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CHRISTADELPHIAN
BIBLE SCHOOL

SCRIPTURE HAS STRUCTURE

How the Bible says emphasizes, clarifies, and illustrates **What** the Bible says.

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July, 2021

To Get Started, Consider These Passages:

- ◆ After seeing a vision, Peter pays a visit to Cornelius's house . . .
- ◆ After a priest and a Levite walked on by, then a Samaritan came upon the man . . .
- ◆ We do not see our signs; there is no longer any prophet, there is none among us who knows how long. How long, O God, is the foe to scoff? Is the enemy to revile your name forever? Why do you hold back your hand, your right hand? Take it from the fold of your garment and destroy them!

Some Patterns We Will Explore in These Classes

- ◆ Patterns and Structures Found Throughout Scripture
 - ◆ Chiasmus
 - ◆ Tetrads
 - ◆ Couplets
 - ◆ Out of Sequence: Parenthetical and Other Inserts
 - ◆ What's Missing?
- ◆ Organization of and Structural Aspects of Specific Books
 - ◆ Genesis, Judges, John, Romans



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Topic 1

Chiasmus: The Classic Bible

Structure

Chiasmus: The classic Bible structure, though
somewhat misnamed

The Chi of Chiasm(us)



Simplest Chiasmus

A B B' A'

- ◆ Figures don't lie, but liars figure.
- ◆ Figure lie liars figure

Simplest Chiasmus A B B' A'

Hosea 6:2

- ◆ English versions: After **two days** he will **revive us**, and on the **third day** raise us up.
- ◆ Hebrew: He will **revive us** after **two days**, and on **the third day** raise us up.
 - ◆ A **revive**
 - ◆ B **two days**
 - ◆ B' **third day**
 - ◆ A' **raise us up**

Simplest Chiasmus

A B B' A'

- ◆ A fury of God
 - ◆ B disobedience
 - ◆ B' sin
- ◆ A' famine

Chiasmus With Central Item: A B C B' A'

- ◆ A fury
 - ◆ B disobedience
 - ◆ C faithlessness
 - ◆ B' sin
- ◆ A' famine

Galatians 3:7-14

⁷ Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." ⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. ¹⁰ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith."¹² But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them."¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

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Galatians 3:7-14, Chiastic Pairs

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Galatians 3:7-14, Full Chiasmus Format

A those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.

B that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In
————— you shall all the nations be blessed.

C Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."

D Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law,

E The righteous shall live by faith

D' But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them.

C' Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed
————— is everyone who is hanged on a tree

B' so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles

A' we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

Galatians 3:15-18

¹⁵ To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. ¹⁶ Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. ¹⁷ This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

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Galatians 3:15-18, Chiasmus with Alternation

- ◆ A no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified
 - ◆ B promises were made to Abraham
 - ◆ C offspring
 - ◆ D It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one
 - ◆ C' offspring, who is Christ
- ◆ A' does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God
 - ◆ B' God gave it to Abraham by a promise

Psalm 74:9-12

We do not see our signs;

there is no longer any prophet,

there is none among us who knows how long.

How long, O God, is the foe to scoff?

Is the enemy to revile *your* name forever?

Why do you hold back *your* hand, *your* right hand?

Take it from the fold of *your* garment and destroy them!

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Psalm 74: 6-9, "Poetical" Chiasmus

- ◆ A Waiting for God to Act
 - ◆ B while the foe scoffs
 - ◆ B' while the enemy reviles
- ◆ A' Pleading for God to Act

Romans 6:11-14 Life and Death

¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. ¹³ Do not present your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments of righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

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Life and Death in Romans 6

- A dead to **sin**, alive to God
 - B do not let **sin** reign
 - C do not **yield members** to sin as unrighteous instruments
 - D **YIELD YOURSELVES TO GOD**
 - C' [yield] your **members** to God as righteous instruments
 - B' **sin shall have no dominion** over you
 - A' not under **law**, but under **grace**

Proverbs 6:16-19

- 16 There are six things that the Lord hates,
seven that are an abomination to him:
- 17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
and hands that shed innocent blood,
- 18 a heart that devises wicked plans,
feet that make haste to run to evil,
- 19 a false witness who breathes out lies,
and one who sows discord among brothers.

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Six Things YHWH Hates,
Seven that are Abominations Proverbs 6:16-19

- ◆ A haughty eyes
 - ◆ B lying tongue
 - ◆ C hands that shed innocent blood
 - ◆ D a heart that devises wicked plans
 - ◆ C' feet that make haste to run to evil
 - ◆ B' false witness who breathes out lies
- ◆ A' one who sows discord among brothers

How Does this Help Me with My Faith and Discipleship?

- ◆ Focuses attention
- ◆ Reveals new insights into familiar content
- ◆ Provides a lesson in perspective and humility
- ◆ The purpose of Bible reading is not just to learn, but to use what we learn to change our character and behavior.



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Topic 2

Tetrads: The Neglected Bible Structure

Bible Tetrads

Sets of four items in which the first three members share a common theme or identity and the fourth member contrasts for emphasis or resolution. Consider the four gospel accounts: Three synoptic—Matthew, Mark, Luke—and then John's gospel.

Some Bible Tetrads

- ◆ The Parable of the Sower: path, rocky ground, weeds, good soil
- ◆ Jotham's Parable: olive, fig, vine, bramble
- ◆ Jesus in the Wilderness: three temptations of the devil, then the angels.
- ◆ Questions in Mt. 22: Pharisees, Sadducees, Pharisees, Jesus.
- ◆ Abraham's Heir: Lot, Ishmael, Eleazer, Isaac.
- ◆ Daniel's four beasts, etc.: lion, bear, leopard, ten-horned beast, "different from all the beasts that were before it."
- ◆ Parents in Luke 2: parents, parents, your father and I, my father's house.
- ◆ How many times did God speak to young Samuel as he slept?

Some Bible Tetrads

- ◆ Elijah's theophany: strong wind, earthquake, fire, small, quiet voice
- ◆ Job's three friends, Bildad, Eliphaz, Zophar, then comes Elihu
- ◆ Sets of more than four: Judah fourth son, fourth plague separates Israelites from Egyptians.
- ◆ Four Gospel Resurrections: Jairus' daughter, Widow of Nain's son, Lazarus, Jesus
- ◆ Saul's demise prophesied: II Samuel 28:6-7
- ◆ Samson's three lies to Delilah, then the fatal truth. (Judges 16)
- ◆ Deuteronomy 20: reasons to forego military duty.
- ◆ Acts 10-11: Peter's vision and visit to Cornelius



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Topic 3

Couplets: The Simplest Poetic Structure

Couplet Formats

- ◆ Line B completes the thought of Line A
- ◆ Line B parallels line A—same idea, different expression
- ◆ Line B gives a contrast to Line A
- ◆ Line B give an example or specific instance of line A
- ◆ One line is metaphor, the other a literal parallel statement
- ◆ ¡Cuidado! Some couplets are triplets, and not all two line verses are couplets.

Couplets: Completing the Thought

“Bad, bad,” says the buyer,

Prov. 20:14

Couplets: Completing the Thought

“Bad, bad,” says the buyer,
but when he goes away, then he boasts.

Prov. 20:14

Couplets: Completing the Thought

Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue

Prov. 21:23

Couplets: Completing the Thought

Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue
keeps himself out of trouble.

Prov. 21:23

Couplets: Parallel Expression

Blows that wound cleanse away evil;
strokes make the innermost part clean.

Prov. 20:30

Couplets: Parallel Expression

Whoever is slack in his work
is a brother to him to who destroys

Prov. 18:9

Couplets: Contrasting Thoughts

A joyful heart is a good medicine,
but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

Prov. 17:22

Couplets: General Statement and Instance

The LORD has made everything for his its purpose,
even the wicked for the day of trouble.

Prov. 16:4

Couplets: Metaphoric and Literal Lines

As a door turns on its hinges,
so does a sluggard on his bed.

Prov. 26:14

Couplets: Metaphoric and Literal Lines

Whoever gives an honest answer
kisses the lips.

Prov. 20:26

Proverbs 7:6-15

For at the **window** of my house
I have looked out through my **lattice**,
and I have seen among the **simple**,
I have perceived among the **youths**,
a **young man lacking sense**,
passing along the **street** near her corner,
taking the **road** to her house
in the **twilight**, in the **evening**,
at the time of **night** and **darkness**.



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Topic 4

Sequences, Interruptions, Parentheticals, and Other Non-Sequitors

What's This Doing Here?

- ◆ Interruption of a narrative by a seemingly unrelated or out-of-sequence text.
- ◆ Passage that doesn't interrupt another thought or narrative, but seems to shift to another topic. Sequential sections that add together to yield a richer teaching even when they are not obviously connected.

What's This Doing Here?

- ◆ Interruption of Abraham's account in Hebrews 11:8-19
- ◆ The morals of the "Lost" parables in Luke 15
- ◆ Psalm 90:7-9a—the "sin verses"
- ◆ Gen. 1:4, etc. "It was good"

What's This Doing Here?

Abraham's account in Hebrews 11:8-19

- ◆ vv. 8-10 by faith, Abraham obeys God's call, leaves Ur, sojourns in the Promised Land
- ◆ v. 11 Sarah receives power to conceive
- ◆ v. 12 Therefore innumerable descendants of Abraham were born.
- ◆ vv. 13-16 These all died in faith, not having received the promises. God has prepared for them a better city.
- ◆ vv. 17-19 By faith, Abraham obeys God, offers up Isaac

What's This Doing Here?

- ◆ Luke 21: The poor widow
- ◆ Genesis 38
- ◆ Insertion of Psalm 32 into the discussion of Abraham's faith, Rom. 4
- ◆ Deuteronomy 10: 6-9, 16
- ◆ 1 Peter 3: 19-20



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Topic 5

What's Missing?

What's Missing?

- ◆ The Book of Esther has no mention of God
- ◆ 1 Thess. 3:6 Timothy brought Paul good news of their faith and love
- ◆ Day 2 of Genesis
- ◆ Beginning of Hebrews
- ◆ Any mention of the patriarchal promises in Joseph narrative, until Jacob's blessing Gen. 48:15-16
- ◆ The Parable of the Good Samaritan—who's on third?

Who's Missing? (Not Titus! 9/13 mentions are in II Cor)

II Corinthians

- ◆ 2:1 the one whom I have pained
- ◆ 2:5-7 . . . anyone . . . such an one . . . forgive and comfort him . .
- ◆ 6:9 We are treated as imposters, and yet are true as unknown, and yet well known . . .
- ◆ 7:12 not for the sake of the one who did wrong
- ◆ 8:18 the brother who is famous among all the churches
- ◆ 8:22 the brother we have often tested and found earnest
- ◆ 10:10 "they" say (no clear antecedent)
- ◆ 10:12 some of those who are commending themselves
- ◆ 11:5, 12:11 super-apostles
- ◆ 11:13 such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.
- ◆ 12:2-5 I know a man in Christ

Where Did Lazarus Go?

John 11

- ◆ v. 1 Now a certain man was ill, **Lazarus** of Bethany.
- ◆ **Lazarus** mentioned by name in v.1, 2, 5, 6, 11 (5x)
- ◆ v.14 Then Jesus told them plainly, **Lazarus** is dead.
- ◆ v.14-39 him/he (5x), brother (4x), this man, the dead man.
- ◆ v.43 **Lazarus**, come out!
- ◆ **Lazarus** mentioned by name in 12: 1, 2, 9, 10, 17 (5x)
- ◆ 11x "**Lazarus**," 11x other identification
- ◆ Middle (6th) mention of **Lazarus** is v. 43, the moment of resurrection.



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Topic 6

Structural Patterns of Specific Books

Structure of Specific Books

- ◆ Genesis
- ◆ The Four Books of the Law
- ◆ Judges
- ◆ John
- ◆ Romans

How does Genesis start and end?

In the beginning, God . . .

. . . Joseph's embalmed body in a coffin in Egypt.

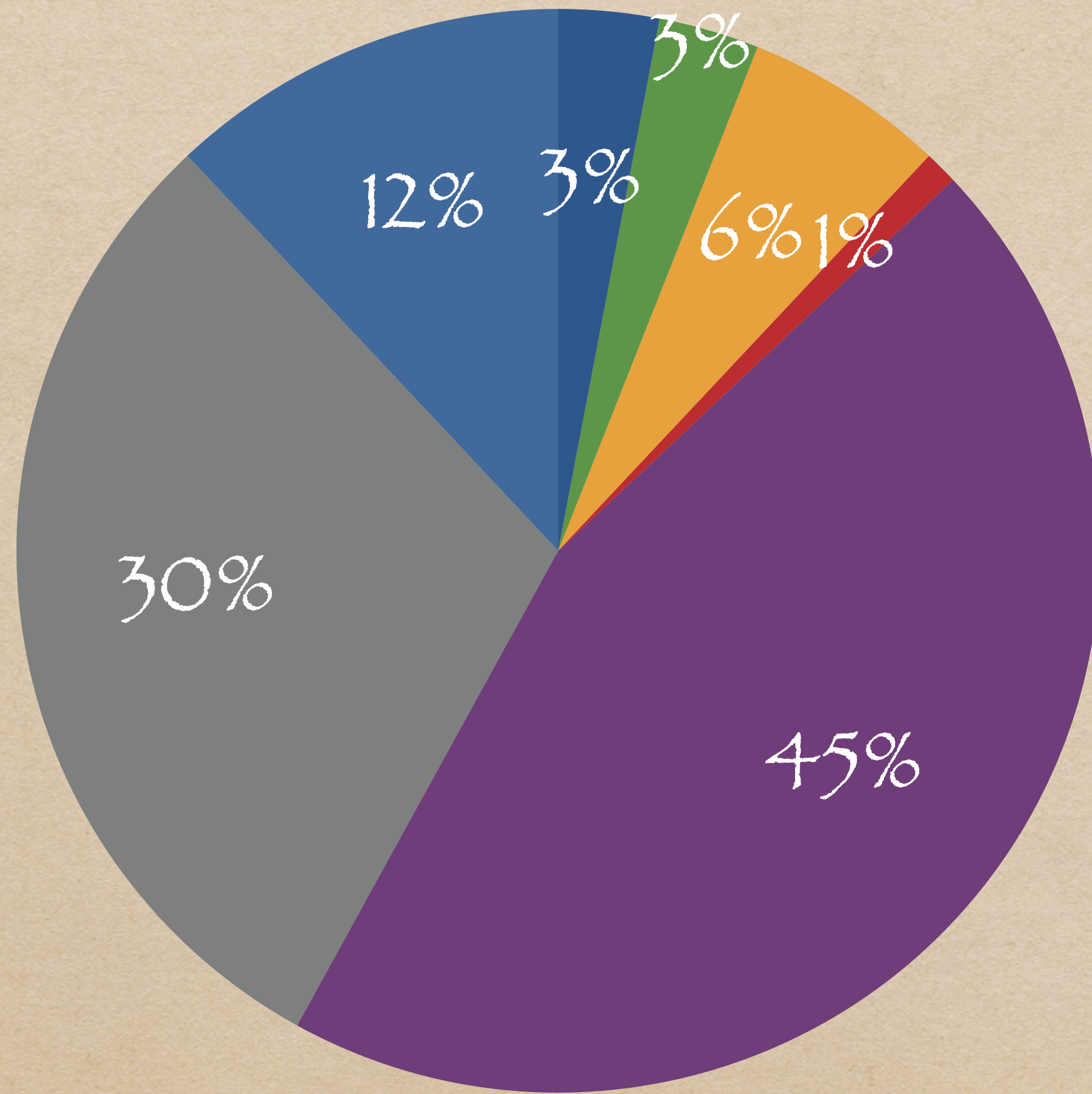
What Does Genesis Contain?

- Creation Account
- History of Adam, Eve and their children
- Flood
- Babel
- Patriarchal Narratives: Abraham, Sarah; Isaac, Rebekah; Jacob/Israel and his wives and children.
- Joseph and his brothers, Israel in Egypt

How Much of Genesis?

- Creation Account $\approx 3\%$
- History of Adam, Eve and their children $\approx 3\%$
- Flood $\approx 6\%$
- Babel $< 1\%$
- Patriarchal Narratives: Abraham, Sarah; Isaac, Rebekah; Jacob/Israel and his wives and children. $\approx 45\%$
- Joseph and his brothers $\approx 30\%$
- Genealogical Lists $\approx 12\%$

How Much of Genesis?



- Creation
- Flood
- Patriarchs
- Genealogies
- Adam & Eve
- Babel
- Joseph

“These are the generations . . .”

אלה תולדת

5:1 the book of the generations of Adam

6:9 the generations of Noah

10:1 the generations of the sons of Noah

11:10 the generations of Shem

11:27 the generations of Terah

25:12 the generations of Ishmael

25:19 the generations of Isaac

36:1, 9 the generations of Esau

37:2 the generations of Jacob

These are the generations . . .

2:4 the generations of heaven and earth

5:1 the book of the generations of Adam

6:9 the generations of Noah

10:1 the generations of the sons of Noah

11:10 the generations of Shem

11:27 the generations of Terah

25:12 the generations of Ishmael

25:19 the generations of Isaac

36:1, 9 the generations of Esau

37:2 the generations of Jacob

These are the generations . . .

1:1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth

2:4 the generations of heaven and earth

5:1 the book of the generations of Adam

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The Conceptual Structure of Genesis

. . . Genesis is not so much an historical book punctuated with or linked by genealogical records, but a genealogical record annotated with historical accounts.

Structural Notes on Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

- ◆ Historical narrative interspersed with legal declarations?
- ◆ Or legal compendium with illustrative historical examples?

Structural Notes on Judges

- ◆ Six major, six minor judges mentioned
- ◆ Cycle of sin, foreign oppression, prayer, God appoints a judge, deliverance, rinse, repeat.
- ◆ Narratives of the six major judges tend to increase in length, percentage of personal information, and amount of concurrent internal strife.
- ◆ There is more text (191 verses) on internecine conflict than on national deliverances (176 verses).
- ◆ How does this lead us to a hypothesis about the purpose of the book?

Content Distribution in Judges

	Total Verses	National	Personal	Internal Strife
Othniel	5	4.5	0.5	0
Ehud	19	18.5	0.5	0
Deborah/ Barak	55	48.7	3	3.3
Gideon	100	42	29	29
Jephthah	60	46	13	6
Samson	96	1	95	0

Interactional Episodes in the Gospel of John: chapters 2-12

- ◆ Marriage Feast at Cana
- ◆ Nicodemus
- ◆ The Well in Samaria
- ◆ Healing the Man Lame for 38 years at the Pool of Bethesda
- ◆ Feeding the 5000
- ◆ Feast of Lights in Jerusalem
- ◆ The "Woman" Caught in Adultery
- ◆ Man Born Blind
- ◆ Raising Lazarus

Structure of the interactional Episodes
in the Gospel of John: chapters 2-12

- ◆ Initiating Event
- ◆ Spiritual Interpretation
- ◆ Escalation of importance
- ◆ Questioning
- ◆ Contention/Threat
- ◆ Belief Report

Structure of the interactional Episodes
in the Gospel of John: Bread of Life, chapter 6

- ◆ Initiating Event: crowd looks for Jesus day after feeding 5000
- ◆ Spiritual Interpretation: true bread from heaven
- ◆ Escalation of importance: Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood or you have no life in you.
- ◆ Questioning: "This is a hard saying"
- ◆ Contention/Threat: Disciples grumble, many turn back.
- ◆ Belief Report: "You have the words of eternal life . . . we have believed."

Thematic Structure of Romans

- ◆ 1-3 God alone is righteous
- ◆ 4 God accepts faith, not works
- ◆ 5 Christ's atoning sacrifice
- ◆ 6 Our role
- ◆ 7 It's too hard! I can't do it!
- ◆ 8 God can-here's how
- ◆ 9-11 What happened to the Old Israel?
- ◆ 12-15 Ethics of the New Israel
- ◆ 16 People who did it

Where Paul Could Have Ended Romans

- ◆ 4:25—but that would have left out the work of Jesus
- ◆ 5:21—but that would have left out our obedience
- ◆ 6:23—but that would have left us hopelessly over our heads
- ◆ 7:25—but that would have left out Providence
- ◆ 8:39—but that would have left out God's national purpose
- ◆ 11:31—but that would have left out the application of love
- ◆ 15:33—but that would have left out the the real-life side of Paul's theological treatise.

Repetition in Romans

- law 74x
- grace 25x
- death 25x
- life 21x
- judge, etc. 24x
- faith, believe 61x
- sin, sinner 59x
- justify 65x

Levels of Learning

(adapted from Bateson's Logical Levels of Learning)

- ◆ **Learning 0:** You retain nothing of the material presented, or you already know everything that I present. No learning (or change) occurs.
- ◆ **Learning 1 Content:** You learn the examples presented in these classes and recognize them in future Bible reading.
- ◆ **Learning 2 Pattern:** You find other examples of the patterns presented in this class; you learn to recognize locate novel examples of known patterns.
- ◆ **Learning 3 Patterns of Patterns:** You discover other patterns not presented in these classes; you learn to recognize patterns.



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