part of a larger body of text in the NT, including 1 Cor. 12, that allude to the differentiation of spiritual gifts that are to be integrated for the effective functioning of the church.

This prelude provides the backdrop for discussing language sophistication. Of necessity, any language that was a part of the continuum of salvation history (*Heilsgeschichte*<sup>2</sup>) should: 1) possess the sophistication necessary to re-define OT terminology – Hebrew, 2) have the hegemony to launch the NT church, 3) enjoy the universality that allowed for translation into contemporary languages (1<sup>st</sup> century – Latin, Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopic), and 4) retain the portability that enables interpretation in post-modern languages.

Douglas Moo suggests that the letters attributed to Paul must have bewildered their 1<sup>st</sup> century recipients due to their theological sophistication.<sup>3</sup> A few elements of the Koine will be highlighted here to demonstrate the idea of sophistication and how the writers themselves would have benefitted from the pliancy and the fixity, the differentiation and the integration, and the diversity and unity of the language. It is also fair to note that the language itself would have benefitted from the writers who coined phrases that would have become part of the language through regular usage.

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<sup>2</sup> Seeking to understand the personal redemptive activity of God within human history to effect his eternal saving intentions; for detail see Donald Carson, Mark Seifrid, and Peter O'Brien, eds., "Paul and Salvation History," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism; Volume 2 – The Paradoxes of Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 297.

<sup>3</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans: New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1996), 40.

## COGNITION AND COMMUNICATION

The fact that NT writings reflect a high level of language sophistication is an indication that the authors possessed well-developed cognitive and communication skills. Gentner lists a number of abilities that make human cognitive abilities remarkable. Two of these important abilities contributing to “smartness” are: the ability to reason outside of the current context, and the ability to learn and use external symbols to represent numerical, spatial, or conceptual information. The psychologist then asserts that humans have an edge because they possess language which serves to invite learning relational concepts and provide cognitive stability once they are learned.<sup>4</sup>

Vygotsky’s theory gives language a major role in cognition. With the advent of language children augment their prelinguistic cognitive abilities, associative learning, and sensorimotor intelligence. They develop new capacities for focused attention, deliberate memory, and symbolic thought. On this view, acquiring a language gives the children control over their mental processes including the ability to direct attention, to choose a course of thought, and to formulate mental plans.<sup>5</sup>

Gentner accepts the Sapir-Whorf view that the grammatical structure of a language shapes its speakers’ perception of the world. He synthesizes this observation with the Vygotskian view that possessing an internal language permits speakers to guide their own mental processes. He then proposes a third view which theorizes that learning specific relational terms provides

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<sup>4</sup> Dedre Gentner and Susan Goldin-Meadow, *Language in Mind*, 195.

<sup>5</sup> L. Vygotsky, *Thought and Language* 1934 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1962).

representational resources that augment cognitive powers. Language is thus a set of tools to construct and manipulate representations.<sup>6</sup>

When human beings invented written symbols and notations to help them count and calculate, all of a sudden they began to count and calculate in some new and more complex ways. It is well known that some notation systems enable certain kinds of calculations that others do not. For example, it is basically impossible to imagine doing algebra or calculus (not to mention long division) with Roman numerals; something like Arabic numerals, based on the place value system is required for modern mathematics. Language transforms cognitive activity.<sup>7</sup>

Learning language is crucial to the development of cognition. Learned relational symbols provide representational tools with which to structure knowledge. These learned relational tools amplify the human capacity for structural alignment and mapping. If a pattern discovered by analogy is named, it becomes easier to see as part of yet another analogy. This process of extracting relations via analogy and then preserving them via language acts to bootstrap learning and to create the structured symbolic representations essential for higher-order cognition.<sup>8</sup>

Higher-order cognition is indispensable for unpacking this NT writer's recollection of Jesus' utterance in Matt 16:28: ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰσὶν τινες τῶν ὧδε ἐστῶτων οἵτινες οὐ μὴ γεύσονται θανάτου ἕως ἄν ἴδωσιν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ αὐτοῦ (Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom). This often misunderstood text uses "His kingdom" relationally. This is clear from the following NT extractions: in Lk 17:21b Jesus is reported as saying, "behold, the kingdom of God is within you;" in Rom 14:17 the NT epistle writer

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<sup>6</sup> Dedre Gentner and Susan Goldin-Meadow, *Language in Mind*, 228.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 228.

observes that the kingdom of God is ... righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and in Rev 1:9a the kingdom of Christ became a reality for the writer of the apocalypse in the expression, “I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.” This pattern of analogy observed here maps the “kingdom of God” to a state.

Notwithstanding, this relational tool “kingdom of God” is used throughout the NT liberally and is mapped to other patterns of thought that can also be extracted from the NT that connote a place or an event. The tool is three-tiered (state, place, and event) and the relations may overlap. The proper alignment and mapping therefore requires discourse analysis to determine the relation/s. This type of discrete structuring of knowledge facilitates higher-order cognition for objective exegetical analysis. The exegesis of Matt 16:28 is therefore less subjective if the appropriate extractions are made and relational structuring is applied.



## TIME AND TENSE

*Time is the most undefinable yet paradoxical of things; the past is gone, the future is not come, and the present becomes the past even while we attempt to define it, and, like the flash of lightning, at once exists and expires.* ~Charles Caleb Colton

There are two elements associated with the Greek verb tense – *time* of action and *kind* of action. When time is a factor, the meaning will be past, present, or future. When kind of action is meant, it is expressing progressive, undefined, or perfected action. The New Testament verb is made more complicated due to the significant Hebrew influence contained within it. The Hebrew verb is mostly dominated by aspect (complete or incomplete action), and as such, some grammarians have gotten confused by the nature of the Greek verb when looking at the NT, as the author uses OT quotations, allusions, or simply his normal Jewish mind as he wrote within his Hellenistic world. It must be borne in mind that the NT is authored, for the most part, by the Jew using Koine Greek.<sup>9</sup>

One of the linguistically conditioned features of western civilization is a deeply ingrained objectified view of time. It is favorable to historicity and to everything connected with the keeping of records. On the other hand, the Hopi Indians of South America view time in a manner that counteracts the objectified view. Their view is subtle, complex, and ever-developing, supplying no ready-made answer to the question of when “one” event ends and “another” begins.

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<sup>9</sup> “The Verb,” *GreekII Grammar Lesson 13* [tutorial on-line]; available from [http://biblegreekvpod.com/GreekII/GreekII\\_Grammar\\_lesson\\_13.pdf](http://biblegreekvpod.com/GreekII/GreekII_Grammar_lesson_13.pdf); accessed 17 August 2011.

There is less incentive for the Hopi to study the past when it is implicit that everything that ever happened still is, but is in a different form from what memory or record reports.<sup>10</sup>

One very obvious objectification of time in Western society is the emphasis on “saving time” which leads to a very high valuation of “speed.”

In some translations of Matt. 18: 18, it sounds like Jesus was giving power to his disciples so that whatever they bound on earth would be bound in heaven. Their decrees would therefore have the seal of heaven. In reality, the English translations oversimplify the thoughts and hence utterance of the author in Koine Greek. The verb used for the actions in heaven are *future perfect passives* which could be translated “will have already been bound in heaven” and “will have already been loosed in heaven.” This means that the heavenly decree supporting the earthly one is based on an already decided verdict. Christians who accept the righteousness of God or what is already true in God’s sight, may be assured that they will act on the authority of God’s court when they decide cases.<sup>11</sup>

The emphasis here is not on which action comes first in time, whether it be the action of the disciples or heaven but on the kinds of action relative to each other. In *Principles of the History of Language* Hermann Paul clarifies that: “The category of tense depends on the temporal relation in which the event stands to a definite point in time.”<sup>12</sup> Farrar further declared that, “The translators of the English version have failed more frequently from their partial knowledge of the force of tenses in Greek than from any other cause.”<sup>13</sup> Originally in Indo-

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<sup>10</sup> Benjamin Lee Whorf, “The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language,” 32.

<sup>11</sup> William D. Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 121.

<sup>12</sup> Hermann Paul, *Principles of the History of Language*, trans. H.A. Strong (New York, NY: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1891), 300.

<sup>13</sup> Frederick W. Farrar, *Greek Syntax* 1876, 123.

Germanic speech the tense-stems of the verb were not intended to indicate kinds of time such as present, past or future. Essentially, the tense in Greek expresses the kind of action, not time, which the speaker has in view and the state of the subject, or, as the Germans say, the *Aspekt*. In short, the tense-stems indicate the point of view from which the action or state is regarded. The word *Aktionsart* (kind of action) expresses this essential idea.<sup>14</sup>

The chief kinds of action are continuous – linear – and instantaneous – punctiliar. The aorist stem expresses punctiliar, and the present stem expresses linear action. Sometimes the aorist will not even express momentary or punctiliar action but will be non-committal; it regards the action as a whole without respect to its duration; time is irrelevant to it. A *prefixed augment* (έ) was what the Greek used to indicate time as distinct from the *Aktionsart*. The augment was added to both present (which becomes imperfect) and aorist action-stems to show that the time had passed, from the speaker's standpoint. If there is no augment to the stem the speaker is usually referring to contemporary action or is not concerned with time at all. Besides the augment, the future tense too indicates a temporal relationship with the speaker and considerations of *Aktionsart* do not intrude.<sup>15</sup>

According to Brugman, the matter of the *Aktionsart* applies to all verbs.<sup>16</sup> It has long been clear that the “tense” has been overworked and made to mean much that it did not mean. The verb itself is the beginning of all. All verbs may be described as “punctiliar” (*punktuell*) and non-punctiliar (*nicht-punktuell*). However, the non-punctiliar divides into the indefinite linear (durative) and the definite linear (complete or perfect). The three essential kinds of action are

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<sup>14</sup> Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 59.

<sup>15</sup> Turner, 59.

<sup>16</sup> K. Brugman, *Griechische Grammatik*, 469.

thus momentary or punctiliar represented by a (.), linear or durative represented by a continuous line —, and the continuance of perfected or completed action represented by •—. The distinction between punctiliar and perfected action is not clearly drawn in the verb-root itself.<sup>17</sup>

Brugman credits this “perfected” idea to the perfect stem. “Iterative” action belongs to certain stems (reduplicated, like γιγνόμεαι), but it is not a fundamental kind of action.<sup>18</sup> These ideas (punctiliar, durative, perfected state) lie behind the three tenses (aorist, present, perfect) that run through all moods. The forms of these tenses are meant to accentuate these ideas. The action in each case is timeless. It is confusing to apply the expression “relations of time” to this fundamental aspect of tense, as was done by traditional grammarians.<sup>19</sup> These three tenses were first developed irrespective of time.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Robertson, 823.

<sup>18</sup> K. Brugman, *Griehische Grammatik*, 472.

<sup>19</sup> A. N. Jannaris, *A Historical Greek Grammar*, 433; Gildersleeve and Miller, *Syntax Of Classical Greek*, 79.

<sup>20</sup> Robertson, 824.

## USE OF RECURSION AND CHIASTIC STRUCTURES

The copious uses of recursion in the letters attributed to Paul of Tarsus add depth and give clarity to utterances. These attest to the heuristic skills and linguistic competence of the writer/writers. The study of language performance incorporates formal structures described as recursive nested constructions. The most obvious formal property of utterances is their bracketing into constituents with the conventional technical name, “nested constructions.”<sup>21</sup> The recursiveness of language is achieved through embedding of one structure into another of the same kind. Such recursiveness occurs in many parts of the sentence: a clause within a clause, a noun phrase within a noun phrase, a verb phrase within a verb phrase. This may also be referred to as nesting and a phrase may be nested into a phrase which may be nested into another phrase in a series of continuous embedding or nesting. Such strings of nesting are often open to ambiguity, but give languages versatility if properly exercised.<sup>22</sup>

Linguist Noam Chomsky theorizes that unlimited extension of a language is possible using the recursive device of embedding phrases within sentences. The essence of human language is, according to Chomsky, the ability of finite brains to produce what he considers to be infinite grammars. By this he means not only that there is no upper limit on what we can say, but that there is no upper limit on the number of sentences our language has, there's no upper limit on the size of any particular sentence. Chomsky has claimed that the fundamental tool that

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<sup>21</sup> Naom Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 12.

<sup>22</sup> Martha Kolln and Robert Funk, *Understanding English Grammar*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York, NY: Pearson Education, Inc., 2006), 145.

underlies all of this creativity of human language is recursion: the ability for one phrase to reoccur inside another phrase of the same type. For example, the sentence “John's brother's house” has a noun, “house”, which occurs in a noun phrase, “brother's house”, and that noun phrase occurs in another noun phrase, “John's brother's house”.

Recent works in neurolinguistics bear evidence that all human beings are endowed with neurobiological structures to manage recursion in language. A crucial element of syntax is center-embedded recursion which is specific only to humans.<sup>23</sup> Recursion in linguistics enables “discrete infinity” by embedding phrases within phrases of the same type in a hierarchical structure. Without recursion, language does not have “discrete infinity” and cannot embed sentences into infinity.

Recursion in computer programming is exemplified when a function is defined in terms of simpler, often smaller versions of itself. The solution to the problem is then devised by combining the solutions obtained from the simpler versions of the problem. One example application of recursion is in parsers for programming languages. The great advantage of recursion is that an infinite set of possible sentences, designs or other data can be defined, parsed or produced by a finite computer program.

In the six opening verses of the book of Romans the linguistic competence of the NT writer enables him to embed several phrases into one sentence recursively.

Παῦλος δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, κλητὸς ἀπόστολος ἀφωρισμένος εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ, <sup>2</sup> ὃ προεπηγγείλατο διὰ τῶν προφητῶν αὐτοῦ ἐν γραφαῖς ἀγίαις <sup>3</sup> περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, <sup>4</sup> τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα ἀγιωσύνης ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, <sup>5</sup> δι’ οὗ ἐλάβομεν

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<sup>23</sup> Stefano Nolfi and Marco Mirolli, *Evolution of Communication and Language Embodied Agents* (New York, NY: Springer, 2009), 42.

χάριν καὶ ἀποστολὴν εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, <sup>6</sup>  
ἐν οἷς ἐστε καὶ ὑμεῖς κλητοὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,

The phrases serve to clearly present the apostle Paul, the gospel, and Jesus Christ respectively to the addressees. This lucid recursive nested construction uses prepositional phrases, active and passive participial phrases, and relative clauses to modify and/or identify both nouns and verbs.<sup>24</sup> Both adjectival (for nouns), and adverbial (for verbs) prepositional phrases are used without ambiguity.

The KJV translators faithfully render the absence of any full-stop in the text which is translated thus: Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup> (which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) <sup>3</sup> concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; <sup>4</sup> and declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: <sup>5</sup> by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: <sup>6</sup> among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: (Rom 1:1-6). As well as describing and identifying Paul, the Gospel, Jesus Christ, and the addressees, the sentence is so structured as to indicate that the quartet is synergistically linked.

Chiasmic structures are important literary or oratorical forms that involve the use of bilateral symmetry about a central axis.<sup>25</sup> McCoy adds that it is “the use of inverted parallelism of form and/or content which moves toward and away from a strategic central component.” Chiasmus, he says, involves inverted parallelism between two or more (synonymously or antithetically) corresponding words, phrases, or units of thought. 1 Jn 3:9 is a commonly used example of an

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<sup>24</sup> Martha Kolln and Robert Funk, 136-150.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Norman, *Samuel Butler and the Meaning of Chiasmus* (London: St Martin's, 1986), 276.

NT chiasm made up of two parallel components (A/a and B/b) that build to and then move away from a central component (X). The central component is the crux; it is the clause “for His seed remains in him.” It is the pivot around which the arguments, pointers, or supporting parallel clauses of the verse rotate.<sup>26</sup> A commonly used example of NT chiasm

A     whoever has been born of God  
      B     does not sin  
          X     for His seed remains in him  
      b     and he cannot sin  
      a     because he has been born of God

The NT writer may have used the chiasmus as a tool of expression because of the greater flexibility of the highly inflected Koine Greek that made it easy to invert the order of semantic, grammatical, and syntactical components to create the chiasmus<sup>27</sup> According to Stock, “The chiasmus provided the needed element of internal organization for ancient writings that did not make use of paragraphs, punctuation, capitalization and other synthetic devices to communicate the conclusion of one idea and the commencement of the next,”<sup>28</sup> The chiasm was also a mnemonic device. The use of chiasms as a major structural feature in the Bible is rooted in the

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<sup>26</sup> Brad McCoy, “Chiasmus: An Important Structural Device Found in Biblical Literature,” on-line document (On the Wing Evangelical Enterprise, 2014) [www.onthewing.org/user/BS\\_Chiasmus%20-20%McCoy.pdf](http://www.onthewing.org/user/BS_Chiasmus%20-20%McCoy.pdf), accessed 28-Dec-14.

<sup>27</sup> Mary Schertz and Perry Yoder, *Seeing the Text: Exegesis for Students of Greek and Hebrew* (Nashville: Abington, 2001), 52.

<sup>28</sup> Augustine Stock, “Chiastic Awareness and Education in Antiquity,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin: Journal of Bible and Culture* 14, January 1984, 23.



fact that chiasm “infused the thought and speech patterns of the Semitic mind, and in this manner found its way into the OT and then into the NT.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ronald Man, “The Value of Chiasmus for New Testament Interpretation,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 141/562, April-June 1984, 146.

## SAMPLES OF CHIASTIC SOPHISTICATION

One sample that demonstrates the language complexity and chiasmic sophistication common to NT writers being discussed is found in the epistle to the Romans. This chiasmus spans the text of Romans chapters 5-8 and is illustrated by Douglas Moo in his commentary on the book. It is briefly outlined here as follows:

- A. 5:1-11 assurance of future glory
  - B. 5:12-23 basis for this assurance in the work of Christ
    - C. 6:1-23 the problem of sin
      - C'. 7:1-25 the problem of the law
  - B'. 8:1-17 ground of assurance in the work of Christ,  
mediated by the Spirit
- A'. 8:18-39 assurance of future glory

Moo argues that:

As 8:18-39 shares a common theme with 5:1-11, so 8:1-17 has much in common with 5:12-21. Sandwiched between these passages is 6:1-7:25. Here Paul focuses on the situation of the Christian in this life – a situation of some tension and conflict because, while transferred through our justification into the new realm of God’s kingdom, the powers of the old realm to which we no longer belong nevertheless continue to influence us. Temptations to sin, the sufferings that are a part of our sin-sick world, and the last enemy – the death of the body – must still be faced. But, proclaims Paul, the God who has provided for the beginning of spiritual life (justification) and the end (glorification) also provides for the period “between.” In union with Christ, we have been delivered from the tyranny of sin (chap 6) and the law (chap 7).<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans: New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1996), 293-294.

It is evident, indicates William Ramey, that this New Testament writer wrote the pericope within a very meticulously determined literary framework.<sup>31</sup> Moo describes the framework as the salvation-historical approach which views God's work in Christ as the center of salvation history.<sup>32</sup> Didactically encoded within the literary structure is a deep theological historical constituent that is flanked by textual "steps" that are diametrically congruent but syntactically inverted. These "steps" constructed in chapters 5 and 8 lead the reader first towards, and then from their locus in chapters 6 and 7 (chapter 5 leads towards; chapter 8 leads away from). Their locus is "the problem of sin and the law." Like "co-axial data cable" the writer's first and last arguments are insulating layers concentric about the axis, the core of the cable.

Ramey lists a number of pericopae to which he pins the nomenclature *X-files* in the NT. They are: Matt 15:1-20; Matt 19:23-20:16; Lk 15:1-32; Lk 24:13-35; Jn 12:20-36; Jn 13; Mk 14; Acts 2:1-21; 1 Cor 12-14; 1 Cor 15:1-58; Heb 1:1-4; Heb 7:1-10; and 1 Jn 1:1-5:21.<sup>33</sup> Each of these X-files are coherent units of thought encoded by the author in chiasmi that may not be visible to the casual 21<sup>st</sup> century reader. Their loci or cores are poignant elements of NT theology supported by flanking statements that are spiraling semantic updrafts and downdrafts that highlight and simultaneously resonate with them.

The NT writers liberally used chiasmic frameworks constantly employing them in a literary environment devoid of other devices such as punctuation etc. previously mentioned. Ramey quotes Bengel's deduction: "Often there is the greatest use in the employment of this figure [chiasmus], and it is never without some use, viz., in perceiving the ornament, in

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<sup>31</sup> William Ramey, "Introduction," *Biblical Studies*[document on-line] (Chantilly, VA: In the Beginning.org, 2014); <http://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/index.html>, accessed May 17, 2014.

<sup>32</sup> Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 26.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, "The X-files," *Biblical Studies* [document on-line] (Chantilly, VA: In the Beginning.org, 2014); <https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/xfiles.html>, accessed May 17, 2014.

observing the force of the language; in understanding the true and fuller sense; in making clear the sound exegesis; and in demonstrating the true and neat analysis of the sacred text.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Johan Bengel, et.al., *Gnomon of the New Testament, Volume 5* (Charleston, NC: Nabu Press, 2012), 399.

## SUMMARY

This chapter highlights some features of New Testament prose and narrative which lent sophistication to the expressions. The elements discussed and exemplified here are: cognition and communication, time and tense, and use of recursion and chiasmic structures. Of course, the nomenclature used to describe some of their techniques is generally modern but the methodologies were common to writers then.

Beyond the hegemony of the Greek Koine, its sophistication allowed a discrete structuring of knowledge in the NT common to its writers. Terms are cognitively connected by mapping, enabling the construction of sophisticated utterances using these terms relationally or associatively. This becomes visible when expressions are placed in the context of wider discourses of which they are apart and also within the context of the entire NT.

It must be noted that the tense in Greek expresses “kind of action.” The chief kinds of action are continuous, linear and punctiliar. These provide some latitude to action beyond the simplicity of “time” conveyed by many other languages.

Sophistication is illustrated also in the use of recursions that iterate to provide complexity necessary for articulation of some ideas. As well, the Koine Greek did not make use of paragraphs, punctuation, capitalization and such devices; therefore in order to communicate the conclusion of one idea and the commencement of the next the chiasmi would have provided the means.