Type: Book Chapter

Rethinking the Structure of the "Farewell Discourse" (John 13–17) through a Chiastic Lens

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Source: *Chiasmus: The State of the Art*
Editor(s): Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch
Published: Provo, UT: BYU Studies; Springville, UT: Book of Mormon Central, 2020
Page(s): 193–205

Abstract: Wayne Brouwer, "The Chiastic Structure of the Farewell Discourse in the Fourth Gospel," examines the parallel and repetitive elements of John 13–17, which form a macro-chiasm. The chiasm's pivotal point is Jesus's Discourse of the Vine and the Branches, with the repeated expression abide in me. Recognition of this pivotal point provides a better comprehension of the remaining parts of the macro-chiasm. For example, the mirrored elements "foot washing scene" (13:1–35) and Jesus's Intercessory Prayer (17:1–26), are both to be "understood as parallel explications of the central theme: 'Abide in me!'" Brouwer's presentation comprises a new understanding of the Farewell Discourse which strives to solve several certain scholarly challenges.

Rethinking the Structure of the "Farewell Discourse" (John 13–17) through a Chiastic Lens

Wayne Brouwer

Introduction

Briefly stated, my thesis is this: although it is very difficult to read the mind of the Evangelist, or the redactor who brought elements of previously written material into the shape of the gospel as we have it today, it appears that the repetitive and reflexive elements of the Johannine farewell discourse fit together into a large chiasm[1] bounded by expressions of spiritual intimacy with God on either end (the foot washing episode of ch. 13 and the prayer of ch. 17) and channeled toward the challenge to "abide" in Jesus at the center (15:1–17). In outline, it could be diagrammed as follows:

A Gathering scene (Focus on unity with Jesus expressed in mutual love) (13:1–35)
  B Prediction of the disciples' denial (13:36–38)
    C Jesus' departure tempered by assurance of the father's power (14:1–14)
      D The promise of the παράκλητος ("Advocate") (14:15–26)
        E Troubling encounter with the world (14:27–31)
          F The vine and branches teaching ("Abide in me!") producing a community of mutual love (15:1–17)
        E_1 Troubling encounter with the world (15:18–16:4a)
      D_1 The promise of the παράκλητος ("Advocate") (16:4b–15)
    C_1 Jesus' departure tempered by assurance of the father's power (16:16–28)
  B_1 Prediction of the disciples' denial (16:29–33)
A_1 Departing prayer (Focus on unity with Jesus expressed in mutual love) (17:1–26)

Read in this manner, John 13–17 takes on a different character than it would if understood primarily as a linear discourse. For one thing, the vine and branches teaching of 15:1–17 becomes the apex of its development, proclaiming the dominant theme that spiritual unity with Jesus (summarized a number of times in the phrase "abide in me") is at the center of the discourse, shaping and pervading the surrounding material. Also, the repetitive themes of betrayal, Jesus' leaving, the promise of the spirit as "Advocate," and the character of the disciples' interaction with the world, initially stated in chapters 13 and 14, become paired in a meaningful way with their counterparts in chapters 15 and 16. Each of these themes becomes an extension of the "Abide in me!" injunction of 15:1–17, explicating its significance in one of several ways.

Finally, in this chiastic reading of the discourse, there is an understanding of the foot-washing scene, which serves as a prelude to the discourse proper (13:1–35), as being a counterpart to the prayer of chapter 17. If union with Jesus is the organizing theme of the discourse, the disciples enter the discourse through a visible expression of Jesus' desire for their intimacy and leave with a spiritual expression of that same desire. Although this reading of John 13–17 is similar in various elements to other chiastic proposals, it is rooted in the dual assumptions that both the historical development of the text and its current form are of significance for interpretation. As a result, Jesus' command to "abide in me," reiterated several times in the central element of the discourse (15:1–17), serves to provide a cohesive understanding of the text in its received shape (which is the goal of synchronic interpreters) while, at the same time, encourages the investigations of historical criticism to provide insight into the editing process which is behind the final arrangement of the text (the emphasis of diachronic interpreters). In this manner, reading the farewell discourse chiastically brings resolution to many of the issues of interpretation that have stood between the diachronic and synchronic approaches.

Nonlinear Communication

It is important, at this point, to determine more specifically the criteria by which chiasmus in biblical literature will be assessed. Although there are clear representations of chiasms scattered throughout the literature of antiquity, it was not until early in the twentieth century, largely through the work of Nils Lund, that chiastic analyses in biblical studies were more widely developed.

While he was a student at North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago, Lund began an investigation that would ultimately become a

lifetime passion, namely, to observe and specify the use of chiasm as a New Testament literary convention. From 1929 through 1934 Lund published a series of seven articles on various aspects of the topic.[2] At the same time, he was working on a much more comprehensive investigation of chiasm in its historical and biblical expressions. This monograph eventually became his PhD dissertation for the University of Chicago.[3] In it, Lund devoted himself to "the tracing of the Hebrew literary influence on the Greek text of the New Testament,"[4] with a particular focus on "the extensive use of the inverted order commonly called chiasmus."[5] In an early article,[6] Lund had outlined what he perceived to be the chiastic structure to the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel. His analysis of that passage continues to be influential for many scholars through to the present.[7] It included the elucidation of elements of chiastic arrangement that Lund would later distil into seven theses:[8]

> The center of a chiastically shaped pericope *is always the turning point*.
> The thought shifts at the centre, often to an antithetic thought, only to return to the previous line of argument or topic development.
> Identical ideas are distributed across the given passage "at the extremes and . . . centre."
> Some ideas are redistributed in the second half as if deliberately reiterated.
> Certain terms appear to gravitate toward the center of the passage.
> Larger units are frequently introduced and concluded by "*frame-passages*."
> Chiastic developments are frequently interspersed with linear progressive lines.

These "laws"[9] are essentially observational hypotheses. Yet, they resonate with recurring phenomena in the textual data.[10] For Lund, they indicated thought processes at work in both the Hebrew Bible and in the New Testament that consciously highlighted an idea of significance by placing it at the center of a discourse. The normative character of this centered idea in the pericope as a whole was reinforced textually through balanced pairs of inverted, parallel, complementary statements or themes on either side of it that "pointed" back to it as the structuring motif of the larger passage.

Focus on Repetition and Centering

While Lund's concise "laws" governing chiastic movement within a passage are useful in discerning the broad outlines of chiastic passages,[11] they lack the precision required for careful examination of those texts where a chiasm might be suspected as playing a role in the development of themes and concepts.[12]

First, as Alan Culpepper noted,[13] Lund's "laws" fail to provide a clear set of criteria for identifying clues that might signal chiastic intent. They document what Lund declares to be the moves of chiasm, but they do not indicate where one begins to look for those moves. David Clark worked to fill this void in his 1975 essay, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm."[14] According to Clark, chiastic repetition, parallelism, and centering may be found in any, several, or all of these dimensions of a passage: content, structure, choice of words, setting, and theology.[15] Thus, for Clark, chiasm might be found on several levels of literary expression. Although he does not make entirely clear the precise tools which might be used in assessing each of these dimensions of communication, Clark's analysis of Lund's general search for parallel repetition into several categories broadens the possibilities in the search for chiasm while, at the same time, it calls for more clarity in describing what sorts of parallels are to be found. In addition, Clark observed that most assessments of chiasm are to be evaluated on some cumulative collection of evidence that may be less than fully apparent at the first reading.[16] He offers several different types of measures by which to assess possible chiastic design in a text, especially focusing on locating and isolating repetitions of content within a pericope either in language or structure.[17]

Second, Lund's "laws" fail to explore adequately both the idea of the heightened literary impact of the central element in a chiasm and the importance of balanced length on both sides of this center. Ian Thomson, in rewriting Lund's "laws" and amplifying them to address that need more specifically, suggested the following, more precise, criteria:[18]

Chiasms frequently exhibit a shift at, or near, their center. This change can be very varied in nature: a change of person of the verb, a new or unexpected idea suddenly introduced, and so on. Usually after the "shift," the original thought is resumed. For this reason, in this study, the phrase "shift and reversion" is preferred to Lund's simple term. This immediately highlights the problem associated with all such characteristics. Many passages have "shifts" but are obviously not chiastic. In a chiasmus, "shifts" that are not at its center will occur, marking, for example, points of development in an argument.

Chiasms are sometimes introduced or concluded by a frame passage. Lund himself makes no comment on this, but, judged by examples which he later gives, a "frame-passage" is a springboard from which to launch into the chiasmus, or a section which acts as a tail-piece to a chiasmus without itself being part of the chiastic pattern.

Passages which are chiastically patterned sometimes also contain directly parallel elements.[19]

Identical ideas may occasionally be distributed in such a fashion that they occur at the extremes of the passage and also again at the center of a given chiastic system.

Balancing elements are normally of approximately the same length. On a few occasions when this is not the case, some explanation seems to be called for.

The center often contains the focus of the author's thought. It will be suggested that this is a particularly powerful feature with obvious implications for exegesis.

In light of what Thomson believes are a plethora of unwarranted, supposed discoveries of chiasm throughout the New Testament, he elaborates on the use of his guidelines, making a plea for rigorous objectivity by those who seek to assess any passage for possible chiastic development.[20] First, Thomson says, "The chiasmus will be present in the text as it stands, and will not require unsupported textual emendation in order to 'recover' it."[21] Either it is there or it is not, and any attempt to find it in previous redactions of the text only remind us that the form of the passage in its final editing undid whatever chiasm might have been there earlier.

Second, according to Thomson, "The symmetrical elements will be present in precisely inverted order."[22] That is to say, where one must seek to rearrange elements in order to gain parallel inversion of elements in a passage, it is not likely that chiastic intent was there in the first place. Thomson does allow for some latitude in this requirement, so long as the rationale for a departure from the norm makes sense within the development of the passage itself.

Third, says Thomson, "The chiasmus will begin and end at a reasonable point."[23] In other words, the reason for expressing a thought in chiastic design is to define the relationships among the elements of a single subunit of communication, whether it is represented in four short lines of poetry or encompasses a comprehensive tale unfolded in an extended narrative. There must be a correlation between the completeness of the thought unit and the extent or boundaries of the chiastically shaped passage. If either moves on before the other, chiasm is not likely to be present at all.[24]

Although it is clear that chiasm is one among many literary forms used in both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, it is not always

as certain when chiastic patterns are definitively present. According to the criteria established by Clark, chiastic intent in a passage is recognized on the basis of the strength and combination of up to five intermingling elements: "(1) content—the theme or themes of each pericope, (2) form or structure—the type of narrative and/or dialogue of which the pericope is composed, (3) language—primarily the occurence [*sic*] of catchwords. . . . [T]wo other features . . . are worth separate listing: (4) setting, and (5) theology."[25]

While these five criteria are the basis for chiastic exploration, they are not sufficiently precise to provide the specific tools of analysis in all instances. As Thomson says, the process for identifying chiasm "is inevitably complex."[26] Not only that, but it appears, at times, to become an exercise in circular reasoning: one reads a passage looking for a particular pattern of repetition or reflexivity; then, when hints of such a pattern are found, one declares that the form of the pattern found is both typical and original. It is typical because it follows the preasserted pattern, and it is original in the sense that its form provides the basis upon which to seek further similar patterns.

Pay Attention to Balance and Parallelism

Thomson suggests both a two-step method by which to assess the evidence for chiasm in a text and a series of carefully delineated guidelines that are designed to shape the process of testing the hypothesis from beginning to end. The first stage in Thomson's investigation is "to identify a pattern which is potentially chiastic."[27] Thomson urges the reader to pay attention to repetition of vocabulary and syntax and to seek the possible inverse paralleling of common words and ideas. Thus, the first step is that of data collection. Are there triggers in the text that give the reader a reason to pause for a second appraisal, seeking larger patterns of recurring movement? Is there a sudden shift of an idea back along the path recently taken? Do the extremes of a passage reiterate a single idea in some reflexive form?

Secondly, according to Thomson, the suspected chiasm must be put to a critical test involving the use of his criteria for chiasm assessment in a particular manner. The procedure requires movement through the following specific steps:[28]

Note whether there is a critical shift at the center of the suspected chiasm which clearly returns the thought back along the path recently taken.

Check for the possibility of a "frame passage" which either introduces or concludes a chiastic passage (or perhaps both), clearly setting the chiasm apart from its larger literary environment.

Analyze the passage to determine possible subunits of chiastically aligned elements which are themselves parallel in structure.

Extrapolate thematic relationships, realizing that these most often occur at the extremes of the passage and possibly also at or near the centering element.

Check to see whether there is a clear balance of length between the elements of the chiasm that occupy the first half of the design and those which follow the midpoint.

Assess the significance of the central element of the passage for the meaning or impact of the passage as a whole. There are most often a heightening and clarification of the main "point" of the narrative or a poetic implication in the central element itself. The center, rather than the beginning or ending, holds the interpretive key.

In response to the increased interest in chiastic studies in recent years, Thomson expresses wary skepticism toward simplistic exegetical efforts that find a plethora of chiastic development throughout biblical texts. He posits several limitations to these investigations that he believes will help scholars looking for chiasm to maintain a necessary academic rigor as they pursue their goals.

For one thing, he holds to the view that chiasm is strictly a device of words and phrases and not of themes.[29] In this regard he would not agree with Clark that themes might be chiastically arranged in a literary passage, even where the vocabulary and grammar may not appear so. Thomson calls this "chiasmus by headings,"[30] where the reader, rather than the author, views the larger contours of a literary unit and determines a recurrence of themes and ideas. "This produces a potentially circular argument," according to Thomson: "headings are interpretatively selected to create or bolster a chiasmus; it is then argued from the chiasmus that the selective choice of heading reflects the true interests of the author!"[31] There must be a clear correspondence of terms, mirrored across a central axis, according to Thomson, in order for chiasm to be present in a passage.

After following Thomson's first instruction when seeking a possible chiasm, interpreters should allow Thomson's second limitation to shape further analysis of the text. As Thomson puts it, the "chiasmus will begin and end at a reasonable point."[32] In his estimation, chiasm is generally

limited to short passages where clear reflexivity is immediately accessible. The longer the passage, even where repetitions, regressions, and *inclusios* are evident in the broader sweep, the more difficult it is to pin down either chiastic intent or the benefits of a chiastic reading.

Thomson is astute in these points. It is important that the paralleled elements of a passage emerge from the passage itself and are not imposed upon it by way of hopeful thematic projection on the part of the modern interpreter. Also, length certainly plays a crucial role in the clarity of chiastic approbation: the longer a passage is, the harder it becomes to determine whether, or in what clear manner, chiastic design pervades the whole.

What is not immediately apparent, however, is the basis for Thomson's rejection of any chiastic correspondence between themes and ideas that might not exactly repeat certain words or phrases in the paired sections of the chiasm. After all, micro-chiastic parallelism in the several lines of a poem often uses different terms to refer to a single thing or idea. It seems probable that, in a similar manner, paired sentences or paragraphs reflecting on common ideas or actions might use different terms or phrases to give shape to these considerations in macro-chiastic developments.

In the same way, there seems to be no clear basis for Thomson's adamant limitation of chiastic length to roughly fifteen verses. He offers no reason for denying chiasm to pericopes that extend beyond that arbitrary maximum other than his skepticism at some lengthy and seemingly contrived chiastic outlines, particularly those by Lund.

In essence, Thomson rigorously develops criteria for assessing micro-chiasm while denying the possibility of macro-chiasm as a literary device. At issue is whether chiasm is a literary device at work exclusively in relatively brief expressions of reflexive poetic parallelism and quickly told tales or whether it also functions on a broader level as a shaping tool for organizing multiple literary panels. Evidence of the presence of micro-chiasm in biblical poetry and short narrative is well documented.[33] Research into the possibility of identifying macro-chiasm as a literary tool at work in longer, multiple-panel biblical passages abounds[34] and requires a careful reflection on the relationship between the devices of rhetorical technique and the thought patterns at work in the crafting of narratives.

The heart of the discussion focuses on the question of whether there is a type of pervasive chiastic thought process at work in certain

cultures of antiquity that may have resulted, over time, in broadening the range of use of chiastic reflexivity in literary expression. Is it possible for writers within those cultures to think chiastically when developing ideas or narratives, thus producing macro-chiastic patterns of literary development in passages that extend beyond several lines of poetry or single-panel stories?

Regardless of the limits Thomson places on the length of chiastic passages, he believes that chiastic patterns of thinking grew out of the practices of oral recitation and memorization in both the formal and informal training processes of ancient near-eastern cultures. He notes that "even Greek itself at one time was sometimes found written from left to right in one line and from right to left in the next."[35] It is his contention that chiasm is a communicative technique of the "cultural environment"[36] that gave rise to the scriptures of the Hebrew and Christian traditions. He even conjectures that this "ambilateralism" was responsible for a broadened use of chiasm beyond the shorter reflexive parallelism of poetry.[37]

Thomson's work with micro-chiastic studies invites a similar attention to precision and consistency in macro-chiastic investigations. It suggests, further, that if there are literary movements in a text longer than fifteen verses which appear to function in a manner similar to the reflexive parallelism of words in micro-chiasm, these literary movements need to be governed and assessed by criteria that explain both thematic and conceptual parallels and grammatical and verbal parallels between the halves of the chiasm.

Extending the Reach: Carl Blomberg on Macro-Chiasm

Stanley Porter and Jeffrey Reed, like Thomson, proposed limiting the scope of chiastic investigations to short passages that would be termed micro-chiasms. They do not believe that supposed macro-chiasms identified by other scholars are legitimate analyses, since, as they assert, "To date a convincing set of criteria for how to identify chiasm has not been developed."[38] In their view, there are at least three difficulties with the proposals of Lund and Clark.[39] First, most of the schemes are overly complex, with duplicated or restated criteria. Second, many of the criteria posited are difficult to quantify. Third, some of the criteria put forward have an "impressionistic" quality about them, resulting in assessments of macro-chiasm that are based largely on what Porter and Reed would term subjective "generalizations."[40]

Porter and Reed rightly argue that unless more objective and measurable criteria are established, it will be impossible to use macro-chiasm in a standardized way as an interpretive tool in biblical or classical studies. Their challenge for someone to produce such criteria has already been answered, however, according to Boyd Luter and Michelle Lee,[41] in theses put forward by Blomberg nearly a decade prior to their request.[42] Concerned that "chiastic outlines have become so fashionable among biblical scholars" without scholarly consensus regarding the "detailed criteria which hypotheses of extended chiasmus must meet in order to be credible," Blomberg proposed "a fairly rigid set of criteria" by which he hoped explorations in macro-chiasm would be assessed.[43]

Blomberg found sufficient documentation of the extensive use of chiasm in the literature of antiquity to move present scholarship beyond a skeptical stance regarding its existence.[44] Further, he believed that chiasm "underlies numerous portions of Scripture where it has not usually been perceived,"[45] since "it was used far more widely in the ancient world than it is today."[46]

He then outlined his criteria for macro-chiasm in nine points, summarized as follows:

There must be a problem in perceiving the structure of the text in question which more conventional outlines fail to resolve. If a more conventional and straightforward structure can adequately account for the textual data, recourse to less obvious arrangements of the material would seem, at the very least, to risk obscuring what was already clear.

There must be clear examples of parallelism between the two "halves" of the hypothesized chiasmus to which commentators call attention, even when they propose quite different outlines for the text overall. In other words, the chiasmus must be based on actual verbal repetitions or clear thematic parallels in the text which most readers note irrespective of their overall synthesis. Otherwise, it is too simple to see what one wants to see and to impose on the text an alien structural grid.

Verbal (or grammatical) parallelism as well as conceptual (or structural) parallelism should characterize most, if not all, of the corresponding pairs of subdivisions. The repetitive nature of much biblical writing makes it very easy for general themes to recur in a variety of patterns.

The verbal parallelism should involve central or dominant imagery or terminology, not peripheral or trivial language. Ancient writers often employed key terms as catchwords to link passages together, although the material they considered central does not always match modern preconceptions of what is important.

Both the verbal and conceptual parallelisms should use words and ideas not regularly found elsewhere within the proposed chiasmus. Most unpersuasive proposals fail to meet this criterion; while the pairings suggested may be plausible, a little ingenuity can demonstrate equally close parallelism between numerous other pairs of passages which do not support a chiastic whole.

Multiple sets of correspondences between passages opposite each other in the chiasmus as well as multiple members of the chiasmus itself are desirable. A simple ABA′ or ABB′A′ pattern is so common to so many different forms of rhetoric that it usually yields few startlingly profound insights. Three or four members repeated in inverse sequence may be more significant. Five or more elements paired in sequence usually resist explanations which invoke subconscious or accidental processes.

The outline should divide the text at natural breaks which would be agreed upon even by those proposing very different structures to account for the whole. If a proposed chiasmus frequently violates the natural "paragraphing" of the text which would otherwise emerge, then the proposal becomes less probable.

The center of the chiasm, which forms its climax, should be a passage worthy of that position in light of its theological or ethical significance. If its theme were in some way repeated in the first and last passages of the text, as is typical in chiasmus, the proposal would become that much more plausible.

Finally, ruptures in the outline should be avoided if at all possible. Having to argue that one or more of the members of the reverse part of the structure have been shifted from their corresponding locations in the forward sequence substantially weakens the hypothesis; in postulating chiasmus, exceptions disprove the rule![47]

Blomberg's criteria for macro-chiasm show great care and insight. They retain the emphasis on strong parallelism and reflexivity present in Thomson's criteria for micro-chiasm as well as the emphasis on the heightened significance of the central element and the clear limits of the chiastic passage. At the same time, they recognize the possibility of "conceptual (or structural)" parallelism (criterion #4) which is an essential element of macro-chiasms, stretching beyond the simple verbal reflexivity and parallelism of micro-chiasms.

Blomberg, in fact, shows how these criteria function in an assessment of 2 Corinthians 1:12–7:16. He outlines the passage chiastically in the following manner:

A 1:12–22 the Corinthians can rightfully boast in Paul

B 1:23–2:13 grief and comfort over the painful letter; hope for forgiving the offender

C 2:12–13 looking for Titus in Macedonia

D 2:14–4:6 a series of contrasts—belief vs. unbelief, centered on Christians as the letters of the living God, in glory being transformed into his image

E 4:7–5:10 surviving and triumphing despite every hardship

F 5:11–21 the theological climax: the ministry of reconciliation

E′ 6:1–10 surviving and triumphing despite every hardship

D′ 6:11–7:4 a series of contrasts—belief vs. unbelief, centered on Christians as the temple of the living God, in light being transformed into his holiness

C′ 7:5–7 finding Titus in Macedonia

B′ 7:8–13a grief and comfort over the painful letter; joy after forgiving the offender

A′ 7:13b–16 Paul can rightfully boast in the Corinthians[48]

A review of this literary development in light of his nine criteria for the assessment of macro-chiasm shows all points are met. He also reviews briefly a number of other supposed chiastic analyses of other passages which conform to all, some, or a few of these criteria and thus show varying degrees of success or failure in providing beneficial interpretations.[49] Porter and Reed agree that Blomberg's criteria "improve upon" Clark's six-point revision of Lund's "laws,"[50] and they find Blomberg's first criterion "particularly relevant."[51] Yet they retain an overall skeptical stance against any assessment of macro-chiasm in biblical literature.[52] Porter and Reed see a "conflict" between the first criterion and the common concerns of criteria 2 and 6. They assume that no scholar could acknowledge parallel developments in a passage and then not provide some satisfactory structure for organizing the materials of the whole.[53] That, of course, has not been the case in a number of New Testament passages, most notably the book of James, where much effort has been made to ascertain a meaningful structure for the commonly perceived repetitive and parallel elements, usually with inconclusive results.[54]

Further, when responding to Blomberg's seventh and ninth criteria (requiring any chiastic interpretation of a text to follow natural literary

breaks), Porter and Reed assume that if the breaks in a text are natural, this fact necessarily means that chiastic interpretation is not necessary.[55] As Blomberg has demonstrated in his review of the issues surrounding the interpretation of 2 Corinthians 1–7, this is simply not the case: although "every division in the proposed chiasmus appears as a major or minor break in the Nestle-Aland Greek NT and is supported by various commentaries,"[56] no other analysis of textual development has proven widely agreeable. It is, in fact, because "Paul's logic contains regular transitional paragraphs which can easily be taken as either concluding a previous thought or beginning a new thought" that no suitable linear understanding of the passage has emerged.[57] Similarly, common recognition of literary shifts in the Johannine farewell discourse has not brought a common sense of structure and has, for some, suggested an investigation into chiastic ordering of these passages.

Blomberg's criteria for assessing macro-chiasm appear to provide a reasonable and thorough measure by which to determine the possible existence and scope of chiastic paralleling in biblical and other texts. To date, there are no assessment criteria that exceed Blomberg's in either specificity or cohesiveness. Some, like Porter and Reed or Thomson, might argue with Blomberg that chiasm exists only on the micro level of twelve to fifteen lines at maximum and want to limit chiastic reflexive parallelism only to exact verbal or grammatical repetitions. If, however, as many others allow, chiastic reflexivity can also occur on a macro level of paralleled concepts and structures in narrative development, Blomberg's criteria are specific enough to guard against the excesses of those who would impose such outlines on the text rather than read them from the actual content of each passage.

It is thus fair to say that macro- as well as micro-chiasm is evident at various places throughout the literature of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. Further, it appears that Thomson's criteria and method for locating and analyzing chiastic development on the micro-chiastic level are a beneficial refinement of Lund's initial "laws" regarding chiasm. Finally, Blomberg's criteria for the assessment of macro-chiasm have proved beneficial. They should serve well as tools to determine the validity of the thesis explored in the next section that the farewell discourse in John 13–17 can be read chiastically and that, when interpreted from that development, there is provided a new and important step in the continuing analysis of the passage.

Looking for Reflexive Parallelism

As noted, Thomson suggested that the first clue to chiasm in a passage is repetition and the second clue is the presence of a central element of heightened significance that calls attention to the reflexive mirroring of words and themes in the other elements of the passage across the midpoint of the text. In reading the development of John 13–17 as an unfolding narrative "plot," the following movements emerge:[58] Jesus had announced, in 12:23ff, that his "hour" had come and that this hour would bring his death. As chapter 13 opens, it appears that Jesus is about to explain how this "hour" will affect his disciples (13:1). The process of setting in motion the execution apparatus is announced (13:2) but sidelined temporarily (until verse 18ff). The first major scene portrays Jesus washing the disciples' feet (13:3–17). Because of the dialogue between Peter and Jesus (13:6–10), the impact of the scene appears to be that of the disciples gaining and retaining a spiritual connection with Jesus (13:8—"share [μέρος] with me"). This also appears to be the case because, as the conversation continues and Judas is identified as the betrayer (13:18–30), the narrator explains that "Satan entered into [Judas]" (13:27), with the result that Judas separates himself from Jesus and whatever glory there might be surrounding Jesus in this special hour, opting instead to go out into the night [νύξ] (13:30).

Now the "hour" apparently begins, and Jesus announces it with a summary statement regarding glorification, his leaving, and the command to love (13:35). These are rolled into one another with such continuity that they appear to be a single great declaration.

There is a brief period of dialogue with Peter (13:36–37), Thomas (14:5), Philip (14:8), and Judas (14:22) interacting with Jesus, raising questions in response to his statements. Peter has previously spoken to Jesus in both the foot-washing episode (13:6–9) and in the conversation in which Judas is identified as the betrayer (13:24–25). Peter seems to have a bold and assertive relationship with Jesus that prompts him to react quickly to Jesus' actions and statements. After 13:36, however, the dialogue appears to be more roundtable, with different disciples entering the dialogue at various points. Thus, it appears at this point that the tone of the narrative shifts from action to a more formal expression of conversation and discourse.

Even though Peter asks Jesus where he is going (13:36), the focus turns immediately (and rather unexpectedly) to Peter's denial of Jesus (13:37–38). The suddenness with which that topic enters the conversation at that particular point stands out. There was nothing in the context

to prod Jesus' challenging response to Peter. For some reason, the intervening verses (13:37–38) seem to move the dialogue somewhat abruptly in a different direction.

Chapter 14:1–14 unfolds with a fairly consistent movement. Jesus is going away to his Father's house (14:2–3) to take up his residence and prepare residences for the disciples. They will be able to travel the road to the Father's house, provided they attach themselves to Jesus (14:6). The unique connection between Jesus and his Father is further explained in 14:8–14, yet Jesus indicates that the disciples are also able to enter into this special relationship (14:11–14).

A new theme develops in 14:15. It is related to the previous section in terms of a call for the connectedness of the disciples with Jesus and through him with the Father. Yet, now the nature of that connectedness is spelled out as a ministry of the παράκλητος ("Advocate") (14:16) who is identified as the "Spirit of truth" (14:17). It is in this context that the connection between Father, Jesus, and disciples is confirmed and nurtured (14:18–24), leading back to a specific identification of the ministry of the "Advocate" again in 14:26. But the Advocate disappears from the scene until 15:26, and Jesus develops these themes no further until then.

Now the tone changes again. Rather than focusing on the relationship between Jesus, the Father, and the disciples, nurtured by the Advocate, Jesus speaks about his peace giving the disciples fortitude in the troubling times that will follow his departure. The language of 14:27 mirrors that of 14:1, the first time in the discourse that a specific repetition is apparent. There does not, however, appear to be a broader repetition of ideas or themes at this moment. Jesus instead continues the new theme of the peace that his disciples will receive through this knowledge, even in the context of a troubling situation.

The last phrase of 14:31 is enigmatic. Jesus suddenly says, "Rise, let us be on our way." Yet no movement appears to take place, and chapter 15 marches on into a clearly different, though related, element of discourse. It is apparent that the unifying theme of the first eight verses is Jesus' teaching about the vine and branches. At the heart of his monologue is a call and challenge for the disciples to "abide in me" [μείνατε ἐν ἐμοί] (15:4, 5, 6, 7), repeated in some form at least eight times.

At 15:9, there is a moment of indecisive apprehension for the reader. The Greek term καθώς ("As") sometimes signals the start of a new thought development. Yet there are three more references to "abide in" in 15:9–10, and these appear to wed the ideas of these verses very closely to the theme of 15:1–8. 15:11 seems to finish the thought begun in the

previous verses because of the reference to Jesus' joy being in the disciples [ἐν ὑμίν], which appears to imply again the "abiding in" continuity.

With 15:12 we have a clear reiteration of 13:34. Not only that, but 15:17 repeats the mutual love command once again. The intervening verses pick up the theme of masters and servants first expressed in 13:16 and the exhortation to bear fruit from 15:1–8. They also reflect the commissioning theses of 13:31–33. The dominant theme of 15:12–17 seems to be an intentional repetition of the major ideas of 13:31–33.

As we move into 15:18ff, parallels with and repetitions of things stated earlier leap out with great constancy. 15:18–25 picks up the contrast between the power and attitude of the "world" [ὁ κόσμος] that appears prominent in 14:27–31. Similarly, 15:26–27 appears to be a reiteration of the words and ideas of 14:25–26. Suddenly it seems as if we are backing our way along the course recently travelled. 16:1–4a continues the themes of 15:26–27, giving substance to them in the specific situation of excommunication from synagogues. 16:4a ties 15:26–16:4a together as a package and again brings thoughts of repetition from 15:25.

Jesus' statement in 16:5 that "none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'" reminds us immediately of Peter's question to that effect back in 13:36. Yet the theme of 16:4b–15 is largely parallel to that of 14:15–24 where Jesus promises to send the παράκλητος ("Advocate") who strengthens those who know Jesus and the Father but works in opposition to whatever belongs to "the world."

16:16–28 brings back Jesus' talk of leaving "in a little while" and the comfort to be provided by the Father that was first presented in 14:1–14. In fact, just as at the center of the earlier passage where Thomas and Philip bring questions about the meaning of Jesus' words, so also at the center of this section the disciples as a group are given to questioning. The section ends similarly to the manner in which 14:1 began, with a straightforward declaration by Jesus that he is returning to the Father.

Then, when it seems as if clarity in all things has arrived (16:29) and the disciples are affirming confidence in the teachings Jesus has spoken, the dark shadows of 13:36–38 return. There, Jesus declared solidarity with the disciples in the trauma of the times ahead, and Jesus returned a prophecy of denial; here in 16:29–33, after the disciples together speak declarations of great faith, Jesus foretells their communal desertion from him.

As chapter 17 opens, Jesus takes command of the group in a way that is reminiscent of the beginning of chapter 13. Not only that, but Jesus repeats the line from 13:1 which declares that "the hour has come" (17:1).

In 13:3 the evangelist tells us that Jesus knew "that the Father had given all things into his hands." In 17:2 Jesus declares, in his prayer, that the Father "has given him authority over all people." Then, in parallel to the foot-washing episode in chapter 13, Jesus now announces in chapter 17 that he has prepared the disciples to belong to the Father. Further, he declares that all of them have, in fact, become one with the Father and Jesus "except the one destined to be lost" (17:12). This note about a contrary disciple who does not remain close to Jesus is located, in the flow of the prayer, in a position virtually identical to Jesus' declaration during the foot-washing ceremony that "not all of you are clean" (13:11).

As Jesus concludes his prayer in 17:21–24, he makes reference to the shared glory of the Father and himself, repeating again the theme (and almost the wording) of 13:31–33. The culmination of the prayer is a definitive declaration that shared love will become the norm (17:25–26). These words repeat, in fulfilled form, the injunction of the new commandment stated in 15:12–17 and earlier in 13:34–35.

Weighing the Evidence

From this reading of the farewell discourse, the first stage of Thomson's investigation is met. There is, indeed, repetition of terms and ideas that balance themselves in somewhat equivalent measure on either side of a pivotal center. In broad outline, the following repetitious elements are most noticeable in John 13–17:

Jesus is about to leave the disciples and go to the Father (13:1, 3, 33, 36; 14:2–4, 12, 28–29; 16:5–7, 16, 28).

Jesus will be betrayed by Judas (13:2, 11, 18, 21–30), disowned by Peter (13:38), and deserted by the Eleven (16:32).

The disciples are chosen by Jesus (13:18; 15:19).

Jesus issues the "new commandment" to love each other (13:34–35; 15:12–17).

"Asking" and "receiving" are encouraged (14:13–14; 16:23–24, 26).

"Obedience" to Jesus' "commands" is the sign of "love" for him (14:15, 21, 23–24; 15:9–10).

Jesus promises the coming of the παράκλητος ("Advocate") to "testify" in and through the disciples (14:16–18, 26; 15:26–27; 16:7–11, 12–15).

Jesus declares his "peace" upon the disciples (14:1, 27; 16:33).

Jesus promises "joy" (15:11; 16:20–22).

Jesus foretells the "hatred" of the world (15:18–25; 16:1–4).

Clearly, there is sufficient repetition of words and ideas in the Johannine farewell discourse to suggest the possibility of chiastic reflexivity. Virtually all who read John 13–17 take note of these obvious repetitions.[59]

The second stage of chiastic investigation, according to Thomson, calls for a closer look at the correspondence between parallel repetitive sections and the manner in which the movement of thought in the elements relates to the conceptual development of the whole. Based on the movement of plot in the discourse, an initial broad understanding of the reflexive movement would look something like this:

A Symbolic Union with Jesus (13:1–35)—an act of sanctification (foot washing)
  B Themes of Leaving, Denial, Trouble and Comfort (13:36–14:31)
    C Life Connections (15:1–17)
  B_1 Themes of Trouble, Comfort, Leaving and Denial (15:18–16:33)
A_1 Symbolic Union with Jesus (17:1–26)—an act of sanctification (prayer)

Indeed, those who look for elements of parallelism that may be read chiastically in the Johannine farewell discourse begin here.[60] Yet while the simplicity and thematic clarity of the above chiastic reading has inherent integrity, it is too brief to deal with the larger complexity of the two major discourse sections, 13:35–14:31 and 15:18–16:33.

John 13–17 as Macro-Chiasm

The chiastic reading of John 13–17 presented in this study results in an interpretation of the farewell discourse that addresses a number of important issues in Fourth Gospel studies. It offers, for instance, an intelligible role for the repeated "love command," showing it to be part of the chiastic framing and centering of the discourse as a whole. Furthermore, it highlights the significance of the vine and branches teaching in 15:1–17, allowing it to stand prominently as the turning point around which the discourse is built and using its metaphor as the guiding principle by which the rest of the teachings of the discourse hold together.[61] Finally, it balances the introductory narrative—shaped by its expression of union with Jesus at entrance into the hour of glory—with the concluding prayer, where, once again, union with Jesus is shown to take place in the experience of the hour of glory.[62]

Indeed, this approach has potential for bringing together some of the best understandings developed by the otherwise-divergent synchronic and diachronic readings of John 13–17. Each of those readings is based on a linear movement of either the text or some perceived psychological

development behind the text. The synchronic readings too quickly dismiss the disjunctures of the passage at its literary level as if these do not matter much. The diachronic readings, on the other hand, cannot seem to find a comprehensive understanding of the text as its stands, focusing instead upon the meaning of portions of the discourse and their presumed history.

If, however, the sections of the discourse as they have been collected and edited in the final redaction hold together in a chiastic reading, the disjunctions take on new significance. The strange ending of chapter 14 can be recognized as both a lingering indication of redactive editing as well as a signal announcing the move from one section to the next, perhaps even hinting at some of the multiple levels of meaning Thomas Brodie suggested, particularly with reference to the crowning apex of chiastic design that follows in the vine and branches teaching of 15:1–17.[63] The repetitious elements of the discourse begin to make sense as parallel teachings on common themes. The character of the vine and branches teaching becomes more obvious in its role as the chiastic pivot, shaping the flow of meaning for the discourse as a whole. Jesus' ministry is one that incorporates the disciples into the glory he shares with the Father. He creates the context in which they will abide in him (13:1–35; 17:1–26), producing a community of mutual love. If they should fail to abide in him, life becomes very dark (13:36–38; 16:29–33). Therefore, in view of Jesus' imminent departure, abiding in Jesus takes on eschatological overtones (14:1–14; 16:16–28). The παράκλητος ("Advocate") becomes the spiritual link by which the disciples are able to abide in a physically absent Jesus (14:15–26; 16:4b–15), and threats to disrupting this linkage create a challenging context for living faithfully (14:27–31; 15:18–16:4a).

This chiastic reading of the discourse goes beyond previous approaches to John 13–17 in several ways. First, it shows the significance of the central teaching of the vine and branches as the focus of the passage rather than just a thematic turn along the way. In the other readings of the discourse, emphasis is often placed upon the meal (e.g., Brown, Schnackenburg), on the discourse as a farewell (e.g., Segovia, Brodie), or even upon the history of the community in which the discourse is transmitted (e.g., Painter).

Second, the prominent sections that begin (the outward union of the disciples with Jesus through the washing in the foot-washing scene) and end (the inner union of the disciples with Jesus through the sanctification offered in his prayer) the discourse are understood as parallel explications of the central theme: "Abide in me!" The discourse holds

together in this reading, and the foot-washing scene is directly linked to the theology of the passage. Similarly, the prayer in chapter 17 is neither the climax nor the summary of the discourses. Instead, it functions to conclude the discourses as a sort of reflection on the foot-washing scene, confirming the intimate connection between Jesus and his disciples.

Third, the otherwise cumbersome repetition of themes, from the small references focusing on denial to the larger investigations of the work of the Spirit, would be understood in this reading as a means by which the flow of the discourse in its entirety would be shepherded along a meaningful movement of ascending and descending paired stairs, bringing the reader up toward or down from the central thrust of the whole.

In this manner, a chiastic reading of the Johannine farewell discourse provides new insight. If the text of the Fourth Gospel as it has come to us, with the farewell discourse developed in its present formation, is a finished product designed to convey meaning and significance related to the person and teachings of Jesus, the chiastic reading of John 13–17 presented here offers an interpretive approach that can provide a new way in which to bring together the insights provided by both the diachronic and synchronic readings of the text. Moreover, it encourages recognition that the multiple sections of the farewell discourse reflect each other and build upon one another in a manner that allows the whole to become more than the sum of its parts.[64]

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Notes

1. Chiasm is the term used to describe the literary flow of a passage in which each element of the first half of the poem, story, or discourse is mirrored in a similar element in the second half, inverted in order. Most often, though not always, a center element

will be unparalleled, and it will carry a unique statement of the most significant idea intended by the author.

2. Nils W. Lund, "The Presence of Chiasmus in the Old Testament," *AJSL* 46 (January 1930): 104–26; "The Presence of Chiasmus in the New Testament," *JR* 10 (January 1930): 74–93; "The Influence of Chiasmus upon the Structure of the Gospels," *ATR* 13 (1931): 27–48; "The Influence of Chiasmus upon the Structure of the Gospel according to Matthew," *ATR* 13 (1931): 405–33; "The Literary Structure of Paul's Hymn to Love," *JBL* 50, no. 4 (1931): 266–76; "Chiasmus in the Psalms," *AJSL* 49 (July 1933): 281–312; H. H. Walker and N. W. Lund, "The Literary Structure of the Book of Habakkuk," *JBL* 53 (December 1934): 355–70.

3. Nils W. Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in the Formgeschichte* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942).

4. Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament,* 28.

5. Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament,* 28–29.

6. Lund, "Influence of Chiasmus upon the Structure of the Gospels," 27–48.

7. Cf. R. Alan Culpepper, "The Pivot of John's Prologue," *NTS* 27 (October 1981): 1–31; Jeff Staley, "The Structure of John's Prologue: Its Implications for the Gospel's Narrative Structure," *CBQ* 48 (April 1986): 241–64.

8. Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament,* 40–41, emphasis in original.

9. In a review of Lund's book in *JTS,* "Reviews," s.v. "Chiasmus in the New Testament, a Study in Formgeschichte, by Nils Wilhelm Lund," 45 (January 1944): 82, T. W. Manson suggested that the term "law" is excessive.

10. Ian H. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters* (JSNTSup 3; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 213–19.

11. Cf. Culpepper, "Pivot of John's Prologue," 6–7.

12. Cf. Stanley E. Porter and Jeffrey T. Reed, "Philippians as a Macro-Chiasm and Its Exegetical Significance," *NTS* 44 (April 1998): 213–31.

13. Culpepper, "Pivot of John's Prologue," 6–7.

14. David J. Clark, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm," *LB* 35 (September 1975): 63–72.

15. Clark, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm," 63.

16. Clark, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm," 66. See also Mark Allan Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 32–34; Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 35–40.

17. Clark, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm," 68–69.

18. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters,* 27.

19. Lund, according to Thomson, lacks precision in his quest for chiasm by ignoring the obvious possibility of direct parallels between chiastic halves. It is at this point in his rewriting of Lund's criteria that Thomson is beginning to push in the direction of clearly articulated word and phrase parallels as necessary for chiastic design. In this, he rejects Lund's thematic parallelism and, with it, much of Clark's recommendation regarding the possibility of multidimensional layers of chiastic meaning.

20. John W. Welch, ed., *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structure, Analysis, Exegesis* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1981), 13.

21. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters,* 28.

22. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters,* 29.

23. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters,* 29.

24. These criteria, according to Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters,* rule out the more speculative ends to which chiasm has sometimes been pushed, such as "chiasmus by headings" without reference to the substance of the text itself (p. 30), the selective use of certain recurring words or thoughts while bypassing other instances of the same words or thought which simply do not fit the projected chiasm (p. 31), ignoring nonbalancing elements in a particular passage (pp. 31–32), and using chiasm as a quick answer in situations where other scholarship has failed to reach some degree of consensus in interpretation (p. 32).

25. Clark, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm," 63.

26. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters,* 33.

27. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters,* 33.

28. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters,* 27.

29. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters,* 30–31.

30. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters,* 30.

31. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters,* 31.

32. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters,* 29.

33. Cf. Anthony R. Ceresko, "The Chiastic Word Pattern in Hebrew," *CBQ* 38 (July 1976): 303–11; Anthony R. Ceresko, "The Function of Chiasmus in Hebrew Poetry," *CBQ* 40 (January 1978): 1–10; Angelico di Marco, "Der Chiasmus in der Bibel," *LB* 36 (1975): 21–79; 37 (1976): 49–68; 44 (1979): 3–70; John T. Willis, "The Juxtaposition of Synonymous and Chiastic Parallelism in Tricola in Old Testament Hebrew Psalm Poetry," *VT* 29 (October 1979): 465–80.

34. Cf. Peter F. Ellis, *Matthew: His Mind and His Message* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1974); Peter F. Ellis, *Seven Pauline Letters* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1982); Peter F. Ellis, *The Genius of John: A Composition-Critical Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1984); M. Philip Scott, "Chiastic Structure: A Key to the Interpretation of Mark's Gospel," *BTB* 15, no. 1 (1985): 17–26; Charles H. Talbert, "Artistry and Theology: An Analysis of the Architecture of Jn 1,19–5,47," *CBQ* 32 (July 1970): 341–66; Welch, *Chiasmus in Antiquity.*

35. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters,* 21. As evidence of this βουστοφηδόν, he notes extant manuscripts containing copies of Solon's Laws written in this fashion.

36. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters,* 22.

37. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters,* 22–24. Cf. H. l. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956); Augustine Stock, "Chiastic Awareness and Education in Antiquity," *BTB* 14, no. 1 (1984): 23–27.

38. Porter and Reed, "Philippians as a Macro-Chiasm," 221.

39. And with many who attempt chiastic interpretations based upon their methods. Cf., e.g., John Ashton, *Studying John*: *Approaches to the Fourth Gospel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 153.

40. Porter and Reed, "Philippians as a Macro-Chiasm," 218–19.

41. A. Boyd Luter and Michelle V. Lee, "Philippians as Chiasmus: Key to the Structure, Unity and Theme Questions," *NTS* 41 (January 1995): 89–101.

42. Craig Blomberg, "The Structure of 2 Corinthians 1–7," *CTR* 4, no. 1 (1989): 3–20.

43. Blomberg, "Structure of 2 Corinthians," 5.

44. Besides Welch, *Chiasmus in Antiquity,* Blomberg points to the "voluminous catalog" of Angelico di Marco, *II Chiasma nella Bibbia: Contributi di Stilistica Strutturale* (Torino: Marietti, 1980), in Blomberg, "Structure of 2 Corinthians," 5.

45. Blomberg, "Structure of 2 Corinthians," 5.

46. Blomberg, "Structure of 2 Corinthians." Cf. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters,* 36: "The fact that modern readers of New Testament Greek may struggle to identify a chiastic structure may say more about the modern cast of mind than about the presence and relevance of chiasmus. It may well be, therefore, that the readers (or even the hearers) of a particular epistle of Paul's would be aware of the presence of chiasmus because of a much more highly developed consciousness of chiastic patterns resulting from its prevalence in the languages of their day." Kenneth E. Bailey, *Poet & Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes: A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables of Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), believes that the link between the micro-chiasm of literary technique and the macro-chiasm of narrative has its origins in the art of story-telling and the manner in which oral recitations have a tendency to come full circle in thought processes from beginning to end. First, chiastic inversion (repetition of terms and ideas across a midpoint) and *inclusio* (returning to an original expression or its variation to bring a tale to completion) aid in memorization. With its balance of related words, themes, and sentence structure, chiasm offers a way to organize and connect the elements of a prose or poetic recitation. Where details of a story must be carried along from generation to generation in the mind rather than on paper, these aids to memorization become very important. Second, chiastically developed thought is primarily inductive rather than deductive. No "thesis" is stated at the beginning, to be aided and supported by syllogistic logic. Instead, the "point" of the narrative approaches in measured anticipation and then is brought back to its home turf with deepened insight. Third, there is inherent artistic beauty to chiastically ordered communication. The skill of the storyteller is at stake. Both a well-told story and the apparent sagacity of its teller are a product of practice and repetition.

47. Luter and Lee, "Philippians as Chiasmus," 95–97, adopt these criteria as the basis for their investigation of a chiastic structure to Philippians, though their examples of "clear parallelism between the two 'halves' of the chiasm" (criterion #2) are not convincing. At best, their statement of the divisions of the text seems somewhat arbitrary (criterion #7), and the use of the Pauline "travelogue" in Phil 2:17–3:1 as the "climax" of the chiastic development (criterion #8) presents a strange twist on the usual interpretations of the letter. Indeed, rather than disproving the value of Blomberg's criteria for chiastic assessment, they have affirmed it, indicating the manner in which it appears to undermine their own attempt at macro-chiastic analysis.

48. Blomberg, "Structure of 2 Corinthians," 8–9.

49. Blomberg, "Structure of 2 Corinthians," 7–8.

50. Porter and Reed, "Philippians as a Macro-Chiasm," 220.

51. Blomberg, "Structure of 2 Corinthians," 219.

52. Blomberg, "Structure of 2 Corinthians," 221.

53. Blomberg, "Structure of 2 Corinthians."

54. Cf., e.g., Peter H. Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 22–29. Interestingly, Davids suggests that a type of chiastic ordering may be helpful in finding a meaningful relationship between the parallel themes and terms occurring in the letter.

55. Porter and Read, "Philippians as a Macro-Chiasm," 220.

56. Blomberg, "Structure of 2 Corinthians," 9–10, 14.

57. Blomberg, "Structure of 2 Corinthians," 14.

58. Cf. R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 77–98. See also the method of reading the biblical text

described by Charles H. Talbert in *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 1–6, and in *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), xiii.

59. Cf. Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (AB 29 & 29a; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966, 1970), 588–94.

60. Cf. Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (SP Series 4; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1998), 24.

61. Spiritual attachment to Jesus brings one into the circle of divine glory (13:1–30; 17:1–26), safeguards against the tendencies toward denial (13:36–38; 16:29–33), creates a context in which Jesus' departure holds comfort (14:1–14; 16:16–28), is given substance by way of the Spirit (14:15–26; 16:4b–15), and provides endurance in the face of persecution by the world (14:27–31; 15:18–16:4a).

62. Note that in each instance, Judas is removed at the time of the cleansing motif and is separated from the subsequent glory: 13:18, 17:12.

63. Thomas L. Brodie, *The Gospel According to John: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 437–40.

64. For a more complete treatment of these things, with additional data on biblical chiastic expressions and passages, along with a comparison of this reading of John 13–17 alongside several other prominent approaches, see Wayne Brouwer, *The Literary Development of John 13–17: A Chiastic Reading* (SBLDS; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000).