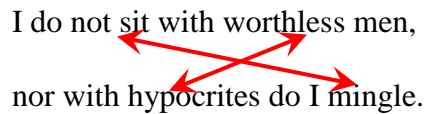


Parallel (“Chiastic”) Structures in Psalms

Chiasm (or chiasmus), from the Greek word for crosswise or crosspiece (χιάσμος)¹. The word begins with the letter chi (“khee”), χ, similar in appearance to the English letter “X” and illustrates the “crosswise” structure.

Example from Psalm 26:4 (NABRE)

I do not sit with worthless men,
nor with hypocrites do I mingle.



Chiastic structures are often illustrated using letters to represent the parallel ideas. For example:

- (A) I do not sit
- (B) with worthless men,
- (B) nor with hypocrites
- (A) do I mingle.

Some structures are even more intricate.

Example from Psalm 90:1-2 (NASB)

- ¹ Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.
- ² Before the mountains were born
- Or You gave birth to the earth and the world,
- Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

The structure of these verses can be illustrated as follows:

- (A) Lord,
- (B) You have been our dwelling place
- (C) in all generations.
- (D) Before the mountains
- (E) were born
- (E) Or You gave birth
- (D) to the earth and the world,
- (C) Even from everlasting to everlasting,
- (B) You are
- (A) God.

¹ *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1:392.