

Chiasmus

Denver C. Snuffer, Jr.
American Fork, UT
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We all know that the name of “chiasmus” comes from the Greek letter Chi, which is an X. We know the date on which Chiasmus was discovered in the Book of Mormon to the exact day: it was Wednesday, August the 16th of 1967. And it was a missionary to the Church in Germany who made the discovery after going and attending some lectures about the subject where they were using the Bible as an example, and the account of that you can read in an article that is available online. The title of the article is *The Discovery of Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon: Forty Years Later*. If you just do a word search—“Discovery of Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon” or “Chiasmus Forty Years Later”—you can... It’s in the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*; the article written by John Welch, and it’s about his discovery.

And in there you’ll learn that the first occasion in which the presence of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon occurred as the consequence of a revelation. He quotes a voice that spoke to him, and these are the words: “If it’s evidence of Hebrew style in the Bible, it must be evidence of Hebrew style in the Book of Mormon.”

And so, as a consequence of a revelation, John (our young missionary at the time) went out and pursued the subject, and found, among other things, the largest single chiasmic passage in literature in Alma chapter 36, that we’re now all familiar with.

He also wrote an article about determining criteria for identifying and evaluating the presence of chiasmus, and that also appears in the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*. And he gives a list of some fifteen criteria that can be used to determine the presence or absence of chiasmus. And throughout the day today, there will be those who are speaking about how this pattern has been located in a variety of places.

And I’m more interested in the issue of **why**. It’s really interesting to note its presence, to study it—and the theory that underlies the presence of chiasmus in the Hebrew text is the idea that this made it easier for people to memorize it. If you have this **progression** and you have this **regression** and there’s a single point at which it flips, then it makes it easier for people to study and memorize and preserve things in oral tradition. But juxtapose that with the statement you find in Abraham chapter 1, verse 28 about how “*the records have come into mine hands*” —and the records that he’s talking about are those that run back to the beginning of the creation— and that’s in Abraham chapter 1, verse 28. And then the comment that is made, also, in the book of Moses about Adam keeping a record. And if the record keeping—see, Moses chapter 6, verse 5: “*And a book of remembrance was kept, in the which was recorded, in the language of Adam, for it was given unto...many as called upon God to write by the spirit of inspiration.*” By then the children were taught to read and write, having a language that was pure and undefiled—this is chapter 6, verses 5 and 6. So if writing was with us from the beginning (that is, at the time of Adam—the language of

revelation was not transmitted orally), then perhaps the pattern has nothing to do with the ease of which one can memorize and preserve passages of traditional understanding from one to another. It may have another deeper and more profound underlying purpose behind it.

See I— I want to skip right to some things that are important, in my view. I've written a paper that will be published as part of this thing, and you can read all those words in there. I want, given the fact that it's an opportunity to talk live— I really detest reading talks to people.

I have a theory that underlies the reason why we find this pattern that appears over and over. And this pattern appears: it's a **progression**, and then it's a **regression**. And if you take those and you close them in, what you wind up with are two triangles—one pointing upward; the other pointing downward—with the suggestion that if this relates to the heavens and God, then it suggests the notion that God is actively in the process of reaching down to man. And if this suggests mortality, then implicit in that is that it's the obligation of man to reach upward to God. And that implicit in this may be embedded a message about the point at which—the contact at which—the Chi crosses one another is at that moment, that instant, a revelation—that point at which we get perfectly aligned with heaven and heaven is able (because of that alignment) to reach down and make contact with us. And perhaps implicit in the message of why this would appear is the suggestion that it's the obligation of man to reach upward because God is permanently in a state of reaching downward in order to make the contact with man.

The **progression** and the **regression**—if you look at the pattern that you find in the menorah, "ABCDCBA," what you're seeing in the pattern of menorah (which was a deliberate symbol located within the holy place of both the tabernacle and later the temple of Solomon and down from there) this symbol is suggesting in another way the exact same pattern of **progression** and **regression** and convergence in the center. See, those that take the chiasmic literary form and explore why it was done—in addition to the ease of memorization—they say the point that you locate in the center of the chiasm is the point at which the central theme of the idea is presented.

And if you go into Alma chapter 36 and you look at Alma chapter 36's suggestion of what the center point is, it's that moment at which the conversion occurs; it's the moment at which the contact between the man and God occurs; it's the conversion point. And so it would also be consistent with there being an underlying **why** to chiasmus that's perhaps more important than detecting its presence elsewhere. Because if Alma (or Mormon, and I think the greater light is that it was Alma and not Mormon that wrote that chapter because of its literary form—that's beyond this, but I think it was Alma that wrote it) experienced it and understood the underlying **why**, then of course the central theme would be the point of contact between God and man, because that is the point at which redemption occurs—the point at which the process goes on.

Well, the other thing that this does is, particularly here, this **progression** and this **regression** is the process of walking you backwards; it's the process of returning you to

somewhere, as opposed to going somewhere. You're already somewhere—you need to get away from where it is you are and back to something which was better and preferable and earlier. And so the **regression** is a question about, well what is it that regression would deliver to you, would fetch for you, if you were to take it seriously?

Matthew chapter 18 has this little incident in it:

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:1-3).

And so the idea of **progression** and **regression** and becoming something converted from what you are today—where you find yourself at this extremity—back to where you once were at the other end of the scale may also be a reminder that, although your mind is currently filled with all of the issues and all of the experiences of adulthood, there was a time when, previously in childhood, you were capable of much more and much different kinds of things. Christ's comment that you—

The question that drove the answer was the question about who's the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. So the issue on the plate was: "Where do we find something that is great; show us one of these; tell us." (And I suppose they were hoping for some mention of themselves.) But instead, what Christ did was He asked for a little child. And the narrative suggests that this is quite a young child—a toddler, the younger that could toddle over the better. So He has the little child, and He puts the child in front of Him, and He says, "This—here is an example—this is what the greatest in the kingdom of heaven is like." Well, why is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven something that has regressed from the complexity and the sophistication—particularly of **our** kind of thinking—back into a point at which there is this child-like faith, there is this child-like approach to whatever is out there?

We put away childish things. In fact, Paul in one of his passages makes a comment about childish things and putting them away.

Well, King Benjamin had something to say about the character of a child, and he gives this in his big talk, beginning in Mosiah where they're all together for his farewell address. This is Mosiah chapter 3, verse 19:

The natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child.

Then he elaborates what it is about the child that is so useful in yielding "to the enticings of the holy spirit, [putting] off the natural man, [becoming] a saint through the atonement of

Christ -- all of those are driven by these kinds of characteristics, which are childlike: “*submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father*” (Mosiah 3:19). Those are the characteristics of a child that manages to change their mind or to facilitate their development.

I heard again (people keep trying to calculate this and come up with a new number all of the time)—but I’m sure all of you have heard it said that most of what you’re going to learn in your entire life you learn by the time you’re five years old. The personality of a person is fully developed at five. There’s another study that came out and said almost all of the education that a person is going to receive in their lifetime has been completed by the time they’re in fourth grade, then they simply reapply and reapply the same techniques as they had acquired by the fourth grade, repetitively thereafter, to increasing levels of complexity; but nevertheless, it’s the same tools. Well, why is it then, that at the early front-end there is this capacity for absorbing everything there is from the universe around them, and then that begins to quiet down and slow down or to become resistant thereafter? It’s because, by its very nature, the mind of the child is open. **Submissive** is a characteristic that says:

- I am open to, will submit to, and looking forward to something you can give to me.
- I don’t come here with a hard attitude.
- I don’t come here with my predisposition.
- I don’t come here with a bundle of things that, if you’re going to present a truth to me, it must fit within the boxes that I have constructed.

“If you want...wait a minute, wait a minute—how do you reconcile that with... well wait a minute, I...Now Elder McConkie wrote in this book—we have to have bibliographies okay?”

Here’s an idea: It’s a truth, but it’s truth that you must relax, open your heart, open your mind, and accept and see if it contains light and truth.

“No, no, no, no, no, no, no I want a bibliography; if you don’t fetch a bibliography for me, and I want footnotes. Then...”

See, I have been so tempted... I have been so tempted to write a book without a single footnote in it. My wife just thinks that’s a terrible idea. The most important chapter I ever wrote had no footnotes in it when I wrote it, and it’s my wife’s fault that it’s now riddled with footnotes, because she says, “You can’t do that; they won’t— You’ll get in trouble! You won’t...it’s not...” And she’s right. She’s right because the reader—the typical reader—is not at a point where the typical reader will simply relax and say, “Is it true? Does it resonate with light? Is there something about this that is fulfilling?”

I’ve been able to put more information about God and man in ten short parables than I’m able to put into 170,000 words in *The Second Comforter*, simply because parables don’t require you to vindicate or justify; but what it does impose upon the reader is the obligation, then, to open themselves up and say, “Well, how do we do that?”

Well, there was a time... There was a time and it was back here in your life, there was a time when you did not need to go down to the firing range and have a skeet machine firing off a clay pigeon and a 12-gauge loaded with birdshot in it to be able to enjoy yourself. If you had a stick... If you had a stick, it was enough, because your mind was alive with the kinds of things that allowed you to have just as much—if not more—joy pretending, as does the adult with the gun and the ammunition and the skeet range and the machine and the clay pigeon and the thing blowing up in the air, and “Oooo, isn’t that fun; don’t you wish there was more of that from Hollywood.” Too bad we can’t load blood in clay pigeons; then we’d all be at the firing range.

The idea of submissiveness is another way of reckoning into the idea of openness—the same with meekness; the same with humility and being humble; the same with patience—and we ought to clarify the point about the child and patience, because at first blush, you look at a child, and you say there is nothing less patient than a child:

“Can we...? Can we...? Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Can I, can I, can I...? Please! Please! Please! Are you sure? Aaaahhhh! Crap, how does this work? Can I? Can I? Can I...? Okay, what if I give this; can I get that?”

See, they go through all of the tantrum stuff until they begin to negotiate, and sometimes that negotiation thing works, particularly if the kids are bright. (And we’ve been playing with really bright kids, so they tend to go and negotiate everything.) They are not patient in that sense. They are... Children are patient in the sense that relentlessly, endlessly they are studying to learn more. They **want** to know more.

I write... I write a blog, and on it I ask more questions than I give answers, because what people need are not a bunch of answers. And answers end the discussion. Once you’ve got the answer, that’s the end of that. What you need is a question, and you need a question so that you’ll open your mind. And you need to open your mind so you can become like a child. And you need to become like a child so that you’re a suitable environment in which revelation can take place. And you need to have revelation take place in order for you to reconnect with heaven. And you need to reconnect with heaven so that you get to know who God is. And you need to get to know who God is so that He can, in turn, make you a member of His own household and redeem you from this current plight in which you find yourself: in darkness and distrust. And what people want from me are answers, and I can hand you an answer and cripple you. Or I can teach you to ask and even turn you into, potentially, someone that can make this trek backward, that can make this climb.

When you take the symbols and overlay them upon one another, you wind up with the symbol that was adopted by David as one of the symbols of Ancient Israel, United Kingdom, Priesthood, the Star of David. When you place them side-by-side, if you read the account given by Lucy Mack Smith of the Urim and Thummim, the Urim and Thummim were similarly these two triangular-shaped (and this is in the stuff that is going to be published, you can find the sights and description in there) set in a bow that he would look through.

And you ought to ask yourself again the question of: If the Urim and Thummim has that symbol contained within it, again the question becomes, Why? Why would we wind up with it embedded in the Urim itself, an instrument in which the contact between God and man is to take place? Why would it bear the symbol that appears there?

The Urim and Thummim becomes another interesting issue to think about as a device, as a mechanism. Joseph Smith would begin the process of translating the Book of Mormon, in using the Urim and Thummim, found that it was so filled with light—his comment was that “I can see everything in looking through it.” It was so filled with light that he wound up having headaches because it was physically painful using the device. Later, Joseph would use a seer stone, and he would block out light because it was less painful to make the process. And later still, towards the end of the translation process, the book wasn’t even open, the seer stone wasn’t even used, because this “prop” had resulted in Joseph acquiring this capacity. And at the time that we get Joseph in the section 76 revelation, Joseph’s just sitting in an upper room dictating the transcript from heaven while in open vision, without possession of any instrumentality, because the process has changed the person into being in contact with the heavens, which was the purpose behind it all.

Well, there is a... there is another statement made by King Benjamin that I want to suggest, too, as another way to look into the same, the same.... Mosiah chapter 2, verses 20 and 21: “*I say unto you, my brethren, that...*”

(Oh that’s right, we’re not in sacrament meeting—you can actually open your scriptures if you have them. Now by that I mean no disrespect. I’m honoring the letter from the First Presidency that says, Stop opening your scriptures in sacrament meeting.)

I say unto you, my brethren, that if you should render all the thanks and praise which your whole soul has power to possess, to that God who has created you, and has kept and preserved you, and has caused that ye should rejoice, and has granted that ye should live in peace one with another— I say unto you that if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another—

Then he goes on to say that you’re still unprofitable after all of that.

So, if you find yourself out here at the extremity of the mortal condition, you are still supported from moment to moment. The breath that you are taking in is loaned to you by God who gives you the power to live and breath and move and has sustained you from moment to moment. So if that’s where you find yourself, then the deeper you look inside yourself—the farther in you go—the closer you will come to the point of contact between yourself and God.

We have a very coarse kind of intellect in the West. We have a “give us a rule; give us a formula—if I follow the steps, then, as a result of following the steps, I will produce the

relevant gas, explosion, fire, compound, cake, cookie, whatever. So, all I want from you, therefore, is a list. And if I follow my list, I will produce, at the end, the fire I want, the taste I'm looking for, the whatever-it-is-that-I'm-trying-to-build." And so when **we** pick up the scriptures, it ceases to be for us a Urim and Thummim, and it turns into a rule book. It ceases to be a contact point between God and us, in which God, himself, can be speaking, and the manner of revelation that He gives to us are the words contained by other prophets elsewhere. It ceases to be that, and it turns into a bibliography for our behavior; a justification for what we're all about; a way to say, "I'm right; you're wrong." It becomes clutter and noise and nonsense—and useless.

What is inside you, sustaining you from moment to moment, is God.

What organized you and keeps you intact, moment to moment, is God.

What lies at the deepest core inside you is God.

What you should be trying to regress back to, and find within yourself, is God.

The kingdom of heaven is within you, said Christ. Well, if the kingdom of heaven is within you, if—in your core—there is a contact between you and God, then our rule books don't do us a whole lot of good.

There's another way of looking at the mangled mess that we find in the minds that we have with us. And, by the way, the vision of Daniel (where it was necessary, in the last days, to grind up Babylon into dust)—despite the fact that Babylon has been gone for 2500 years—is because Babylon's still alive and well and running around inside your head. That's the manner in which you think. You're the product of Babylon; you're the product of the Medes and Persians; you're the product of the Greeks; you're the product of the Romans. You're the product of all those things, as they've accumulated and been handed down. Therefore, **it** must be ground to dust in a regression back to a point where—within you—you find that simplicity.

There's another tradition: it hails from the East; it is, in fact, the tradition out of which Christ Himself came, and that was one that focused upon the transcendent. The Gospel of John was written by someone who fully bought into the notion of transcendence, that there is this great and powerful and over-governing word (or order or truth or light). And that the greatest embodiment of that word (or notion or truth or light) finds itself embodied fully in the person of Jesus Christ. And that great light, that great truth, came down here in the person of Jesus Christ and dwelt among us.

See and there's a statement rather on point with that in the scriptures as well. Doctrine and Covenants section 88, beginning at verse 6:

He that ascended up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in...and through all things, the light of truth;

*Which truth shineth. This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made. As also he is in the moon, and is the light of the moon, and the power thereof by which it was made; [And] the light of the stars, and the power thereof by which they were made; And the earth also, and the power thereof, even the earth upon which you stand. And the light which shineth, which giveth...life, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings; Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—The light which is in **all things**, which giveth life to **all things**, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things. (D&C 88:6-13, emphasis added)*

When we read that, we say, “Cool, wonder how that science works? Wonder what rules we’ve got to learn in order to have that happen?” But an Eastern mystic would say, “Yes, I have seen that; yes, I have felt that.”

I have stepped outside the door of a house, on a perfectly still day when there was no wind, and the temperature outside was the same temperature as what is in my body, and there was no difference in the feel between myself and the air all around me. And I was, at that moment, connected by my body and by my mind to all that is and all that ever was. And I felt behind me a bird flying, because the pressure of the wings of the bird in flight touched me, though it was distant from me; because I was it, and it was me, and the light in it and the light in me were all one. And I could feel the freedom of flight, and in that I saw God. And we would say, “Oh I get it, it’s poetry! Okay, so now, let’s see; that’s probably ‘free verse.’” And we miss what is going on. We miss the Divine connection that exists. To stand in the presence of God results in people feeling inadequate and ashamed. Isaiah’s words were, “*Woe is me! ...I am undone; ...I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell [among] a people of unclean lips*” (Isaiah 6:5). Well, why is that? Because of the accumulation of junk that exists inside the clutter of our minds—and the inability to see in the simplest of things.

I’m sitting at a baseball game, and my son is playing on the Alta Hawks, and there’s a bird overhead making a relentless noise, and it’s distracting. And I’m the scorekeeper, and I don’t spend much time paying attention to those things. But I finally look up between innings, and it’s a hawk; and there aren’t many hawks that fly in Sandy, Utah around baseball diamonds. And I think, “Huh, that’s strange.” Then I thought, “What are you doing? This might be a message. There might be something to this.” So I thought, “What on earth could the meaning of the hawk be? If it’s a message, what is it?” And I came up with nothing, as is almost invariably the case. When I come up with a good question, I usually have to get a lot of help to get a good answer.

Well, the next time I look up, there are two hawks circling the ball field at the Jordan baseball field—so we’re on hostile territory—this is being a [BYU] Cougar up at Utah State: we’re on “evil” ground here. And there are two hawks circling the field above, going in a clockwise fashion. So it occurs to me: “I know clockwise generally means blessing; counter-clockwise generally means cursing. So, two hawks circling the field—a blessing of some

sort.” And I think, “Well, what on earth— what on earth could that mean?” We make it a regular habit to pray for our kids, no matter what they’re doing, and on this particular occasion, we’d been praying, and my son is involved in a baseball game, and there’s a hawk overhead—which is the symbol of his team, and there were two of them—and my kid comes up to bat, and I look up, and the hawks are gone. And I think, “Huh, that’s strange.” But we’d been praying about everything, including our kid. My son hit a double. And I thought to myself: “Okay, so that I would not miss the point that God answers prayers. So that I might not miss the point that God’s hand is in everything.”

One of the greatest baseball movies ever made is *The Last Samurai*, which all you good Mormons have not seen because it’s rated R. It is a terrific baseball movie, because when this Western, alcoholic, civil-war veteran soldier gets immersed into this Eastern culture and tries to assimilate to their method of warfare, he’s completely unable to master the art, and he’s beaten every time he goes up against the fellow who is his chief nemesis. Until finally, the kid with whom he had been residing comes up to him and says, “Too many minds; too many minds. One mind.” And so the character, the soldier, he finally gets it, and he ceases to worry about anything other than the reaction to the moment in which he finds himself.

One of the reasons why skiing is appealing—snow skiing—is appealing to people is because you can’t plan for tomorrow, and you can’t worry about yesterday, because if you take your mind off this moment, if you’re anywhere other than the now, you’re going to go down, and you’re gonna get hurt. Riding a motorcycle’s rather the same way. If you take your mind off it is— Skiing and riding a motorcycle are both very childlike experiences. God is in everything. He’s absolutely everywhere. It’s necessary for you to pay attention to that, in order to open yourself up to that. Because the process of revelation— In the East, what people would do to try and get a revelation would be to ponder, to meditate, and to open themselves up. In the West, what we would do to get a revelation is to fast and pray and offer God commitments of 50 different things if He—

Please, please, please, please, please, please, just this one time, just oh, please, please ever so much this, and I’ll do that; I’ll do that, and I’ll agree to do this. And okay, what am I not doing and why... What else could... I didn’t wear a white shirt to sacrament last—I’ll always wear a white shirt every time I go... and I believe they ask for dads to volunteer to bless the sacrament with their sons, but I know it’s something I need to do... I’m gonna bless the sacrament... and there’s a list of 50 things I think, I think I can, I think I can, I think I can...

And God’s up there saying, “Hey I put the answer to the prayer right there—it’s in the front yard, ya know.”

Oh, ooooh! I gotta bake some bread and go make some bread and take it to the neighbor and welcome him to the neighborhood, and this next door neighbor who’s got this attitude problem... I’ll go over and tell them how wonderful sacrament meeting is—I’ll get it done, I’ll get it done, I’ll get it done—Give me the revelation, will ya!

And the revelation was sitting right in your front yard, waiting for you to come out and to notice.

And we look upon those things and we keep ourselves distracted from, disconnected with, and incapable of opening ourselves up to the revelation which God, at all points, is offering to us. The world is filled with revelation. And our problem is that the manner in which we choose to go about asking for and opening ourselves up to it is so limited in scope, so poor in quality, so alien to the teachings of Christ, that it doesn't matter that the Lord is shouting at us all around. We simply won't pay any attention or give any heed to what it is that He has been offering all along.

Full of love. By the way, "patience of the child" is the relentless openness that a child has to instruction—to receiving more—the perpetual walking about with the empty cup. "I would like my cup to be filled." It is always— The child is always standing with the cupped hand, asking for you to fill it. And **we** go about saying, "I'm gonna offer a prayer now—what's that formula? Oh, we thank thee; we ask thee." We close ourselves off, when the child would open themselves up and extend a hand in a petition asking for God to give them something. And it doesn't matter how many different ways the Lord goes about trying to teach us that, either with scriptures or symbols or signs—it doesn't matter. We, nevertheless, remain committed to closing ourselves off from—and refusing to open up and receive—what things the Lord would offer if we simply would be patient, humble, submissive, and come to Him with an open recognition that we lack.

Full of love. Full of love is one of those things which— It's really a reflection of how close you've drawn to the center point. John, who we call Beloved, seems to have had his eyes opened as to the Savior, because at one point he defines the Lord as love. God is love. You draw nearer to that—and it's not a process of drawing nearer without difficulties. When you read, in particular, the strugglings that Enos had in the Book of Mormon, the closer you draw to the center point, the closer it is you reach to the point of love. And you begin to realize that there are people you don't love; indeed, there are people you despise. But the nearer you approach to God, the more you realize that—despite the fact that you have legitimate reasons for harboring resentments or grudges or attitudes about others—it is, nevertheless, the case that if you love, you can't hold onto those things. I could say "I hate it, I just hate this love that I have to show to other people, but I can't resist it. You know, that guy, he deserves to get what's coming to him, and here I have no more disposition to give it to him. I can actually look upon him with compassion." And yet in my rational mind, "I sure hope the Lord doesn't because he deserves to get stomped on at some point. I'm not going to do it. You know, live and let live; let him go. I bring no accusation against him."

And then the phrase, "*Willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father*" (Mosiah 3:19). That's a long phrase that's capturing one idea; that is, that from the vantage point at which the connection is made between the two, at the moment in which the clarity comes, at the moment when you realize what it is God would have you do, it ceases to be a question of whether or not you're willing to do it. If you knew God wanted you to do (I don't know, choose the "thing")—sell

all you have and give it to the poor? That was what was asked of the rich young man, and he didn't do it. But I commented on that fellow in *Come, Let Us Adore Him* and what he would have been involved with had he sold all he had and gone with the Lord. He would have been there for those—that final trek into and all of the events that occurred at Jerusalem. He said, “*Come follow me*” (Luke 18:22)—sell all he had and give it to the poor and come. In essence, “You’re gonna be right there for the greatest moments in history. You’re going to ride alongside of me.” Now, we look at that as kind of a fool’s bargain, because he went away mourning because he had great riches, and he didn’t want to give them up. But what he didn’t know was this was the last opportunity he had to see Christ alive, and he would have and could have been there for everything—all the way from there to the resurrection—had he been on board and done what he was invited to do.

Well, I’m running out of time. There are portions of the endowment (if you’ve been through the endowment) that suggests this chiasmic pattern. But the biggest problem is that as adults, we don’t see things that children **can** see because our minds are cluttered with craftiness, cunning—we are suspicious of other people; we can be mean; we can be manipulative; we can be jealous; we can be skeptical. Much of the clutter that’s in our mind we learned as we entered into and participate in adulthood and the adult services. In order to go forward, we need to go back. In order to get back in contact with God, the regression that is shown in the symbol of chiasmus is part of the process of going back to both an earlier point in time (that is, your childlike attitude) and a more open and a more spiritually-welcoming portion that lies only deep withinside you, at this point.

You know I think enough of what I’ve said is what I would be willing to stand on in the presence of God and defend, and so let me end by bearing testimony to you that this stuff and this symbol and this meaning and this process is, in fact, the path back to God. When you go all the way out to the farthest reach of the universe and you find God sitting upon His throne, one of the shocking realizations that you’ll make when you meet God is that God has always been with you, and that He is as close to you as the very next breath you take.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

[Transcription Christine Walter, v1.3]