

MAKING SENSE OF REVELATION

This Author's Viewpoint

Textbook histories are written in chronological order. That is, the main events to be covered are presented, logically, from chapter to chapter in a beginning to the end manner. However, charts, maps and narrative insertions are not uncommonly placed throughout the main chronological text. For instance, chapters that teach the American Civil War might carry special insertions that delve with greater detail into important themes, such as the life of Abraham Lincoln or the development of political parties and their positions on slavery, etc.

Quite some years ago, the author received teaching that the book of *Revelation* can reasonably be outlined in an identical manner. Winding its way through the text, one can discern a trail that represents the main chronology. Into this sequence of events are interspersed passages which enlarge upon special topics, which we may refer to as “parenthetical visions.”

The main chronology lays out the following prophesied developments: 4:1-5:14 - Tumult surrounding a scroll(or book), which contains the turbulence of the apocalypse; 6:1-9:21; 11:15-19; 15:1-16:21 - A series of seven seal openings, followed by seven trumpet blasts, followed by seven bowls of wrath; 19:1-22:5 - The marriage of the Lamb, the triumphal return of Christ, the battle of Armageddon, the millennial kingdom, its downfall, judgement before the great white throne and the eternal ages.

Five parenthetical visions will be labeled as follows: The Little Scroll, Measuring of Temple and the Two Witnesses(10:1-11:14); The Woman in Glory, the Great Red Dragon, and her Man Child(12:1-17); The Beast out of the Sea(13:1-18); The 144,000 on Mount Zion, Angelic Pronouncements and the Harvest(14:1-20); Babylon the Great, History of the Beast and the Fall of Babylon(17:1-18:24).

Connecting parenthetical visions to main chronology requires the uncovering of specific items that form cross-links between parenthesis and text. It will be seen that the details of outside passages must be compared for this to be accomplished. The chart below presents a scheme of organization along these lines.

Although it will not become our task to comment on *Revelation* verse by verse, we may risk a supposition. As, earlier in these essays, we have noticed the book's vast array of fantastic images, it may be that their precise interpretation will require examining each detail and developing every theme as they have been delivered to us throughout the rest of scripture, *Genesis to Jude*.

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SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Main Time-Line	Parenthetical Visions	Daniel ch8 ch9 ch11	New Testament Matt 2Thess 1Cor 1Thess
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D E V E L O P M E N T S	4:1- 6:1 6:9,10	17:3 12:2	24:4,5 24:14ab 2:3ab
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3 ½ Y E A R S F I N A L S E V E N Y E A R S Y E A R S	6:11 6:12a 6:12b 9:13 9:21; 11:15- 11:19; 15:1- 16:12-16 16:21.	17:14 17:16 10:1 12:5 13:1 14:1 11:2,3 12:6,14 13:5 14:8 18:2 11:14 14:16 15:5	11b 27a 30b, 31a 24:14c 2:3c 5:3 24:15 2:4 24:29 15:52, 4:16 14 44, 45
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Y E A R S Y E A R S Y E A R S	6:12a 6:12b 9:13 9:21; 11:15- 11:19; 15:1- 16:12-16 16:21.	10:1 12:5 13:1 14:1 11:2,3 12:6,14 13:5 14:8 18:2 11:14 14:16 15:5	12 27b 31b 24:15 2:4 24:29 15:52, 4:16 14 44, 45
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ARMAGEDDON	Rev 19:1-21 (Compare 19:17,18,21b and Ezekiel 39:17-20)
MILLENNIAL REIGN	Rev 20:1-6
“AGES OF ETERNITY”	Rev 20:7-22:5