Proposal for 2025 Bible Faculty Summit (July 29–31, Bob Jones University, Greenville, SC)

Proposed Title: Is There an Objectively Verifiable Chiastic Structure in the Genesis Flood Account (MT & LXX)?

ABSTRACT:

This paper considers the plausibility of an objective chiastic structure in the Hebrew text of the Flood account (FA) of Genesis 6:9–9:17 and whether Greek Genesis confirms such a structure.

It is not uncommon for scholars to posit a chiastic structure for the FA. Some of these proposals are consistent with—or expansions of—others, while other versions diverge significantly. Before setting forth a fresh proposal for an extended chiasm appearing in both the MT and LXX versions of the FA, this paper will present controls that preclude chiastic structures owing more to coincidence or imagination than a defensible literary design. The analysis follows Wilfred G. E. Watson's guidelines, John Harvey's synthesis of Craig Blomberg's rules, and Craig Smith's fivefold criteria (coherence and significant correspondences, along with discernable symmetry, function, and authorial affinity). These controls will be applied to representative samples of Flood account chiasms by Nils Lund (1942); Bernard Anderson (1978); Gordon Wenham (1978); John Harvey (1999); David Dorsey (2004); and Todd Patterson (2012).

This research contributes an application of principles of discourse analysis, namely lexical and morphosyntactic patterning, as well as a study of translation technique, suggesting that the Greek Genesis translator worked above the sentence level.

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Verifying Chiastic Structure in the Genesis Flood Account (MT & LXX)[1]

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1. Introduction

James Kugel used the pejorative "chiasmaniacs"[3] amid a spirited exchange with fellow biblical scholar Adele Berlin in the early 1980s.[4] Kugel candidly evaluated the enterprise of investigating potential symmetrically corresponding literary structures in the Bible (i.e., chiasms or chiasmus). He concluded that "the ability to abstract symmetries from a narrative context may therefore not be very informative about the narrative itself," but rather "about the ingenuity of the symmetry-finders."[5] Berlin countered that the reader "has the right to conclude that chiasm really exists in the Bible," given that "large number of examples have been found there" and despite the fact that the phenomenon "is not an especially prominent feature in modern literature."[6] In a similar vein, Angelico-Salvatore Di Marco observes, "It seems evident from some scholarly studies that not all biblical scholars are aware of how diffuse this pattern is in the Bible, and some seem even *annoyed* by this increase of analysis of chiasmus."[7]

Before discussing a case study impinging on awareness and attitudes for this controversial literary device, it is vital to further qualify "chiasm." Paul Overland describes it:

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[1] This paper reworks and expands material from my unpublished thesis, "A Comparative Discourse Analysis of the Genesis Flood Account in the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Septuagint" (PhD diss., Columbia International University, 2023), especially chapter 6, "Extended Chiasm in Genesis^{MT} and Genesis^{LXX} 6:9–9:17." I express my debt to my committee, Dr. Ben Noonan (advisor) and Dr. Steven Boyd and Dr. Peter Gentry (readers) for fruitful discussion, feedback, and resources that helped my understanding of this topic.

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[3] James Kugel, "James Kugel Responds." *Prooftexts* 2, no. 3 (1982): 330.

[4] See also the prior articles: James Kugel, "On the Bible and Literary Criticism," *Prooftexts* 1, no. 3 (1981), 217–36; and Adele Berlin, "On the Bible as Literature" in *Prooftexts* 2, no. 3 (1982), 323–27.

[5] James Kugel, "James Kugel Responds," 331. Elsewhere, Kugel does acknowledge the antiquity of chiasmus as "a well-known trope of Greek and Latin literature" and contend that in Hebrew, it "ought rightly not to be separated from the context of parallelism itself," since it is a byproduct of "the binary structure of parallelistic sentences" and "a decision *not to parallel* the word order" of the first line. James Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

[6] Berlin, 325. The implication is that the foreignness of chiasm, compared to modern literary techniques, provides no intrinsic motivation to find these structures in the text as specimens of literary sophistication. This is in contrast to modern conventions of rhyme being read back into a literary study of ancient texts, a matter which Kugel raises in "On the Bible and Literary Criticism," 219–22. See also *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 243–51

[7] Angelico-Salvatore Di Marco, "Rhetoric and Hermeneutic-On a Rhetorical Pattern: Chiasmus and Circularity," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht (Bloomsbury, 1993): 479.

> A sequence of components repeated in inverted order is known as a chiasm (named for the crossover pattern of the Greek letter *chi*: X). Repetition may occur at the level of phonemes (similar sounds), lexemes (whether identical or synonymous words), grammatically equivalent components (e.g., subject, verb, object :: object, verb, subject) or conceptually related components . . . . Any number of terms may comprise a chiasm, forming either a fully doubled scheme (e.g., A, B, C :: C′, B′, A′) or a scheme with an isolated center (e.g., A, B, C: D: C′, B′, A′).[8]

While such structures have been noticed by a variety of scholars in multiple parts of the Bible,[9] the issue in the present study is whether the Flood Account (FA) in Genesis 6:9–9:17[10] has a such a chiastic organization, as posited by numerous scholars, or whether such proposals are fanciful products of "chiasmania." A comparison of the FA in its original language (Biblical Hebrew, hereafter BH)[11] with its earliest known translation (into Koine Greek, hereafter KG)[12] holds potential for seeing whether such a structure might have been noticed in times much closer

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[8] Paul Overland, s.v. "Chiasm," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*, ed. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 54.

[9] See, e.g., Angelico Di Marco, *Il Chiasmo Nella Bibbia: Contributi Di Stilistica Strutturale* (Torino: Marietti, 1980); John J. Welch, ed., *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis*, ed. John J. Welch (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1981); and David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004).

[10] As for limiting the discourse unit to these boundaries, the combination of the *toledot* superscription, asyndeton, verbless clauses, marked word order, presentational sentences, the highlighting of significant participants (Noah, the sign of the covenant), and the morphologically and parallel structures in 6.09.1 and 9.17.2 suggest that Genesis 6:9–9:17 is a literary unit within the *toledot* of Noah (6:9–9:29) and comprises the FA proper. "Comparative Discourse Analysis of the Genesis Flood Account," 119. For discussion of the *toledot* superscriptions, see Sarah Schwartz, "Narrative Toledot formulae in Genesis: The Case of Heaven and Earth, Noah, and Isaac," *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 16 (2016): 1–36; Carol M. Kaminski, *Was Noah Good? Finding Favour in the Flood Narrative*, Library of HB/OT Studies 563 (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 184–88; Jason S. DeRouchie, "The Blessing-Commission, The Promised Offspring, and The 'Toledot' Structure of Genesis," *JETS* 56, no. 2 (2013): 219–47; and Matthew A. Thomas, *These Are the Generations: Identity, Covenant, and the Toledot Formula*, The Library of HB/OT Studies 551 (New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 71–73.

The *Toledot* of Noah (Gen 6:9–9:29)	
The Flood Account (6:9-9:17)	Noah and His Sons after the Flood (9:18–29)

Given the complexity and repetition of the narrative in the FA, it is also possible to consider alternative boundaries as part of the narrative structure, e.g., the correspondence of the names of Noah's sons in 6:10 and 9:18–19. This expansion could suggest that 9:18–19 provides closure or functions as a Janus structure which bridges 6:9–9:17 with 9:20–29. If one includes the whole of 9:18–29, it results in seeing the entirety of Noah's *toledot* comprising a chiastic narrative, connecting mentions of Shem, Ham, and Japheth (6:10, 9:18) as well as thematic correspondence of the directly stated idea of the ruin of the earth by all flesh (6:12) with the presence of dishonorable behavior in the world after the Flood (9:21–29). Although these alternatives are credible and defensible, the present study treats the FA of 6:9–9:17 as its own narrative and the episode with Noah and his sons as an epilogue. My dissertation considers the case for this unit delimitation in Chapter 5, "Macrosegmentation of Genesis[MT] and Genesis[LXX] 6:9–9:17." For further discussion of the boundaries of the FA and the placement of 9:20–29, see Lee A. Anderson, Jr., "Sounding the Structural Depths: Theme Tracing and the Segmentation of the Narrative," in *Grappling with the Chronology of the Genesis Flood: Navigating the Flow of Time in Biblical Narrative*, ed. Steven W. Boyd and Andrew A. Snelling (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2014), 675–76.

[11] Following Abraham Tal, ed., *Genesis*, Quinta Editione Cum Apparatu Critico Novis Curis Elaborato, vol. 1, *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2015).

[12] Following John W. Wevers, ed., *Genesis*, Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis Editum, vol. I, Vetus Testamentum Graecum (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974).

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to the account's composition, rather than simply being the product of an overactive imagination of modern scholars. In order to assess whether a verifiable objective chiasm exists in the FA, this paper will 1) examine discussions of chiastic structure along with controls for validating chiastic proposals for BH and KG; 2) evaluate representative proposals of a chiastic structure for the FA; and 3) offer a new proposal regarding chiasm in the FA.

2. **Controls for Chiastic Structure**

A chiasmus or chiastic structure, also known as a palistrophic or "ring" structure, "inverts the ordering of words"[13] and resembles concentric circles of inclusios,[14] often with a single element at the center that functions as the turning point, regardless of its length,[15] with mirrored correspondences of lexical, morphologogical, and/or syntactic phenomena.[16] Chiasms can effectively communicate concepts such as merism,[17] reversal,[18] and highlight the climax, or peak, of a pericope[19]—which might also serve as the main point of the discourse unit.[20]

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[13] Mary Douglas, *Thinking in Circles: An Essay on Ring Composition*, Terry Lecture Series (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 31. W. W. Parks and S. S. Bill write, "[R]ing composition provides a mechanism for configuring circles into the production and reception of linear narratives." W. W. Parks and S. S. Bill, s.v. "Ring Composition," in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Roland Green, Stephen Cushman, and Clare Cavanagh, 4th ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).

[14] An inclusio "occurs when the author states the same thing at the beginning and end of a discourse unit." Richard A. Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach* (Nashville: B&H, 1994), 252. It "may indicate that the material concerned forms a self-contained unit." Stephen H. Levinsohn, *Discourse Features of NT Greek: A Coursebook on the Information Structure of NT Greek*, 2nd ed (Dallas: SIL, 2000), 277. Young also mentions the alternative terms "sandwich structure" and "bracketing," while von Siebenthal uses the term "ploce." See Young, *Intermediate NT Greek*, 252; and von Siebenthal, *Ancient Greek Grammar for the Study of New Testament* (Oxford: Peter Lange, 2019), 558, §294r. George Guthrie notes that inclusio "was a commonly used device in ancient literary and oratorical traditions" with "clear examples of the device being found in both biblical and extra-biblical sources." George H. Guthrie, "Cohesion Shifts and Stitches in Philippians," in *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and D. A. Carson (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 39–40.

[15] Stephen H. Levinsohn, *Self-Instruction Materials on Non-Narrative Discourse Analysis* (Dallas: SIL, 2022), 107.

[16] Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Traditional Techniques in Classical Hebrew Verse*, JSOT 170 (Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 336–37.

[17] "Merismus is the expression of totality of representative parts of that totality. A very common way of expressing merismus is to use a polar word-pair." Watson, *Traditional Techniques*, 370. For further discussion of word pairs, see Yitsḥak Avishur, *Stylistic Studies of Word-Pairs in Biblical and Ancient Semitic Literatures*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament, Bd. 210 (Kevelaer: Neukirchener, 1984).

[18] Watson, *Traditional Techniques*, 370–71.

[19] Watson, *Traditional Techniques*, 388.

[20] "*The central element (or pair of elements) serves as the pivot and/or thematic focus of the entire unit.*" John Breck, *The Shape of Biblical Language: Chiasmus in the Scriptures and Beyond* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1994), 336 (italics original). The nature of the symmetry – whether the total number of parts is even or odd – might also affect the function of the chiasm, e.g., "[w]hen there is an even number of parts, the outer parts tend to be prominent (e.g. ABCCBA); if the number of parts is uneven, the center tends to be the place of prominence (ABCBA)." John Beekman, John Callow, and Michael Kopesec, *The Semantic Structure of Written Communication* (Dallas: SIL, 1981), 120. Genesis 8:1 features as the center of multiple chiastic conceptions of the FA. If it is indeed the turning point of the narrative, this comports with a thematic climax and reversal.

This literary technique, appears in BH and "throughout the history of Greek rhetoric, from the writings of the Ionian philosophers through to the works of Plato and the orators."[21] It "frequently occurs as a structuring principle" in such extra-biblical texts and the Bible itself (including the KG of the NT)[22] and indicates that the material "should be treated as a block over against that which precedes and follows."[23] Chiasmus is not limited to a single literary genre, but occurs in both poetry and narrative.[24]

Although chiasmus occurs in multiple places in the Bible, as Paul Overland warns, there are "two extremes" related to discerning them: "underdetection and overdetection."[25] As for underdetection, he provides two reasons:

> First, readers accustomed to linear presentations tend to overlook concentric patterns. In this regard, Western readers may be particularly disadvantaged. Second, most grammatical and virtually all phonemic chiasms defy effective translation—for example, the aforementioned grammatical inversion in Psalm 7:16 evident only in Hebrew (Ps 7:17 MT), and similarly the phoneme-level chiasm of Ecclesiastes 7:1: "A good name is better than fine perfume," which limps rather lamely alongside the smoothly pivoting original: *ṭôb šēm miššemen ṭôb*.[26]

Overdetection, on the other hand, proves problematic "when concept-level discoveries only

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[21] Smitherman, s.v. "Chiasm," in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Language and Linguistics*, ed. Georgios K. Giannakis (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 1:277. Smitherton also notes that chiasm was not only "an elegant and useful tool for organizing text," but also "a helpful cue for the reader" and "mnemonic aid" which even reflected the pedagogy of teaching the alphabet forward, backward, and "as two sequences that met in the middle (Marrou 1956:121)." H. I. Marrou, citing J. Grafton Milne, suggests that the teaching of the alphabet in a symmetrical manner is an innovation of Roman times. See H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1956), 150–51; and J. Grafton Milne, "Relics of Graeco-Egyptian Schools," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 28 (1908): 121–22. Milne's article discusses evidence from ostraca dating to the 2nd century A.D. It is also important to note that many aspects of Greek pedagogy directly transferred to Roman educational practices, so it is possible that such integration of chiasm even with the learning of letters existed earlier in Greek education. See Marrou, 265.

[22] See von Siebenthal, *Ancient Greek Grammar for the Study of NT*, 560, §294ac; and John Dewar Denniston, *The Greek Particles*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), 74–77.

[23] Levinsohn, *Discourse Features of NT Greek*, 277. See also William Thalmann's description of ring composition in Greek poetry: "In extended passages, then, ring composition shapes and delimits subsections and thus aids in the creation of a series of parallel episodes, actions, or ideas. At the same time, it can provide formal transitions or in other ways facilitate a thematic or narrative development between the parts, although as we have seen the implied connections between passages that are simply juxtaposed suffice for this purpose. In these ways, ring composition enables the poet to mark the stages in his plot or argument with particular clarity, but without any loss of a sense of the whole." William G. Thalmann, *Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Epic Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 21.

[24] Watson, *Traditional Techniques*, 328. For a discussion of the feature in narrative and other modes of discourse, see Francis I. Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew*, Janua Linguarum Series Practica 231 (The Hague: Mouton, 1974), 119–40. For a treatment of the literary function of chiasm in prophetic texts, see Peter J. Gentry, *How to Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017) 28–30, who sees chiasm as a key example of the recursive nature of Hebrew literary conventions. Ibid., 25.

[25] Overland, "Chiasm," 55.

[26] Overland, "Chiasm," 55.

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invent hopeful chimeras of chiasm"[27] such that "diligence must be exercised lest the text grow silent beneath the weight of imposed patterns."[28]

Although scholars should exercise caution regarding proposed chiasms that depend too much on imagination and creative interpretation, methods exist for verifying whether objective structures do indeed occur in texts. This section will present three approaches that offer controls for analyzing proposed chiasms and chart the methodology used in the following section to analyze several chiastic structures proposed for the extended narrative of the FA since, addressing concerns relevant to scholars more inclined to see such proposals as the overactive imagination of so-called "chiasmaniacs."

2.1 Controls for Chiasms (Wilfred Watson)

Wilfred G. E. Watson suggests the following controls for assessing possible chiastic structures in poetic texts of extended length,[29] but these considerations apply to narrative texts as well.

1. First, such chiasmus must be *strict*. There are cases where a poet has applied chiasmus loosely, or where variants of a standard form are used. (Deviation is often the mark of a good poet.) Cases of this nature, though, can only be judged against an established norm.
2. Next, the *whole stretch of text* must be involved, not simply certain select parts . . .
3. *Repetition* of single words (or their synonyms) is of more value than labelling of the order 'God's judgment' or 'Futility of idols.' Traditional word-pairs are also significant.
4. The *basis* on which the chiastic structure is posited *must be stated*, whether it is change of speaker, alteration of gender or content.[30]

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[27] Overland, "Chiasm," 55.

[28] Overland goes on to offer the following cautions: "Along a vector of diminishing concern, one should be suspicious of the following scenarios: (1) when segments of the text must be overlooked to achieve chiasm; (2) when form-related markers clearly segmenting the text conflict with chiastic divisions; (3) when titles proposed for chiastic segments seem forced, not reflecting cogently their actual content; (4) when length of chiastically balancing segments is severely lopsided. Criteria such as these may help assess relative merits of conflicting proposals. . . " Ibid.

[29] He notes, "While it is relatively easy to determine the presence of chiasmus in short stretches of text, from the monocolon to the stanza of eight lines, it is considerably more difficult to establish the same pattern for longer sections of poetry." Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Traditional Techniques*, 354.

[30] Watson, *Traditional Techniques*, 355–56.

2.2 Controls for Chiasms (John Harvey's Synthesis of Blomberg)

John Harvey proposes the following synthesis of Craig Blomberg's safeguards "to prevent one from imagining chiasmus where it was never intended"[31]:

1. There should be examples not only of conceptual parallelism but also of verbal and grammatical parallelism between elements in the two 'halves' of the proposed structure.
2. Verbal parallelism should involve central/dominant terminology and words/ideas not regularly found elsewhere within the proposed structure.
3. The central element should have some degree of significance within the structure.[32]

2.3 Controls for Chiasms (Craig Smith)

Finally, Craig Smith proposed the following guidelines for objectively assessing intentional chiasm in a passage:[33]

1. Coherence with other structures
2. Significant correspondences
3. Discernable symmetry
4. Discernable function
5. Discernable authorial affinity

Like Blomberg,[34] Smith sees coherence "with other structural indicators in the literary work" as an important indicator of a proposed chiasm's plausibility.[35] Similarly, the correspondences between the parts of the chiasm must be noteworthy, with verbal and syntactical correspondences being most significant.[36] Next, the symmetrical balance and order of inverted elements can affect the credibility of the chiastic proposal.[37] Furthermore, the presence of discernable semantic function often "strengthens an argument for *chiasm of design*."[38] Finally, authorial affinity, i.e., demonstrable precedent for chiastic structures by the same author, might furnish additional

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[31] Craig Blomberg, "The Structure of 2 Corinthians 1–7," *Criswell Theological Review* 4, no. 1 (1989): 5. Harvey's three rules are a condensation of Blomberg's nine. See ibid., 5–7. For an application of Blomberg's principles to an extended passage (John 13–17), see Wayne Brouwer, "Understanding Chiasm and Assessing Macro-Chiasm as a Tool of Biblical Interpretation," *Calvin Theological Journal* 53, no. 1 (2018): 99–127.

[32] John D. Harvey, *Listening to the Text: Oral Patterning in Paul's Letters*, ETS Studies 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 109.

[33] Craig A. Smith, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm of Design in New Testament Literature: Objective Means of Distinguishing Chiasm of Design from Accidental and False Chiasm," (PhD diss., University of Bristol, 2009), 2, 337–38.

[34] Blomberg, "The Structure of 2 Corinthians 1–7," 7.

[35] Smith, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm of Design," 120. See, e.g., his assessment of Andersen's chiastic structure of 7:6–17 with symmetry of Flood (6), entry (7–9), Flood (10–12), entry (13–16a), and Flood (17) that appears in *The Sentence in BH*, 124–25. Smith agrees with John A. Emerton's critique of the unit delimitation in Andersen's proposal ("An Examination of Some Attempts to Defend the Unity of the Flood Narrative in Genesis: Part II," *Vetus Testamentum* 38, no. 1 [1988]: 4), and notes the justified consensus of commentators that 7:17 begins a new unit. Smith, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm of Design," 136.

[36] Smith, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm of Design," 150.

[37] Smith, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm of Design," 184–201.

[38] Smith, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm of Design," 258 (italics original).

support, especially if such examples "occur near other, similar structures."[39] Unlike Blomberg and Harvey, Smith sees the "presence of an explicit center" as an optional element in chiastic structures, rather than as a key feature.[40]

2.4 Methodology for Application to FA Chiasm Proposals

While Watson, Harvey, and Smith (hereafter CS) each offer helpful controls for evaluating chiastic models, CS's guidelines are the most fruitful for assessing suggested structures for the FA, especially since they speak to objections against chiastic proposals to the FA raised by some scholars.[41] The following analysis considers the FA in light of such criteria, as well as Blomberg's observation that three, four, and especially five or more verbal parallels signal intentional design, and that dominant—rather than peripheral—terminology is important for these parallels.[42] Furthermore, Blomberg's urging that the natural breaks of the passage should not be violated and that the number of disruptions to the chiasm be minimal also guides the following assessment.[43] Although there is disagreement regarding whether a center point is an essential element for a chiasm, the following discussion of FA proposals considers whether an extended chiasm in the FA has such a center, and if so, what its significance is.

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[39] Smith, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm of Design," 304. Smith admits that discernable authorial affinity is the "least helpful" of his criteria and concedes, "Demonstration of authorial affinity for a figure does not necessarily reveal anything about a particular proposal except to say that if the author is known to have employed the figure elsewhere, there should be no immediate reason to be skeptical of its appearance again." Ibid., 305. He reasons that the existence of at least fifteen chiastic proposals throughout the book of Ephesians furnishes precedent that "increases the likelihood of a *chiasm of design* in Ephesians 2:1–10." Ibid., 335 (italics original).

[40] Smith, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm of Design," 93–94. Cf. Blomberg, "The Structure of 2 Corinthians 1–7," 7; and Harvey, *Listening to the Text*, 109. See also Douglas' statement about ring structures not only having "inverted word orders" but also a center point. She writes, "The other prime test of a well-turned ring is the loading of meaning on the center and the connections made between the center and the beginning; in other words, the center of a polished ring integrates the whole." Douglas, *Thinking in Circles*, 31–32.

[41] Emerton, "An Examination of Some Attempts to Defend the Unity of the Flood Narrative in Genesis: Part II," 1–21. Cf. Lloyd R. Bailey, *Noah: The Person and the Story in History and Tradition*, Studies on Personalities of the OT (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1989) 154–58; and Ellen van Wolde, "A Text-Semantic Study of the Hebrew Bible, Illustrated with Noah and Job," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 113, no. 1 (1994): 19–31; and Jan Christian Gertz, *Genesis 1-11* (Leuven: Peeters, 2023), 271, 277. I am grateful to Dustin Burlet for calling my attention to this latter resource in his review of Gertz's book in *McMaster Journal of Theology and Ministry* 24 (2022–2023): R45–R46. See also the treatment of the FA in Smith, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm of Design," 136, 142–43.

[42] Blomberg, "The Structure of 2 Corinthians 1–7," 6–7.

[43] Blomberg, "The Structure of 2 Corinthians 1–7," 7.

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3. Application of Controls for Chiastic Structuring to the FA (MT & LXX)

The following discussion is limited to six examples of proposals for a unifying chiastic structure in the FA before offering a new proposal. These models present a variety of segmentation options for the narrative, such as Genesis 6:5–9:17, 6:9–9:29, 6:9–9:19, and 6:10–9:19, but all include 6:9–9:17 within their boundaries. The first five proposals are based on an inverted symmetrical structure of five or more elements with no disruptions (Nils Lund [1942]; Bernard Anderson [1978]; Gordon Wenham [1978]; David Dorsey [2004]; Todd Patterson [2012]), while the sixth (John Harvey [1999]) has a justified disruption. Each is assessed in light of 1) its compatibility with the aforementioned controls and 2) whether the translation in Genesis[LXX] reproduces the same chiasm in part or whole.

3.1 Authorial Affinity for FA in Genesis

CS's criterion of discernable authorial affinity, bears examination before considering the individual proposals for a FA chiasm, since this criterion holds irrespective of the structure of the FA. One compelling example in proximity to the FA is Genesis 11:1–9. Jan Fokkelman presents a clear example of presentation of "a concentric symmetry" in the tower of Babel account.[44]

A	All the earth *was of* one language (כָל־הָאָרֶץ שָׂפָה אֶחָת)		11:1
B	There (שָׁם)		11:2
C	Each to his neighbor (אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ)		11:3
D	"Come on, let us brick bricks" (הָבָה נִלְבְּנָה לְבֵנִים)		11:3
E	"Let us build for ourselves" (נִבְנֶה־לָּנוּ)		11:4
F	A city and a tower (עִיר וּמִגְדָּל)		11:4
G	YHWH came down to see (וַיֵּרֶד יְהוָה לִרְאֹת)		11:5
F'	The city and the tower (אֶת־הָעִיר וְאֶת־הַמִּגְדָּל)		11:5
E'	Which the children of humanity had built (אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ בְּנֵי הָאָדָם)		11:5
D'	"Come . . . so that we may confuse" (הָבָה . . . וְנָבְלָה)		11:7
C'	Each the language of his neighbor (אִישׁ שְׂפַת רֵעֵהוּ)		11:7
B'	From there (מִשָּׁם)		11:8
A	The language of all the earth [confused] (שְׂפַת כָּל־הָאָרֶץ [בָּלַל])		11:9

Fokkelman's chiasm exhibits considerable verbal parallelism and exact inversion of nearly identical or closely similar elements, with a clear center turning point that triggers the

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[44] J. P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art in Genesis: Specimens of Stylistic and Structural Analysis*, 2nd ed. (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 22–23. Fokkelman's structure, with my English translation, is adapted here with a layout matching the following chiastic structure proposals, which have also been formatted for consistency, with the exception that I left most of David Dorsey's more complex design intact.

More examples in proximity to the FA may be marshaled, such as the Eden narrative, Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph cycles. See Michael Fishbane, "Composition and Structure in the Jacob Cycle (Gen. 25:19-35:22): Formations of Epic Narrative," in *Biblical Text and Exegetical Culture: Collected Essays*, 5–28 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022); Gary A. Rendsburg, "Chiasmus in the Book of Genesis," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 59, no. 2, supplement (2020): 17–34; Roberto Ouro, "The Garden of Eden Account: The Chiastic Structure of Genesis 2-3," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 40, no. 2 (2002): 219–43; and Isaac M. Kikawada and Arthur Quinn, *Before Abraham Was: The Unity of Genesis 1–11* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 89–106. One recent proposal—along the lines of a thematic approach—posits a chiastic structure comprising the whole of Genesis 1:1–11:32. See Joshua J. Spoelstra, "The Literary Shapes of the Primeval History: A Case for Chiasm in Genesis 1–11," *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 48, no. 1 (2022): 43–60.

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unraveling of the elements of A–F in F'–A'. Like the FA, this event is also pivotal in the primeval history, and its proximity to Genesis 6:9–9:17 suggests discernable authorial affinity, supporting the likelihood that the corpus of Genesis and even the entire Pentateuch may have more chiastic structures awaiting.[45]

3.2 Assessment of Six FA Chiasm Proposals

3.2.1 Nils Lund (1942)

In his seminal study on chiasm, Nils Lund posits a structure of the FA as part of a larger configuration, with the foregoing and following sections producing a parallel pattern around the chiasm in E through E':[46]

A	The contribution of Cain and his descendants,	4:17–22
B	A poetic section: the Song of Lamech,	4:23–24
C	The generations of Adam,	4:25–5:32
D	The wickedness of mankind; big men;	6:1–8
	Yahweh saw it and determined their destruction,	6:5–7
E	The three sons of Noah,	6:9–12
F	God's covenant with Noah,	6:13–22
G	Yahweh declares he will destroy everything,	7:1–5
H	Noah enters the ark,	7:6–9
I	The flood continues to rise,	7:10–20
J	The central panel: enumerating the results of the flood	7:21–23a
I'	The flood continues to fall	7:23b–8:12
H'	Noah leaves the ark,	8:13–19
G'	Yahweh declares he will not curse the ground any more,	8:20–22
F'	God's covenant with Noah,	9:1–17
E'	The three sons of Noah,	9:18–19
A'	The contribution of Noah: a vineyard; his descendants,	9:20–24, 28
B'	A poetic section: the Curse of Canaan,	9:25–27
C'	The generations of the sons of Noah,	10:1–32
D'	The wickedness of mankind: a big tower,	11:1–9
	Yahweh saw it and determined to confound them,	11:5–9

Lund's chiasm for the FA has several strengths. First, there are defensible lexical items, such as the three sons of Noah, covenant, the ark, and even the designations for God. Second, clear word-pairs are in view for the opposite activities of entering and exiting. Third, the thematic parallel of the flood rising and then falling clearly correspond. Fourth, the language and concepts are key to the FA, not incidental. Fifth, there are five symmetrical elements in Lund's structure. Sixth, the center of the chiasm occurs at a turning point in the narrative.

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[45] For supporting evidence of patterns of data for multiple proposed chiasms in Genesis and the Pentateuch, see the discussion in Smith, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm of Design," 308–13.

[46] From Nils W. Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in the Form and Function of Chiastic Structures* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1942), 61. Note that Lund keeps 9:18–19 as part of the unit, which is defensible given the parallels. Lund's work also provides exploration of additional detail, e.g., in 7:21–23. Ibid., 60. At least one earlier attempt to demonstrate chiasmus in the FA, though of a more thematic variety, appears in E. W. Bullinger, *The Companion Bible* (1922; repr., Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2018), 11, 14.

Although the chiasm has strengths, there are also at least two notable weaknesses. First, some parallels could be stronger, such as "destroy" and "not curse." Second, the division of the text does not always follow natural breaks, segmenting the text, e.g., into 7:21–23a and 7:23b–8:12, rather than beginning the I' section with actual statements about the reduction of water, the first of which occurs in 8:1b.

Nothing in the Genesis[LXX] FA changes any of the elements in Lund's chiasm. Although there is a mismatch between the divine designations in some portions of the FA, the appearances of θεός and κύριος ὁ θεός in the initial boundaries of the sections in Lund's chiasm are consistent with אֱלֹהִים and יהוה, respectively.

3.2.2 Bernard Anderson (1978)

Like Lund, Bernard Anderson also suggests a chiasm of five elements. Unlike Lund, he separates 6:9–10 and 9:18–19 from the FA itself, designating them as transitional elements at its edges.[47] Furthermore, Anderson's chiasm generally segments the text into different subunits than Lund. Another difference is the center of the chiasm. Instead of the pivot being the destruction of the Flood, it is God's remembrance of Noah.[48]

Transitional introduction		6:9–10
A	Violence in God's creation	6:11–12
B	First divine address: resolution to destroy	6:13–22
C	Second divine address: command to enter the ark	7:1–10
D	Beginning of the flood	7:11–16
E	The rising flood waters	7:17–24
F	GOD'S REMEMBRANCE OF NOAH	8:1
E'	The receding flood waters	8:1–5
D'	The drying of the earth	8:6–14
C'	Third divine address: command to leave the ark	8:15–19
B'	God's resolution to preserve order	8:20–22
A'	Fourth divine address: covenant blessing	9:1–17
Transitional conclusion		9:18–19

Anderson has strong lexical parallels, such as the waters in E and E', strong word-pairs with entering and leaving in C and C', and strong conceptual parallels with rising and receding in E and E'. Some of the other parallels appear more tenuous, such as A and A', without an identification of lexical or conceptual correspondence. Similarly, D and D', though covering clearly opposite but related situations, could be improved by the identification of lexical links

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[47] Bernard W. Anderson, "From Analysis to Synthesis: The Interpretation of Genesis 1–11," *JBL* 97, no. 1 (1978): 38. Lee Anderson presents an identically structured chiasm with further clarification, such as the lexical parallels of "all flesh" ("The Corruption of All Flesh," 6:11–12; "The Covenant with All Flesh," 9:1–17). See Lee Anderson, Jr., "Sounding the Structural Depths," 648.

[48] The presence of this pivot affects the emphasis of the structure of the account. With God's remembrance of Noah as the turning point, salvation is prioritized over judgment in the chiastic structure. See also Dustin Burlet's argument in *Judgment and Salvation: A Rhetorical-Critical Reading of Noah's Flood in Genesis* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2022), where he defends the priority of salvation as the emphasis of the account through the application of rhetorical criticism.

between the two sections.[49] B might better correspond with A', given God's stated intention to destroy (6:13) and later resolution not to do so again (9:11, 15), as well as the first appearance of covenant in 6:18 and its later fulfillment (9:9, 12–17).

Anderson's proposed structure is entirely compatible with Genesis[LXX], given that he does not specify the divine designations—which are not identical in 6:13 and 8:20—as elements in the pairs. Although "violence" as a translation of חָמָס suggests a different though not unrelated semantic range from ἀδικία, there is nothing in LXX that would weaken or strengthen the contribution of A and A' for demonstrating a chiastic structure than the data in MT would indicate since neither the Greek nor Hebrew lexemes appear in A'.

3.2.3 Gordon Wenham (1978)

Gordon Wenham's extended chiasm encompasses fifteen paired elements, with the same center point as Anderson's.[50] Like Lund, he identifies "covenant" as meriting its own corresponding pair, and like Lund and Anderson, he represents entry into and exit from the ark. Wenham's proposal, however, differs in several ways. He uses 6:10 as the initial boundary of the chiastic unit and includes Noah separately from his sons. He distinguishes references to the covenant, identifying the first of the pair in reference to Noah and the second in reference to all flesh. He adds pairs that focus specifically upon the ark, the Flood, food, time periods, Yahweh shutting and Noah opening, and the mountains as primary elements—rather than representing them only in connection with other parts of the narrative. Furthermore, he represents the presentation of all ark passengers entering as parallel with the flights of the raven and dove.

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[49] Again, Lee Anderson's improved version of this chiasm explicitly links these items with the lexeme for the earth, labeling them "The Beginning of the Flood: The Inundating of the Earth (7:11–16)" and "The End of the Flood: The Drying of the Earth (8:6–14)." Lee Anderson, Jr., "Sounding the Structural Depths," 648.

[50] Gordon J. Wenham, "The Coherence of the Flood Narrative," in *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1–11*, ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura, Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 4 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 438. Wenham's essay originally appeared in *Vetus Testamentum* 28 (1978): 336–48. Citations of pages in this paper are from the 1994 anthology. Joshua Berman provides a reworked version of Wenham's chiasm, but it comprises 6:13–9:17. They share items K through P but Berman makes several alterations. For example, he distinguishes the sending of raven and dove (8:7–8) from the later missions of the dove (8:10–12), paralleling them with statements that include birds entering the ark (7:8, 14). He also parallels the first mention of 600 (7:6) with the mention of year 601 (8:13) and adds fulfillment to the commands to enter (7:1–5) and exit (8:15–19). See Joshua A. Berman, "Source Criticism and Its Biases: The Flood Account," in *Inconsistency in the Torah: Ancient Literary Convention and the Limits of Source Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 261.

A	Noah	6:10a
B	Shem, Ham and Japheth	6:10b
C	Ark to be built	6:14–16
D	Flood announced	6:17
E	Covenant with Noah	6:18–20
F	Food in the ark	6:21
G	Command to enter ark	7:1–3
H	7 days waiting for flood	7:4–5
I	7 days waiting for flood	7:7–10
J	Entry to ark	7:11–15
K	Yahweh shuts Noah in	7:16
L	40 days flood	7:17a
M	Waters increase	7:17b–18
N	Mountains covered	7:19–20
O	150 days water prevail	7:[21]–24
P	GOD REMEMBERS NOAH	8:1
O'	150 days waters abate	8:3
N'	Mountain tops appear	8:4–5
M'	Waters abate	8:5
L'	40 days (end of)	8:6a
K'	Noah opens window of ark	8:6b
J'	Raven and dove leave ark	8:7–9
I'	7 days waiting for waters to subside	8:10–11
H'	7 days waiting for waters to subside	8:12–13
G'	Command to leave ark	8:15–17[22]
F'	Food outside ark	9:1–4
E'	Covenant with all flesh	9:8–10
D'	No flood in future	9:11–17
C'	Ark	9:18a
B'	Shem, Ham and Japheth	9:18b
A'	Noah	9:19

For the most part, Wenham's chiasm is quite comprehensive and primarily based around objective lexemes and is compatible with LXX. However, two areas of potential deficiencies bear mentioning. First, the combination of 150 days with the waters prevailing or abating could be separated, thus making an extra paired element in the chiasm while preserving the possibility of interpreting the 150-day periods as two distinct time references or as a reference to the same 150 days. As it stands, Wenham's chiasm might suggest two distinct time periods, an interpretation which is arguably not required by the Hebrew text.[51] Second, some elements in conceptual pairs are tenuous. Although the entry to the ark (J) surely included the raven and the dove, they are mentioned by name only in 8:7–12, and their release is not an exact counterpart to the comprehensive exiting required by God's command in 8:15–19.[52] Another weakness is the presence of significant gaps, such as a lack of items from 6:11–13 and 8:18–22.[53]

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[51] As Wenham acknowledges in "The Coherence of the Flood Narrative," 444.

[52] Kikawada and Quinn provide a plausible justification for pairing the two items: "In 8:7–9 a dove and raven leave the ark; in 7:11–15 the animals enter the ark, including 'every bird according to its kind, every bird of every sort.'" See *Before Abraham Was*, 101. Although Wenham does not discuss this potential objection, if Kikawada and Quinn are correct, LXX diminishes this link by using only a single designation for birds in 7:14 in contrast to the double appellation in MT.

[53] Smith, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm of Design," 143.

3.2.4 David Dorsey (2004)

David Dorsey's proposed chiasm spans Genesis 6:9–9:19.[54] Like Lund's, the destruction of the Flood is the climax rather than God remembering. Like Wenham, he observes food, time periods, and the mountains, but also observes the collocation of mountains and ark. Like Lund, Anderson, and Wenham, his unit boundaries include Noah's three sons. In contrast to the preceding proposals, Dorsey produces a robust alternative that is less ambitious than Wenham's but more substantial than Lund's or Anderson's versions in terms of enumerating symmetrical pairs.

	genealogical note	
A	• Noah's *three sons enumerated*	6:9–10
	• Noah's righteousness	
	God *sees* (*rāʾâ*) that the *earth* (*hāʾāreṣ*) is *ruined* (*šāḥat*)	
B	• *all flesh* (*kol-bāśār*) has *ruined* (*šāḥat*) its way	6:11–12
	God's instructions to Noah in light of his coming destruction of life on earth	
C	• directions regarding *food* (*ʾoklâ*) that they may *eat* (*ʾākal*)	6:13–22
	they enter the ark at God's command	
D	• Noah takes "*clean animals* and [clean] birds"	7:1–9
	flood begins, ark is closed	
E	• *after seven days*	7:10–16
	• *forty days*	
	waters rise	
F	• series of clauses depicting prevailing waters	7:17–20
	• *mountains* (*hehārîm*) *are covered* and ark is borne over them	
G	**CLIMAX: all life on land dies**; only Noah and those with him are spared	7:21–24
	waters recede	
F'	• series of clauses depicting receding waters	8:1–5
	• *mountains* (*hehārîm*) *are uncovered* and ark rests on one of them	
	flood ends, ark's window is opened	
E'	• *after seven days*	8:6–14
	• *forty days*	
	they exit the ark at God's command	
D'	• Noah takes some "*clean animals* and clean birds" and offers them to God	8:15–22
	God's instructions to Noah in light of his renewal of life on earth	
C'	• directions regarding *food* (*ʾoklâ*) that they may *eat* (*ʾākal*)	9:1–7
	God promises to never again *ruin* (*šāḥat*) the *earth* (*hāʾāreṣ*)	
B'	• God will never again *ruin* (*šāḥat*) *all flesh* (*kol-bāśār*)	9:8–17
	• God will *see* (*rāʾâ*) the rainbow	
	genealogical note	
A'	• Noah's *three sons enumerated*	9:18–19

Dorsey incorporates several items not found in the earlier chiastic proposals, such as pairing the appearances of ראה ("to see") and collocations of הָאָרֶץ ("the earth") and שׁחת ("ruin") as well as כָּל־בָּשָׂר ("all flesh") and שׁחת ("ruin") in B and B'. Some of his parallel descriptions are

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[54] Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, 52 (formatting original).

more conceptual than lexical (e.g., mountains being covered/uncovered), but they make sense and represent semantically opposite verbs. Dorsey's model is also compatible with LXX.

3.2.5 Todd Patterson (2012)

Todd Patterson's chiastic proposal has five paired elements.[55] Its elements include parallels seen in prior proposals, including God's determination to destroy/not destroy, covenant, entering/exiting the ark, the waters rising/drying, and boundaries related to Noah and his three sons.

A	Noah, his three sons, corruption in the earth	6:9–12
B	**Divine Speech**: determination to destroy, covenant	6:13–22
C	**Divine Speech**: go into the ark	7:1–9
D	The flood begins, preservation of life shut inside	7:10–16
E	The waters rise, destruction of life outside	7:17–24
E'	God remembers Noah, the waters abate	8:1–5
D'	The waters dry up, preserved life opens up	8:6–14
C'	**Divine speech**: go out of the ark	8:15–19
B'	**Divine speech**: determination not to destroy, covenant	8:20–9:17
A'	Noah, his three sons, (corruption in the earth)	9:18–29

Unlike prior proposals, Patterson's chiasm encompasses the entire *toledot* of Noah (6:9–9:29). He is on strong lexical grounds with Noah and his three sons, but the absence of the lexeme שחת in 9:18–29 weakens the inclusion of "corruption in the earth" in his proposal, although it is plausible as a description of the events chronicled in 9:20–29. Another difference in Patterson's structure is that there is not a single center point, although there is a fully symmetrical construction juxtaposing the destruction of life outside the ark and God's remembrance of Noah on opposite sides of the pivot. Patterson's proposal is compatible with LXX.

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[55] Todd Patterson, "The Righteousness and Survival of the Seed: The Role of Plot in the Exegesis and Theology of Genesis" (PhD diss., Trinity International University, 2012), 175 (boldface original).

3.2.6 John Harvey's (1999) Revision of Yehuda Radday (1981)

The final chiastic proposal for consideration is John Harvey's adaptation of Yehuda Radday's structuring of Genesis 6:5–9:17. Harvey's diagram is important for this comparative study of the FA in MT and LXX for two reasons. First, it is an example of improving an existing chiastic proposal with regard to the previously discussed controls. Second, it is given in reference to the Greek version of the FA. Before examining Harvey's revision, Radday's original chiasm merits attention:[56]

A	Divine monologue	6:3, 7
B	It grieved Him to His heart	6:6
C	"I will establish My covenant"	6:18
D	Four stages of entering the ark "as commanded"	6:22; 7:5, 9, 16
E	"Go into the ark"	7:1
F	The fountains of the deep burst forth	7:11
G	Seven verbs of "ascent"	7:17, 18, 19
H	God remembered Noah	8:1
G'	Seven verbs of "descent"	8:1, 2, 3, 4, 5
F'	The fountains of the deep were closed	8:2
E'	"Go forth from the ark"	8:11
D'	Four stages of leaving the ark	8:7, 8, 10, 12
B'	The Lord said in His heart.	8:21
C'	"I established My covenant"	9:9
A'	Divine monologue	9:12–16

Although Radday rightly highlights multiple key lexical symmetries or word-pair opposites and presents God's remembering of Noah as the apex of the account, Harvey points out several difficulties with Radday's model. These difficulties include the idea of a divine monologue that combines statements from two different paragraphs (6:1–4 and 6:5–8), the extraction of items from the "divine monologue" and "four stages" sections to make additional symmetrical pairs, displacement of the command in E' in contrast to the text sequence, and paralleling the entering of the ark to the release of raven and dove rather than to its proper counterpart of exiting the ark.[57]

Harvey's modifications improve Radday's scheme by presenting each pair with clear lexical symmetry.[58] Where opposite word-pairs appear, they share a common lexical item (C, E, F, G), thus grounding the chiasm solidly on objective lexemes in each line.

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[56] Yehuda Thomas Radday, "Chiasmus in Hebrew Biblical Narrative," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis*, ed. John J. Welch (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1981), 99. Although the command in E' occurs in 8:16, Yadday's treatment lists 8:11 as the reference.

[57] Harvey, *Listening to the Text*, 113–14. Another difficulty with Radday's "divine monologue" at the end of the chiasm as that it is specifically framed as addressed to an audience in the second person plural, given the pronouns in the speech in both MT and LXX. MT does not specify the recipients in the QF of Genesis 9:12, presumably continuing the address to Noe and his sons last acknowledged in 9:8. LXX, however, has a plus of Noe in the QF in 9:12. The only divine monologue within the boundaries of Noe's *toledot* is 8:21–22.

[58] Harvey, *Listening to the Text*, 106, 114–15.

A	God considers (ὁ θεὸς . . . διενοήθη) mankind's wickedness	6:5–8
B	God promises covenant (διαθήκη) with Noah	6:9–22
C	Command to enter the ark (εἴσελθε . . . εἰς τὴν κιβωτόν)	7:1–5
D	Seven day period (ἑπτὰ ἡμέρας)	7:6–10
E	Fountains opened (αἱ πηγαὶ τῆς ἀβύσσου . . . ἠνεῴχθησαν)	7:11
F	Forty days (τεσσαράκοντα ἡμέρας) . . . flood on earth	7:12–17
G	Waters prevail for 150 days	7:18–24
	(chiasmus + ἡμέρας ἑκατὸν πεντήκοντα)	
H	God remembers (μιμνήσκομαι) Noah	8:1
E'	Fountains closed (ἐπεκαλύφθησαν αἱ πηγαὶ τῆς ἀβύσσου)	8:2
G'	Waters subside for 150 days	8:3–5
	(chiasmus + πεντήκοντα καὶ ἑκατὸν ἡμέρας)	
F'	Forty days (τεσσαράκοντα ἡμέρας) . . . sent dove	8:6
D'	Two seven day periods (ἡμέρας ἑπτὰ)	8:10–14
C'	Command to exit the ark (ἔξελθε ἐκ τῆς κιβωτοῦ)	8:15–20
A'	God considers (ὁ θεὸς διανοηθείς) Noah's offering	8:21–22
B'	God makes covenant (διαθήκη) with Noah	9:1–17

Harvey's model comprises Genesis[LXX] 6:5–9:17, but Genesis[MT] is entirely compatible with the same structure, except for the lack of a common verb bridging the A and A' sections in Genesis[MT]. However, those sections would retain the same structure if replaced with יְהוָה אֶל־ . . . לִבּוֹ in 6:6 and יְהוָה אֶל־לִבּוֹ in 8:21.[59]

Although Harvey's chiasm is strong, the appearance of a possible extraneous element and two disruptions must be noted. Each line of the chiasm has a lexical connection to its counterpart, but the inclusion of F's "flood on earth" opposite "sent dove" in F' does not have a clear rationale, particularly since the Flood occurs during a forty-day period and the dove is sent sometime following a forty-day period. Harvey acknowledges two disruptions to the inverted pattern. First, the sequence E F G H E G' has the fountains of the deep as the "most glaring break in this scheme," but Harvey justifies the deviation in that "the logic of the narrative demands that the fountains of the earth and the floodgates of the heavens be closed before the waters can subside."[60] Second, the appearance of the sequence A B at the beginning and A' B' at the end occur due to the inclusion of 6:5–8 in the corpus. Limiting the unit boundaries to 6:9–9:17 would produce a tighter chiasm with only a single disruption, although it would also eliminate 8:21–22 from appearing in a distinct element. This elimination, however, would not necessarily be a problem, given the varying lengths of textual units, several of which certainly contain additional subdivisions.

Harvey's revised chiasm shows both the value of engaging with prior work on chiasms and investigating the preservation of chiastic structure in Genesis[LXX]. The next section likewise seeks to build off inverted parallel structures in Genesis[MT] observed by others to offer a new proposal and to assess the extent to which Genesis[LXX] manifests a similar structure.

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[59] Genesis[LXX] has κύριος ὁ θεός in both 6:6 and 8:21, but the compound verb διανόημα subsumes the Hebrew noun לֵב, translating the וַיִּתְעַצֵּב אֶל־לִבּוֹ (6:6) and וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־לִבּוֹ (8:21), although Genesis[LXX] does represent לֵב quantitatively with the noun καρδίᾳ in 6:5, although διάνοια renders the same noun in 8:21.

[60] Harvey, *Listening to the Text*, 114.

4. A New Proposal for Chiastic Structure in the Flood Account (MT& LXX)

The commonality found among FA chiasm proposals testifies to the presence of some sort of symmetrical structure. At the same time, the differences between the proposals suggest that the account is not an exact symmetry in all ways. Nonetheless, elements of lexical, grammatical, and syntactical symmetry tend to occur in an inversion with God remembering Noah marking the division the narrative. On either side of this center point, one finds correspondence between the increasing and decreasing of the water, as well as symmetries between the time periods of 7, 40, and 150. The following chiasm shares many elements with those discussed above, but augments them with the mention of the ark being raised and resting, the symmetry of "generations," and the opening and closing formulas at the boundaries of 6:9–9:17. Like Harvey's chiasm, this proposal includes at least one element of lexical correspondence in each line, although some lines have additional elements such as opposite word-pairs (G, I, K, L), variation in grammatical number (A, E), or inversion of phrase constituents (D). It also includes a significant pivot point (M) and its verbal parallelism includes terminology that is central to the FA. Furthermore, this new proposal neither violates natural breaks of the passage nor contains disruptions, and it has twelve symmetrical elements—which are often comprised of collocations, with one exception (B).

New Proposal for Chiastic Structure in Genesis[MT] 6:9–9:17		
A	Opening formula: These are the records of Noah	6:9
B	Generations	6:9
C	Ruin + the earth	6:13
D	The Flood of waters	6:17
E	Uphold My covenant with you (s)	6:18
F	Food for eating	6:21
G	Impv. from YHWH to Noah: Enter the ark	7:1
H	7 days, 7 days, exact date in the life of Noah	7:4, 10, 11
I	YHWH closed	7:16
J	וַיְהִי + 40 days	7:17
K	Ark raised/moving, waters vigorous, mtns covered	7:18–20
L	150 days + waters were vigorous	7:24
M	God remembered Noah…	8:1
L'	150 days + waters receded	8:3
K'	Ark rested, waters diminished, mtns appeared	8:4–5
J'	וַיְהִי + 40 days	8:6
I'	Noah opened	8:6
H'	7 days, 7 days, exact date	8:10, 12, 13
G'	Impv. from God to Noah: Exit the ark	8:16
F'	Food for eating	9:2–4
E'	Uphold My covenant with you (p)	9:9
D'	The waters of the Flood	9:11
C'	Ruin + the earth	9:11
B'	Generations	9:12
A'	Closing formula: This is the sign of the covenant	9:12, 17

Genesis[LXX] keeps this chiasm with slight differences. Opposite word-pairs still occur, although in the case of the verb in 7:24, it is a variation from the other verbs used for the water; nonetheless, the opposite relationship between the verbs in L and L' remains. For K and K', Genesis[LXX] describes the waters actively as covering the mountains, in contrast to the mountains being covered in MT, although the opposite state of appearing occurs in both versions. Genesis[LXX]'s plus of "and nights" (7:17) and "in the life of Noe" (8:13) do not invalidate the symmetry introduced by J and H, respectively, but do reshape it. In the case of 7:17, it slightly weakens the symmetry since 8:6 only mentions days.[61] Genesis 7:11 and 8:13, however, are linked more strongly with each of the dates given in reference to the life of Noe.[62] Likewise, the rendering of κύριος ὁ θεός in LXX for MT's יהוה (7:1) and אֱלֹהִים (8:15's QF for 8:16–17), respectively, strengthens the chiasm by identical appellations for the divine speaker of the imperative in G and G'. In B, γενεά is singular in 6:9 but plural in 9:12 (B'), a change that does not affect the essence of the chiasm, despite the singular appearing in both 6:9 and 9:12 in MT. Given the nature of these differences, it can be said that LXX retains the key elements of chiasm found in MT, only slightly diluting the connections (B, J) and sometimes strengthening their degree of correspondence (H).

New Proposal for Chiastic Structure in Genesis[LXX] 6:9–9:17		
A	Opening formula: Now these are the generations of Noe	6:9
B	Generation	6:9
C	Ruin + the earth	6:13
D	The Flood of water	6:17
E	Uphold My covenant with you (s)	6:18
F	Food for eating	6:21
G	Impv. from κύριος ὁ θεός to Noe: Enter the ark	7:1
H	7 days, 7 days, exact date in the life of Noe	7:4, 10, 11
I	Κύριος ὁ θεός closed	7:16
J	καὶ ἐγένετο + 40 days (**+ nights**)	7:17
K	Ark lifted/carried, waters prevailed, covered mtns	7:18–20
L	150 days + water was elevated	7:24
M	God was reminded of Noe…	8:1
L'	150 days + water was subsiding	8:3
K'	Ark aground, water diminishing, mtns appear	8:4–5
J'	καὶ ἐγένετο + 40 days	8:6
I'	Noe opened	8:6
H'	7 days, 7 days, **exact date** (**+ in the life of Noe**)	8:10, 12, 13
G'	Impv. from **κύριος ὁ θεός** to Noe: Exit the ark	8:16
F'	Food for eating	9:2–4
E'	Uphold My covenant with you (p)	9:9
D'	The water of the Flood	9:11
C'	Ruin + the earth	9:11
B'	Generations	9:12
A'	Closing formula: This is the sign of the covenant	9:12, 17

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[61] The addition of nights with days, however, more explicitly connects 7:17 with "days and nights," which appear in Genesis[MT] 7:4 and 7:12.

[62] Quite possibly another harmonizing plus in Genesis[LXX] 8:13.

5. Conclusion: Plausibility of Chiastic Structure in the FA is Objectively Verifiable

Having assessed a selection of proposals for an extended chiasm in the FA by comparing them against a set of quality controls, the results indeed suggest that the FA contains an extended chiasm. The inclusion of formulas, single words, collocations, opposite word-pairs, a connective formula, numbers, and key participants, in a mirrored constituent order strongly suggests a turning point, reversal, and closure in the FA. Furthermore, the frequent collocation not only of words, but also entire phrases or clauses, strengthens the case for chiastic structure. After noticing such phenomena, the question is not, "Does the FA have a chiastic structure?" but "What are the essential elements of the FA's chiastic structure?"[63]

Since scholars have continued to propose variant—but often overlapping—chiasms, it is possible that stronger proposals with more numerous correspondences might yet emerge.[64] The fact that Genesis[LXX] retains the symmetrical arrangement—rarely diminishing it and occasionally strengthening it—also testifies to its presence in the translator's source text as well as its acceptability in the conventions of the target language, and suggests that the translator deliberately sought to present symmetrical correspondence, reading above the level of the sentence in formulating his representation of the discourse.[65] Both MT and LXX present God's remembrance of Noah as the main turning point,[66] and this climax can be related to both the preparation and protection amid judgment in 6:9–7:24 as well as the events leading up to life in a renewed creation as recounted in 8:1–9:17. Thus, proposing an objectively, lexically-based chiastic structure for the FA can be defended against charges of "chasmania."[67]

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[63] Although the focus here was the FA as a whole, smaller chiasms may be defended at multiple points within its boundaries as well, viz., 7:11b; 9:6, 9:12–17. On Gen 7:11b as an instance of parallelism and poetic chiasm, see Steven W. Boyd and Douglas K. Smith, Jr., "Genre and Geology: Meaning and Mechanism in Genesis 7:11b," *Journal of the Creation Theology Society* 1 (2022): 51–124; and "Genre and Geology: Meaning and Mechanism in Genesis 7:11b, Part Two: Syntactic Structure and Morphological Sequence," *Journal of the Creation Theology Society* 2 (2023): 57–157.

[64] Including the remarkable correspondence in the morphosyntactic sequences of 6:17 and 9:9 with their shared וֹ + 1cs indep. pron. + *hinneh* with 1cs pron. suffix + ptc. + DDO marker + DDO + PP pattern.

Gen 6:17 וַאֲנִי הִנְנִי מֵבִיא אֶת־הַמַּבּוּל מַיִם עַל־הָאָרֶץ לְשַׁחֵת כָּל־בָּשָׂר אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ רוּחַ חַיִּים מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמָיִם

Gen. 9:9 וַאֲנִי הִנְנִי מֵקִים אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם וְאֶת־זַרְעֲכֶם אַחֲרֵיכֶם

Steven Boyd, email message to author, May 11, 2023.

Furthermore, CS's challenge for Wenham's chiasm is relevant, since my proposal shared some of the same gaps pointed out by CS: "Missing from this outline are vv.6:11-13, 6:22, 7:6, 8:2, 8:14, 8:18-21 and 9:5-7. . . . An outline which could account for the missing material in such a way as to render it part of the inverted parallelism" would add credibility "for *chiasm of design*." Smith, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm of Design," 143.

[65] In my dissertation, my analysis supports Mark Scarlata's summary of the Genesis translator's approach: "Reflecting on some of the scholarly opinions on the general characteristics of LXX Genesis, we might consider the translation an intelligent and faithful rendering of the Hebrew that veers away from word-for-word literalism. The Greek demonstrates linguistic sensitivity, harmonisation, and possible theologically motivated exegesis, but, where discrepancies exist, there is also the possibility that they were due to a difference in *Vorlage*." "Genesis," in *T&T Clark Companion to the Septuagint*, Bloomsbury Companions (London: T&T Clark, 2015), 15.

[66] "The structure itself helps to draw attention to the nature of the flood and the water's rise and fall, and to pinpoint the real turning point, God's remembering Noah (8:1). It was divine intervention that saved Noah, and the palistrophic pattern reminds the reader of the fact." Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 212.

[67] And thus paving the way for further discussion as to the value of discerning such structures, which deserves its own treatment, particularly in the areas of textual criticism, aesthetics, and exegesis, as Overland has observed. Overland, "Chiasm," 55–56.

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