

## APPENDIX A

### FIGURES OF SPEECH AND LITERARY TECHNIQUES

The following material is intended to help the student with the process of exegesis by furnishing explanations and examples of commonly encountered figures of speech and literary techniques. An attempt has been made to group these into six general categories, although the category designations are admittedly inadequate.

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### I. FIGURES INVOLVING COMPARISON

The following figures involve some sort of comparison between one thing (or person) and another.

#### A. Simile

(cf. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, p 726)

An explicit comparison of two unlike things that have something in common, by the use of words such as "like" or "as."

Ps 1:3 "And he will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water."

Ps 42:1 "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God."

**B. Metaphor** (Bull., 735)

A declaration that one thing is or represents another (without using "like" or "as").

Ps 23:1 "The LORD is my shepherd."

Ps 119:105 "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path."

**C. Hypocatastasis** (Bull., 744)

A declaration that implies the comparison, in which only one of the elements of the comparison is mentioned. [This differs from a *metaphor* in that an equative verb is not used to express the comparison.]

Ps 22:16 "For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me."

point: the evil men harassing the psalmist are compared to dogs

Mt 16:6 "Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

point: their teaching is compared to leaven

Note: The hypocatastasis, however, can be confused with metonymy or synecdoche, since it actually involves the substitution of one term for another. The hypocatastasis will involve a substitution, but the stress will be on the comparison that is implied.

Note: Even verbs can be used to express the comparison, as the following example illustrates:

Prov 20:26 "A wise king winnows the wicked, and drives the *threshing* wheel over them."

Point: "The point of the proverb is to be sought in the comparison. Even as harvested grain contains valuable and worthless material which needs to be separated, so the words, thoughts and deeds of the wicked man contain both worthless and valuable things which it is the business of a king to discern and separate."<sup>1</sup>

The following three figures involve a comparison, in which unnatural characteristics are assigned to God, man or animals.

**D. Personification** (Bull., 861)

The giving of human characteristics to inanimate objects, ideas, or animals.

Gen 4:10 "The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground."

Ps 35:10 "All my bones will say, 'LORD, who is like Thee?'"

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<sup>1</sup>William E. Mouser, Jr., *Walking in Wisdom; Studying the Proverbs of Solomon* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 95.

**E. Anthropomorphism** (Bull., 871)

The representation of God in the form of, or with the attributes of man.

Ps 33:18 "Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness."

Ps 130:2 "Lord, hear my voice! Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications."

Note: The following suggestions may be helpful for discerning the intention of the figure:

His face denotes His presence  
 His eyes denote His awareness  
 His ears denote His attentiveness  
 His nostrils denote His anger  
 His heart denotes His moral intentions

**F. Zoomorphism** (Bull., 894)

The representation of God (or man) in the form of, or with the attributes of, the lower animals.

Ps 63:7 "For Thou hast been my help, and in the shadow of Thy wings I sing for joy."

**II. FIGURES INVOLVING SUBSTITUTION**

The following figures involve a substitution of one term, concept or action for another. Because Metonymy and Synecdoche are sometimes confused, I have attempted to provide some notes clarifying the basic difference under the discussion of Synecdoche.

**A. Metonymy** (Bull., 538)

This involves the substitution of one word (usually a noun, but sometimes a verbal action) for another word closely associated with it. This could be the substitution of some attribute or suggestive word for what is meant (e.g., crown for royalty).

Gen 11:1 "Now the whole earth used the same lip and the same words."

Point: "lip" stands for *language*. Note that the *NASB* actually translates לִשְׁוֹן as "language."

Metonymies can be categorized into four basic groups:

**1. Metonymy of Cause for Effect** (Bull., 539)

When the cause is stated but the effect is intended.

Ps 5:9 "Their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue."

Point: "Throat" is put for *speech*, the throat being that which causes (enables) speech.

a. The person acting for the thing done, i.e., Agent/Actor for effect.

Lk 16:29 "But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'"

Point: The Jews have the writings (the effects) which were given by (caused by) Moses and the prophets.

- b. The instrument for the thing effected.

(see example above with Gen 11:1)

- c. The thing or action for that which is effected or produced.

Deut 28:33 "A people whom you do not know shall eat up the produce of your ground and all your labors."

Point: They will eat up the *fruits* of your labor.

- d. The material is put for the thing made from it.

Jer 2:27 "Who said to a tree, 'You are my father,' and to a stone, 'You gave me birth.'"

Point: "Tree" is put for *wooden idol*, and "stone" for *an image*.

## 2. Metonymy of Effect for Cause

(Bull., 560)

When the effect is stated but the cause is intended (opposite of #1).

Ps 51:8 "Make me to hear joy and gladness."

Point: The cause is "forgiveness," but the effect is stated (i.e., the psalmist is asking for an assurance of forgiveness that will result in joy and gladness).

- a. The action or effect is put for the person or agent producing it.

Lk 2:30 "For my eyes have seen Thy salvation."

Point: He has seen the Savior who brings about salvation.

- b. The thing effected is put for the instrument or organic cause.

Ps 57:8 "Awake, my glory; awake harp and lyre."

Point: "Glory" stands for the *tongue* or *soul* that causes it.

- c. The effect is put for the thing or action causing or producing it.

Ex 10:17 "Make supplication to the LORD your God, that He would only remove this death from me."

Point: He is asking for the removal of the deadly plague that brings about death to the Egyptians.

- d. The thing made is put for the material from which it is made.

Isa 28:28 "Bread is crushed; indeed, he does not continue to thresh it forever."

Point: "Bread" is put for the *grain* from which bread is made.

**3. Metonymy of Subject for Attribute** (Bull., 567)  
When the subject is put for an attribute or adjunct of it.

Ps 23:5 "Thou dost prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies."

Point: "Table" is put for a feast (which would be set upon the table).

- a. The subject (whether thing or action) is put for that which is connected with it (i.e., the adjunct).

(1) Nouns

Common expressions: *soul* for desires, appetites  
*heart* for thoughts, understanding  
*kidneys* for affections, passions

Jer 12:2 "Thou art near to their lips [lit., *in their mouth*; i.e., in regard to their words - a metonymy of cause]  
But far from their kidneys" [i.e., their affections - a metonymy of subject for adjunct]

(2) Verbs

For example, what is said to be done is put for what is declared to be done.

Acts 10:15 "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy" [i.e., what God has *declared to be clean*].

- b. The container is put for the contents.

Isa 38:18 "For Sheol cannot thank Thee, death cannot praise Thee."

Point: Sheol is the grave, i.e., the place of the dead. So, the grave is put for that which it contains, namely, dead people.

- c. The possessor is put for that which is possessed.

Acts 9:4 "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" [i.e., My church]

- d. The object is put for that which relates to it.

Ps 8:2 "From the mouth of infants and nursing babes Thou hast established strength." [i.e., praise for the manifestation of Your strength]

- c. The possessor is put for that which is possessed.

Acts 9:4 "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" [i.e., My church]

- d. The object is put for that which relates to it.

Ps 8:2 "From the mouth of infants and nursing babes Thou hast established strength." [i.e., praise for the manifestation of Your strength]

- e. The thing signified is put for the sign.

Num 6:7 "He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is on his head."

[i.e., his *hair*, which is the symbol of his separation]

4. **Metonymy of Attribute/Adjunct for Subject** (Bull., 587)  
When the attribute or adjunct that pertains to the subject is put for the subject (opposite of #3).

Gen 49:10 "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet."

Point: The "ruling authority" will remain with the tribe of Judah.

- a. The adjunct or attribute is put for the thing/object.

1 Sam 15:29 "And also the Glory of Israel [i.e., the God who is their glory] will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind."

- b. The contents are put for the container.

Acts 16:13 "And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer."

[lit., "supposing there would be prayer." Thus, prayer is put for the place where prayers are offered.]

- c. The time is put for the things done during it.

Prov 5:9 "Lest you give your vigor to others, and your years to the cruel one."

[i.e., the strength and fruits of the labors of your years]

- d. The appearance of a thing is put for the thing itself.

Ps 72:9 "Let the nomads of the desert bow before him; and his enemies lick

the dust."

[i.e., they shall be so humbled and prostrated that they shall appear to lick the dust]

- e. An action or affection is put for the object of it.

Ezek 24:16 "Son of man, behold, I am about to take from you the desire of your eyes [i.e., your wife] with a blow; but you shall not mourn."

- f. The sign is put for the thing signified.

- (1) Nouns ["scepter" - see the example of Gen 49:10 under #4 above]
- (2) Verbs

Ps 2:12 "Do homage to [lit., *kiss*] the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way."

["kiss" is a sign of one's homage to another; notice that the *NASB* does not translate this literally but rather renders the point of the figure]

- g. The name of a person is put for the person himself.

Ps 20:1 "May the name of the God of Jacob [i.e., God Himself] set you securely on high!"

## B. Synecdoche

(Bull., 613)

Like metonymy, the figure of "synecdoche" also involves a substitution of one word (or concept or phrase) for another. With synecdoche, however, the relationship of the two components is closer. They either belong to the same genus, or one is a component of the other. Often, a part of something is put for the whole, or the whole is put for a specific part.

Example: Ps 102:11 "My days are like a lengthened shadow; and I wither away like grass."

Point: The psalmist is saying that *his life* is like a lengthened shadow (a "part of time" is put for the "whole time").

### Distinguishing Metonymy and Synecdoche:

In both metonymy and synecdoche, the figure is based on relationship. The difference (at times there is little) has to do with whether or not the terms/concepts involved are related generically. In metonymy, the exchange is made between two related terms/concepts belonging to different genera. Synecdoche, on the other hand, involves an exchange of two terms/concepts related generically.

#### Metonymy (of different genera)

Ps 23:5 "Thou preparest a table before me."

Clarification: In this example, "table" stands in the place of food and drink. But table is not of the same genus as food; the one merely suggests the other.

**Synecdoche** (related generically; or involves a part/whole relationship)

Mt 6:11 "Give us this day our daily bread."

Clarification: Here, "bread" stand for *food*. In this case, bread and food are of the same genus (namely, that which is edible).

1. **Synecdoche of genus for species** (general for specific) (Bull., 614)  
The genus is put for the species (or, the general is put for the more specific).

Gen 6:12 "And God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth."

Point: "All flesh" stands for all mankind (the latter being more specific).

- a. "All" is put for the greater part.

Jer 26:9 "And all the people [i.e., a great many of the people] gathered about Jeremiah in the house of the LORD."

- b. "All" (or every) is put for all kinds.

Acts 10:12 "And there were in it all [i.e., all kinds of; so *NASB*] four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air."

- c. A "universal negative" is made, but is not intended to be taken absolutely.

1 Sam 20:26 (context: David's failure to appear at Saul's table)  
"Nevertheless Saul did not speak anything that day [i.e., anything about David], for he thought, 'It is an accident, he is not clean, surely he is not clean.'"

- d. A "universal" statement is made, but is not intended to be taken absolutely.

Acts 28:22 "But we desire to hear from you what your views are; for concerning this sect, it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere." [i.e., everywhere it is known and spoken about]

- e. Words of wider meaning are used when a narrower sense is intended (e.g., flesh for man; house for temple).

Mk 16:15 "And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation' [i.e., to all people]

2. **Synecdoche of species for genus** (specific for general) (Bull., 623)  
The species is put for the genus (or, the more specific is put for the general).

Ps 44:6 "For I will not trust in my bow; nor will my sword save me."

Point: "bow" and "sword" stand for weapons in general (i.e., he is not going to rely upon human weapons).

- a. Words of a narrow sense are put for words of a wider meaning.

Ps 22:4 "In Thee our fathers (i.e., forefathers) trusted."

- b. Species is put for genus ["our daily bread", i.e., food. See Mt 6:11 under the discussion above distinguishing synecdoche from metonymy]

Bullinger has other sub-categories, but not all are convincing (cf. pp 623-635).

**3. Synecdoche of whole for part** (Bull., 635)  
The whole is put for the part.

Jn 12:19 "The Pharisees therefore said to one another, 'You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world [i.e., people of all sorts] has gone after him.'"

1 Sam 5:4 "But when they arose . . . Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground . . . And the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off on the threshold; only Dagon [i.e., the trunk of Dagon] remained."

**4. Synecdoche of part for whole** (Bull., 640)  
A part of something (or someone) is put for the whole.

Prov 1:16 "For their feet run to evil, and they hasten to shed blood."

Point: "their feet" stands for the evil men themselves.

- a. An integral part of man may be put for the whole man.

The example from Prov 1:16 above fits this category. Other examples include:

soul:	Gen 14:21	face:	2 Sam 17:11
body:	Ex 21:3	mouth:	Prov 8:13
blood:	Ps 94:21	belly:	Titus 1:12
head:	Jud 5:30		

- b. A part of the thing may be put for the whole thing (e.g., field for country, wall or gate for city).

Ps 87:2 "The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the *other* dwelling places of Jacob." [i.e., He loves the city of Zion]

- c. A part of time may be put for the whole time.

Ps 102:11 "My days are like a lengthened shadow; and I wither away like grass." [i.e., My life]

**C. Merism**

The totality is expressed by two contrasting parts (or, two extremities).

Ps 139:2 "Thou dost know when I sit down and when I rise up."

Point: God knows everything he does (from the moment he rises until the moment he sits, and everything in between).

**D. Hendiadys**

(Bull., 657)

Two terms or concepts (formally coordinated) are used to express a single concept (one of the components defines the other).

Gen 3:16 "I will greatly multiply your pain and your childbearing."

Point: God will multiply her pain in childbearing (notice the next clause which substantiates this). So, this is really one matter, i.e., a painful childbirth. The *NASB* translates this verse, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth."

**E. Euphemism**

(Bull., 684)

The substitution of an inoffensive or mild expression for an offensive one.

Job 2:9 "Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Bless (בָּרַךְ) God and die!"

Point: Really she means "Curse God and die!", which is exactly how the *NASB* translates the verse.

**III. FIGURES INVOLVING ADDITION OR AMPLIFICATION**

The following figures involve an amplification of a thing, concept or effect, often through some additional element.

**A. Anabasis (Gradual Ascent)**

(Bull., 429)

This involves an increase of sense in successive lines.

Ps 1:1 "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,  
Nor stand in the path of sinners,  
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!"

[this assumes that the latter is considered the most intensive involvement]

**B. Catabasis (Gradual Descent)**

(Bull., 432)

This involves a decrease of sense in successive lines (opposite of anabasis).

Isa 40:31 "They will mount up with wings like eagles,  
They will run and not get tired,  
They will walk and not become weary."

**C. Hyperbole**

(Bull., 423)

An exaggerated expression for the purpose of emphasis or heightened effect (more is said than is literally meant).

Deut 1:28 "The people are bigger and taller than we; the cities are large and fortified to heaven."

Ps 40:12 "My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to see;  
They are more numerous than the hairs of my head."

**D. Paronomasia** (Bull., 307)

This involves the repetition of words similar in sound (often used to call attention to something significant that the reader should notice).

Gen 11:9 "Therefore its name was called Babel (בָּבֶל), because there the LORD confused (בָּלַל) the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth."

**E. Repetition** (Bull., 263)

This involves the repetition of the same word (or words) in a passage.

Num 9:20 "If sometimes the cloud remained a few days over the tabernacle, according to the command of the LORD they remained camped. Then according to the command of the LORD they set out."

#### IV. FIGURES INVOLVING OMISSION OR SUPPRESSION

The following figures involve a diminishing of a thing, concept or effect, often through some omitted element.

**A. Aposiopesis** (or Sudden Silence) (Bull., 151)

This involves the breaking off from what is being said (in anger, grief, deprecation, promise, etc.) with sudden silence.

Ps 6:3 "And my soul is greatly dismayed;  
But Thou, O LORD—how long?

Point: His words seem to be drowned in grief. The full thought is something like:  
"But Thou, O LORD—how long [before Thou will arise to deliver me]?"

**B. Ellipsis** (or Omission) (Bull., 1)

This involves the omission of a word (or words) in a sentence.

Ps 108:8-9 "The LORD is compassionate and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.  
He will not always strive *with us*;  
Nor will He keep [*His anger*] forever."

Note: The words "His anger" are not in the Hebrew text, but are understood from the context.

**C. Meiosis** (or Be-littleing) (Bull., 155)

This involves a be-littleing of one thing in order to magnify another. "In meiosis there is an omission therefore, not of words, but of sense. One thing is lowered in order to magnify and intensify something else by way of contrast."<sup>2</sup>

Gen 18:27 "And Abraham answered and said, 'Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am *but* dust and ashes."

**D. Tapeinosis (or Demeaning)** (Bull., 159)

In this figure, a person or matter is *lessened* when the intent is really to increase, enhance or intensify it. [This differs from meiosis, because meiosis involves the lessening of one thing in order to magnify another. With tapeinosis, the very thing lessened is that which is meant to be magnified.]

Ps 51:17 "A broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."

Point: Not only will the Lord not despise it; He will gladly receive it.

Prov 17:21 "The father of a fool has no joy." [i.e., he has plenty of sorrow]

## VI. SPECIAL FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

I have listed the following figures as "special forms of communication" (e.g., parables, types, and symbols). Some of these could actually be included in the preceding categories. Bullinger, for example, would regard a "parable" in the same category as the simile, because a parable is actually a *continued resemblance*. Unfortunately, I can only treat these subjects briefly, though some of them (especially typology) deserve a very in-depth treatment to fully comprehend their role in Scripture.<sup>3</sup>

**A. Parable** (Bull., 751)

A parable involves comparison by continued resemblance (something of an extended simile). One thing is *likened* unto another. This may be for the purpose of clarifying the meaning or role of something, but parables can also be used to talk about things in a veiled way (e.g., the parables of the kingdom in Matthew 13). Care must be taken when interpreting and applying parables that we do not attempt to push every detail for meaning (in some cases, they may have only one primary lesson).

Mt 25:1-10 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins . . . ."

**B. Allegory**

An allegory is similar to a parable, but an allegory involves a story in which one thing is being *represented* by something else without an intended likeness between them. The symbolic or hidden meaning of the story is meant to convey a lesson or explain ideas or

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<sup>2</sup>Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, 155.

<sup>3</sup>For a more detailed treatment of typology, see Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos; The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, translated by Donald H. Madvig (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982); and Edward W. Glenny, "Typology: A Summary of the Present Evangelical Discussion," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 40:4 (Dec 1997): 627-638.

moral principles. Care must be taken to distinguish an allegory from allegorical interpretation (the former is intended by the author as a literary means of making a point, whereas the latter is illegitimately imposed upon the text).

Jud 9:7-15 A story is told about trees that went forth to anoint a king over them. The point is not to compare how humans choose a king to the way trees choose a king. The trees are merely symbolic devices to relate a story that ends with a lesson.

**C. Idiom** (Bull., 819)

This involves the use of frozen or dead metaphors as standard or common expressions. These expressions are often unique to one culture without having the same meaning to others (even though they may share the same language).

Examples: "sons of God" is an idiom for angels  
"breaking bread" is an idiom for eating food

**D. Irony** (Bull., 807)

This involves the expression of thought in a form that conveys its opposite.

1 Kgs 18:27 "Elijah mocked them and said, 'Cry out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened.'"

Amos 4:4 "Enter Bethel and transgress; in Gilgal multiply transgression! Bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days."

**E. Proverb** (Bull., 755)

A widely used saying in the marketplace or roadside which illustrates (or communicates) a fundamental truth or lesson about life.

Prov 27:6 "Faithful are the wounds of a friend."

Point: Some people will tell you what they think you want them to say (just to gain an advantage with you), but a true friend is not afraid to tell you the truth even though it may momentarily hurt you.

1 Sam 24:13 "As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness'; but my hand shall not be against you."

Point: David uses this proverb to reason with Saul. Although *wicked people can be expected to do wicked things*, David's innocence and integrity is shown by the fact that he does not hurt Saul when he has the opportunity to do so.

**F. Symbol** (Bull., 769)

A material object is substituted for another reality (often implying some characteristic or moral truth about the latter). Although the Bible extensively uses symbols, care must be taken not to claim something as a symbol for which there is no warrant. Oftentimes, the Bible will specifically identify the presence of symbols (e.g., Zech 3:8). Otherwise, we should not label something a symbol unless there is a clear departure of normal meaning in the given context.

Zech 4:7 "What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of 'Grace, grace to it!'"

Note: In this verse, the "great mountain" is a symbol for the obstacles that the Jewish governor Zerubbabel faced in the process of rebuilding the temple. In the context, there is nothing to suggest that the concern was one of displacing a literal mountain in order to make a plain.

### G. Type (Bull., 768)

A type is a divinely prefigured illustration of a corresponding reality (the latter being known as the antitype). The type can prefigure a person, an institution, an action, an event, or a situation.

Example: The ministry of the high priest on the annual Day of Atonement is a type of Christ's high priestly ministry in which He went into the heavenly holy of holies. The relationship between type and antitype often involves important differences which must not be overlooked. For example, the fact that the high priest brought the blood of animals reflects the fact that the old covenant is inferior to the new covenant, for in the latter Christ presented His own blood.

## VI. LITERARY TECHNIQUES

### A. Acrostic (Acrostichion) (Bull., 180)

This involves the repeating of the same or successive letters at the beginnings of words or clauses. In the Hebrew Bible, this will often happen in the same sequence in which they appear in the alphabet, but in certain other cases it may follow another peculiar order. Even when the pattern follows the Hebrew alphabet, there may not be a strict adherence to the plan.

Ps 34 Each verse begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in sequence, beginning with **א** but omitting the entry for *waw*. After the alphabet has run its course, there is an additional line beginning with **פ** to emphasize redemption (**פִּדְיוֹן** = "redeems").

אֲבָרְכָה אֶת־יְהוָה בְּכָל־עֵת תָּמִיד תִּהְיֶה בְּפִי:  
בִּיהוָה תִּתְהַלֵּל נַפְשִׁי יִשְׁמְעוּ עֲנָוִים וְיִשְׁמְחוּ:  
גִּדְלוּ לַיהוָה אֱתֵי וְנִרְוַמְכֶם שְׁמוֹ וַיְחַדְּו:  
etc.

### B. Apostrophe (Bull., 901)

This involves a turning aside from the direct subject matter to address others (who or which may not actually be present).

Ps 6:8 "Depart from me, all you who do iniquity,  
For the LORD has heard the voice of my weeping."

Point: David turns from his prayer to address those who caused his trouble.

### C. Chiasm

This is a literary technique in which the order of the members of a line is changed so as to reflect an inversion of parallel members with the corresponding line.

Ps 6:9 The following illustration is not apparent from the *NASB* translation, but is from

the Hebrew text.

	A	B
The LORD	<u>has heard</u>	<u>my cry for mercy.</u>
	B'	A'
The LORD	<u>my prayer</u>	<u>accepts.</u>

The chiastic pattern is: A B B' A' (the verb and object are reversed in the second line).

#### D. Inclusio

This is a form of repetition in which the beginning and end of a unit (whether it be a verse, strophe, or psalm) contain the same word(s) or same thought.

Psalm 148 begins and ends with the line "Praise the LORD!"

#### E. Refrain

This involves a repetition of one or more clauses at various junctures in the literary unit (sometimes with minor variation).

Ps 42:5 "Why are you in despair, O my soul?  
And why have you become disturbed within me?  
Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him  
For the help of His presence."

Ps 42:11 "Why are you in despair, O my soul?  
And why have you become disturbed within me?  
Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him  
The help of my countenance, and my God."

#### F. Rhetorical Question

Asking a question without expecting an answer, but to assert or deny something. It usually evokes a strong feeling and is used frequently for persuasion.

Gen 18:14 "Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son."

Rhetorical questions carry implications and thus must be identified and analyzed. There are clues for helping identify rhetorical questions, but the key factor is to examine the response. If there is no answer given or if the response does not answer the question but rather responds to the implications lying behind the question form, then the question is probably rhetorical. Rhetorical questions can serve one of four principal functions:

##### 1. A Statement of Certitude

Some rhetorical questions do not carry any implications of evaluation or obligation. Rather, they express the fact that the speaker is sure of what he is saying . . . he speaks with certainty. These could be used for the purpose of affirmations or denials.

##### a. Affirmation

Mt 6:30 - ". . . shall He not much more clothe you . . . ?" This type of question is functionally equivalent to the assertion, "he will certainly much more clothe you."

b. Negations (denials)

Lk 9:25 - "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?" The question is equivalent in meaning to "There is no advantage for a man . . . ."

2. **A Statement of Incertitude**

Other types of rhetorical questions will not express certitude but rather incertitude. These will occur in various forms, such as doubt, perplexity, and uncertainty; or contingency or deliberation. Examples:

a. Doubt or uncertainty

Mt 6:31 - "'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?'" These questions are used rhetorically by Jesus because they express the idea of doubt . . . doubt which very quickly passes into the worry which Jesus is forbidding in this passage.

Mt 13:56 - ". . . Where then did this man get all these things?" This is a rhetorical question that really expresses uncertainty, equivalent to "We do not know where he got all these things."

b. Contingent Questions

Jas 5:13 - "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises." These have the force of conditional statements: "If anyone among you is suffering, let him pray. If anyone is cheerful, let him sing praises."

c. Deliberation

Lk 12:17 - "And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?'" The question expresses the fact that he was thinking over what action he should take in the circumstances.

3. **A Statement of Evaluation or Obligation**

Other types of rhetorical questions are used to make a statement of evaluation, whether of approval or disapproval. Beekman and Callow observe, ". . . judgments are usually accompanied with emotional overtones and frequently imply an obligation on the part of the hearers to respond with appropriate action. It would seem that the question form is used as a more polite or less direct way to administer the rebuke or command."<sup>4</sup>

a. Negative Evaluation

Some of these questions reflect negatively upon the legitimacy of the purpose, reason for, or motive of another's actions or statements. These may imply an obligation to respond (they may at times have the force of a command; cf. Mt 8:26).

Mk 14:4 - "But some were indignantly remarking to one another, 'For what purpose has this perfume been wasted?'" The question clearly expresses anger from those who were indignantly condemning the woman. This is equivalent to

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<sup>4</sup>John Beekman and John Callow, *Translating the Word of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 241.

"This waste ought not to have been made."

b. Positive Evaluation

Lk 1:66 - "What then will this child turn out to be?" This is equivalent to "This child will be very important."

4. **To Introduce a New Subject or a New Aspect of a Subject**

Finally, rhetorical questions may be used to signal the start of a new subject, or some new aspect of the same subject. They may function as an inference, conclusion, explanation, or answer to a preceding discussion.

a. To Conclude

Rhetorical questions of this sort are frequent in Paul's epistle to the Romans: "What then?" or "What shall we say then?" Beekman and Callow note, "These questions introduce conclusions, some of them Paul's own, some of them false conclusions, representing the view of those who distorted Paul's teaching. These latter are characteristically rejected with 'God forbid.'"<sup>5</sup>

Rom 8:31 - "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?" This could be restated as "We conclude, therefore, from these things that since God is for us . . . ."

b. Introducing a New Aspect of a Subject

Rom 3:1 - "Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?" Paul had been discussing the Jew in chapter two and now he begins to discuss him from another angle. The questions essentially imply, "Let us consider whether the Jews have any advantage and whether there is any profit in circumcision."

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 243.