PART 1

SURVEY

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CHAPTER 1

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Preachers and teachers should strive for the fullest message possible, because anything less may leave the congregation empty. For example, when Priscilla and Aquila first heard Apollos preach at the synagogue in Ephesus, they found that his messages were not quite right. Since Apollos based his studies on less than the whole story, his sermons were incomplete (Acts 18:24-28). As Aquila and Priscilla filled him in on what was missing, the Spirit gave Apollos deeper insights and richer doctrine. Eventually some of the Corinthian church members compared him favorably to Paul and Peter (1 Cor. 1:12).

The Only Authorized Context

In your study of God's Word, avoid incomplete conclusions. Don't isolate a passage from what comes before or after it in the text. Instead, get the whole picture. To do this you will need to acquaint yourself with the *context*, the entire body of text surrounding a passage, which sheds light on its meaning. The following diagram illustrates the relationship between the four principle Bible contexts:

FIGURE 2

The Canonical Context

Did you know that God revealed more to His people than just the collection of writings we call the Bible? For example, 1 Chronicles 29:29 mentions books by three ancient Hebrew prophets, yet God saw fit to preserve the words of only one—Samuel.

Although it took more than 300 years to finalize the New Testament group of writings, people who lived during biblical times apparently recognized and honored God's Word from the time it first appeared. In A.D. 350 Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, was the first person to identify *ta biblia* (the Bible) with *kanon* (a Greek word that meant measuring stick). Later, in his 39th Festal Letter (Easter, A.D. 367), he was the first to propose the 27 constituent parts of the New Testament as it exists today.

The 66 books of the entire Bible constitute the Protestant *canon* of Scripture— the officially recognized body of inspired writings. (The Jewish canon differs from the Christian canon, of course, because it does not include the Christian writings. The Samaritan canon differs from that of the Jews because it includes only the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. And the Roman Catholic canon includes more books—the Apocrypha—than does the Protestant canon.) Even though different people wrote the books of the Bible during a span of some 1,500 years, the entire collection functions for us as a single unit—the Holy Bible.

The early church had two reasons for attaching its faith to this group of authoritative writings: (1) to maintain a direct connection with the apostles and prophets and (2) to establish a perpetual, divine standard of faith and practice.

Today the Christian community still believes that God continues to make Himself, His will, and His purpose known through the Scriptures. Even though the Bible is a record of what God has already said and done, the sacred writings are more than a memorial of the past. Indeed, they remain a fresh, living witness to the present and the future—until Christ returns (2 Peter 1:19).

Biblical scholars have argued with each other about the possibility that the Bible has a single overarching theme. Those who insist that it does have such a theme differ among themselves, however, regarding what that theme might be. I side with those who suggest that there is one overall theme that unifies every moment of history into one divine working plan, uniting every biblical verse into a single, powerful message. This all-inclusive motif would thus be the main setting for every Bible study—the ultimate context even for individual verses.

And just what do I think this theme is? The everlasting covenant. God's promise/plan to all who believe in Messiah Jesus is the grand story line that unfolds itself across every sacred page. "In both testaments, the same God offers the same salvation by the same Savior through the same actions" (John Marsh, *Biblical Authority for Today*, p. 189). Spread cover to cover, this canonical context can serve as the foremost framework for Bible study because it shows us both where a text is coming from and where it is going.

Salvation is a promise that unfolds progressively throughout a period of time, rather than a prediction that is limited to a particular fulfillment. The Scriptures attest to the way that the covenant has been appropriate for human beings of every age, accommodating itself to a variety of historical contexts. The covenant began prior to sin and continues in a redemptive format since the Fall (see Gen. 3:15; cf. verse 21).

When He installed Adam and Eve as royal caretakers of His creation (Gen.

1:28ff.), the Creator revealed the plans for His creation, and He intends to see these plans through.

The covenant with Noah confirmed the Creator's resolve to bless His creation—even if He had to re-create it.

The covenant with Abraham embraced all the nations of the world. The Creator installed the aging patriarch as both the object and agent of promise to extend the sphere of blessedness to people everywhere (Gen. 12:1-3).

The covenant with Moses called on Israel to demonstrate its appreciation of the Creator, who also redeems, with holy service according to His law (Ex. 19:6; 20:1ff.). Although fulfillment depended upon their loyalty, only the Creator has the attributes to keep the covenant in force (Ex. 34:6).

The covenant with David gave further structure to the agreement by placing it in a theocratic context (2 Sam. 7:8-16), thus symbolizing His royal presence and commitment with the Temple. During David's reign God continued to prepare Israel for the literal fulfillment of His promises to Abraham and Moses under Solomon (2 Sam. 8; 1 Kings 4:20-25).

The latter prophets used the covenant as a symbol of hope for the post-exilic future (Isa. 55:3).

The new covenant of which Christians speak is not a separate arrangement, but the ultimate expression of the Creator's faithfulness and determination to carry out His original plans for the Creation. It was progressively disclosed in the previous covenants. Israel's hope, revealed in the progression of divine covenants, reached climactic proportions in the person and ministry of Jesus. He was the promised King who was to perpetuate the covenant, make it possible for Israel to complete her original mission, and inaugurate the age that will usher in the final edition of the kingdom—the new earth.
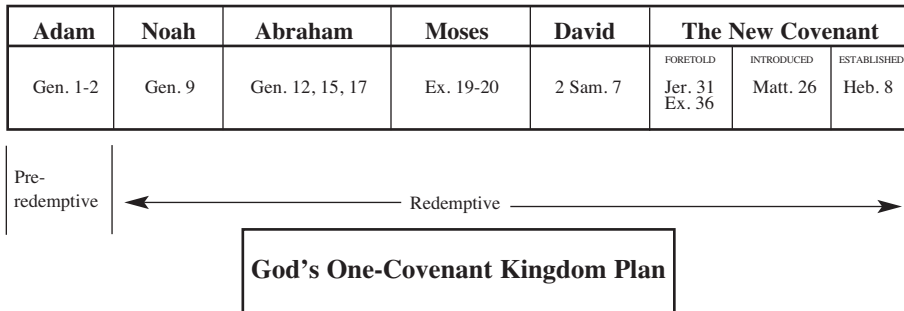
Adam	Noah	Abraham	Moses	David	The New Covenant		
					FORETOLD	INTRODUCED	ESTABLISHED
Gen. 1-2	Gen. 9	Gen. 12, 15, 17	Ex. 19-20	2 Sam. 7	Jer. 31 Ex. 36	Matt. 26	Heb. 8

Pre-redemptive ← ————————— Redemptive ————————— →

God's One-Covenant Kingdom Plan

FIGURE 3

It is so much easier to see where each part fits into the big picture when you have a view like this of the whole. Every verse is ripe for understanding if it is allowed to grow from its Old Testament roots into fruit on the New Testament branches of the Bible tree. (These are distinctly Christian terms, of course. Our Jewish friends do not think in terms of a "New" Testament added to an "Old" Testament. They refer to their Bible as the Tanakh, an acrostic made up of the initial letter of each of the three divisions of the Hebrew Scriptures—*Torah* [law], *Nebiim* [prophets], and *Kethubim* [writings].)

In terms of progressive fulfillment, we are still living during the stage when branches grow, bud, and bear fruit. God's people have always lived in the tension of present real-

ity on the way to future fulfillment. We still draw strength from God's record of faithfulness in the past in order to believe He will act according to His promises in the future. Like our Old Testament brethren, we live by faith, awaiting the "age to come."

So while it is important that you examine the historical context, it is equally critical that you relate the passage to God's unfolding plan as it appears throughout the Scriptures, because every word of God is for all God's people regardless of their nationality or era. Until you get a fix on your text in the flow of progressive revelation, you cannot relate its message to the past, present, and future of God's promises.

The Book Context

Once you have established solid contact with this overall theme, it is time to search for the overall plan and purpose of the book from which you have selected a passage. (See the *International Inductive Study Bible*. Its book-by-book work sheets make it a contextual analysis workbook.) Introduce yourself to the background and structure of the particular scriptural book by completing a biblical data chart. Consult at least three different sources for the information it takes to fill in its boxes.

Because you are in the preliminary stages of study, now is the time to get only a rough sketch of things. Fine details should come later. For example, if geography appears to play a major role in the passage, you may want to glance at a Bible atlas for a lay of the land, but that is all. For now, just get in touch with *who* wrote the book, *when*, *where*, and to *whom* he addressed it. Then try to figure out *why*. Read the entire book through, and jot down the reasons or motives the author may admit, whatever he challenges the readers to join him in doing, or anything he seems to be driving at so that you can determine the overall purpose.

As you begin to make out the general shape of the whole book, specific verses will stand out. Sort through and pick out the main ones, but it is too early to concentrate on any particular passage. Below (Figure 4) is a scaled-down version of the biblical data chart that appears in Appendix A.

FIGURE 4

Biblical Data for the Book of _____ Date _____				
DATA	DICTIONARY	INTRODUCTION	COMMENTARY	CONCLUSIONS
Author				
Date written				
From where?				
To whom?				
Why?				
Main theme				
Key verses				

The next step is to sketch a flow chart of the entire book. Draw a *horizontal* line to represent the author's flow of thought. Trace the progressive stops that unfold his purpose and lead to his goal. For example, in his *second* epistle, Peter seems to think along these lines:
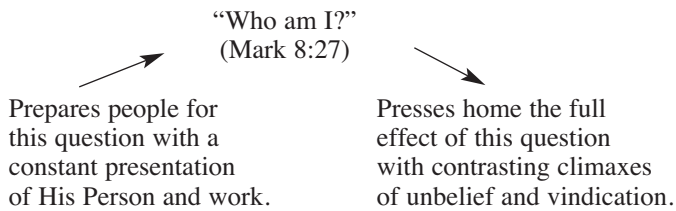
BOOK OF THE BIBLE FLOW CHART "A"
FIGURE 5

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3
Foundation	Caution	Exhortation

But sometimes one line is not enough. Just as does Mark's gospel, your Bible book may require two sloping lines to get the author's point across:
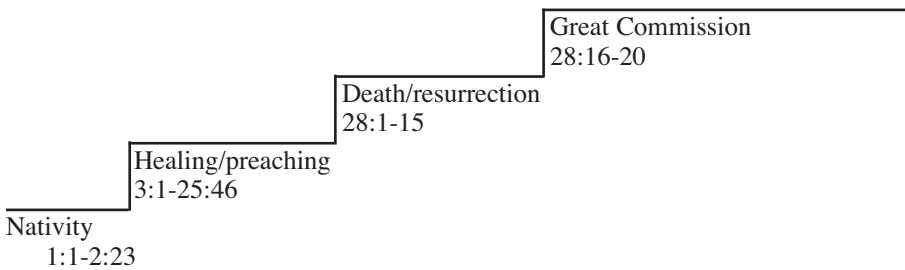
BOOK OF THE BIBLE FLOW CHART "B"
FIGURE 6

"Who am I?"
(Mark 8:27)

Prepares people for
this question with a
constant presentation
of His Person and work.

Presses home the full
effect of this question
with contrasting climaxes
of unbelief and vindication.

BOOK OF THE BIBLE FLOW CHART "C"
FIGURE 7

Matthew's gospel requires a stepladder:

Great Commission
28:16-20

Death/resurrection
28:1-15

Healing/preaching
3:1-25:46

Nativity
1:1-2:23

Whatever shape your flow chart takes, a diagram of the biblical author's primary line of reasoning across the book is a must for mapping out the rest of the context.

The Section Context

During this aspect of your contextual studies, you focus your attention on the natural breaks in the text that divide it into sections. Read the entire book through *at one*

sitting and try to concentrate on the larger relationships in the passage.

Be on the Lookout for *Repetition* — Sometimes repeated terms, phrases, clauses, and sentences act as headings to introduce sections. For example, you may read the words "And it came to pass" repeatedly. Or these elements may act as tailpieces to conclude each section. (See, for instance, Luke 1:80; 2:40; cf. 2:52.) Some authors repeat key words, propositions, or concepts to set the tone for entire sections — such as the word "love" in 1 John.

Search for *Grammatical Clues* — Some conjunctions and adverbs mark the place where the author made a transition. Hunt out such words as "then," "therefore," "wherefore," "but," "nevertheless," or "meanwhile." If you know Greek, pay attention to the words *oun*, *de*, *kai*, *tote*, or *dio*.

Watch Out for *Rhetorical Questions* — Verses such as Romans 6:1 could signal a switch to a new theme or new section. Sometimes you might find a series of questions designed to keep up the argument or plan of an entire section, as in Romans 3:1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, etc.

Be Alert to *Psychological Indicators* — Occasionally an author will (1) leave out a conjunction (asyndeton) when in a hurry or excited or thinking fast; (2) insert an explanation (parenthesis) when wanting to throw in some guidelines for interpretation (see, for an example, Eph. 3:2-13); or (3) not bother to finish a sentence before going on to the next thought (anacoluthon) when really stirred up about something.

Be Sensitive to *Changes* — When the author switches the *time, location*, or *setting* — especially when either he or the speaker is narrating something — or modifies the *tense, voice,* or *mood* of a verb, it could signal the inception of something new. A shift in the *subject or object* or of *attention* from one group to another (usually with a vocative — "O man," [Rom. 2:1]) frequently establishes sectional limits in the epistles.

Don't Miss When the Author *Announces* the Theme — Paul clearly states the topic for the section (1 Thess. 4:13-18) when he says: "But we do not want you to remain uninformed, brethren, *about those who are asleep*" (verse 13).

After you have divided the book into its major sections, *prepare a map* to show the natural breaks in the text. Chart each turn in the author's flow of thought. For example, here is how you might map the main sections in Peter's second epistle:

THE SECTION MAP — FIGURE 8

Greetings	Foundation	Caution	Exhortation	Conclusion
	COVENANT			
Benediction	Cooperation	Desecration	Consummation	Benediction
1:1, 2	1:3-21	2:1-22	3:1-17	3:18

The Immediate Context

Once you locate your text in the stream of progressive revelation, it is time for you to pin down where and how it fits into its book and section. Unlike its forerunners, however, this step presents some unique challenges. As A. Berkeley Mickelson points out: "The first responsibility of every interpreter is to note carefully what precedes and what follows any verse or passage which he is interpreting. This often involves going back two or three paragraphs and ahead two or three paragraphs. Chapter divisions do not necessarily serve as boundary lines. One may need to go back to the preceding chapter or ahead to the next chapter to get the true context" *(Interpreting the Bible*, p. 102).

Each section of a biblical book can be broken down into paragraphs, that is, distinct blocks of related thought. (The Old Testament was not originally written in paragraphs—just as the entire Bible was not originally written in verses. The paragraph was originally considered a form of punctuation among the Greeks and was the only punctuation mark that Aristotle ever mentioned. Aristophanes, in developing his theory of rhetoric, subdivided long segments of writing into periods, colons, and commas, which, of course, we now consider punctuation marks and not sections of copy. The Hebrew books of Scripture were divided into *parashiyyot*, not paragraphs, and at least some of these parashiyyot were given names. For example, the *parashah* [singular of *parashiyyot]* of Moses' encounter with God in the wilderness was called "the bush" and appears that way in Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37; Acts 7:35.)

Even if your text is only a fragment of a paragraph, your search for its connection with what comes before and after it may span the entire section. At times your investigation may extend to other sections—especially if your text is part of a section that resumes or develops an earlier topic or theme that differs from those of bordering sections. The connection may be:

1. *historical* if the text is tied to actual facts, people, places, or events—possibly in chronological order.

2. *logical* when the text is involved in a chain of reasoning, either depending on what the writer or speaker said previously or as part of a developing argument.

3. *theological* if the text develops some historical fact or circumstance along Christological, ecclesiological, or eschatological lines (see chapter 5, the section on typology under the subdivision of the analogy of faith).

4. *psychological* when the author or speaker seems to go off on a tangent for some inexplicable reason. Actually, something in the preceding text most likely triggered a somewhat different but related idea that interrupted the flow of thought. The result is usually an *asyndeton* (the omission of conjunctions that normally link together words or phrases), a *parenthesis* (a digression or explanation), or an *anacoluthon* (inconsistent or incoherent syntax within a sentence that breaks off the original line of reasoning to launch into what at first appears to be out-of-place). The mood of a verb is also a key to the speaker or writer's psychology. (See chapter 3.)

For example, more is at stake than Samson's personal fall in Judges 16. The angel of the Lord announced in 13:5 that Samson would begin to deliver his people—not just himself. So taking the larger context into account, we discover that God meant for Samson's individual Nazirite vows to commence the process of separating both him and Israel from a pagan Philistine environment.

God used the Hebrew strongman as a symbol of cultural differences to instigate division between His people and their oppressors. For instance, the Philistines relied on military prowess to give them the advantage over their neighbors. Archaeologists have uncovered evidence that the Philistines shaved their heads for hand-to-hand combat. Imagine how Samson's uncut locks stood out against a sea of Philistine "skinheads." So Samson's final blow against the Dagon worshipers was more than an act of personal vindication; it was a blow toward Israel's freedom.

Interpreters need to remember that there is a danger of bypassing the historical situation and reading the text as if God spoke directly to them and contemporary society. The opposite risk is also possible—that interpreters may get bogged down in the immediate situation and draw the incorrect conclusion that God spoke only to

Israel. As you attempt to understand Scripture, stay in touch with the everlasting covenant and explore how God's people related to your text in pre-Exilic, Exilic, and post-Exilic times, and both before and after Christ's first advent.

Notice the summarizing guidelines for contextual analysis, adapted from Mickelsen's book, *Interpreting the Bible* (p. 113).

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1. Keep everything in perspective. Never lose sight of the big picture. The smaller the quantity of material under investigation, the greater the danger of ignoring context. The entire Bible is the eventual context for your verse or passage. Build your study on a canonical framework.

2. Examine the book as you zero in on the more local setting for your text. Discover its overall plan and purpose. Prepare a biblical data chart of background information and a Bible flow chart of the author's thought.

3. Concentrate on the larger relationships in the text. Map the entire book, separating it at those points where it naturally divides into major segments of thought. Your verse or passage belongs to one of these sections of the book.

4. Explore the immediate context of your verse or passage. Observe any parallels between it and other material in the same section. You may have to go outside the local section to establish a historical, logical, theological, or psychological connection with what comes before and after it.

5. Expand the context to canonical proportions. Observe any parallels with other material, first in the same book and then in another book by the same author, and finally in other books by different authors. Try to find genuine parallels that come from the same time period.

CHAPTER 2

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

Tere is more to locking in the meaning of a word than just looking it up in a dictionary. When you single out and apply one of the definitions for a word under consideration, you might plug a meaning into the text that forces the verse to say something it does not. You could even distort the sense of the entire passage.
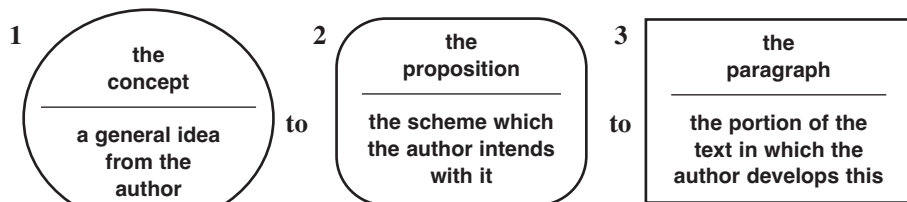
To Begin With

Language experts recognize that the literary *context* reflects an author's overall flow of connected thoughts. It provides the framework for each word and even directions as to how the sentence should function. Every sentence gets its instructions, so to speak, from the words, phrases, and clauses that precede it, and it influences those that follow. That is why experienced interpreters investigate larger textual segments instead of individual words in the process of trying to get a sense of what the author meant. They work with clauses, phrases, and sentences, while paying strict attention to the details of each component word.

Since the Bible writers expressed themselves both by the word forms they chose and by the way that they arranged those forms, grammatical analysis is not enough. Grammar may tell us how words are used in their various forms, but *syntax* explains how word forms are arranged into phrases, clauses, and sentences. *Structural analysis*[1] aims to expose the overall pattern by which an author develops his ideas, with main and supporting arguments, into a series of connected thoughts—without disturbing the original context or stripping the writer's original intent from a single word.

Instead of concentrating on individual words, structural studies focus on the way the author assembled them into a single whole—in order to separate the text into distinct blocks of thought called paragraphs—without tearing the text apart. The contribution of each word becomes clear, as you trace the way the author organized his views. (See Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, p. 89.)

THE SYNTACTICAL PROCESS—FIGURE 9

1 the concept		2 the proposition		3 the paragraph
a general idea from the author	**to**	the scheme which the author intends with it	**to**	the portion of the text in which the author develops this

Generally, an author progressively develops his thoughts the usual literary way:

FIGURE 10

Introduction

↓

Body

↓

Conclusion
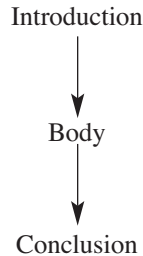
The Introduction—If the author has written a narrative, the unifying principle is most often chronology, and the author usually gives the basics about time, place, characters, and other important information in the introduction.

New Testament stories, for example, often compress this information into a single sentence, as in Matthew 8:5-13 (KJV). Matthew quickly establishes what follows as the next event in a sequence ("And when"); tells us where (Capernaum); gives the reason for the encounter ("my servant . . . sick of the palsy"); indicates the social positions of the characters (centurion, Lord, servant); and reveals the centurion's genuine concern for his servant's welfare ("beseeching him"). Thus he gives us a clue to the centurion's character and attitude.

Old Testament narratives tend to stress historical data, such as time and place in their introductions. Esther 1:1-3, for example, supplies the background to the feast (time, date, occasion, and guest list), which is the occasion that queen Vashti refused to appear before King Ahasuerus and to impress the VIPs at his court.

If the writer intends to *persuade* readers about something, the introduction takes whatever form appeals to the widest audience. In 1 Corinthians the first thing Paul does is to establish himself and his position to his readers. Instead of tooting his own apostolic horn, he displays the affection and concern of a genuine shepherd, which makes the reprimands that follow easier to take. As Christ's emissary he can accomplish a great deal more than as a leader in his own right.

When a writer intends to express clear, incisive thoughts or the importance of cause and effect, he frequently uses *lead-in* sentences to introduce each progressive step in the development of thought, linking each step clearly to what has gone before. Lead-in sentences focus the readers' or listeners' attention, preparing them for what follows. Each paragraph picks up an idea (or more often an exact word) from the closing sentence of the preceding paragraph and that idea, finally linking it clearly with the next paragraph.

Therefore, each chapter, and especially each paragraph, in 1 Corinthians has its own organization within the greater organization of the whole. Each unit has its own introduction, body, and conclusion as Paul elaborates on an idea introduced in a preceding chapter or verse. The conclusion leads into the next major unit, and the pattern repeats itself.

The Body—After the introduction accomplishes its purpose, the writer frequently amplifies a thread, a detail, or concept set forth in the introduction (1) by presenting

examples, (2) by taking a more detailed look at various aspects of it, or (3) by developing it into a larger issue.

In a narrative the body begins after the introduction has presented the time, place, and characters and has developed the plot and action. In nonnarrative prose, it is usually easy to detect when the writer moves on to the body of the work.

In the book of Romans, for instance, Paul finishes his introduction with the theme he will follow (1:16, 17) and immediately shifts into an explanation of what he means (verse 18).

Jude rushes right into his purpose for writing (verse 3), and after he exposes the false teachers, he repeatedly reminds his readers of the danger they present to the faithful. These reminders clearly define the way that Jude organized his thoughts as he leads us from one major thought unit into the next.

The Conclusion—The conclusion is the place where the writer or speaker pulls together the main threads of the introduction and the high points of the body. He can (1) summarize things, (2) deductively or inductively reason his way to a principle, (3) call readers to action, or (4) ask a significant question, to mention only a few.

Conclusions to the New Testament epistles usually stand out sharply as they return the reader to the tone found in the introductions. Frequently they summarize things in the form of a doxology followed with final greetings and blessings. Biblical narratives usually have a brief conclusion, simply telling about the action that resulted from the climax or noting that the characters left the scene and went to another place.

In Summary—Biblical writers organized their thoughts in the usual literary way: with an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. This overall format even appears within the chapters or smaller units.

Those ideas grouped together in paragraphs, or in stanzas of poetry, work very closely together and form a cluster of associated minor thought units. Structural analysis explores the way that these clusters contribute to the overall progression of thought.

The ability to analyze the author's style will help the interpreter see how everything works together to achieve a total effect. Style reflects the complex attitudes and environmental influences directly responsible for the thought patterns and habitual vocabulary that the author uses to express himself or herself in writing. As structural analysis recaptures the writer's pattern for putting words together, it simultaneously reconstructs his thread of thought and so reproduces the original meaning from the text.

Here is the basic syntactical procedure:

1. Identify what type of literature you are working with.

2. Trace the way that the author develops the idea into a full-fledged proposition by (a) identifying the form of each word; (b) recognizing the way that the author organized the words into groups to form phrases, clauses, or sentences; (c) determining the relationship of one group to another; and (d) measuring the rhythm of groups as a result of stresses and pauses.

3. Define all paragraphs, the basic units for any further study. This is the aim of the first two steps.

Identifying the Type of Literature

There are five basic literary types.

Prose—Plain, free-flowing language that isn't organized according to the rules of poetry is prose. There are three classes of biblical prose: (1) speeches—sermons (for example, Deut. 6; Acts 7:2-53) and prayers (for instance, Nehemiah's prayer in Neh.

1:5-11); (2) records—contracts (Gen. 15), letters (Galatians), lists (Ex. 1:1-5; Matt. 1:1-16), laws (Ex. 20:1-17), and ritual observances (Lev. 16); and (3) historical narratives (for example, Acts 17:10-15).

Poetry—This type of literature makes up almost one third of the Old Testament and frequently appears in the New Testament, especially in the gospels. In fact, only Leviticus, Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, and Malachi lack some form of poetry. Poetry presents issues in black and white with mostly figurative language. It generally avoids certain devices found in Hebrew prose (such as the definite article—*heh*, the definite direct object marker—*eth*, the relative pronoun—*asher*, and either the *waw* consecutive or conversive).

The dominant feature, however, of biblical poetry is the way it arranges two (a couplet), three (a triad), and even four (a quatrain) lines in parallel.

The three basic kinds of parallels used in Hebrew poetry are:

1. Grammatic—The lines are parallel in form but not in meaning. For example, both lines may have the same word order:

<div align="center">

subject   verb   direct object
subject   verb   direct object

</div>

But none of the words used need to have the same meaning.

2. Semantic—The lines are parallel in meaning or thought and also can match up grammatically. There are two subdivisions of semantic parallelism:

(a) *synonymous parallelism*, in which the second or succeeding lines repeat the thought from the first line but use different words; for example,

"Israel	does not	know,
My people	do not	consider" (Isa. 1:3, NKJV)

"Love	your enemies,
Do good to	those who hate you, . . .
Bless	those who curse you,
Pray for	those who abuse you" (Luke 6:27, 28).

[Matt. 5:39, 40; 39:46, 47; 6:25; 7:6; 7:7, 8; 10:24, 25; 10:41; 12:30; 12:41, 42; 13:16; 23:39; Mark 2:21, 22; 3:4; 3:24, 25; 3:28; 4:22; 4:30; 8:17, 18; 9:43-47; 10:38; 10:43, 44; 13:24, 25; Luke 6:37, 38; 12:48b; 13:2-5; 15:32; 17:26-29; 19:43, 44; 23:39; John 3:11; 6:35; 6:55; 12:31; 13:16]

(b) *antithetic parallelism*, in which the second or succeeding lines are in contrast with the thought from the first line, but again using different words; for example,

"A soft answer	turns away	wrath,
But a harsh word	stirs up	anger" (Prov. 15:1).

| "A good tree cannot | bear | bad fruit, |
| Nor can a bad tree | bear | good fruit" (Matt. 7:18). |

[Matt. 5:19; 6:2, 3; 6:5, 6; 6:22, 23; 7:17, 18; 10:32, 33; 13:16, 17; 22:14; Mark 2:19, 20; 3:28, 29; 4:25; 7:8; 7:15; 8:35; Luke 6:21a and 25a; 6:21b and 25b; 7:44, 45; 7:46, 47; 16:10; John 3:6; 3:12; 3:17; 3:20, 21]

　　3. Rhetorical—This type of parallelism uses certain literary devices to balance, beautify, or simplify meaning, and it uses seven different ways to do this:

　　(a) *climactic*, in which the thoughts repeat and progressively build to a peak; for example:

"The Lord	is	in	his holy temple;
The Lord	is	on	his heavenly throne;
He	observes		the sons of men;
His eyes	examine		them" (Ps. 11:4, NIV).

or they might climb a staircase; for example:

"for	he cometh,			
for	he cometh	to	judge	the earth:
	he	shall	judge	the world	with righteousness,
		and	the people	with his truth"
				(Ps. 96:13, KJV).

"Do not think that	I have come	to abolish the law and the prophets;
	I have not come	to abolish
	but	to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17).

[Matt. 6:6; 6:22, 23; 6:34; 10:34; 10:40; 12:28, 29; Mark 2:27, 28; 9:37; Luke 10:16; John 6:37; 8:32; 10:11; 11:25; 13:20; 14:2, 3; 14:21; 16:7; 16:22]

　　(b) *synthetic*—in which thoughts are added to one another and so fill out the idea; for instance:

"Blessed is the	man			
	who does	not walk	in the counsel	of the wicked
		or stand	in the way	of sinners
		or sit	in the seat	of mockers"
				(Ps. 1:1, NIV).

"The law of the wise is a fountain of life,
to turn one away from the snares of death" (Prov. 13:14, NKJV).

Sometimes both lines seem to express entirely different or unrelated ideas, yet they share a common theme:

"He that hideth hatred with lying lips,

and

he that uttereth a slander   is a fool" (Prov. 10:18, KJV).

Although the first person hides his true feelings and the second makes no effort to conceal his, both improperly use their tongues to produce the same results—injury.

[Matt. 23:5-10; Mark 12:38b, 39; Luke 12:49-51]

(c) *chiastic*—in which the thoughts alternate, usually going from thought A to B and then back from B' to A'. If you diagram the pattern, you discover that the thoughts crisscross to form an X, which is the shape of the Greek letter *chi*, hence the words "chiastic" and "chiasm."

FIGURE 11

"The alternation of ideas . . . indicate that this . . . structure is not accidental, but rather an ingenious design of the poet . . . the Hebrew poet deliberately decided not to parallel precisely the word order of his poem by using the chiastic pattern." Although B may complement or even complete A, "Chiastic parallelism clearly avoids expressing the same idea twice. It rather aims at a sequence of thought which brings out the essence of the point more fully and sharply" (LaRondelle, *Deliverance in the Psalms,* pp. 27, 28).

There are at least three chiastic patterns.

The simple chiasm:

A	"Ephraim		
B		shall not envy	
C			Judah,
C'			and Judah
B'		shall not harass	
A'	Ephraim" (Isa. 11:13, NKJV).		

The line chiasm:

A	"My son, if thine heart be	wise,
B	My heart shall rejoice, . . .	
B'	My reins shall rejoice,	
A'	When thy lips speak	right things" (Prov. 23:15, 16, KJV).

A   "Whoever exalts himself
        B   will be humbled, . . .
        B'   whoever humbles himself
A'   will be exalted" (Matt. 23:12, NIV).

The stanza chiasm:

A   "By his power   he stilled the Sea;
        B   by his understanding   he struck down   Rahab.
        B'   by his wind   the heavens were made fair;
A'   his hand pierced   the fleeing serpent" (Job 26:12, 13, NRSV).

[Matt. 6:24; 7:6; Mark 2:22, 27; 8:35; 9:43, 45, 47; 10:31]

     (d) *comparative*—in which the second line, in comparison with the first, illustrates and explains it

figuratively:

    "As the deer pants   for   the water brooks,
      so pants my soul   for   You, O God" (Ps. 42:1, NKJV).

directly:

    "A continual dropping on a very rainy day
     and a contentious woman are alike" (Prov. 27:15, NKJV).

sensibly:

    "Better is a little with the fear of the Lord,
     than great treasure and turmoil" (Prov. 15:16, NASB).

    (e) *merismus*—in which a part is used to indicate the whole, and vice versa.

    "For from the rising of the sun
     even unto the going down of the same
     my name shall be great among the Gentiles" (Mal. 1:11, KJV).

    (f) *paronomasia*—in which similar sounds are placed side by side; poets used paronomasia to achieve a play on words:

    [God] "looked for   justice   *[mishpat]*,
      but saw   bloodshed   *[mishpach]*;
      for   righteousness   *[tsedaqah]*,
      but heard   cries of distress   *[tseaqah]*" (Isa. 5:7, NIV).

    (g) *ballast-variant*—when couplets or triads occur in which one grammatical unit has no counterpart to balance it, the Hebrew compensates by lengthening the shorter

line with the missing part:

A	"He made known	his ways	to Moses,
B		his acts	to the people of Israel" (Ps. 103:7).

(Note that the verb translated "he made known" in the first line has nothing to match it in the second line, but David adds "of Israel" to the second line as sort of ballast to compensate for the lack of the verb.) For more information about these insightful parallelisms, see Nils Lund's *Chiasms in the New Testament*.

Narrative—The writer tends to stay in the background of a narrative. Instead of addressing us with direct statements, he usually allows the words and actions of the people in the story to get across the main thrust of the message. As you try to figure out what is going on in the narrative, ask these questions of the text: (1) What details did the author select from the maze of possible speeches, persons, or events? (2) How did he arrange this selection? (3) Does the author allow a person or a group of people to go on speaking at the climax of a sequence of events, or does he personally interrupt the narration to offer an inspired estimate of what took place?

Wisdom—There are two basic strains of biblical wisdom writing: (1) Philosophic or reflective wisdom thought tends to carry a sustained argument across a large body of text in either a persuasive tone (for instance, Job or Ecclesiastes) and/or in a pleading tone (for example, Prov. 1-9; Matt. 5-7). It asks how and why in search of answers to life's most basic questions about the ways of God and the purpose of life. (2) Prudential wisdom thought tends to come in smaller, disconnected units of thought that often stand alone (for example, Prov. 10-31; Psalms 1, 37, 49, 112; James). It consists of practical statements that answer the question "What?"

Here is a complete list of the wisdom writings of the Bible: Job; Psalms 1, 19, 32, 34, 37, 49, 73, 78, 112, 127, 128, 133; Proverbs; Ecclesiastes; Song of Solomon; Matthew 5-7 (the Sermon on the Mount); and James.

Apocalyptic—Ezekiel; Daniel; Zechariah; Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 (the Olivet discourse); the book of Revelation; and brief prophetic sections in the Old Testament (for instance, Isa. 24-27) are all examples of biblical apocalyptic thought. Apocalyptic writing generally (1) stresses God's freedom to act and power to rule, (2) emphasizes dreams and visions, (3) uses sometimes bizarre symbolism, (4) puts everything in historical sequence, (5) focuses on the end time rather than the present, (6) features angels, and (7) proclaims a powerful ethical warning.

Whether in ancient literal Babylon or presently symbolic Babylon, God's people often find themselves caught between their difficult present circumstances and the glorious promised future. At first the Old Testament prophets spoke to their own day, but as time wore on and their dreams were not realized, new generations of prophets shifted their perspective from a contemporary to an end-time focus, projecting the fulfillment of their announcements into the remote future. As a result, they resorted to typology in order to reach beyond their current circumstances to the promised realities.

Unlike classical prophecy, apocalyptic writing attempts to answer contemporary questions and dispel current doubts by describing the time between the disturbing *now* and the wonderful *then* as a divinely controlled delay of inevitable victory. Apocalyptic literature reveals God as the permanent Lord of history, and no matter how bad things seem to get, the glories of the new age are sure to come—but in His good time. It relieves the pressure of our frustration by reminding us that the worse

things seem to get, the nearer we are to Christ's blessed return.

Apocalyptic also inspires perseverance by insisting that, finally, just as the earth is about to give out and the heavens brace themselves for collapse, Jesus will come with heavenly armies to overthrow the enemy and to install the kingdom for those who remain faithful to the end.

The Importance of Grammatical Details

Most of us hated English class in elementary school and high school. Remember all those sentences the teacher made you diagram? Who cared? You surely didn't. It might have been useful learning the times tables, but you'd never have any use for learning the parts of speech, for knowing the difference between a noun and a verb. But most of us managed to slog through those tedium-filled classes. Boring!

But if you stop to think about it for a moment, anyone who sets out to interpret Scripture needs to have a working knowledge of basic grammar. After all, how can you exegete the Bible properly if you cannot distinguish between a subject and the direct object? And this cluster of words here—what role do they play in the sentence? Do they form an adverbial clause? Prepositional phrase? Participial phrase? And how can you explain what is going on in a sentence unless you know the difference between a declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentence? Similarly, it is important for you to know what kind of action is taking place in a sentence, but the only way you will know that is if you understand the difference between a transitive verb and an intransitive one.

And who cared about participles and gerunds and infinitives? Well, now that you want to understand Scripture better, *you* care. But all those puzzling terms you met so many years ago that you hardly know how to spell them now, let alone know what they mean. Yet you are serious about exegeting the Bible so that your congregation can understand God, His will, and His plan more clearly. So what can you do? How do you make up for all that lost time when you daydreamed through English classes?

Well, all is not lost. In Part 2 of this book—"A Closer Look"—you will find in chapter 7 a crash course in some of the niceties of basic grammar—especially adapted to English Bible study. Some of it may seem confusing, but read it through carefully. Study the examples given. And, if need be, consult an English grammar book at your local library.

The section that immediately follows this paragraph relies heavily on syntactical and grammatical analysis. So you may want to read chapter 7 right now before you proceed to "A Strategy for Structural Analysis."

A Strategy for Structural Analysis

The purpose of "structural analysis" is to trace an author's train of thought by means of the literary-grammatical footprints left behind in the text. We do this by applying what we have learned about grammar and syntax to the text so that we can mark the starting and ending points along the trail where the author developed his topics or themes. The process should yield an accurate, detailed picture of what the author intended to communicate.

The first thing we want to do is to identify and define sentences. We accomplish this by acquainting ourselves with the *parts of speech* so that we can prepare a structural draft of the clauses and phrases that they form. After we figure out which clauses and phrases belong to one another, we count the number of related clauses

and phrases and label each sentence as simple, complex, compound, or compound-complex. This will divide the text into units of complete thought.

Next, we need to figure out which sentences work together. We start by mentally lumping together those sentences that we suspect share the same topic or theme. Then we prepare a map to show where we believe the text divides into separate themes or topics.

Then we need to determine which topic sentences or theme propositions work together. To do this, we must prepare a structural analysis of the entire passage. Proceeding verse by verse, we carefully position every word, phrase, clause, and sentence to show the way that they parallel or support one another. This will bring out the precise relationship between every element in the passage.

Finally, we need to identify the relationship between related topic sentences or theme propositions. This last step is to convert the structural analysis into a structural diagram that shows how everything works. Color-coding each structural signal allows the structure to stand out more vividly. Grammatical-syntactical notes alongside key words further define the shape of the text and make it easier to isolate each stated or implied theme proposition or topic sentence so that we can syntactically bracket into paragraphs the ones that seem to share something similar into paragraphs. Then we can outline the entire structure as a whole, in the main margin, with main divisions at each paragraph, subdividing its sentences, clauses, or phrases into main points and subpoints.

Here are step-by-step instructions for the entire procedure—complete with detailed examples. A sample analysis appears in Appendix A.

Proceed *one sentence* at a time.

Step 1—Scan the Text—Mentally identify each part of speech.

FIGURE 12

PART OF SPEECH	QUESTIONS TO ASK
Noun	Does it name a person, place, or thing? Does it answer the question *who?* or *what?* before the verb; *whom?* or *what?* after the verb?
Pronoun	Does it stand for a noun?
Verb	Does it tell what someone or something did?
	Does it link one word with another that identifies or describes it?
	Does it merely show that something exists?
Adjective	Does the word tell *what kind, which one, how many,* or *how much?*
Adverb	Does the word tell *where, when, in what manner,* or *to what extent* the verbal idea occurs?
Preposition	Is the word part of a phrase that includes a noun or a pronoun as its object?
Conjunction	Does the word connect other words in the sentence?
Interjection	Does the word express emotion and function independently from the rest of the sentence?

Step 2—Prepare a Structural Draft—The basic unit for structural analysis is the sentence. It (1) shows how each clause and phrase functions, (2) organizes them according to the actual way they relate to each other, and (3) makes it possible to accurately compare their significance with that of other clauses and phrases in the text.

The three steps to sentence identification are:

1. *Identify clauses and phrases*. Examine the word group. Decide whether it is a clause or a phrase. Record the word or words that introduce it ("Intro"). Label the ("Type") of clause or phrase that these words introduce, not what part or parts of speech they are. Is it an adjective, adverb, noun, or main *clause*? Is it a prepositional, adjective, appositive, adverb, or verbal *phrase*?

2. *Figure out the relationship between clauses*. If it expresses a complete idea and can stand alone, it is independent. If it is connected to another independent clause by means of a coordinating conjunction, it is coordinate. If it is connected to an independent or coordinate clause by means of a subordinating conjunction, it is dependent. (Indicate whether it is independent [ind.], coordinate [coor.], or dependent [dep.] in the "Relation" slot.

3. *Count the number of clauses and phrases directly related to each other*. A single independent clause is a *simple sentence*. One or more subordinate clauses joined to a single independent clause form a *complex sentence*. Two or more independent clauses joined by either a comma and a coordinating conjunction or a semicolon make up a *compound sentence*. Two or more independent clauses plus at least one subordinate clause constitute a *compound-complex sentence*. (Label each sentence on the same line as its first clause.)

<div align="center">FIGURE 13</div>

	CLAUSES			PHRASES		SENTENCES
Vs	Intro	Type	Relation	Intro	Type	Type
1	Jude	Subj.		a bondslave and brother	Appo. Appo.	Complete Subj.
				to those	Prep.	Incompl. Pred.
	who	Adj.	Dep.			
	who	Adj.	Dep./Coor.	by	Adv.	
	who	Adj.	Dep./Coor.	in	Prep.	
2	Grace	Noun				Simple
	peace	Noun				
	and mercy	Main	Ind.			
3				While	Verb	Complex
				about	Prep.	
	I	Main	Ind.	calling	Verb	
				to battle	Verb	
	that was	Adj.	Sub.			
4	because	Adv.	Sub.			
	those who	Adj.	Sub.			
	ungodly	Appo.				
	who turn	Adj.	Sub.			
	and deny	Adj.	Sub./Coor.			
5	So I	Main	Ind.			Complex
	though	Adv.	Sub.			
	that	Noun	Sub.			
	after			from	Prep.	
	who	Adj.	Sub.			
6	and He	Noun	Coor.			
	those who	Adj.	Sub.			
	who did not	Adj.	Sub.			
	but	Adj.	Sub./Coor.	in	Prep.	

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	CLAUSES			PHRASES		SENTENCES
Vs	Intro	Type	Relation	Intro	Type	Type
				under	Prep.	
				for	Prep.	
7	Just as	Adv.	Sub.			
	which indul.	Adj.	Sub.	the same	Adv.	
	and went	Adj.	Sub./Coor.	as	Prep.	
				by	Adv.	
8	Well these	Main	Ind.	in	Prep.	Complex
9	Even Mich.	Main	Ind.			Compound
	when he	Adv.	Sub.	with	Prep.	
	and argued	Adv.	Sub./Coor.	about	Prep.	
				against	Prep.	
	but said	Main	Coor.			

Step 3—Prepare a Paragraph Map—We need to gather together those sentences that deal with a single topic or a series of events that relate to one actor or participant in the same time-setting and location. Since there may be many of these paragraphs in a single section, carefully trace each concept from the point at which the author starts developing an idea to its conclusion. Fortunately, most of the criteria for recognizing these units resemble those for setting off sections.

Repeated terms or concepts may give away the theme that unifies the author's arguments into one paragraph (for example, "love" in 1 Cor. 13).

Rhetorical questions (see Rom. 6:1) and *vocative* forms of address (for instance, Col. 3:18-4:1) often mark the start of a paragraph.

Sudden changes in the text usually betray the beginning of a paragraph—(a) a switch in the key actor or participant, (b) a shift in the action site, (c) a swing in topic, or (d) a change in the tense, voice, or mood of a verb.

What appears *at or near the end* of one paragraph frequently becomes the topic of more intense development in the next (for instance, "wisdom" in 1 Cor. 2:5; then from 2:6ff).

The *strophe*, the paragraph of poetry, gives itself away by:

1. the *recurring refrain*—lines that repeat themselves in the midst of a poem (for example, Psalms 39, 42, 43, 44, 46, 49, 56, 57, 59, 62, 67, 78, 80, 99, 107, 114, 136, 144, 145; Amos 1, 2, 4; Isa. 5:9, 10). For instance, the following refrain divides Isaiah 9:8-10:4 into four strophes (9:12, 17, 21; 10:4): "For all this his anger is not turned away; his hand is stretched out still."

2. the word *selah*, which occurs 71 times in 39 psalms, plus three times in Habakkuk (3:3, 9, 13). (The meaning of *selah* is unknown, but speculation has identified it as a sort of musical notation, as a pause in singing for narration, as a command to lift up the hands, as a command to bow in prayer, as instructions to the choir, as instructions regarding instrumental accompaniment, or as an ejaculation such as Hallelujah.)

3. the *alphabetic acrostic*, in which the first word of the first stanza begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet and the first word in the second stanza begins with the second letter of the alphabet, etc. In some cases every line in the same strophe begins with the same letter. Acrostics are found in Psalms 9-10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 135 and Lamentations 1-4.

4. *miscellaneous devices*, such as (a) changes in rhythm or length of the last line, (b)

repeated catchwords (for example, "O Lord") or formulas like "Thus saith the Lord," (c) chiasms (see the subsection "Parallelism" under "Poetry"), (d) anacrusis, which is when a single word (for instance, an interrogative—"How"—in Lamentations 1:1 or an exclamation—"truly"—in Genesis 4:24) stands outside the basic pattern of balance and parallelism in couplets or strophes. This is found in especially expressive strophes, such as "If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech [ballast variant] seventy-seven fold" (NKJV).

5. *distant parallelism*, as when parallel paired words are sometimes separated from each other as in "I crushed them" (Ps. 18:38, NIV) and "I beat them" (Ps. 18:42, NIV).

Once you have consulted several Bibles and compiled some notes of your own, map out the divisions with a chart like this one. Use Malachi 1:1-14 as your text.
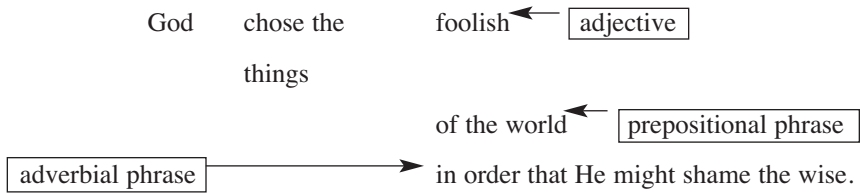
PARAGRAPH MAP—FIGURE 14

	AV	RSV	LB	NASB	NAB	NEB	NIV	Mine
1								
2		2		2	2	2	2	
3								
4								4
5								5
6	6	6		6	6	6	6	6
7								
8								8
9								
10								10
11								
12	12							
13								13
14								

Step 4—Prepare a Structural Analysis—1. Preserve the writer's flow of thought by (a) listing each verse in numerical order and without skipping lines between them and (b) working (in pencil) from left to right then from top to bottom, from main to subordinate clauses and from subject to predicate.
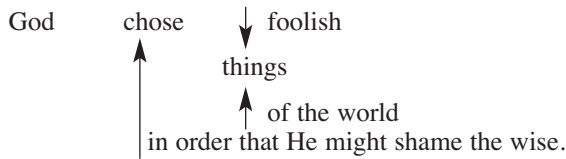
2. Carefully position each term in order to show (a) *coordination* of parallel words, phrases, clauses, and sentences, as well as balanced pairs and contrasts, lining them up directly under each other no matter how far apart they are from each other in the text.
For example,

| Jude 3		Beloved
Jude 17	But	you, beloved

(b) *subordination* of adverb, adjective, and noun clauses; of adverb, adjective, appositive, prepositional, and verbal phrases; and of adverbs, adjectives, appositives, and most pronouns. Do this by indenting them (when it helps bring out the structure of the text) *above* (if they come before) or *below* (if they come after) and slightly to the right of the terms they modify.

God   chose the   foolish ← ▢ adjective

           things

                           of the world ← ▢ prepositional phrase

▢ adverbial phrase ————————→ in order that He might shame the wise.

(c) *connection* between every term in the text with *arrows* pointing up to show dependency or support or pointing down to continue the flow of the text. For example,

God   chose   ↓ foolish

           ↑   things

           ↑   ↑ of the world
       in order that He might shame the wise.

Or use *brackets* to lump together groups of terms, attaching distant terms to each other. For instance,

Jude (verse 3)   Beloved . . . ⌐

             But   you   ————

Jude (verse 17)   beloved . . . ⌐
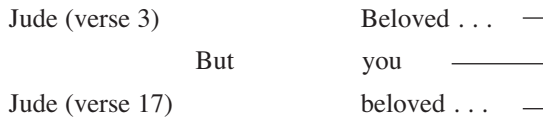
3. Set off the structural signals in the text by
(a) isolating
(b) using boldface or underlining to mark adverbs, adjectives, prepositions, pronouns, interjections, conjunctions.

FIGURE 15

Vs.	Conjunctions	
6	*Yet*	we do speak⌐ wisdom
		↑*among* those *who* are mature;
		↑ └*wisdom*,
		however, ↑*not* *of* this age, ——
		↑*nor* of the rulers
		↑*of* this age, ——
		who are passing away.

(c) positioning (i) conjunctions that introduce independent clauses (like *yet* in the above diagram), before, and to the left of the main margin; coordinate clauses/ phrases or couple nouns, verbs, etc., (like *however* in the above diagram), before, and to the left of a connecting arrow; and subordinate clauses/phrases (like *nor* in the above diagram), after, to the right of a connecting arrow; (ii) brief quotes, idiomatic expressions, or introductory formulas where they best bring out the structure of the text; (iii) predicate nominatives, adjectives, or pronouns where a direct object would

go to balance their subject; (iv) complementary infinitives immediately after the verbs they complete; (v) gerunds where their counterparts would go (that is, subject, direct object, indirect object, object of a preposition, appositive); and (vi) participles where adjectives would go.

(d) highlighting (i) appositives with parentheses ( ), (ii) controversial words from the original text in plain brackets [ ], and (iii) italicized words, missing from the original text, in braces { }.

2. Preserve the writer's syntax, by working from a formal translation (such as the King James Version, the New King James Version, the American Standard Version, the New American Standard Version, the Revised Standard Version, or the New Revised Standard Version), which aims at preserving the original grammar of the language and translates the original text form-for-form (for example, a verb with a verb and a noun with a noun). These translations are preferable to a dynamic translation (such as the New International Version, *The New English Bible*, Moffatt's translation, or Phillips' translation), which aims at preserving the original sense of the language and translates the original text thought-for-thought (for instance, a clause or a phrase for a word).

Because English strains to capture the original language, consult at least two formal translations for the grammar and several dynamic translations for the sense of the passage.

Step 5—Convert Your Structural Analysis Into a Structural Diagram—1. Code your analysis.

<div align="center">

Figure 16

</div>

Part of Speech	Highlight in	or	Mark with
relative pronoun	orange		○
preposition	green		◇
adjective	yellow		□
conjunction	pink		▷
adverb	blue		△

2. Make appropriate grammatical/syntactical notes alongside key words, phrases, and clauses. (Consult chapter 7 in this book and a good English reference tool with a wide selection of definitions, such as the *Oxford Dictionary of Current English*.)

3. Isolate the stated or implied theme proposition or topic sentence for each paragraph and whether at the paragraph's beginning, middle, or end (a) by singling out the main clause syntactically rather than logically and (b) by tracing the flow of thought along the trail of phrases, clauses, and sentences that the author left behind in the text.

4. Outline the structure in the main margin, using Roman numerals lined up with theme propositions or topic sentences, and letters and working from capitals to lower case lined up with main and subordinate subpoints.

5. Reflect any insights gained so far by labeling the theme propositions or topic sentences and the subpoints.

SAMPLE STRUCTURAL DIAGRAM[2]—FIGURE 17

Book		Chapter	Verses	Bible Version	Date
Vs.	Conjunctions	MAIN Clause	SUBORDINATE Clause, SUBJECT		PREDICATE

The diagram includes:

- I. / A. / 1. — Topic Sentence; Subordinate Clauses; Coordinate Clauses — A Typical Paragraph

- II. — Theme Proposition (×4)

  Alternate Paragraph 1
  Sometimes the writer offers the same topic or theme several ways in the same paragraph. So, instead of displaying how subordinate clauses rank under the one main topic clause, this situation requires you to show how each clause shares the same status—by lining them up, one under the other, and bracketing them together as a single package.

- III. — Theme Proposition; Subordinate Clauses; Theme Proposition; Subordinate Clause; Theme Proposition

  Alternate Paragraph 2
  At times, the writer develops his theme over a series of clauses in the same paragraph—even though subordinate material may separate them from one another. But you can show their equal rank by disregarding the space between them, lining them up with one another, and bracketing them as a single package.

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[1] The term *structural analysis* can have two meanings when we talk about exegesis.

A relatively recent discipline in biblical studies is based on the linguistic theories of A. J. Greimas, Ferdinand de Saussure, and others. In this kind of structural analysis, biblical scholars try to discern the "deep structures" that underlie the biblical passage.

Frequently these deep structures will reveal ideas that are polar opposites which are then mediated by a third idea. The assumption is that the larger act of verbal communication has a grammar to it just as do the sentences and paragraphs that constitute a literary work.

That is *not* the meaning of structural analysis as used in this chapter. In this chapter we are talking about the syntactical structure of written works—how words function in phrases, how phrases function in sentences, how sentences function in paragraphs, etc.

[2] Adapted from Kaiser, Walter C., Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981).