3

Semantics

MEANING IS AT THE HEART OF COMMUNICATION. WORDS PROVIDE THE BUILDING BLOCKS of meaning, grammar and syntax the design. However, until recently semantics (determining word meaning) was more an art than a science. Louw (1982:1-4) says that it is only in the last twenty-five years that the study of words and their meaning has come to the forefront of academic concerns. Moreover, only in this century has it been truly recognized as a linguistic science in its own right. James Barr's epochal work *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (1961) first applied linguistic principles scientifically to biblical study. The results were startling, to say the least. Previously, scholars thought that the meaning of a word could be found in its historical development (the thesis of the first volume on semantics ever published, by M. Breal in 1897). We now know how much more complex is the true discovery of word meaning. Silva mentions the frustration of attempting to cover this field, "a task that cannot be executed in one volume without oversimplifying the material" (1983:9). How much more difficult is it to cover the issue in a single chapter?!

Word studies have certainly become the most popular aspect of exegesis. A glance at the standard commentaries, with their structure organized as a word-by-word walk through the text, will demonstrate this. So will the average college or seminary classroom, where exegesis courses often spend an inordinate amount of time on word studies. This is especially true of many Old Testament courses, where the seeming lack of a strong return from Hebrew grammar leads the professor to center upon word studies as the most important factor in exegesis. Of course, as I stated in the last chapter, grammar can contribute a great deal, and I would argue here that we cannot actually separate the two. Without grammatical relationships with other words, there is no meaning. If I utter the term *counter,* the hearer has no idea what I mean. Without a context in a grammatical sentence, a word is meaningless. Only as I say "Look on the counter" or "Counter his argument" does the term have a connotation.

Most modern linguists recognize the centrality of the literary and historical context, that is, the linguistic and extralinguistic dimensions, to the whole issue of meaning (see Thiselton 1977:75). In other words, the semantic analysis of a concept involves not only syntax but also the historical-cultural background behind the statements. Analysis is part

of and yet presupposes the total hermeneutical package. One does not perform these steps one at a time upon a passage. Rather, there is a constant spiraling action as one aspect (such as grammar or backgrounds) informs another aspect (such as semantics) and then itself is transformed by the result.

Yet as critical as an understanding of semantics actually is, it is amazing how little emphasis has been given to the subject. Carson presents basic linguistic fallacies of many contemporary works (1984:25-66), and Silva laments,

> How does one . . . explain the fact that even reputable scholars have attempted to shed light on the biblical languages while working in isolation from the results of contemporary linguistics? One could just as easily try to describe Jewish sects in the first century without a knowledge of the Dead Sea Scrolls. (1983:10)

The problem of course is that we have been taught several erroneous assumptions. That is the subject of the first section of this chapter.

I want to make clear at the outset that I am not merely trying to establish "rules" for semantic analysis. W. P. Alston (1974:17-48) demonstrates the error of what he calls "the rule theory of linguistic meaning." Alston argues that such rules should meet four requirements: (1) distinctiveness, with conditions specified for the correctness or inadequacy of an utterance; (2) a translinguistic connection, relating to the referential content behind an utterance; (3) noncircularity, going beyond definitions to determine the valid structure within which meaning can be incorporated; and (4) scope, covering all types of speech behavior (such as assertions, questions, promises) and not just the meaning of particular terms. Thus any such rule at the outset must be *descriptive* (stating how speech functions, that is, what "is") rather than *prescriptive* (determining artificial standards for what "must be").

Following J. L. Austin, Alston calls for an "illocutionary act" approach, that is, the determination of the actual conditions that communicate meaning. These conditions must be culture-specific; they must be aligned with the way the individual culture communicates. This means that at every stage of biblical study the speech patterns of the ancient culture (biblical Hebrew or Greek) must determine the semantic principles (notice I deliberately say *principles* rather than *rules*). In this chapter I will then discuss previously held ideas that do not work and then elucidate several that I trust will enable the reader to determine the probable meaning of the utterances (not just the terms) in a given context.

Semantic Fallacies

In this section I will not merely discuss semantic errors but try to work through the topics to a proper delineation of principles under each category that will enable the reader to use the tool correctly. In other words, the discussion will provide a topical bridge to the more systematic presentation of methodology in the second half of the chapter. Naturally, I cannot be exhaustive in my coverage. However, the more important problems will, I trust, be considered.

1. The Lexical Fallacy. It has become common, especially since the appearance of Kittel's

Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT, 1932—1977) and to a lesser extent its Old Testament counterpart (1970—) to assume that word studies can settle theological arguments. For instance, some seem to assume that a decision as to whether κεφαλή means "source" or "authority" in 1 Corinthians 11:2b or Ephesians 5:23-24 will solve the issue of the woman's role in church and home. While none will state it quite so starkly, an inordinate amount of time is spent tracing the term(s) through extant Greek literature and too little time is spent in noting the context. This is not to argue against establishing the semantic field but rather for recognizing the centrality of the immediate context. This error can occur in works of the highest quality. Silva (1983:23) notes the overemphasis upon word studies in George Knight's *The Faithful Sayings in the Pastoral Letters* (1968), citing A. T. Hanson's review that "in his scrupulous examination of the lexicography of the sayings, Mr. Knight has all too often missed the wood for the trees" (in *JTS* 1969:719).

This overemphasis upon words to the detriment of context leads to one of the most serious of Barr's criticisms, "illegitimate totality transfer" (1961:218). After going to so much trouble to find multitudinous meanings and uses for a word, it is hard for the scholar to select just one for the passage. The tendency is to read all or most of them (that is, to transfer the "totality" of the meanings) into the single passage. Such is "illegitimate," for no one ever has in mind all or even several of the possible meanings for a term when using it in a particular context. Consider the term *grill.* We hardly think of the connotation "grill a hamburger" when speaking of a fence "grill," let alone the idea of "grilling," or questioning, a person. These are rather obvious examples but at times similar errors can be made when interpreting a language with which we are not so familiar, like biblical Hebrew or Greek. This in fact leads to Barr's criticisms of Kittel. In seeking the theological concept behind the terms, the articles repeatedly stress breadth over specifics. Barr especially notes (1961:218) the article on *ekklēsia* ("church"). While the term may be interpreted variously as an "assembly," as "the body of Christ," as "the community of the Kingdom" or as "the bride of Christ," these constitute possible meanings of *ekklēsia* but not *the* meaning of the term in Matthew 16:18.

Thiselton (1978:84) notes Nida's contention that "the correct meaning of a term is that which contributes least to the total context" (1972:86). Nida means that the narrowest possible meaning is usually correct in individual contexts. The defining terms surrounding it limit the usage quite radically. Thiselton uses the term *greenhouse* as an example. The various meanings of "green" and "house" hardly have much bearing upon the combination of the two either in "green house" (itself open to differing meanings in various contexts) or in "greenhouse." The same must be true of *ekklēsia* in Matthew 16:18; Acts 7:38 or Ephesians 1:22-23.

2. The Root Fallacy. This common error assumes that the root of a term and its cognates carries a basic meaning that is reflected in every subordinate use of the word(s).

> It seems to be commonly believed that in Hebrew there is a 'root meaning' which is effective throughout all the variations given to the root by affixes and formative elements, and that therefore the 'root meaning' can confidently be taken to be part of the actual semantic value of any word or form which can be assigned to an identifiable root; and likewise that any word may be taken to give some kind of suggestion of other words formed from the same root. (Barr 1961:100)

This fallacy is closely related to etymology, and many scholars in fact equate the two. However, it has two aspects that I would like to separate: the belief that a basic root meaning is to be found in all subsets (root fallacy); and the belief that the historical development of a term determines its current meaning (lexical fallacy). "Etymology" would be a cover term that encompasses both aspects.

Gibson notes the misuse of comparative philology in Old Testament research (1981:20-34). On the basis of similar roots scholars cross time lines and apply a particular meaning to a difficult term or concept from a document belonging to a related language but from a different era. One example he mentions (pp. 24-28) is equating *lotan* in the Baal texts (Ugaritic) with "leviathan" *(lwytn)* in Isaiah 27:1, although little evidence connects the Ugaritic texts of the late second millennium with the Hebrew of Isaiah's time. Barr provides an even better example: "bread" *(leḥem)* and "war" *(milḥāmāh);* they obviously come from the same root but could hardly have a shared meaning, "as if battles were fought for bread or bread a necessary provision for battles" (1961:102; for further Old Testament examples, see Kedar 1981:82-98). The problem is to define exactly what constitutes a universal meaning that can be transferred across time and language barriers. Most doubt whether any such universal aspect exists in semantic domains. However, many of the older lexicons (such as Thayer's Greek lexicon) and word study books (such as Vincent, Vine or Wuest) assumed such. This can lead to many misinterpretations. Thiselton notes the linguistic connection between "hussy" and "housewife" and asks whether one would wish to equate the two (1977:81).

Similarly, it is erroneous to take a compound word, break it into its component parts, and read the resultant meanings in that light. Louw states unequivocally, "It is a basic principle of modern semantic theory that we cannot progress from the form of a word to its meaning" (1982:29). Two well-known examples may help: *ekklēsia* and *paraklētos.* The first is often said to mean "the called out" believers, while in reality nowhere in extant Greek literature does *ekklēsia* have this connotation. The other is the major title for the Holy Spirit in John 14—16 and contains the roots *para* ("beside") and *kaleō* ("call"). At one time the term did have a meaning similar to its root, "one called alongside to help," and was used in Hellenistic circles for a "helper" or "advocate." However, this is inadequate for John 14:16, 26; 15:26; and 16:7-8, 13 because that sense is never used in the context. Moreover, the semantic field does not build upon that root. Brown (1970:1136-37) distinguishes two forensic or legal meanings (advocate, mediator) and two nonforensic meanings (comforter, exhorter). However, he finds none of them adequate for John and posits that the major thrust is continuity of person and ministry. The Spirit as "another Paraclete" is "another Jesus," that is, continuing his ministry.

The main point is that the root meaning, although closer to the semantic range of the term, is not a "universal meaning" that permeates the whole. All who have studied Greek are aware that a prepositional prefix can affect a stem in three ways (see Wenham 1965:55): (1) The force of both preposition and verb continues *(epagō,* "I lead away"; *ekballō,* "I throw out"); (2) the preposition intensifies the thrust of the verb *(luō,* "I loose";

apoluō, "I release"); (3) the preposition changes the meaning of the verb *(ginōskō,* "I know"; *anaginōskō,* "I read"). The student can never assume that a prepositional prefix affects a compound in any one of the three ways. Only the context and word usage can decide.

Most students assume that the root or basic meaning of a term is the definition memorized as vocabulary in the basic language course. However, what they memorize is the usual or normal meaning rather than the root of a word. For instance, *ballein* means to "throw," but the standard lexicon (Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker) also defines it as to "put," "place" or "bring." These obviously do not derive from "throw" but are other linguistic usages. Similarly, *praxis* means "act" or "deed" but can also be translated "undertaking," "business," "state" or "situation," depending on the context.

For this reason the basic tool for serious word study is not a theological word book but a lexicon. The best for Old Testament study is Brown-Driver-Briggs (BDB) and for New Testament study is Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker (BAGD). Both can function as concordances as well, for many terms have all their occurrences listed. For more serious students there is also Liddell and Scott for classical Greek, Moulton and Milligan for the papyri. In addition are the excellent concordances, Mandelkern or Lisowsky for the Old Testament, Moulton and Geden or Aland's computer concordance for the New Testament, Hatch and Redpath for the Septuagint, Rengstorf for Josephus. Those engaged in detailed research have no end of tools to guide their study. Similar works on the intertestamental literature and the rabbis are currently in progress. For the student without knowledge of the languages, Strong's, Young's or Cruden's concordances are available.

At times a study of roots can be highly illuminating. As I already mentioned, some compounds do maintain their root meaning. In 1 John 2:1, *paraklētos* does follow its root meaning of "advocate": "If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." On these occasions, the root meaning adds richness to the exegesis. The point I made above is that we dare not assume any type of universal meaning for a root. Louw discusses the general or most common meaning of a word (see above) and points out that while it never yields a universal meaning, it does have linguistic value in what is called "unmarked meaning" (1982:33-37). He defines this as "that meaning which would be readily applied in a minimum context where there is little or nothing to help the receptor in determining the meaning" (p. 34). For instance, farmers and stockbrokers would interpret the sentence "They had a large amount of stock" in different ways. However, add specifics like "The stock died" or "The stock averages fell" and all would understand the sentences. In a minimum context (with few modifiers) each one understands on the basis of his or her most common meaning. As an example, Louw refers to L. Goppelt's article on *trapeza* ("table") in TDNT (vol. 8), where Goppelt has divided his discussion into "General Use" (including etymology) and specific uses like "Dining Table," "Moneychanger's Table" and such like.

Finally, I might mention Gibson's extensive discussion of roots in a Semitic context (1981:176-206). He shows that no "common sense—bearing" transfer takes place between an original root and its later descendants. However, at a lesser level, there is semantic

transfer between cognate languages and so a limited value to comparative linguistics at the semantic level. Louw describes this as the "functional referent." There is no "genetic" relationship between roots, but if obvious parallels exist between terms in two languages, then there is semantic overlap between the two terms. Silva (1983:42-43; compare Kedar 1981:98-105) points out that this is especially valuable in Old Testament study, since there are 1,300 hapax legomena (once-only words) and 500 others that occur only twice (out of a total vocabulary of 8,000!). While many can be known from other sources, several hundred obscure terms have no Hebrew cognates and are not found in extrabiblical literature. In these instances root transfer, although it can yield only possible meaning, is invaluable. For instance, Silva points to Job 40:12, "Look on every proud man [and] humble him, and *hadok* the wicked where they stand." The Arabic *hadaka* "conforms to the established phonological correspondences between Arabic and Hebrew, and its meaning 'tear down' fits the context perfectly" (p. 43). The key is linguistic and functional parallels between the terms.

3. Misuse of Etymology. Actually, this category includes the first two as subsets, but for convenience I have separated them. Etymology per se is the study of the history of a term. Louw traces the problem back to the ancient Greek belief that the meaning of a word stemmed from its very nature rather than from convention (1982:23-25). Thus until recently scholars believed that the key to a word's meaning lay in its origin and history. This assumption of linear development lay behind the misuse of etymology, wherein any past use of a word could be read into its current meaning.

Ferdinand de Saussure, in his *Course in General Linguistics* (1915), pioneered the distinction between "diachrony" (the history of a term) and "synchrony" (the current use of a term). He argued radically that "the linguist who wishes to understand a state must discard all knowledge of everything that produced it and ignore diachrony . . . by suppressing the past. The intervention of history can only falsify his judgment" (1915:81, in Silva 1983:36). Of course, Saussure did not deny the validity of etymology altogether; rather, he restricted it to its proper sphere, the history of words. Therefore, current usage rather than history alone could define a word's meaning. The example that appears most frequently in the literature is the word *nice,* which stems from the Latin *nescius,* "ignorant." Thus, it is not the background or evolution of a term but its present usage that has relevance for its meaning.

Scholars have long been guilty of errors in this area. An oft-cited example is the misunderstanding with respect to *hypēretēs* ("servant"). Barclay followed Trench in arguing that the concept derived from the Homeric *eressē,* "to row," then went further and said the *hypo* added the idea of "under," therefore designating "a rower on the lower bank of a trireme." *Hyperetēs* thereby became a "lowly servant." This derivation combines root fallacy with etymology fallacy, for according to Louw this meaning cannot be found in Greek literature current to the New Testament. It is highly dubious at best. The problem is that it makes great preaching and so is difficult to resist. Yet if it is not *true,* dare we risk the danger?

Silva notes the frequent danger of equating Greek words in the New Testament with

their Hebrew counterparts (1983:56-73). Since Edwin Hatch in the last century, many have assumed that the Septuagint had such an enormous impact on New Testament lexicography that much of its language was transformed into a type of semitized Greek. Some have taken this to the extent that terms in biblical Greek often are assigned the same meaning as the Hebrew word they translate (Turner 1980 is criticized for this error). To do so, however, is to misunderstand the true state of New Testament Greek. As I noted in the last chapter, the consensus is that the New Testament is written in colloquial Greek. Therefore, the link between the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint and the New Testament is complex rather than simple. We dare not assume that any particular word is influenced primarily by its Hebrew counterpart. To be sure, there may be influence; but the degree of continuity can be established only after detailed study. As Silva points out (p. 72) this is true of the Septuagint itself; how much more true of the New Testament, a further step removed from the Masoretic Text.

Thiselton discusses the further danger of "dead metaphor" (1977:81). This occurs when the imagery behind a word in its past no longer has meaning. For instance, *splanchnizomai* ("to show compassion") is given the connotation of involving one's innermost being, due to the presence of *splanchna* ("internal organs"). However, this metaphorical thrust was no longer present in the first century. One should never refer to the use of a term in Homer or Aristotle to "prove" or "demonstrate" a meaning in New Testament times. This error can become anachronistic, for example, reading *dynamis* ("power") as "dynamite." As Carson explains, dynamite blows things up and destroys while the Word makes whole and heals (1984:33). More important, a modern metaphor can never be used to define but only to illustrate.

Perhaps the best statement of the problem is that of J. Vendryes's *Language: A Linguistic Introduction to History* (in Barr 1961:109; Silva 1983:46-47):

> Etymology, however, gives a false idea of the nature of a vocabulary for it is concerned only in showing how a vocabulary has been formed. Words are not used according to their historical value. The mind forgets—assuming that it ever knew—the semantic evolutions through which the words have passed. Words always have a *current* value, that is to say, limited to the moment when they are employed, and a *particular* value relative to the momentary use made of them. (Italics his)

This does not mean, however, that etymology has no place in word studies, only that it must be employed with care. The key is to discover whether or not there is a conscious allusion to background meaning in the text. One example would be the use of *pararymen* ("drift away") in Hebrews 2:1. Two metaphors are possible, both attested to in current Greek literature of the day: (1) A ring that "slips off" the finger and is lost (Plutarch); or (2) a ship that slips downstream past the point of safety. Since the author used a nautical metaphor in the similar context of 6:19 ("anchor of the soul"), the second becomes somewhat more likely. The important point is that both synchronic or current usage and the context itself have made the etymological metaphor possible.

Another word that also has been under much discussion is *hamartanō*, one of the basic words for "sin." Louw points out the inadequacy of utilizing the Homeric idea of "miss the mark" or "purpose" as the "hidden meaning" of the term (1982:29-30), but Silva

correctly points out that this may indeed be the connotation in a specific text, Romans 3:23, with the idea of sin "as a failing to obtain God's glory" (1983:50). We cannot make a general assumption based on this, but an individual instance can draw upon an etymological distinction. This is especially true of biblical puns or plays upon words (see Gibson 1981:180-81), as in the preceding example.

At all times the synchronic dimension has priority, and diachronic considerations are utilized only if current usage makes such possible and if the context itself makes historical allusions probable. This is often the case in the biblical writings due to the importance of tradition and canon. The prophetic works of the Old Testament contain many deliberate allusions to the Torah, and the New Testament often uses a term in the sense of its Old Testament or Septuagint background. This is the basis of Leon Morris's argument for the forensic use of the passive *dikaiousthai* in Romans 3:24 (and elsewhere) for "justify" rather than "make righteous" (1956:233-35, 259-60). He grounds his position partly on the direct influence of the Septuagint on Paul's technical language. The context makes it probable that Morris is correct. Of course, this is even more true of direct quotes or allusions to Septuagint passages. As we will see later, the best clue to the symbolism of the book of Revelation lies in its background (much of it from the Old Testament).

In studying the history of a word we must consider the strong possibility of semantic change, when a word alters its meaning over the course of years. This is a basic fact of language. The New King James Version was necessitated because the average layperson no longer understood many of the terms in the 1611 version. As Sawyer states, "What is quite inadmissable . . . is the assumption that because a word has a particular meaning in one context, it automatically has the same meaning in another quite different context a couple of thousand years earlier" (or later! 1972:9).

In fact, semantic change has a very real value in word study, for it acts as a control against an overly zealous delineation of the semantic field to include archaic meanings. The most comprehensive coverage of such is found in Silva (1983:53-97), who notes how difficult it is to trace semantic change in the Old Testament (due to the paucity of extrabiblical material and the difficulty of dating the texts) and primarily studies semantic change from the Septuagint to the New Testament. At times the semantic field can expand (such as the use of *artos*, "bread," for "food" in general); at other times it can contract (such as the use of *ho pistis*, "faith" for the Christian faith). In many cases virtual substitution has occurred, as in the use of *angelos* for the Hebrew *mal'āḵ*, "angel." The great influence of the Hebrew Bible has resulted in a great deal of semantic borrowing, as in cases of loan words *(abba*, "father") or structural considerations (the centrality of *kardia*, "heart," for the mind due to the influence of the Hebrew *lēḇ*). We must be aware of such possibilities if we are to read the evidence correctly. I will discuss many details from this category (such as polysemy, homonymy, ellipsis) in the next chapter.

4. Misuse of Subsequent Meaning. The opposite problem from etymology occurs when we read later meanings back into the biblical material. This occurs, for instance, when *martys* ("witness") is interpreted in terms of its second-century meaning of "martyrdom," or when the "fish" of John 21:11-14 is made a symbol of the Eucharist because of its

presence in the sacrament in the later church. Kaiser coined the phrase "the analogy of antecedent Scripture" to cover the process of interpreting the theology behind a text (1981:134-40). This means that we must interpret a theological term not on the basis of what it came to mean later but rather on the basis of what it meant in the past, especially as that past meaning affected the current use of the term. While that is broader than the topic here, Kaiser applies it first to "the use of certain terms which have already acquired a special meaning in the history of salvation and have begun to take on a technical status (e.g. 'seed,' 'servant,' 'rest,' 'inheritance')" (p. 137).

This principle is even more applicable to word study. One of the basic problems of modern popular interpretation is the tendency to read twentieth-century meanings into the ancient terms of Scripture. All of us have attended Sunday-school classes where great theological points were drawn from Webster's Dictionary or from particular phrases in the Amplified Bible. A similar problem is the tendency to read New Testament meaning into Old Testament concepts like salvation, grace, mercy and truth. At all times current usage and the context must determine the meaning. Future meaning does have a place, of course. Canon criticism (such as Child's commentary on Exodus) has demonstrated the value of an awareness of later interpretation on a text. However, it dare not influence the meaning of the current text but only can show how a text or term was later applied to the life of God's people.

5. The One-Meaning Fallacy. At times we encounter the view that every appearance of a Hebrew or Greek term should be translated by the same English word. This of course is closely related to the root fallacy described above. The Concordant Version has attempted this with disastrous results. The problem is a distorted view of language. The average person has, say, a vocabulary of 20,000 words; yet linguists have shown that in that person's lifetime he or she will express four to five million different ideas. Simple mathematics demands that the words must be used in many different combinations with many different meanings in order to meet the need. Naturally, some highly technical terms (such as those in the sciences) will approximate a single meaning; but not words in everyday language. This is complicated even further when one crosses language barriers to communicate, as is the case when studying the Bible. No two languages express themselves or use words the same way. To say a simple phrase such as "I will get it" in German, for instance, one must ask which of the many possible German words for "get" will express that particular idea. Cassells' *Wörterbuch* has two columns with scores of word combinations for the simple English word "get."

The same is true when translating from the Hebrew or the Greek. Louw uses the excellent example of *sarx*, "flesh," a word often translated literally in the versions (1982:39-40). However, note the following widely different semantic uses: Matthew 24:12, "no flesh will be saved" (no person); John 1:14, "the Word made flesh" (became a human being); Romans 9:8, "children of the flesh" (children of natural birth); Hebrews 5:7, "days of his flesh" (his earthly life); Romans 8:13, "live according to the flesh" (sinful nature); Jude 7, "go after strange flesh" (sexual immorality). The point is obvious: the English term *flesh* cannot adequately express all these divergent connotations, and a translation

would be wrong to use "flesh" in all these instances. As Louw concludes, "one can never say what *sarx* means, but only what it means in this or that context" (pp. 39-40).

Below I will discuss the linguistic concept of "primary" and "secondary" meanings, but this is a quite different phenomenon from "one meaning." The "primary" meaning relates to the "thread of meaning" that ties together the semantic field of a word (Beekman and Callow 1974:96-97). However, even that definition is debated and most linguists agree that many associated meanings are related only peripherally (see below). The technical term for the multiple senses an individual word can have is "polysemy," literally "multiple meaning." This is an extremely important linguistic principle, for it forces us once again to the semantic field and the context as the two factors in determining the meaning of a term.

6. Misuse of Parallels. This provides another of the most frequent sources of error. An excellent article by Robert Kysar (1970:250-55) shows that Rudolf Bultmann and C. H. Dodd in their commentaries on John (specifically the prologue) used entirely different sources of evidence to "prove" their respective theories. Rarely did either consider the parallels adduced by the other. In other words, they chose only those parallels which would support their preconceived notions. This happens all too often in scholarly circles. Instead of a comprehensive study of all possible parallels in order to discover which *best* fits the context, scholars will select only those most favorable to the thesis and ignore the others. Further, they will often accumulate numerous examples in order to overwhelm the reader with volume. Carson calls this "verbal parallellomania, . . . the listing of verbal parallels in some body of literature as if those bare phenomena demonstrate conceptual links or even dependency" (1984:43-44). Such occurs frequently with some practitioners in the History of Religions school. In their desire to show the Hellenistic rather than Jewish origin of a concept or term, they virtually ignore evidence from Jewish circles. Martin Hengel in his many writings has done a brilliant job of overturning many of the invalid assumptions of this school.

It is critical to recognize the relative value of parallels. For instance, when studying Paul's use of *dikaiousthai* ("justify") in Romans 3:24, we must consider several levels. First, the passive voice verb rather than the noun or adjective is truly relevant. Second, Paul's use elsewhere *in Romans* is more important than his use elsewhere. Third, the use of *dikaioun* and cognates elsewhere in the New Testament does not tell us how it is used in Romans. All the latter can do is expand the semantic field and provide possible meanings from the use of the term in the early church. Fourth, we must ask whether there is a direct allusion or indirect influence from the Septuagint or the Old Testament. Fifth, we must study extant Greek literature for other possible semantic parallels.

Most important, we must search for true parallels rather than be satisfied with seeming or potential parallels. The difference is not always so simple to detect. We must consider the whole semantic range and compare the contexts behind the possible parallels before deciding. Then we must chart each occurrence and see which uses of the term elsewhere have the greatest degree of overlap with the use of the term in the particular context we are studying. Any individual occurence is no more than a possible parallel until it has

been shown to have a higher degree of semantic overlap (that is, it corresponds to the biblical term at several levels) than the other possibilities, even if the parallel is found elsewhere in the same book or section. We need to remember that we often use the same word with slightly different nuances only a couple sentences apart and think nothing of it. Paul, for example, uses *nomos* ("law") in several different ways in Romans 5—7 (see the chart in Moo 1983:76). It is not the nearest parallel but the best one that counts, and the immediate context is the final arbiter in deciding the proper parallel.

7. The Disjunctive Fallacy. Often two options are presented as either-or, forcing the reader to make a choice when one is not necessitated. Carson connects this with "a prejudicial use of evidence," which presents the data in such a way that the reader is influenced in a direction not actually demanded by the evidence (1984:54-56). We have already seen this in the previous chapter with grammar, for instance, when one is asked to choose between an objective and subjective genitive when a general genitive is indicated. This error is often made with word studies as well. One example would be the use of institutional language by proponents of Early Catholicism, which assumes that the early church was charismatic and free and only at the last part of the first century developed church government. Therefore, all mention of "elders" or "bishops" (such as Acts 14:23; Phil 1:1) had to be late, while language of Spirit-led activity (for example, 1 Cor 14:26-28) stems from the primitive church. This is an unwarranted disjunction, however, for charismatic freedom and institutionalism are not dichotomous. A good parallel was the Jewish synagogue, which had freedom and yet regimen within its programs.

8. The Word Fallacy. Another major problem is a failure to consider the concept as well as the word, that is, the other ways the biblical writers could say the same thing. This naturally includes synonyms; one of the purposes of the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (NIDNTT) was to correct that basic error in TDNT. However, as Moises Silva has said, even in NIDNTT "the grouping of semantically related terms does not really evince sensitivity to linguistic theory; it appears to be only a matter of convenience. Cf. my review in *WTJ* 43 (1980-81), 395-99" (1983:21n). We dare never study only occurrences of the particular term if our purpose is to trace the theology behind a word or phrase. Such will help in determining the semantic range of that particular term but will not recapitulate the range of the author's thought or of biblical teaching.

None of us ever uses the exact same words to describe our thoughts. Rather, we use synonyms and other phrases to depict our ideas. Therefore, a truly complete picture must cluster semantically related terms and phrases. The methodology for this will be discussed in the next section; at this stage I want to note the danger of neglecting the procedure. For example, to discuss the spiritual realm and center only upon *pneuma* is fraught with danger. Thiselton (1977:91) charts the concept and notes the related terms under wind (such as *anemos, lailaps),* spirit *(sōma, sarx, psycho),* seat of emotion or insight *(kardia, etarachthō),* the whole person *(to emon, me)* and several other categories. We would do

an injustice to the topic by ignoring passages dealing with the same theme but using other related terms. Here a semantic field approach (see below) is needed to determine all the terms and phrases which express a concept.

9. Ignoring the Context. In one sense this is the basic error that encompasses the others and makes them possible. For instance, etymology is misused as formative of meaning when the diachronic history of a term is given priority over the context. I have already noted that context and the current semantic range of a word are the two aspects of the synchronic dimension. The failure to note context may be the most frequently occurring error, since the majority of commentaries are organized around a word-by-word approach that usually isolates each word from the other terms surrounding it and as a result fails to put the message of the text together as a coherent whole.

For instance, in Philippians 2:7 *heauton ekenōsen* ("emptied himself") has become the focus of widespread debate centering upon the kenotic theory, namely whether Christ "emptied himself" of his deity. The traditional evangelical approach has been to respond that Christ emptied himself of the prerogatives and glory of deity but not of his divine nature (compare v. 6; see Lightfoot). However, as Hawthorne has noted, this ignores the context (1983:25-86). There is no (genitive of) content given for the "emptying," and it is better in this light to recognize the intransitive nature of the verb. In the semantic range another use fits the context better, to "pour out" or "make himself nothing." This fits the transition from "did not consider equality a thing to be grasped" to "took on the form of a servant" as well as the parallelism with "humbled" in verse 8. A proper regard for context removes the necessity of debating the kenotic school on their own grounds.

Basic Semantic Theory

1. Meaning. In a very real sense this chapter is the heart of the entire book. Everyone who studies this work has one basic question: What procedure can I follow to discover more precisely what the Bible means? Yet there are several issues involved, as we have already seen. For one thing, what is "meaning"? Earlier we distinguished between the author's intended meaning, which is singular in essence, and what the text "means" for each of us, which is multiple, depending upon its significance for us at given times. Yet we still have not defined "meaning." One major area of agreement on the part of semanticists is that meaning is not an inherent property of words. Contrary to popular assumptions, terms really do not carry meaning by themselves. It is true that some terms do produce a word picture in the mind, like "apple" or "house." However, they confer this meaning as part of sentences or "speech-acts," and often they do not carry that particular meaning at all, as the term "pineapple" or the sentence "His suggestion housed several different ideas" illustrates.

Thus, there is no inherent meaning in a word. As Ullmann has noted, dictionaries give us the impression that words carry abstract content by their very nature (1964:39). Yet in reality words are arbitrary symbols that have meaning only in a context. They function on the basis of convention and practical use in any language system, and they must be studied descriptively (how they are actually employed) rather than prescriptively (accord-

ing to preconceived rules). Nida provides a working definition of meaning as "a set of relations for which a verbal symbol is a sign" and adds that a word should be understood as "a token or a symbol for this or that meaning" (1975:14). Similarly, Kedar begins his discussion by noting that speech is primarily a "symbol system" (1981:9). In other words, the individual term is not the basic unit of meaning. "As Saussure has shown decisively in one way, and Wittgenstein decisively in another, the meaning of a word depends not on what it is in itself but on its relation to other words and to other sentences which form its context" (Thiselton 1977:78-79).

This theory of meaning can be illustrated in many ways. Note the use of *peirasmos* in James 1:2 and 1:12-13. In itself the word has no single meaning but only meaning potential. It is a symbol waiting for a context, when its meaning will be decided by interaction in a sentence. In these three passages there is a definite shift of meaning. In 1:2 *peirasmos* clearly means a "trial," defined further as a "test of faith" (v. 3) that comes in a myriad of forms (v. 2). After the discussion of prayer and doubting (vv. 5-8) and poverty and wealth (vv. 9-10), James returns to his topic in verse 12, specifically renewing the idea of "enduring trials" (compare vv. 3-4). In verse 13, however, the meaning changes to another aspect of the semantic range, that of "temptation." This subtle shift is necessitated by the statement "I am tempted by God" and leads into a discussion of the source and progress of temptation-sin-death (vv. 14-15). Meaning was not inherent in *peirasmos* but was given to it by its context; without a context the term has only meaning potential.

2. Sense and Reference. Most of us have grown up with some form of the reference theory of meaning.[1] This theory posits a direct relationship between a word as symbol and the thing to which it refers. But the problem is that words do not always "name" the reality behind them. As Gilbert Ryle has said,

> If every single word were a name, then a sentence composed of five words, say "three is a prime number" should be a list of five objects named by those five words. But a list like "Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Locke, Berkeley" is not a sentence. . . . What a sentence means is not decomposable into the set of things which the word in it stands for, if they do stand for things. So the notion of "having meaning" is at least partly different from the notion of "standing for." (1963:133; in Silva 1983:106)

Silva modified this functional view of language by noting the fact that some words do indeed have a direct link with physical entities (or in the case of biblical study, with theological concepts). This is true of proper names, as Ryle suggests, and is sometimes true of technical or semitechnical terms like *nomos* (law) or *hamartia* (sin). However, we have already noted the flexibility of *nomos*. W. Günther points out that in the Septuagint "two words, *hamartia* and *adikia*, represent between them almost the whole range of Hebrew words for guilt and sin" and that in the New Testament the term and its cognates are used "as the most comprehensive expression of everything opposed to God" (1978:577, 579). In short, even these semitechnical expressions have a certain flexibility in their use. Silva correctly notes that we must distinguish between technical and nontechnical terms, but I must add one caveat: there is no absolute or clear-cut distinction.[2] Semitechnical terms like *nomos* can be used in a nonreferential way, for example as "legal

principles" in general. Silva's diagram (1983:107) is helpful (see figure 3.1).

fully referential	mostly referential	partly referential	non-referential
(Plato)	(law)	(cold)	(beautiful)

Fig. 3.1. Silva's Diagram of Degrees of Reference.

We can study a term that is completely or mostly referential by what linguists call the "word and thing" approach (as utilized in TDNT). This method assumes the identity between the word and the "thing" to which it refers and proceeds to define the referent in exact terms. However, not many words can be studied this way, and the method is open to many pitfalls. Carson, for instance, cautions against "false assumptions about technical meaning," in which a person presupposes the content of a technical term like "sanctification" without letting the text define it (1984:45-48). In the case of "sanctification," passages like Romans 6 or 1 Corinthians 1:2 equate it with the moment of justification rather than with the process of spiritual growth. In other words, even with technical terms the context has priority.

The well-known triangle of Ogden and Richards (1923:11; in Silva 1983:103) illustrates the basic distinctions in defining words (see figure 3.2).

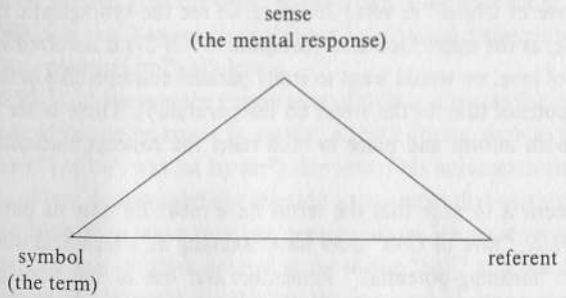


Fig. 3.2. Ogden and Richards Triangle.

It is not easy to establish the link between a symbol and its referent, as we have already discussed. The major point is to note the difference between the sense of a word and its reference. The latter is an extralinguistic factor, the specific object denoted by the statement. The "sense" is the picture built in the mind by the term, that image which is connoted. For instance, if we say "The ship is at the docks," we have a symbol (ship), a sense (a large boat) and a referent (the Queen Mary). Let us consider Peter's confession at Philippi, "You are the Christ" (Mk 8:29). The symbol, "Christ," actually refers to Jesus (as we know from the context) but its sense is that of the Jewish expectation of the Messiah. In most other cases we must deal with sense more than reference. Abstract terms like "faith," "hope," "love" fit only this former category. In tracing salvific terms in the Old Testament (see Sawyer 1972), we are dealing with sense relations. Therefore, I will

center upon sense in the ensuing discussions.

3. Structural Linguistics. The sense of a term depends upon its function in the larger linguistic unit, the sentence. This realization is at the heart of a structural (not structuralist; see chap. six) view of language. Saussure also grounded his system in the difference between syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations. The former is linear and defines a word's relationship with the other terms that surround it in the speech-act, such as the interrelationship of concepts in "God is love." A paradigmatic relation is vertical or associative, noting other terms that could replace it, such as words that are synonymous. Rather than "love" one could say "kind," "merciful" or "gracious." Both aspects are connected to the key exegetical question, Why? Why did the writer choose this series of relationships by which to express his thoughts? This leads to a series of "what" questions: What limiting relationships do the series of terms develop with one another? What other terms could have been chosen to describe the writer's thoughts? What is the larger semantic domain (range of meanings) of which these terms are a part, and what does it add to the thought? In biblical study this takes us straight into the theological domain.

Both aspects must be considered in a proper word study. For instance, "love of God" in Romans 8:39 is part of a much larger structure, the statement of the inseparability of the child of God from his love (vv. 38-39). We cannot understand it without considering the whole statement of which it is a part. Further, we must note that it stands in deliberate parallel with "love of Christ" in verse 35. Here we see the syntagmatic combined with the paradigmatic, as the entire Godhead (compare vv. 26-27) is involved in our security. On the concept of love, we would want to study parallel concepts like *ḥesed* (lovingkindness) and omnipotence (due to the stress on inseparability). These latter are sister concepts that will both inform and place in bold relief the concept elucidated here. More on this later.

My purpose here is to note that the terms have meaning only as part of the larger structure. Naturally, "love of God" does have meaning as a technical phrase; however, a better label is "meaning-potential." Remember our use of this very concept in our discussion of the genitive in the previous chapter. It *could* mean many things—"God loves me"; "I love God"; "God is love" and so forth. I can only know what it *does* mean when I see it as part of a larger context like Romans 8:39. Moreover, the meaning of a statement is not the sum of the meanings of its individual words (the impression given by many commentaries) but the total message produced by the words in relation to one another. Consider the difference between "I help the boy" and "The boy helps me." There is never an accumulation of separate meanings but only a single message. Each term is a part of a whole, and to change any term or its relationship to other terms is to change the whole.

4. Context. I have stressed this throughout the book; I want here to explore its relationship to semantics. Silva summarizes the universally accepted axiom regarding its importance when he assigns "a *determinative* function to context; that is, the context does not merely help us understand meaning; it virtually *makes* meaning" (1983:139; italics his).

In chapter one we used two aspects of context—the historical and the logical—to describe the prolegomena to serious Bible study. Here we note a similar breakdown and, following linguistic convention, will label them literary and situational.

Sawyer calls the literary context the "linguistic environment" that relates semantics to several concerns that will be covered later, such as syntax and genre (1972:10-28). In his study Sawyer centers upon stylistics, that is, upon grouping semantic units on the basis of similar types of expression. This is indeed a critical area of linguistic investigation, for it recognizes that every writer (as well as every genre—see chaps. six through twelve) uses language differently. At the same time every language has certain stylistic preferences (idioms, ways of saying things) that often determine word selection. These two forces work in opposite directions: individual style produces variety of expression, cultural norms produce conformity of expression. The student of the Word must be aware of both and ask what stylistic factors are at work in the context.

This is especially valuable in studying the question of synonyms (see below). Without presupposing the data to follow, consider Paul's use of *ginōskein* and *eidenai*, the two basic words for "to know." Burdick examines the Pauline occurrences and believes that in the majority of cases (90 of 103 for *eidenai* and 32 of 50 for *ginōskein*) Paul follows the classical distinction between *eidenai* as denoting knowledge already possessed (characterized by assurance) and *ginōskein* as the process of gaining knowledge (1974:344-56). Silva, however, challenges the results, arguing that *eidenai hoti* is conventional language and should not be pressed (1983:164-69). Paul's usage is dictated more by stylistic concerns (Silva 1980 calls this "lexical choice") than by classical distinctions, and therefore the two are often synonyms in Paul's letters.

Hirsch (1976:50-73) challenges the importance of style and syntax for meaning, arguing that synonymous ideas can be stated in varying stylistic forms, such as active ("I hit the ball") or passive ("The ball was hit by me"). However, his arguments are not conclusive for two reasons. First, he has carefully selected an example that might prove his point, but in reality linguists have taken that into consideration. We must consider the context and ask whether the passive gives greater stress to the "ball" and the active to the act of hitting. However, in other stylistic choices, the influence of style is more direct, as we have seen. Second, Hirsch is attacking a deterministic view that assumes that style is the creative force in meaning. I am saying that style is *a* key rather than *the* key to meaning, one among many factors that one must consider when investigating the contribution of a word within a sentence structure. Therefore, Hirsch's objection is a valuable caution against an exaggerated view of the importance of style but not applicable to a more nuanced understanding.

The situational context is more difficult to determine, for it involves the reconstruction of the historical situation behind the surface context of the passage. This looks forward to the discussion of historical-cultural exegesis (chap. five) but needs also to be addressed in relation to semantic research. I will discuss the difficulty of understanding something uttered in the past (see appendices one and two), but linguists at least do not consider this to be an impossible task. Historical documents help recreate not only the meaning of words but also the events and situations behind most ancient documents. Moreover,

these situations themselves are determinative of meaning. For instance, the command to "confess your sins" in 1 John 1:9 is surrounded by three statements addressed to John's audience: "If we claim to have fellowship with him but walk in darkness" (v. 6); "If we claim to be without sin" (v. 8); and "If we claim we have not sinned" (v. 10 NIV). There have been many interpretations of this discourse, but the best stems from the realization that John is addressing his opponents, a group of perfectionist proto-Gnostics whose "knowledge" in their opinion has lifted them above sin. John commands his readers to recognize their sinfulness, to confess it, and to return to the "light" (v. 5). Thiselton correctly observes, "To try to cut loose 'propositions' in the New Testament [or Old Testament!] from the specific situation in which they were uttered and to try thereby to treat them 'timelessly' is not only bad theology; it is also bad linguistics. For it leads to a distortion of what the text *means*" (1977:79; italics his).

5. Deep Structure. Louw speaks of the surface and deep levels of an utterance (1982:75-89). By this he does not identify with the psychologistic approach of the structuralists but rather speaks purely from the linguistic perspective. The surface structure deals with the basic grammatical and semantic relationships of a sentence. It is akin to a modern translation like the New International Version, pariphrastic when it needs to but faithfully reproducing the original. The deep structure, however, looks to the underlying message behind the words. For biblical study this is the theological truth embedded in the statement. This is based upon the transformational grammar of Noam Chomsky, a topic I will explore further in the next chapter. Yet it has implications for semantics, and I wish to explore these. Chomsky taught that behind the surface grammar of every statement lay linguistic transformations, that is, the deeper message of the utterance. There is a very real danger to this, for some, like the structuralists, have been led to denigrate and virtually ignore the surface text. Many semanticists, however, have recognized this pitfall and rightly seen that the surface grammar controls the transformations. The two are interdependent parts of a larger whole.

Louw uses Ephesians 1:7 as an example (1982:75-76). The surface statement is "by whom we have redemption through his blood." The deep structure says "God sets us free because Christ died for us." This considers not only syntax but also deep-level semantics. Both halves, "redemption" and "blood," are analyzed in terms of syntagm and paradigm, then transformed into their underlying theological statements. Behind this there must also be serious exegetical study. One by-product of the method is the elimination of ambiguities (Thiselton 1977:96). We must work through the interpretive options before we can identify the deeper message.

This works at grammatical as well as at semantic levels. For instance, "God loves us" and "we love God" are two possible deep structures (in the next chapter I will call these "kernel sentences") for the surface statement "the love of God." In semantic investigation let us consider *parakaleite* in Hebrews 3:13. Most translate it "encourage one another daily," partly on the basis of its parallel in 10:25, "encourage one another, especially since you see the day drawing near." However, as I stated earlier in this chapter, we must use parallels carefully, examining whether the contexts match sufficiently. There are two

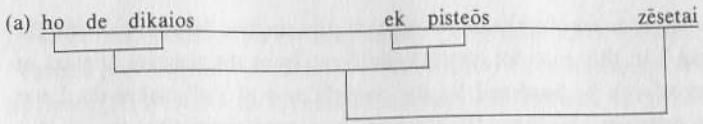
possible deep meanings for *parakaleite* in this context, the positive "encourage" and the negative "admonish." In this case the context (different from the positive context of 10:24-25) "lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" makes the latter definite. The deep structure would be, "It is necessary to keep examining one another for sin, because if you don't, it will deceive and then harden you."

6. Syntax and Semantics. Nida and Taber discuss the two basic factors that influence meaning (1969:56-63), and this will provide a good summary for the first half of the discussion of structural semantics. It is amazing that with the millions of idea possibilities and our limited vocabulary, ambiguity is not a constant result. Yet a remarkable degree of precision is achieved through the wide range of meanings and uses attached to words in different contexts. The first factor that leads to meaning is syntax, the subject of the next chapter. Whether a word is used as a noun, a verb or an adjective makes a great deal of difference. Consider: "he threw the stones"; "he was stoned" (with several possible meanings depending on context); "he had a stony countenance." The meaning can change radically with each syntactical usage. The same is often true of biblical words. We must always ask what the term contributes to the meaning of the whole statement, not just inquire as to what it "means" in the context. Thiselton uses Wittgenstein's concept of the "language game" (1977:1130-32; 1980:373-79) to express this truth. Each word used in an utterance is not an entity in itself but is part of a larger activity grounded in everyday life. Thus speech-acts have no uniform pattern; hermeneutical rules above all must be flexible enough to allow the syntax to speak for itself, to allow the language to play its own game.

"Semotaxis" is the second factor and refers to the influence of the surrounding words. This of course can be exceedingly complex, since all the given elements in a surface structure interact with each other. One of the critical aspects concerns the modifiers (adjectives, subordinate clauses and so forth). As modifiers increase, the specificity of the statement increases proportionately, for example, "his father," "the father of the blond fellow," "the father of the blond fellow standing there." Yet in many cases ambiguity abounds. Louw provides an excellent illustration by diagramming the two semotactic ways of understanding Romans 1:17 (1982:75)—see figure 3.3.

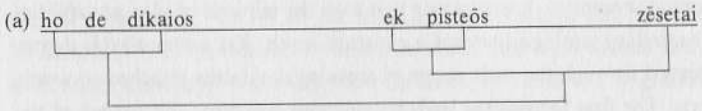
These two interpretations are quite different but each is based on viable semotactic relationships. On the basis of the larger context the interpreter must choose, but the principle of semotaxis helps us to realize that we are dealing with whole statements and not just individual phrases.

7. Semantic Range. As we turn from the structural aspects of language to the actual tools of semantics, we must begin with the basic task of establishing the parameters of word meaning in individual cases. The semantic range of a word is the result of the synchronic study, a list of the ways the word was used in the era when the work was written. For Old Testament study, apart from comparative linguistics (such as Ugaritic or Akkadian texts) the terms can be traced in Jewish inscriptions and rabbinic literature. Lexicons (Koehler-Baumgartner, Holladay, Brown-Driver-Briggs) and concordances (Mandel-



= "he who through faith is righteous shall live" (RSV)

= "he who is put right with God through faith shall live" (GNB)



= "the just (righteous) shall live by faith" (KJV, NKJV, NASB, NIV)

= "the upright man finds life through faith" (JB)

Fig. 3.3. Louw's Diagrams of Romans 1:17.

kern, Lisowsky, Wikgram) are the primary source for such statistics. The person doing frontline semantic research will trace the occurrences, note the distribution (such as special uses in wisdom or prophetic literature), check syntactical groupings (such as preference for a certain preposition) and organize the data into primary, secondary, and metaphorical meanings. Above all, we must study each context in detail, for many have made mistakes by assuming a primary meaning in a passage that actually favors one of the secondary uses of the term. Extrabiblical sources must be employed with care, since the use of the cognate languages can easily lead to the etymological fallacy (see above) but parallels properly adduced can be highly illuminating (see Stuart 1980:120-26; Kedar, 1981:70-82).

In New Testament word study we need to trace the word carefully in both Graeco-Roman and Jewish contexts, noting its use in Philo and Josephus as well as in the papyri. Again for serious research we will want to consult the primary sources and both trace and collate the usages of the word in different contexts. Next we will do the same in the New Testament (using a concordance like Moulton-Geden or Aland's computer concordances), noting the proclivities of certain authors (for instance, John's preference for the verb form of "believe" and "know"). Etymology, as I noted above, can be very helpful since many passages deliberately allude to Septuagint or Old Testament meanings. Moreover, some Greek words are more transparent, continuing the past uses of the term.

The major lexicon, Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker (BAGD, 1979), is a valuable tool because it traces the origins and distribution of the term as well as its basic semantic range. However, it is important to remember that BAGD is descriptive and interpretive. When it places a passage behind a certain meaning it is an opinion and not an established fact. Fee notes the handling of *archontes* (rulers) in 1 Corinthians 2:6-8 (1983:87-89).

BAGD places it under the rubric of the evil spirits. However, a closer look at the evidence yields several interesting facts: only the singular is used in the New Testament for Satan; the plural always refers to human rulers; the first use of the plural for demonic forces in Greek literature appears in the second century. While the demonic remains a possible interpretation, I personally follow those who favor human rulers as the meaning of *archontes* here. My point is that we should not assume BAGD's decisions to be irrefutable.

Beekman and Callow discuss the "multiple senses" of a word from the standpoint of translation procedures (1974:94-103). They recommend that the student consider three levels of word meaning. The primary level is the common meaning that the word carries when it stands without a context and in most cognate terms. For example, the primary meanings of *lutroun* would be to "free" or "ransom."

Secondary meanings are specific meanings that often share an aspect of the primary sense but occur only in some contexts. Beekman and Callow speak of a "thread of meaning," but such is not always true. A good example of the latter is *rûaḥ/pneuma*, which can mean "wind" or "spirit" or "breath" or the person (see above). The various uses cover a broad band of semantic categories and cannot be restricted to a common thread (see above on the root fallacy). Therefore these meanings are used infrequently. For *lutroun* these would be the idea of a ransom payment, redemption, the liberation of a prisoner of war or the manumission of a slave. The first two of course are found frequently in the New Testament, but still the context must decide whether or not a ransom payment ("blood") is stressed.

Finally, figurative meanings are based upon "associative relations with the primary sense" (p. 94). (I will consider this in the next chapter under "figures of speech.") Under this category the term is used metaphorically to depict a word picture. For *lutroun* BAGD lists its use in prayer ("save me from . . .") as a figurative sense. These categories will prove helpful in organizing the data one has collected on the semantic range of a term.

The majority of us will never be engaged in the type of detailed research described herein. We will not have the time to retrace each use in its original context and reorganize the results on the basis of recent semantic theory (as did Barr, Sawyer or Kedar). We will have to be satisfied with secondary sources like BDB or BAGD. However, we can still use them knowledgeably, and when commentaries or monographs employ semantic research and argumentation, we can be aware of the level of sophistication with which the data is utilized. Certainly those of us who are pastors, missionaries and scholars in related fields will not have the time to do primary research. Yet if we know the theory we can use the secondary tools with far greater understanding and awareness. This chapter will be used on many different levels by its readers, from serious devotional reading to writing major monographs. I do not want to give the impression that this is only for serious scholars. If we know what is involved in developing a semantic range, we can properly use those semantic studies which have been developed for us. We can also avoid misusing tools like TDNT, TDOT or NIDNTT, which have not been intended for detailed lexical study. They are certainly invaluable exegetical resources but are not

exhaustive on semantic range (TDOT comes the closest) since they deal more with theological usage.

8. Connotative Meaning. Nida and Taber (1969:37-39) present the four basic components of the dynamic employment of words in a context: the object element (O), the event connoted (E), the abstract nature acquired (A) and a relationship implied (R). Wycliffe translators as well as others use this OEAR complex to identify more precisely the exact way a particular word is used in its context, and to provide a guide to select a dynamic equivalence term or phrase in the receptor language into which the passage is being translated. This does add time to the exegetical task, but on key words that deserve detailed word study it is a worthy tool that will enable the student to think through the surface structure of a text much more carefully.

For instance, "justify" has an E-A complex of meanings ("declare righteous"), "justifier" an O-E-A thrust (the object "declares righteous") and "reconcile" an E-R emphasis (a new relationship is mediated). An "object" or "thing" word constitutes an animate entity and emphasizes the person or thing concerned in a statement. An "event" word connotes action and stresses the movement aspect of a statement. An "abstract" term is theoretical in essence and centers on the qualitative aspect of the word. A "relational" term looks at the concept in its association with other people or ideas and emphasizes the correlation between the terms. In Romans 1:17 ("The just shall live by faith," see above), "just" or "righteous" is an O-A-R term because the person is seen in "right" relationship with God. "Live" is an E-A term because it is the action word in the sentence and a key idea for the new life with God in the Epistle to the Romans (see 2:7; 4:17; 5:17-18 among others). "Faith" is also an E-A term because it is the basis of right "living" and stresses the abstract aspect of "faith" in God.

9. Paradigmatic Research: Synonymity, Antonymity and Componential Analysis. This section concerns the semantic field of a concept, not just the various meanings the term itself might have in different contexts but other terms that relate to it. This paradigmatic approach increasingly is recognized as having great value in serious word study. The technical term for the former is polysemy (a term with more than one meaning) and the term for the latter is polymorphy (several symbols with the same meaning), or synonymy. Nida (1972:85-86) calls this paradigmatic method "field semantics" and goes so far as to say that "critical studies of meaning must be based primarily upon the analysis of related meanings of different words not upon the different meanings of single words" (p. 85). Certainly this is an overstatement, but it is true that synonyms are very neglected in semantic investigation and can be quite helpful in broadening the thrust of the actual term chosen in the syntagmatic or surface structure. The difficulty of course is avoiding over-exegesis of the actual term found; for instance, overstating the differences between the word and its synonyms on the one hand or illegitimately reading the others into it on the other hand. A nuanced use of the method will nevertheless enrich the meaning of the passage, leading to the biblical theology behind the concept embedded in the term.

Silva notes three types of synonyms (1983:120-29).[3] The predominant category is that

of overlapping relations, so called because synonyms meet at the level of sense rather than reference. This means that some of the various senses of the terms overlap or cohere. There are few if any absolute synonyms, terms that agree with one another at every level. However, we can say that terms are synonymous in particular contexts, such as *pneuma* ("spirit") and *psychē* ("soul") in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 or *agapaō* and *phileō* ("love") in John 21:15-17.

There are two uses of synonyms in Bible study. If we are looking to the larger theological pattern behind the use of a certain term, we will study similar terms for the same concept in order to find the larger semantic field, which can enrich a particular study. For instance, in a study of *proseuchomai* ("pray") in 1 Thessalonians 1:17, we could look up similar terms for prayer like *aiteō, deomai, eucharistia, enteuxis* and *iketoria* and see how they expand and clarify the biblical concept.

Second, we can study synonyms used in the same passage and ask the extent to which they overlap. This is often quite difficult. To use as an illustration the prayer language just noted, four of the terms occur in Philippians 4:6, "Stop worrying about anything, but in every case by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." Most likely Paul is deliberately stockpiling prayer terms synonymously in order to present prayer in its most comprehensive form rather than speaking of different aspects of prayer. In other situations, however, the language is more akin to step parallelism (see chap. seven on poetry), that is, the accent is more on the development of ideas. Gibson gives two examples of pseudo-synonymy, a false claim of synonymity (1981:199-206): (1) Lindar's assumption (1968:117-26) that terms for the law in Deuteronomy ("judgments," "statutes," "commandments") are synonymous; (2) Bultmann's statement that "see the Kingdom of God" and "enter the Kingdom of God" (Jn 3:3, 5) are synonymous. Neither assumption is proven, and the latter is based on theology rather than on language. It is likely that neither example is synonymous. Nida and Taber illustrate the method of overlapping relations by comparing repentance, remorse and conversion (1974:66)—see figure 3.4.

repentance	remorse	conversion
1. bad behavior	1. bad behavior	1. bad behavior
2. sorrow	2. sorrow	2. _____
3. change of behavior	3. _____	3. change of behavior

Fig. 3.4. Nida and Taber's Illustration of Overlapping Relations.

Silva calls the second type of synonym "contiguous relations," or "improper synonymy." These terms share some similarity of reference but could never be interchanged. For instance, the "upper garment" *(himation)* and the "under garment" *(chitōn)* obviously are quite similar but they could never be true synonyms. The same is true of "man" and

"woman," "boy" and "girl." The key question is whether the two could replace one another in a statement without changing the meaning.

The third category is labeled "inclusive relations" and is technically called "hyponymy," or "semantic domain." This relates to a hierarchical relationship between words (see Nida and Taber 1974: 68-70) from the generic to the specific; for instance, creature-animal-mammal-dog-terrier-"Bozo." Semantic domains are seldom used with accuracy; people frequently use "that dog" to refer to a specific pet. Since individuals do not use the components of a domain in the same way, it is critical to note the particular speaker's or author's use and not to read greater specificity into a term than is there. The context is the final arbiter. Further, substitution is not as simple in hyponymy. As Silva states, " 'Flower' can take the place of 'rose' in many sentences, . . . whereas 'rose' can take the place of 'flower' only in sentences where another type of flower is not meant" (p. 127).

Mistakes in this category are quite similar to Barr's warning against "illegitimate totality transfer" (noted above). Scholars are constantly reading the whole of a doctrine into isolated statements. This is especially true of theologically loaded passages like John 6:37-40, where many scholars see the full-fledged doctrine of predestination, or Acts 2:38, where others read a developed view of baptismal regeneration. We must remember that the biblical authors normally stressed one aspect of a larger dogma to fit individual situations. Doctrines must be based on an accumulation of all biblical passages on a topic. Individual terms or passages relate only to aspects of the larger whole.

Finally, let us note Nida's diagram of the three types of synonyms (from Silva)—see figure 3.5.

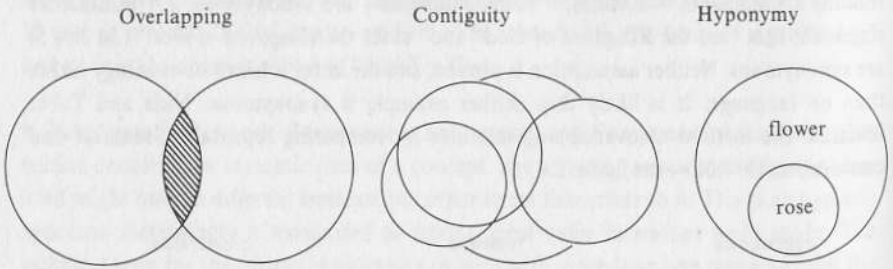


Figure 3.5. Nida's Diagram of Three Types of Synonyms.

Antonyms belong to the semantic category of opposition. This is also quite common in biblical language and is similar to the Hebrew poetic pattern of antithetical parallelism. Scholars are quite divided on subcategories of opposition, but we might note three types (combining Lyons 1977:1:322ff.; Thiselton 1977:90-92; Silva 1983:129-32). The strongest type is the binary opposite, a black-and-white structure in which the assertion of the one entails the denial of the other. To be single is not to be married, to receive is not to give. Paul establishes such a contrast in Romans 11:6 and Ephesians 2:8-9, *tē chariti* ("by grace") . . . *ouk ex ergōn* ("not of works"). The hymn of 1 Peter 3:18 has a similar twofold contrast: *thanatōtheis men sarki* ("died in the flesh"), *zōopoiētheis de pneumati* ("made alive in the spirit"). Another example is the so-called dualism of the Gospel of John, seen

in light-darkness, ascend-descend, above-below and so forth.

Less stark in its contrast is relative or gradable antonymy, a hierarchical opposition that compares but does not establish mutual exclusion. Such examples as tall-short, happy-sad, good-bad are comparative: "George is taller/happier/better than John." Thiselton mentions Paul's use of spirit-flesh, which at times is a binary opposite (Rom 8:9, 12) and at other times is not. "On the one hand, whilst the Corinthian believers are in some sense men of the Spirit (1 Cor 2:6-16; 12-14) in another sense Paul refuses to accept their inference that therefore they are 'not fleshly' (3:1-4)" (1977:92).

A third opposition is converse. For instance, "buy" is the converse of "sell." To say the one is to imply the other; if George buys from John, obviously John sells to George. German sometimes indicates this with the prefix *ver-*: "buy" is *kaufen*; "sell" is *verkaufen*. This can also be a matter of perspective; from one viewpoint you "go" to the house, from the other you "come" to the house.

The whole process of paradigmatic analysis is complex and those who have the time to compile such statistics would do well to chart the results by means of what Nida (1974) and others call "componential analysis." The purpose is to compare synonyms and antonyms by a chart of what semanticists call the "components of meaning," the various categories that define the content of the terms. We used such a chart above to compare repentance, remorse and conversion. Another frequently used example is found in figure 3.6.

	man	woman	boy	girl
human	+	+	+	+
adult	+	+	-	-
male	+	-	+	-

Figure 3.6. Chart of Components of Meaning.

The vertical columns relate to members of the semantic field, the horizontal categories are the components by which they are graded. However, this method has some basic problems (see Carson 1984:50-51; Silva 1983:134-35). Nida himself admits that the method is restricted primarily to referential or extralinguistic categories. This limits its use for it does not apply to structural meanings and demands an encyclopedic listing of categories. Further, it is open to subjective misuse, and indeed scholars using the method have come up with widely differing conclusions. In other words, it is not as "scientific" as it appears on paper, for it demands exhaustive coverage to be precise. Nevertheless, it is a helpful way to visualize the results of one's study and to use the tools with greater precision.

10. Ambiguity and Double Meaning. In studying both syntagmatic and paradigmatic aspects of words (see above), it is important to note the many types of vagueness, at times intended and at other times seemingly accidental, probably due to the fact that we do not have enough data to interpret the author's meaning. It is important to recognize this and not to read into the text greater precision than it has, a problem especially apt to occur in overexegeting synonymity or antonymity (overstating the similarities or differences). At all times the context must tell us the extent to which terms cohere or differ. As mentioned earlier, "context" is broader than the immediate context and refers also to the writer's emphases and style elsewhere. Earlier I alluded to the synonymous use of *agapan* and *philein* in John 21:15-17. What makes this interpretation conclusive is the congruence of the immediate context (the two words for "know," the two words for "tend" and "sheep" also used synonymously) and the wider context (John's tendency to use terms synonymously and the extensive number of times he does so with *agapan* and *philein* in his Gospel).

Ambiguity is the most difficult aspect of exegesis. Often the phenomenon occurs with *hapax legomena* or obscure, infrequent aspects of the semantic range. The interpreter is mystified because none of the usual meanings works or, even worse, more than one makes sense in the context. Ambiguity is the reason why many Old Testament scholars so frequently suggest emendations in the text, often without any textual evidence. On the surface the Masoretic Text does not make good sense in the context. In reality very few emendations are actually needed, and with new knowledge from the cognate languages the trend is away from such drastic and subjective measures. Nevertheless the problem of ambiguity is greater in the Old Testament.

The semanticist Martin Joos has formulated an important principle in such situations: when faced with a *hapax legomenon* or problem of multiple meanings, "The best meaning is the least meaning. . . . He [the lexicographer] defines it in such fashion as to make it contribute least to the total message derivable from the passage where it is at home" (1972:257; in Silva 1983:153-54). While this is expressed negatively it is meant positively: the meaning that is most likely is that one which causes the least change in the context. Silva applies this to the difficult use of *paschō* ("suffer") in Galatians 3:4, "Did you suffer so many things in vain?" Everywhere else in the New Testament the verb has its normal meaning, but a variant use, attested infrequently elsewhere, is "experience"; thus the text would read "Did you experience so much [that is, blessings from the Spirit] in vain?" The context in many ways favors the latter, for persecution is never mentioned in the epistle; however, the vastly predominant New Testament usage favors the former. Using Joos' principle, Silva argues that "the neutral sense 'experience' creates less disturbance in the passage than does 'suffer' because the former is more redundant—it is more supportive of, and more clearly supported by, the context" (p. 155). Clearly this principle is a valuable exegetical tool supportive of the structural approach already taken in this chapter.

A good example of deliberate ambiguity in Scripture is the oft-discussed phenomenon of "double meaning." These expressions are notoriously difficult to interpret, for the contextual framework itself is often ambiguous. The famous word-play on wind/spirit in Genesis 1:2 is a fairly simple example, but others are not so easy. The Gospel of John is justly famed for its widespread use of double meaning. Note for instance *anōthen gennēthēnai,* "born from above/again" in John 3:3, 7; *hydōr zōn,* "living/flowing water" in 4:10-11; and *hypsōthō,* "lifted up (to the cross/the Father)" in 12:32. However, should we read double meaning into the interchange between Jesus and the disciples in 1:38-39, specifically in *menō,* which occurs three times in these verses and may mean "live" on the physical plane but "remain" on the spiritual plane? The theological use of the term (which occurs forty times in the Gospel and twenty-seven times in the Johannine Epistles but only twelve times total in the Synoptics) in John, where it binds together Father-Son-believer in mutual cohabitation (compare 15:4-10), would favor the possibility, but the context itself gives no actual hint of such. However, John's preference for dramatic development along salvific lines (compare 1:35-51 with 3:1-15; 4:1-42; 9:1-34) may favor a soteriological double meaning. On the whole, it is a difficult decision, but I cautiously do find double meaning in 1:38-39.

Conclusion: A Methodology for Lexical Study

When scholars write about method, they too easily climb their ivory towers and speak only to each other. I don't wish to do this; therefore, at the outset I want to make it clear that the methodology will be developed on several levels. At the top level, of course, is the scholar who deals with the primary evidence, takes nothing for granted and works intensively, dealing with every occurrence of the term in order to derive its range of meaning and its particular meaning in the context. However, few readers of this book will be working on such a level, which would require as much as several weeks of steady research for key terms. Most of us will be working on a much lower level. The busy pastor cannot spend more than an hour on any individual word-study and for the most part will be forced to spend less time than that. The average layperson, as well as the pastor or missionary, will certainly depend upon the secondary tools (commentaries, word-study books and the like) and will want to be aware of the ensuing methodology even though they will hardly ever pursue these various steps.

Nevertheless, the knowledge of a proper methodology is critical because the student of the Word will want to note whether or not the commentator has indeed done a proper word study or only a cursory background study before coming to any conclusions. It is crucial to understand at all levels of Bible study how to determine the semantic range of a word and to narrow that range down to the probable meaning of that particular term in an individual context. Therefore, those working with the secondary tools can note whether or not the commentator has done his homework; if not, they can use lexicons and other word-study books to delineate the true meaning of the word in that context. Above all, the methodology that follows will provide a perspective for understanding how one determines word meaning in individual cases and therefore will be a valuable corrective to a misuse of words in sermons and Bible studies.

1. *Determine the key words in the context.* As we work at the structure of the passage (see chap. one above) we should note those terms which stand out in the context as demanding extra study. Naturally, it is not always simple to discover which words deserve

extra work. Most of us would make those decisions on the basis of personal preference; Adler and Van Doren state that "the most important words are those that give you trouble" (1972:102). To an extent this is true. We would wish to study more deeply those aspects that we ourselves do not quite perceive. However, in studying Scripture we certainly want to probe more deeply and choose the significant words in the passage. Fee gives us four valuable steps in isolating the key words (1983:84-85):

a. Note those terms in the context which are "theologically loaded." If you see terms that state basic New Testament truths (such as "grace," "Lord" or "salvation"), these terms will certainly deserve extra study. It is quite common to read too much meaning into them in individual context on the basis of their use elsewhere. Therefore, it is particularly important to locate precisely the way they are used in the individual context.

b. Note those terms which are crucial to the meaning of the passage but may be ambiguous in their context. Fee notes the use of "virgins" in 1 Corinthians 7:25-38 and of "vessel" in 1 Thessalonians 4:4 as examples. Many more could be mentioned. When a term is critical to the meaning of a passage but is unclear, the passage will hinge upon your interpretation. Therefore, that particular term will become an important clue to the meaning of the whole, and must be studied more deeply.

c. Those words which are repeated in a context or become themes within the paragraph must be investigated. A good example would be the use of "rejoice" in Philippians 1:18. In the first half of the verse Paul uses "because of this I rejoice" to conclude the paragraph. The last portion of the verse, "Yes and I will continue to rejoice," begins the new paragraph of verses 19-26. Paul's emphasis upon rejoicing in the midst of the two trials in the succeeding paragraphs makes it worthy of special attention. Another example where "joy" becomes the key theme for the context would be James 1:2-4. In both cases the concept of joy demands extra study.

d. We must look for those terms which may be more critical to the context than might seem to be at first glance. Naturally, this can be done only after more detailed research. However, we must always be aware that our research will uncover other terms that will be far more worthy of research than we had at first suspected. Fee notes the use of *ataktos* in 2 Thessalonians 3:6, which might mean "lazy" in a passive sense or "disorderly" in an active sense. Also in this category are words used in a semitechnical sense but not appearing to be so at first. For instance, at first glance one might pass across "faith" in Ephesians 4:13 when reading "unity in the faith." However, "faith" is probably used in a semitechnical sense for the Christian faith and is critical for understanding the whole statement. During detailed exegesis these types of things will need to be uncovered and probed.

2. *Study carefully the context in which the word occurs.* It is very important to keep the context firmly in mind at every stage because the time-consuming process of gathering the semantic range causes one to become so immersed in the word itself that illegitimate totality transfer becomes quite easy. It is difficult to spend a great amount of time gathering material and then use it only briefly in the context. In order to control this tendency, context must at all times be uppermost in the process of data gathering. Note how the word fits into the total statement of the passage and try to elucidate the influence of the surrounding terms upon it.

3. *Determine the semantic range of the term.* As I have already argued, this means the synchronic more than the diachronic dimension of meaning. That is, the student will want to investigate how the word was used at the time of writing rather than how the word had developed in earlier times. This does not mean that etymology has no value, for if the context indicates, one might discover that a past meaning was consciously in the mind of the author at the time of writing. This occurs especially with an allusion to an Old Testament passage or when the word is "transparent" and still carries its past meaning. Therefore, etymology has limited value but on occasion can add a great deal to the context. As we gather the various uses of the word we will want to collate and organize the meanings into related sets, always keeping in mind the various contexts in which the word was used. This is important because we will want to select that meaning which is used in a context similar to the passage we are studying. We must try to be as complete as possible in gathering the semantic range because even an obsolete or rare meaning of a term is a possibility for the use of that term in the biblical context. It is also critical to remember that the use of the term in the New Testament is as important as its use in parallel literature. Many New Testament words had a semitechnical force that derived its meaning from the life of the early church as much as from Hellenistic usage. In those cases we must at all times be aware of the Christian meaning inherent in terms like "love" or "faith."

4. *Note whether the word is used primarily in terms of sense or reference.* This combines the previous categories of context and semantic range. Silva makes this the first step, stating that a semitechnical or referential term is not susceptible to structural analysis but rather needs a conceptual approach similar to that of TDNT (1983:176). While this is true, few words in the New Testament are used so technically that the semantic range becomes an invalid tool. I believe that a conceptual approach must still consider the semantic range and that the latter is essential to word meaning in terms of both sense and reference. Therefore, this will determine *how* one uses the semantic range rather than whether or not one utilizes it.

5. *If the term is referential, study it conceptually.* This will involve the further collection of synonyms and antonyms in order to derive the theological deep structure underneath the use of the particular term. Of course, we must avoid reading more into the term than the context will allow but this is controlled by the previous decision as to the extent to which the word is used referentially in the context. The theological background behind the word becomes an important factor in determining the overall message of the passage, and a referential term is elevated automatically to a position of extreme importance in the context. Therefore, we must be extremely careful in determining exactly the extent to which the technical or theological sense is being stressed. The methodology of biblical theology will be paramount in this approach (see chap. thirteen) and will guide the student in his or her study. Above all, we must consider the theology of the individual book and then of the writer before broadening it to the New Testament as a whole. Here we must recognize the danger of misusing parallels (see above), for scholars frequently read more into the passage than is warranted.

6. *If the word is used in terms of sense, study it structurally in its environment.* We

will utilize the paradigmatic dimension here differently than we would for a referential term. In this case we will want to study synonyms and antonyms in order to determine the exact parameters for the use of the term that the author actually chose. Again, we must proceed with extreme caution, for similarity and opposition to related terms can be subjectively misused to read more into the passage than the context will allow. Therefore, the syntagmatic or contextual investigation will at all times have priority over the paradigmatic.

7. *Rework the semantic range in terms of the writer's proclivity and immediate context.* On the basis of related context choose that aspect from the semantic range which most closely parallels the use of the term in the passage you are studying. Note the connotative aspect, whether the term is used in terms of object, event, abstract meaning or relationship. This will help you to see dynamically exactly how the term relates to its context and will enable you to choose more precisely the set of meanings from the semantic range that most closely parallels its use in the passage. Above all, as Mickelsen cautions, be aware at all times of the tendency on the part of both you and your listeners or readers to read modern meanings into ancient meanings (1963:128-29). It is the author's intended meaning that is paramount at this stage. We cannot transform the context crossculturally until we have determined first of all its meaning in its original context. This becomes the basis for the dynamic transference of that meaning into our modern context. Good expository preaching will always blend what it meant with what it means and will seek to unite the hearer with the message of God in the text.

4 Syntax

THE SEMANTIC RANGE OF THE TERM *SYNTAX* HAS BOTH A NARROW AND A BROAD CONNOtation. In its narrow sense it refers to the relationship between the words of a sentence and is virtually equivalent to grammar. Some grammars (such as Williams) include "syntax" in their title. In its broad sense syntax refers to all the interrelationships within the sentence as a means of determining the meaning of the unit as a whole. In this broader sense, syntax includes compositional patterns, grammar and semantics, and so forms a valid conclusion to the previous three chapters.

I am using syntax in this broader sense and therefore want to describe in this chapter how these three aspects of exegesis (structure, grammar, lexical study) can be used together rather than separately. Rhetorical patterns deal with the relationship between sentence units and so provide the foundation for syntactical study. Grammar is concerned with the relationship between individual terms and phrases and therefore provides the second stage of syntactical analysis. Semantics investigates the semotactic relationships between the meanings of the terms in the larger surface structure and thus provides the final building block of syntactical analysis. A common thread in all of these aspects of exegesis has been structure. In the study of compositional techniques I noted the fact that they form a pattern that weaves together the larger whole of the paragraph. Individual grammatical decisions likewise are based upon the structural development of the whole statement. Finally, we took a structural approach to semantics, noting that words have meaning only as part of the larger context.[1]

Therefore, syntax is structural at the core. None of the elements of the surface structure dare become an end in itself. We are not looking primarily for chiasm or climax. We are not searching only for subjective genitives or circumstantial participles. We do not wish to center upon word studies of individual terms as if the meaning of the whole paragraph could be narrowed down to a particular key term. Rather we want to elucidate the thought development and meaning of the whole statement. In communication none of us ever isolates words or particular statements as the meaning of the whole. We seldom dwell upon one portion of a sentence or paragraph and neglect the rest. Rather we intend for meaning to be communicated primarily by the entire utterance taken as a whole.

Recent investigation into communication theory has dealt with the problem of infor-