

Chapters John 13 – 17 consist of a farewell. Farewells are generally structured the same way.

- A. Structured Setting – The one who is leaving or dying will call together those who are his own prior to the separation. (John 13:4, 5; 17:9).
- B. Memory – The memory of those times together are recalled. (Jn.13:33, 14:9,25,26; 15:14, 15)
- C. Exhortation – The one departing calls for love and loyalty. (Jn. 13:14, 34, 35; 15:4, 5).
- D. Admonition – A warning is given before the danger once they are alone. (Jn. 16:1-4).
- E. Transfer of powers – Powers for the entrusted task are given. (Jn. 14:16-20; 16:7; 17:18).
- F. Expectations – Expressions of Hope in the promises of God are made. (Jn. 14:3; 15; 17:24)

Farewells are common in Scripture. They are given by Isaac – Gen 27, Jacob – Gen.49, Moses – Deut 31-33, Joshua 24, Samuel in 1 Sam. 12. Last Goodbye. Paul’s farewell to Ephesus also follows this form in Acts 20:17-38.

THE CHIASTIC STRUCTURE OF JOHN 13-17

This section of John 13-17 has an interesting structure. It is called CHIASTIC. A chiasm is a literary device where a sequence of ideas is presented and then repeated in a reverse order. The result is a “mirror” effect as the ideas are “reflected” back in a passage. Each idea is connected to its “reflection” by a repeated word, often in a related form. The term *chiasm* comes from the Greek letter *chi* which looks like our letter X. Chiastic structure is also called “ring structure.” It is circular or concentric and is used as a form in ancient poetry. The chiasm in chs. 13-17 is as follows.

- A. 13:1-30 An act of love with the disciples.
- B. 13:31-14:31 Desertion and discourses of comfort.
- C. 15:1-17 Unity and love with Christ in the persecution.
- D. 15:18-25 *United to Jesus before the hatred of the world.*
- C’. 15:26-6:4 United to Jesus in the persecution
- B’. 16:4c -33 Discourses of comfort.
- A’. 17:1-26 Acts of love for the disciples.

A very simple chiasm would be, “when the going gets tough, the tough get going.” This would be an ABBA structure. The one above is ABCXCBA, so sometimes there is a middle phrase that is separate. When Jesus says “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” he is using the ABBA structure.

Other complex ones found in Scripture are: Joel 3:17-21, Eccles. 11:3-12:2, Genesis 6-9, Amos 5:4-6a, Isaiah 1:21-26, Joshua 1:5-9. These patterns of Hebrew poetry found in the Bible are simply one more example of the richness and complexity of God’s Holy Word.

References are: What is a chiasm from GotQuestions.org
Direction: A Service of Sacrificial Love: Footwashing.

