

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION (3): STRUCTURE – HOW DOES IT FIT TOGETHER?

Exodus 19:16-25

1. INTRODUCTION & OUTLINE

1:1-20	Prologue
2:1–3:22	The 7 letters to the churches
4:1-11	A vision of heaven
5:1–8:5	The 7 seals
8:6–11:19	The 7 trumpets
12:1–15:4	The 7 signs: serpent/beast 1/beast 2/Lamb & 144k/three angels/harvest/saints victory & song
15:5–16:21	The 7 bowls / plagues
17:1–19:10	The judgement of Babylon the whore
19:11-20:15	The victory of the Word of God, defeat of Satan, and final judgement
21:1–22:5	The new creation: the church perfect in glory
22:6-21	Epilogue

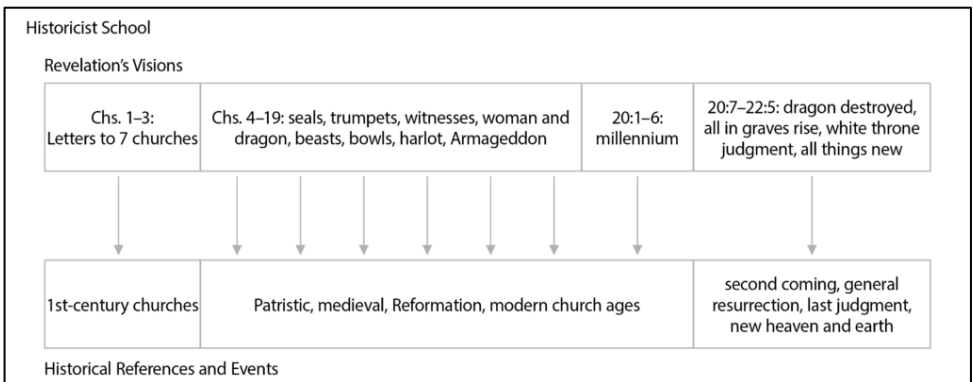
Q: How do these sections relate to each other? – linear... or recapitulation?

Big thanks to G.K. Beale and

ESV Study Bible! [Buy them!](#)

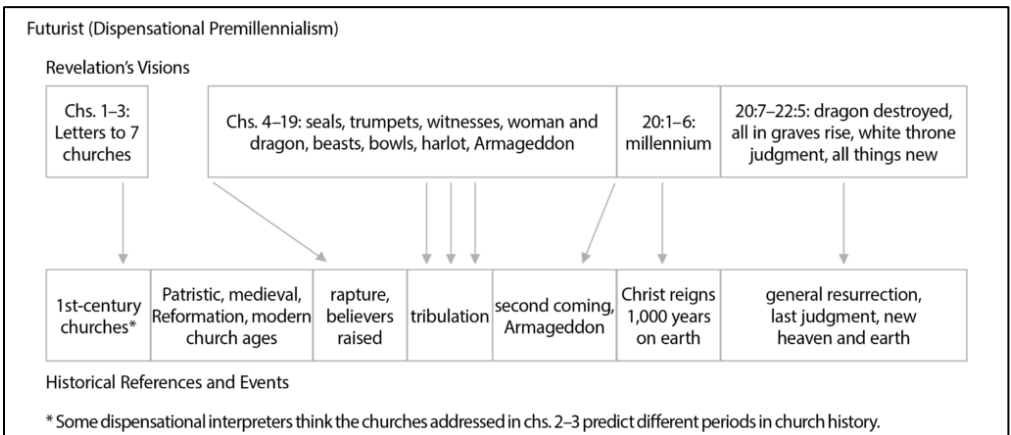
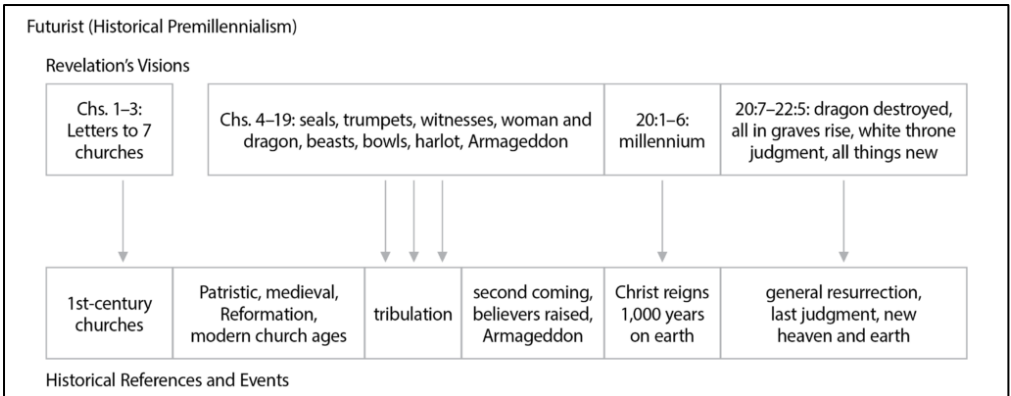
2. LINEAR: REVELATION UNFOLDS HISTORY IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

a) Historicist



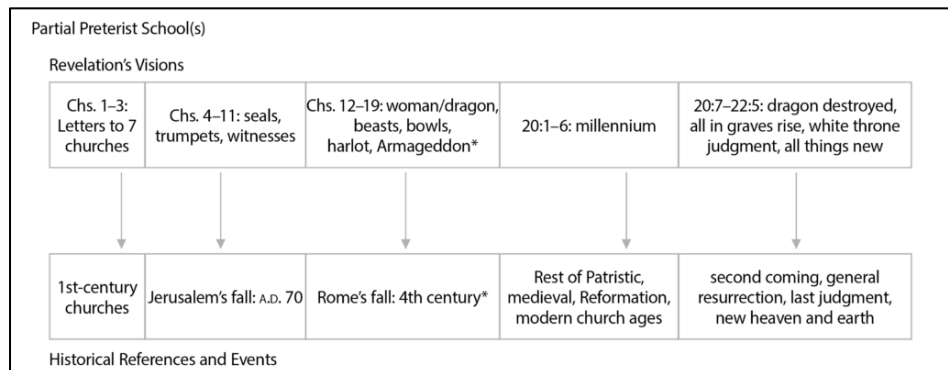
- Chs 4-22 = Church history: Goth invasions, Muslims, Catholic corruption, Charlemagne, Reformation, Napoleon, Hitler, the End etc.
- Most Reformers held to this view (e.g. papal Rome = the “beast”)
- But: too “Western”... too much disagreement... Revelation isn’t linear (see below)

b) Futurist



- Chs 4-22 = single, successive, chronological story of *future* history.
- There is a future aspect to Revelation. BUT: linear??? (see below...)
- Note: if you take a "literal" view of Rev you will be a futurist. (See session on symbolism)

c) Preterist ("past"): Rev chiefly fulfilled in AD70 and/or fall of Rome Mix of linear/recapitulation



3. RECAPITULATION: THE SAME TIME PERIOD... REPEATED

a) Idealism

- The visions' literary order need not reflect the actual chronological order of particular historical events. Idealists also believe that Revelation is mainly symbolic.

4. EVIDENCE FOR RECAPITULATION

a) Final judgement / final salvation occurs repeatedly

		Judgement	Salvation
1:1-20	Prologue		
2:1-3:22	The 7 letters to the churches		
4:1-11	A vision of heaven		
5:1-8:5	The 7 seals	6:12-17	7:9-17
8:6-11:19	The 7 trumpets	11:18a	11:18b
12:1-15:4	The 7 signs	14:14-20	15:2-4
15:5-16:21	The 7 bowls / plagues	16:17-21	
17:1-19:10	The judgement of Babylon the whore	17:1-18:24	19:1-10
19:11-20:15	The victory of the Word of God, defeat of Satan, and final judgement	20:7-15	
21:1-22:5	The new creation: the church perfect in glory		21:1-22:5
22:6-21	Epilogue		

b) Specific example: compare these "judgement" passages

See Revelation 20:11-15

Then read 6:12-17, 11:15-18, 14:14-20, 16:17-21,

Parallel visions from Pentecost to return of Christ.

** The order in which John saw things is not necessarily the historical chronological order in which those things will happen.

c) Specific example: Repeated judgement in the 7th item (see Exodus 19)

- 4:5, "flashes of lightning, and rumblings/voices, and peals of thunder..."

- 8:5, "peals of thunder, rumblings/voices, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake."

- 11:19, "flashes of lightning, rumblings/voices, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail."

- 16:18-21, "flashes of lightning, rumblings/voices, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake...and great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each..."

d) Other parallels:

- (1) "It is done" in 16:17 and 21:6, re: final judgement
- (2) "gather together for war" in 16:14; 19:19; and 20:8 - the same (final consummative) battle is being described three times.
- (3) declarations concerning fall of Babylon in 14:8, 16:19 and variously in chs.17-19 must describe the same judgement.
- (4) trumpets and bowls are both modeled on the Exodus plagues, alluding to the same plagues and presenting them in roughly the same order.

e) The close relation of the Letters to the Visions

- (1) The theme of true/false Israel (2:9, 3:9, 7:4-8).
- (2) The enduring of persecution (2:10, 6:11)
- (3) The protection of the name of God (3:10,3:12, 7:3, 14:1)
- (4) The privilege of being God's temple (3:12, 7:15)
- (5) The theme of witnessing for God (2:13, 6:9, 11:3-13)
- (6) Demonic figures (2:13, 2:14, 12:9, 13:13-17, 16:13, 19:20)
- (7) A harlot (2:20-23, ch.17)
- (8) Promises of clean garments and eating with the Lord (3:18,20, 19:8-9)
- (9) Christ is the faithful and the truth (3:14, 19:11)
- (10) Overcoming (2:7, 11, 12:11; 15:2; 17:14)
- (11) Jesus bringing judgment by the sword coming out of His mouth (2:16, 19:15).

RESOURCES ON REVELATION

- *ESV Study Bible*: notes and introduction [NB. The introduction is available online at The Gospel Coalition website: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/revelation/#overview>]
- John Richardson, *Revelation Unwrapped* (82 page booklet)
- G.K.Beale, "Help me teach the Bible: Revelation" (1 hour interview with Nancy Guthrie – tips for Bibleteachers – at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/revelation/#teaching-preaching>)
- Leon Morris, *Revelation* (256 pages; Tyndale New Testament Commentary series)
- G.K. Beale, *The book of Revelation: a shorter exegetical commentary* (NB. Beale's "shorter" commentary is still 500 pages.... but it's smaller than his 1,300 page classic!)