# Dr. David Bauer, Inductive Bible Study, Lecture 10, Survey of Parts and Wholes, Survey of Divisions, Segments, Sections, and Genre
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This is Dr. David Bower in his teaching on Inductive Bible Study. This is session 10, Survey of Parts and Wholes, Survey of Divisions, Sections, Segments, and Genre.

You remember that we mentioned that there are actually three levels of observation.

The first is the survey of the book, the observation of the book, and the survey of the book as a whole. We've talked about that. I've actually presented two book surveys here: Survey of Jude, a short book, pretty straightforward, and survey of James, a little more complex.

The second level, as you remember, of observation is a survey of parts and wholes, which involve the survey of divisions, of survey of sections, of survey of segments, more or less extended units within the book. And let me just clarify the terminology here. When you do a survey of the book, the main units of the book would be considered divisions.

And divisions are themselves broken down into or divided into sections. And sections are divided into segments. Now, if sections are sufficiently large or long, you may have an intervening category here, subsections.

So, generally speaking, it goes from divisions to sections, possibly subsections, and to segments in terms of length. Now, just in case that's too simple, let me complicate matters a bit and point out that segments are defined by length. A segment is two or more paragraphs about the length of an average chapter, though not necessarily corresponding to a chapter, bound together by common theme and by common structure.

Two or more paragraphs about the length of an average chapter, though not necessarily corresponding to a chapter, bound together by a common theme and by a common structure, which means really that a major division within a book might also be a segment. As a matter of fact, that's exactly what we found in my survey of James, where the first major division of the book is 1, 2, through 27. That is a major division of the book, but it is also a segment because it is a group of two or more paragraphs about the length of an average chapter bound together by a common theme and common structure.

So, for the sake of simplicity, we'll assume that we're talking about the survey of segments here. But what I'm saying about the survey of segments can apply to the survey of divisions or the survey of sections. In terms of the identification of materials, we might go ahead and identify the specific materials by giving a brief title to each paragraph, thereby recalling the contents of the paragraph, helping us to recall by association the content of the segment by paragraphs and to be able, therefore, to think through the contents of the segment without recourse to the text.

Also structure, and you'll see that the process of segment survey corresponds generally to the process of book survey. So, once again, as in book survey, so in segment survey, the center of what we're doing really is structural analysis. Structure involves here two main components as it does in book survey.

The identification of main units and subunits, the breakdown, and the identification of major structural relationships. Again, a major relationship within the segment is one that controls the bulk of the segment and that controls more than half the material within the segment as a whole. Otherwise, you're getting into minor relationships and are not really addressing the macrostructure of the segment.

And the same structural relationships that we talked about under book survey are relevant here as well. Again, we raise questions, definitive, rational, and implicational questions about each major structural relationship that we identified and identify key versus or strategic areas that are representative of major relationships within the segment. Now, in contrast to book survey, though, we don't, of course, go ahead and do again anything like the higher critical data.

We've already done that for the entire book. But we note here the literary form or forms employed. And we'll talk about that.

We want to come back and talk about that a little bit more in just a moment because that is very important, even for interpretation. A lot of what we say, we're going to say in just a moment with regard to literary forms or genre, will pertain to interpretation. And then, again, other major impressions, anything else that you think should be mentioned that pertains to the segment as a whole but didn't fit under numbers 1 through 5 or number, in particular, might be mentioned here.

I want now, though, to pause and say a bit with regard to literary form or forms. And this pertains actually to the whole issue of genre. Matter of fact, these two terms are basically synonymous.

By literary form, we really mean genre here. It's important to realize that every passage, really every speech act, involves genre. And in every culture, there are certain genres, that is to say, certain forms that are recognized.

When a writer makes use of a certain genre, the writer assumes that his readers will recognize the genre, will be able to recognize that this is a genre that he is employing, and will also recognize the character of that genre and will know what kinds of reading strategies, what kinds of reading moves are necessary in order properly to construe this passage according to the genre in which it is cast over against reading it according to other kinds of genre. Wittgenstein refers to this as the rules of the language game. Genre actually involves a kind of implicit code.

As I say, every passage involves a certain kind of genre, and every genre involves an implicit code. The genre clues the reader in to interpret this passage according to the character and the requirements of this genre over against reading it according to other kinds of genres. Now, genre is kind of an interesting category or issue because you have various levels of genre.

You have some genres that are quite general, general genres, we might say, and these general genres themselves can be subcategorized in terms of more specific genres, and these more specific genres themselves can be subcategorized in terms of most specific genres. For example, a general genre like prose narrative can be subdivided into various kinds or various genres within prose narrative. For example, healing stories or the like, and healing stories themselves can be subdivided further.

Now, the genres that we identify at the point of segment survey are actually more general genres, not more specific, because if you get into more specific genres, if you try to identify more specific genres at the point of observation, you necessarily get into a great deal of interpretation. You have to assume that some of these more specific genres were known and used and would be recognized at certain times and by certain people in the culture or subculture to which the readers belonged. So, it's really safer to avoid a kind of premature interpretation at this level to talk about more broad categories of genre than more specific ones.

But, here are some of the major types of genres that we encounter within the Bible. The first we'll mention is discursive, which is a genre of logical argumentation. This is really the kind of thing that we find virtually in all epistles.

You might cite any passage here in James or in Hebrews, discursive, the genre of logical argumentation. You find it though also in other parts of the canon. For example, Mark 13, the end time discourse in Mark's gospel is discursive.

One of the characteristics of discursive, logical argumentation, or discursive genre is that it is assumed, unless there are clear indications to the contrary, that the language that is used will be literal rather than figurative. You can have figurative language in discursive literary form, but you would consider language to be figurative rather than literal in discursive form only if there are certain clues to the fact that certain indications within the text itself that in this particular discursive passage, we

are to think in terms of figurative language rather than literal language or related to that if it's impossible to make sense of the passage by reading it in a literal versus figurative way. It is also the case that in logical argumentation, we are not to assume chronological sequence.

The passages move along thematically rather than chronologically. So, we cannot assume that what is described in verse 25 of discursive literary form is meant in terms of time actually to have taken place or to take place after what has been described in verse 22 or verse 23. Another type of genre is prose narrative.

This is a genre of story or of history. You have this, for example, in Acts 5:1 through 11, the story or the reportage of the event of Ananias and Sapphira there, but of course, in many, many other places in the New Testament as well. In the case of prose narrative also, the default assumption is that the language employed will be literal rather than figurative, although you can have figurative language, of course, in prose narrative literary form, but only if there are pretty clear indications in the passage itself that in this prose narrative passage, we are to understand the language more figuratively than literally.

In prose narrative, over against what we said about discursive, the default assumption is that the passage does move along chronologically, that what is described in, let's say, verse 40 of prose narrative passage is meant to be understood as coming after what was described in verse 38 and coming chronologically before what will be described in verse 45 and the like. But you can have exceptions to this. The exceptions are flashbacks or foreshadowing.

Of course, in the case of flashback, the author actually pauses from the storyline and the text and describes an event that, in time, actually took place earlier on. That is a flashback. It's sometimes referred to as an ellipsis, and when that happens, actually, that is quite significant to observe because when the writer interrupts the storyline in the text and engages in flashback or its opposite, engages in foreshadowing where the writer pauses and talks about an event in time will take place in the future in relation to where we are in the story of the text.

When you have that kind of temporal interruption, the writer is actually drawing the attention of the reader to this, generally speaking, and is urging us to consider why, in fact, this event that actually doesn't belong here in time is placed here in the logic of the text. What is it doing here? And how does it inform what's going on, what is being described event-wise in this passage? Now, beyond that, we also have poetry, and poetry is, of course, found more in the Old Testament than in the New. If you want to see what it looks like when translators consider a passage to be in poetic literary form, just go look back in your Bibles to the Psalms, and you'll find that in the Psalms, for example, you have a constant indentation and that constant indentation

is a way for English Bible translators to indicate that in their judgment in this passage, we have poetic form.

Now, you do have some poetry in the New Testament, especially when, of course, the New Testament is quoting Old Testament poetic passages or when a New Testament writer is quoting from a hymn, a Christian hymn, or perhaps putting forth a creed. Some of the creeds that are incorporated in the New Testament seem to have been composed in poetry, but for the most part, you have poetry in the Old Testament rather than in the New Testament. Now, biblical poetry is not characterized for the most part by rhyme, as is the case with at least a lot of modern English poetry.

For the most part, you do not have rhyme, although there is some rhyme in Hebrew poetry, but, of course, the rhyme is in Hebrew and is not necessarily ascertainable or distinguishable in the English translation. But it is characterized, poetry is, by meter, that is to say, by rhythm, if not by rhyme, at least by rhythm. So many beats to the line, this kind of thing, and you can imagine that this would be quite helpful in interpreting biblical poetry, to know, for example, where the beat falls, where the rhythm is, in terms of where the emphasis may lie, and also how one stanza relates to another stanza in terms of sense.

Unfortunately, although we know that Hebrew poetry has a meter, we do not understand it. We do not really know what was involved in the Hebrew poetic meter. The Hebrew poetic meter nor do we understand it at all, and therefore biblical scholarship is unable really to make much use of insights from meter in poetry.

But one thing we do know that we have in poetry, and this was discovered especially and was emphasized by Robert Louth several centuries ago, is parallelism. There are essentially three types of parallelism in poetry, and these are categories that were developed by Louth and have basically been adopted since that time. The first that we'll mention is synonymous parallelism, where the second line or the second stanza says essentially the same thing as the first but only in different words.

And you can see how helpful this would be for interpretation in terms of making more precise, more robust our understanding of the passage, but you have essentially the same idea presented in two different ways. And so that the two lines, the synonymous lines or stanzas, actually mutually interpret each other. Another type of parallelism is antithetical.

We have this when the second stanza or the second line stands in contrast to the first, and again, these are mutually interpretive, extremely helpful. The third type, and we could give examples of this but I won't take time to do it at this point, is synthetic parallelism. Basically, synthetic parallelism involves all parallelism that is not synonymous and is not antithetic.

There are various other kinds of parallelism that do not fit under synonymous and antithetic, have various other functions, and so synthetic is really a kind of catch-all category for all the others. Now, parable is another type of form. A story, normally a story from a poem, is a story from everyday life that points to a spiritual truth and could say a great deal more here with regard to parables.

But the word parable or English word parable actually is a transliteration of the Greek parable, which means literally a casting alongside, a setting alongside. So, what you have are two elements within a parable, the story of the parable itself and the spiritual truth to which the parable points. I say spiritual truth, biblical parables, of course, especially point towards spiritual truth, but the truth or the spiritual truth to which it points.

The main issue here, really, in the parable, is the relationship between the story of the parable and the spiritual truth to which it points. Now, in the early church, a major way, a favorite way, although this wasn't practiced by all the fathers by any means, a favorite way of interpreting parables was as allegory, where every detail of a parable had its own spiritual counterpart. Often, this allegorical interpretation of the parables had little to do with the story of the parable itself or the context, the gospel context of the parable, but it was really a matter of every detail having its own spiritual counterpart that did not contribute to anything like the main point of the parable itself.

This is an allegorical approach, and you find this among others in St. Augustine. This was essentially, for the most part, the way parables were read and interpreted until the Reformation, and the reformers took exception to a lot of the fanciful allegorical interpretation of parables in favor of the plain sense of parables, but the reformers often didn't practice what they preached and they often fell back into allegorical interpretation. And, of course, in their interpretation, the Pope tended to function pretty prominently and never in a very happy sort of way.

This was the way things stood until, at the end of the 19th century, we had the production of what is arguably the most significant work in the whole history of parable interpretation by the German scholar Adolf Jülicher. His two-volume work, the first volume of his two-volume work on the parables, came out in 1899, the second in 1910. It's a two-volume work that has never been translated into English.

The title is Die Gleichnisreden Jesu. If it were to be translated into English, the title would mean the parables of Jesus. He argued that the parables, as Jesus spoke them, had one point and one point alone and all the details of the parable existed only to provide interest and color to the story.

There was no spiritual counterpart here at all. So, you have Augustine, who engages in, as I say, an allegorical approach where every detail has its own spiritual counterpart that goes all over the place. They're not really those details and the spiritual truth that are represented by the various details are not related to each other in terms of the logic of the parable.

That kind of allegory on the one hand over against a rather severe absolute one point only. Now, you'll recognize, of course, immediately that when you have Jesus' explanation of the parables in the Gospels, for example, the 13th chapter of Matthew, and for example, the parable of the soils, you'll find that Jesus does, in fact, identify spiritual counterparts to details. The seed in the parable of the soils, the seed represents this.

This kind of soil represents this kind of person. This other kind of soil represents this other kind of person. The third type of soil represents this other kind of person.

So, you have a movement toward a kind of allegory. So, when Jülicher argued that the parables have one point and one point only, he insisted that that was true of the parables as Jesus Himself spoke them. He insisted that the explanation of the parables, Jesus' explanation of the parables that we find in our Gospels are, to use a technical expression, non-Dominical.

They were not actually spoken by our Lord but were put into His mouth by perhaps the evangelists. So, the whole allegorical tendency that comes to full expression in, say, Augustine begins already with the evangelists. But anyway, this was a view of the parables that held sway for the most part until the middle of the 1980s or so.

But at that point, you had a number of scholars coming forward. I'm thinking here for one thing of John Sider in a very significant article that appears in the New Journal of Biblical Literature, Rethinking the Parables, the Logic of the Jeremias Tradition. Jeremias was a great New Testament scholar who followed Jülicher in terms of his understanding of the parables.

Sider says that even if one grants that Jesus' explanation of the parables that we find in the Gospels are non-authentic, that they're non-Dominical, they were put into the mouth of Jesus by the evangelists. Even one grants that, and Sider said he wasn't sure that one should grant it. Even if one does, he said, really, if you're going to interpret these parables in terms of their role in the Gospels, in terms of the final form of the text, you have to take seriously Jesus' explanation of these parables.

So, the key to interpreting parables according to their New Testament context is to interpret parables according to the method that Jesus employs in parable understanding as expressed in his own explanations. He says if you do that, you'll

find that both Jülicher and Augustine are right to an extent, that Jesus' parables, as he explains them, do have one main point. They don't go all over the place.

This detail has to do with this theological truth, this other detail has to do with this other theological truth. No, the parable does have one main point, but the details do have spiritual counterparts, but they support and develop the one main point. So, you have one main point that is developed by the spiritual truth, expressed by the details of the parable. And really, by and large, this is the way the parable interpretation has gone in the past several years.

Now you can see how recognizing what's involved in parable interpretation is very significant in interpreting passages in this parable genre. If you accept, as I do, Sider's position here that if you read the parables according to their gospel context, including the explanations that you have, parables have one main point, with the details having spiritual counterparts that develop or expand upon that one main point, then that is a way, of course, that you will approach the parables, you will interpret them accordingly. Now, apocalyptic was a genre that attempted to present really transcendent divine action in an encoded form.

Apocalyptic was really not simply a type of literary form; it was also a socio-religious movement that flourished for about 200 years on either side of the birth of Christ. This was a movement that involved people who felt themselves marginalized, both religiously and socially, from the elites, from the mainstream, and who actually believed that although God as creator still exercised control and rule over the world, He had sovereignly decided not to manifest or make known, make clear His rule over the world, and would not do so until the end, until the eschaton. In the meantime, God was active and was moving history toward the great consummation, the eschaton, the apocalypse, but in hidden ways, ways that were not really observable by persons who were not given help to see it.

And so, the apocalyptic movement attempted to discern God's work in subtle and hidden ways in the world and also, of course, to declare what God had in mind at the end. And this was expressed in highly symbolic language. Of course, the most obvious example of apocalyptic literary form in the New Testament is Revelation 4-22.

In symbolic sort of language, highly visual sort of language, and really it involved being able to see the invisible. And that's why you have such a pictorial, such an emphasis upon pictorial or visual sort of figurative language here. And really, you have a kind of consistent use of figurative language.

So, in other words, the same figures tend to appear in one apocalyptic work after another, and they tend to have the same significance. They tend to point to the same reality so that once you're initiated into apocalyptic thought, you can pretty much go

from one apocalyptic work to another. The default assumption in apocalyptic is that the language will be figurative rather than literal.

You can, again, have literal language in certain apocalyptic passages, but the default assumption is that minus the clear indications of figurative language, of literal language, the language should be understood as figurative rather than literal, as it were. And also, there is the assumption that a passage moves along, not necessarily chronologically, but rather topically. And so, you cannot assume that, say, what is described in chapter 12 of an apocalyptic work is meant to be understood as coming chronologically after what had been described in chapter 11.

In fact, there are a lot of people who tend to read apocalyptic as involving chronological sequence. At least in the Western world, there is a tendency to read all literary forms essentially as prose narrative and to assume chronological sequence, even in cases like this, which, of course, involves a genre that is not used and is not familiar anymore, to read even apocalyptic, which, as I say, does not move along in terms of genre, generic expectations, chronologically, to read it in a chronological way. And this has led to a whole industry, if we may put it so.

I'm not using that language necessarily pejoratively, but one might say there are a number of people who have made a career of eschatology and of laying everything out in terms of the details of the end on the basis of a chronological reading of Revelation 4 through 22, which may be problematic. And then drama or dramatic prose, which involves the, really involves prose, but the personification and vivid description of events or ideas for their moving effects. So, although it's in the form of prose or story, the point is not to relate a happening or a story as such but to use the various characters or the various events in the prose passage as representing cosmic realities.

I think a great example here is the 37th chapter of Ezekiel, the famous Valley of Dry Bones chapter, where it's quite clear that Ezekiel doesn't actually go into a valley and see dry bones that come together and are enfleshed before his eyes, this kind of thing. He's not talking about that as an event but using the prose in a dramatic fashion to talk about realities, other kinds of realities that God is about. Another example of this would be the 7th and 8th chapters of Proverbs, where wisdom is presented as a virtuous woman and folly, foolishness, is presented as a prostitute.

And he's not really talking, although he uses language that refers to a prostitute and what a prostitute does and the seductions of prostitution and all this kind of thing. He's really not talking about prostitution. His point is to use prostitution or a prostitute as an image for folly.

So, quite clearly, it's important to interpret passages according to their genre and not engage in what we might call a violation of genre, which happens, as I say if you

interpret a passage that belongs to one literary genre as though it belonged to another. An example I gave is from Apocalyptic, to interpret Apocalyptic as though it were prose narrative, including moving along and assuming a chronological sequence when, in fact, it's inappropriate, given that genre, to assume a kind of chronological sequence.

Now, the place to go for a description of and further study of and an understanding of these genres, these various genres, the kind of default reference we're to go to for something like that is Bible dictionaries. I realize that many of you who are watching this video may not have access to various kinds of secondary resources. But let me just say, if you do have access to secondary resources, either in your own libraries or in libraries that may be available to you or perhaps even online, one of the most significant, and I think everything else being equal, the most significant kind of resource to have for biblical studies is Bible dictionary.

If you have access to it, if you can afford it, a multi-volume Bible dictionary is really appropriate for anyone involved in Christian ministry. A single-volume Bible dictionary simply is too selective, too brief, too sketchy in order to be a great deal of help. Now, I have actually produced a bibliography of works on various aspects of biblical study.

It's entitled Essential Bible Study Tools for Ministry, and I do have a section here on Bible dictionaries. The most authoritative biblical or Bible dictionary is probably considered to be the Anchor Bible Dictionary. It's six volumes.

It is somewhat expensive. It is available, incidentally, both in book form and also electronically. One that is not quite as extensive but still a very robust multi-volume Bible dictionary is the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, often referred to by acrostically as ISBE.

If you make use of this, you want to be sure to get the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, the one that is edited by Bromley and not by Orr. The one that was produced by J. Edwin Orr and came out in 1929 is quite dated. It is being sold by a major publishing house, being touted by it.

You do not want that. It's really dated. You want to get the more recent edition edited by Bromley.

Another very helpful one, and actually this is the most recent one, is the New Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible, published by Abingdon. That is in five volumes. But they have articles on all of these literary forms.

They go into detail and are quite helpful in terms of the interpretive significance of these literary forms. In the next segment, we are actually going to look at the

segment survey and do a segment survey of the first chapter of James. Again, before you watch that video, I would encourage you to read the first chapter of James.

Try to do what you can in terms of making sense of it by way of a segment survey. Then, we'll talk about that at the beginning of the next segment.

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