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Dear Jeff,

I enjoyed very much discussing your work on Jer. 7 at the recent workshop on Hebrew discourse structure. During our discussion, I offered you an analysis of Jer. 7 using Longacre's paragraph grammar, subject to the condition that it was not the section that had been lost due to computer malfunction. Unfortunately, that was indeed the lost section!

What I do have, however, are some notes that I made in synthesizing the structure of chapters 7-11 on the basis of the (now lost) paragraph analysis. I've summarized them below, in the hopes that they may be of some use to you. Please feel free to correspond or call if I can be of further help.

Best wishes,

Van Parunak

Structural Notes on Jeremiah 7-10

A. Macro structure of chapters 7-10

1. Whole section (7-10) delimited by WTC QF's in 7:1 and 11:1. (These outrank LSM in 9:12, which is thus subordinated to the entire unit 7-10.)
2. 7 and 10 have fairly clear internal structure, outlined further below. Basic principle here is analysis by residue. Explain what you can, then look hard at what's left.
3. After reading 8-9 several times (perhaps 10 or 15), three main themes seem to recur: Sin, Judgment, and Mourning (SJM). A common trio in Jer. 4-6, they are a natural causal chain. NB: While ch. 7 and 10 also deal with sin and judgment, they say nothing about the people's mourning. Hypothesize that these are the atoms from which the section is constructed. (This mode of analysis is what I term "semantic structure" in my article in the Black volume from the 91 Greek discourse seminar.)
4. Separate out paragraphs:
 - a) Shifts of speaker
 - b) Rhetorical relations (statement + reason)
 - c) Small structural features (chiasm in 9:7-9)

d) Theme: Sin, Judgment, Mourning.

5. Now note that the sin in view in 8:22-9:8 is different from that in the rest of the section. It is social, mainly deceit, and leads Jeremiah to fear for his own welfare. Elsewhere we are looking at sacral sin: ignoring God, idolatry, etc.
6. Drawing now on the causal relations among SJM, we have three cycles in ch. 8-9, each exhibiting all three components.
7. Integrate this now with the outer sections, to trace an ABCBA chiasm. ("Symmetric structure" in the Black volume.)
 - a) 7 and 10 concentrate on sacral sin, introducing its consequences.
 - b) The consequences and resulting mourning come more into focus in 8 and 9b.
 - c) 9a looks at the social sin that emerges.

B. Ch. 7

First A in ABCBA. God alternates between talking to the people and talking with Jeremiah about the people; between commenting on their faulty piety toward him and their following after other gods. The result is identifying four forms of improper worship, and warning of the punishment for each.

1. 3-15, Part-time piety
2. 16-20, Outright idolatry
3. 21-28, Shallow spirituality
4. 29-8:3, Child sacrifice

C. 8:4-21

First B in ABCBA; first SJM cycle. Sin leads to judgment, and judgment to mourning, in linear fashion. (Gets more complicated in later sections.)

D. 8:22-9:9

Center of the chiasm. The emphasis in this section is on social sin; in particular, deception. The overall structure of the chiasm shows that it emerges from sacral sin.

Detailed structure:

1. Note QF at 9:7, dividing it into two parts.
2. First part, 8:22-9:6, is unified by three desires. The first two, on the lips of Jeremiah, express mourning, while the last, by the Lord, sets forth the people's sin.
3. Second part, 9:7-9, is chiasmic, ABA: outer members warn interrogatively of judgment, while the center again focuses on their sin.
4. Thus the two parts are {Mourning + Sin} and {Sin + Judgment}. All three components are here, but not in linear order as they were in 8:4-21.

E. 9:10-22

Second B section in ABCBA.

1. The section has two parts:
 - a) vv.10-16 traces once more the causal chain from mourning to judgment and then to sin.
 - b) 17-22 emphasizes the mourning that will result from this judgment.
2. 9:23-26 is an inverted hinge transition to the outer A section. (See my article in JBL 102 (1982) 525-48 on transitional techniques in the Bible for more on this device.)

F. 9:23-10:25

Final A in ABCBA.

1. 9:23-10:25 is an amplifying alternation, abAB:

9:23-24 -> 10:1-16, glory in the Lord, not in man-made idols.

9:25-26 -> 10:17-25, judgment will fall on Jew and Gentile alike who forsake the Lord.
2. Consider first 9:23-24; 10:1-16. This section discusses the need to glory in the Lord, and shows the glory of the Lord in contrast to pagan gods. The entire structure is one of cascaded amplifications:
 - a) 9:23-24 is amplified in 10:1-16
 - b) Within 10:1-16, 1-5 is amplified in 6-16.
 - c) Within 1-5, 5b is amplified in 2-5a.
 - d) Within 1-5a, 3a is amplified in 3b-5a
3. 10:17-25 is an interaction paragraph. God warns of coming judgment, and Jeremiah laments its effect, then prays to God for mercy.