

A REPRESENTATIONAL STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ROMANS

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SPECIAL INCLUSION THEMATIC: EXTRUSION, COHERENCE, AND OBJECTIFICATION

INTRODUCTION AND TERMINOLOGY:

Important note: An understanding of this thematic would be predicated upon understanding several concepts introduced in depth in the 1 Peter study. Those concepts include: rules of containment, the 3-D model and the indexical pathway levels (Holy Spirit, revelation, faith, and manipulation of symbols), rhetorical reality, and analogic intelligence. In addition, the concepts of extrusion and coherence discussed in previous lessons from the Romans study are also used. Though these terms will be briefly defined for the reader in this inclusion thematic discussion, understanding the thematic will be impossible without the previous study of those concepts.)

In previous discussions of Romans, we have seen how the idea of extrusion has brought about a form of coherence; and it should not be surprising that such things emerge in the seen world in what we might call objectifications.

These things take place through a process we might call inflection. Here is an area in which we can kidnap some of the terms of grammatical structure of language to help us understand the process. In grammar, especially in foreign languages, when you inflect a word, it is passive but it nonetheless changes in meaning. Objectifications are similarly passive---an end product of a process or change. Like a word in grammar, an objectification can similarly be parsed to see if the parts that resulted can be traced back to a source; in this case, divine extrusion.

When we pray for wisdom, for example, what we are asking for is to have our understanding of an event or situation inflected. When God answers prayers with divine action, we see that He has inflected the situation as well. Thus the answer to prayer may be both an inflection of the one praying, as well as the situation prayed about. Indeed, the way the entire universe is described in the Bible, as under the control and authority of God, is that of an inflected creation.

The rhetorical universe, or rhetorical reality as studied in 1 Peter, is itself a symbolic and verbal conjugation--or parsing and declining--of the relationship between the eternal and the temporal; a way of announcing the various inflections of God. It points back to its Creator; the great Inflector.

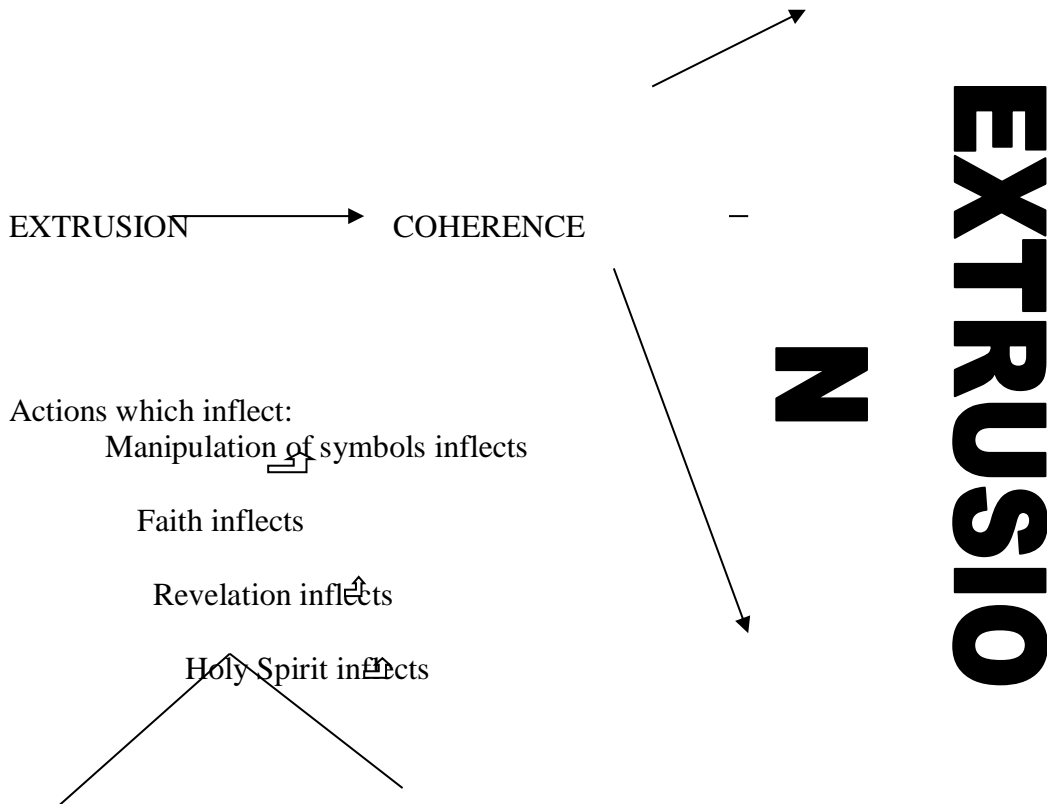
First Peter describes the righteous suffering Christian as an inflected personality--one who is holy, just as his God is holy, through the process of being inflected by Him. The more inflectable a person is, the more he or she can be affected. In 1 Peter, we see

women described as the weaker vessel which must not only be inflected by male leadership, but protected and nourished as well. Slaves are inflected by their masters, children by their parents.

In understanding something that has been inflected, it is important that we keep in mind the element of passivity. An inflected entity is characterized not by being dynamic but by being passive in the process. (The Rules of Containment, as an example, show how the world of objectifications is inflected.) Another prime example: Jesus (who not coincidentally was described in grammatical terms by John as "The Word,") was Himself a highly inflected individual. He took no action that did not inflect His surroundings according to His understanding of the eternal. We as believers mirror that as we see our purpose here as that of achieving ever-higher levels of inflection in ourselves.

THE THEMATIC:

4 Engines of Coherence:
 Providence Assertion
 Renunciation Subordination



Index position: Axis of inflection

ELEMENTS OF THE THEMATIC:

In the thematic we see the way that extrusion leads to coherence through a special class of actions which inflect: those elements we have identified as the index column . The Holy Spirit inflected revelation, which in turn inflects faith, which subsequently and inevitably inflects the manipulation of symbols in the life of a believer: how he acts, thinks, and speaks. These pathways therefore create coherence as we "travel up" the index column. Thus we can see that the index position--whether occupied by the tabernacle or the temple in the Old Testament; or by the church or the individual Christian in this age--whoever or whatever occupies the index position is at the axis of inflection.

GENERALIZATIONS DERIVED FROM ROMANS AND FROM THE THEMATIC:

- 1) The doctrine of inflection would have to be seen as an antipode to what are currently referred to as "theories of change." Instead of looking to gradual, context-based motivations for change in personal circumstances and/or organizations, a Christian would instead seek what the Bible calls "transformation" which results from the linking of incommensurables (the eternal and the temporal). Such super-inflection would lead to personal transformation; as well as to unity between brothers.
- 2) An inflected personality will have a different discourse. We might accurately say that one thing that characterized the faithless actions of the Israelites at Rephidim is an impoverished discourse--words that reflected their thinking that God was powerless. All discourse is itself a temporal structure for thoughts and ideas. As containments, discourses like temples enclose something--either the emptiness of faithlessness, or the fullness of the presence of God. That's why the discourse of Jesus was so rich--it was full of the presence of God as language.

There are ways God has given us to reconstruct discourse to please God. Psalm 119, for instance, is a medium for the reconstruction of discourse about the history of Israel--which was itself an inflected entity, there for all the world to see.

- 3) An inflected personality will often bear the marks of inflection. 1 Corinthians teaches that many among them were sick or had even died because they were inflected by the way that they partook of the Lord's Supper. Jacob wrestled with the angel, and bore in his hip the mark of that struggle of inflection his entire life. And Paul correctly identified his thorn in the flesh as an inflection.
- 4) Though human beings tend to see themselves as necessitated, they should instead seek to be inflected. This is seen in Matthew 6, where pagans are depicted as seeing themselves as necessitated--running after all kinds of "needs." But God would

instead have us see ourselves as being in the process of inflection. The rich man of Luke 12 who wanted to tear down and build bigger barns created an architecture of self-provision--but it was a mental architecture, one that was illusory. Had he seen himself as in the process of being inflected by God, he would never have assumed that he had provided for his own needs.

- 5) There is no such thing as objectivity from the world's point of view--just an assessment of whether a person or situation is being inflected by either God's symbols or by the symbols of man. Since true intelligence is the linking of incommensurables, then that kind of intelligence is the only one which can have true objectivity.
- 6) There are many things which can be seen as the end product of inflection. We can identify some of these objectifications:
 - a) The mouth and its uses--a highly inflected part of every person's body.
 - b) The life of a Christian.
 - c) Analog intelligence (highly inflected, while contextual intelligence is not.)
 - d) Understanding (Ephesians 1:8-10; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:10.)
 - e) The temporal order--all creation needs to be and desires to be highly inflected by God.
 - f) Experience, especially in the view of time, should be inflected in the life of the believer.
 - g) All physical well-being is inflected