5 Composition— Knowing the Parts

The three lessons of this unit will deal with aspects of the *synthetic* or *whole book method* of Bible study. Habakkuk is the book to be examined. The word *synthetic* need not alarm you! It comes from two small Greek words that mean "together" and "to put." Thus synthetic means "to put together."

You will find some other unusual words in this lesson and in the next one. Don't be discouraged if you can't remember them. *The ideas behind them will be most important.* If you remember a few of the words too, so much the better. These lessons will be foundational to all your future Bible study, so be sure you understand each point before you go on to the next one.

lesson outline

Whole Book Method Defined

Principles of Composition

Groups of Literary Devices

Comparison and Contrast

Repetition, Interchange, Continuity, Continuation

Climax and Cruciality

Particularization and Generalization

Causation and Substantiation

Miscellaneous Literary Devices

Instrumentation

Explanation

Preparation

Summarization

Interrogation

Harmony

Principality

Radiation

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- 1. Describe the synthetic or whole book method of study.
- 2. Name the main principles of composition and recognize them in Scripture.
- 3. State why communication is the most important task of composition.
- 4. Describe what comparison stresses and what contrast stresses.
- 5. Distinguish among the similar literary devices of repetition, interchange, continuity, and continuation.
- 6. Describe the relationship of climax to a story and of cruciality to a teaching passage.
- 7. Distinguish between the movements of thought in particularization and generalization.

- 8. Distinguish between the orders of procedure in causation and substantiation.
- 9. Define each of the literary devices in this section of the lesson.

learning activities

- 1. Read the opening section, outline, and objectives.
- 2. Learn the meanings of key words that are new to you.
- 3. Study the lesson development, responding in writing to each exercise as you come to it.
- 4. Have your notebook nearby as you move through the lessons. There will be items to write in your notebook in addition to personal notations you may wish to make.
- 5. Begin to do some personal reading in the book of Habakkuk. When you begin your study in Lesson 7, it will be necessary to read that book through in one sitting. If you are not in the habit of reading the Bible in this way, it would be helpful for you to begin reading shorter portions to become familiar with the words and style of writing.
- 6. Take the self-test at the end of the lesson. Check your answers carefully. Review those items answered incorrectly.

key words

analyze	clue	principle
archaeologist	composition	
association	literary device	

lesson development

Whole Book Method Defined

Objective 1. Describe the synthetic or whole book method of study.

When an archaeologist goes to an area to dig for remains of ancient civilizations, he works from a broad, general survey of the area down to the smallest particulars where the very dust often is sifted for articles of interest. He goes into the plot of ground and makes a survey of the land. He then marks it off into sections. He and his team of workers never begin a "dig" without this careful survey first; then, they really dig for details. Every find is eventually examined thoroughly, photographed, and registered. But the archaeologist does not get to the fine details until he has measured and surveyed the entire hill or field where he plans to work.

The synthetic method of Bible study corresponds to the broad general survey first made by the archaeologist. The student of the Bible will be able to find the treasure of richer meaning in the details of Scripture when he first sees the book or major passage he is to study as a unified whole!

Remember that *synthetic* means "to put together." The synthetic method (or whole book method) gives an overall picture of the book, a "bird's-eye" view. This method can be used with a part of a book if the part is a unit (such as a Psalm or the Sermon on the Mount) that can stand alone.

The first step in the synthetic method is *whole book reading*. A short book has been chosen for this study so that you can read it through at one sitting. When you arrive at the point of applying the method, you will be looking for specific information as you reread the book. When you have gathered the information in some sort of written form, you will make a summary outline. You may wish to try a simple chart. Whatever you do to summarize, you will have a good grasp of the overall content and message of the book. Then, like the archaeologist and his treasures, you can examine every small section of the book you study. You will find that the treasure of God's Holy Word cannot be exhausted! As long as you live, you can come to passages again and again and find fresh inspiration every time.

- 1 Circle the letter before each of these terms that could apply to the synthetic method.
- a) Whole book method
- **b)** Overall picture
- c) Study of particular detail
- d) Bird's-eye view
- e) Put together
- f) Dig for details
- **2** Your plan of action when you apply the synthetic method will be to read
- **a)** the whole book, write the chapter headings, and single out the best verse.
- **b)** certain portions, analyze each detail, and chart your findings.
- c) the book through at one sitting, look for specific information, and summarize it.

PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION

- **Objective 2.** Name the main principles of composition and recognize them in Scripture.
- **Objective 3.** State why communication is the most important task of composition.

A composition puts several parts together to make one thing out of them, to make a whole. A composition may be a painting, a musical work, poetry, or written language. Whatever the composition, it will express unity. It will have a beginning, middle, and end. If it is a piece of art, it will have several parts that all merge to form a unit.

A composition of words must communicate thoughts. God gave man language. With language comes the order, arrangement, and principles that make communication possible. Each language has order, though it may differ from other languages.

People usually do not consider that Bible authors had a plan in mind when they sat down to write what we know to be Scripture. Because we give so much attention to the inspiration given to these men by the Holy Spirit, we neglect to understand that the Holy Spirit used the writers' own abilities. Scriptures are Holy Spirit-inspired in content and message, and the Holy Spirit used the writers, their language, their vocabulary, and the forms of literature of their day. This had to be since the Holy Spirit was communicating truth. You communicate with people by using the language forms they know!

I am taking time to prepare you for learning the principles of composition because they are important. I am sure you will recognize many of the ideas that these principles represent.

Consider Paul. He knew he was writing letters. He used the normal form for letters in his day. The greetings in his letters are very much like greetings of letters archaeologists find from that period. David knew he was writing poetry. We have discussed some aspects of Hebrew poetry, and will discuss more in lesson 6. Moses wrote God's Law with the full intent that it would become Scripture that would be dear to the people as a blessing and a warning. Consider Deuteronomy 31:24-26:

Moses wrote God's Law in a book, taking care not to leave out anything. When he finished, he said to the levitical priests who were in charge of the Lord's Covenant Box, "Take this book of God's Law and place it beside the Covenant Box of the Lord your God, so that it will remain there as a witness against his people."

All the writers of both the Old Testament and the New Testament wrote with full consciousness of writing something that would *communicate*

Now when you write something, you try to make yourself clear. There are simple *principles of arrangement* which are good to know because they make the whole more understandable. You use them yourself, but you may not have learned their names or realized that they were principles of

composition! You may *compare* something to something else. You may use an *illustration*. You may *repeat* ideas if you really want the person who reads to get the point you are making. You may *warn*. You may *say things another way* to help someone understand. You will use all these principles of writing if you really want to convince someone of the importance of your words.

Well, Bible writers did the same thing. They warned, illustrated, repeated, made comparisons, showed relationships, and reemphasized. If you can see some of these principles as *clues* to what the Bible writer was trying to communicate, you can get in back of the principles and begin to see his motivation. The eyes of your understanding begin to open as you observe the Holy Spirit's powerful use of these principles.

Application

3	Name four principles of composition mentioned above.	

GROUPS OF LITERARY DEVICES

Comparison and Contrast

Objective 4. Describe what comparison stresses and what contrast stresses.

Comparison involves the association of two or more things which are alike or similar in some way. Sometimes the words "as," "even as," or "like" will give you a clue that two or more similar things are being compared. When you see this, you know that *similarity* is being stressed by the author. When you become aware that a comparison of two or more similar things is being made, you say to yourself, "This is a device of composition— comparison!" You may find comparison used for people, places, things, or ideas.

Comparison is the first of twenty devices of composition you will learn to recognize in this lesson. Each device will be explained and illustrated with a numbered example from Scripture. You are to write answers for these examples in your own notebook. At the end of this section on Groups of Literary Devices, there will be a matching exercise based on the definitions for each of the 12 devices in this section. Then there will be a similar matching exercise based on the remaining eight devices under the section on Miscellaneous Literary Devices.

Application

4 EXAMPLE: 1 Samuel 13:5. What is the comparison made in this verse? (Be sure to look for the key word "as.")

Contrast involves differences between things. Sometimes things contrasted have only small differences, but at other times they are totally different. Contrast may be signaled by words such as "but," "or," "else," and "however." The essence of contrast is not in the word used to signal it, but in the fact that unlike qualities are being stressed. So, you look for contrast!

Application

5 EXAMPLE: Psalm 1. The whole structure of this psalm is based on contrast. The same two classes of people are contrasted in verses 1 and 2, 3 and 4, and 6. What are these classes? What words do you see in verses 2, 4, and 6 that signal contrast?

Repetition, Interchange, Continuity, Continuation

Objective 5. Distinguish among the similar literary devices of repetition, interchange, continuity, and continuation.

Repetition is reuse of identical words, phrases, or sentences for emphasis. For example, five times in the second chapter of Habakkuk, the warning "You are doomed!" rings out. In the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, we find over and over these words: "How terrible for you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees! You hypocrites!" That's forceful *repetition*. It brings unity of thought to the passage.

Application

6 EXAMPLE: Isaiah 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4. What repetition do you find in these verses?

In *interchange* you will see a special kind of repetition in which an alternating pattern repeats itself. There is a beautiful example of this in Luke chapters 1 and 2, where you will find *interchange* or *alternation* between the topics of John the Baptist and Jesus: the announcement of John's soon birth and the announcement of Jesus' soon birth, the birth of John and the birth of Jesus. The use of the device of interchange strengthens contrast or comparison. It is a very good literary device when used effectively, as Luke has used it.

Application

7 EXAMPLE: 1 John 2:12-14. Point out the alternating pattern and its repetition in this passage.

Continuity is apparent in passages where there is repeated use of terms that are "more or less" alike. Often is it seen in the repeated expression of an idea in similar terms. There may be movement toward a point in the passage. For example, in Amos 1:6–2:6 there is a repeated sentence: "The Lord says, The people of . . . have sinned again and again, and for this I will certainly punish them!" The same sentence is repeated for Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Judah, and finally Israel. The sins of each group are somewhat different, but the pattern is the same. The movement is that the condemnation gets closer and closer to Israel, the people God is intensely concerned

about. So *continuity* is reuse of similar words or phrases to express the same idea.

Application

8 EXAMPLE: Hebrews 4:1-11. What is the theme, restated in different ways, that brings continuity to this passage?

Now, *continuation* involves the extended treatment of a particular theme. You develop your theme after introducing it. The essence of continuation is progress through extension. You have studied *parallelism* in connection with Hebrew poetry. Continuation is closely related to "synthetic" parallelism where a thought in one line is built upon or extended in the second line. When you are studying a passage of Scripture, get in the habit of asking yourself, "What is being done here?" When you see that the author is taking an idea and moving it along, extending and developing it, he is using the principle of *continuation*. You will find this especially in narrative or story passages. The entire book of Jonah displays the device of continuation.

Application

9 EXAMPLE: Jonah 1:1-6. Briefly summarize the progression of separate actions of Jonah in verse 3.

Climax and Cruciality

Objective 6. Describe the relationship of climax to a story and of cruciality to a teaching passage.

Climax involves reaching the critical point in a narrative (story): the highest point of interest. The author builds from lesser to greater and then to the greatest point of interest and importance. Then, there is a little period toward the end where things are tied together and the tension is released and you see how everything comes out. But the climax is that critical point.

Exodus is arranged with a climax. Its highest point is in 40:34-35. After all the narrative of leaving Egypt, the giving of the Law, the instructions, the details of the tabernacle, finally the cloud and the dazzling light of the Lord's presence covers and fills the Tent. That is the climax of the book!

Application

10 EXAMPLE: Mark 1:14-45. Compose a *title* for each of the following parts of this passage: verse 14; verses 16-20; verse 26; verse 28; verses 38-39; verses 41-42; verse 45. Your titles should give you a picture of how this passage builds toward a climax. (Your titles may be worded differently from those in the answers, but they should have similar thought.)

Cruciality is related to climax, but it is found in teaching passages more than in narrative or story-like passages. In a teaching passage, it would be the pivotal point in the discussion, the "hub" around which the matter under discussion turns. In a book like Galatians there are a number of crucial points because there are "sub-discussions" within the main discussion. The crucial, pivotal point for the whole book is Galatians 5:1, "Freedom is what we have—Christ has set us free!" The first four chapters lead up to this crucial, pivotal point.

However, there are other crucial points throughout Paul's teaching in Galatians. One of these is found in 3:16. Paul has been showing that the Law of Israel, not sufficient for salvation, is indeed related to the death of Christ (3:13). Then he proceeds to show how the promises God made to Abraham really were directed toward Jesus Christ in whom all is fulfilled. The crucial, pivotal verse upon which all this hinges, and without which it would fall apart, is 3:16. The promises were made by God to Abraham's descendant (singular—not plural).

So, cruciality is the pivotal point or *hub* in teaching passages. It can be found in narrative or story passages also, not as *the* climax or high point but as *a* crucial point. In the book of

Ruth, for example, there is cruciality where Boaz sits at the gate and negotiates with the other kinsmen. If things don't go right at that point, the whole thing will fall apart. That is a crucial point.

Application

11 EXAMPLE: John 11:45-54. In which verse of this passage are you shown that the course of the ministry of the Lord shifted drastically because He was no longer doing all that He had done? (This verse is a pivotal point and demonstrates cruciality.)

Particularization and Generalization

Objective 7. Distinguish between the movements of thought in particularization and generalization.

Particularization is the movement of thought from the general to the particular, much like your synthetic study will move from a survey of the whole book to study of details. In particularization the movement is from the whole inward to its parts, from the general to the specific. In other words, you may have a generalization such as "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." But "John Doe has sinned," or "I have sinned," brings it down to the specific. That is particularization, sometimes called deductive thought.

Application

12 EXAMPLE: Matthew 6:1-18. In what ways does Jesus particularize His theme, the *performing of religious duties?*

Generalization is the *inductive* thought movement, going from the specific example to the general principle. It is the reverse of particularization.

13 EXAMPLE: James 2. James starts chapter 2 with specific examples of right Christian conduct: treating people with love regardless of their clothing, honoring the poor, loving your neighbor, obeying the Commandments. He moves from those specifics to a general principle in the last verse of the chapter. Write that generalized principle in your notebook.

Causation and Substantiation

Objective 8. Distinguish between the orders of procedure in causation and substantiation.

The principle of *causation* proceeds from cause to effect; it deals first with the reason for something, then with the result of that thing. This is seen in Habakkuk 2:5. It says that "greedy men are proud and restless . . . that is why they conquer nation after nation for themselves." Cause: greed! Effect: war!

Application

14 EXAMPLE: Habakkuk 2:17. In the first part of this verse, what two *cause-to-effect* patterns can you find?

Substantiation is the reverse of causation. Substantiation of cause moves from effect to cause. Something happens. The reason for it is explained later. "Because" is a key word in the use of this literary device. I say, "My finger hurts." Someone asks, "Why?" I say, "Because it was burned." That is a simple illustration but it shows the progression.

- **15** EXAMPLE: Habakkuk 2:17. What example of substantiation do you see in the last part of this verse?
- **16** Review the first twelve devices of composition that you have learned. Match each device (right) with the phrase (left) that defines it or describes its action.
- ... a Involves likeness between things
- ... **b** Involves difference between things
- ... **c** Identical terms repeated
- ... **d** Repetition of similar terms
- ... **e** Extended treatment
- ... **f** Effect to cause
- ... **g** Cause to effect
- ... **h** High point in the story
- ... i Pivot-point in the discourse
- ... i An alternating pattern
- ... k General to specific movement
- ... I Specific to general movement

- 1) Climax
- 2) Interchange
- 3) Comparison
- 4) Particularization
- 5) Continuity
- 6) Causation
- 7) Substantiation
- 8) Contrast
- 9) Generalization
- 10)Continuation
- 11)Cruciality
- 12)Repetition

MISCELLANEOUS LITERARY DEVICES

Objective 9. Define each of the literary devices in this section of the lesson.

Instrumentation

Instrumentation involves the means, tools, or instruments that are used to make something happen. Key words are "through" or "by" as in the last sentence of James 3:5, "Just think how large a forest can be set on fire by a tiny flame!" In this verse, by indicates that instrumentation will follow.

Application

17 EXAMPLE: James 2:21. What was the instrumentation by which Abraham was put right with God?

Explanation

Explanation clarifies, analyzes, or explains. For example, in Luke 2:4 we are told about Joseph going from Nazareth to Galilee. His going is "because he was a descendant of David."

Application

18 EXAMPLE: Matthew 13:58. This verse *explains* why Jesus did not perform many miracles in His hometown. Relate that explanation in your own words.

Preparation

Preparation is introductory material that is preliminary to the rest of the section or book. For example in Luke 1:1-4, Luke gives you that little preliminary introduction telling what his purposes are and what his methodology is. It's not a part of the gospel narrative itself; it's preliminary.

19 EXAMPLE: Mark 1:1; 1 Corinthians 1:1; and 1 John 1:1. Which one of these books starts with a *preparation* that best fits our description of the term?

Summarization

Summarization is condensing information into a short form. You summarize what you have already written or said. You are terse. You are concise. You single out the essence of the thing. For example, Genesis 45 is a summary chapter of the whole story of Joseph. It states in short form what has led up to this point.

Application

20 EXAMPLE: Joshua 24:1-14. State briefly in your own words what Joshua has summarized in this passage before he tells the people in verse 14 to "honor the Lord and serve Him."

Interrogation

Interrogation is asking questions. Sometimes Bible writers ask a question and follow it with the answer. Paul does this often. An example is found in Romans 3:31. "Does this mean that by this faith we do away with the law?" He immediately follows it with the answer: "No, not at all; instead, we uphold the Law." Other questions are rhetorical, meaning that the answer is so obvious that the question doesn't need to be answered. Galatians 3:5 is an example: "Does God give you the Spirit and work miracles among you because you do what the Law requires or because you hear the gospel and believe it?"

21 EXAMPLE: Malachi chapter 1. List the verses in this chapter which have instances of interrogation.

Harmony

Harmony involves unity by agreement or consistency. When a point is made, the other points farther along in the passage must agree with it! It is called a "law" of harmony, but actually it is "truth"; it makes sure that all parts tell the truth. The whole of Scripture illustrates harmony. And harmony is clearly seen in passages where there is a problem and an answering solution: disease and remedy, promise and fulfillment.

Application

22 EXAMPLE: Romans 3:21-31. This passage is part of an example of *harmony*. It is the answer or solution to the problem Paul describes in Romans 1:18-3:20. What is being described in 1:18-3:20?

Principality

Principality is not just a main idea standing alone, but it involves a main idea supported by subordinate ones. It is dominance and subordination. An outline is a good illustration of principality. A main heading stands apart from its subheadings, but they contribute details. In Scripture, this literary device is illustrated in the parables of Jesus. You have already learned that each parable teaches one main or dominant lesson. The lesson that the parable intends to teach is set in a background of lesser details. All of it helps to make up the parable, but the one dominant lesson stands out. In interpreting Scripture, it is important to train your eye and your mind to focus on what is a central or essential issue, and to be able to identify the things that are secondary or subordinate.

23 EXAMPLE: Matthew 13:47-50. What is the main point in the lesson that this parable teaches? What are at least two subordinate points?

Radiation

In *radiation* everything either moves or points toward a certain thing or away from it. Branches of a tree and spokes of a wheel are visual examples of radiation. In Scripture, Psalm 119 demonstrates this device in a beautiful way. Its 176 verses are divided into 22 stanzas. They all radiate from the same point or theme: the greatness and excellence of God's Law.

Application

- **24** EXAMPLE: John 15:5. In what way does this verse use the device of radiation?
- **25** Review the last eight devices of composition, starting with *instrumentation*. Match each device (right) with the phrase (left) that defines it or describes its action
- ... **a** Means by which something happens
- ... **b** Clarifies and analyzes
- ... c Introductory material
- ... **d** Condenses information
- ... e Asking questions
- ... **f** Points that agree
- ... **g** Main idea
- ... **h** Toward or from a point

- 1) Explanation
- 2) Interrogation
- 3) Preparation
- 4) Radiation
- 5) Harmony
- 6) Instrumentation
- 7) Summarization
- 8) Principality

A further word about these literary devices: you will find that they overlap. For instance, you may find the same question asked several times. This would be an overlapping of *interrogation* and *repetition*. Perhaps one or the other of them would be dominant. Begin to notice these devices as you read. Finally, individual aspects of composition are sometimes considered as principles of composition and at other times as literary devices, as in the cases of *comparison* and *repetition* in this lesson

self-test

- **1** Which of these terms best applies to the synthetic method of study?
- a) Bird's-eye view
- **b)** Paragraph study
- c) Particularization
- **2** The first step in the synthetic method procedure is to
- a) read several portions of the book.
- **b)** make a chart.
- c) read the whole book through.
- **3** Illustration, repetition, and warning are main principles of composition that are clues to what the Bible writer was trying to
- a) say another way.
- **b)** compare.
- c) hide.
- d) communicate.
- **4** Which device of composition associates things that are alike in some way?
- a) Cruciality
- **b)** Comparison
- c) Causation
- **5** Which device of composition has to do with introductory material?
- a) Continuity
- **b)** Preparation
- c) Summarization
- **6** Which literary device is being used in the Scripture, "I am the vine, and you are the branches"?
- a) Substantiation
- **b)** Interrogation
- c) Radiation

- **7** What literary device is used when movement of thought is from general to specific, from the whole to its parts?
- a) Particularization
- **b)** Instrumentation
- c) Harmony
- d) Generalization
- **8** Which device of composition presents things that are unlike, as in "The righteous shall inherit the earth, but the ungodly shall perish."?
- a) Principality
- **b)** Continuation
- c) Contrast
- **9** Which device of composition was John using when he wrote to children, fathers, and young men (in that order) and then immediately repeated this same pattern?
- a) Explanation
- **b)** Generalization
- c) Interchange
- d) Climax
- e) Repetition

answers to the study questions

- **13** As the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without actions is dead.
- 1 a) Whole book method
 - b) Overall picture
 - d) Bird's-eye view
 - e) Put together
- **14** You cut down forests, now you will be cut down. You killed animals, now animals will terrify you.
- 2 c) the book through at one sitting, look for specific information, and summarize it.
- **15** The people will be cut down and terrified *because* of the murders and violence they have committed.
- **3 c)** Your answer may include any four of the following: comparison, illustration, repetition, warning, showing relationships, saying things another way.
- **16 a** 3) Comparison
 - **b** 8) Contrast
 - c 12)Repetition
 - **d** 5) Continuity
 - e 10)Continuation
 - **f** 7) Substantiation
 - g 6) Causation
 - h 1) Climax
 - i 11) Cruciality
 - i 2) Interchange
 - k 4) Particularization
 - 9) Generalization
- **4** The comparison being made is between the number of soldiers and the number of grains of sand on the seashore.

- **17** His action of offering his son Isaac on the altar.
- **5** Good people are being contrasted with bad people in each case. *Instead* and *but* signal contrast.
- **18** Jesus did not perform many miracles in His hometown because the people there did not have faith.
- **6** The Lord's "hand . . . stretched out to punish."
- **19** 1 Corinthians.
- **7** The alternating pattern from children to fathers, to young men in verses 12-13 is repeated in verse 14.
- **20** Joshua has summarized what God has done for His people since the time of Abraham
- **8** The theme of rest.
- **21** Malachi 1:2, 6, 7, 8, 13.
- **9** Jonah set out to get away from the Lord; he went to Joppa; he found a ship about to go to Spain; he paid his fare and went aboard that ship.
- **22** Guilt and condemnation for sin.
- **10** Verses 14 Jesus Begins to Preach
 - 16-20 Jesus Calls Disciples
 - 26 Jesus Shows Authority
 - 28 News of Jesus Spreads
 - 38-39 Jesus Preaches in Villages
 - 41-42 Jesus Heals Disease
 - 45 People Come From Everywhere to

Jesus (climax)

- **23** *Main point:* Separation of good people from bad people at the end of the age. *Subordinate points:* Information concerning the fishermen, the net, the fish, and the buckets. (Although these details illustrate what is taught in the parable, they are not the essential teaching of it.)
- **11** Verse 54 shows that the Lord's ministry shifted drastically because He no longer traveled openly in Judea.

- 24 By picturing Christ as the vine or main stem to which believers (pictured as branches of that vine) are fastened, this verse uses the literary device of radiation to teach that all believers must remain attached to Christ in order to bear spiritual fruit.
- **12** By application of it to the specific duties of charity, prayer, and fasting.
- **25 a** 6) Instrumentation
 - **b** 1) Explanation
 - **c** 3) Preparation
 - **d** 7) Summarization
 - **e** 2) Interrogation
 - f 5) Harmony
 - g 8) Principality
 - **h** 4) Radiation