

THE TWELVE VISIONS OF JOHN: ANOTHER ATTEMPT AT STRUCTURING THE BOOK OF REVELATION

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Abstract: *No other NT writing endures as many attempts to outline its structure as does Revelation. Progress, however, has been made over the past several years toward scholarly agreement in marking off the major sections of Revelation. This paper appends more evidence for several intratextual markers. The result will demonstrate that John produced twelve visions. The paper updates the latest studies on external and internal approaches for structuring the Apocalypse. This is followed by a summary of the sequential and recapitulation methodologies. A progressive recapitulation approach supports the remainder of the paper. The study discusses five intratextual markers that are located at or near the conclusion of twelve individual visions. These markers signal not only the close of the individual vision, but provide a picture of the end of history as well. Finally, an outline of the twelve visions will be supplied.*

Key words: *visions of Revelation, structure, literary markers, intertextuality, progressive recapitulation*

No other NT writing has endured as many attempts to outline its structure as has the book of Revelation. There is no consensus, and there are no illusions that the present study will solve one of the most complex issues in biblical studies. Progress, however, has been made over the past several years toward scholarly agreement in marking off the major sections of Revelation. My contribution to the discussion is to extend the evidence on intratextual markers and thereby demonstrate that John produced twelve visions.

I. THE PROBLEM

That Revelation comprises a single document is widely accepted. Those who find multiple sources and later redactors remain in the minority.¹ John's visionary document is intricately woven and divided into numerous individual visions. But how many total visions are there? And what are the literary markers for a vision?

Most interpreters agree on major divisions of Revelation's structure. There is a prologue (1:1–8) and an epilogue (22:6–21). There is acceptance on the parameters of the inaugural vision and seven letters (1:9–3:22). Likewise, the boundary markers for the throne room vision are recognized (4:1–5:14). But that is all. The

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¹ For a recent discussion on the unity of Revelation's composition, see Ian Paul, "Source, Structure, and Composition in the Book of Revelation," in *The Book of Revelation: Currents in British Research on the Apocalypse* (ed. Garrick V. Allen, Ian Paul, and Simon P. Woodman; WUNT 2/411; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 41–54.

seals, trumpets, and bowls (6:1–16:21), although marked by a series of seven each, experience disagreement on exactly where each series begins and/or ends. Many scholars acknowledge three interludes within this major division of chapters 6–16. The first (7:1–17) and second (10:1–11:13) experience consensus as marked-off sections. Disagreement exists, however, on the conclusion of the third interlude. Most select the boundaries as 12:1–14:20, but several interpreters conclude the third interlude at 15:4 (and some at 15:5 or 15:8). Divergence continues for chapters 17–22. The fall of Babylon has general agreement for chapters 17–18, the rider on the white horse for chapter 19, the millennium and great white throne for chapter 20, and the new heaven and new earth for chapters 21–22. But in each case, there is dispute on the beginnings and/or conclusions for these sections. The fall of Babylon begins at 17:1 but where does it conclude (18:24; 19:5; 19:10; 19:21)? The rider on the white horse concludes at 19:21, but where does it begin (19:1; 19:6; 19:11)? Where does the millennial vision of chapter 20 end (20:15 or 21:8)? Does the new heaven and new earth vision begin at 21:1 or 21:9? Does it conclude at 22:5 or 22:9?²

This study offers evidence to answer these questions and to solidify the structure of Revelation. External and internal approaches are briefly analyzed for the latest updates and insights. After selecting a methodology, several images will be examined that help clarify John's structure into twelve visions.

II. EXTERNAL APPROACHES

Several resources discuss in depth what this section will abbreviate.³ Numerous interpreters utilize external approaches to structure Revelation.⁴

1. *Chiastic structure.* Following Nils Lund's seminal work in 1942,⁵ Bible students discovered chiastic structures in all the NT. In the 1970s and 1980s, the book of Revelation was accented by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Kenneth A. Strand, and John W. Welch.⁶ Recent representatives who pursue macro-structural chiasm

² G. K. Beale (*The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* [NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 109) lists nine separate proposals for outlining chapters 17–22.

³ David E. Aune, *Revelation* (WBC 52; 3 vols.; Dallas: Word, 1997–1998), 1:xcv–cv; Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 1–37; Beale, *Revelation*, 108–51; J. Ramsey Michaels, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation* (Guides to NT Exegesis 7; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 51–71; Pierre Prigent, *Commentary on the Apocalypse of St. John* (trans. Wendy Pradels; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 84–103; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Composition and Structure of the Book of Revelation," *CBQ* 39 (1977): 344–66; Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 5–55.

⁴ W. R. Kempson ("The Theology of Revelation" [Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1982], 45–95) conveniently divides the approaches into external and internal.

⁵ Nils W. Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1942).

⁶ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 175–76; Kenneth A. Strand, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation* (2nd ed.; Naples, FL: Ann Arbor, 1979), 44, 47; John W. Welch, ed., *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1981).

in Revelation include Victor M. Wilson, Michele V. Lee, and Ranko Stefanovic.⁷ Each scholar developed unique proposals, but all claimed that Revelation was one giant chiasm. However, David deSilva effectively critiques chiasm in Revelation at the macro-structural level. He charges that such outlines are shaped by selective summary statements, selective reading of key terms, and manipulation of formal markers.⁸ That micro-chiastic patterns are found within Revelation is acceptable.⁹ That a macro-chiastic structure exists remains questionable.

2. *Dramatic play structure.* This approach declares Revelation to be patterned after the Greek theater. This was indeed recognized by some as a backdrop, but John Wick Bowman and James Blevins promoted Greek drama wholeheartedly as the structural key for all of Revelation.¹⁰ Michael Wilcock was the first to produce a full commentary, dividing Revelation into eight scenes.¹¹ Recently, Wilson unveiled seven acts with seven scenes for each act.¹² Stephen Smalley structures his major exegetical commentary into two acts with seven total scenes. He points to elements such as the involvement of the audience, the progress of the narrative in spiral, not linear terms, intervals, and the use of colors for support.¹³ The most recent advocate is Sylvie T. Raquel who also follows seven acts but variously numbered scenes.¹⁴ The variable passage markers and numbers of scenes and acts from individual interpreters lessen the viability that John was using a dramatic structure.

3. *Liturgical structure.* The presence of hymns, doxologies, and beatitudes has led many to view Revelation as liturgically crafted. Supporters suggest that John

⁷ Victor M. Wilson, *Divine Symmetries: The Art of Biblical Rhetoric* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997); Michele V. Lee, "A Call to Martyrdom: Function as Method and Message in Revelation," *NovT* 40 (1998): 164–94; Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (2nd ed.; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2009), 37.

⁸ David A. deSilva, "X Marks the Spot? A Critique of the Use of Chiasmus in Macro-Structural Analyses of Revelation," *JSNT* 30 (2008): 343–71.

⁹ For example, Craig Koester offers a broad chiasm for chapters 12–20 in *Revelation* (AB 38A; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 114. See also Antoninus King Wai Siew, *The War between the Two Beasts and the Two Witnesses: A Chiastic Reading of Revelation 11:1–14:5* (LNTS 283; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2005). Beale (*Revelation*, 131) actually offers his macro-structural outline but does not accent it in his commentary.

¹⁰ John Wick Bowman, *The First Christian Drama* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1955) and "Revelation," *IDB* 4:58–71; James L. Blevins, *Revelation as Drama* (Nashville: Broadman, 1984). See Kempson ("Theology of Revelation," 51–62) for a critique of these proposals.

¹¹ Michael Wilcock, *I Saw Heaven Opened: The Message of Revelation* (BST; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 15–18.

¹² Wilson's fuller approach places him more under chiastic arrangements above. It is also possible to place David Barr under this rubric. In *Tales of the End: A Narrative Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 1998), Barr presents the Apocalypse as a story in three acts (1:1–3:22; 4:1–11:18; 11:19–22:21).

¹³ Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 20–22.

¹⁴ Sylvie T. Raquel, "Revelation as Drama: A Staging of the Apocalypse," in *Essays on Revelation: Appropriating Yesterday's Apocalypse in Today's World* (ed. Gerald L. Stevens; Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 156–74.

borrowed or produced these materials for use in worship services.¹⁵ Some posit that Revelation is structured on the Jerusalem temple liturgy. The first part of Revelation is based on the daily sanctuary service (*tamid*) and the second half of Revelation on the yearly service (Yom Kippur).¹⁶ M. D. Goulder suggested Revelation be structured by the annual cycle of feasts—Passover (chap. 1), Pentecost (chaps. 4–5), Feast of Trumpets (chaps. 8–9), Day of Atonement (chaps. 12–22), and Tabernacles (chaps. 14–20).¹⁷ Massey Shepherd proposed a Christian liturgy based on the Paschal Vigil.¹⁸ Jose Adriano Filho stressed the four “I was in the Spirit” markers and the numerous hymns to promote Revelation as a liturgical document.¹⁹ These possibilities are intriguing. The Jewish feast cycle in particular brings to mind how John structured his Gospel in chapters 5–10.²⁰ Nevertheless, the theory that Revelation is a liturgical document intended for worship services or based upon the annual feasts has not gained acceptance. Schüssler Fiorenza observes, “Yet even a superficial comparison of a ritual book and of Revelation indicates that all these proposals force a liturgical pattern on the text.”²¹ John’s structural placement of hymns, however, holds significance, and will be discussed below.

4. Ekphrastic *structure*. A few interpreters utilize rhetorical analysis to help explain the structure of Revelation. *Ekphrasis* is the rhetorical description of a work of art. David Aune, for instance, argued that Revelation 17 is an *ekphrasis* of the *Dea Roma* coin.²² Others agree on the possible allusion to the *Dea Roma* coin but counter that it is “merely one of the many possible backgrounds for the harlot”²³ and “does not greatly illuminate the setting and composition ... of such a short passage.”²⁴ Marvin Pate, however, proposes that *ekphrasis* not only guides Revelation 17 but is determinative of its larger structure. Pate calls *ekphrasis* “the dominant

¹⁵ John J. O’Rourke (“The Hymns of the Apocalypse,” *CBQ* 30 [1968]: 399–409) stated that John borrowed from preexisting liturgical sources.

¹⁶ Kenneth A. Strand, “The Eight Basic Visions in the Book of Revelation,” *AUSS* 25 (1987): 107–21; Jon Paulien, “The Role of the Hebrew Cultus, Sanctuary, and Temple in the Plot and Structure of the Book of Revelation,” *AUSS* 33 (1995): 247–55.

¹⁷ M. D. Goulder, “The Apocalypse as an Annual Cycle of Prophecies,” *NTS* 27 (1981): 342–67.

¹⁸ Massey H. Shepherd, *The Paschal Liturgy and the Apocalypse* (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1960), 77–84.

¹⁹ Jose Adriano Filho, “The Apocalypse of John as an Account of a Visionary Experience: Notes on the Book’s Structure,” *JSNT* 25 (2002): 213–34.

²⁰ Following Leviticus 23, the Gospel of John’s chapters move from Sabbath (5) to Passover (6) to Tabernacles (7–9) and ultimately, the Feast of Dedication (10). See, e.g., Andreas J. Köstenberger, *A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters* (Biblical Theology of the NT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 413–22; Gerry Wheaton, *The Role of Jewish Feasts in John’s Gospel* (SNTSMS 62; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

²¹ Schüssler Fiorenza, “Composition,” 353. Some interpreters (e.g. Stefanovic, Strand, Wendland) combine aspects of chiasm, liturgical patterns, drama, and septenary patterns.

²² Aune, *Revelation*, 3:919–28. He provides an illustration of the coin on p. 920. The goddess Roma reclines on the seven hills. Her foot stretches over the Tiber River and her hand holds a sword.

²³ Beale, *Revelation*, 848.

²⁴ Smalley, *Revelation to John*, 426. Koester (*Revelation*, 685–86) suggests the coin is alluded to simply for satire.

subgenre” in Revelation.²⁵ He asserts that Revelation 4–19 is an *ekphrasis* of the Arch of Titus. Pate parallels Revelation’s structure with the Arch of Titus by depicting three parts of a Roman triumph: the pre-parade (chaps. 4–5), the procession (chaps. 6–18), and the sacrifice and feast (chap. 19).²⁶ Thus, for Pate, *ekphrasis* serves as the major external factor for structuring Revelation.

5. *Intertextual structure.* Intertextuality is the recognition that John utilized previous biblical books in producing his own composition. John saturates his work with OT language, imagery, and themes without direct citation. Some OT books are used extensively by John. Recent discussions include his use of Exodus, Zechariah, and Isaiah.²⁷ But not only does John allude to the OT, he actually makes use of the structure of select books. Daniel and Ezekiel in particular are candidates for fuller intentional structuring. Gregory Beale suggests that Daniel influences the whole structure of Revelation. John’s “allusions to Dan. 2:28–29 punctuate the book at major divisional transitions (1:1; 1:19; 4:1; 22:6). Furthermore, the five apocalyptic visions in Daniel (chs. 2, 7, 8, 9, 10–12) cover the same time of the eschatological future, which may be the prototypical structure followed by Revelation in some of its purported synchronously parallel sections.”²⁸

But it is Ezekiel that appears to be the deliberate choice of John for his overall structure. Several scholars note how John models Ezekiel’s structure.²⁹ Beate Kowalski delivers the most recent and convincing analysis. She discovers that seven major sections of Ezekiel have structural parallels in the Apocalypse. Kowalski

²⁵ C. Marvin Pate, *Interpreting Revelation and Other Apocalyptic Literature: An Exegetical Handbook* (Handbooks for NT Exegesis; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2016), 44.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 153–58. Robyn J. Whitaker (*Ekphrasis, Vision, and Persuasion in the Book of Revelation* [WUNT 2/410; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015]) recognizes *ekphrasis* in Revelation 4–5.

²⁷ J. S. Casey, “Exodus Typology in the Book of Revelation” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1981); B. A. Isbell, “The Past Is Yet to Come: Exodus Typology in the Apocalypse” (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013); R. R. Rogers, “An Exegetical Analysis of John’s Use of Zechariah in the Book of Revelation: The Impact and Transformation of Zechariah’s Text and the Themes in the Apocalypse” (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002); and Jan Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation: Visionary Antecedents and Their Development* (JSNTSS 93; New York: Bloomsbury, 1994).

²⁸ Beale, *Revelation*, 87, 135–36. See Beale’s *The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984). In addition, John A. McLean (*The Seventieth Week of Daniel 9:27 as a Literary Key for Understanding the Structure of the Apocalypse of John* [Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1996]) argues that Revelation 4–19 is structured by the framework found in the seventieth week of Dan 9:24–27.

²⁹ Albert Vanhoye, “L’utilisation du livre d’Ezechiel dans l’Apocalypse,” *Bib* 43 (1962): 436–76; Goulder, “Apocalypses as an Annual Cycle,” 343–49; Steve Moyise, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation* (Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 1995), 64–83; F. D. Mazzaferri, *The Genre of the Book of Revelation from a Source-Critical Perspective* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1989), 365; J. M. Vogelgesang, “The Interpretation of Ezekiel in the Book of Revelation” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1985), 66–71; Jean-Pierre Ruiz, *Ezekiel in the Apocalypse: The Transformation of Prophetic Language in Revelation 16:17–19:10* (Europäische Hochschulschriften 23/376; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1989), 1–180; and Külli Tõniste, *The Ending of the Canon: A Canonical and Intertextual Reading of Revelation 21–22* (LNTS 526; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 36–39, 94–108.

advances that John basically adapts Ezekiel 1–3, 8–11, 16, 23–27, and 37–48 for his own outline. Thus, John develops Ezekiel in light of the Christ event.³⁰

One more intertextual link provides insights on structuring the Apocalypse. Alan Bandy proposes a full-fledged outline of Revelation based on prophetic lawsuit oracles. Briefly, Bandy's threefold pattern of judgment with their corresponding passages in Revelation are: oracles against Judah and Jerusalem (Isaiah 1–12; Jeremiah [LXX] 1; 1–25; 13; Ezekiel 1–24; Rev 1:9–3:22); oracles against nations (Isaiah 13–27; Jeremiah [LXX] 25; 14–32; 38; Ezekiel 25–32; Rev 4:1–16:21; 17:1–21:8); and promises of salvation/vindication (Isaiah 28–35; Jeremiah [LXX] 33–42; Ezekiel 33–48; Rev 21:9–22:5).³¹

6. *Conclusion.* The external approaches for structuring Revelation offer a mixed bag. The dramatic, liturgical, and *ekphrastic* structures are not convincing. A full chiasmic structure is also unpersuasive. That limited examples of chiasm are present is more agreeable yet still open to individual interpretation. However, John's use of Daniel, Ezekiel, and the prophetic lawsuit speeches to compose his work are intriguing and worthwhile for modern interpreters to consider as they study Revelation.

III. INTERNAL APPROACHES

Many interpreters stress internal approaches for structuring Revelation. They recognize that John provides key literary features that aid in composing the book. The structure therefore revolves around literary indicators—morphemes, words, phrases, and sentences that introduce, conclude, or in some fashion distinguish a section of text.

1. *Septenary pattern.* Because so many sevens permeate Revelation, many interpreters organize the entire book into a septenary pattern. This is easily done for seven letters, seals, trumpets, and bowls, but what about the large portions without numbering indicators? Such scholars end up discovering seven unnumbered sections in chapters 12–14.³² To these chapters others discern an additional seven sections for either 17:1–19:10,³³ 17:1–20:15,³⁴ 19:11–20:15,³⁵ 19:11–21:8,³⁶ 19:11–

³⁰ Beate Kowalski, *Die Rezeption des Propheten Ezechiel in der Offenbarung des Johannes* (SBB 52; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2004).

³¹ Alan S. Bandy, "The Layers of the Apocalypse: An Integrative Approach to Revelation's Macro-structure," *JSNT* 31 (2009): 485–87; and "The Prophetic Lawsuit in the Book of Revelation: An Analysis of the Lawsuit Motif in the Book of Revelation with Reference to the Use of the Old Testament" (Ph.D. diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007), 87–112. Bandy and Töniste (*Ending of the Canon*, 51–80) provide insightful intratextual and thematic approaches to Revelation's structure.

³² Alan F. Johnson, *Revelation* (EBC; rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 592; Leon Morris, *The Book of Revelation* (INTC; 2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 44. Frederick J. Murphy (*Fallen Is Babylon: The Revelation to John* [NT in Context; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998], 50) extends the unnumbered section to 15:4. Simon J. Kistemaker (*Exposition of the Book of Revelation* [NT Commentary; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001], 65–70) shies away from finding unnumbered sevens, but similar to dramatic play structure he finds a total of seven visions.

³³ Vern S. Poythress, *The Returning King: A Guide to the Book of Revelation* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2000), 61.

³⁴ Ronald L. Farmer, *Revelation* (Chalice Commentaries for Today; St. Louis: Chalice, 2005), 110.

22:11,³⁷ or 21:1–22:5.³⁸ Ernst Wendland offers a meticulous recent effort in achieving sevens. He proposes seven sections with seven subsections beneath each one. In addition to the numbered sevens, he includes seven “sign” visions (12:1–15:8), seven visionary sayings (17:1–19:10), and seven sights (19:11–20:15).³⁹ No one, however, agrees on these unnumbered sevens. G. B. Caird surmised that such efforts to force a seven into the structure “founders on a reef of difficulties. . . . If we attempt to do what John himself has so explicitly refrained from doing and force these chapters into a sevenfold scheme, we soon find that this can be done only at the cost of extreme artificiality.”⁴⁰

2. 1:19. This verse serves not only as a potential structural key but an interpretive key as well. Grant Osborne calls it “a well-known *crux interpretum*.”⁴¹ John appears to reveal a tripartite structure for Revelation: “Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later” (1:19, NIV). Many Bible students appeal to this verse as a major structural marker for outlining the book’s past (1:9–20), present (2:1–3:22), and future (4:1–22:5).⁴² Other interpreters, however, remark that such a division does not take into account that the letters to the churches speak of eschatological warnings and promises of the future or that chapters 4–22 unveil past, present, and future features. All three clauses of 1:19 relate to the past, present, and future of the entire book. The verse reflects a common apocalyptic formula, similar to the one “who is, and who was, and who is to come” (1:4).⁴³ Therefore, no temporal or structural distinctions should be forced upon 1:19, especially with so many other acceptable literary indicators available.

³⁵ Felise Tavo, “The Structure of the Apocalypse: Re-Examining a Perennial Problem,” *NorT* 47 (2005): 59–62.

³⁶ Austin M. Farrer, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), 19–23; Murphy, *Fallen Is Babylon*, 50; Yarbrow Collins, *Combat Myth*, 13–14.

³⁷ Ian Boxall, *The Revelation of St. John* (BNTC 19; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 18.

³⁸ Merrill C. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 38. Supporters of the dramatic structure discussed above also find sevens woven throughout Revelation. In addition, Töniste (*Ending of the Canon*, 57) follows a sevenfold structure that includes the prologue and epilogue.

³⁹ Ernst R. Wendland, “The Hermeneutical Significance of Literary Structure in Revelation,” *Neot* 48 (2014): 447–76. Wendland notes several chiasmic arrangements as well. An earlier offshoot of this is J. M. Ford’s *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 38; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 46–50. She opted for six series of sixes, and then explained that a Christian editor added the seventh septet.

⁴⁰ G. B. Caird, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine* (HNTC; 2nd ed.; New York: Harper & Row, 1984), 105.

⁴¹ Grant Osborne, *Revelation* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 97.

⁴² George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 34; Robert Thomas, *Revelation* (2 vols.; Chicago: Moody, 1992, 1995), 1:115; John Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago: Moody, 1989), 47–49; Paige Patterson, *Revelation* (NAC 39; Nashville: B&H, 2012), 32–34.

⁴³ So Aune, *Revelation*, 1:105; Koester, *Revelation*, 254–55; Murphy, *Fallen Is Babylon*, 95; Osborne, *Revelation*, 97; Smalley, *Revelation to John*, 56–57. See also Beale, *Revelation*, 152–70; Christopher R. Smith, “Revelation 1:19: An Eschatologically Escalated Prophetic Convention,” *JETS* 33 (1990): 461–66; J. Ramsey Michaels, “Revelation 1:19 and the Narrative Voices of the Apocalypse,” *NTS* 37 (1991): 604–20.

3. *"In the Spirit."* Many interpreters agree that "in the Spirit" (ἐν πνεύματι) comprises a major structural marker for Revelation (1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10). Several commentators divide John's visions into four major segments based on this marker (1:9–3:22; 4:1–16:21; 17:1–21:8; 21:9–22:9).⁴⁴ These markers are enhanced by noting their different locations. John shifts the setting from Patmos to heaven to the wilderness to a high mountain. Closely linked to the "in the Spirit" marker is the invitation for John to "come and see" (4:1; 17:1; 21:9). G. Eldon Ladd chose this marker to structure Revelation but it is essentially the same as "in the Spirit."⁴⁵ Likewise, the phrase "I will show you" (δείξω σοι) is found at 4:1; 17:1; 21:9.

This marker is significant. It confirms the beginning and the end of major sections. However, there are certainly more than four visions in Revelation. Two of the four "in the Spirit" sections are especially long (4:1–16:21; 17:1–21:8). To place the visions of the seals, trumpets, bowls, and the three interludes under the umbrella of one visionary section lessens the impact for those visions to stand on their own. The proposal suggested below lists seven visions within the 4:1–16:21 section, and three visions within the 17:1–21:8 section.

There are others who are unwilling to limit John to only four major vision markers. Richard Bauckham relegates the phrase to a supporting role. He understands the first reference to "in the Spirit" (1:10) as an indicator for the entire visionary experience of John. The final three mentions of "in the Spirit" serve as major transitions.⁴⁶ Craig Koester calls the phrase a major subpoint for structure. Many might echo Koester's conclusion: "Since *en pneumati* does not occur in the middle section of Revelation, I see it in a key supportive role, rather than as the dominant structural marker."⁴⁷

4. *"And I saw."* Another discourse marker is "and I saw" (καὶ εἶδον), found thirty-five times in Revelation. This phrase may underscore the visionary aspect and therefore relate what is coming next (e.g. 6:2, 5, 8, 12). Most often, however, it functions as a literary indicator to introduce a new vision or new scene or action within a vision (e.g. 5:1; 6:1; 7:2; 8:2; 9:1; 10:1; 13:1, 11; 14:1, 6, 14; 15:1, 2, 5; 19:11; 20:1; 21:1). A closely linked phrase is "and behold" or "look" (καὶ ἰδοὺ). The twenty-six occurrences of this Greek particle are often not translated in modern versions due to stylistic reasons.⁴⁸ It is simply a marker of semantic emphasis in direct

⁴⁴ Filho, "Apocalypse of John," 215; Ronald Herms, *An Apocalypse for the Church and for the World* (BZNW 143; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 147–154; Ladd, *Revelation*, 14–17; Mazzaferri, *Genre of Revelation*, 338–43; J. Ramsey Michaels, *Revelation* (IVPNTC; Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997), 26–32; Christopher R. Smith, "The Structure of the Book of Revelation in Light of Apocalyptic Literary Conventions" *NovT* 36 (1994): 373–93; John Christopher Thomas and Frank Macchia, *Revelation* (Two Horizons NT Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 2–5; Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation*, 32–33; Tōniste, *Ending of the Canon*, 44; and Robby Waddell, *The Spirit of the Book of Revelation* (Blandford Forum, UK: Deo, 2006), 138–50.

⁴⁵ Ladd, *Revelation*, 14.

⁴⁶ Bauckham, *Climax*, 3–4.

⁴⁷ Craig R. Koester, "Continuing the Dialogue on Interpretation of Revelation: Responses and Reflections," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 24 (2015): 40. Prigent (*Apocalypse of John*, 96) concurs: "Is the fact that the words 'in spirit' recur 4 times in the 22 chapters of a prophecy, truly a determining one?"

⁴⁸ An exception is the NASB which translates ἰδοὺ as "behold" each time.

speech,⁴⁹ and validates what is coming with assurance and certainty.⁵⁰ But when *ἰδοῦ* is combined with *καὶ εἶδον*, it deserves attention as a potential structural marker (4:1; 6:2, 5, 8; 7:9; 14:1, 14; 19:11).

5. “*After these things.*” Another vital marker is “after these things” (*μετὰ ταῦτα*). Long ago R. H. Charles recognized that these words were utilized by other apocalypses as a literary marker that often separates or divides up vision episodes, including Daniel, 1 Enoch, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, Testament of Joseph, and Testament of Levi.⁵¹ *Μετὰ ταῦτα* should be understood as a discourse marker, not a temporal marker.⁵² This is enhanced through its association with prominent narrative participants. Heavenly voices are mentioned in 4:1 and 19:1 and angels are mentioned in 7:2 and 18:1. Moreover, *ἐν πνεύματι* and *δείξω σοι* are connected closely with *μετὰ ταῦτα*, adding further support that John is commencing a new section.

Μετὰ ταῦτα occurs ten times in Revelation. Six times, however, the verbs “I saw” or “I heard” are attached (4:1; 7:1 [*μετὰ τοῦτο εἶδον*], 9; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1 [*μετὰ ταῦτα ἤκουσα*]). These reflect strategic markers. Three commence a new vision (4:1; 7:1; 15:5), and three serve as major transitions within the vision (7:9; 18:1; 19:1). Ralph Korner makes a detailed case for *μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον* as a major marker and *καὶ εἶδον* as minor visions within the textual boundaries of a major vision.⁵³ Yet this forces Korner to divide the first interlude too drastically—7:1–8 ends one vision and 7:9–15:4 becomes his next vision. Similarly, Korner separates the fall of Babylon vision in the same manner.⁵⁴ Such divisions raise questions on Korner’s overall thesis that every *μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον* represents a major vision break. Nevertheless, Korner confirms six literary markers with his study.

6. *Interlocking-chain link construction.* One key reason for the disagreement on the beginnings and endings of sections is John’s use of “interlocking”⁵⁵ or “chain links.”⁵⁶ This refers to an ancient model with which modern readers are unfamiliar. Essentially, it is a preliminary hint of what is to come. The conclusion of one vision includes words or phrases that prepare for the introduction to the following vision, affording a stronger tie between the two sections. Bruce Longenecker states that

⁴⁹ Stephen Pattemore, *Souls under the Altar: Relevance Theory and the Discourse Structure of Revelation* (UBS Monograph Series 9; New York: United Bible Societies, 2003), 116; Bandy, “Layers of the Apocalypse,” 476.

⁵⁰ Aune, *Revelation*, 1:53; Osborne, *Revelation*, 69.

⁵¹ R. H. Charles, *The Revelation of St. John* (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1920), 1:106–7.

⁵² So Aune, *Revelation*, 1:xciii; Beale, *Revelation*, 316–17; George R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation* (NCBC; Greenwood, SC: Attic, 1974), 142; Charles, *Revelation of St. John*, 1:106; Murphy, *Fallen Is Babylon*, 169.

⁵³ Ralph J. Korner, “‘And I Saw ...’: An Apocalyptic Literary Convention for Structural Identification in the Apocalypse,” *NovT* 42 (2000): 160–83.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 174.

⁵⁵ Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 15–16.

⁵⁶ Bruce W. Longenecker, “‘Linked Like a Chain’: Rev 22.6–9 in Light of an Ancient Transition Technique,” *NTS* 47 (2001): 105–17. Longenecker notes chain-linking in Quintillian (late first century) and Lucian of Samosata (late second century).

these chain links help with marking “text-unit closures” and “springboards into the text-unit that follows.”⁵⁷

The recognition of the interlocking technique allows interpreters to structure Revelation with more exactness. The two major examples are 8:1–5 and 15:1–4. Although 8:2 introduces the trumpets and 15:1 introduces the bowls, the subsequent verses actually conclude the previous seals series (8:3–5) and trumpet series (15:2–4). Other passages serve the same role. Although not as parenthetical as 8:2 and 15:1, Longenecker finds a chain link at 3:21–22, joining chapters 1–3 with 4–5.⁵⁸ Beale lists more candidates, including 1:19–20; 11:19; 17:1–3; 19:9–10; 21:9–10; and 22:6–9.⁵⁹ All these passages display interlocking functions. This internal approach supports the outline proposed below.

7. *Intratextual repetitions.* Intratextuality refers to the recurring words, phrases, and images found within Revelation that work together “to create a complex network of textual cross-reference, which helps to create and expand the meaning of any one passage by giving it specific relationships to many other passages.”⁶⁰ These lexical signifiers become the structural aids that bind the whole book. They also offer interpretive guidance. For example, in 1974 C. H. Giblin listed numerous connections of terms and subject matter between the introductions and conclusions of 17:1–19:10 and 21:9–22:9, confirming the parallel structure for those two visions.⁶¹ Since then many scholars have agreed with his findings.⁶² When the content of these two intratextual connections is studied, we find a contrast between two cities—Babylon, the great prostitute and the new Jerusalem, the bride of Christ.

8. *Conclusion.* Seeking a septenary pattern or a structure based on 1:19 is unpersuasive. The other internal approaches, however, offer extensive possibilities for organizing Revelation. It is the intratextual repetitions that this study will enlarge upon. The numerous repeated patterns give cross-referenced structural and temporal clues. Certain words and phrases are consistently found near the end of an individual vision. But before launching into these intratextual indicators, a short note on interpretation is in order.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 114, where Longenecker explains, “Specifically, in 3:21–22 the author first introduces the content of Rev 4–5 (3:21), then closes the previous section (Rev 2–3 on macro level, 3:14–22 on micro level), before starting a new section (Rev 4–5).”

⁵⁹ Beale, *Revelation*, 113–115. See Bauckham, *Climax*, 5–6; Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 15–16. Mark Seaborn Hall, “The Hook Interlocking Structure of Revelation: The Most Important Verses in the Book and How They May Unify Its Structure,” *NovT* 44 (2002): 278–96, considers 10:1–11:18 to be the interlocking center and 10:11–11:1 the center of the center.

⁶⁰ Bauckham, *Climax*, 22.

⁶¹ Charles H. Giblin, “Structural and Thematic Correlations in the Theology of Revelation 16–22,” *Bib* 55 (1974): 487–504.

⁶² See Aune, *Revelation*, 1:xcv–xcii; Bauckham, *Climax*, 4–5; Beale, *Revelation*, 110; Longenecker, “Linked Like a Chain,” 106; Murphy, *Fallen Is Babylon*, 416; Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 19. Bauckham (*Climax*, 18–21) adds that the intervening materials (19:11–21:8) serve as a transition between the two visions, weaving a web of intratextual cross-referencing.

IV. SEQUENCE OR RECAPITULATION?

How interpreters structure the Apocalypse underscores the methodology they bring to the table. Futurists and historicists tend to emphasize chronological progression throughout Revelation. Preterists, idealists, and eclectic interpreters tend toward recapitulation. There are exceptions and nuances, but most scholars may be placed in one of the following two categories.

1. *Sequence.* Many interpreters understand the structure in sequential, linear terms. The seals chronologically lead to the trumpets which lead to the bowls which lead to the eschaton at the conclusion of Revelation.⁶³ A modified sequential approach tabbed “telescoping” is another possibility. In this case, the seventh seal breaks to reveal the seven trumpets. Then the seventh trumpet sounds to reveal the seven bowls.⁶⁴ For Robert Thomas, the seventh trumpet does not arrive until 16:1. The heavenly anthem of 11:15–18 is not the seventh trumpet but rather a proleptic celebration of what will happen *after* the seventh trumpet, which is actually the seventh bowl.⁶⁵ John Walvoord accepts 14:17–20 to describe the divine harvest at the final judgment, stating, “This passage speaks prophetically of that which will chronologically follow the return of Christ to the earth” (i.e. 19:11–21).⁶⁶ Thomas uses the word “anticipates” to deal with the mention of Armageddon in 16:16 but its lack of fruition until 19:17.⁶⁷ The modified sequential approach recognizes that Revelation cannot be presented in strictly linear terms. Thus, it attempts to answer the problem by suggesting the visions preview or anticipate the end.

2. *Recapitulation.* Other interpreters follow some form of recapitulation. In the third century, Victorinus noted that the trumpets and bowls were parallel accounts of the same events. Later, the seven seals were added, extending the principle of recapitulation. Modern scholars went beyond the septenaries, finding repeated features in the presentation of the beast and the eschatological earthquake.⁶⁸ Adela Yarbro Collins, for example, affirms repetition that starts with persecutions, moves to the punishment of the nations, and ultimately to the triumph of God or the Lamb or the faithful.⁶⁹

⁶³ Patterson, *Revelation*, 34, is a recent commentator who essentially follows the sequential approach, but allows for “flashbacks to historical events (12:7–9) and contemporaneous events (John’s frequent participations in his own visions).” See also James L. Resseguie, *The Revelation of John: A Narrative Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 54–59. Beale (*Revelation*, 116–119) discusses other sequential proposals.

⁶⁴ Thomas, *Revelation*, 2:525–43; and “The Structure of the Apocalypse: Recapitulation or Progression?” *MSJ* 4 (1993): 45–66; A. Johnson, *Revelation*, 669–70; Ladd, *Revelation*, 122; Walvoord, *Revelation*, 150.

⁶⁵ Thomas, “Structure of the Apocalypse,” 53.

⁶⁶ Walvoord, *Revelation*, 223.

⁶⁷ Thomas, *Revelation*, 2:394.

⁶⁸ Charles H. Giblin, “Recapitulation and the Literary Coherence of John’s Apocalypse,” *CBQ* 56 (1994): 81–95. Beale (*Revelation*, 135–37) discusses several OT and intertestamental books that display a recapping structure.

⁶⁹ Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 32–34. In her view, this recapping dealt with the confrontation (combat motif) between Jesus’s followers and the Roman Empire.

John therefore repeats his visions. Nevertheless, there is sequence within the individual visions. William Hendriksen proposed that Revelation's sections "are parallel: each spans the entire new dispensation, from the first to the second coming of Christ."⁷⁰ However, interpreters must be cautious and not fall into the trap of parallelism (e.g. first seal equals first trumpet equals first bowl). Instead, spiraling, ascending, expanding, and developing progress is made so that later visions describe more fully earlier echoes.⁷¹ As Koester says, "The combination of elements can best be pictured as a forward-moving spiral, which repeatedly leads readers through scenes of threat and back to the presence of God."⁷² Jan Lambrecht calls this an "encompassing technique" in which an increasing recapitulated intensity is observed from the seals to the trumpets to the bowls yet also extends to the three interludes.⁷³ Subsequent visions expand and develop the same subject matter but from different, fuller, and deeper perspectives. Therefore, sequence plus recapitulation takes place. A better term is "progressive recapitulation."

Several recent commentaries on Revelation utilize various aspects of recapitulation.⁷⁴ Beale declares, "The strongest argument for the recapitulation view is the observation of repeated combined scenes of consummative judgment and salvation found at the conclusions of various sections throughout the book."⁷⁵ Following a progressive recapitulation approach, the next section will augment Beale's observation.

V. WORDS AND IMAGES CLUSTERED AT THE CONCLUSION OF VISIONS

John reserves certain words, phrases, and concepts for the conclusion of his visions. These intratextual clues serve not only as structural indicators but as

⁷⁰ William Hendriksen, *More than Conquerors* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1962), 28.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 47. See Dennis E. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2001), 45–46.

⁷² Koester, *Revelation*, 115.

⁷³ Jan Lambrecht, "The Structuration of Revelation 4:1–22:5," in *L'Apocalypse Johannique et l'Apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament* (ed. Jan Lambrecht; BETL 53; Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1980), 95–99. Moreover, Andrew E. Steinmann argues that the sixth seal, trumpet, and bowl are parallel, and progressively reveal new information concerning the same final judgment in "The Tripartite Structure of the Sixth Seal, the Sixth Trumpet, and the Sixth Bowl (Rev 6:12–7:17; 9:13–11:14; 16:12–16)," *JETS* 35 (1992): 69–79.

⁷⁴ Beale, *Revelation*, 121–51; Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 30–31; Boxall, *Revelation of St. John*, 17–18; Louis A. Brighton, *Revelation* (Concordia Commentary; St. Louis: Concordia, 1999), 18; J. Scott Duvall, *Revelation* (Teach the Text Commentary Series; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 7–8; D. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*, 44–47; Craig S. Keener, *Revelation* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 33–34; Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 65–66; Koester, *Revelation*, 115; Joseph L. Mangina, *Revelation* (Brazos Theological Commentary; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 30–31; Robert H. Mounce, *Revelation* (NICNT; 2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 33, 369–70 (apparently); Murphy, *Fallen Is Babylon*, 51–53; Osborne, *Revelation*, 303, 339–40; Mitchell G. Reddish, *Revelation* (Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary; Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001), 21. Beasley-Murray, Duvall, and Osborne are premillennial interpreters, thus underscoring the breadth of recapitulation scholars. Beasley-Murray understands the seals, trumpets, and bowls as parallel judgments of the near end.

⁷⁵ Beale, *Revelation*, 121.

chronological markers. Each one of the following five motifs occurs not only at the end of a vision but at the conclusion of history. A sixth motif is also found at the conclusion of visions. It does not hold temporal significance, but does assist in delineating the structure of Revelation.

1. *The last battle.* Revelation presents several images to what is called only once “Armageddon” (16:16). In fact, there are seven allusive portrayals of this end-time battle (6:15; 9:14–19; 14:20; 16:12–16; 17:12–14; 19:17–21; 20:7–10). Each depiction is located near the end of its respective vision. Interpreters agree that John repeats the final consummating, end-time battle mentioned in 16:12–16 in 19:17–21. Yet the same images are found in 20:7–10. The reason the battles in chapters 19 and 20 are so similar is due to the fact that both passages draw heavily from the last battle imagery of Ezekiel 38–39. R. Fowler White convincingly argues the simultaneity of Armageddon found in 16:12–16 and 19:17–21 with 20:7–10.⁷⁶ This supports the view that the boundary markers for 15:5–16:21, 19:11–21, and 20:1–21:8 all refer to the same episode and time period of the end.

Allusions to this final battle, however, can be enlarged beyond these three passages. The conclusion of the sixth seal portrays the terror of unbelievers on judgment day at the return of Christ. A sevenfold list of people is found at 6:15. It matches the list found in 19:18, the only other place in Revelation where such a list occurs. Thus, their parallel suggests these people groups comprise the armies of the beast at Armageddon (“kings,” “generals,” “horses and riders”). It forms a clearer picture of all those who have “gathered” for the end-time battle.⁷⁷ Both lists are found at the conclusion of their respective visions.

The sixth trumpet (9:13–21), like the sixth seal, offers tantalizing allusions to the end-time battle. The four angels bound at the Euphrates are released to allow murderous cavalry to cross. “Euphrates” occurs only twice in the NT at Rev 9:14 and 16:12, an intratextual clue that the sixth trumpet and sixth bowl depict the same events from different perspectives.⁷⁸ In 9:17–18, “fire,” “smoke,” and “sulfur” comprise three end-time elements for eternal punishment in John’s other visions (14:10–11; 19:20; 20:10). John also draws from Ezekiel 38–39 for 9:13–21 as he did in 16:17–21, 19:17–21, and 20:7–10.⁷⁹ Louis Brighton asserts that the sixth trumpet “depicts the battle of Armageddon just before the end of this world at Christ’s return. This last battle is also connected with the River Euphrates (16:12). Here in 9:13–21 John receives the first glimpse of that last battle, the last great affliction.”⁸⁰

⁷⁶ R. Fowler White, “Reexamining the Evidence for Recapitulation in Rev. 20:1–10,” *WTJ* 51 (1989): 319–44; see 325–30. See Beale, *Revelation*, 132.

⁷⁷ Bauckham, *Climax*, 19; Beale, *Revelation*, 400. Osborne (*Revelation*, 294) writes concerning 6:15 and 19:18: “Therefore, there is probably a connection between these two events. The judgment envisaged here will take place in 19:17–18, 21.”

⁷⁸ Beale, *Revelation*, 507; Smalley, *Revelation to John*, 237.

⁷⁹ Caird, *Revelation of St. John*, 122; Mounce, *Book of Revelation*, 187; Osborne, *Revelation*, 384.

⁸⁰ Brighton, *Revelation*, 248. Beale (*Revelation*, 513) adds: “The equation of the sixth trumpet with the sixth bowl is a natural one.”

Another hint of Armageddon is the grape harvest (14:17–20). Even sequentialists agree this passage anticipates Armageddon.⁸¹ In reality, it is not a prophetic preview but another iteration of the same end-time battle. Moreover, the horses mentioned in 14:20 are cavalry horses. The implication is that the cavalry horses are in battle, which is more clearly repeated in 19:18. Thus, “blood to the horses’ bridles” is not “simply an abstract measure of height ... but the actual cavalry horses in a battle.”⁸² Next, the beast makes (final) war with the Lamb, who is “Lord of lords, King of kings” (17:14). This is the same title found in 19:16. His faithful followers reappear as well (17:14; 19:14). This cross-reference connects both passages to the same end-time battle.⁸³

Armageddon, therefore, is echoed in the sixth seal (6:15), given more development in the sixth trumpet (9:13–21), the third interlude (14:19–20); the sixth bowl (16:12–16); the fall of Babylon (17:12–14); the rider on the white horse (19:17–21); and the millennial reign (20:7–10). Altogether, we discover allusions to the final battle in seven different visions proposed in the outline below, all near the conclusion of their respective visions.

2. *The great earthquake and other cosmic imagery.* Cosmic imagery saturates Revelation—earthquakes, falling heavenly bodies, and the dissolution of the world. Specifically, John utilizes two apocalyptic formulas—the earthquake and the cosmic storm—to signify the appearance of God and end-time judgment. First, the end-time cosmic storm is related four times in Revelation (4:5; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18–21). Its features are flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder. It alludes to the appearance of God at Sinai (Exod 19:16). It originates and proceeds from the throne of God (4:5). It increases one item in the next two iterations—an earthquake (8:5) and great hail (11:19). Then, in 16:18–21, the seventh bowl expounds upon the earthquake and hail. The first reference is a theophany in heaven. The latter three are on earth and portray end-time judgment.⁸⁴ The cosmic storm is a picture of the end.

Second, as Bauckham insists, “The earthquake is one of the major images of the End in the Apocalypse, far too often passed over as a conventional apocalyptic image of no great interest.”⁸⁵ The “earthquake” (σεισμός) is found exactly seven times (6:12; 8:5; 11:13 [twice]; 11:19; 16:18 [twice]). Each time the earthquake occurs at the conclusion of a vision. All repeat the one final great earthquake at the end of earth history (Heb 12:26–27). The earthquake in 6:12 is accompanied by much cosmic imagery which was customarily used for the end of the age or a nation.⁸⁶ That the earthquake is mentioned in 8:5 supports extending the seventh seal to 8:5. Bauckham relates the parallelism of the earthquake in 11:13 with 16:18, giv-

⁸¹ Patterson, *Revelation*, 295; Thomas, *Revelation*, 2:220; Walvoord, *Revelation*, 223.

⁸² Bauckham, *Climax*, 19.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 20. See Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 258–59; Brighton, *Revelation*, 453; Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 476; Murphy, *Fallen Is Babylon*, 362.

⁸⁴ Bauckham, *Climax*, 8, 202–4. Beale (*Revelation*, 124) adds that each one of the four texts has the heavenly temple or altar in its immediate context.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁸⁶ Beale (*Revelation*, 123 n. 71) lists several biblical examples.

ing evidence that both passages herald the end.⁸⁷ White considers the cosmic destruction found at 6:12–17, 16:17–21, 19:11–21, and 20:9–11 to refer to “the cosmic shaking that accompanies the advent of the Divine Warrior-Judge.”⁸⁸ Thus, the earthquake becomes a cosmic, universal quake that shakes the heavens and the earth at the day of the Lord. In apocalyptic terms, it means the final dissolution of the world.⁸⁹ Significantly, the imagery of the great earthquake and accompanying end-time cosmic storm are located at the conclusion of eight of the individual visions proposed below. This suggests that John reserves his usage of cosmic imagery not only as a structural clue, but as a picture of the end of history.

3. *The second coming.* When Jesus comes, he comes to judge the wicked and to vindicate the righteous. The image of the Parousia accents the point of view of believers at the eschaton. For them, the second coming is a time of celebration and vindication.⁹⁰ Allusions and descriptions of his return are found in all twelve visions proposed below as well as the prologue and epilogue. It is a major theme of Revelation.

The word *παρουσία* is found twenty-four times in the NT and seventeen clearly refer to the second coming. Yet *παρουσία* is not found in Revelation. Instead, John prefers *ἔρχομαι* (“coming”). This verb is found thirty-six times, and twenty-one of those refer to the coming of Christ at the conclusion of history.⁹¹ Several occurrences of “coming” emphasize the divine judgment for unbelievers which the next section will discuss. In the seven letters, his coming is divided into three for delivering the righteous and three for judging the unrighteous (only Smyrna does not receive a message of coming).⁹² “Coming” is also used to stress the imminence of his appearance (2:16; 3:11; 16:15; 22:7, 12, 20). The remainder of references, however, has the second coming in mind. The following passages in particular allude to the appearance of Christ (6:16; 11:15–18; 14:1–5, 14–16; 16:15; 17:14; 19:6–8, 11–16; 20:9, 11). Each instance appears near the end of an individual vision. In addition, several of John’s visions portray this futuristic event—“will come”—as already happened—“has come” (6:17; 11:18; 14:7, 15; 18:10; 19:7). This helps in identifying John’s structure since these past tense usages are found near the end of individual visions, namely the sixth seal, the seventh trumpet, the third inter-

⁸⁷ Bauckham, *Climax*, 207–8.

⁸⁸ White, “Reexamining the Evidence,” 331. See Bauckham, *Climax*, 208–9.

⁸⁹ Schüssler Fiorenza, *Book of Revelation*, 64; Beale, *Revelation*, 413; Osborne, *Revelation*, 291.

⁹⁰ The coming of the Lord also functions as a warning to believers to remain faithful (2:25; 3:3, 20). Believers will also be judged (Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10), but the point here is on victory and vindication.

⁹¹ John also uses *εἰσερχομαι* (3:20; 11:11; 15:8; 21:27; 22:14); *ἐξερχομαι* (3:12; 6:2, 4; 9:3; 14:15, 17, 18, 20; 15:6; 16:17; 18:4; 19:5, 21; 20:8); and *ἐκπορεύομαι* (1:16; 4:5; 9:17, 18; 11:5; 16:14; 19:15; 22:1). Note how often these words are found near the conclusion of an individual vision.

⁹² For Thomas (“The ‘Comings’ of Christ in Revelation 2–3,” *MSJ* 7 [1996]: 153–81), this dualism supports a pretribulational rapture (deliverance) and the commencement of the seventieth week of Daniel (judgment). For other writers, it speaks simply of the dual nature of the second coming—deliverance for the saints and judgment for the wicked.

lude, and the fall of Babylon. Lastly, there are seven references to coming in the epilogue.⁹³

4. *The final judgment.* When Jesus comes, he comes not only to vindicate the righteous but to judge the wicked. This image then emphasizes the second coming from the perspective of unbelievers. John positions key words and images on the final judgment for the conclusions of several visions (6:16–17; 8:3–5; 11:18; 14:8–11, 17–20; 16:17–19; 19:1–2; 20:11–15). Thus, all of the intratextual allusions to the great day of wrath, fall of Babylon, and eternal punishment anticipate the consummative judgment of the great white throne which is more fully developed in chapter 20. For example, the past tense refrain of “Fallen is Babylon” is found in 14:8; 16:19; and several times in 17:16–19:3. Since Babylon falls only once at the end of history the three visions must depict the same cataclysmic judgment. This lends support that the conclusion of the third interlude, the seventh bowl, and the fall of Babylon visions are all synchronous.

Several key words are linked to the final judgment. First, “wrath” (ὄργη) is found six times in Revelation, each time at or near the conclusion of a vision (6:16–17; 11:18; 14:10; 16:17–19; 19:15). The symbol of “wine” and “grapes” crushed in the “winepress” are intratextual indicators for the end of Babylon (14:8, 10, 18–20; 16:19; 17:2; 18:3; 19:15). Again, “fire,” “smoke,” and “sulfur” embraces three end-time elements for eternal punishment in John’s visions. Significantly, they are grouped together near the end of several visions (9:17–19; 14:10–11; 18:9, 18; 19:3, 20; 20:10; 21:8).⁹⁴ Altogether, the end-time images of judgment and their key linking words are found at the conclusion of nine visions proposed below.

5. *The new heaven and new earth.* Allusions associated with eternal bliss, heavenly rewards, new heaven and new earth, and the intimate, eternal presence and fellowship with God and the Lamb are not confined to chapters 21–22. They are scattered throughout Revelation. Rewards for overcomers saturate the seven letters. These images show up again in chapters 21–22. The promises and their fulfillment include the tree of life (2:7; 22:2); no second death (2:11; 20:6); a new name (2:17; 22:4); authority to reign forever (2:26; 22:5); name in the book of life (3:5; 21:27); Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple (3:12; 21:22); the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven (3:12; 21:2); my new name on their foreheads (3:12; 22:4); and the right to sit and reign with Christ (3:21; 20:4).

End-time rewards, fulfilled promises, heavenly worship, and eternal bliss are major components of several throne room scenes. The initial and longest throne room scene is chapters 4–5. The remaining seven heavenly throne room scenes are located at or near the conclusion of six visions (7:9–17; 8:1–5; 11:15–19; 14:1–5; 15:2–4 [two throne room scenes support viewing the final section of the third interlude as 14:1–15:4]; 19:1–10; 21:1–8).

⁹³ Seven suggests numerical symbolism for completeness for Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (NT Theology; London: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 26–27.

⁹⁴ “Fury” (θυμός) is another candidate, a word usually reserved for the end of visions (14:8, 10, 19; 16:19; 18:3; 19:15). But since it is also found outside the boundaries of the conclusion of a vision (12:12; 15:1, 7; 16:1), it is left off here.

A consistent feature of heavenly throne room scenes is the hymns. The exact number of hymns and doxologies is debated but most interpreters would agree with these: 4:8–11; 5:8–14; 6:10; 7:9–17; 11:15–19; 12:10–12; 14:1–5; 15:2–4; 16:5–7; 18:2–3, 4–8, 10, 14, 16, 19–23; 19:1–10. Thus, the hymns typically appear toward the end of an individual vision. In fact, only two are not in heavenly throne room scenes (12:10–12; 16:5–7). Aune states: “Since these hymnic sections usually provide commentary on the narrative vision contexts in which they are embedded, the primary reason the author introduced throne scenes was to serve as literary contexts for hymnic commentary; thus they are extremely important in any structural analysis of Revelation.”⁹⁵

The hymns of Revelation are a topic of recent study.⁹⁶ Stephen N. Horn considers the hymns to summarize the theology of the whole book. Horn lists the sovereignty of God and his Christ, the judgment of God, the work of Christ, and the appropriate relationship that individuals should have with God.⁹⁷ Yet now an additional insight is to pinpoint where the hymns are placed. They become another feature of Revelation that signals the conclusion of an individual vision, providing hints of what is more fully described in chapters 21–22.

Therefore, the above five motifs not only assist in structuring Revelation, but in interpreting it—there is one earthquake, one end-time storm, one end-time battle, one return of Christ, and one end-time judgment.

6. *More examples.* Other words and images consolidating toward the end of a vision and suggestive of literary indicators are the beatitudes and select titles of God. These do not display the same temporal importance as the previous examples. Nevertheless, their presence becomes another intratextual clue that John is nearing the end of a vision. First, there are seven beatitudes scattered through Revelation, hinting at numerical symbolism.⁹⁸ At first glance, the beatitudes reveal no structural importance. Thus, Edmondo Lupieri relates it is “not structurally important that there are seven blessings in the text, as the blessings do not represent a self-contained segment, nor do they signal the beginning or end of distinct sections of the work.”⁹⁹ However, such is not the case. The first beatitude is found in the prologue (1:3) and final one in the epilogue (22:14). The remaining five beatitudes are situated at or near the end of five different visions (14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7).

⁹⁵ Aune, *Revelation*, 1:xcviii.

⁹⁶ Studies include Stephen Grabiner, *Revelation's Hymns: Commentary on the Cosmic Conflict* (LNTS 511; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015); Justin P. Schedtler, *A Heavenly Chorus: The Dramatic Function of Revelation's Hymns* (WUNT 2/381; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); Ardea Cavigliola Russo, “Behind the Heavenly Door: Earthly Liturgy and Heavenly Worship in the Apocalypse of John” (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2009); J. M. Ford, “The Christological Function of the Hymns in the Apocalypse of John,” *AUSS* 36 (1998): 207–29.

⁹⁷ Stephen N. Horn, “Hallelujah, the Lord Our God, the Almighty Reigns: The Theology of the Hymns of Revelation,” in *Essays on Revelation*, 41–54. See Koester, *Revelation*, 126–30.

⁹⁸ Bauckham, *Theology*, 26–27.

⁹⁹ Edmondo F. Lupieri, *A Commentary on the Apocalypse of John* (trans. Maria Poggi Johnson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 99.

Their purpose is to stress ethical living for persecuted believers in light of the nearness of the second coming.¹⁰⁰

Second, several titles of God are found in the throne room scenes mentioned above. Three titles in particular are reserved only for God and only for the eschaton. The first is “the one who sits on the throne.” This title and its variations occur six times in the crucial throne room vision (4:2, 9, 10; 5:1, 7, 13). But the remaining five instances all appear at the conclusion of individual visions (6:16; 7:10, 15; 19:4; 21:5).¹⁰¹ The second title of God is “the one who is and was and will/has come.” This title with variations is found five times (1:4, 8; 4:8; 11:17; 16:5). Significantly, the exchange of the final futuristic present tense “is to come” with a past tense “has come” in the last two references assists in understanding structural and temporal aspects of Revelation. In other words, the past tense phrase reveals that John has neared the end of a vision and the end of history at 11:17 and 16:5. Bauckham notes concerning the two abbreviated forms that change their tense: “At these points in the vision the eschatological coming of God is taking place.”¹⁰² The third divine title reserved for the end of a vision is “Lord God Almighty.” It is found in a shorter form twice (16:14; 19:15) and its full form seven times (1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7; 19:6; 21:22). After the first two references the title is placed near the end of an individual vision and is complemented with statements of God’s deeds, justice, and sovereignty over history. These three titles of deity appear sparingly enough to notice a preference for the conclusion of an individual vision, thereby accenting the eschaton.¹⁰³ Thus, even the beatitudes and specific titles for God are used by John as structural indicators.¹⁰⁴

7. *Conclusion.* John reserves key words, phrases, and images for the end of his individual visions. These clusters assist not only in structuring the vision, but interpreting it. John recaps his visions so that the end of a vision pictures the end of history.

¹⁰⁰ Daniel Earl Hatfield (“The Function of the Seven Beatitudes in Revelation” [Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1987]) analyzes their ecclesiological, ethical, and eschatological content, concluding that the beatitudes reiterate and intensify themes of worship, witness, and reward.

¹⁰¹ Bauckham (*Climax*, 33) notes the numerical symbolism of this important designation of God. The exact phrase is found exactly seven times (4:9; 5:1, 7, 13; 6:16; 7:15; 21:5). There are variations, “but it looks as though John used these variations quite deliberately in order to keep the number of occurrences of the precise phrase to seven.”

¹⁰² Bauckham (*Theology*, 29) footnotes David Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 280–81. See Beale, *Revelation*, 187–88.

¹⁰³ Another possible candidate is the vocative use of “God” (ὁ θεός). Most of its usages are genitival (τοῦ θεοῦ). The vocative form is found only at 4:11; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7.

¹⁰⁴ By virtue of their connection with other themes, several words cluster toward the end of visions. Among these are “throne” which is found twenty-two of forty-seven times at the end of an individual vision (6:16; 7:9, 10, 11 [2x], 15 [2x], 17; 8:3; 11:16; 14:3; 16:10, 17; 19:4, 5; 20:4, 11, 12; 21:3, 5; 22:1, 3); and “Lamb” which occurs sixteen of twenty-eight times (6:16; 7:9, 10, 14, 17; 14:1, 4 [2x], 10; 15:3 [17:14 (2x)]; 19:7, 9; 22:1, 3). The two references in 17:14 are not near the end of a vision but do refer to the second coming.

VI. THE TWELVE VISIONS OF JOHN

Aided by the above macro- and microstructural clues, and following a progressive recapitulation methodology, another outline for Revelation will now be attempted. Most of the visions begin with John's audience and progress to eternity. Chapters 1–3 stress John's immediate audience. By extension, every generation and each believer should heed the challenges of what the Spirit says to the churches. The mighty throne room vision of chapters 4–5 pictures the result of what God did in creation and what the Son accomplished via the cross. His death opens the scroll and reveals its contents. The seals, trumpets, and bowls reveal the ups and downs of history from three different angles. Specifically, the first five of each series reflect this—earthly, natural, resultative judgments on humanity and nature—from John's day through the Middle Ages and Reformation up to the present day and especially toward the end. The final two seals, trumpets, and bowls, however, usher us to the brink of the eschaton. They include allusions, images, and phrases that reveal the final battle, Parousia, cosmic imagery (earthquake), end-time judgment, and eternal bliss.

Similarly, the three interludes reveal the same progressive recapping—7:1–8; 10:1–11:6; and 12:1–13:18 present the ongoing battle between the devil and believers throughout the centuries. It is a spiritual war and believers are called to witness until they die. But at the conclusion of each interlude, the end-time images reappear, signaling the eschaton. Thus, 7:9–17, 11:7–13, and 14:1–15:4 are end-time pictures. The fall of Babylon is prefaced by a survey of history in 17:1–11 but 17:12–14 depicts end-time images. Babylon's fall is described (18:1–24), leading to a portrayal of end-time bliss (19:1–10). The rider on the white horse begins abruptly with the Parousia and leads to final judgment. The millennial vision, however, depicts history in 20:1–6, leading to the eschatological battle (20:7–10), final judgment (20:11–15), and new heaven and new earth (21:1–8). The new Jerusalem vision completes John's visions, stressing eternal bliss (21:9–22:9). The following outline takes into account the previous discussion on intratextual indicators. Only a few comments are added to each section.

Prologue (1:1–8)

The prologue is easily marked off and agreed upon by modern interpreters.

Vision One: Inaugural Vision and Seven Letters (1:9–3:22)

The boundary markers for this vision are widely accepted. The inaugural vision of Jesus is described in 1:9–20 and leads to the seven letters. Thus, 1:9–3:22 forms one distinct unit, holding hints of later things. It leads to the next vision, not chronologically, but literarily.

Vision Two: Throne Room (4:1–5:14)

Few interpreters dispute the clear structural markers for the throne room vision. "Come and see," "I will show you," and "I was in the Spirit" (4:1–2) launch the largest structural section of Revelation—4:1–16:21. Yet chapters 4–5 form one

short, crucial vision. Worship in heaven revolves around God as Creator (chap. 4) and Jesus as Redeemer (chap. 5). The Lamb's acquisition of the scroll connects to the seals in chapter 6. Again, literary order is at work here.

Vision Three: Seven Seals (6:1–17; 8:1–5)

No one argues on the markers for the first six seals (6:1–17). The debate centers on whether the sixth seal envisions the end and on whether the seventh seal extends to 8:5. The answer to both issues is yes. The sixth seal pictures cosmic end-time events (6:12–14), an allusion to a gathering for the final battle (6:15), the Parousia, and final judgment (6:16–17) complete the scene. The seventh seal (8:1–5) completes the theme of end-time judgment initiated in the sixth seal.¹⁰⁵ The lull of anticipatory silence and prayer (8:1) leads to a fuller description of final judgment from a heavenly camera angle (8:3–5). The thunder, rumblings, and lightning (from 4:5) have the end-time earthquake added. “In 8:5 the climactic end of the cosmos is in mind.”¹⁰⁶

Vision Four: First Interlude (7:1–17)

The three interludes involve an audience shift from the wicked who suffer from the plagues of the seals, trumpets, and bowls to the saints who are sealed, sent, and struggle in holy war. Each interlude commences with John's audience and traverses through history to the eschaton. The purpose of this first interlude is to picture the people of God being eternally, spiritually sealed and serving as militant witnesses for Christ while on earth (7:1–8). Then they are pictured in heaven at the consummation (7:9–17).¹⁰⁷ This wondrous scene will be recapped and given more detail in chapter 21.

Vision Five: Seven Trumpets (8:6–9:21; 11:14–19)

The sixth trumpet (9:13–21) includes allusions to Armageddon (angels bound for this moment, demonic murderous cavalry, battle, Euphrates). The three plagues of fire, smoke, and sulfur signal final punishment. Following the second interlude (10:1–11:13), the seventh trumpet blasts forth with end-time images. Pictures of the

¹⁰⁵ Numerous scholars agree that the seventh seal extends to 8:5, including Bauckham, *Climax*, 70–83; Beale, *Revelation*, 454–64; Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 149–52; Brighton, *Revelation*, 210; Caird, *Revelation of St. John*, 106; Gordon Fee, *Revelation* (New Covenant Commentary Series 18; Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 118; C. H. Giblin, *The Book of Revelation: Open Book of Prophecy* (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier, 1991), 13; Wilfred Harrington, *Revelation* (SP 16; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1994), 103; Koester, *Revelation*, 114; Morris, *Revelation*, 44; Prigent, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 297; Reddish, *Revelation*, 161; Thomas and Macchia, *Revelation*, 175–79; Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, 148.

¹⁰⁶ Beale, *Revelation*, 458, who adds on p. 459: “That 8:5 is about the Last Assize is confirmed from 14:18–19, where the Judgment Day is commenced apparently by the same angel described in the same language as here in 8:3–5.”

¹⁰⁷ John uses *μετὰ ταῦτα* and *καὶ ἰδοὺ* to accent the break in 7:9. Beale (*Revelation*, 424–45) suggests that 7:9–17 might portray the ultimate bliss of the faithful, but ultimately opts for the inaugurated bliss of saints that runs throughout the ages prior to consummation.

consummative judgment of the wicked, the eternal destiny of the faithful, and the earthquake and cosmic storm are clearly depicted as accomplished in 11:14–19.¹⁰⁸

Vision Six: Second Interlude (10:1–11:13)

The second interlude's boundaries are well accepted. Whether or not the conclusion of the interlude describes the eschaton, however, is disputed. The resurrection of the two witnesses anticipates the second coming. The earthquake represents the last, great earthquake.¹⁰⁹ Once more, at the end of an interlude, we find the end of history. Similar to the seals, trumpets, and bowls, we note spiraling, developing information in the interludes. The faithful are sealed (first interlude), but they are sealed and commissioned to be witnesses.

Vision Seven: Third Interlude (12:1–15:4)

The issues again are where the third interlude concludes and whether its images reflect the end of history. End-time images abound in chapter 14. The consummate salvation of the faithful (14:1–5) leads to a discussion of the fall of Babylon (14:6–11). The salvation of the faithful at the second coming is expanded in the grain harvest (14:14–16), but the grape harvest reflects the end-time battle and final judgment of unbelievers (14:17–20).¹¹⁰ Finally, after the interlocking hint of the forthcoming bowls series (15:1), the interlude concludes with a vision from heaven. After their decisive victory, believers celebrate eternal bliss with God (15:2–4).¹¹¹

Vision Eight: Seven Bowls (15:5–16:21)

The seven angels are reintroduced in 15:5 with the strong *καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον* marker. Drawing from exodus plagues and paralleling the seals and trumpets, the spiraling continues. The sixth bowl (Armageddon) leads to the seventh bowl

¹⁰⁸ Some commentators begin the third interlude with 11:19: Aune, *Revelation*, 2:647; Koester, *Revelation*, 523; M. Robert Mulholland, *Revelation: Holy Living in an Unholy World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 214; Wilcock, *Message of Revelation*, 16.

¹⁰⁹ The earthquake kills 7,000 and destroys “a tenth of the city.” These are not literal numbers but symbolic numbers of completeness. Beale (*Revelation*, 603) affirms they “would emphasize the totality of unbelievers judged at the conclusion of history.” Some writers understand the survivors’ giving glory to God (11:13) as last-chance repentance (Bauckham, *Climax*, 278–83; Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 187; Caird, *Revelation of St. John*, 139–40; Osborne, *Revelation*, 433; Resseguie, *Revelation*, 166). It seems better to understand forced homage similar to Phil 2:9–11 (Beale, *Revelation*, 606–7; D. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*, 175; Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 339; Mounce, *Book of Revelation*, 224).

¹¹⁰ Most scholars distinguish the grain and grape harvests in this way. Several, however, view end-time judgment for both harvests, including Aune, *Revelation*, 2:801–3; Beale, *Revelation*, 770–78; Duvall, *Revelation*, 203; A. Johnson, *Revelation*, 725; Lupieri, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 232; Mounce, *Book of Revelation*, 277–81; Patterson, *Revelation*, 296; Thomas, *Revelation*, 2:219–20; Walvoord, *Revelation*, 220–22; Ben Witherington III, *Revelation* (NCBC; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 196.

¹¹¹ Several scholars extend the third interlude to 15:4, including Bauckham, *Climax*, 16–18; Beale, *Revelation*, 113–14; Boxall, *Revelation of St. John*, 20; Koester, *Revelation*, 114; Murphy, *Fallen Is Babylon*, 329; Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, 148; Wilcock, *Message of Revelation*, 137; and Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 15–19. Mulholland (*Revelation*, 214) extends it to 15:5; Giblin (*Book of Revelation*, 95) and D. Johnson (*Triumph of the Lamb*, 199) extend it to 15:8. Mounce (*Book of Revelation*, 34) limits the third interlude to 14:6–20.

(fall of Babylon and the eschaton). The cosmic storm is described in depth (16:18–21).

Vision Nine: Fall of Babylon (17:1–19:10)

The largest “in the Spirit” marker (17:1–21:8) may be segmented into three independent visions (17:1–19:10; 19:11–21; 20:1–21:8). Buttressed by *δεῦρο δεῖξω σοι* (17:1), *μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον* (18:1), and *μετὰ ταῦτα ἤκουσα* (19:1), the three subsections of the fall of Babylon vision become 17:1–18; 18:1–24; 19:1–10.¹¹² The third subsection depicts the joy of eternal bliss at the eschaton.

Vision Ten: Rider on the White Horse (19:11–21)

In 19:11, *καὶ εἶδον ... καὶ ἰδοῦ* launches this short but powerful vision. Bauckham notes how several words and phrases are cross-referenced from here to other parts of Revelation, including 1:14, 16; 2:12, 16, 18, 26–27; 3:14; 6:14–17; 12:5; 14:14–20; 16:14, 16; 17:14.¹¹³ This vision finds agreement among interpreters as the second coming of Christ. Once again, key elements that confirm it as an end-time vision are evident—the Parousia, end-time battle, end-time judgment, and even cosmic phenomena.

Vision Eleven: Thousand Years (20:1–21:8)

This section completes the third *ἐν πνεύματι* marker (17:1–21:8). The vision commences with *καὶ εἶδον* (20:1).¹¹⁴ It is subdivided into the millennium (20:1–6), Armageddon (20:7–10), great white throne judgment (20:11–15), and the new heaven and new earth (21:1–8). Attaching 21:1–8 to the conclusion of this vision instead of the beginning of the next vision fits well with several interpreters.¹¹⁵

¹¹² A growing consensus of scholarship extends the fall of Babylon vision to 19:10, including Aune, *Revelation*, 3:905; Bauckham, *Climax*, 2–6; Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 32; Brian K. Blount, *Revelation: A Commentary* (NLI; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 347; Boxall, *Revelation of St. John*, 18; Fee, *Revelation*, 228; Griblin, *Book of Revelation*, 16; Harrington, *Revelation*, 185; A. Johnson, *Revelation*, 593; D. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*, 241; Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 69; Koester, *Revelation*, 637; Lambrecht, “Structuration of Revelation,” 86; Mulholland, *Revelation*, 276; Murphy, *Fallen Is Babylon*, 348; Poythress, *Revelation*, 159; Prigent, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* (apparently), 90, 515; Leonard L. Thompson, *Revelation* (ANTC; Nashville, Abingdon, 1998), 166; Töniste, *Ending of the Canon*, 55; Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, 149; Witherington, *Revelation*, 233–34. Those who end the vision with 19:5 include Duvall, *Revelation*, 244; Mounce, *Book of Revelation*, 35; and Osborne, *Revelation*, 31.

¹¹³ Bauckham, *Climax*, 18–20.

¹¹⁴ The pre-, post-, and amillennial question revolves around whether *καὶ εἶδον* in 20:1 is being used as a literary indicator for the next vision or a historical sequence marker of subsequent events. Following the majority of other uses of *καὶ εἶδον* in Revelation and the progressive recapitulation approach, this outline understands it as a literary indicator. Moreover, as Beale (*Revelation*, 975) and White (“Reexamining the Evidence,” 336–43) affirm, whenever *καὶ εἶδον* is followed by an angelic descent or ascent (7:2; 10:1; 18:1 [*μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον*]; 20:1) it introduces a vision that interrupts temporal progress of a previous section to introduce a synchronous section or reverts to a time anterior to the preceding section.

¹¹⁵ Interpreters who extend the vision to 21:1–8 include the ten resources who follow “in the Spirit” (see footnote 44) as well as Aune, *Revelation*, 3:1040; Griblin, *Book of Revelation*, 17; Ladd, *Revelation*, 16; and Witherington, *Revelation*, 256.

Vision Twelve: New Jerusalem (21:9–22:9)

This vision comprises the final ἐν πνεύματι marker. Its parallel to the fall of Babylon vision is widely accepted. Their introductions (17:1–3; 21:9–10) and conclusions (19:9–10; 22:6–9) have almost identical phrasing.¹¹⁶ As discussed above under the intratextual connections, there is growing recognition that 22:6–9 serves as both a conclusion to the previous vision and an introduction to the epilogue. Bauckham relates that shifting the conclusion of the vision from 22:5 to 22:9 is no problem. To insist on assigning the verses to the previous vision or to the epilogue “is to misunderstand John’s literary methods, among which are the overlapping and interweaving of the sections of his work.”¹¹⁷ Thus, it serves to conclude the new Jerusalem vision and introduce the epilogue.

Epilogue (22:10–21)

Many scholars who retain 22:6 as the beginning of the epilogue still understand that verses 6–9 serve as both a conclusion to the previous vision and the introduction to the epilogue.¹¹⁸ Perhaps Brian Blount’s commentary outlines it the best. He titles his subheading for 22:6–9 as “Transition,” and completely separates the section.¹¹⁹

VII. CONCLUSION

This study sought to demonstrate through boundary markers and other intratextual indicators that John produced twelve visions in the Apocalypse. A few conclusions may be put forward. First, John’s literary genius is on display. Studies such as this confirm John’s intricate, expert crafting and editing of his visions. The intratextual repetitions discussed underscore his skillful cross-referencing. John’s structural signals—allusive like the whole work—may nevertheless be detected. Second, a progressive recapitulation view is the best approach for understanding why John clusters eschatological images toward the conclusions of his visions. He is giving several developing angles to the same events. This study reinforces the understanding that John pictures one end-time cosmic theophany, one end-time earthquake, one end-time battle, one second coming, and one final judgment. Third, future work might include attempts at integrating the external structures of Daniel, Ezekiel, and the prophetic lawsuit speeches to the internal factors that were emphasized in this study.

¹¹⁶ See the charts in Bauckham, *Climax*, 4–5; Aune, *Revelation*, 1:xcv–xcvii.

¹¹⁷ Bauckham, *Climax*, 5.

¹¹⁸ Beale, *Revelation*, 114; D. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*, 324; Koester, *Revelation*, 847; Schüssler Fiorenza, *Book of Revelation*, 175; Thomas and Macchia, *Revelation*, 391; Waddell, *Spirit of Revelation*, 138.

¹¹⁹ Blount, *Revelation*, 399.