

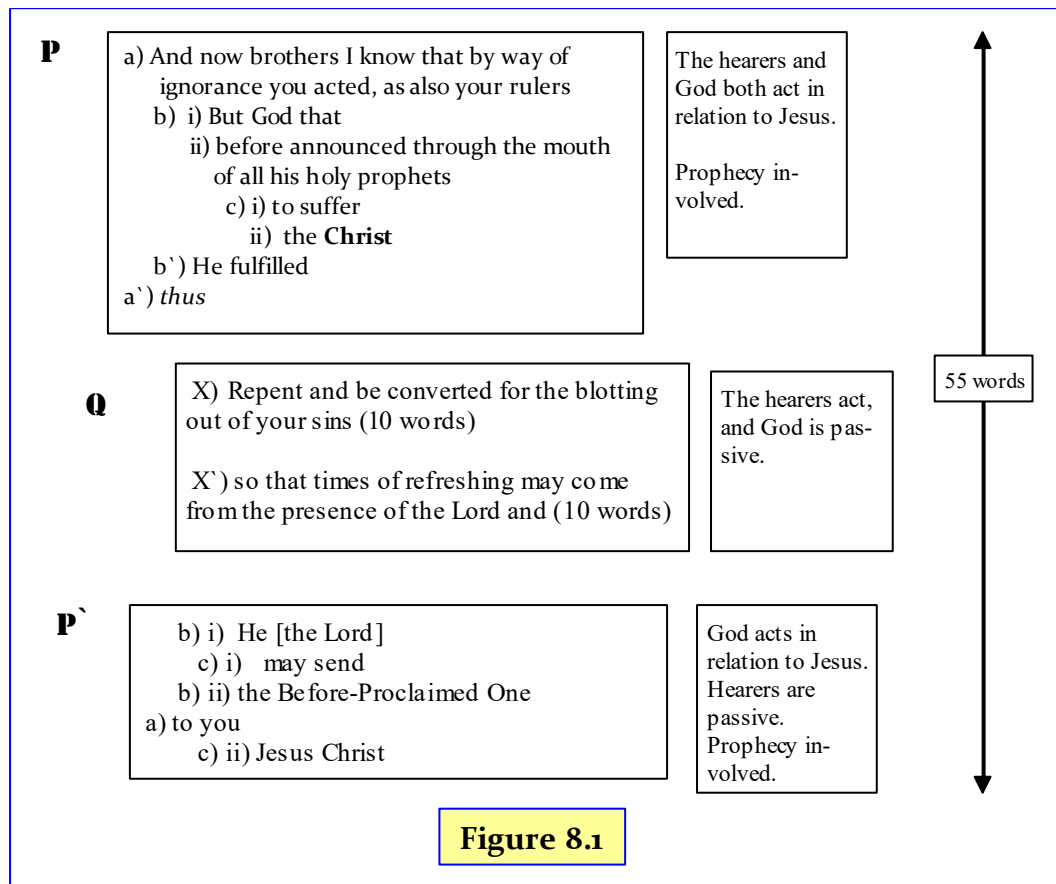
-8-

More About the “Earth and Heaven” Chiasm

We have tentatively put forward a chiasmic analysis of verses 17-24 in which the upper half (vs. 17-20) is characterised by Christ on earth, and the lower half (verses 21-24) by Christ in heaven. It appears that the first of these sub-sections (i.e. A-B using the notation from the previous chapter) is *itself* structured chiasmically, and that the second sub-section (B'-A') also has its own internal structure—topics we will explore in this chapter.

Structural Analysis of the Upper Half of the Chiasm (vs. 17-20)

The proposed chiasmic structure of A-B is shown (using different notation) in the diagram below (Figure 8.1).



Notes:

1) It seems to me that the chiasmic structure in A-B is that of a gracious reversal of repentant Israel’s sins (presumably sins specifically against Christ as well as other sins) as indicated in note 6) of the previous section.

2) There is a paradoxical aspect to the suffering of Christ at the start of the chiasm on subsection P: although the sin against Christ was committed by Peter’s hearers and their rulers, Peter explains that through this, God had fulfilled what He had before announced through the prophets that Christ should suffer. Therefore there was a sense in which the hearers/rulers and God paradoxically “acted together” in bringing about Christ’s (passive) suffering: God brought about the action, the hearers/rulers acted and Christ was caused to passively suffer. However, at the end of the chiasm, in subsection P’, God alone acts—sending the (once again passive) Jesus Christ to the very people who caused him to suffer!

3) The “imbalance” in the actions of God and the hearers is actually corrected in the middle section, Q, since here, the hearers act, and, remarkably, at least in the text before us, this is seen to cause times of refreshing to come from the Lord’s presence; in this respect, the Lord is passive whilst the hearers are active.

4) P and P’ correspond since they both specifically involve God, the hearers, Jesus Christ as well as prophecy/proclamation—unlike the middle section, Q, where only God and the hearers are involved.

In P, Christ suffers, and this corresponds to the sending of Jesus Christ in P’.

5) The section is 55 words long. The middle word is “Christ”, and the middle three word phrase is “to suffer the Christ”.

Structural Analysis of the Lower Half of the Chiasm (vs. 21-25a)

The second half of the “Heaven and Earth” chiasm has a more complicated structure than the first half. There is however a chiasmic aspect to this structure too as well as a “word count” aspect.

The lower half of the chiasm is 88 words long. However, it is also possible to see the little phrase, “You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant” as effecting the transition between the “prophecy” and the

“covenant” parts of the application section of Peter’s sermon (please see Chapter 5 especially Figure 5.7 regarding this division in the application section). If we treat this little phrase as a separate little transition in the application section, then we would not consider the five words (in Greek), “You are the sons of the prophets”, as part of the “lower half” that we are considering. This will reduce the word count to 83 words.

The analysis given below is basically the same as the one given for the “Heaven and Earth” chiasm as a whole, except it has been expressed in a way that proposes the equivalence between the restitution of all things in the upper half (labelled **X**) and the requirement for obedience on the part of those who hear the Prophet speaking to them in the lower half (labelled **X`**). Thus the upper division (v. 21) is again 21 words long, but this time the lower division is 62 words (i.e. three times as long to the nearest word given that the total word count is 83 words.)

A suggested outline structure is shown on the next page (Figure 8.2):

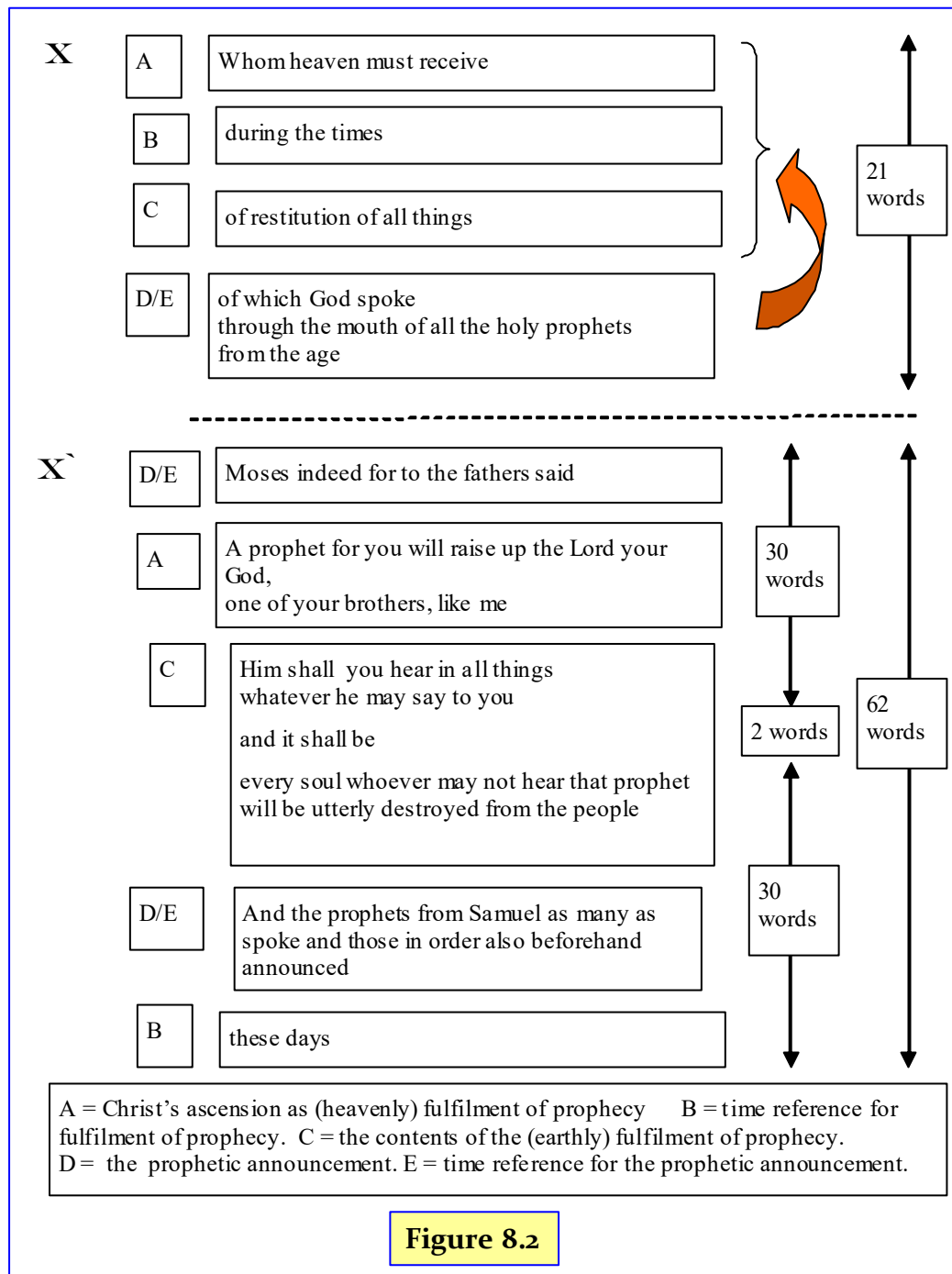
Notes:

1) In this analysis, there are five main themes: A) the fulfilment from a heavenly perspective B) time reference for the fulfilment of the prophecy C) the fulfilment from an earthly perspective D) the prophetic announcement and E) the time reference for the prophetic announcement.

2) A key difference between the upper part, **X**, and the lower “expansion” part, **X`**, is that there are no direct references to the people in the upper half. Although prophets are mentioned, it is God who speaks through them, and the expression “the restitution of all things” does not specify the role of the people in that event, and it is heaven that receives Jesus—without saying from where He is received.

By contrast, in the lower half, it is Moses and Samuel etc. who do the speaking (God is not specifically mentioned as speaking). Moses specifically speaks “to the fathers”. A response is very definitely required from the people, and the prophet who is raised up (i.e. in ascension) is one of the people also.

3) That the upper and lower sections are actually speaking about the same thing is indicated by the words “for indeed” (*gar* and *men*) at the start of the lower section: we are, by this means, led to expect, in the lower half, a dramatic explanation of what has just preceded!



4) The overall structure suggests that the little word *ov* (“of which” in v. 21 refers back, at least in this analysis, not just to “all things”, nor to “the restitution of all things”, but to both the reception of Christ in heaven and also to the times of the restitution of all things. We can see that this may well be the case because the “expansion” section (the longer, lower half of the structure) refers to both elements, and both in the context of the ful-

filment of prophecy. This view is in contrast to the discussions in the commentaries regarding the referent of *ov* which, in general, restrict the referent to the first two possibilities listed above.

