



Type: Book Chapter

Jesus and the Roman Centurion (Matthew 8:5–13): A Window to Chiasmus and Apostolic Pedagogy

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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: H. Douglas Buckwalter, “Jesus and the Roman Centurion (Matthew 8:5–13): A Window to Chiasmus and Apostolic Pedagogy,” examines Matthew’s account of Jesus Christ’s interaction with the Roman centurion (Matt 8:5–13). Buckwalter finds that this account consists of a six-part chiasmus—an A-B-C-C’-B’-A’ structure—with the centurion’s “great faith” serving as the focal point. This six-part chiasmus, Buckwalter observes, is placed in the greater context of Matt 8:1–11:1, which consists of nine miracle episodes set in clearly demarcated structures, with the narrative of the centurion and his servant being the second of the nine miracles. Buckwalter concludes that his study contributes “in five ways to understanding apostolic pedagogy in relation to structured text,” namely (1) the apostle’s teachings were designed to be understood by lay persons; (2) the text’s structure was created to facilitate memorization by individuals who lacked their own personal scriptures; (3) the text’s structure was designed to provide practical lessons to its readers; (4) memorization of the apostles’ writings allowed Christians to possess God’s word in various parts of the known world where written texts were rare or even nonexistent; and (5) memorization of the text would have encouraged Christians to take God’s word “to heart” and to apply it to one’s life.



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Jesus and the Roman Centurion (Matthew 8:5–13)

A Window to Chiasmus and Apostolic Pedagogy

H. Douglas Buckwalter

At the time I was doing my post-graduate work in New Testament studies at Kings College at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, my wife gave birth to our second child, a son. Under the National Healthcare System that was provided, we were periodically visited at home by a district nurse. As our son grew a little older, she began to bring colored toy blocks for him to play with. At first, she would randomly pick out any colored block, say a blue block, and see if he could associate color and pick out the same colored block. In time this progressed to short sequences and then longer ones, where she might line up a row of blocks in the order of red to blue to green to yellow and see if he could follow the pattern and create on his own the same arrangement. Such patterning ability was considered an important marker of cognitive development.¹

In a landmark study on Hebrew literary structure in the Old Testament,² David A. Dorsey has plausibly demonstrated that such patterning techniques (parallelism, symmetry/chiasm) comprise a common writing format used in each book of the OT to convey meaning and even to grace simultaneously linear chronological accounts.³ After years of research and careful analysis of the Hebrew, his work is a compendium of the fruits of his labors in each Old Testament book. His argument is quiet but persistent and compelling that the OT text exhibits *a conscious surface structure designed to convey meaning*.⁴ Dorsey has provided extensive, sensible patterning examples (most as chiasms) of this, supplying with commentary the overall pattern for each book, the

patterns for each of their sub-points, and sometimes those of the third level as well.⁵

It is fascinating to see the cognitive link between the patterning development testing that the nurse was doing with my young son and the consistent use of these very same patterns as foundational “literary packaging”⁶ designed to preserve and pass on history and instruction, in this instance, to Israel throughout the OT era.

When approaching an OT text, Dorsey explains that literary structure conveys meaning in three primary ways:

- through the composition’s overall structure
- through structure repetition
- through positions of prominence⁷

A literary structure’s reach can be at the overall book-wide level or extend down to sub-sections at multiple levels within a book. Having had the opportunity to carefully read through a full-length copy of the manuscript before Dorsey sent it to the publisher,⁸ I began to wonder if this was an organizing and communication technique used by the New Testament writers in the same kind of thoroughgoing way to convey and package meaning for the benefit of their readers. This essay will seek to put a sleeve to a window and give it a good rub in the hopes that in some small way it will let us see back to the days of the apostles and glimpse what they, perhaps, consciously embedded in the very words of their written text.

We will use as our sample study the Gospel story of Jesus’ healing of the Roman centurion’s servant as preserved for us in Matt 8:5–13.⁹ Before looking at its patterning, we will first examine the larger literary patterns in which the story itself forms a part. This broader perspective increases the likelihood that these structures originate with the biblical author and help readers understand better the author’s purposes for the passage in its context and for the passage itself. Next, we will analyze the literary structure of the story, keeping in mind Dorsey’s three points for examining structured text. In closing, we will attempt some observations on what this study may show us about first-century apostolic pedagogy.

Gospel Literary Setting

The overall book-wide unit in which the Roman centurion story occurs is Matt 8:1–11:1.¹⁰ A guiding rationale that supports this block of text as

a literary unit is its six-part parallel arrangement (A-B-A'-B'-A''-B''), alternating between miracle stories and discipleship passages:

A **three miracle episodes** (8:1–17)

- ^[1]Jesus heals a leper (8:1–4)
- ^[2]Jesus heals a centurion's paralyzed servant (8:5–13)
- ^[3]Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law of her fever (8:14–15)
- ends with a summation of Jesus' extensive healing ministry (as also in point A')

B **short section of Jesus' teaching on discipleship** (8:18–22)

- Jesus calls two would-be disciples to follow him

A' **three miracle episodes** (8:23–9:8)

- ^[1]Jesus calms a storm (8:23–27)
- ^[2]Jesus heals two demon-possessed men (8:28–34)
- ^[3]Jesus heals a paralytic (9:1–8)

B' **longer section of Jesus' teaching on discipleship** (9:9–17)

- includes Matthew accepting Jesus' call to follow him

A'' **three miracle episodes** (9:18–38)

- ^[1]Jesus heals a woman's bleeding disorder and raises a ruler's daughter from the dead (9:18–26)
- ^[2]Jesus heals two blind men (9:27–31)
- ^[3]Jesus heals a mute demon-possessed man (9:32–34)
- ends with a summation of Jesus' extensive healing ministry (as also in point A)

B'' **longest section of Jesus' teaching on discipleship** (10:1–11:1)

- he prepares to send out the Twelve, whom he called to himself

The unit's two strands of material each consists of three points.¹¹ The A points form the first strand, containing three episodes each on Jesus' miracle working in Galilee. The B points form the second strand, all recording some of Jesus' teaching on discipleship and progressively increasing in length, from point B which contains two short interactions between Jesus and two would-be disciples (82 words) to point B' which contains Jesus' calling of Matthew to follow him, the bridegroom analogy, and a couple of short teachings that show the newness that has come with him (198 words) to point B'' where Jesus gives a lengthy speech comprising all of chapter 10 in preparing to send out his chosen disciples, designated apostles, to preach the gospel of the kingdom in the towns of Israel as an extension of his own ministry (747 words).

The unit's pattern helps the reader make a visual connection between what Jesus' miracles show about him and the nature of true discipleship. It demonstrates from Jesus' life and actions who his miracles reveal him to be and the purpose of his mission. By nature, he is sovereign over death and demons and is able to forgive sin (e.g., the middle cluster of miracles), and by nature he is willing to make others clean by taking their uncleanness upon himself (the first summary of Jesus' miracle working, 8:16–17). Jesus is the Good News. The only suitable response to him then is to follow him with utter abandonment. Even partial allegiance to him is not to accept him fully for who he truly is.

The passage that leads to the story of the Roman centurion takes us to point A of the first sub-section of the unit, the first cluster of three miracle episodes in Matt 8:1–17. It is organized according to a three-part symmetric (chiastic) pattern, finishing with a climaxing summary point (A-B-A'-C):

A Jesus heals a leper through touch (8:1–4)

- ends: the healed man was to go and show himself to the priests as testimony to them

B Jesus heals the centurion's paralyzed servant by merely willing it from a distance (8:5–13)

- ends: the servant was apparently healed the moment Jesus told the centurion to go and it would be done as he had requested of Jesus

A' Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law through touch (8:14–15)

- ends: the healed woman got up and waited on Jesus

C CLIMACTIC SUMMATION of Jesus' healing ministry (8:16–17)

- fulfills Scripture: Isaiah 53:4 cited (“he took our illnesses and bore our diseases”)

All three healing passages speak volumes about Jesus in that the recipients of his healing ministry were a leper, a Roman soldier, and a woman. The leper and woman in the A points were more marginalized in Jewish society and, of course, the Roman soldier in the middle B point was of the hated Roman occupying force. Yet Jesus' mission was not affected by class, gender, race, or even apparent sinfulness, as in the case of the leper (the visitation of things like leprosy, blindness, and paralysis on a person was commonly seen among the Jews as punishment for sin; see, e.g., John 9:1–2). Important language repetition between the A points is Jesus healing through *touch*, expressing the value and dignity he gives to the leper and Peter's mother-in-law, in addition to their healing:

Jesus touched (ἥψατο, *hēpsato*) the leper (8:3)

Jesus touched (ἥψατο, *hēpsato*) the hand of Peter's mother-in-law (8:15)

Our passage is the featured middle healing story. What separates it from the other two episodes is that Jesus never goes to the centurion's house, which would have allowed him to touch the servant in healing him. It is what happens in this exchange between the centurion and Jesus that distinguishes this healing story from the other two and which probably factored into its being given this center position status.

Analysis of Story

In light of this contextual study, the story of Jesus' healing of the Roman centurion's servant in Matthew 8:5–13 has an important position at the head of this unit (8:1–11:1). It forms the featured miracle episode of the opening cluster of miracles, which begins the unit (8:1–17). This means that a featured element within this story may be intended to stand over the entire unit, including all of the discipleship material. In exploring this possibility, we will examine the story's literary arrangement. We will analyze its paired points, noting key relationships of meaning between the matching points, and in the process, possibly see how literary patterning can add a memorable instructional design to a chronological account, without forfeiting enjoyment of the story¹² or necessarily compromising its historical integrity. It enables the reader to see the truth of Jesus in his personal interaction with others. We will close this section with a brief assessment of how this analysis links up with Dorsey's three ways that literary structure conveys meaning.

The episode is arranged according to a six-part symmetry (chiasm) (A-B-C-C'-B'-A').

A **the centurion's servant is paralyzed and suffering terribly at home** (8:5–6)

B **Jesus says to the Roman centurion: "I will go and heal him"** (8:7)

- focus: Jesus will go to the centurion's house and heal the servant there

C **CENTER: the centurion displays great faith in Jesus, believing he can heal from afar just by commanding it to happen** (8:8–9)

- the centurion's display of faith: "only say the word and my servant will be healed"
- the centurion's understanding: Jesus can heal from a distance

C' **CENTER: Jesus exclaims that he has not seen such great faith in Israel and issues a kingdom pronouncement on such faith** (8:10–12)

- Jesus remarks on this expression of faith: “truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel”
- Jesus’ pronouncement: such faith will be the only grounds by which Jews and Gentiles alike will sit at the feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

B’ **Jesus says to the Roman centurion: “you go and it will be done just as you believed it would”** (8:13a)

- focus: Jesus will stay where he is and heal the centurion’s servant from afar

A’ **the centurion’s servant was healed at that hour** (8:13b)

The paired A points (8:5–6, 13b). The paired A points act as an *inclusio*, beginning and ending the pattern with a description of the current status of the servant’s health, with the second A point as the actual record of the miracle.

point A = When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came up to him, pleading with him, saying, “Lord, **my servant** is lying at (ἐν, *en*) home paralyzed, suffering terribly.”

point A’ = **His servant** was healed at (ἐν, *en*) that hour [or *moment*].

The italicized prepositional phrase, beginning with ἐν in each instance, draws attention to the present circumstance of the servant—the first being his location (in that he was not with the centurion), the second being the time (at the time of Jesus’ exchange with the centurion). But the key paired meaning here is the *contrast* between the underlined material. *Contrasting meaning is where one or more things between the matching points is slightly to highly different, contrary, or opposite to the other.* Initially, the servant is suffering terribly; ultimately, he is healed. The servant goes from excruciating and incapacitating physical suffering (point A) to complete and instant physical healing, thus highlighting the miracle (point A’). In a sense, the pattern’s foundation is the A points in the miracle work of Jesus. He is the one solely responsible for the servant’s healing. He did the miracle.

The paired B points (8:7, 13a). In the B points the action of *going* in connection to Jesus’ healing of the servant plays a strategic role.¹³

point B = *Jesus said to him*, “I will go (ἐλθὼν, *elthōn*) and heal him.”

point B’ = *Jesus said to the centurion*, “[You] Go (ὑπάγε, *hypage*)! As you have believed, let it be done to you.”

What is immediately evident with the italicized narrative introduction to the direct address is that Jesus is the speaker in both points. This is important. What happens is not only by his permission but by his will. He authorizes it. Secondly, while it is clear that Jesus is going to heal the servant (point B), it would appear that he is most pleased to be able to alter how he is going to go about doing it in order to honor the centurion's great display of faith in him (point B').

Three paired meanings are significant between the B points. First again is the *contrast* as seen in the underlined words. Jesus initially prepares to go himself. The verb ἔρχομαι (*erchomai*, “to go/come”) is used, which is the verb generally used of Jesus in his public ministry travels with the disciples and often crowds of people, as would likely be the case here in proceeding to the centurion's home. However, in changing his plan and staying where he is, Jesus tells the centurion to go. In this instance, he uses the verb ὑπάγω (*hypagō*), which generally means “to go away” but can carry the sense of going away “particularly under cover, out of sight, with stealth.”¹⁴ This choice of wording seems plain enough here. Jesus does not wish on the centurion all the fanfare that could potentially accompany this change of plan; he wants for him to be able to go home without the public knowing what was at stake and in the luxury of the peace and quiet of his own home to enjoy and celebrate his servant's healing.

The second significant paired meaning is a *parallel*. *Paralleling occurs where something in the matching point loosely or tightly matches or agrees with something in the opening point.* Jesus is the healer in point B (“I will heal him”) and again in point B’ (“as you have believed, let it be done to you”). This factor has not changed but remains constant between the two points.

The third significant paired meaning is *progression*. *Progression occurs where the matching point shows a logical progression or development of thought or behavior from the opening point.* Jesus was planning to perform the miracle at the centurion's house (point B), but as the story progresses Jesus now has a change of plans and will do the miracle at a distance from the Roman soldier's house in order to honor the centurion's faith in him (point B'). Jesus is still going to do the miracle, but it will now take place according to the centurion's request. Why the change? This brings us to the central part of the story.

The paired C points (8:8–9, 10–12). Both of these points are long and consist entirely of direct address. In the first instance, it is by the

centurion to Jesus; in the second instance, it is by Jesus to the crowds about the centurion.

point C = Speaking up, the centurion said, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof, **but only say the word and my servant will be healed**, *for I am also a man under authority, having soldiers under me—and I say to this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.*” (8:8–9)

point C' = Now when Jesus had heard this, he marveled and said to those following him, “Truly I say to you, **I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel**. I say to you, *many will come from the east and west and be made to recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be thrown out in the outermost darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*” (8:10–12)

These points show nice literary balance with their content. Each begins with mention of the centurion’s faith: first by the centurion himself (8:8), then by Jesus (8:10). The remainder of each point expands the faith theme: the centurion explains why he is convinced that Jesus can heal by simply issuing a command without being present (8:9); Jesus issues a pronouncement on faith (“truly I say to you,” 8:11–12). The paired meaning here is a *continuity*. *Continuity in meaning is where the matching point continues or extends a particular idea, theme, or storyline of the opening point.* Jesus’ words in point C’ not only reiterate the idea of faith but continue the conversation and extend it with teaching of his own. The centurion exhibits remarkable faith in Jesus by asking him simply to say the word where he is and the miracle will happen, understanding himself how voiced authority works (point C); Jesus then comments on this remarkable display of faith in him and uses it as modeling the grounds upon which people will sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven (point C’).

Jesus decided not to go to the centurion’s home because of the centurion’s great faith in him (8:8–9), which he then greatly praised (8:10). “That faith was the more surprising since the centurion was a Gentile and lacked the heritage of OT revelation to help him understand Jesus. But this Gentile penetrated more deeply into the nature of Jesus’ person and authority than any Jew of his time.”¹⁵ This leads to Jesus’ pronouncement that people will sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the messianic banquet at the end of the age only on the basis of the kind of faith exhibited by the centurion (8:11–12). This includes Jews (sons of the kingdom will be thrown out presumably for their lack of faith) and Gentiles (those

from the east and the west will take their seats with the patriarchs presumably on the basis of their faith). The object of belief is Jesus.

The importance of understanding this episode as the featured point of the opening cluster of miracles for the unit through this analysis of its literary structure has hopefully now become more apparent. It supplies the definition of what faith is, the demand for it in Jesus, the indiscriminate nature of it for those who believe, and the priority of it for entrance into the kingdom of God. What enhances its placement still more is that the first occurrence of the noun πίστις (*pistis*, “faith”) in Matthew’s Gospel is Jesus’ words about the centurion’s great faith in 8:10: “Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith (πίστιν, *pistin*) with anyone in Israel.”¹⁶ The Roman centurion’s behavior toward Jesus is *the defining act of faith* for the unit and the Gospel. He exhibits humility in recognizing that Jesus is vastly more important than he is and acts on it by asking Jesus simply to say the word where he is, believing that nothing more is needed for Jesus to heal his servant. *This is true faith in Jesus, pure and simple.* For a unit on discipleship that demands the right response to what Jesus displays about himself through his miracles, there is no greater opening impact point.

The analysis of how the literary structure of this NT text conveys meaning has demonstrated that a composition’s overall structure, structure repetition, and positions of prominence¹⁷ are integral ingredients sown into the actual fabric of the episode itself, creating a beautiful tapestry of meaning in the recounted episode, visible in its carefully crafted framework, texture, and coloring in the text’s arrangement, language, and paired meanings.

Sampling of Apostolic Pedagogy

It is easy to forget that as we read and study the Bible, we are doing cross-cultural studies. The Bible has appeared in the chapter and verse format that we are familiar with for many years, having “packaged” indented paragraphs and numbered chapters as we know them. This was not the way it looked when it was written. The same words and sentences were there, but their packaging may have instead been deliberately embedded with literary patterns that were intended to enrich the text as salt does to a good steak.

First-century culture was primarily an oral culture. While illiteracy rates were sometimes high, there were still many people who could read and write. However, it was simply too prohibitive to own a book. Books were relatively rare and expensive to publish. Few could afford to own

one. On the other hand, people were generally seasoned in the ability to memorize, since this is how most learning was done. An important point of structured text in the OT was to facilitate the ease of memorization and the learning of the lessons embedded in it.

In following the lead of the OT, it seems that apostolic teaching was passed on orally and, in time, in written form (as preserved for us in the NT) in these self-contained capsules of structured text. It is most humbling and yet exciting to consider that each of the points of the overall unit of Matt 8:1–11:1 has its own literary pattern and that each of the miracle episodes of the three clusters do as well. All of this was designed to contribute to the meaning of the unit. Just because we may not be able to fathom the literary presence of structured NT text should not be the basis for dismissing it. This runs the risk of cultural blindness and provincialism. Rather, the basis should stay with what examination of the structured NT text suggests, as with our sampling with the Roman centurion episode.

With this in mind, this study may contribute in five ways to understanding apostolic pedagogy in relation to structured text. First, structured texts were seemingly designed to be very accessible and understandable to the “lay person”; they were meant to be “reader friendly,” not obscure and hard to follow, although, to be sure, they required some initial instruction and mentoring.

Second, a text’s internal structure was to facilitate and safeguard accurate memorization. The patterned layout made it easier to memorize the words versus having to memorize a shapeless paragraph-long string of words. The layout, likewise, provided a grid of sorts to help with accurate recall and to protect losing parts of the text.

Third, a text’s internal structure appears simultaneously to have provided built-in apostolic instruction on the text itself. The lessons were embedded in the text, as we saw with the Roman centurion episode. This was most efficient and practical.

Fourth, memorization of a collection of such pieces of structured texts would have allowed the apostles to leave careful and precise Gospel teaching and Christian instruction with converts and fellow Christians, even though the apostles and early missionaries would have moved on to another place to preach. This was especially helpful in the early churches where there was no existing written material. Such structured text provided a measure of safety as well in times of persecution. With the lessons embedded in the memorized texts, they could not be burned or confiscated.

Fifth, rather than just putting the lessons in writing, there was an added benefit of memorizing a structured text. Memorization would have encouraged the apostolic teaching to be embedded in the heart of the individual, readily available to be applied to life. Something memorized is not quickly forgotten. This technique would have facilitated elders teaching in the church and parents teaching their children. Memorization would have profited the mutual edification of fellow Christians or one's personal walk with God and Jesus Christ.

We have put the sleeve to the window and given it a good rub. What we have seen is not new but quite old. It has a solid connection to the mechanics of OT structured text. What is dynamic is what it may mean for enriching our understanding of the New Testament.

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Notes

1. Children's nursery rhymes and stories frequently display similar carefully arranged sequences. E.g., if the houses of The Three Little Pigs story were illustrated with colored blocks—the house of straw as yellow, the house of sticks as brown, and the house of bricks as red—the story would appear as two repeating rows of this sequence of colored blocks (creating a six-part parallel pattern, with the final blocks of each row being the most important ones):

- yellow block (house of straw, in building it)
- brown block (house of sticks, in building it)
- red block (house of bricks, in building it, which the pig took a long time to build)
- yellow block (house of straw, in visit by the wolf)
- brown block (house of sticks, in visit by the wolf)
- red block (house of bricks, in visit by the wolf, which withstood the adversity)

In another example, if Hickory, Dickory, Dock were laid out in colored blocks—the refrain as blue, the mouse running as green, the clock striking as orange—the story would appear as two rows of blocks, sharing a block at the end of the first row and the

start of the second one, with the second row then following the color sequence of blocks of the first row in reverse order (creating a five-part symmetry/chiasm, with the middle block, in this instance, as the “turning” point):

blue block (Hickory, Dickory, Dock)
 green block (the mouse ran up the clock)
 orange block (the clock struck one, presumably scaring the mouse)
 green block (the mouse ran down)
 blue block (Hickory, Dickory, Dock)

2. David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999); see pp. 36, 38, for his linkage of patterning to nursery rhymes (“Three Little Pigs”).

3. Dorsey presents this in his Introduction, *Literary Structure*, 26–27, but then routinely illustrates it throughout his structural commentary on the literary arrangements of the OT books.

4. For his use of the term “surface structure,” see Dorsey, *Literary Structure*, 15.

5. His introduction, *Literary Structure*, 15–44, consists of five helpful chapters that explore the history, procedure and methodology, and value of structure study.

6. An expression used by John Beekman, John Callow, and Michael Kopesec, *The Semantic Structure of Written Communication* (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1981), 14–15, in their language work with indigenous oral cultures (as cited in Dorsey, *Literary Structure*, 16–17).

7. Dorsey, *Literary Structure*, 36.

8. Dave Dorsey was my esteemed Old Testament colleague.

9. Translations of this passage are my own from the UBS, 5th ed.

10. In working with the alternating narrative-discourse organizing principle for Matthew’s Gospel, some scholars consider 8:1–11:1 a literary unit subdivided between Jesus’ actions in chs. 8–9 and his speech in ch. 10. D. A. Carson, *Matthew 1–12* (EBC; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 53, and David L. Turner, *Matthew* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008), vii, 10, subdivide the unit into two sections: 8:1–10:4; 10:5–11:1; Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew* (ZECNT 1; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 42–43, and Charles H. Talbert, *Matthew* (PCNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010), vii (who begins the unit at 8:2), slightly adjust the break to a few verses earlier: 8:1–9:34; 9:35–11:1. F. C. Fenton, “Inclusio and Chiasmus in ‘Matthew,’” *SE* 1 [TU 73] (1959): 174–79; C. H. Lohr, “Oral Techniques in the Gospel of Matthew,” *CBQ* 23 (1961): 403–35, esp. 427–34, make a clean break between chs. 8–9 and 10 as two individual points in their proposed thirteen-part chiasm for Matthew’s overall pattern, alternating between narrative and sermon with ch. 13 as the unmatched middle point. All of this comes in their attempt to account for the significance of the five speeches of Jesus in Matthew, as does Peter F. Ellis, *Matthew: His Mind and His Message* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1985), 12, in his nearly identical eleven-part chiasm. H. J. Bernard Combrink, “The Structure of the Gospel of Matthew as Narrative,” *TynBul* 34 (1983): 71, follows a similar division to that of Osborne and Talbert (except he ends the first point at 9:35 and begins the second at 9:36) but as overall points (C and D) of his proposed eleven-part chiasm of Matthew.

11. Scholars have commonly recognized the three clusters or “triads” of miracle episodes, to use the language of W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988, 1991), 1:67, 102; 2:3–4 in chs. 8–9. Moreover, Paul Gaechter, *Die literarische Kunst im Matthäus-Evangelium* (StBibS 7; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1966), ch. 2; and

Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8–18*, 3–4, 6, have observed the corresponding follow-up material on discipleship in 8:18–22 and 9:9–17 in the rhythm of a A-B-A-B-A parallel pattern; both relegate ch. 10 to another overall unit. Turner, *Matthew*, 227, has the same sequence as Gaechter and Davies and Allison but adds a closing third B point (9:35–10:4) as summary and transition.

12. It is this “on the street” experience between the Roman centurion and Jesus that makes the pattern so compelling and meaningful; it depicts a snapshot taken from a person’s life. The patterning assists in drawing the reader’s eyes to what is the most important or memorable part of the picture.

13. The “at that hour/moment” phrase in point A’ is in all probability referring back to the “going” scenario as played out at the time of the second B point.

14. *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (comp. and ed. S. Zodhiates; Chattanooga, TN: AMG, 1992), 1407.

15. Carson, *Matthew 1–12*, 202.

16. The noun πίστις (*pistis*, “faith”) occurs 8x in the Gospel: 8:10; 9:2, 22, 29; 15:28; 17:20; 21:21; 23:23. Incidentally, the first of the eleven occurrences of the verb form πιστεύω (*pisteuō*, “to believe”) is in 8:13 in Jesus’ words to centurion about his faith: “Go! As you have believed (ἐπίστευσας, *episteusas*), let it be done” (elsewhere, 9:28; 18:6; 21:22, 25, 32 [3x]; 24:23, 26; 27:42).

17. Dorsey, *Literary Structure*, 36.