

The Book of Revelation: A Guide for Understanding

by Vern S. Poythress

Prepared for use with the course NT 311, Hebrews through Revelation,
at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia

Version 2.2

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NT 311 Revelation: Syllabus

Vern S. Poythress, fall, 2022

I. Introduction to the course

CONTENTS:

Why NT 311
Basic information
Assignment Overview
Assignment Details
Policies
Course Schedule

A. Why NT 311? (This syllabus focuses on Revelation)

1. Purpose of the course

a. The WTS Catalog has the following purpose statement:

- To introduce the particular character of Hebrews through Revelation
- To enable students to understand these books so that they can apply their

teaching to their own lives and in their ministry

The course will deal with questions of special introduction, and will include the exegesis of selected passages in order to establish the structure and distinctive themes of these books.

b. For the Revelation half of the course, here is the purpose:

We aim to gain an understanding and appreciation of the central message and style of Revelation, so that we will be able to lead the total church membership to profit from reading and studying the book themselves.

2. Learning goals. By the end of the portion of NT 311 on Revelation, the student should be able to:

- Identify main themes in the book of Revelation.
- Appreciate the practical purposes of the book.
- Know how to deal with symbolism in the book.
- Be able to study, research, and expound any passage in Revelation with sensitivity to its themes, symbolism, and evocation of the Old Testament, and with appropriate application to modern hearers.
- Have a basic idea of the structure of Revelation.
- Know the principal approaches that have been historically used to interpret Revelation.
- Have basic information about the historical background for the book, and competence to investigate more fully where appropriate.
- Understand and explain the significance of theophany in Revelation.
- Be able to explain the main issues involved in the millennial dispute.
- Understand and be able to explain the significance of the vision of the consummation in Revelation.

3. Strategy:

We will concentrate not on verse-by-verse analysis of the whole book, but on themes. II. Counterfeiting (13:1-18). III. Structure. IV. Underlying choices of hermeneutical approach (see 9:1-11). V. Historical situation (2:1-3:22). VI. Theophany (1:9-20). VII. Millennium (20:1-10). VIII. Consummation (21:1-22:5). IX. Worship (5:1-14). My plan is that, through this selective study, you will gain an over-all framework for appreciating Revelation. Then you can utilize commentaries effectively in trying to understand details in years to come.

If you are interested in more verse-by-verse analysis, see the courses NT 433 or NT 733.

B. Basic information

Class hours: 8am, Wednesdays; 10am-11:55, Fridays

Teacher for Revelation, first four weeks: Vern S. Poythress

(Teacher for Hebrews-Jude: Brandon Crowe)

Contact: vpoythress@wts.edu; work: 215-572-3820; home: 215-885-7785.

Office hours: Wednesday, 3:30pm.

C. Assignment overview

1. Assigned readings: presupposed for class participation and for the midterm
2. Class participation 5%
3. Midterm 95%

D. Assignment details**1. Assigned readings**

Remember, the study of Revelation will take up only one half of the course Hebrews-Revelation. The other half will have its own set of reading assignments and responsibilities. Hence, I have tried to cut the required readings to the bare bones. Full information about the items below is provided in the bibliography for the course.

- a. Read Revelation in a translation in your native language at least twice through. (This assignment should have top priority. Very important.)
- b. Background issues: authorship and date
Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 700-712.
- c. Hermeneutical introduction
George E. Ladd, *Revelation*, 10-14.
Leland Ryken, "Revelation," in *A Complete Literary Guide*, 458-69.
G. K. Beale, *Revelation*, 50-64.
- d. Topical insights
G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 24-27, on Christology
G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 46, on the purpose of Revelation
- e. Theophany
Vern S. Poythress, *Theophany*, Parts I and II, 15-195.
- f. Historical introduction
G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 44-49 (interpretive approaches)
- g. Poythress, *The Returning King* (serving like a textbook)
- h. The millennium
Recommended for later reading
Meredith G. Kline, *WTJ* 37:366-375, 39:110-19
J. Ramsey Michaels, *WTJ* 39:100-109
R. Fowler White, *WTJ* 51:319-344.
See also further bibliography items on the millennium

2. Class participation

Students are expected to be present at every meeting of the class. From time to time, I may call on an individual student to answer a question, as part of our interaction.

3. Midterm

The grade for my half of the course will depend almost wholly on a midterm

exam (taken online). The exam will contain questions on the assigned reading and on the lectures given in class. Some questions will ask for a short identification or definition. But other questions will be essay questions. You can expect that there may be a question on any of the major themes that we will cover in class: counterfeiting and spiritual war; the structure of Revelation; the four schools of interpretation; hermeneutics of symbolism; historical setting; theophany; the millennium; the consummation. There will also be one general question that you may think about beforehand: "What was most valuable in what you have learned about the Book of Revelation in this course?"

4. Discussion session

In addition to our regularly scheduled hours for NT 311, I intend to have one extra 55-minute "discussion session," where students may come and follow up with questions and discussion with regard to any issues on Revelation that they wish to pursue. The exact time for this session will be set once we have a class schedule and the class has begun to meet.

E. Policies

1. As in other classes, we work on the honor system.
2. Please do not access other sites on the internet during class, or use your technology for purposes unrelated to class. It is a courtesy to your professor (I would like your full attention!). I think it is also a courtesy to you--you will learn more deeply.

Outline:

- I. Introduction to the course (see previous pages)
- II. Counterfeiting (13:1-18)
- III. Structure.
- IV. Underlying choices of hermeneutical approach (see 9:1-11).
- V. Historical situation (2:1-3:22).
- VI. Theophany (1:9-20). (Moved to readings)
- VII. Millennium (20:1-10).
- VIII. Consummation (21:1-22:5).
- IX. Worship (5:1-14). (Omitted for lack of time)

NT 311 I. Introduction by Poythress at WTS

1.1

Studying Revelation



Vern Sheridan Poythress
Westminster Theological Seminary

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A. Organization of the Course

- ♦ **Purpose:** understand and appreciate Revelation
- ♦ **Strategy:** focus on themes and issues
 - Counterfeiting (13:1-18)
 - Structure
 - Hermeneutical issues
 - Theophany (1:9-20)
 - Millennium (20:1-10)
 - Consummation (21:1-22:5)

Assignments

- ♦ General Epistles has its own assignments
- ♦ Reading
 - Revelation in translation
 - A few pages in various introductions
 - *The Returning King*
 - Part of *Theophany*
- ♦ A midterm examination

Office Hours

Office hours will be announced in class.

B. Bibliography

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| ♦ Beale | ♦ Best technical |
| ♦ Beasley-Murray | ♦ Best short |
| ♦ Caird | ♦ Modernist, but creative |
| ♦ Morris | ♦ Good |
| ♦ Mounce | ♦ Good |
| ♦ Dennis Johnson | ♦ Very good |
| ♦ Wilcock | ♦ Semipopular |
| ♦ Colclasure | ♦ Very popular |
| ♦ Poythress | ♦ Semipopular |
| ♦ Guthrie | ♦ Popular, thematic |

Topics in Bibliography

- ♦ 1. Commentaries
- ♦ 2. Apocalyptic
- ♦ 3. Hermeneutical issues
- ♦ 4. The millennium

NT 311 I. Introduction by Poythress at WTS

1.2

C. How to Approach Revelation

- ♦ Vision of God's victory
- ♦ Summarized by 1 John 5:4-5; Rev. 17:14; Rev. 12:10.
- ♦ God rules history, and will bring it to its consummation in Christ.
- ♦ You can understand.
- ♦ Sing it.



The Main Course Materials

- ♦ The main course materials are contained in **The Book of Revelation: A Guide for Understanding**, which can be downloaded.
- ♦ It contains almost all the visual materials shown on screen.
- ♦ In class, I advise you to listen and take notes without referring to the course materials.

Attentiveness

Multitasking?

- ♦ Courtesy to teacher
- ♦ Depth and application
- ♦ No internet or computer games or cell phones

Song from Rev. 19:6-7

Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. (2X)

Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory unto him.

Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

Song from Rev. 4:11

Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy,
Thou art worthy, O Lord.

Thou art worthy to receive glory,
glory, and honor, and power.

For Thou hast created--
hast all things created,
For Thou hast created all things.

And for Thy pleasure they are created;
Thou art worthy, O Lord.

Song from Rev. 5:9-14

Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy,
Thou art worthy, O Lamb.

Thou art worthy To receive glory
And power at the Father's right hand.

For Thou hast redeemed us,
Hast ransomed and cleansed us,
By thy blood setting us free;
In white robes arrayed us, Kings and priests
made us, And we are reigning in Thee.

AN INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION

FOR REGULAR PEOPLE

by Vern S. Poythress, 2002

The Purpose of Revelation

Many people either fear the Book of Revelation or have an unhealthy interest in it. But God designed this book for a very different purpose. Revelation is meant to produce in you comfort, courage, hope, and praise. Do you believe that?

Look at the very beginning of Revelation. Rev 1:3 says, “Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.” God knew that many people would feel timid about this book--that many would say to themselves, “I can’t understand it.” So he gave you special encouragement to read it. Make a point of reading it once or more during the next few months.

In the verse I just quoted (1:3) we already receive a hint about the contents of Revelation. God tells us to “take to heart what is written in it.” Revelation does not give us information just to tickle our fancy. We are meant to “take things to heart.” We ought to be transformed by what we read, to become more faithful servants of Christ. The Book of Revelation is a very practical book.

Note also what it says in 1:1: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place.” To whom is the Book of Revelation written? Not to PhDs, to experts, to prophecy fans, to a narrow inner circle of specialists. God writes it to “his servants”--the servants of Jesus Christ. If you are a follower of Christ, this book is for you. You can understand it, because God knows how to communicate to you. In addition, let me say the obvious. The Book of Revelation is a revelation, “the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:1). “Revelation” means an unveiling, a disclosure, a display of who God is and what he promises to do. The Book is not a concealment, a puzzle, a riddle, as some people think. It is not a puzzle book but a picture book. Its message is so clear that a child can grasp it and be encouraged.

The Message of Revelation

How can I make such bold claims? I will tell you. The message of Revelation is this: God rules history, and he will bring it to its consummation in Christ. The heart of this message is expressed in Revelation 4 and 5. John is given a vision of God seated on his throne (4:2). Here is the king of the universe. He is no idle monarch. His will and his orders created the universe long ago (4:11). His will now is that the whole universe should join in praise of the Lamb (5:11-14). From his throne issue the orders for governing history up to its climax, the time when Christ appears. At that time we will say, “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, ...” (19:6-7). God shows us in Revelation how he is in control, how powerful he is, and what the future must bring. We come to know that God’s promises are trustworthy and that his power is invincible. Hence we can begin to praise God even now, and to sing “Hallelujah!” over his reign. Do you begin to see how encouraging the Book of Revelation can be?

Look again at Revelation 1:1. God shows “his servants what must soon take place.” What is the word “must” doing there? Things “must” take place only because God rules over history and makes sure that they do take place. In the very first verse of Revelation God already hints at the theme that will develop in the course of this book. As we move further into chapter 1, God is introduced as “him who is, and who was, and who is to come” (1:4). God is. He is self-sustaining, all-sufficient. God was. He always has been, from eternity. He is the creator and owner of all things. God “is to come.”

The future that must come is the future defined by God. God will come himself! God will appear, and will ring down the curtain on the course of history.

Revelation is above all a God-centered book. This book is designed to stir your imagination. It sets before you in indelible pictures the truth that we most need to take to heart: God is the King! All the nations are as nothing before him (Isa 40:17). “He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: ‘What have you done?’ ” (Dan 4:35). His goodness, his magnificence, his beauty, his bounty, are the source of all blessing (Rev 22:1, 4:2). The climax of history comes when “the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever” (Rev 11:15). Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords, who will wage war against God’s enemies until all are subdued to him (Rev 19:16; 1 Cor 15:24-25). We find our fulfillment as we serve and praise this marvelous King (Rev 19:1-10).

How to Read Revelation

How then do you read the Book of Revelation?

- Read it prayerfully. Jesus Christ is the source of this Book (Rev 1:1). He alone can give you spiritual eyes and hearts to understand it. Pray to the Lord that he would interpret this book to your heart.
- Focus on the central theme. Read Revelation to see what it says about God ruling history and bringing it to consummation in Christ. Read for the big picture. Don’t be discouraged when you do not understand some detail.

Most people who get into difficulty fail right here. They want to understand the details and to predict future historical pin-pricks before they have even begun to absorb the central message. They are doing things the wrong way around. Nobody can properly understand the details of a book without first understanding the main points.

Be God-centered. Otherwise, you will be like someone who takes holds of a knife by the blade instead of the handle. Or you will be like someone who tries to understand a beautiful painting by looking in a magnifying glass at each blob of paint on the canvas.

- Focus on the hope for the coming of Christ. Watch how the whole Book points forward to Christ’s return.
- Let the images “soak into you.” Get involved in the Book. Don’t try to puzzle it out. Enjoy it. Sing about it. Cheer for the saints. Detest the beast. Rejoice in God’s power and glory. Praise the Lamb.
- Pay attention to Old Testament themes and images that are used in a fresh way. The Book of Revelation has many allusions to Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and the breadth of the Old Testament. Becoming familiar with the Old Testament will help you deepen your appreciation of Revelation, even though the basic message of Revelation comes through to all the servants of Christ.
- Use this Book in times of distress, persecution, and death. Christians of all ages testify that it speaks powerfully to people in deep trouble.

The Organization of Revelation

Many people feel lost when they read Revelation. One vision comes after another until they are disoriented. Actually, the Book of Revelation is carefully and beautifully organized. It is like a Persian rug. To those who become familiar with it, it reveals an intricately interwoven pattern of exquisite beauty. But the patterning is so complex that a newcomer can feel the need for guidance.

The theme of Revelation is--remember?--that God rules history and will bring it to its consummation in Christ. So what is the most important event? Naturally, the second coming of Christ, which brings history to its climax. When we mark off the descriptions of the Second Coming, Revelation divides itself neatly into parts. Seven visionary histories each lead up to a description of the Second

Coming. Before these histories begin, there are two introductory sections, containing a vision of Christ and his messages to the churches. Here is an outline.

- I. “What you [John] have seen”: the vision of Christ, Rev 1:9-20
- II. “What is now”: the state of the seven churches, 2:1-3:22
- III. “What will take place later”: visions concerning the future, 4:1-22:5
 - A. Cycle 1: 7 seals 4:1-8:1
 - B. Cycle 2: 7 trumpets 8:2-11:19
 - C. Cycle 3: 7 symbolic histories 12:1-14:20
 - D. Cycle 4: 7 bowls 15:1-16:21
 - E. Cycle 5: judgment of Babylon,
including 7 messages of judgment 17:1-19:10
 - F. Cycle 6: judgment by the rider on the white horse 19:11-21
 - G. Cycle 7: judgment from the white throne 20:1-21:8
 - H. Culminating vision: the new Jerusalem 21:9-22:5

The first part of the outline is based roughly on Rev 1:19. Part III of the outline is divided so that each “cycle” leads up to a description of the Second Coming. Each cycle pictures for us some aspect of the events leading up to the Second Coming. But each takes a different focus. In addition, the later cycles contain more intense judgments and lead up to the Second Coming more quickly. By the time that we come to cycle 6, the whole cycle focuses on the Second Coming rather than the events leading up to it.

To organize your thinking about these cycles in a convenient way, use the analogy of warfare. In cycle 1, the 7 seals, God sends out 4 horsemen, indicating that he commissions the warfare. Cycle 2 describes effects on the earth. In cycle 3, symbolic histories indicate the depth of the conflict and opposition between the two armies and their leaders. Cycle 4 describes further effects on earth, more intense and comprehensive than before. Cycles 5, 6, and 7 describe the final elimination of the opponents: the elimination of Babylon the seductress (17:1-19:10), the elimination of the powerful persecuting foe (the beast, 19:11-21), and the elimination of the ultimate source of evil (Satan, 20:1-21:8).

Holy War

In Revelation two kingdoms and two armies are poised opposite to one another. The kingdom of God will triumph, but it is opposed by the kingdom of Satan. God controls the whole course of the battle, but it is waged partly among unseen angelic and demonic powers who operate alongside and behind human beings. Human beings have their own role to play, because their commitments and actions display their loyalty to God or to Satan.

We must realize that in all of history, this spiritual battle is going on. Revelation enlightens our spiritual eyes to see the true state of affairs in this universe and in our lives.

The principal actors characteristically appear in visionary form in Revelation. They are brought on stage one by one, as if in a drama. Then God pronounces judgment on them, in the form of rewards or punishments. They are then taken off stage in the reverse order, as the following outline shows.

- A. The Holy Trinity. 4:1-5:14, especially 5:6
- B. The people of God surrounded by creation's beauty 12:1
- C. The dragon (Satan) 12:3
- D. The beasts 13:1-18
 - 1. sea beast 13:1-10
 - 2. earth beast (false prophet) 13:11-18
- E. The people of God as virgin pure 14:1-5
- F. Babylon, the seductive harlot 17:1-18

- F. Judgment on Babylon 18:1-24
- E. Reward for the people of God as virgin pure 19:1-10
- D. Judgment on the beasts 19:11-21
- C. Judgment on the dragon 20:1-10
- B. Reward for the people of God,
surrounded by creation's beauty 21:1-22:5
- A. The Holy Trinity. 22:1

The characters form two groups. God and his servants are opposed by Satan and his servants, who endeavor to counterfeit God's work. We may diagram the relations as follows:

Spiritual Warfare

<u>The True</u>	<u>The Counterfeit</u>
God the Father, source and ruler	Satan
Christ the image of God	The (Sea) Beast, the image of Satan
The Holy Spirit, the persuader	The False Prophet, the propagandist
The people of God, the worshipers	Babylon, the counterfeit church

The Challenge of Revelation

Revelation challenges you to see the world and your life for what it is: a scene of spiritual warfare. There are no noncombatants, no truces, no mercy from the Satanic opponents. But there is victory, brought to a climax when Christ returns. In the meantime, you must be loyal to Christ, your commander and chief. You must obey him, worship him, honor him, praise him without compromise in all your life.

You must beware primarily of two kinds of threats: from the Beast and from the Harlot Babylon. The Beast represents persecuting power. The state, especially in totalitarian countries, threatens to make it difficult for Christians, to impoverish them, to cause them pain, even to kill them if they do not compromise. You must not give in to the Beast, and you must pray that your brothers and sisters in other countries would be strong in faith, looking to their reward from Christ.

The Harlot represents seduction by pleasure, prosperity, and economic advantage (see Rev 17:4, 18:3,19). In Western countries, the blandishments of unbridled pleasure seduce Christians into surrendering their purity. You must stir yourself up to see the consequences of unlawful pleasure (18:4-

8), the beauty of holiness (19:7-8), and the superiority of the lasting pleasures of fellowship with God (22:1-5). Pray that your fellow Christians also would be pure in all their lives.

Major Options for Interpreting Revelation

Over the course of church history, interpreters of Revelation have disagreed with one another primarily about the question of the time of fulfillment of the prophecies of Revelation. There are four major schools of interpretation.

First, the Roman Empire interpretation (which scholars call “preterist”) believes that the bulk of the prophecies were fulfilled in the first few centuries, especially in connection with the fall of the Roman Empire. The beast of Rev 13:1-8 represents the Roman Empire in its persecution of Christians. An alternate form of this approach connects the prophecies primarily with the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Second, the Final Crisis interpretation (“futurist”) believes that the prophecies will be fulfilled at the second coming of Christ and in the events of final crisis immediately preceding the Second Coming. The beast represents the final Anti-Christ who will severely persecute God’s people during the final crisis.

Third, the Church History interpretation (“historicist”) believes that the prophecies are fulfilled in the history of the church from the first century until the Second Coming. The narrative of Revelation is assumed to be in exact chronological order. The early chapters (for example, Revelation 2, 3, and 6) relate to events in the first few centuries, the middle chapters (Revelation 13) relate to events of the Reformation, and the later chapters (Revelation 18, 19) related to events immediately before the Second Coming. The beast represents the Pope in Reformation times.

Fourth, the General Principle interpretation (“idealist”) believes that the prophecies depict general patterns of conflict that repeatedly occur throughout the period between the first and second comings of Christ. The beast represents state persecution of Christians throughout this age.

In my opinion, all of these except the Church History interpretation have considerable merit. The Roman Empire interpretation is relevant, in view of the detailed knowledge of the seven churches displayed in Revelation 2-3, the threat of persecution that those churches experienced (2:10,13), and the thematic connections between Revelation 2-3 and the rest of the book. We cannot ignore that Christ was expressing his concern and encouragement to those people back there, not merely writing directly to us now.

The Final Crisis interpretation is relevant, in view of the fervent hope that Rev 22:20 expresses for the Second Coming, and the way in which earlier parts of the book all lead up to passages that use language associated with the Second Coming. 2 Thessalonians 2 clearly indicates that a final crisis preceding the Second Coming will involve a climactic outbreak of a pattern of wickedness that exists earlier (2 Thess 2:6-8).

The General Principle interpretation is relevant, in view of the fact that Revelation claims to be relevant to all the servants of Christ (1:1), and in view of the fact that Paul teaches us explicitly that there is a general pattern of conflict (2 Thess 2:7). The General Principle approach also explains how the Roman Empire interpretation and the Final Crisis interpretation can in a sense both be right, since both are looking at one manifestation of the general principle. Part of the power of the symbolism of Revelation lies in its fluidity: it is capable of being applied to a multiplicity of cases through church history, and thereby serving to encourage and instruct Christians in every generation. Even the Church History interpretation is not entirely wrong, since it too finds events that are one manifestation of the principles of Revelation.

In view of the element of truth in these approaches, I recommend that we anticipate the possibility of fourfold fulfillment of the great bulk of prophecies in Revelation. (1) Any particular prophecy finds a fulfillment of a preliminary kind in the Roman Empire period. (2) The prophecy finds a climactic fulfillment in the Final Crisis. (3) The prophecy finds fulfillment throughout the age, in that it sets forth a general pattern delineating the character of spiritual war throughout. (4) The prophecy finds fulfillment now, in our time. Our time is not necessarily special, but simply because we live when we

live, we are obliged to think through with greater care what the implications of Scripture are for our present situation.

For Further Reading

Very readable: Chuck Colclasure, *The Overcomers: The Unveiling of Hope, Comfort, and Encouragement in the Book of Revelation*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1981.

Semipopular: Michael Wilcock, *I Saw Heaven Opened: The Message of Revelation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1975.

Vern S. Poythress, *The Returning King: A Guide to the Book of Revelation*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2000.

More detailed: Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977.

2. Counterfeiting

The Counterfeit Trinity:

Combating Spiritual Corruption Monsters

Vern Sheridan Poythress
Westminster Seminary

A. Counterfeiting

Satan's Assistant: Rev. 13:1

Satan (12:3)	Assistant (13:1)
♦ Dragon	♦ Beast
♦ 7 heads	♦ 7 heads
♦ 10 horns	♦ 10 horns
♦ Crowns on heads	♦ Crowns on horns
♦ Pattern	♦ Reflected image

Imaging

– God the Father	Christ the Son (Col. 1:15)
♦ God	Adam
↙ Counterfeiting ↘	
♦ Dragon Pattern	Beast (Rev. 13:1) Reflected Image

Counterfeit Trinity

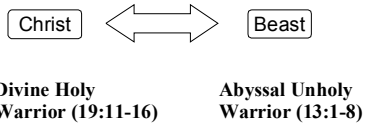
Original	Function	Counterfeit
♦ The Father	originates	♦ Dragon
♦ Christ the Son	executes	♦ Beast
♦ Spirit	witnesses	♦ False Prophet

The Beast Counterfeits Christ

Christ	Feature	Beast
19:12	Diadems	13:1
19:11,12,16	Name	13:1
12:5,10	Power	13:2
1:18	Resurrection	13:3,12
1:6	Worship	13:4
Exo. 15:3,11-12	Praise	13:4
14:1; 7:3	Seal	13:16
5:9	Nations' allegiance	13:7-8

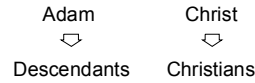
2. Counterfeiting

Eschatological War



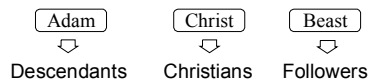
Representative Heads

♦ Two representatives, 1 Cor. 15:45-49.



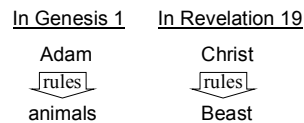
Nature of the Beast

- ♦ Beast as Third Man from Abyss.
- ♦ A head representing a whole kingdom.
- ♦ His worshippers bear his mark, 13:16; 14:9.



Failure of the Beast

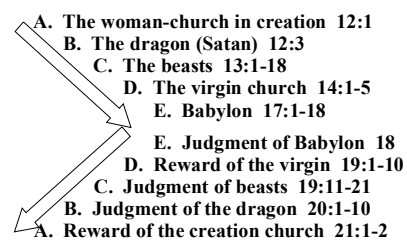
- ♦ Symbolically speaking, he is a beast.
- ♦ Destined to be subdued by man.



Who Counterfeits the Bride?

Original	Function	Counterfeit
♦ The Father	originates	♦ Dragon
♦ Christ the Son	executes	♦ Beast
♦ Spirit	witnesses	♦ False Prophet
♦ Bride	gather, worship	♦ Prostitute

The Role of the Characters in the Course of the Battle



2. Counterfeiting

Lessons from Counterfeiting

- ♦ You are either for God or against him.
- ♦ Satan as a creature must imitate God (2 Cor. 11:14).
 - Danger in passing off the counterfeit
 - Satan is not the Creator/Originator
- ♦ Repulsiveness of the counterfeit.
- ♦ Fit punishment for followers is to be under the Beast.
- ♦ God controls Satan and all history, Job 1-2; Ps. 76:10; Rom. 8:28.

B. Satan's Role

Satan's Repeated Pattern



- ♦ Satan cannot create; he must imitate.
- ♦ Satan always follows the same pattern.
- ♦ Spiritual war shows a constant pattern.
- ♦ Satan suffers repeated defeats.

Repeated Defeat of the Dragon

- ♦ Exodus from Egypt. Isa. 51:9-10; Ps. 74:13-14?
- ♦ Restoration from Babylon. Isa. 51:9-11
- ♦ Babylon destroys Egypt. Ezek. 29:3-6; 32:2-5
- ♦ Time of fulfillment. Isa. 27:1
- ♦ First coming of Christ. John 12:31; Luke 10:18; Rev. 12:9; Rev. 20:2?
- ♦ Second coming of Christ. Rev. 20:2? Rev. 20:10

Less Obvious Defeats

- ♦ Creation. Job 26:12 (and repeatedly); Ps. 104:7//Ps. 106:9
- ♦ Providential rule of the sea. Job 26:12; Ps. 89:10
- ♦ Noah's flood. Ps. 74:13-14? 106:10-11 (similar to flood)
- ♦ Crossing the Jordan by Joshua, Elijah, and Elisha. Josh. 3; 2 Kings 2:8,14

Application of Satan's Defeat to Us

- ♦ Satan has been decisively defeated Col. 2:15, Rev. 12:7-12.
- ♦ Christ's crucifixion and resurrection accomplished it, Rev. 1:18.
- ♦ We do not fear death, Rev. 1:18.
- ♦ We can endure momentary injustices.
- ♦ Satan's final defeat is guaranteed, Rev. 20:10.

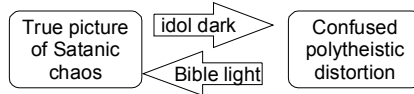
2. Counterfeiting

The Dragon

- ♦ **Biblical background of a sea monster**
 - Leviathan לוֹיִתָּן Isa. 27:1; Ps. 74:14; Ps. 104:26
 - Sea creature תַּנִּינִי Gen. 1:21; Isa. 27:1; 51:9
 - Rahab רָהַב Isa. 51:9; Ps. 89:11
- ♦ **Extrabiblical mythology**
 - Akkadian creation epic
 - Baal legends

Myths of Combatting Monsters

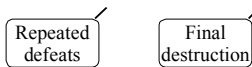
- ♦ Satan threatens monstrous chaos
- ♦ People sense the fear of chaos and Satan (general revelation)
- ♦ In idolatry they twist the truth



- ♦ The Bible unravels the twist

Summary of Defeats

- ♦ Spiritual war throughout history
- ♦ The dragon is repeatedly defeated
- ♦ The pattern of defeat leads up to his final destruction.



Pattern of Combat (Exodus 15)

- ♦ Threat to order 15:9
- ♦ Appearance of the divine warrior 15:3, 6, 12
- ♦ Combat 15:7



- ♦ **Victory 15:7, 4**

Fruits of Combat (Exodus 15)

- ♦ (Consignment of foes to the abyss 15:4-5)
- ♦ Salvation for adherents of the warrior 15:13
- ♦ Praise 15:1-2
- ♦ Manifestation of kingship 15:14-16
- ♦ House building 15:17
- ♦ Fertility of the restored order 15:17

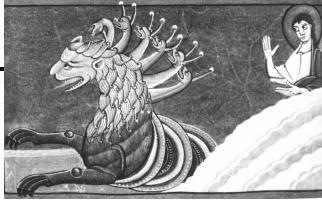


Combat in Revelation

- ♦ Motifs of combat pervade Revelation
- ♦ They instruct us in persecution and temptation
- ♦ See the true situation and persevere, 12:11
- ♦ Victory is by endurance in death
- ♦ Not direct military resistance, 12:10

2. Counterfeiting

C. Role of the Beast



Bamberg Apocalypse

Background for Rev. 13:1-10

Beast of
Rev. 13:1-10



OT text ?

Daniel 7 and Rev. 13:1-10

Daniel 7

- ① lion
- ② bear
- ③ leopard
- ④ iron teeth & ten horns



Revelation 13

- ◆ lion's mouth
- ◆ bear's feet
- ◆ leopard
- ◆ 10 horns

Composite horror

Beast as Demonized State

Beast (Rev. 13:1-8)



4 beasts (Dan. 7)



4 idol kingdoms
(Dan. 2)



Last of the 4
is Rome



Roman Emperor
demands worship



Satan's Counterfeit "Son"

- ◆ Rev. 12:13-17:
Satan cannot defeat the church by deceit alone.

Satan's deceit



Church witness

- ◆ Rev. 13:1,2,4:
he creates a monster in his image.



Dragon

Beast

Repeated Manifestations

- ◆ Satan has repeated defeats (pattern or war)
- ◆ The Beast can have
 - repeated manifestations
 - and repeated defeats.

Satan

Image

forces

Beast

Like father,
like son.

2. Counterfeiting

Understanding Our Time

♦ What is our era of redemptive history?

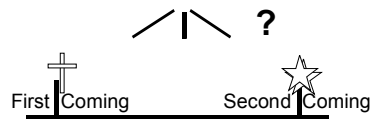
♦ When does it begin?

♦ When does it end?

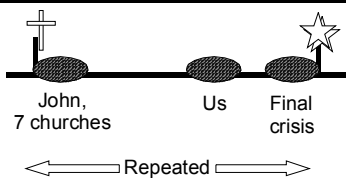


Time of Fulfillment

When is the primary fulfillment?



Foci of Fulfillment



Fourfold Work of Beast

♦ Roman persecution ♦ Suetonius, *Domitian* 12.2.

♦ Final persecution ♦ 2 Thess. 2:6-8

♦ Persecution NOW, ♦ Totalitarian aspirations
2 Tim 3:1,12

♦ Repeated
persecution

♦ Dan. 7 spans this age; 2
Tim. 3:1, 12

Repeated Wickedness

already

- ♦ 2 Thess. 2:7
- ♦ restrained mystery
- ♦ “mystery of lawlessness”

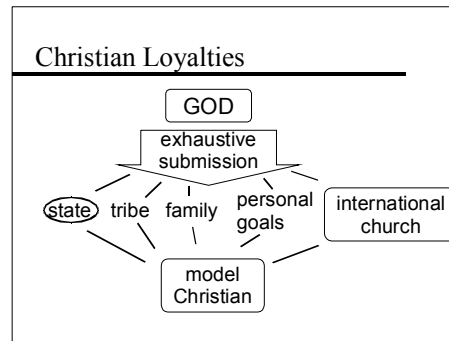
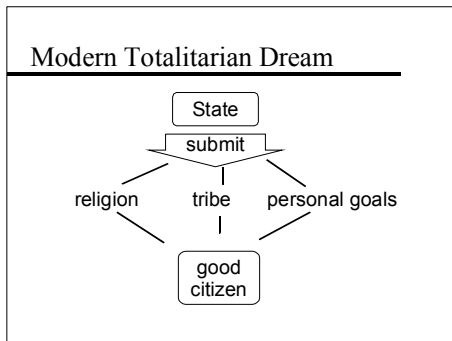
yet to come

- ♦ 2 Thess. 2:8
- ♦ unrestrained, revealed
- ♦ “man of lawlessness”

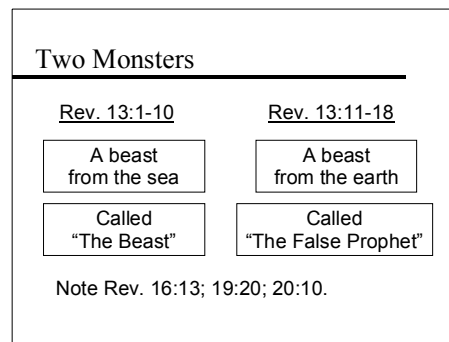
Analogous Climaxes

	already	yet to come
2 Thess. 2:7-8	mystery (7)	man of lawlessness (8)
Rev. 17:1-18	Beast that was (8)	eighth king (11)
1 John 2:18	many antichrists	supreme Antichrist

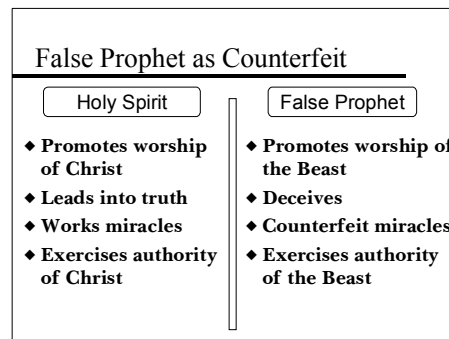
2. Counterfeiting



D. The False Prophet



- The False Prophet**
- ♦ False Prophet assists the Beast.
 - ♦ He promotes worship of the Beast, 13:12-15.
 - ♦ He counterfeits the Holy Spirit.



2. Counterfeiting

E. The Prostitute



West Flemish Apocalypse

Two Opponents

Who will defeat God's people for me?

I will

I will

Strategy of Opposition

How?

Persecution!

Seduction with money and sex!

Response to Opposition

Calling of the church:

Light-bearing Witness

Virgin purity

Endurance (13:10)

Separation (18:4)

Opposition:

Persecuting power of the Beast

Seductive luxury of the Prostitute

Prostitute Depends on Beast

- ◆ Prostitute sits on the Beast (Rev 17).
- ◆ Beast and Prostitute go together.

Beast ↔ Prostitute

- ◆ Fourfold manifestations of the Beast lead to fourfold manifestations of the Prostitute

Beast and Prostitute

Beast ↔ Prostitute

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| ◆ Roman persecution | ◆ Roman seduction |
| ◆ Final persecution | ◆ Final seduction |
| ◆ Persecution NOW | ◆ Seduction NOW |
| ◆ Repeated persecution | ◆ Repeated seduction |

2. Counterfeiting

Fourfold Work of Prostitute

- ♦ Roman seduction ♦ Jezebel (2:20-23)
- ♦ Final seduction ♦ 2 Thess. 2:10-11
- ♦ Seduction NOW ♦ Compromise with worldliness:
 - money
 - sex
- ♦ Repeated seduction ♦ Dan. 7 spans this age

F. Levels of Application

Idols Worldwide

Beast

- ♦ Totalitarian Power
 - Communism

Prostitute

- ♦ Immoral Pleasure
 - Corrupt business
 - Corrupt sexuality

False Prophet

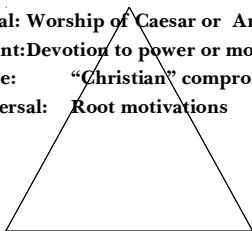
- ♦ Propaganda

Revealing Contrasts

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| ♦ God vs. Satan:
Transcendence | ♦ False religion
♦ Human autonomy |
| ♦ Christ vs. Beast:
Power | ♦ Liberation
♦ Salvation through technique and state |
| ♦ Bride vs. Harlot:
Worship | ♦ Integrate native religions
♦ Money, pleasure |

Forms of Idolatry

- ♦ Literal: Worship of Caesar or Artemis
- ♦ Blatant: Devotion to power or money
- ♦ Subtle: “Christian” compromises
- ♦ Universal: Root motivations



Idols in USA

Beast

- ♦ Power
 - State

Prostitute

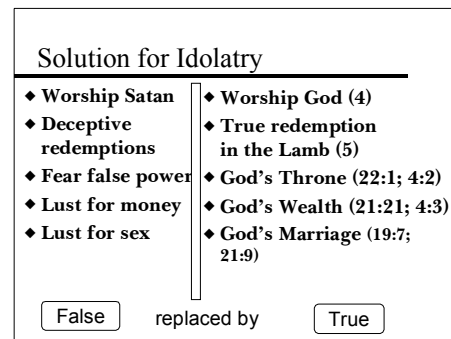
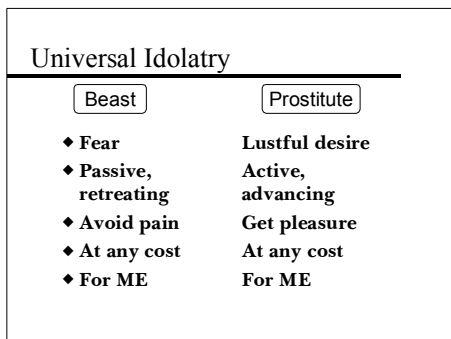
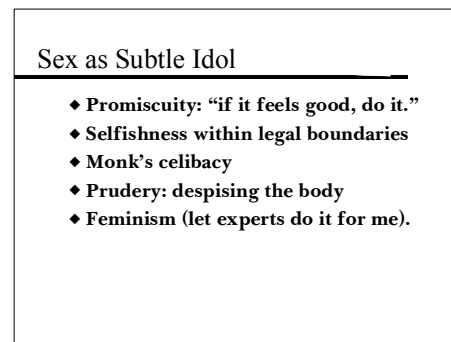
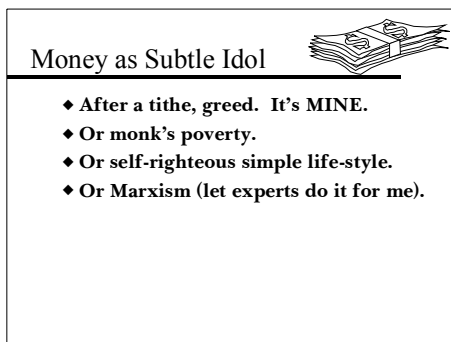
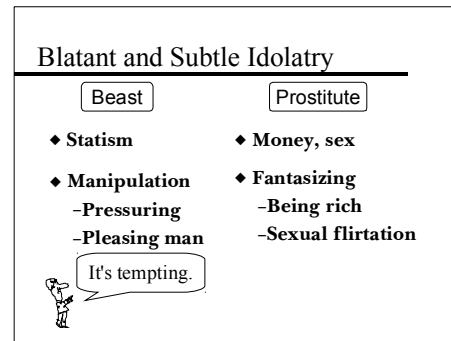
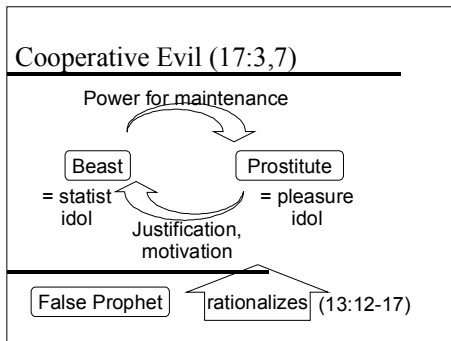
- ♦ Pleasure
 - Leisure

False Prophet

- ♦ Propaganda
 - Education
 - Media



2. Counterfeiting



2. Counterfeiting

Destruction of Idols

- ♦ God judges idols, 15:1.



- ♦ Idols destroy idolaters, 17:16-17.



Prostitute

Hallelujah!



Examples of Self-Destruction

- ♦ Statism consumes wealth (communism).
- ♦ Self-pity needs suffering.
- ♦ Self-righteousness is self-willed.
- ♦ Self-love repels would-be lovers.
- ♦ God will purify you to the utmost.

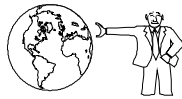
G. Truth and Error

Counterfeit Ideas

- ♦ False ideas are counterfeits
- ♦ Institutionalized
- ♦ Containing enough truth to be plausible
- ♦ Containing spiritual poison
- ♦ Originating in Satanic deceit
- ♦ Useful for Christians?

Bad Reactions to Counterfeits

- ♦ Pure rejection



- ♦ Pure acceptance



Using Counterfeit Ideas

- ♦ Extract the truth
- ♦ Set in a Christian context
- ♦ But will we fall prey to deceit?
- ♦ The importance of spiritual discernment in scholarship and cultural analysis
- ♦ Revelation as promoting discernment
- ♦ Ultimate failure of the deceit

OUTLINES OF REVELATION

by Vern S. Poythress

The following pages contain diverse outlines of the Book of Revelation. Each outline concentrates on one strand of the total structure of Revelation. Revelation as a whole is so richly structured that no one outline will express equally well all the beautiful relations that it contains.

1. Epistolary structure of Revelation (p. 1)

We concentrate first on "formal" and grammatical signals for dividing up sections of Revelation. Repeated phrases ("first seal," "second seal," etc.) offer a significant clue. Revelation as a whole has the normal form of a Greek letter of the first century, to which is added a preface in 1:1-3. Individual visions (paragraphs) are normally introduced by the phrase καὶ εἶδον ("and I saw") or occasionally ἤκουσα ("I heard").

2. Rhetorical structure of Revelation (p. 3a)

Next we concentrate on the actual contents of Revelation. We focus on the linear arrangement of vision. We preserve at this point the normal structure of a Greek letter (Greeting, Body, Closing salutation). The body of the letter is then organized into major chronological blocks (1:9-20, 2:1-3:22, 4:1-22:5), concerning past, present, and future. In the last and main block, the most prominent event is the Second Coming of Christ. There are seven descriptions of the Second Coming, each of which is accompanied by judgments leading up to it. Thus there are seven cycles of judgment. In making our decisions here, we paid some attention to clues offered by the earlier, "formal" study. But the main impulse comes from the content of each section rather than its formal features.

- a. What distinguishes the 7 cycles of judgment, if indeed each lead up to the Second Coming? P. 3a uses the theme of holy war to help explicate the unique focus of each cycle.

3. Fine structure in the rhetorical outline of Revelation (p. 4)

Within the 7 cycles, some further explanation is needed for the prominent interludes in 7:1-17 and 10:1-11:14 which fall between the 6th and 7th judgment of a cycle. These interludes speak prominently of promise and comfort, in counterpoint to the grim contents of the judgments around them. Observing this fact alerts us to the bipolar character of the cycles of judgment. The cycles begin with a scene which introduces the major character, typically the holy source for the judgments (a; positive). Then follow six judgments falling preeminently on the enemies of God (b; negative). The following interlude encourages the people of God (a'; positive). The 7th judgment brings intense punishment to God's enemies (bb; negative).

Once we have seen this pattern in two clear cases (7 seals, 7 trumpets), we can extend it to cases that are somewhat less clear (7 symbolic histories, 7 bowls, 7 judgments on Babylon). The pattern even is applicable to the white horse judgment (19:11-21) where the 7-fold judgment is no longer clearly discernible.

The same pattern may be operable on a larger scale (p. 5a). The millennial passage (20:1-10) may be an interlude between the first 6 cycles of judgment (5:1-19:21) and the 7th cycle (20:11-21:8). If we reverse the positive and negative polarities of good and evil, the same pattern repeats itself at a still larger level in 1:12-22:5. This arrangement is a classic "Chinese box" structure in which the largest box is 1:12-22:5. This box has 4 "compartments," A (1:12-20), B (2:1-3:22), A' (4:1-21:8), and BB (21:9-

22:5). Inside the 3d compartment is another box with the same structure: A (4:1-11), B (5:1-19:21), A' (20:1-10), and BB (20:11-21:8). Inside these compartments are more boxes with the same structure.

4. Symbolic personages in Revelation (p. 5b)

The principal symbolic character of Revelation come on stage one at a time. They receive their final recompense and in effect go off stage in the reverse order.

5. Motifs in Revelation (in chiasm) (p. 6)

Repeated motifs in Revelation reveal a chiastic pattern with the beast in the center.

6. Focus on the 7s in Revelation reveals a pattern of 7 sevens related in a chiasm(p. 7)

7. Symbolic analogies with indwelling (p. 8)

The theme of the manifestation of God ("theophany") and his dwelling in creation unfolds a group of symbolic analogies which inaugurate the 7 cycles. All these images are rooted in the being of God and his dwelling with us.

8. Bipolarity of characters of Revelation (p. 9)

The symbolic characters of Revelation are organized in terms of their functions, their domains and their allegiances (true versus counterfeit)

9. Events in war (p. 9b)

The theme of holy war in Revelation involves a complex of characteristic events, all derived from themes of Exodus 15.

10. Outline based on symbolic personages (p. 10-11)

The chiasm of symbolic personages on p. 5 can be expanded into a motific outline of Revelation as a whole, in which the theme of witness is prominent.

11. Victory in martyrdom (pp. 13-15)

The paradox of victory in martyrdom is analyzed in terms of the pattern in Christ's life and in the life of Christian martyrs. It is then extended to an analysis of preliminary and final victory in the cycles of judgment in Revelation (p. 12)

3. Structure of Revelation by Vern S. Poythress, WTS

3.1



The Structure of Revelation: Appreciating the Tapestry



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A. Formal Structure: A Letter



Obtaining Outlines

- Many possible outlines for Rev. ?
- We start with more formal signals.

Formal signals



Outline
based on form



Outline
based on content



Formal Signals

- We watch
- grammar
 - repeated phrases

Formal signals

Grammar

Repeated phrases

"First seal," "Second," etc.



Revelation as a Letter

Revelation is

- a letter,
- plus preface.

Formal signals



Preface:
1:1-3

+

Letter:
1:4-22:21



Epistolary Structure

- I. Prologue 1:1-3
- II. Introduction of Letter 1:4-5a
- III. Body of the Letter 1:5b-22:20
 - A. Body-Opening 1:5b-8
 - *B. Body-Middle 1:9-22:17
 - C. Body-Closing 22:18-20
- IV. Conclusion 22:21

3. Structure of Revelation by Vern S. Poythress, WTS

3.2



Expanded View of Body Middle

1. Introduction 1:9
2. Visions 1:10-22:5 (each ἐν πνεύματι)
 - a. Of Christ 1:10-3:22
 - b. In heaven (δείξω σοι) 4:1-16:21
 - c. In the wilderness (δείξω σοι) 17:1-21:8
 - d. On the mountain (δείξω σοι) 21:9-22:5
3. Conclusion 22:6-17



Finding Section Breaks

- b. Vision in heaven (δείξω σοι) 4:1-16:21
 - (1) Throne vision (μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον) 4:1-11
 - (2) Scroll (καὶ εἶδον [twice]) 5:1-14
 - (a) scroll 5:1-5
 - (b) lamb (καὶ εἶδον) 5:6-10
 - (c) angelic song (καὶ εἶδον) 5:11-14
 - (3) 7 seals (καὶ εἶδον [twice]) 6:1-8:1
 - (a) 1st (καὶ ἤκουσα ... καὶ εἶδον) 6:1-2
 - (b) 2d seal (ἤκουσα) 6:3-4
 - (c) 3d seal (ἤκουσα ... καὶ εἶδον) 6:5-6
 - (d) 4th seal (ἤκουσα ... καὶ εἶδον) 6:7-8



Markers for Section Breaks

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Major visions | ☐ in the Spirit; I will show you
ἐν πνεύματι, δείξω σοι |
| ☐ Sections | ☐ Numbering, repetition
2d seal, 3d seal, etc. |
| ☐ Smaller sections | ☐ “and I saw”
καὶ εἶδον |



B. The Value of Outlines

- ☐ Interpret symbols in context.
- ☐ See parallel passages as wholes.
- ☐ Reject disunity.
- ☐ Appreciate the beauty.
- ☐ Focus on relationship, not chronology.



C. Rhetorical Structure:

Looking for the Second Coming



From Form to Plot

- ☐ Begin with epistolary form
- ☐ Go to Rhetorical structure

Outline
based on form



Outline
based on content

Preface + Letter ➡

Visions

Epistolary Structure of Revelation: An Outline

- I. Prologue 1:1-3
- II. Introduction of the Epistle 1:4-5a
- III. Body of the Epistle 1:5b-22:20
 - A. Body-Opening 1:5b-8
 - B. Body-Middle 1:9-22:17
 - 1. Introduction 1:9
 - 2. Visions 1:10-22:5
 - a. Vision of Christ (in the Spirit) 1:10-3:22
 - (1) The meeting with Christ 1:10-20
 - (a) Announcement 1:10-11
 - (b) The sight (εἶδον) 1:12-16
 - (c) Response (ὅτε εἶδον) 1:17-20
 - (2) Messages to the churches 2:1-3:22
 - (a) Ephesus 2:1-7
 - (b) Smyrna 2:8-11
 - (c) Pergamum 2:12-17
 - (d) Thyatira 2:18-29
 - (e) Sardis 3:1-6
 - (f) Philadelphia 3:7-13
 - (g) Laodicea 3:14-22
 - b. Vision in heaven (in the Spirit) (δείξω σοι) 4:1-16:21
 - (1) Throne vision (μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον) 4:1-11
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 - (c) 3d seal (ἤκουσα ... καὶ εἶδον) 6:5-6
 - (d) 4th seal (ἤκουσα ... καὶ εἶδον) 6:7-8
 - (e) 5th seal (εἶδον) 6:9-11
 - (f) 6th seal (καὶ εἶδον) 6:12-17
 - (g) parenthesis 7:1-17
 - i. four sealing angels (μετὰ τοῦτο εἶδον) 7:1-8
 - ii. a great multitude (μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον) 7:9-17
 - (h) 7th seal 8:1

- (4) 7 trumpets 8:2-11:19
 - (a) 7 angels together (καὶ εἶδον) 8:2-6
 - (b) 1st angel 8:7
 - (c) 2d angel 8:8-9
 - (d) 3d angel 8:10-11
 - (e) 4th angel 8:12-13
 - i. angelic announcement 8:12
 - ii. eagle announcement 8:13
 - (f) 5th angel 9:1-12
 - (g) 6th angel 9:13-11:14
 - i. 6th angel 9:13-21
 - ii. the angel on sea and land (καὶ εἶδον) 10:1-11:14
 - (h) 7th angel 11:15-19
- (5) the woman and the dragon 12:1-17
- (6) the beast (καὶ εἶδον) 13:1-10
- (7) the lamb-beast (καὶ εἶδον) 13:11-18
- (8) the 144,000 (καὶ εἶδον) 14:1-5
- (9) 3 angelic messengers (καὶ εἶδον) 14:6-13
- (10) the son of man (καὶ εἶδον) 14:14-20
- (11) 7 bowls (καὶ εἶδον [twice]) 15:1-16:21
 - (a) the song of Moses (καὶ εἶδον) 15:2-4
 - (b) 7 angels in the temple (καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον) 15:5-16:1
 - (c) 1st bowl 16:2
 - (d) 2d bowl 16:3
 - (e) 3d bowl 16:4-7
 - (f) 4th bowl 16:8-9
 - (g) 5th bowl 16:10-11
 - (h) 6th bowl 16:12-16
 - (i) 7th bowl 16:17-21
- c. Vision in the wilderness (in the Spirit) (δείξω σοι) 17:1-21:8
 - (1) the harlot Babylon (καὶ εἶδον) 17:3-18
 - (2) announcement of the fall of Babylon (μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον) 18:1- 19:10
 - (3) heaven opened (καὶ εἶδον) 19:11-16
 - (4) the great supper (καὶ εἶδον) 19:17-18
 - (5) capture of the beast and false prophet (καὶ εἶδον) 19:19-21
 - (6) binding of Satan (καὶ εἶδον) 20:1-3
 - (7) first resurrection (καὶ εἶδον) 20:4-10
 - (8) the great white throne (καὶ εἶδον [twice]) 20:11-15
 - (9) new heaven and earth (καὶ εἶδον) 21:1-8
- d. Vision on the great high mountain (in the Spirit) (δείξω σοι) 21:9-22:5
- 3. Conclusion 22:6-17
- C. Body-Closing 22:18-20
- IV. Conclusion 22:21

3. Structure of Revelation by Vern S. Poythress, WTS

3.3



Unfolding Thought

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| I. Prologue 1:1-3 | I. Prologue 1:1-3 |
| II. Introduction 1:4-5a | II. Greeting 1:4-5a |
| III. Body 1:5b-22:20 | III. Body 1:5b-22:20 |
| A. Opening 1:5b-8 | A. Thanksgiving 1:5b-8 |
| B. Middle 1:9-22:17 | *B. Visions 1:9-22:6 |
| C. Closing 22:18-20 | C. Exhortation 22:6-20 |
| IV. Conclusion 22:21 | IV. Closing salutation 22:21 |



Divisions in Rev. 1:19

- “The things that you have seen,” 1:9-20 
- “Those that are,” 2:1-3:22 
- “Those that are to take place after this,” 4:1-22:5 
- ✦ 1:19 ἃ μέλλει γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα
- ✦ 4:1 ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα



Expansion of Thought

- I. Prologue 1:1-3
- II. Greeting 1:4-5a
- III. Body 1:5b-22:20
 - A. Thanksgiving 1:5b-8
 - *B. Visions 1:9-22:6
 - 1. “The things that you have seen,” 1:9-20
 - 2. “Those that are,” 2:1-3:22
 - *3. “Those that are to take place,” 4:1-22:5
 - C. Final exhortations 22:6-20
- IV. Closing salutation 22:21



Developing Plot

- Begin with letter form and Rev. 1:19.
- Look for language of Second Coming.
- Similar language applies to earlier “comings.”
- Earlier judgments anticipate the great judgment.
- Hence, Second Coming is included.

Look for his Coming!



7 Cycles

- 1. “What you have seen,” 1:9-20
- 2. “What is,” 2:1-3:22
- *3. “What is to be,” 4:1-22:5

7 cycles of judgment leading to Second Coming

culmination in new Jerusalem



What Are the Cycles?

- 1. 7 seals 4:1-8:1
- 2. 7 trumpets 8:2-11:19
- 3. Symbolic figures 12:1-14:20
- 4. 7 bowls 15:1-16:21
- 5. Judgment of Babylon 17:1-19:10
- 6. White horse judgment 19:11-21
- 7. White throne judgment 20:1-21:8

Culmination: new Jerusalem 21:9-22:5

Rhetorical Structure of Revelation: An Outline

- I. Prologue 1:1-3
- II. Greeting 1:4-5a
- III. Body 1:5b-22:20
 - A. Thanksgiving 1:5b-8
 - B. Main part 1:9-22:6
 - 1. What you have seen 1:9-20
 - 2. What is 2:1-3:22
 - 3. What is to be 4:1-22:5
 - a. Cycle 1: 7 seals 4:1-8:1
 - b. Cycle 2: 7 trumpets 8:2-11:19
 - c. Cycle 3: symbolic figures and the harvest 12:1-14:20
 - d. Cycle 4: 7 bowls 15:1-16:21
 - e. Cycle 5: judgment of Babylon 17:1-19:10
 - f. Cycle 6: white horse judgment 19:11-21
 - g. Cycle 7: white throne judgment 20:1-21:8
 - h. The 8th and culminating act: new Jerusalem 21:9-22:5
 - C. Final instructions and exhortations 22:6-20
- IV. Closing salutation 22:21

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Cycle 1: Rev 6:12-17 **Is It the Second Coming?**

- 6:12-17 based on Jesus' Olivet discourse.
- "The great day of wrath," (6:17) (cf. 1 Thess. 5:2,3, Mal. 4:1, Joel 2:10,11).
- 7 (or 6?) nature catastrophes
- 7 categories of affected people
- "Wrath" of the Lamb
- Removal of sky (6:14) corresponds to 20:11.

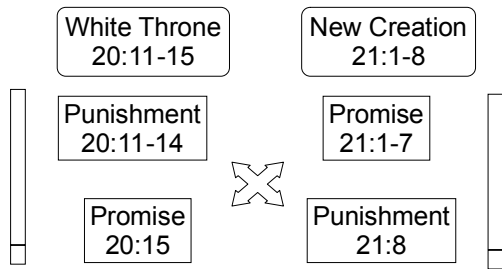


Second Coming in Each Cycle

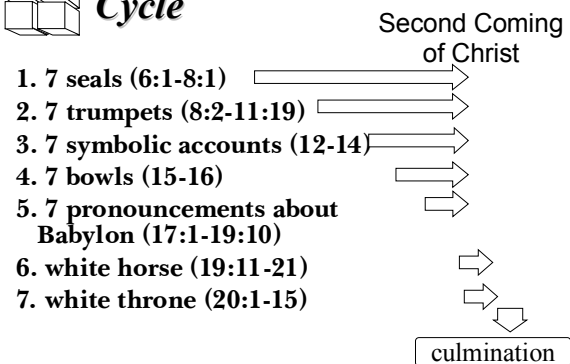
2. Trumpets: 10:7, 11:15-18 ("judged").
3. 14:14-20: "son of man" appears with ripe harvest.
4. Bowls: "wrath is completed," 15:1.
5. 19:1-10: fall of Babylon and marriage supper of the Lamb.
6. 19:11-21: last battle.
7. 20:11-15: Last Judgment.



20:11-21:8 United



Starting Point of Each Cycle



Overview of Progression

- Commission
- Prosecution of war
- Elimination of evil

culmination in new Jerusalem



Progression of 7 Cycles

- Commission
 1. 7 seals: scouts
- Prosecution of war
 2. 7 trumpets: effects on earth
 3. 7 symbolic accounts: characters
 4. 7 bowls: more effects on earth
- Elimination of evil
 5. 7 messages about Babylon: seductress
 6. white horse: power source
 7. white throne: all evil

culmination

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Remembering the Cycles: Jericho

Remember!



1. 7 seals
 2. 7 trumpets
 3. Symbolic accounts
 4. 7 bowls
 5. Words on Babylon
 6. White horse
 7. White throne
- ☐ send spies
 - ☐ march and blow trumpets
 - ☐ keep from "devoted" things
 - ☐ shout of judgment
 - ☐ the walls fall
 - ☐ kill (but not Rahab)
 - ☐ dispose of the spoil
 - ☐ construct new city

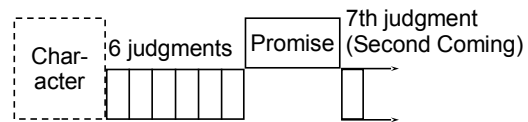
new Jerusalem



Detail of Cycle 1: 7 Seals

Cycle 1: 7 seals 5:1-8:1

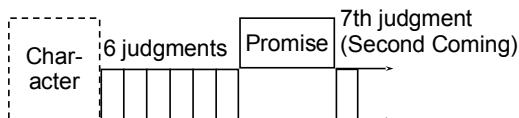
- a. Character: the Lamb 5:1-14
- b. 6 judgments 6:1-17
- a'. Promise for the church 7:1-17
- bb. 7th and final judgment 8:1



Detail of Cycle 2: 7 Trumpets

Cycle 2: 7 trumpets 8:2-11:19

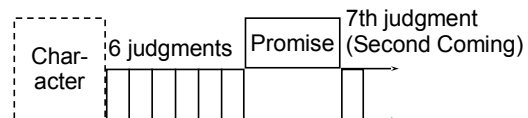
- a. Characters: 7 angels 8:2-6
- b. 6 judgments 8:7-9:21
- a'. Promise for the church 10:1-11:14
- bb. 7th and final judgment 11:15-19



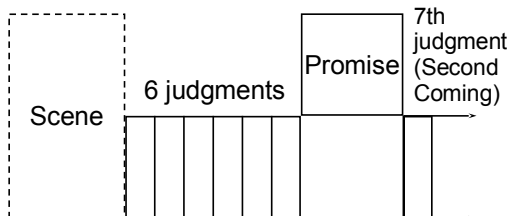
Detail of Cycle 3: Symbolic Accounts

Cycle 3: Symbolic accounts 12:1-14:20

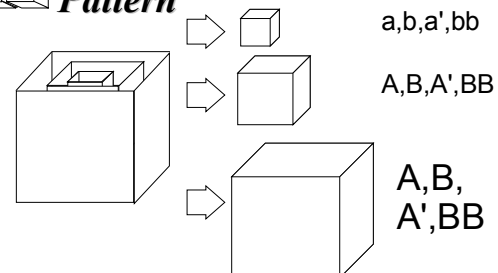
- a. Characters: woman and dragon 12:1-6
- b. 6 accounts 12:7-14:11
- a'. Promise for the church 14:12-13
- bb. 7th account: final judgment 14:14-20



Detail of Cycles



a,b,a',bb in a Larger Pattern



Detail of Rhetorical Structure

1. Cycle 1: 7 seals 5:1-8:1
 - a. Scene: the recompenser 5:1-14
 - b. 6 judgments 6:1-17
 - a'. Promise for the church 7:1-17
 - bb. 7th judgment 8:1
2. Cycle 2: 7 trumpets 8:2-11:19
 - a. Scene: recompensers 8:2-6
 - b. 6 judgments 8:7-9:21
 - a'. Promise for the church 10:1-11:14
 - bb. 7th judgment 11:15-19
3. Cycle 3: 7 symbolic histories 12:1-14:20
 - a. Scene: two poles; the woman and the dragon 12:1-6
 - b. 6 symbolic histories 12:7-14:11
 - (1) The dragon's history 12:7-12
 - (2) The woman's history 12:13-17
 - (3) The (sea) beast 13:1-10
 - (4) The earth beast or false prophet 13:11-18
 - (5) The 144,000 14:1-5
 - (6) The angelic proclaimers 14:6-11
 - a'. Promise for the saints 14:12-13
 - bb. 7th symbolic history: the harvent of the Son of Man 14:14-20
4. Cycle 4: 7 bowls 15:1-16:21
 - a. Scene: the recompensers 15:1-8
 - b. 6 judgments 16:1-14,16
 - a'. Promise for the church 16:15
 - bb. 7th judgment 16:17-21
5. Cycle 5: 7 messages of judgment on Babylon 17:1-19:10
 - a. Scene: symbolic actors (recipients) 17:1-6
 - b. 6 messages of destruction 17:7-18:19
 - (1) 1st angelic message 17:7-18
 - (2) 2d angelic message 18:1-3
 - (3) 3d heavenly message 18:4-8
 - (4) The kings of the earth 18:9-10
 - (5) The merchants 18:11-17
 - (6) The seafaring men 18:18-19
 - a'. Promise for the saints 18:20
 - bb. 7th message of destruction 18:21-24
 - a". 7-fold joy in heaven 19:1-10 19:1-2, 3, 4, 5, 6-8, 9, 10
6. Cycle 6: the white horse judgment 19:11-21
 - a. Scene: the recompenser 19:11-16
 - b. Angelic message of destruction 19:17-18
 - a'. Promise for the saints 19:19c.
 - bb. Final judgment of the beast and the false prophet 19:19-21

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Larger Pattern of Contrasts

- A. Character: recompenser-creator 4:1-11
- B. 6 cycles of judgment 5:1-19:21
 - ♦ Each cycle has a, b, a', bb within it.
- A'. Promise for the saints 20:1-10
- BB. 7th judgment: white throne 20:11-21:8



Contrasts in 20:1-10

- a. Character: recompenser 20:1
- b. Preliminary judgment 20:2-3
- a'. Promise for the saints 20:4-6
- bb. Final judgment of opponents 20:7-10



Contrasts in 20:11-21:8

- a. Character: recompenser 20:11
- b. Divine judgment 20:12-15
- a'. Promise for the saints 21:1-7
- bb. Exhaustive judgment 21:8



Largest A,B,A',BB Pattern

- I. Introduction: participants 1:1-11
- II. Body: the message 1:12-22:5

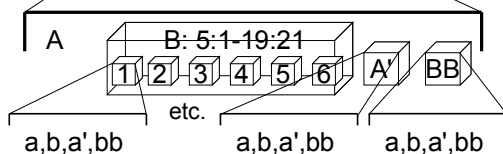
- A. The judge 1:12-20
 - B. Promises and warnings 2:1-3:22
 - A'. Judgment of the world 4:1-21:8
 - BB. Final blessing 21:9-22:5
- III. Concluding exhortations 22:6-21



Summary of A,B,A',BB

1:12-22:5

A B A' BB



D. Symbolic Characters

The Larger Pattern

- A. Scene: recompenser-creator 4:1-11
 - B. 6 cycles of judgment 5:1-19:21
 - A'. Promise for the saints 20:1-10
 - a. Scene: recompenser 20:1
 - b. Preliminary judgment 20:2-3
 - a'. Promise for the saints 20:4-6
 - bb. Final judgment of opponents and Satan 20:7-10
 - BB. Cycle 7: the white throne judgment 20:11-21:8
 - a. Scene: recompenser 20:(7-10)11
 - b. Divine judgment 20:12-15
 - a'. Promise for the saints 21:1-7
 - bb. Exhaustive judgment 21:8
-
- I. Introduction: the participants 1:1-11
 - II. Body: the message 1:12-22:5
 - A. The judge 1:12-20
 - B. Preliminary promises and warnings for the churches 2:1-3:22
 - A'. Judgment for the world 4:1-21:8
 - A. Scene: recompenser-creator 4:1-11
 - B. 6 cycles of judgment 5:1-19:21
 - A'. Promise for the saints 20:1-10
 - BB. Cycle 7: white throne judgment 20:11-21:8
 - BB. Final promised blessing of the consummation 21:9-22:5
 - III. Concluding remarks and exhortations 22:6-21

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Chiasm of Characters

- A. The woman-church in creation 12:1
- B. The dragon (Satan) 12:3
- C. The beasts 13:1-18
- D. The virgin church 14:1-5
- E. Babylon 17:1-18
- E. Judgment of Babylon 18
- D. Reward of the virgin 19:1-10
- C. Judgment of the beasts 19:11-21
- B. Judgment of the dragon 20:1-10
- A. Reward of the creation church 21:1-2



Movement of Characters

- A. The woman-church in creation 12:1
- B. The dragon (Satan) 12:3
- C. The beasts 13:1-18
- D. The virgin church 14:1-5
- E. Babylon 17:1-18
- E. Judgment of Babylon 18
- D. Reward of the virgin 19:1-10
- C. Judgment of beasts 19:11-21
- B. Judgment of the dragon 20:1-10
- A. Reward of the creation church 21:1-2



E. Structures with Themes



Overview of Themes

- A. The communication (seer, revelators, audience) 1:1-11
- B. Christophany 1:12-20
- C. Recompense to church militant 2:1-3:22
- D. Throne vision 4:1-5:14
- E. 7 seals: rider judgments 6:1-8:1
- F. 7 trumpets: angelic judgments 8:2-11:19
- G. The redeemed 12:1-6
- H. Deceptive opponent (Satan) 12:7-17
- I. Destructive opponent (Beast) 13:1-10
- H. Deceptive opponent (False P.) 13:11-18
- G. The redeemed 14:1-20
- F. 7 bowls: angelic judgments 15:1-19:10
- E. White horse: rider judgment 19:11-20:10
- D. Throne vision 20:11-15
- C. Recompense to church triumphant 21:1-8
- B. Theophany 21:9-22:5
- A. The communication (seer, revelators, audience) 22:6-21



Core of the Themes

- F. 7 trumpets 8:2-11:19
- G. vision of the redeemed 12:1-6
- H. vision of deceiver 12:7-17
- I. vision of destroyer 13:1-10
- H. vision of deceiver 13:11-18
- G. vision of the redeemed 14:1-20
- F. 7 bowls 15:1-19:10



Larger Pattern of Themes

- Promises of victory 1:1-5:14
- Judgments on men and nature 6:1-11:19
- Victors in strife 12:1-6
- Villains 12:7-13:18
- Victors in strife 14:1-20
- Judgments on nature and men 15:1-20:10
- Enjoying the victory 20:11-22:21

The Appearance of Symbolic Characters

- I. Introduction: the participants in the prophetic witness and its mediation 1:1-8
 - The Triunal Lord, 7 spirits
 - Angelic messenger
 - John as prophetic witness
 - The 7 churches

- II. First, “normal” level of communication (7 messages) 1:9-3:22
 - 1. Christ the Lord and Judge as head of the theophanic court 1:12-20
 - 2. Christ’s witnesses—
 - trial to the sevenfold church/temple-light in the midst of a trying world 2:1-3:22
 - A. The church as persevering witness to the world 2:2-3, 5, 10, 13, 19
 - B. Deceitful opposition 2:2, 2:9, 13-14, 20, 3:9
 - C. Powerful opposition 2:10
 - D. The church as separated, pure 2:2, 10, 13, 24, 3:4
 - E. Corrupt opposition 2:14, 2:20-21
 - E. Recompense on the corrupt 2:22-23, 3:16
 - D. Recompense to the pure 2:24, 3:4-5
 - C. Recompense on the powerful 2:16, 3:9
 - B. Recompense on the deceitful 2:16, 3:9
 - A. Reward to the persevering witness 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28, 3:5, 3:10-12, 20-21

- III. Second, symbolic level of communication (7 seals and trumpets) 4:1-11:19
 - 1. God as Lord and Judge with the full angelic court 4:1-5:14
 - 2. The Lamb’s decree—witness to the four corners of the earth, separating the church in his temple 6:1-11:19
 - A. The church as persevering temple-witness 6:9-10
 - B.-C. Powerful opposition: kings, etc. 6:15
 - D. The church separated, pure, preserved 7:4-8
 - A'. The church as witness (temple light) 10:10-11:6
 - E. Corrupt city 11:8
 - E. Recompense on the corrupt city 11:13
 - A'. Vindication of the church as witness 11:11
 - D. Definitive separation and preservation of the church 11:12
 - B.-C. Judgment on the opposition 11:18
 - A. Reward of the church in the temple 11:18-19

- IV. Third, depth-symbolic level of communication 12:1-21:8
 ((1. God as Lord and Judge with his angelic court 11:16-17, 19))
 2. The prophetic decree—witness as light to creation 12:1-21:8
 A. The woman-church in creation context 12:1
 B. The Dragon (deceitful opposition) 12:3
 C. The Beasts (opposition in power) 13:1-18
 1. Sea Beast 13:1-10
 2. Earth beast 13:11-18
 D. The virgin church 14:1-5
 ((A'. Church in the context of creation-filling praise 14:2-3))
 E. Babylon (corrupt opposition) 17:1-18
 E. Judgment on Babylon 18:1-24
 ((A'. Church in the context of creation-filling praise 19:5-6))
 D. Reward of the virgin church 19:1-10
 C. Judgment of the Beasts 19:11-21
 B. Judgment of the Dragon 20:1-10
 A. Reward of the creation-church 20:11-21:2
- V. Fourth, climactic level of integration of symbols 21:9-22:5
 1. God as Lord (21:22, 22:1, 3, 5), with angelic court (21:12)
 2. The church
 (1) as pure 21:10, 27
 (2) as persevering 21:14-15, 22:2-3
 (3) as sealed 21:12, 27, 22:4
 (4) as temple 21:16, 22
 (5) as bride 21:9
 (6) as glory-light 21:11, 23, 22:5
 (7) as apex of creation 21:10, 18-21, 24-27; as new paradise 22:1-5.
- VI. Epilogue: the participants in the prophetic witness and its mediation 22:6-21
 The Triunal Lord
 Angelic messenger
 John as prophetic witness
 The holy servants of God

Chiastic Thematic Structure in Revelation: Especially War

A. Leading into the visions: the seer, the revelators, and the audience 1:1-11

1. Prologue 1:1-3
 - a. Title 1:1a.
 - b. The witness 1:1b-2
 - c. Reading the prophecy 1:3
2. Participants 1:4-11

B. Christophany 1:12-20

C. Recompense to the churches: church militant 2:1-3:22

D. Throne vision 4:1-5:14

E. 7 seals: rider judgments (1-4 focus on humans) 6:1-8:1

1. Content of the judgments 6:1-17
2. Preservation of the church 7:1-8:1

F. 7 trumpets: angelic judgments (1-4 focus on nature) 8:2-11:19

1. Judgment of the nations 8:2-9:21
2. Preservation of the church 10:1-11:13
3. Joy in heaven 11:15-19

G. The redeemed 12:1-6

(with intermixed strife 12:3-6)

H. Deceptive opponent (Satan) 12:7-17

I. Destructive opponent (Beast) 13:1-10

H. Deceptive opponent (False Prophet) 13:11-18

G. The redeemed 14:1-20

(with intermixed strife 14:6-20)

F. 7 bowls: angelic judgments (1-4 focus on nature) 15:1-19:10

1. Judgment of the nations 15:1-16:21
2. End of the pseudochurch Babylon 17:1-18:24
3. Joy in heaven 19:1-10

E. White horse: rider judgment (focus on humans) 19:11-20:10

1. Content of judgment 19:11-21
2. Preservation of the church 20:1-10

D. Throne vision 20:11-15

C. Announcement of recompense to the churches: church triumphant 21:1-8

B. Theophany 21:9-22:5

A. Leading out of the visions: the seer, the revelators, and the audience 22:6-21

2. Participants 22:6-17
 1. Epilogue 22:18-21
 - c. Reading the prophecy 22:18-19
 - b. The witness 22:20
 - a. Colophon 22:21

Guarantee
of victory

Judgments
on men
and nature

Victors in
strife

Villain

Victors in
strife

Judgments
on nature
and men

Enjoying
the victory
and its
fruits

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F. Other Structures

- Parallels between the 7 trumpets and the 7 bowls
- The songs of praise, 4:8,11; 5:8-10,11-12,13; 7:9-10,11-12, 11:15,16-18; 15:2-4; 19:1-8.
- 7 letters vs. the new Jerusalem
- Repeated appearances of symbolic characters, especially the beast and Babylon
- Heptads



4 Trumpets and Bowls

Trumpets



Bowls

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. On <u>dry land</u> | 1. On <u>dry land</u> |
| 2. On <u>sea</u> | 2. On <u>sea</u> |
| 3. On <u>fresh water</u> | 3. On <u>fresh water</u> |
| 4. On <u>heavenly bodies</u> | 4. On <u>sun</u> |



Intensification from Trumpets to Bowls

Trumpets

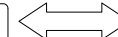
Bowls

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. <u>1/3</u> of earth | 1. <u>All</u> land |
| 2. <u>1/3</u> of sea | 2. <u>All</u> sea |
| 3. Bitter drinking | 3. Drinking blood |
| 4. <u>1/3</u> of heavenly bodies | 4. The sun |



Last 3 Trumpets and Bowls

Trumpets



Bowls

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 5. On beast worshipers | 5. On beast worshipers |
| 6. Involving Euphrates | 6. Involving Euphrates |
| 7. Reign of God; judgment of nations | 7. Reign of God; judgment of Babylon |



Heptads

1. 7 letters 1:1-3:22
2. 7 seals 4:1-8:1
3. 7 trumpets 8:2-11:19
4. 7 symbols 12-14
5. 7 bowls 15:1-16:21
6. 7 words about Babylon 17-18
7. 7 last things 19:1-22:21



7 Last Things

- Final celebration 19:1-10
- Final battle 19:11-21
- Elimination of evil 20:1-10
- Final judgment 20:11-15
- Final new universe 21:1-8
- Final city 21:9-27
- Final paradise 22:1-5

} -

} +

1. 7 messages to 7 churches promising the last things 1:1-3:22
 - (0) Introduction: the source of the messages 1:1-20
 - (1) To Ephesus 2:1-7
 - (2) To Smyrna 2:8-11
 - (3) To Pergamum 2:12-17
 - (4) To Thyatira 2:18-29
 - (5) To Sardis 3:1-6
 - (6) To Philadelphia 3:7-13
 - (7) To Laodicea 3:14-22
2. 7 seals: messages of judgments 4:1-8:1
 - (0) Introduction: the source of seals 4:1-5:14
 - (1) white horse 6:1-2 souls under the altar 6:9-11
 - (2) red horse 6:3-4 cosmic cataclysm 6:12-17
 - (3) black horse 6:5-6 144,000 7:1-17
 - (4) pale horse 6:7-8 silence 8:1
3. 7 trumpets 8:2-11:19
 - (0) Introduction: the source of plagues 8:2-6
 - (1) on dry land 8:7 locusts 9:1-12
 - (2) on sea 8:8-9 army from east 9:13-21
 - (3) on rivers 8:10-11 witnesses 10:1-11:14
 - (4) on heavenly bodies 8:12 reign of God 11:15-19
4. 7 symbolic histories 12:1-14:20
 - (0) Introduction of the two poles 12:1-6
 - (1) the Dragon 12:7-12 (5) the 144,000 14:1-5
 - (2) the woman 12:13-17 (6) angelic proclaimers 14:6-11
 - (3) the (sea) Beast 13:1-10 promise 14:12-13
 - (4) the False Prophet 13:11-18 (7) the harvest 14:14-20
5. 7 bowls 15:1-16:21
 - (0) Introduction of the source of plagues 15:1-16:1
 - (1) on dry land 16:2 (5) throne of the Beast 16:10-11
 - (2) on sea 16:3 (6) army from east 16:12-16
 - (3) on rivers 16:4-7 (7) judgment of city and reign of God
 - (4) on sun 16:8-9 16:17-21
6. 7 messages of judgment on Babylon 17:1-18:24
 - (0) Introduction of object of judgment 17:1-6
 - (1) angelic interpretation 17:7-18 (4) kings mourn 18:9-10
 - (2) angelic doom saying 18:1-3 (5) merchants mourn 18:11-17
 - (3) heavenly separation 18:4-8 (6) sailors mourn 18:18-19
 - (7) final angelic doom saying 18:20-24
7. 7 last things 19:1-22:21
 - (1) the final celebration 19:1-10; 7-fold joy 19:1-2,3,4,5,6-8,9a,9b
 - (2) the final battle 19:11-21; 7-fold attributes 19:11-13; classes 19:18.
 - (3) the final elimination of evil 20:1-10; 7-fold privilege 20:4,4,4,6,6,6,6
 - (4) the final judgment 20:11-15
 - (5) the final (new) heavens and earth 21:1-8
 - (6) the final city 21:9-27
 - (7) the final paradise 22:1-5

PROMISE

JUDG-
MENT

DEPTH

JUDG-
MENT

FULFILL-
MENT

3. Structure of Revelation by Vern S. Poythress, WTS

3.9



The Two Cities

Church militant

- Interpreting angel, 17:1-3
- Vision of City
 - ✦ Harlot, 17:4-18:24
 - ✦ Bride, 19:1-8
- Truth, 19:9
- Worship God, 19:10

Church triumphant

- 21:9-10
- 21:11-22:5
- ✦ Bride
- 22:6
- 22:8-9



G. Chronological Relation of the Scenes of Revelation

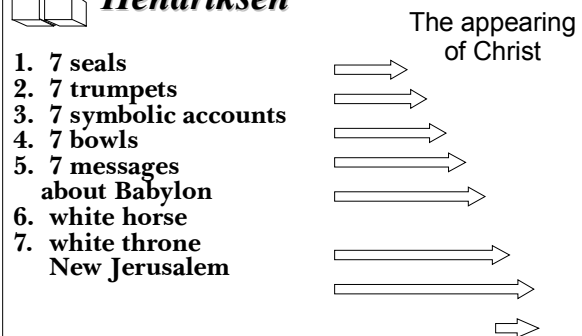


Basic Facts about Chronological Relations

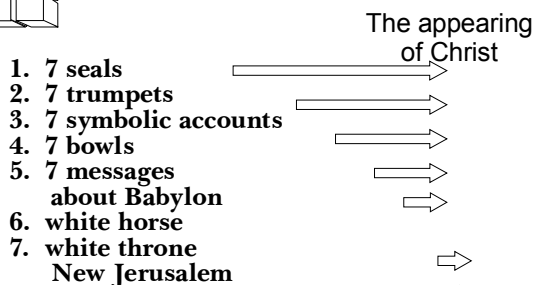
- Fluidity of language suggests multiple fulfillment
- Does Second Coming language refer to the Second Coming? Yes.
- Hence, 7 cycles recapitulate.
- How?



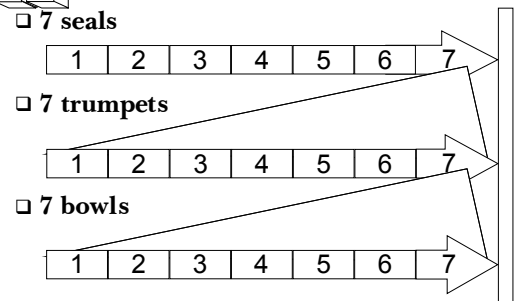
Recapitulation in Hendriksen



Recapitulation in Poythress



The Nesting Approach



3. Structure of Revelation by Vern S. Poythress, WTS

3.10



Nesting as Recapitulation

1. 7 seals
2. 7 trumpets
- (3. 7 symbolic histories)
4. 7 bowls
5. pronouncements about Babylon
6. white horse
7. white throne
New Jerusalem

The appearing
of Christ



Silence of 8:1 — A Blank?

- Otherwise unknown in apocalyptic
- Silence to hear prayers of saints (8:3-5)
 - ✦ Beasley-Murray
- Primeval silence before new creation
 - ✦ Rissi
- Standing in awe of God (Hab. 2:20; Zeph. 1:7; see also Isa. 41:1; 47:5; Zech. 2:13; 4 Ezra 7:30-31; 2 Bar. 3:7)



Nesting: the Failure

- Rev 12-14 requires recapitulation.
- 8:1 is not blank.
- Last battle reoccurs: 20:7-9, 19:17-21, 17:12-14, 16:12-16, 9:14, 6:15.
- Recapitulation, but not nesting, occurs elsewhere in apocalyptic:
 - ✦ Dan 2, 7, 8, 9, 11
 - ✦ Ezek 34, 36, 37, 40
 - ✦ Zech 9:13-17, 10:5, 12:1-9, 14:1-5



H. Possible Preaching Series

- 1. Clarity of Rev.: the victory of Christ
- 2-3. Historical setting
- 4. Theophany
- 5. Christocentricity
- 6-7. Structure
- 8-11. Four schools of interpretation
- 12-14. Counterfeiting; spiritual war



Preaching Series (cont.)

- 15-16. Holiness and the wrath of God
- 17-18. The Prostitute and modern idols
- 19. Second Coming
- 20:1-10. Millennium and its disputes
- 20:11-22:5. The consummation
- 22:6-21. Importance of application: taking to heart, "keeping" (1:3).



I. Conclusion



- Revelation is a beautiful tapestry
- With multiple dimensions
- Interlocking

4. Interpreting Revelation by Vern S. Poythress at WTS

4.1

Interpreting Revelation



Vern Sheridan Poythress
Westminster Theological Seminary

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Extreme Responses

• Repulsion



• Unhealthy interest



Encouragements about Rev.

- Revelation is inspired Scripture.
- God knew the difficulties.
- Profitable, 2 Tim. 3:17.
- For servants of Christ, Rev. 1:1.
- With explicit blessing, Rev. 1:3.

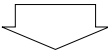


A. Dangers and Rewards



Dealing with Disputes

- The interpretive challenge
(Swete, p. ccvii)



- and patience (Prov. 14:15)

Spiritually
challenging.



Relevance to Our Time

- It always speaks to people under persecution.
- Dispensationalism needs a positive answer.
- It attacks modern sins.

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4.2



Attack on Sins

- **Disp. Literalism**
- **Modernist unbelief**
- **Secularist atheism**
- **Hedonism**
- **False religion**

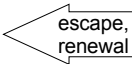
- **Symbolically deep**
- **Supernatural**
- **Theocentric**
- **Exposing sin**
- **Exposing idolatry**

Renewing Your Mind

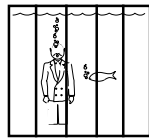
Glory of God in Revelation



escape,
renewal



Western Culture



Beauty of Revelation

- “Within this elaborate plan [of 7 7’s] is developed the action of a prophetic poem unsurpassed in sacred or profane literature in either the grandeur of its poetic imagery, or the superb sweep of its prophetic vision.” (B. B. Warfield: *Selected Short Writings* 2:86).

Resources in Scholarship

- **Biblical theology**
- **M. G. Kline on theophany**
- **Discourse linguistics showing structure**
- **Interest in apocalyptic**

themes



genre

Envisioning the Future

View of future



- **Dealing with bewilderment**
- **Grasping possibilities**
- **God’s mind**
- **Cosmic framework**
- **New values**

Robert Scholes (Structural Fabulation, p. 19), quoting Olaf Stapledon, preface to *Last and First Men*:

B. Four Major Views about Interpretation

4. Interpreting Revelation by Vern S. Poythress at WTS

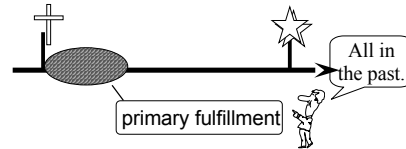
4.3

Why Look at Others' Views?

- Learn from others.
- Don't blindly adopt an approach.
- One's choice affects all of Revelation.
- No one view fits all the Scripture.

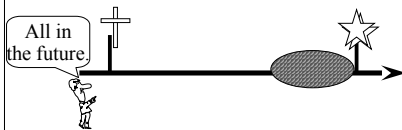
Roman Empire View (Preterist)

- Beckwith (pp. 334-35): "fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem and the fall of the Roman Empire."



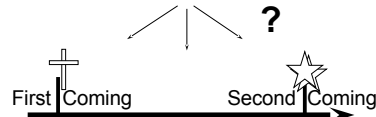
Final Crisis View (Futurist)

- Fulfillment occurs in the events of the final crisis immediately preceding the Second Coming.



Time of Fulfillment

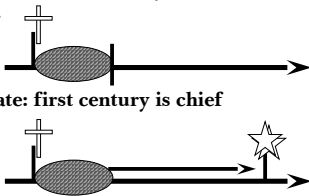
When is the primary fulfillment?



- The four views differ about the primary time of fulfillment of Revelation.

Two Strands of Roman Empire View

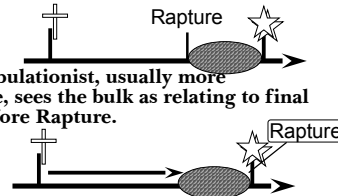
- Modernist extreme: wholly in first century.
- Moderate: first century is chief focus.



Two Strands of Final Crisis

- Pretribulationist: places 4:1-19:21 after the Rapture.

- Posttribulationist, usually more moderate, sees the bulk as relating to final crisis before Rapture.



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4.4

Church History View (Historicist)

- Morris (p. 17): “setting out ... the history of western Europe ... until the second coming of Christ.”
- Rev 6-19 in chronological order.



Repeated Pattern View (Idealist)

- Tenney (p. 143): “... represents the eternal conflict of good and evil which persists in every age.”



Two Types of Repeated Pattern

- Consistent idealist: Eternal conflict, with no reference to specific events.

- Moderate idealist: repeated fulfillment



Two Strands of Church History

- Straight-line historicist: Rev. 6-19 in chronological order.



- Recapitulationist: finds a number of recapitulations and nonchronological order in Rev 6-19.



- But recapitulationist is really more similar to the Repeated Pattern approach

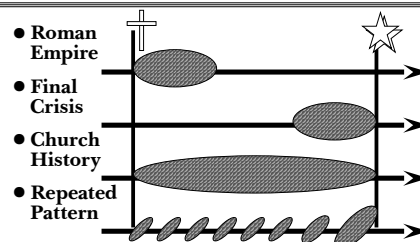
Two Types of Repeated Pattern

- Consistent idealist: Eternal conflict, with no reference to specific events.

- Moderate idealist: repeated fulfillment



Summary of Views



4. Interpreting Revelation by Vern S. Poythress at WTS

4.5

C. How the Four Major Views Work in Practice

Locusts of Rev. 9:1-11

- Roman Empire
- Final Crisis
- Church History
- Repeated Pattern
- Roman decadence
- Future locusts; or evil powers
- Islamic invasion

Interpreting Rev. 9:1-11 (cont.)

- Roman Empire
- Final Crisis
- Church History
- Repeated Pattern
- Roman decadence
- Future locusts; or evil powers
- Islamic invasion
- Powers of evil in the wicked at all times

Interpreting Rev 13:1-8 (Beast)

- Roman Empire
- Final Crisis
- Church History
- Repeated Pattern
- Roman Emperor/Empire
- Final Antichrist
- The Pope
- Persecuting dominion wherever it appears

Interpreting Rev 9:1-11 (cont.)

- Church History
 - Islamic invasion
 - crowns
 - women's hair
 - five months
- Mohammed opens his mission
- 612 — 150 years — 762
- Caliphate to Baghdad

Strengths of Different Views

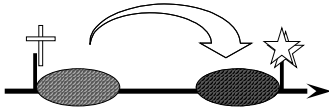
- Roman Empire
- Final Crisis
- Church History
- Repeated Pattern
- Relevance to 7 churches.
- Climax at Second Coming (22:20; 19:11-21).
- Draw a line between the two dates.
- Seize common principle; Satan as unoriginal.

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4.6

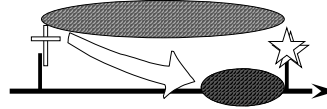
Transition from Roman Empire to Final Crisis View

- Add a second fulfillment



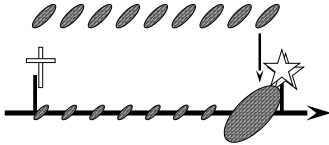
Transition from Church History to Final Crisis View

- Compress the time line



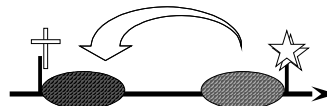
Transition from Repeated Pattern to Another View

- Find a primary fulfillment



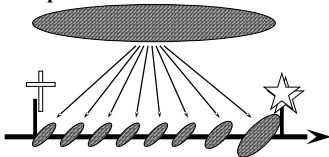
Transition from Final Crisis to Roman Empire View

- Add a foreshadowing



Transition from Church History to Repeated Pattern View

- Recapitulate



Variant Views

- Early Roman Empire: Fulfillment in the fall of Jerusalem
- Recapitulationist. Revelation portrays the entire course of history from Roman times to the Second Coming, several times as one reads through the book.

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4.7

D. Clarity of Revelation

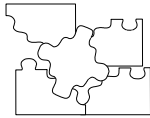
Blessing for Reading (1:3)

"Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it."

- The only book of the Bible with an explicit blessing for reading. Extra encouragement.
- "Keep" means it's practical. Strengthening the heart, not tickling the fancy.

It's Simple

- A picture book, not a puzzle book.
- For children also.



Revealing (1:1)

God's plan

unveiling, disclosure

Christ knows our need

show, not keep in the dark

to his servants (you!)

made known

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known ...

Are Its Symbols Difficult?

Yes

No

- Unfamiliar
- Apocalyptic
- Need OT background

- It's obvious.

Fearsome!
Hideous!



See the Whole

Hmm.... Let's see now. What does the "locust" of Rev. 9 mean? The "horse" part must refer to one of the months of the Chinese calendar. "Crowns of gold" must refer to Babylonian kings. "Women's hair" surely suggests that it is women who will bring about the final downfall of mankind. "Scorpion tails" ... hmm... Now let me see.

Awesome! It's a monster!

College Student

1st Grader

4. Interpreting Revelation by Vern S. Poythress at WTS

4.8

Confidence in God

Don't be the "expert."

You can't possibly understand without my help!

You're right. I give up.

Encourage.

Look at God's greatness!

E. Symbolism

Meaning of a Symbol

The Majesty of Christ

- Christ is our friend (John 15:14-15).
- He is also our majestic, awesome king!

Not a tame lion!

Why the Dispute over Revelation?

clear and yet controverted

?

Due to: ➡ symbolism

Two Approaches to Symbols

1. Code

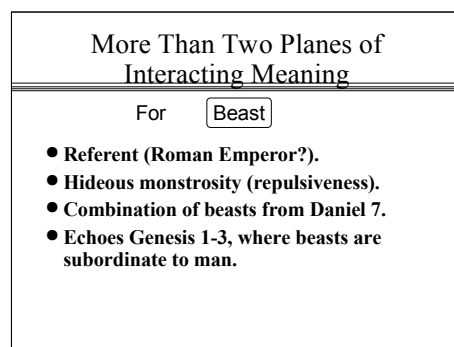
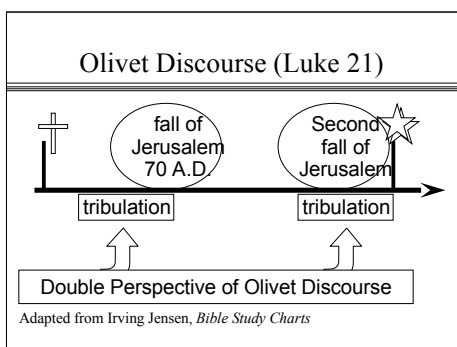
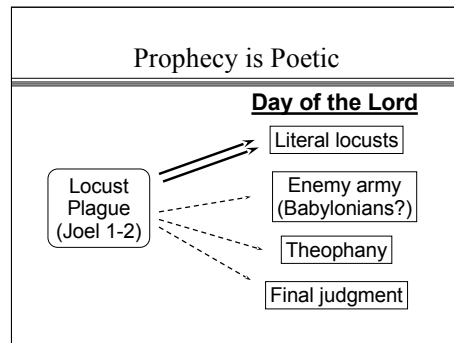
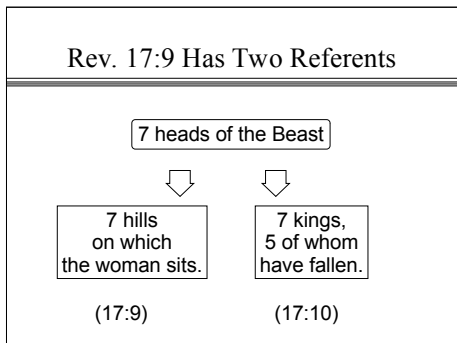
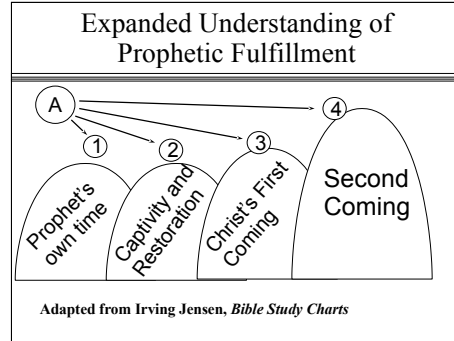
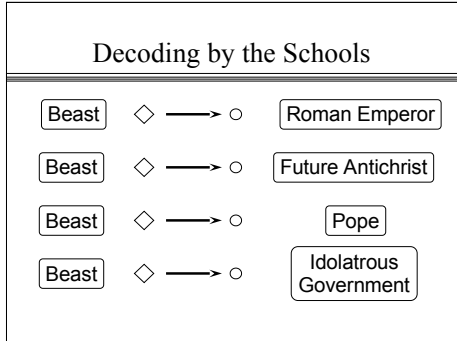
- One referent
- Meaning = referent
- Isolated

2. Multifaceted

- Multiple allusions
- Multifaceted impact
- Holistic

4. Interpreting Revelation by Vern S. Poythress at WTS

4.9



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4.10

God-Centered Symbolism



God in theophany is rich, multifaceted, nonexhaustible, Trinitarian.



Symbolism of Revelation is multifaceted.

F. A Positive Approach

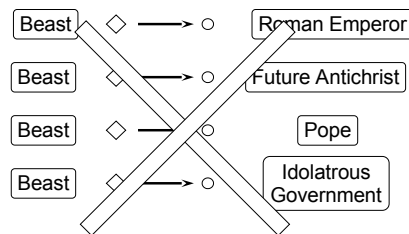
God Is Involved with Us

- Roman Empire
- Final Crisis
- Application NOW
- Repeated
- God loves 7 churches.
- God will come.
- God loves us NOW.
- God is the same at all times.

God is central



Schools' Decoding Is Inadequate



Attractions of the Schools

RE

FC

CH

RP

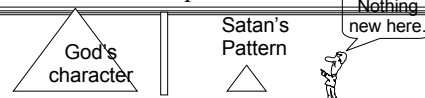


I'm not sure. They all look good.

Insightful!



Satan's Repeated Pattern



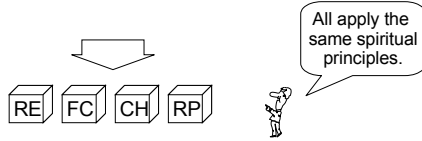
- Satan as a creature must imitate God; he cannot create anything new.
- Since God is the same, Satanic counterfeiting is the same for all times.
- Spiritual war shows a constant pattern.
- Satan suffers repeated defeats.

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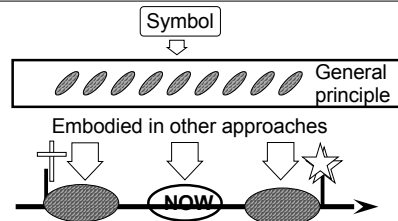
4.11

Some Truth in All Four

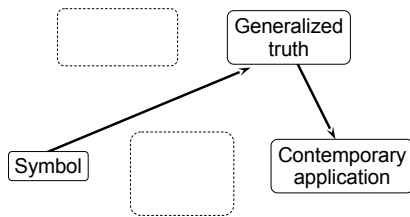
- God is always the same.
- God rules all history.
- Spiritual warfare is always the same.



Starting with Repeated Pattern



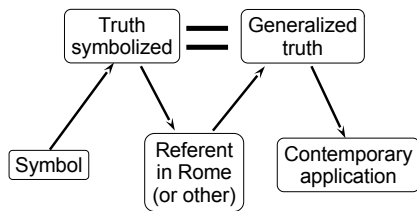
From Symbol to Application in Repeated Pattern View



Evidence for Multiple Fulfillment

- Flexible imagery.
- Speaks to people in all times.
- Evidence for all.
- Necessity of repeating counterfeiting.

From Symbol to Application



Fourfold Interpretation

A Symbol
↓ represents

- | | |
|------------|----------------------------|
| • Roman | • First century embodiment |
| • Final | • Final embodiment |
| • Church | • Embodiment NOW |
| • Repeated | • A general principle |

4. Interpreting Revelation by Vern S. Poythress at WTS

4.12

G. Insight of Roman Empire View

H. Insight of Final Crisis View

Does Revelation Focus on an Earlier “Coming”?

- Rev. 2:5; 2:16; 3:11 speak of Christ “coming”
- He judges the churches, short of final judgment
- This context qualifies 2:5, etc., but *not* 1:7; 2:12-17; 11:18; 22:7, 20; etc.
- Rev. as a whole offers a cosmic context.

Evidence for Roman View

- Rev. 2-3.
- General principle of relevance to original audience.
- Nearness of the “time,” 1:1, 3; 22:10.
- Christ threatens to “come” in 2:5, 16; 3:11.

The Endpoint of Fulfillment

- Endpoint when Christ comes, 22:12, 20.
- For NT church, the Second Coming is next on the “calendar,” 2 Thess. 1-2.
- 22:20 is prayer associated with Second Coming (cf. 1 Cor. 16:22).

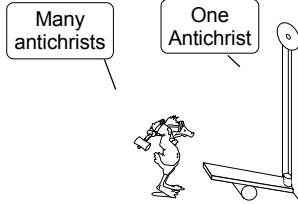
Nearness of Second Coming

- Preliminary judgments foreshadow the climactic judgment.
- Nearness is “structural”: 1 John 2:18.

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4.13

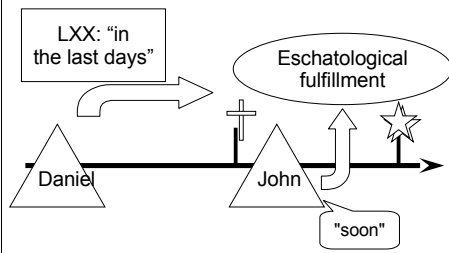
Nearness



Universal Revelance

- Revelation is canon, relevant to now (2 Tim. 3:17).
- Addresses servants of God, 1:1; 22:6, 18.
- “he who has an ear,” 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22.
- Pattern of spiritual war is constant.
- Flexible symbolism.
- Rev. 1:1 references Dan. 2:45.

Daniel and John



I. Insight of Repeated Pattern View

Dan. 2:45 and Rev. 1:1; 4:1

ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα (Dan. 2:45 Theodotion)

- What? The eschatological kingdom of God.

“what must take place” ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα (Rev. 4:1)

- OT eschatological prophecy, in the process of realization (inaugurated eschatology)

Multiple Fulfillments

- Truth in each
- Flexible fulfillments

Historical Situation of Revelation



Comfort in Crisis

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What Is Apocalyptic?

- ✓ • Revelation of God's secrets.
- Pseudonymy.
- History rewritten as prophecy.
- ✓ • Determinism in history, ending is cosmic cataclysm.
- ✓ • Dualism of good and evil.
- Pessimism about God's *saving* rule at present.
- ✓ • Bizarre and wild symbols denote historical events.

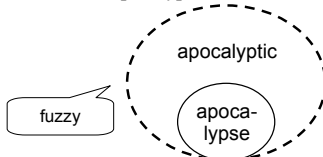
Examples of Apocalyptic

- Numbers 23-24, Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah 24-27, 1 Thess 4-5, 2 Thess 1-2, the Olivet Discourse, Revelation.
- Extrabiblical: 1 QM, Assumption of Moses, 1-2-3 Enoch, 2-3 Baruch, 4 Ezra, Apocalypse of Peter, Apocalypse of Paul, Apocalypse of Thomas, Ascension of Isaiah.

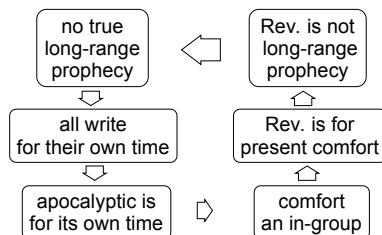
A. Genre: Apocalyptic Literature

Situating Apocalyptic

- See Morris, *Apocalyptic*.
- Morris, *Revelation 22-25*.
- Collins, "Apocalypse" 9.



Modernists' View of Apocalyptic



Prediction in Apocalyptic

- Daniel 7; Zech. 6; 9.
- 1 Enoch; 4 Ezra.
- Comfort for the immediate audience can take place *through* long-range prediction.

Use Extracanonical Literature?

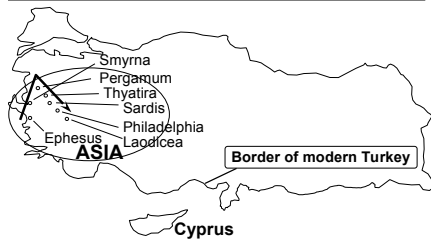
No

- Superficial, vague connections.
- Rev. is Christocentric.
- Much is explainable from canonical parallels.

Yes

- Symbols may come from general culture.
- Parallels may be polemical rather than merely approving paganism.

Asia Minor



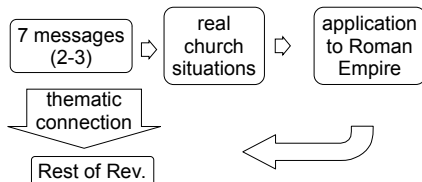
Lessons from Apocalyptic

- Bizarre symbols are common.
- Prediction may be included.
- Present comfort may be one goal.
- Difficult to generalize about all apocalyptic.

B. The Seven Churches

1:11

Importance of the 7 Churches



Structure of the 7 Messages

- “To the angel of the church in X write:”
- “The words of ...”
- “I know ...” (state of the church)
- Commendations and rebukes
- Promise
- “He who has an ear, let him hear ...”
- “To the one who conquers ...”

Message to Ephesus (cont.)

- **Commendations and rebukes**
I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary.
But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. ... Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.
- **Promise**
If not, I will come to you and remove your landstand from its place, unless you repent.
- **“He who has an ear, let him hear ...”**
He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
- **“To the one who conquers ...”**
To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Connections in Smyrna (2:8-11)

- 2:8, “died” • Smyrna destroyed, 627 B.C.
- 2:10, “test” • Gladiatorial contests, 5 days.
- 2:10, “faithful” • Smyrna was known for fidelity to Rome.
- 2:10, “crown” • Like buildings of Mt. Pagan; Goddess Cybele with a crown-battlement; Smyrna as “crown of Ariadne” (Aristides).

Message to the Church in Ephesus

- **“To the angel of the church in X write:”**
To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:
- **“These are the words of ...”**
The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.
- **“I know ...” (state of the church)**
I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.

Research on Churches

- William A. Ramsay, archeological research.
- Ramsay, *Letters of the Seven Churches* (1905).
- Colin J. Hemer, *Letters to the Seven Churches* (1986).

Multifaceted Allusions

“died and came to life again” (2:8)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| • City died. | • City |
| • Church threatened with death. | • Church |
| • OT promise of life. | • OT |
| • Christ died and came to life. | • Christ |

← All-sufficiency of Christ →

C. Troubles in Asia Minor

First Century Idolatries

Counterfeit

Particular form

- Dragon
- Beast
- False Prophet
- Various Satanic activities
- Roman Emperor worship
- Priests of Emperor worship
- Prostitute
- City-life enticements

Roman Persecution

Colin Hemer, *Letters* 8, shows situation:

- Emperor worship proved political loyalty.
- Jews paid temple tax instead.
- After 70 A.D., the tax (2 drachmas) went to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome.
- Domitian, in need of money, enforced taxes (Suetonius, *Domitian* 12.2).

Aspects of Opposition

- Beast → • Persecuting power
- Prostitute → • Seductive luxury

Emperor Worship

- Emperors called themselves divine.
- People offered incense (an act of worship) to the “genius of the emperor” to show political loyalty.
- Those who refused were guilty of treason.



Uh oh!

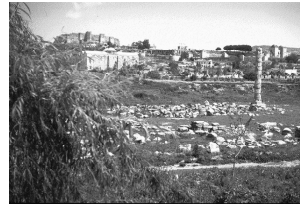
Domitian Persecution?

- Suetonius *Domitian* 12.2: “Besides other taxes, that on the Jews was levied with the utmost rigour, and those were prosecuted who without publicly acknowledging that faith yet lived as Jews, as well as those who concealed their origin and did not pay the tribute levied upon their people.”
- Jews might disown Christians and render them liable to the imperial cult.

The Temple of Domitian in Ephesus



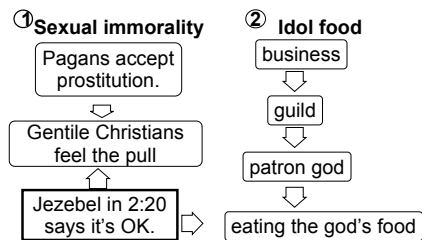
Temple of Artemis in Ephesus



Why Is It Important?

- **Advocates:** Cornelius vander Waal and David Chilton.
- **Postmil interest:** the disasters depicted in Revelation can be put in the past.
- Where is the main danger threatening Christians? In the fall-of-Jerusalem view, the focus is on apostate church, not paganism.

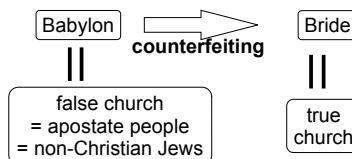
Seduction of the Pagan City

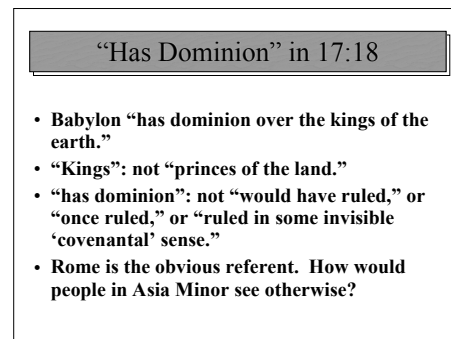
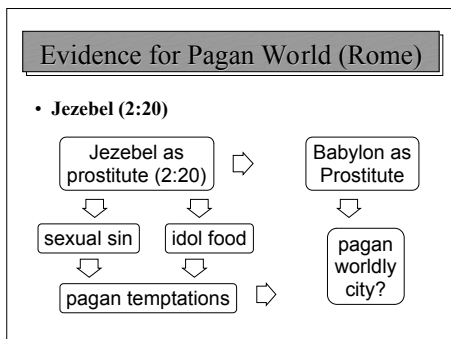
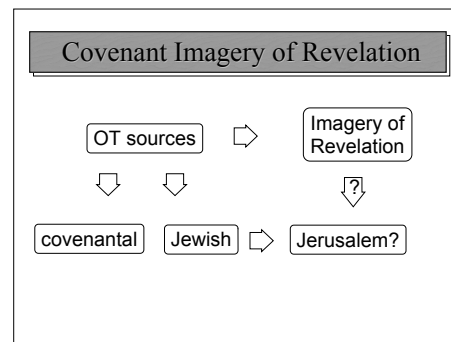
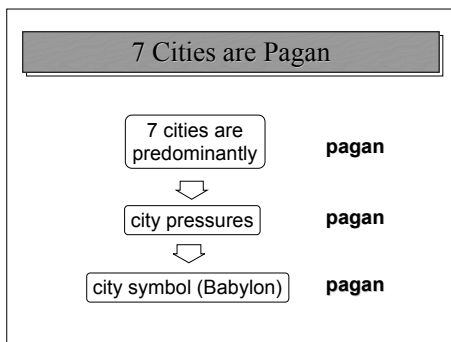
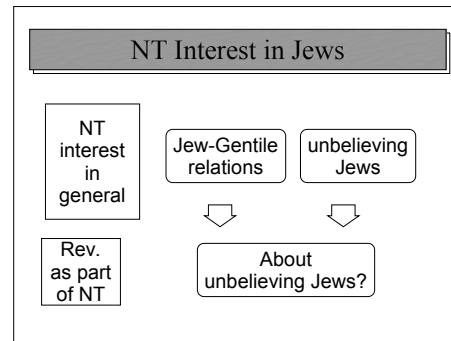
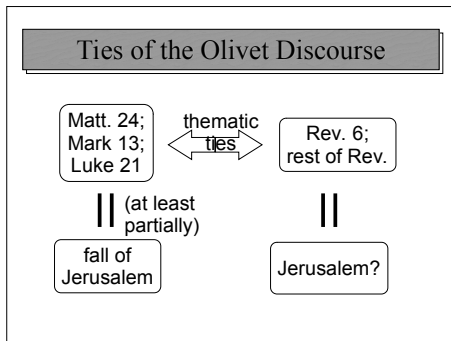


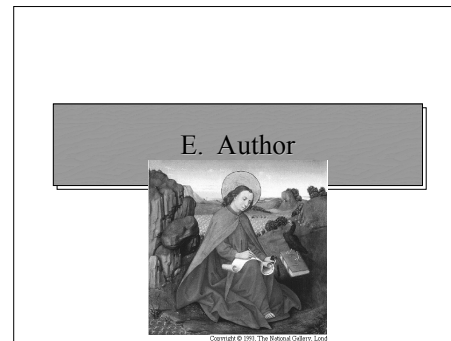
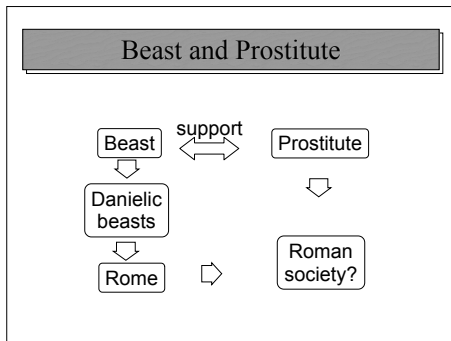
D. Does Babylon Stand for Jerusalem?

Evidence for Jerusalem

- Babylon as counterfeit







The Bearing of Authorship

The Apostle • Treat Rev. together with his other writings. • But the different genre requires different treatment.	Someone else • Treat Rev. separately from Gospel. • But thematic connections invite joint treatment.
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Covenantal Imagery as Universal

- All are in covenant through Adam.
- OT use towards Jews is but one possible use of a general pattern.
- Paganism too is counterfeit religion.
- Nineveh is prostitute, Nahum 3:4.
- Repeated pattern interpretation of Rev. accounts for the plausibility of Jerusalem *as one instance* of a counterfeit church.

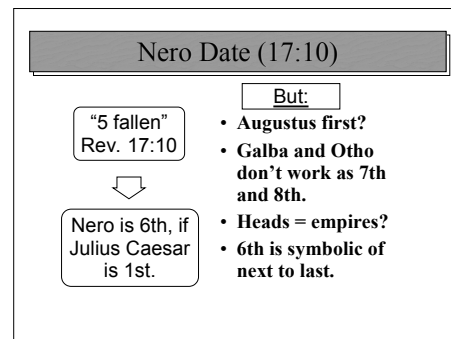
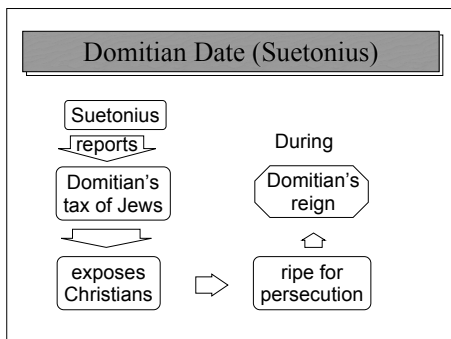
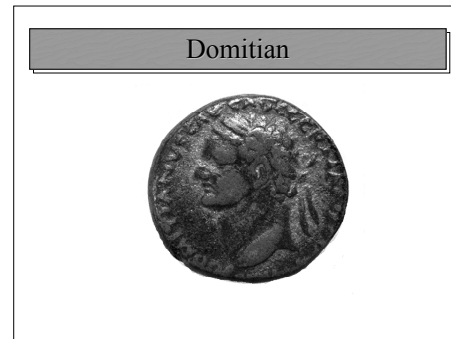
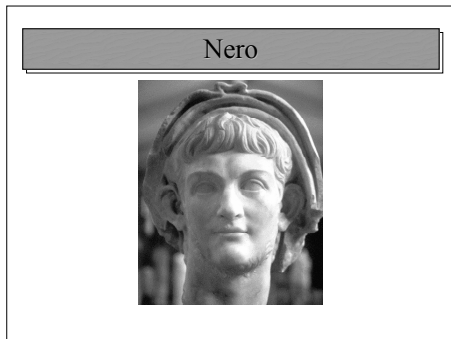
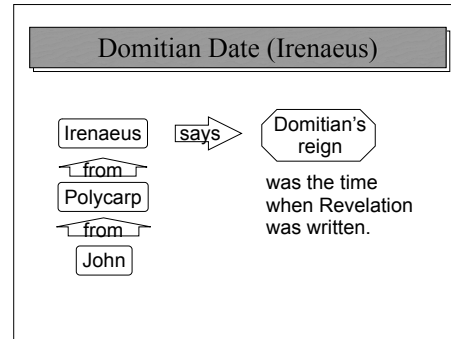
Who Is John?

The Apostle ? • Justin Martyr and Irenaeus say so. • No other John is attested. • Thematic connections with the Gospel of John.	Someone else ? • Style differs from the Gospel.
---	---

F. Date

The Roman Emperors	
• Augustus	27 B.C. - 14 A.D.
• Tiberius	14-37 A.D.
• Caligula	37-41
• Claudius	41-54
• Nero	54-68
– Galba	68-69
– Otho	69
– Vitellius	69
• Vespasian	69-79
• Titus	79-81
• Domitian	81-96

most plausible



Nero Date (11:1-2)

temple in
Jerusalem
is standing
(11:1-2)

But:

- 11:1-3 implies preservation of inner room.
- Does not match the events of 70.
- Rev. 11 is symbolic of the church (11:4 and 1:20).
- City is figurative (11:8)

before
70 A.D.

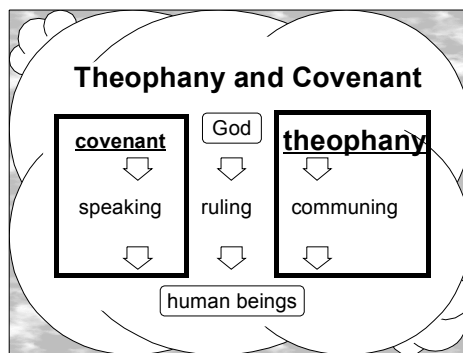
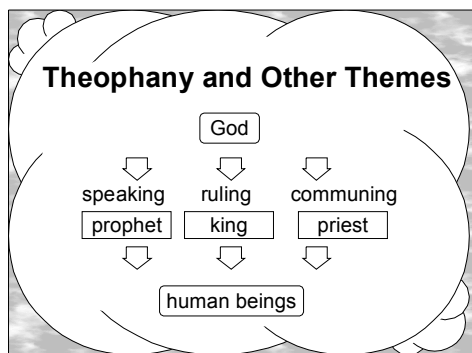
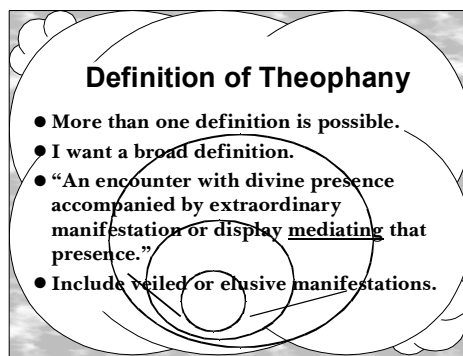
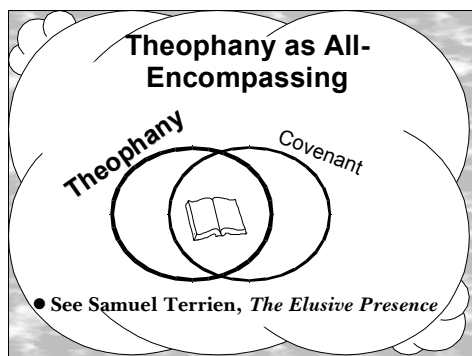
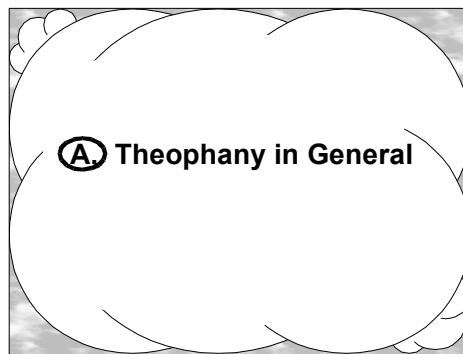
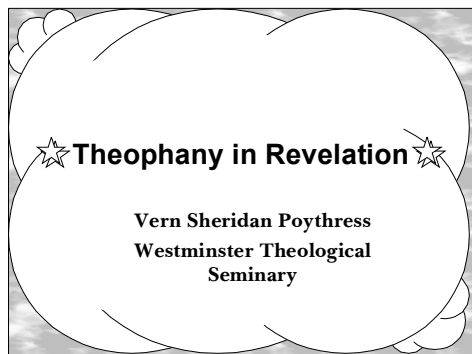
Benefits from Knowing Situation

- Relevance then
- Relevance now

Best Date: Domitian

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6.1



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6.2

Theophany in Spiritual Growth

- Know God as revealed in Rev.
- 2 Cor. 3:18 applies theophanic language to the heart of Christian experience.
- Growth in Christ is unbounded, Eph. 3:18-19.

theophany in Christ

➡

transformation of believers in Christ

Inexhaustible.

Theophany in Revelation

Christophany in 1:12-20

Theophany in 4:1-5:14

Empowers judgments 6:1-22:5

1:12-22:5 as a whole

Ⓑ Rev. 1:12-20

The Lampstands (1:12-13)

- Primary connections: 1:20 (2:1).
- Significance: Christ is in the midst of the churches.
- Secondary connections:
 - ♦ tabernacle, temple
 - ♦ lights of heaven (stars in 1:20)
 - ♦ disciples as light, Matt 5:14

Vision of Christ (1:12-16)

- Primary connections: 14:14; Dan. 7:13; 7:9-10; 10:5-6; Ezek. 1.
- Significance: Christ is divine judge and ruler, both for blessing and for curse.
- Secondary and tertiary connections: OT theophanies.

Judging as a Theme

- Judgment in Ezek. 1 and Dan. 7:9-10.
- From Rev. 1-3:
 - ♦ 1:18, keys of death
 - ♦ 1:20, stars in the hand, with authority
 - ♦ Rev. 2-3, warnings and commendations
 - ♦ 2:8, 10, authority over death
 - ♦ 2:18, eyes searching the heart
- 14:14; 10:1; 19:12,15; 15:6 have judgment.

6. Theophany in Revelation

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6.3

© Types of OT Theophanies

Thunderstorm Theophanies

- Mt. Sinai as primary.
- Instances: Exod. 19; Ps. 18:7-15; Zech 9:14-15; Ps. 68:7-8(8-9); 144:5-6; 29:3-11; 50:3; 97:2-5; Isa. 64:1-3; Zeph. 1:15-16.
- Features: cloud, smoke, thunder, lightning, fire, maybe earthquake and wind.

Fire Theophanies

- Exod. 3:1-6; Gen. 15:17; Exod. 13:21; 14:19, 24; Num. 9:15-23; Acts 2:1-3
- Connected with thunderstorm and glory theophanies

Temple/cloud Theophanies

- Instances: Exod. 40:34-38; Num. 9:15-23; Deut. 4:32-36; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Ezek. 8:4; 10:3-4, 18-19; 43:2-7; 44:4.
- Connected with dedication of the tabernacle or temple, or speech from the temple.

Glory Theophanies

- Instances: Isa. 60:1-2; Mal. 4:2; Ps. 80:1, 3, 7, 19; 94:1.
- Connected with thunderstorm and temple theophanies.

Court Theophanies

- Instances: 1 Kings 22:19-22; Isa. 6:1-5; Job 1:6; 2:1; Dan. 7:9-10; Ps. 82; 89:5-14.
- With a Man in the center.
- Connected with chariot through 1 Chron. 28:18, where chariot = cherubim (court ministers).

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Individual Man Theophanies

- Instances: Judg. 13:6-22; Gen. 18; Dan. 10:5; Rev. 10:1(?); Acts 9:3-7; Dan. 7:13; Rev. 19:11; etc.
- Second type of Man theophany.
- Some are preincarnate appearances of Christ.

Warrior Theophanies

- Instances: Zech. 9:14-15; 14:3-5; Hab. 3:3-15; Isa. 63:1-6; 59:17-19; Zeph. 3:17; Josh. 5:13-15.
- A third type of Man theophany.

Chariot Theophanies

- Instances: Isa. 66:15; Hab. 3:8; Dan. 7:9-10; 2 Kings 2:11-12; 6:17; Ps. 68:17(18), 4(5), 33(34); Deut. 33:26; Isa. 19:1; Ps. 65:11.
- Poetic, context of judgment.
- God going to war.

Creation as Theophany

- Instances: Gen. 1:2; Ps. 104:1-4; 93:1-2; 102:25-26. Building: Job 38:4-11; Prov. 8:27-31; Amos 9:5-6.
- Connected with temple theophanies, Ps. 78:69; 93:5; 11:4-5.

Summary of OT Theophany

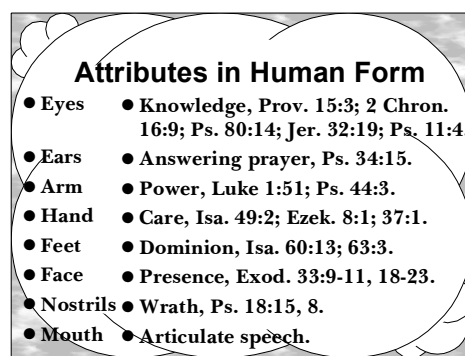
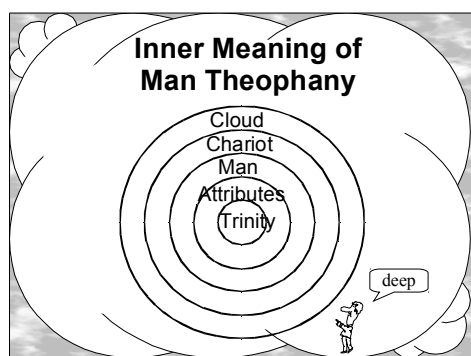
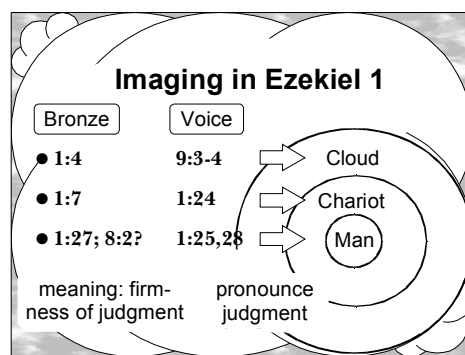
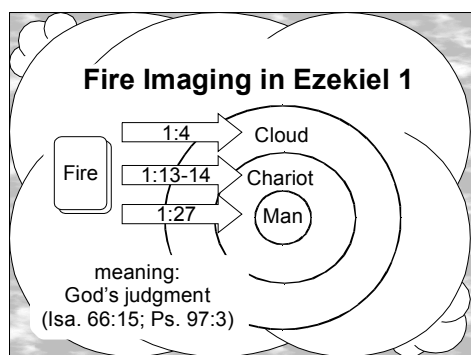
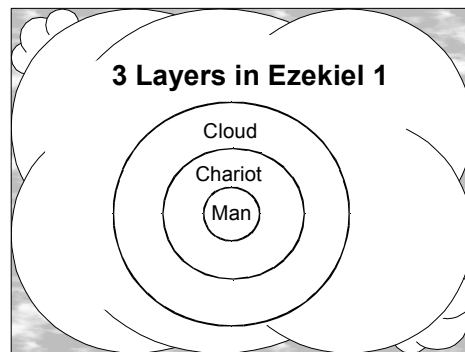
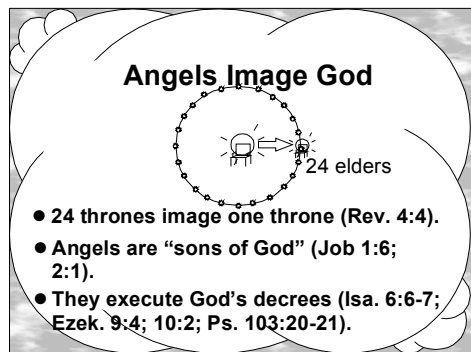
- Diverse, showing richness.
- Interrelated, showing unity and mystery.
- Classifiable up to a point.

Showing
God's wisdom.

D. Imaging in Theophanies

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6.5



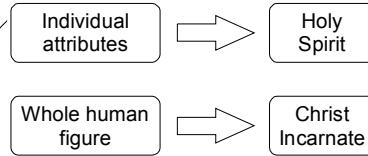
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6.6

Attributes and Spirit

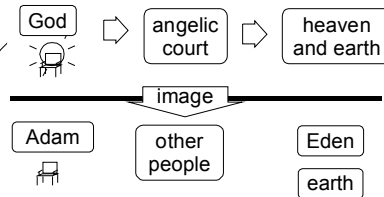
- Face ● Ps. 139:7; 51:11; Ezek. 39:29
- Eyes ● Rev. 5:6; 1:4-5.
- Hand ● Ezek. 8:1 vs. 11:5.
- Finger ● Luke 11:20 vs. Matt. 12:28; 2 Cor. 3:3.
- Breath ● Ps. 18:15; Ezek. 37 (Ps. 104:3)
- Power ● Luke 1:35.
- Many ● Exod. 14:24; 15:6, 8, 12; Isa. 63:10-14.

Attributes and Trinity

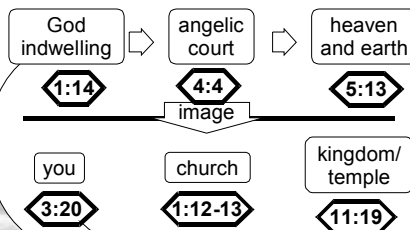


E Imaging and Spatial Structure

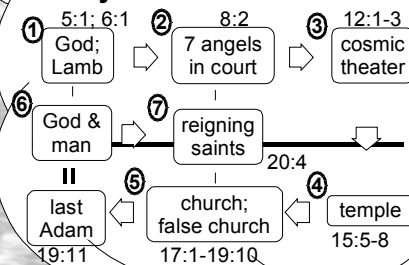
Kingship Reflected



Presence Reflected



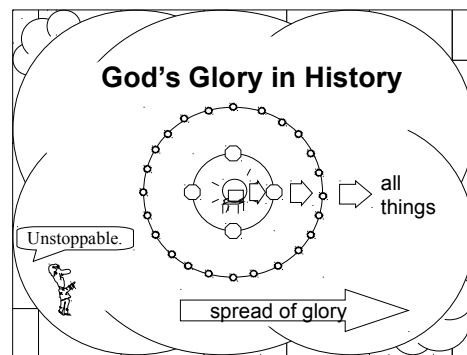
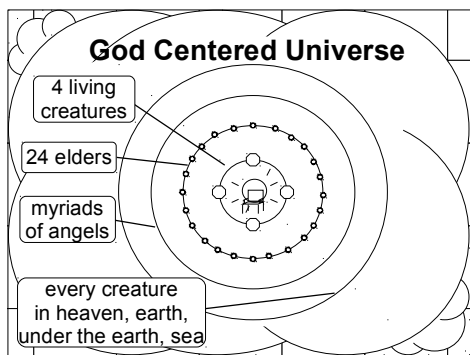
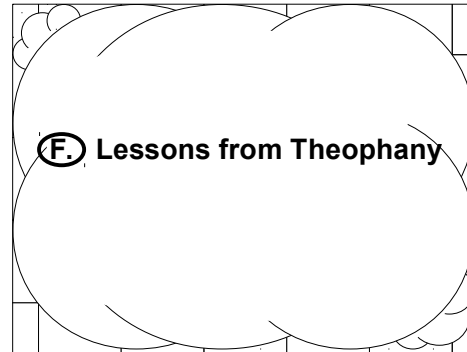
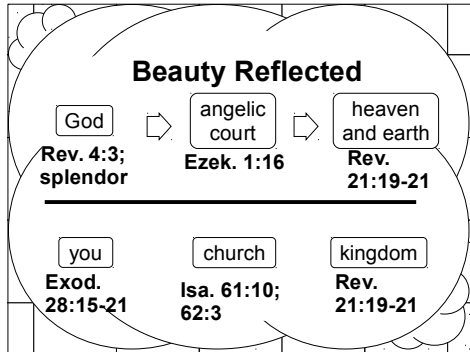
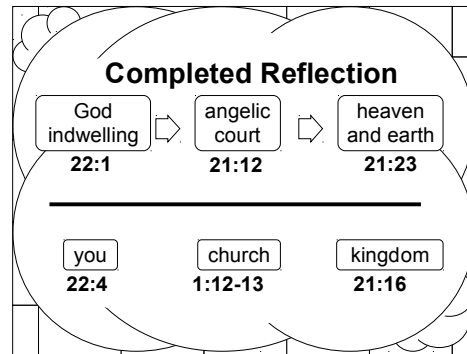
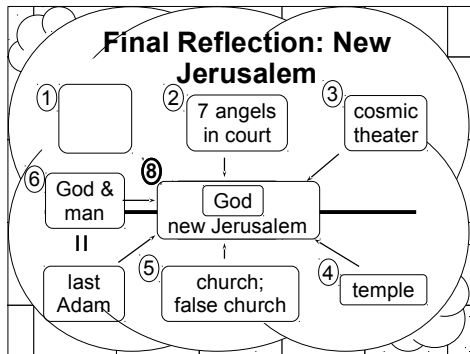
7 Cycles Follow Reflection



6. Theophany in Revelation

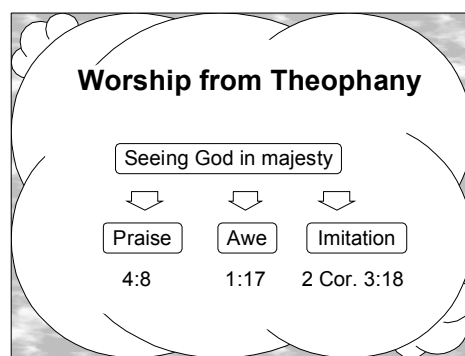
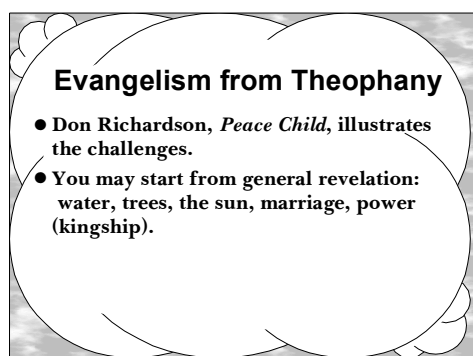
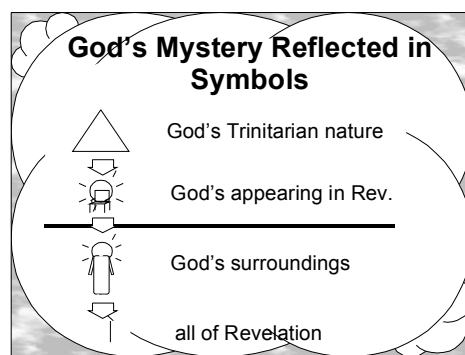
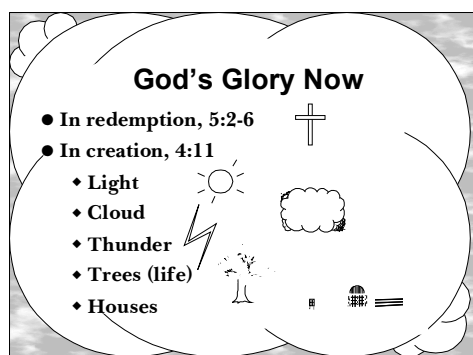
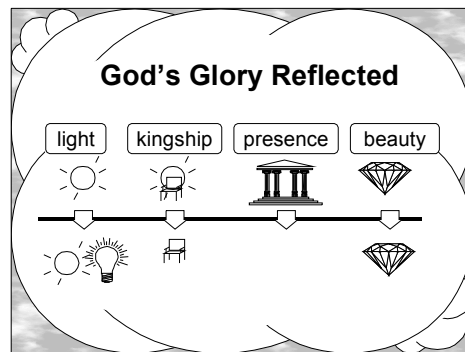
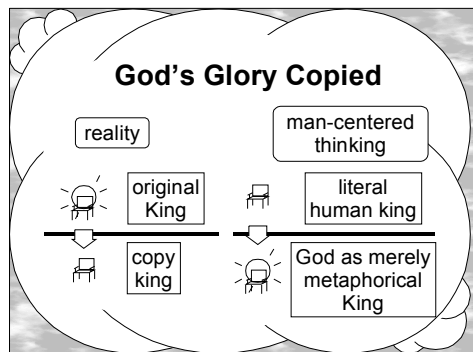
Vern S. Poythress at WTS

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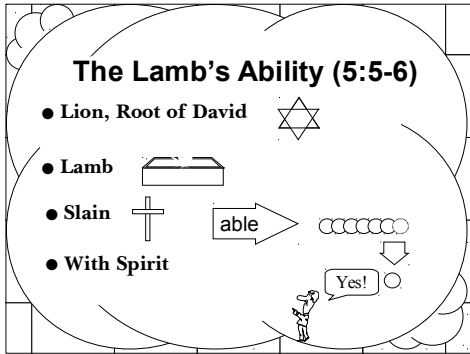
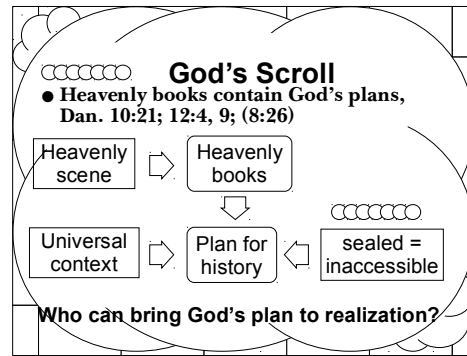
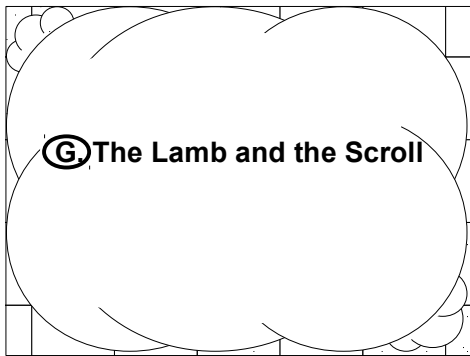
6. Theophany in Revelation by Vern S. Poythress at WTS

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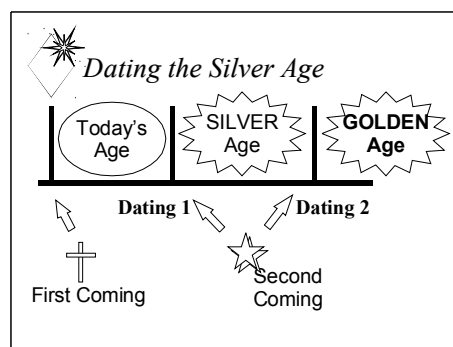
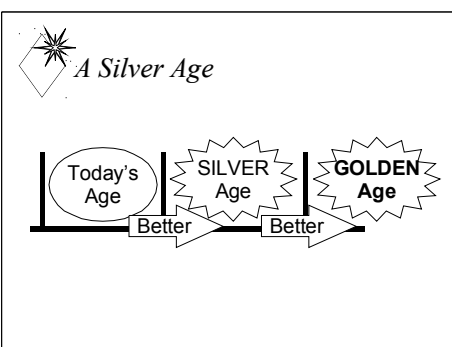
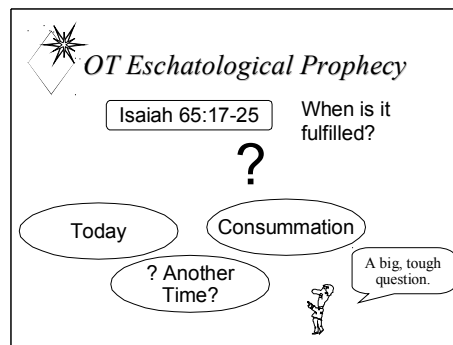
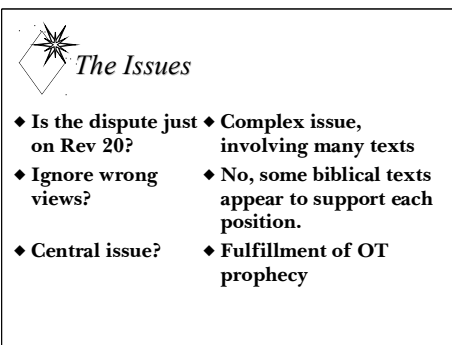
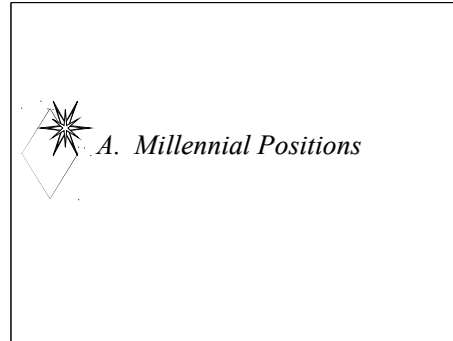
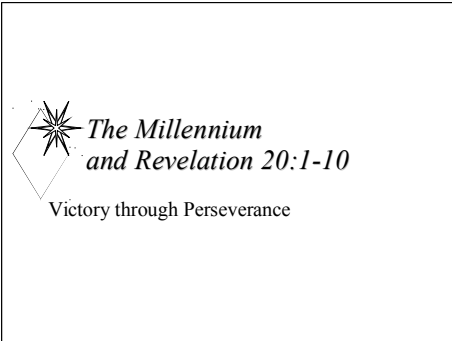
6. Theophany in Revelation Vern S. Poythress at WTS

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7. The Millennium in Revelation by Vern S. Poythress at WTS

7.1



7. The Millennium in Revelation

by Vern S. Poythress at WTS

7.2

 *Origin of Term "Millennium"*

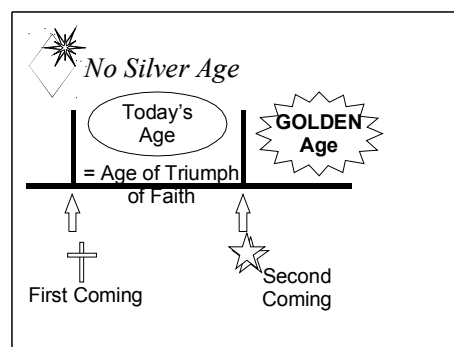
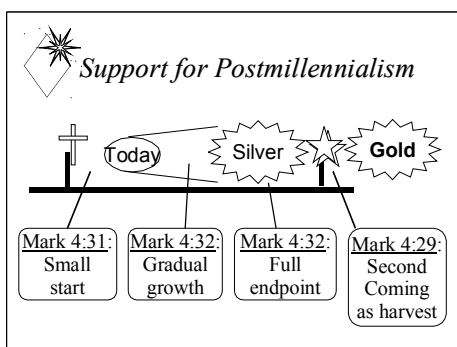
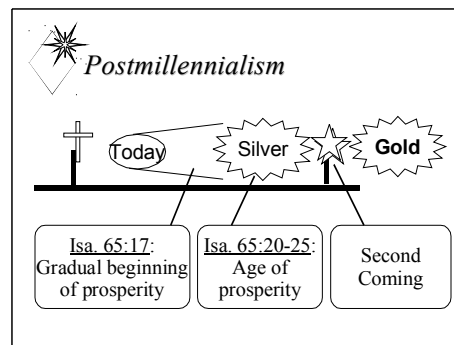
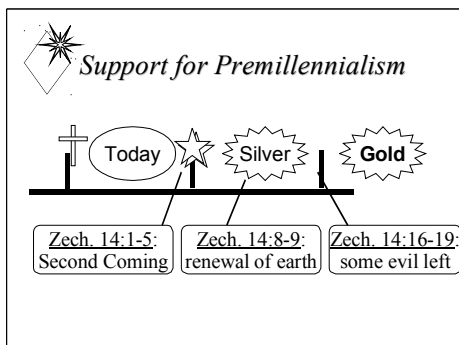
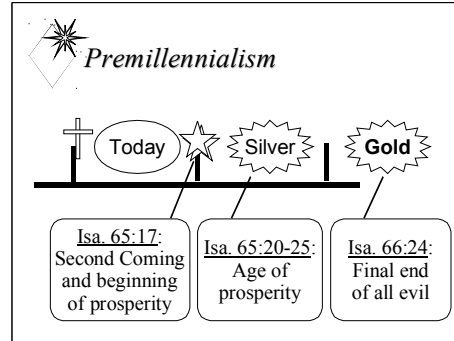
Rev. 20:2-7 ♦ Rev 20:2-7 speaks of "1000 years."

1000 years ♦ "1000 years" in Latin is "millennium."

millennium ♦ The 1000 years may be a silver age.

silver age ♦ Premillennial indicates the Second Coming is before Silver.

date Coming



Definitions of Millennial Positions

Agreements and differences

Bible-believing people all agree that at some future time Jesus Christ will appear openly and bodily to the world in the Second Coming and will begin visibly to reign. But they do not all agree on the exact character of all the events preceding and following the Second Coming, nor do they all agree on the order of events. People have held three main positions over the course of church history, namely premillennialism, amillennialism, and postmillennialism.

The differences among these positions are complex, involving questions concerning the interpretation of a considerable body of OT prophecy as well as various NT passages. Rev 20:1-10 is only one of the passages involved in the discussion. It just happens to be the case that the names of the positions have been derived from the Latin word “millennium,” meaning 1000 years, because of the mention of a period of 1000 years in Rev 20:2-7.

Premillennialism.

Premillennialism argues for the following series of events. (1) The present age continues to be a mixture of good and evil, believers and unbelievers. (2) Christ returns (the Second Coming). Christians living and dead receive resurrection bodies. There is a judgment on the unbelievers who are alive. (3) Christ inaugurates a visible reign over the nations, a time of great peace and prosperity lasting for 1000 years (some think longer). (4) Shortly before the end of this period, Satan instigates a great rebellion (described in Rev 20:7-10). (5) God puts down the rebellion, and there is a final judgment of those alive and of the wicked dead. (6) The eternal reign of God begins (the consummation).

Amillennialism.

Amillennialism has the following sequence of events. (1) The present age continues with a mixture of good and evil. (2) Satan instigates a final rebellion near the end of the age. (3) Christ returns (the Second Coming). Christ judges all people, living and dead. Believers receive resurrection bodies, and unbelievers are cast into hell. (4) The eternal reign of God begins (the consummation).

Postmillennialism.

Postmillennialism has the following sequence of events. (1) The present age becomes better and better as more people become Christians and the blessing of God is poured out on them. There will come a future age of spiritual prosperity when Christian faith will dominate in this world. (2) Christ returns (the Second Coming). Christ judges all people, living and dead. Believers receive resurrection bodies, and unbelievers are cast into hell. (3) The eternal reign of God begins (the consummation).

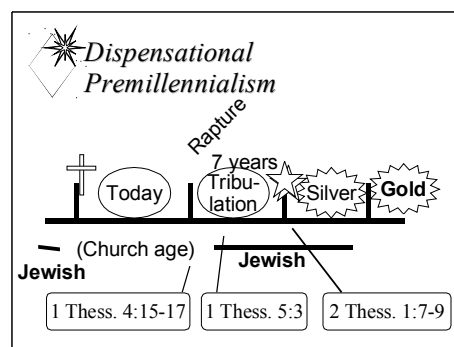
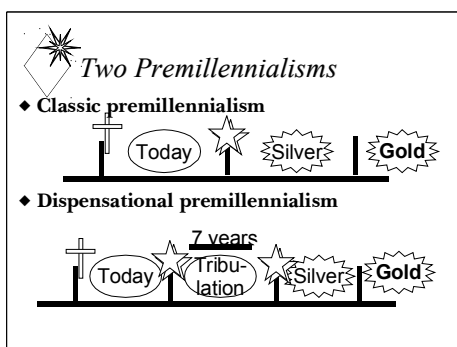
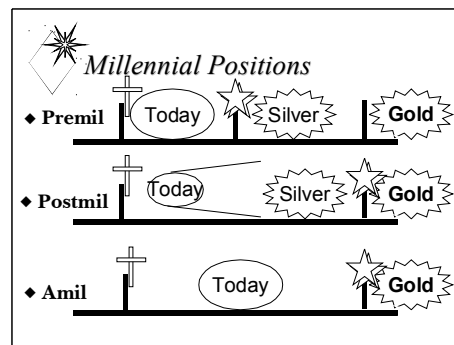
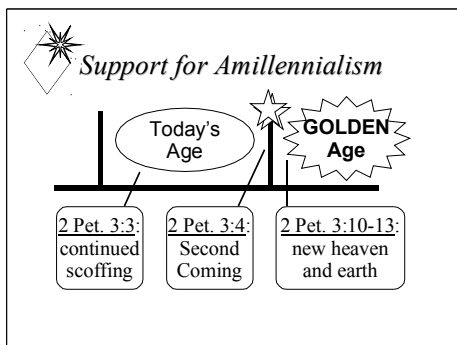
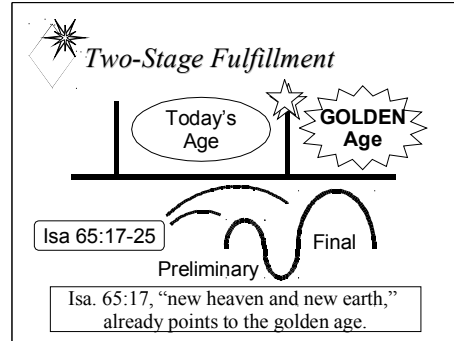
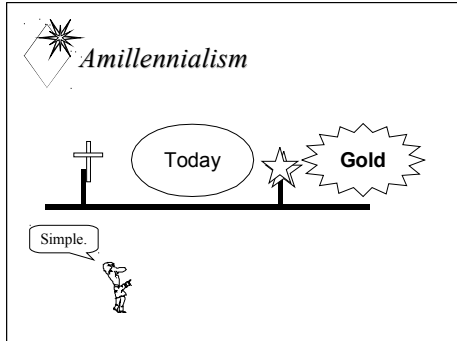
Dispensationalist premillennialism.

A variation of premillennialism arising in the 19th century has the following series of events. (1) The present age continues with a mixture of good and evil. (2) Christ comes to rapture the church. All believers are caught up to heaven and receive resurrection bodies. Unbelievers are left on earth and do not see Christ. (3) Seven years of tribulation begin, during which God’s wrath is poured out on unbelievers and a Jewish remnant converted to faith in Christ bears witness to the truth. (4) At the end of the tribulation Christ appears visibly, unbelievers are cast into hell, and believers living on earth enter a period of 1000 years during which Christ rules over the nations visibly. (5) Satan instigates a rebellion near the end of the period (Rev 20:7-10). (6) God puts down the rebellion and judges all the dead and all the people who lived in the 1000 year period. (7) The eternal reign of God begins (the consummation).

7. The Millennium in Revelation

by Vern S. Poythress at WTS

7.3



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 *Agreements and Disagreements*

- ◆ Christ will appear
- ◆ He will reign
- ◆ A new world
- ◆ What is next after his appearing?
- ◆ What is just before his appearing?
- ◆ Order of events
- ◆ Three main positions: premillennialism, postmillennialism, amillennialism

Some things are sure.



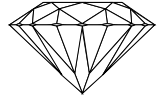
 *B. Distinctives of the Positions*

 *Biblical Insights of the Positions*

- ◆ Each view has some strength
- ◆ Each view shares something with others

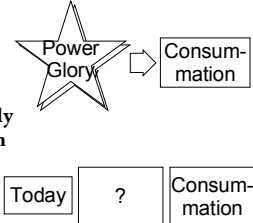
 *Amil Distinctive*

- ◆ Premil and postmil share a more straightforward reading of the OT
- ◆ Amil is more venturesome: love poetry to Jerusalem



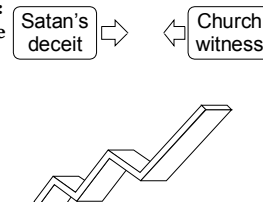
 *Premil Distinctive*

- ◆ Amil and Postmil: Second Coming power and glory leads immediately to consummation
- ◆ Premil has an extra box for awkward texts



 *Postmil Distinctive*

- ◆ Premil and amil: continued struggle of good and evil
- ◆ Postmil: expect conversions



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Lessons from the Positions

- ◆ Premil ◆ Christ is larger than now; long for Second Coming
- ◆ Postmil ◆ Christ reigns now; therefore we are optimistic.
- ◆ Amil ◆ Christ reigns now.

They all sound good.

Premil to Amil Transition

Fewer problems with silver leads to gold.

◆ Premil Today → Silver → Gold

◆ Amil Today → Gold = Gold

Amil to Premil Transition

◆ Second Coming in two stages

Amil to Postmil Transition

◆ Become optimistic

Amil Today →

Postmil Today → Silver →

Postmil to Amil Transition

◆ Optimism becomes present triumph

Postmil Today → Silver →

Amil Today → already →

Premil to Postmil Transition (or back)

◆ Change the timing

◆ Premil Today → Silver → Gold

◆ Postmil Today → Silver → Gold

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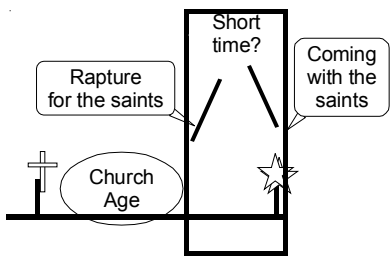
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C. Evaluating Millennial Positions

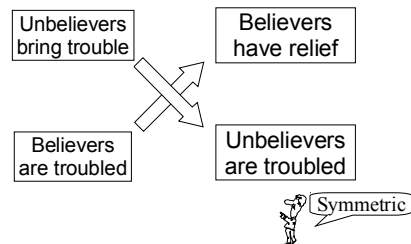
Strongest Arguments for the Millennial Positions

- ◆ Premil
- ◆ Postmil
- ◆ Amil
- ◆ Zechariah 14
- ◆ Parables of growth
- ◆ 2 Thessalonians 1

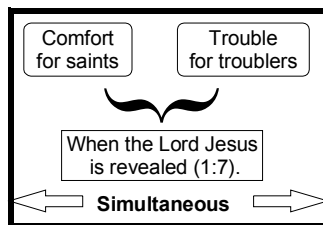
Unified Second Coming?



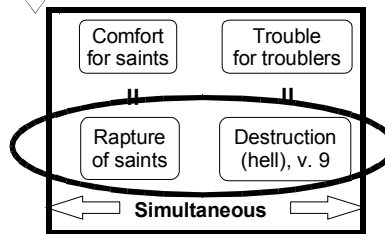
Reversal in 2 Thess 1:6-7



Simultaneous Comfort and Trouble

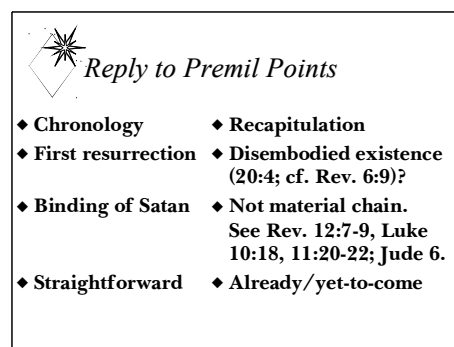
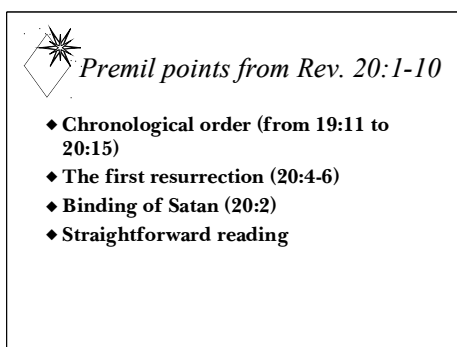
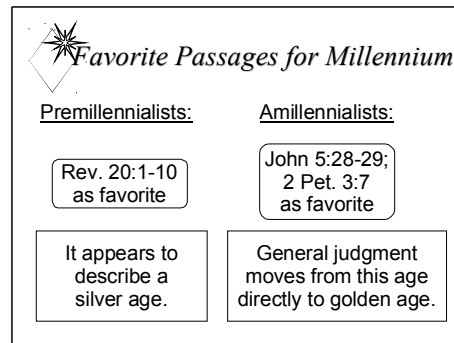
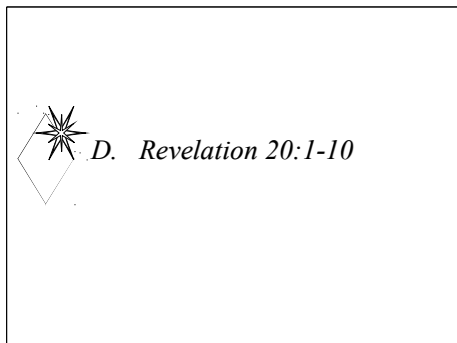
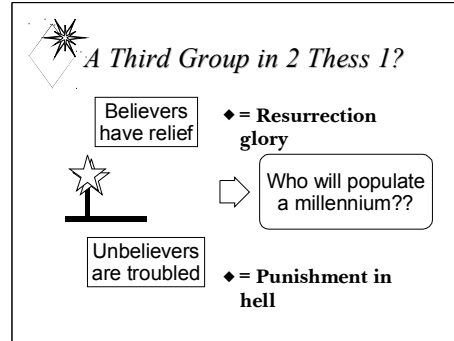
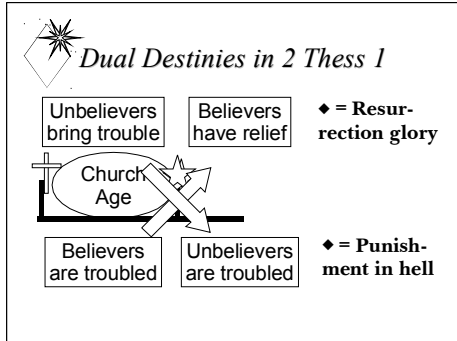


Meaning of Comfort and Trouble



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 *Already and Yet to Come for Rev 20*

	Already	Yet to Come
♦ Prophecy	Down payment	Full inheritance
♦ 19:11-21	War now	Final war
♦ Binding	Luke 10:18; 11:20-22	Future triumph
♦ New life	Regeneration Col. 3:1; Eph. 2:5-6	Bodily resurrection

 *E. Chronological Order*

in Rev. 19:11-20:15

 *Premils' View of Order of Events*

19:11-21	20:1-10	20:11-15	21:1-22:5
Last battle; Second Coming	Reign of 1000 years	Last Judgment	New World

Events in succession Events in succession

 *Premillennialism*

1000 years = millennium

Timeline: Today (cross) → Silver (star) → Gold (star)

 *View 20:1-10 as Recapitulation*

19:11-21	20:1-6 20:7-10	20:11-15	21:1-22:5
Last battle; Second Coming	1000 years Last Battle	Last Judgment	New World

Cycling through the same period

 *Manner of Recapitulation*

Timeline: Today (cross) → 1000 years triumph by faith → last battle → 19:11-21 → last battle → 20:1-6, 7-10 → Gold (star)

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Evidence for Recapitulation in Rev. 20

- ◆ Nations of 20:3 perished in 19:19-21.
- ◆ Vanishing sky in 6:14 same as 20:11.
- ◆ In 15:1 the bowls include all wrath, thus including the wrath of 20:9-10.
- ◆ The final battle occurs in 16:14,16; 17:13-14; 19:19-21; 20:7-10.
- ◆ Imagery from Ezekiel 38-39 occurs in both 19:11-21 and 20:7-10.



F. The First Resurrection



Is First Resurrection of Body?

- ◆ Other places in the New Testament use the word “resurrection” for bodily resurrection.
- ◆ It is a remedy for martyrs (20:4).
- ◆ Many say, “Context does not tell us that this use is figurative.”

But let’s look at the context.



First and Last

Rev 20-22 concerns first and last things:

- ◆ New heaven and earth are last.
- ◆ 22:1-5 returns us to Eden.
- ◆ 19:5-8 returns to an Edenic marriage.
- ◆ “First” and “second” in 20:1-15 match this theme.
- ◆ “Second death” in 20:14-15 is last.



First and Second in Rev 20:1-10

First death

- ◆ First is Preliminary:
 - ◆ Luke 18:30; Matt 12:32
- ◆ Bodily death

Second death

- ◆ Second is Final:
 - ◆ 1 Cor 15:45; Heb 9:28
- ◆ Spiritual
- ◆ With bodily resurrection



Contrasts in Rev 20:1-10

Preliminary:

First death

(Body)

First resurrection

(?)

Final:

Second death

(Spiritual)

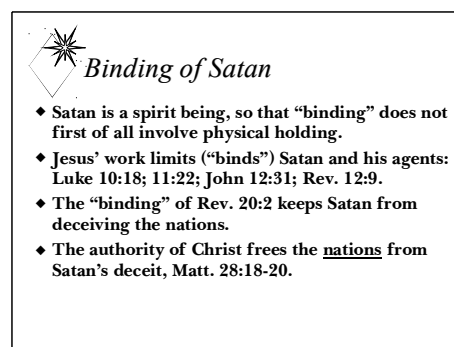
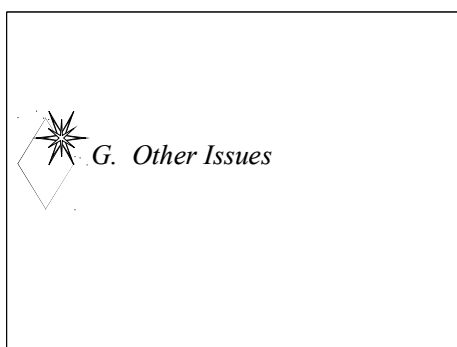
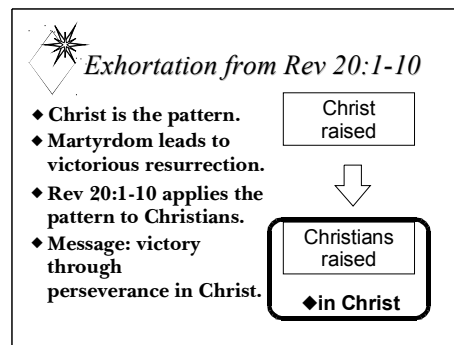
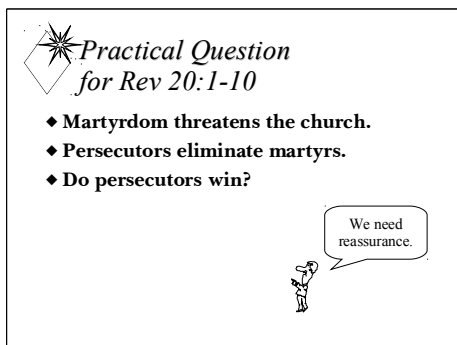
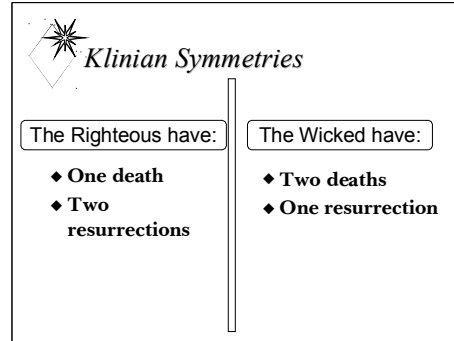
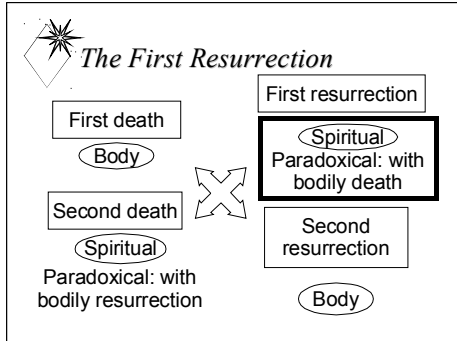
Paradoxical: with bodily resurrection

Second resurrection

(Body)

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7.10



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7.11



Revelation As Not Literal

- ♦ John literally saw the visions.
- ♦ But what he saw was visionary, symbolic. The Beast symbolizes persecuting power.
- ♦ To read literally what is intended symbolically does not really honor the Author.



H. Attitudes

- ♦ God is more interested in major biblical teachings.
- ♦ “The haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day,” Isa 2:17.



God is wiser
than I.

(0) Conclusion: final exhortations 22:6-21 Martyrdom and Vindication

First Stage (First Fruits)

Second Stage (Full Harvest)

Cycle	text	persecution	death of saints	reign of saints	prepare earth	summons to battle	gathering of armies	outbreak of war	defeat of enemies	fire of destruction
(7)	20:1-10 Ezek 36-39	20:4 Ez 36:2 38:8	20:4 37:1-2,11 38:8	20:4		20:7-8a Ez 38:7 39:17	20:8 38:18-20 39:3	20:9a 38:18-20 39:3	20:9b-10 38:21-23 39:3	20:9b-10 39:6,9
(6)	19:11-21 Ezek 39			19:14?		19:17-18 39:17	19:19	19:20a	19:20b-21 39:18-20	19:20b 39:6,9
(5)	17:1-18 Jer 50-51	17:2,10 51:24	17:6 51:24-25 50:7	17:8? 51:35	17:15	(17:17b) 51:27a	17:13 51:27b-28	17:14a 51:29-33	17:14b, 16:17 51:41-44	17:16b 51:58
(4)	16 Jer 25:15-28	16:2	16:6 25:18	15:2-4	16:12	16:13	16:14,16	16:14b	16:19 25:19-31	(16:21)
(3)	12-14 Dan 7	12:6; 13:6-7	12:11; 13:7	12:11-12 14:13	12:16		13:14-17	14:18-19 7:11	14:8-11, 19-20 7:11b	14:10-11 7:11b
(2)	11 Jesus	11:7a earthly life	11:7-10 death	11:12 resurrection	9:14		(9:16) 2 Thess 2:9-10	11:18a	11:15,18 2 Th 2:8	2 Thess 1:7
(1)	6 Luke 21	21:12	6:9,11 21:16	6:9-10 21:18-19	6:12-14 21:25		(6:15) (21:26)		(6:17) 21:27	
(0)	2-3	2:10	2:10,13	2:11				2:27	2:27	

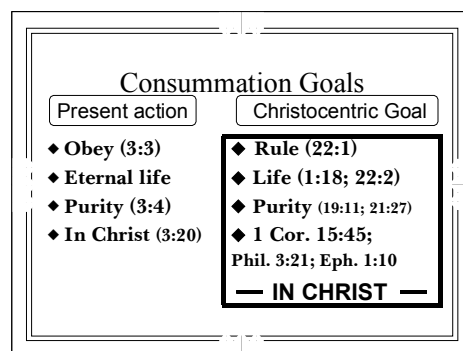
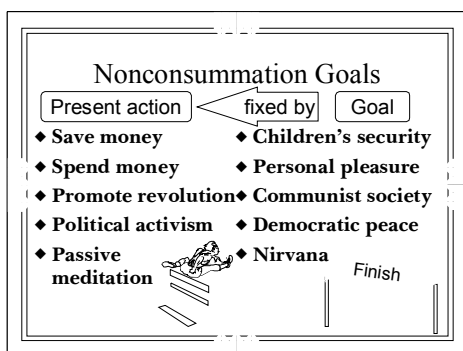
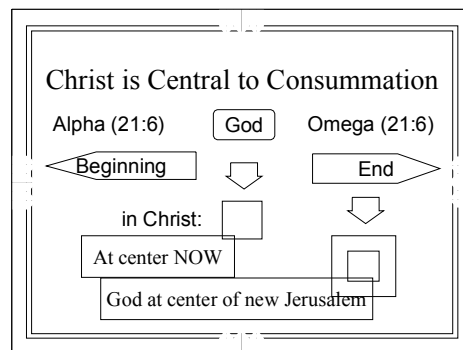
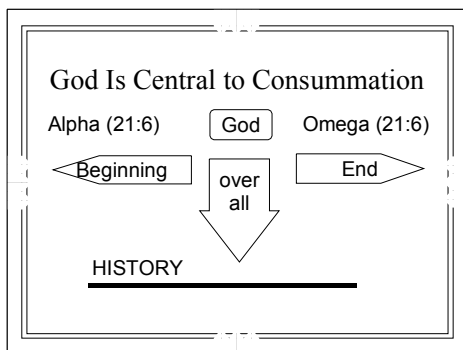
8. The Consummation by Vern S. Poythress at WTS

8.1

The Consummation:
Comfort in the Promise of Communion with God

Vern Sheridan Poythress
Westminster Theological Seminary

A.
The Importance of the Consummation



8. The Consummation

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8.2

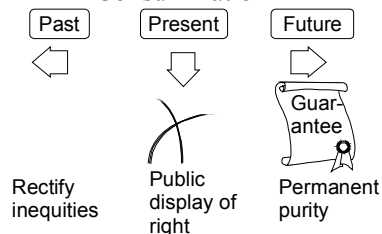
B. Absolute Judgment at the Consummation

Rev. 20:11-15

Benefits of Consummation (20:11-15)

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| - | + |
| ↓ | ↓ |
| Godly
Fear | Reject folly |
- ◆ Strength under persecution
 - ◆ Evil will lose
 - ◆ God rectifies
 - ◆ Leads to 21:1-8

Righteousness in the Consummation



Rectification in Consummation

- ◆ In history: Nebuchadnezzar, communism, humanism
- ◆ Final Judgment of history:
 - judgment of all previous time;
 - deals with every wrong;
 - most intense judgment.
- ◆ The seriousness of judgment is displayed in the cross.

Display of God in Consummation

- ◆ Display of truth, 20:12
- ◆ Display of God's presence, 20:11
- ◆ Display of persons, 20:13
- ◆ No caviling, "every mouth silenced," Rom. 3:19



Purity of the Consummation

- ◆ Fire, Mal. 4:1; Rev. 20:15
- ◆ Crushing, Isa. 63:3; Rev. 14:20
- ◆ Purity, Rev. 21:27
- ◆ With certainty, Rev. 10:6-7; 21:5



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C. God's Triumph in the Consummation

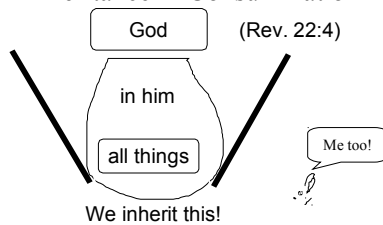
Rev. 21:1-22:5

Triumph in the Consummation

- ♦ **Extent:** whole of heaven and earth, 21:1
- ♦ **Full intensity,** 21:23; 22:4-5
- ♦ **Perfectly planned,** 21:15-17
- ♦ **Gloriously beautiful,** 21:18-21; 22:1-5



Inheritance in Consummation



Materiality in the Consummation

- ♦ **Christ has flesh and bones** (Luke 24:39).
- ♦ **He is a pattern for us** (1 Cor. 15:45-49; Phil. 3:21).
- ♦ **And for creation** (Rom. 8:17-25).
- ♦ **The new is physical.**

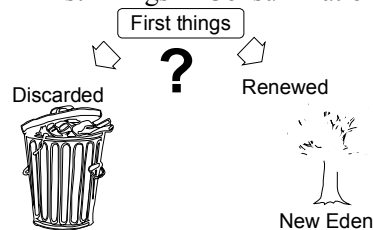
Christ



we

new earth

First Things in Consummation



Renewal in the Consummation

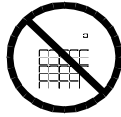
- ♦ **"New heavens"** from Isa. 65:17-25
- ♦ **Christ's resurrection body**
- ♦ **You are saved, not a substitute**
- ♦ **2 Pet. 3:10** connotes radical purification
- ♦ **New Jerusalem is Philadelphia, renewed!**
- ♦ **With God, you lose nothing good.**

8. The Consummation by Vern S. Poythress at WTS

8.4

Meaning in the Consummation

- ♦ God loves his people (John 15:15).
- ♦ He is Incalculable (1 Cor. 2:9; 13:12).



Christ in the Consummation

Already

Yet to Come

- ♦ Down payment
- ♦ Resurrection life
- ♦ Heavenly citizen
- ♦ God's presence
- ♦ Full inheritance
- ♦ Resurrection
- ♦ New Jerusalem
- ♦ God's presence

— IN CHRIST —

Trust Looking for Consummation

Past

Future

God triumphed
in the cross
and resurrection



God will
triumph

First Coming Second Coming

Trust in God through Christ

- ♦ Justice: He establishes right
- ♦ Power: He is able to
- ♦ Faithfulness: It is certain
- ♦ Goodness: Everything you need



Demonstrated in Christ

Song from Rev. 19:6-7

Hallelujah! For the Lord our God
the Almighty reigns. (2X)

Let us rejoice and be glad and give
the glory unto him.

Hallelujah! For the Lord our God
the Almighty reigns.

Song from Rev. 4:11

Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy,
Thou art worthy, O Lord.

Thou art worthy to receive glory,
glory, and honor, and power.

For Thou hast created--
hast all things created,

For Thou hast created all things.

And for Thy pleasure they are created;
Thou art worthy, O Lord.

8. The Consummation by Vern S. Poythress at WTS

8.5

Song from Rev. 5:9-14

Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy,
Thou art worthy, O Lamb.
Thou art worthy To receive glory
And power at the Father's right hand.
For Thou hast redeemed us,
Hast ransomed and cleansed us,
By thy blood setting us free;
In white robes arrayed us, Kings and priests
made us, And we are reigning in Thee.

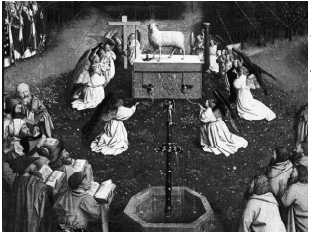
9. Worship

by Vern S. Poythress at WTS

 **Worship in Revelation**

Vern Sheridan Poythress

 **The Lamb**



The Adoration of the Lamb,
by Jan van Eyck, 1432

 **Worship from Theophany**

Seeing God in majesty


Praise
 4:8

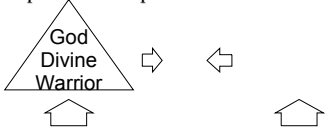

Awe
 1:17


Imitation
 2 Cor. 3:18

 **A. Worship as Theme in Rev.**

 **Conflict as Worship**

► Spiritual war pervades Rev.



► To whom do people give allegiance?

► Worship of God or Satan.

 **Pervasiveness of Worship**

► **Scenes of worship:** 1:17; 4-5; 7:9-12; 8:3-5; 10:6-7; 11:1; 11:15-19; 12:10-12; 15:2-8; 15:5-7; 18:20; 19:1-10; 20:4-6; 20:11-15; 22:1-5; 22:8; 22:20-21.

► **Spiritual war.**

► **Seeing God.**

► **Receiving instruction and exhortation.**

9. Worship

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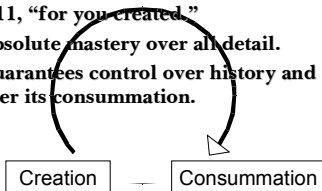


B. God Who Is Worshiped



Creator (4:11)

- 4:11, "for you created."
- Absolute mastery over all detail.
- Guarantees control over history and over its consummation.



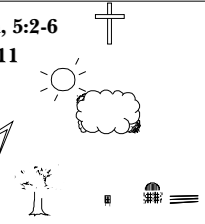
Creation

Consummation



God's Glory Now

- In redemption, 5:2-6
- In creation, 4:11
 - Light
 - Cloud
 - Thunder
 - Trees (life)
 - Houses




Song from Rev. 4:11

Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy,
Thou are worthy, O Lord.
Thou are worthy to receive glory,
glory, and honor, and power.
For Thou hast created--
hast all things created,
For Thou hast created all things.
And for Thy pleasure they are created;
Thou art worthy, O Lord.



Redeemer (5:1-14)

- Only Christ can bring about redemption (5:3).
- Wondrous method (5:6).
- Wondrous results (5:9-10).
- Wondrous praise (5:11-14).




Victory over Death

- 1:18; 2:8-11.
- Christ is victor; so are we.

<u>Christ:</u>	died	eternal resur-rection life
<u>We:</u>	die	gain resur-rection life



9. Worship

by Vern S. Poythress at WTS



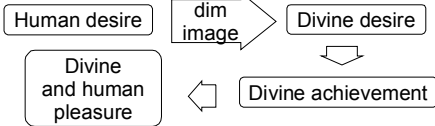
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Thou art worthy To receive glory
And power at the Father's right hand.
For Thou hast redeemed us,
Hast ransomed and cleansed us,
By thy blood setting us free;
In white robes arrayed us, Kings and priests
made us, And we are reigning in Thee.



Righteous Judge (20:11-15)

- **Note worldly longing for peace and justice.**
- **Reflects dimly the desire and will of God.**



Judgment in Rev.

- **The cycles are cycles of judgment.**
- **Set in motion by God (cf. 6:1; 8:2).**
- **As exhibitions of who God is in righteousness and zeal.**
- **Worship is appropriate as a response to all of Revelation.**



Song from Rev. 19:6-7

Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. (2X)

Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory unto him.

Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.



God's Holiness (4:8)

- **Exalted**
- **Ethically pure**
- **With infinite intensity**



Holy, Holy, Holy!

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!
Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
Who wert, and art, and evermore shall be.

9. Worship

by Vern S. Poythress at WTS

 **God's Beauty (4:3)**

- God is magnificent (4:3)
- Beauty in creation dimly reflects the Original (4:7).
- We are to be beautiful in action (19:8; Matt. 5:14).
- Final goal is beauty/glory (21:11, 18-27).
- Indifference to beauty denies creation and dishonors the Creator.

 **God's Beauty in Jewels**

God	➡	angelic court	➡	heaven and earth
Rev. 4:3; splendor		Ezek. 1:16		Rev. 21:19-21
you	↔	church	↔	temple
Exod. 28:15-21		Isa. 61:10; 62:3		Rev. 21:19-21

 **For the Beauty of the Earth**

For the beauty of the earth,
For the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth,
Over and around us lies,
Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.
 For the beauty of each hour
Of the day and of the night,
hill and vale, and tree and flow'r,
Sun and moon and stars of light, ...

 **Responding to Creation**

- Modern secularism has desiccated the sense of God's presence.
- Awareness of God in creation and providence produces breadth to worship.
- "O Lord, how manifold are thy works. In wisdom hast Thou made them all. The earth is full of Thy riches. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live, I will praise my God, while I have my being" (Ps. 104:24, 33).

 **C. Human Response in Worship**

 **Aspects of Worship**

- Know who God is (22:4)
- Praise, singing (19:1-8)
- Sense of pollution and its remedy (14:7; 1:17(?); Isa. 6:5-7)
- Submission, bowing down (1:17; 4:10)
- Obedience (1:3)
- Awe (4:8)
- Imitating God (reflecting the glory of God, as in 2 Cor. 3:18)

9. Worship

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