

# LESSON 6 Synthesis—Putting the Parts Together

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The Holy Spirit gave each Bible author a distinct purpose for writing. Your purpose for writing determines four things: (1) the *terms* of your writing (what you say with the words you use), (2) the *structure* of your material (how you arrange it), (3) what *literary form* is best (the style of writing you choose), and (4) the *atmosphere* or feeling your writing conveys.

*Terms, structure, literary form, and atmosphere* will be explained in detail in this lesson. These features will have to be separated to explain them clearly, but in actual practice there will be overlapping. For example, the devices of composition you learned in Lesson 5 will now be seen as “structure.”

## ***lesson outline***

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Terms As Words  
Structure of Literature  
Literary Atmosphere  
Literary Form  
Progression in Literature

## ***lesson objectives***

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When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

1. Define “terms” and explain their importance to the study of Scripture.
2. Define “structure” and explain its importance to the study of Scripture.
3. Define “literary atmosphere” and identify it in Scripture.
4. Identify main “literary forms” and explain how each of them is used.
5. Identify kinds of “literary progression” and state what is common to all of them.

## ***learning activities***

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1. Take a little time before starting this lesson to review Lesson 5.
2. Read the opening section, outline, and objectives of this lesson.
3. Learn the meanings of key words that are new to you.
4. Study the lesson development and answer the study questions in the usual manner.
5. Take the self-test at the end of the lesson. Check your answers.

## key words

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category	exhaustive	vivid
chronological	keynote	
crucial	routine	

## lesson development

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### TERMS AS WORDS

**Objective 1.** *Define “terms” and explain their importance to the study of Scripture.*

In literature, *terms* are simply words as they are used in a given context. All of the words in the Bible are important, but not all of them are significant for the same reason. Some words (such as “of,” “and,” “a,” etc.) are *routine* words with the obvious function of holding sentences together. Other words are important because knowing their meaning will make a difference in the correct interpretation of the Bible. This kind of word should act as a *flag* to you, signaling that it needs to be given special attention.

What words should act as flags? Well, *any word that you do not understand needs special study*. You should always study with your pencil and notebook. Any word you come to that you do not understand should be written down. Try to find out what it means from a dictionary or in some other way.

*Crucial words, names of things, actions, descriptive words*, these are all important to understanding the passage, so they need to be noted especially. Crucial words are not always the longest ones! As you will see shortly, sometimes important words are the short ones because they indicate a change of action or mood or a transition of thought.

*Terms which express profound concepts* need to be studied. For example, what kind of “change” seems to have come over Jesus in Mark 9:2? That needs to be explored further. You need to be discriminating. Not every word will need special investigation.

You need to notice also whether certain words are literal or figurative. Remember that *literal* refers to the normal, ordinary meaning of the word. *Figurative* refers to symbolic usage when a word stands for something else.

## Application

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**1** Read Genesis 2:16 and Romans 11:24. Note the word “tree” in each passage. In which verse is the word “tree” figurative?

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Even though you may not know grammar or parts of speech, you can learn to recognize key words. Christian doctrines are determined by how different kinds of words are used. *Names of persons, places, and things* are important nouns. *Actions* are important verbs. Descriptive terms that indicate “how fast,” “how large,” etc. are key words. The six faithful serving men (WHO? WHAT? WHEN? WHERE? HOW? WHY?) that you learned about in an earlier lesson can help you find the key words. Notice *commands, advice, warnings, reasons, purposes, proofs, and results*. Watch for words that express these things and write them down. They are often the key to understanding the passage.

There is a category of smaller words that is NOT routine. They are known as *connectives* because they show *relationship*. First, there are connectives that signal time; they tell when something happened. Here are some of them: *after, as, before, now, then, until, when, while*. You may think of others, but these ought to trigger your attention. For example, if you see “Then . . . but . . . now,” it should be obvious that some kind of transition has taken place and maybe you should be looking for progression. (You will learn about kinds of progression in this lesson.) Second, the locale or geographical connective is mainly the word “where” which signals place.

## Application

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**2** Read the four Scripture references given here, then fill in the blanks for *b*, *c*, and *d* in the manner that *a* has been filled in as an example of a connective term.

	SCRIPTURE	CONNECTIVE SIGNALING	TERM
<b>a</b>	Mark 1:23	Time	“then”
<b>b</b>	Mark 1:9	Time	.....
<b>c</b>	Mark 1:14	Time	.....
<b>d</b>	Mark 1:28	Place	.....

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Third, you will learn to notice logical connectives: that is, those that have to do with the *reason* for what happens, the *results* of what happens, the *purpose* of what happens, *contrast* of unlike things, and *comparison* of one thing with another. Let’s take these one at a time.

Logical connectives that show the reason for what happens are *for*, *since*, and *because*. If you see the words “I say this for . . .” or “I say this since . . .” the author is giving a reason. Now relate this to the devices of composition that you have learned. Which literary device moves from effect to cause? *Substantiation*. These words are all signals of substantiation and this, then, becomes a clue to interpretation.

Logical connectives that have to do with results are *so*, *then*, *therefore*, *that is why*, and *thus*. Do you notice that these words go from cause to effect? Which literary device moves from cause to effect? *Causation*. When you see *so*, *then*, *therefore*, *that is why*, and *thus*, you will be looking for causation: one thing causing something else.

### Application

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**3** Find and list (in the order that we have given the Scripture references) the connectives that signal *reason* in part *a* and those that signal *result* in part *b*.

**a** Romans 1:11, 1:26, 1:28, and 2:15.

.....

**b** Galatians 2:17, 1 Corinthians 8:11, 9:26.

.....



Logical connectives that have to do with purpose *are in order that, so that, and so* (or similar phrases).

Logical connectives that signal contrast are *although, but, much more, much greater, nevertheless, otherwise, yet, and still*. These lists are not exhaustive. You may find other terms as you study that serve the same purpose but are different from those listed here. These terms are suggestions to help you begin thinking along these lines.

Logical connectives that signal comparison are *also, as, as this, so as, so that, in the same way, so then, and so also*. There are many combinations of these connectives.

### Application

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**4** Find and list (in the order that we have given the Scripture references) the connectives that signal *purpose* in part *a*, *contrast* in part *b*, and *comparison* in part *c*.

**a** Romans 4:16.

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**b** Romans 2:10, 5:15.

.....

**c** Romans 11:31, 1:27.

.....



We remind you that this study guide uses the Good News Bible (Today's English Version). The translation of the Bible you are using will make a difference in the terms you will be able to find. Therefore, the IDEAS of *reason for*, *result of purpose*, *contrast*, and *comparison* will be more important than the exact words used to express these ideas. The terms that have been given should serve to help you know what to be looking for. There are three more categories of connectives in addition to the three you have had. So far, you have studied the "time" connectives, "place" connectives, and "logical" connectives. Now, the final three kinds of connectives signal *series of facts*, *condition*, and *emphasis*.

The connectives that signal series of facts are such terms as *and*, *first of all*, *last of all*, and *or*. The connective that signals condition is usually *if*: "If this . . . then that." Connectives that signal emphasis are *indeed* and *only*. Sometimes a more forceful word is used: for example, *exclaims* might be used instead of the weaker *says*.

## Application

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**5** Find and list (in the order that we have given the Scripture references) the connectives that signal *series of facts* in part *a*, *condition* in part *b*, and *emphasis* in part *c*.

**a** 1 Timothy 2:1, 1 Corinthians 15:8.

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**b** Romans 2:25.

.....

**c** 1 Corinthians 9:24, Romans 9:27 (two).

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If you will be alert to these particular *terms*, they will help you go beyond grammar and interpret the *meaning* of Scripture. These are significant terms that I, myself, always watch for when I study Scripture (or anything else) because they are clues to the organization of thought.

## STRUCTURE OF LITERATURE

**Objective 2.** *Define “structure” and explain its importance to the study of Scripture.*

I am sure that you are coming to understand that books of the Bible are not just a disorderly collection of unrelated thoughts. You are seeing that they are structured *wholes*, with the parts fitted together in reasonable ways. The author has had to *select* and *arrange*. He has had to select the important things that need to be included, and arrange the material in the clearest way possible. John explains that in the writing of his gospel, he had to leave out much that Jesus had done (John 21:25).

You can get lost in the details of the Scripture verses, as important as they are, and never see the powerful message of the book as a whole. The individual truths, found verse by verse, are related to the whole. The whole is explained by the arrangement of the parts. They are all interrelated. *Structure* is the skeleton, framework, and underlying design that gives the book unity.

Words are the building blocks of language, the smallest units that transmit meaning. Words are joined to form phrases, or partial, incomplete units of thought. The sentence is the complete thought.

*When sentences with related thoughts are joined together, they form paragraphs.* (Some Bibles are divided into paragraphs; this makes studying easier.) In Bible study it is a good idea to “THINK PARAGRAPHS.” That is, look for the main idea in the paragraph and give it a brief, descriptive title. By listing the titles (main ideas) you have found for all the paragraphs in a chapter or book, you will have listed the main points for making an outline. Within the paragraphs you will find the details that will make up the subpoints for your outline. Now, you will practice finding main points in paragraphs in the following exercise.



## Application

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**6** Read each paragraph in Romans chapter 12 then write your title for it in the blank space beside it. After composing your titles, compare them with those we have given. (Your titles may turn out to be as good or better than the ones given.)

Paragraph I. (12:1-2) .....

.....

Paragraph II. (12:3-8) .....

.....

Paragraph III. (12:9-13) .....

.....

Paragraph IV. (12:14-16) .....

.....

Paragraph V. (12:17-21) .....

.....



We have indicated that through *structure* parts of composition are related to one another. This relationship may be expressed through any of the literary devices that you have studied. Not all will be found in every passage. You should review these devices in Lesson 5 until they become very familiar to you. If you can begin to see how the whole is fitted together, how one passage of Scripture relates to another, you will gain new understanding of the whole. *Become structure conscious.*

## Application

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- 7** Circle the letter before the statement that is true.
- a)** Books of the Bible are a collection of unrelated thoughts.
  - b)** Literary devices such as contrast, radiation, etc., are not related to structure.
  - c)** The smallest units of language that transmit meaning are words.
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## LITERARY ATMOSPHERE

**Objective 3.** Define “literary atmosphere” and identify it in Scripture.

*Literary atmosphere* is the underlying tone or mood that is evident in the writing. What mood or moods does the author convey? The mood or atmosphere might be despair, thanksgiving, zeal, awe, urgency, joy, humility, tenderness, anger, persuasion, condemnation, questioning, concern, or encouragement. The entire range of human feelings can be found to make up the atmosphere of literary works.

## Application

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**8** The book of James varies in its atmosphere or tone. Read the following passages and assign to each one a word that describes *atmosphere*.

- a** James 5:1 .....
  - b** James 4:10 .....
  - c** James 2:14 .....
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## LITERARY FORM

**Objective 4.** Identify main “literary forms” and explain how each of them is used.

*Literary form* refers to the kind or type of writing the author uses to get his material across. All the main types of literature can be found in the Bible. If the author has needed

to express deep personal feelings of praise, sorrow, rejoicing, or repentance, he has used *poetry*. If he has needed to explain background information to people, he has used *prose*. If he has wanted to teach important eternal truths or give logical reasons for the argument he was presenting, he has used *discourse*. If he has wanted to illustrate truth for receptive people while veiling it from others, he has used *parables*. If he has wished to disclose a little about the future without giving away too many divine secrets, he has used *apocalypse*.

*Discourse* is a type of literature that is intended to set forth truth in a logical, reasoned way that will appeal to the intellect. Many of the epistles use this style. Jesus used it in His teaching, as did the prophets in some of their writings.

*Prose-narrative* is a biography or story. It can be found in Genesis, the Gospels, and wherever events and situations are described in *chronological order*. Stories appeal to the imagination and emotion. They usually include interesting details. In this kind of literature, you should not press every detail for a spiritual lesson. For example, the story of Peter's vision, in Acts 10, is valuable truth. But there are some details such as whose house Peter was in, and the time of day his vision occurred that help in understanding the story but are not important as far as doctrine is concerned.

*Poetry* is a form of literature found throughout the Bible. In some Bibles, all the poetry is printed in poetic form (with lines indented, and each new line beginning with an upper case letter). This makes it all as easy to identify as the Psalms.

You have learned a few things about Hebrew poetry already. You know it is deeply personal and emotional. It does not rhyme. Every two lines, or two stanzas, are related by some kind of parallelism. Either the second line repeats the thought from the first line, or it builds on the first line by adding something new, or it is in contrast with the first line.

Poetry uses a great deal of figurative language in order to say things in a more expressive way. Here are four kinds of

figurative language (or figures of speech) that are often found in Bible poetry:

1. *Simile*. A comparison of two things through use of the word *like* or *as*. “They are like trees” (Psalm 1:3).
2. *Metaphor*. A comparison of two things without use of *like* or *as*. “Ephraim is my helmet” (Psalm 108:8).
3. *Hyperbole*. Exaggeration for effect, exaggeration beyond reason. “I am like those who died long ago” (Psalm 143:3).
4. *Apostrophe*. Speaking to things that are not alive. “What happened, Sea, to make you run away?” (Psalm 114:5).

It is especially important for the Bible student to understand figurative language. In John 6:51-52, Jesus said, “I am the living bread.” The Jews interpreted His words literally and were offended. You may make similar mistakes unless you observe carefully and interpret fairly!

### ***Application***

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**9** Complete the following sentences using each of the words once: *discourse, poetry, prose-narrative*.

**a** Literature that appeals most strongly to the emotions is

.....

**b** ... is intended to set forth truth in a logical, reasoned way.

**c** A story about events or people is called .....

**10** Match each figure of speech (right) with its Scripture quotation (left).

- |              |  |               |
|--------------|--|---------------|
| ... <b>a</b> | “The Lord is my shepherd”<br>(Psalm 23:1).   | 1) Simile     |
| ... <b>b</b> | “God seizes me by my collar and<br>twists my clothes out of shape”<br>(Job 30:18). | 2) Metaphor   |
| ... <b>c</b> | “We have escaped like a bird”<br>(Psalm 124:7).                                    | 3) Hyperbole  |
| ... <b>d</b> | “Praise him, sun and moon”<br>(Psalm 148:3).                                       | 4) Apostrophe |

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*Parables* are a distinct type of literature known as *parabolic*, or *parabolic prose*. You have already studied about them. If you need to review the section on parables in Lesson 4 in order to be sure you understand how they differ from ordinary prose, do it at this time.

*Drama* or *dramatic prose* is related to poetry in that it appeals to the emotions. It personalizes the story in a manner that the words of the characters in the story are usually spoken in the first person. People respond to each other in the same words they would use if they were actually living through the story. Quite often dramatic literature contains vivid descriptions that appeal to your imagination. Job is a book like this. It reads like a play. The Song of Songs is also in the style of drama. So, when you find portions of Scripture in which the people are speaking directly to one another in the first person, you will say, “this is drama,” or “dramatic prose.”

*Apocalypse* is the last of the literary forms. Apocalypse means “uncovering” or “revelation.” This kind of literature is perhaps the hardest to understand. You met some aspects of it when you studied about prophecy and symbolism in Lesson 4. Apocalyptic literature is made of prophecy and symbolism. It is rich in figures

of speech, symbols, types, and descriptions of visions. Revelation is the classic example of this type of writing.

Here is a simple chart which points out examples in Scripture of various literary forms you have studied in this section. There is some overlapping of these forms, but you will profit by reading these passages with the form in mind that we have listed for it.

CHART OF LITERARY FORMS	
<i>Form</i>	<i>Example</i>
Discourse	Matthew 5:17-48
Prose-narrative	Acts 16:16-38
Poetry	Jeremiah 9:21-22
Parable	Luke 14:16-24
Drama	Job 32:5-14
Apocalypse	Ezekiel 1

## PROGRESSION IN LITERATURE

**Objective 5.** *Identify kinds of “literary progression” and state what is common to all of them.*

The idea behind *progression* is CHANGE. As you read a passage of Scripture for study, you are looking for change! What are some of the things that might change within a passage? Focus on a person’s life might move from one stage to another, or from his life to the lives of his descendants. That would be *biographical progression*. The story might move from event to event. That would be historical progression. If the story is presented in terms of when the events happened (first, second, third, etc.), you have *chronological progression*. In a teaching passage where truth is being set forth you might find *doctrinal progression*. If events are related in terms of places where they happened, it is *geographical progression*. Changing thoughts or ideas themselves may be the basis of a Scripture passage. That is called *ideological progression*. You can sometimes find a complete change of subject. This drastic change is called *subject progression*.

Progression is actually a pattern an author uses to extend a theme in a given passage of Scripture. The pattern may extend through one or more paragraphs or it may extend throughout the entire book. The progression may move toward a climax, but that isn't necessary. One help in identifying a progression, if identity is not obvious, is to compare the first and the last items in a series. If there is a relationship between them, you have progression. And of course the main means of identification is to look for some of these kinds of *changes*.

### ***Application***

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**11** What kind of progression is found in Genesis 12–50 where the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph are featured?

.....

**12** What kind of progression is found in Exodus which centers on the events of the move of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan?

.....

**13** What kind of progression do you find in the book of Romans where Paul is giving a logical argument for the case of Christianity?

.....



An understanding of *progression in literature* should help us to a better understanding of the *spiritual progression* that is necessary to spiritual growth. *Change* is the keynote of spiritual progression too: “We all . . . are changed . . . from glory to glory . . . by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18, KJV). Let us yield to the Holy Spirit so that He may change us into the likeness of Christ.

## self-test

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**1** List the routine words or terms from the following sentence: “And every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47).

.....  
.....

**2** Connectives are small but important words that signal relationships. Which of these words signals time?

- a) If
- b) After
- c) Where
- d) Indeed

**3** Which of these logical connectives signals reason for what happens?

- a) That is why
- b) So that
- c) Much greater
- d) Because

**4** Which of these logical connectives signals contrast?

- a) But
- b) In the same way
- c) For

**5** The framework or underlying design that gives a book unity is

- a) terms.
- b) structure.
- c) atmosphere.

**6** Which of these words best describes atmosphere?

- a) Radiation
- b) Contrast
- c) Mood



**7** Which of these kinds of writing teaches in a logical, reasoned way?

- a)** Discourse
- b)** Prose-narrative
- c)** Poetry

**8** Which of these kinds of writing describes the book of Revelation?

- a)** Parables
- b)** Drama
- c)** Apocalypse

**9** “The tongue is like a fire” (James 3:6). This is an example of:

- a)** Simile
- b)** Metaphor
- c)** Hyperbole
- d)** Apostrophe

**10** Which of these words best describes progression?

- a)** Atmosphere
- b)** Change
- c)** Drama

**11** What kind of progression is shown in the Genesis account of the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph?

- a)** Biographical
- b)** Historical
- c)** Ideological

***answers to the study questions***

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- 7 c)** The smallest units of language that transmit meaning are words.
- 1** Romans 11:24
- 8 a** Despair  
**b** Humility  
**c** Concern
- 2 b** Afterward  
**c** After  
**d** Everywhere
- 9 a** poetry.  
**b** Discourse.  
**c** prose-narrative.
- 3 a** For, because, because since,  
**b** Then, so, that is why.
- 10 a** 2) Metaphor  
**b** 3) Hyperbole  
**c** 1) Simile  
**d** 4) Apostrophe
- 4 a** In order that.  
**b** But, much greater.  
**c** In the same way, in the same way.
- 11** Biographical
- 5 a** First of all, last of all.  
**b** If.  
**c** Only; exclaims, only.
- 12** Historical

- 6** I. “Offer Yourselves”
  - II. “Use Gifts With Modesty”
  - III. “Live With Christian Attitudes”
  - IV. “Live With Concern for Others”
  - V. “Live at Peace With All”
- 13** Ideological

