

Eternity In Motion Series

The Chiasms of The Apostle Paul

Broken Into Color Coded Parallelisms and Chiasms

The First and Second Book of
Thessalonians

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First and Second Thessalonians Parallelisms and Chiasms
In Original Order

The Chiasms of Paul
Introduction

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

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

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

It we look at this graphically, the simple chiasm takes on the form of a X:

a b
X
b a

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

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

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

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

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

This can show why Chiasmus was attractive to the ancient Hebrew. First, parallelisms and chiasms are easy to memorize and would be useful since the Hebrew tradition was mainly oral. Second, chiasmus was in vogue. Just as 16th century English poets were fond of the sonnet, chiasmus seems to have been preferred by many of the ancient Hebrew writers. Third, the form can be very pleasing aesthetically.

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

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

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

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

NET 1 Thessalonians 1:1

From *Paul and Silvanus and Timothy,*
to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord
Jesus Christ. *Grace and peace to you!*

We thank God always for all of you as *we mention you constantly*
in our prayers,

because we recall in the presence of our God and Father your
work of faith

and labor

of love

and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen
you,

in that our gospel did not come to you merely in words, but in
power and in the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction

surely you recall the character we displayed when we came among
you to help you.

And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, when you received the
message with joy that comes from the Holy Spirit,
despite great affliction.

As a result you became an example to all the believers
in Macedonia and in Achaia.

For from you the message

of the Lord has echoed forth

not just in Macedonia and Achaia,

but in every place reports of your faith in God have spread, so that we
do not need to say anything.

For people everywhere report how you welcomed us

and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to
wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus our
deliverer from the coming wrath.

NET 1 Thessalonians 2:1

For you yourselves know, brothers and sisters, about our coming to you-- it has not proven to be purposeless. But although we suffered earlier and were mistreated in Philippi, *as you know, we had the courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of much opposition.*

For the appeal we make does not come from error

or impurity or with deceit,

but just as we have been approved by God

to be entrusted

with the gospel,

so we declare it, not to please people

but God, who examines our hearts.

For we never appeared with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed

--God is our witness-- nor to seek glory from people, either from you or from others,

although we could have imposed *our weight*

as apostles of Christ;

instead we became little children among you.

Like a nursing mother caring for her own children, with such affection for you

we were happy to share with you not only the gospel of God

but also our own lives,

because you had become dear to us.

For you recall, brothers

and sisters, our toil and drudgery:

By working night and day so as not to impose a burden on any of you,

we preached to you the gospel of God.

You are witnesses, and so is God, as to how holy and righteous and blameless our conduct was toward you who believe.

As you know, we treated each one of you as a father treats his own children, exhorting and encouraging you and insisting that you live in a way worthy of God who calls you to his own kingdom and his glory.

And so we too constantly thank God that when you received God's message that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human message,

but as it truly is, God's message, which is at work among you who believe.

For you became imitators, brothers and sisters, God's churches in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, because you too suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they in fact did from *the Jews*,

who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets and persecuted us severely.

**They are displeasing to God
and are opposed to all people,**

because they hinder us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved.

Thus they constantly fill up their measure of sins but *wrath has come upon them completely.*

But when we were separated from you, brothers and sisters, for a short time (in presence, *not in affection*)

we became all the more fervent in *our great desire to see you in person.*

For *we wanted to come to you*

(*I, Paul, in fact*

tried again

and again)

but *Satan*

thwarted us.

For who is our hope or joy or crown to boast of before our Lord Jesus at his coming? *Is it not of course you?*

For you are our glory and joy!

NET 1 Thessalonians 3:1

So when we could bear it no longer, we decided to stay on in Athens alone.
We sent Timothy, our brother and fellow worker for God in the gospel of Christ,

to strengthen you and encourage you about your faith,
so that no one would be shaken by these afflictions.

For you yourselves know
that we are destined for this.

For in fact when we were with you, we were telling you in advance that
we would suffer affliction, and so it has happened, as you well know.

So when I could bear it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith,
for fear that the tempter somehow tempted you and our toil had proven
useless.

But now Timothy has come to us from you and given us the good news of
your faith and love

and that you always think of us with affection and long to see us
just as we also long to see you!

So in all our distress and affliction, we were reassured
about you, brothers and sisters, through your faith.

For now we are alive again,
if you stand firm in the Lord.

For how can we thank God enough for you,
for all the joy we feel because of you before our God?

We pray earnestly night and day to see you in person
and make up what may be lacking in your faith. Now may God
our Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you.

And may the Lord cause you to increase

and abound in love

for one another

and for all,

just as we do for you,

so that your hearts are strengthened in holiness to be blameless before our God
and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

NET 1 Thessalonians 4:1

Finally then, brothers and sisters, we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received instruction from us about *how you must live and please God (as you are in fact living)* that you do so more and more.

For you know *what commands we gave you* through the Lord Jesus.

For this is God's will:

that you become holy, that you keep away from sexual immorality, that each of you know how *to possess his own body in holiness and honor,* not in lustful passion like the Gentiles who do not know God.

In this matter *no one should violate the rights of his brother or take advantage of him,*

because the Lord is the avenger in all these cases, *as we also told you earlier and warned you solemnly.*

For God did not call us to impurity *But in holiness.*

Consequently the one who rejects this is not rejecting human authority but God, *who gives his Holy Spirit to you.*

Now on the topic of brotherly love *you have no need for anyone to write you,*

for you yourselves are taught by God *to love one another.*

And indeed you are practicing it toward all the brothers and sisters in all of Macedonia. *But we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, to aspire to lead a quiet life,*

to attend to your own business, and to work with your hands, as we commanded you.

In this way you will live a decent life before outsiders and not be in need.

Now we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, *about those who are asleep,*

so that you will not grieve like the rest who have no hope.

For if we believe that

Jesus died

and rose again,

so also we believe that

God will bring with him

those who have fallen asleep as Christians.

For we tell you this by *the word of the Lord*, that we who are alive, who are left until *the coming of the Lord*, will surely not go ahead of those who have fallen asleep.

For *the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God,*

and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Then we who are alive, who are left,
will be suddenly caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

And so we will always be with the Lord.

Therefore encourage one another with these words.

^{NET} 1 Thessalonians 5:1

Now on the topic of times and seasons, brothers and sisters, you have no need for anything to be written to you.

For you know quite well that the day of the Lord will come in the same way as a thief in the night.

Now when they are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction comes on them, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will surely not escape.

But you, brothers and sisters, are not in the darkness for the day to overtake you like a thief would.

**For you all are sons of the light
and sons of the day.**

We are not of the night nor of the darkness.

So then we must not sleep as the rest, but must stay alert and sober.

For those who sleep, sleep at night and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

But since we are of the day, we must stay sober by putting on the breastplate of faith and love and as a helmet our hope for salvation.

For *God did not destine us for wrath*
but for *gaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
He died for us so that whether we are
alert
or asleep
we will come to life together with him.
Therefore *encourage one another*
and build up each other, just as you are in fact doing.

Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, *to acknowledge those who labor among you and preside over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them most highly in love because of their work.*

Be at peace among yourselves.

And we urge you, brothers and sisters, **admonish the undisciplined, comfort the discouraged, help the weak, be patient toward all.**

See that no one pays back evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good for one another and for all.

Always rejoice, constantly pray, in everything give thanks.

For this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Do not extinguish the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt.

But examine all things;

hold fast to what is good.

Stay away from every form of evil.

Now may the God of peace himself make you completely holy and may your spirit and soul and body be kept entirely blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He who calls you is trustworthy, and he will in fact do this.

Brothers and sisters, pray for us too.

Greet all the brothers and sisters with a holy kiss.

I call on you solemnly in the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

2 Thessalonians 1:1

*From Paul and Silvanus and Timothy,
to the church of the Thessalonians
in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Grace and peace to you
from God the Father and
the Lord Jesus Christ!*

*We ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so,
because your faith flourishes more and more
and the love of each one of you all for one another is ever greater.
As a result we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God*

*for your perseverance and faith
in all the persecutions and afflictions you are enduring.*

*This is evidence of God's righteous judgment,
to make you worthy of the kingdom of God,
for which in fact you are suffering.*

*For it is right for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you,
and to you who are being afflicted
to give rest together with us
when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.*

*With flaming fire he will mete out punishment
on those who do not know God*

and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

*They will undergo the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence
of the Lord and from the glory of his strength,
when he comes to be glorified among his saints*

*and admired on that day among
all who have believed--
and you did in fact believe our testimony.
And in this regard we pray for you always,
that our God will make you worthy of his calling
and fulfill by his power your every desire
for goodness and every work of faith,
that the name of our Lord Jesus
may be glorified in you, and you in him,
according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

NET 2 Thessalonians 2:1

*Now regarding the arrival of our Lord Jesus Christ
and our being gathered to be with him,
we ask you, brothers and sisters, not to be easily shaken from your
composure
or disturbed by any kind of spirit
or message or letter allegedly from us,
to the effect that the day of the Lord
is already here. Let no one deceive you in any way.
For that day will not arrive until the rebellion comes
and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction.
He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or
object of worship,
and as a result he takes his seat in God's temple, displaying himself
as God.
Surely you recall that I used to tell you these things while I was
still with you.*

And so you know what *holds him back*,
so that *he will be revealed in his own time*.
For the hidden power of lawlessness is already at work.
However, the one who holds him back will do so
until he is taken out of the way,
and then the lawless one will be revealed,
whom the Lord will destroy by the breath of his mouth
and wipe out by the manifestation of his arrival.
The arrival of the lawless one
will be by Satan's working with all kinds of miracles and signs and false
wonders,
and with every kind of evil deception directed against those who are
perishing,
because *they found no place in their hearts for the truth so as to be saved.*

Consequently *God sends on them a deluding influence*
so that *they will believe what is false.*
And so all of them who have not believed the truth but have delighted
in evil will be condemned.
But we ought to give thanks for you always, brothers and sisters
loved by the Lord,
because God chose you from the beginning for salvation
through sanctification
by the Spirit and faith in the truth.
He called you to this salvation through our gospel,
so that you may possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Therefore, brothers and sisters, stand firm
and hold on to the traditions that we taught you, whether by speech or
by letter.
Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us
and *by grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope,*
encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good thing you do or say.

NET 2 Thessalonians 3:1

Finally, pray for us, brothers and sisters, that the Lord's message may spread quickly *and be honored as in fact it was among you,*

and that we may be delivered from perverse and evil people.

For not all have faith.

But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.

And we are confident about you in the Lord that you are both doing-- and will do-- what we are commanding.

Now may the Lord direct your hearts toward the love of God and the endurance of Christ.

But we command you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from any brother who lives an undisciplined life and not according to the tradition you received from us.

For you know yourselves how you must imitate us, because we did not behave without discipline among you,

and we did not eat anyone's food without paying. Instead, in toil and drudgery we worked night and day in order not to burden any of you.

It was not because we do not have that right, but to give ourselves as an example for you to imitate.

For even when we were with you, we used to give you this command:"If anyone is not willing to work, neither should he eat."

For we hear that some among you are living an undisciplined life, not doing their own work but meddling in the work of others.

Now such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ

to work quietly and so provide their own food to eat.

But you, brothers and sisters, do not grow weary in doing what is right.

But if anyone does not obey our message through this letter, take note of him and do not associate closely with him, so that he may be ashamed. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace *at all times*
and in every way.

The Lord be with you all.

I,

Paul,

write this greeting with my own hand,

which is how I write in every letter.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be *with you all.*