

## *Revelation*

### Structure

- I. Introduction (1.1-3)
- II. The Struggle on Earth (1.4-11.19)
  - A. Vision 1: The Seven Churches (1.4-3.22)
  - B. Vision 2: The Seven Seals (4.1-8.5)
  - C. Vision 3: The Seven Trumpets (8.6-11.19)
- III. The Spiritual Background (12.1-22.5)
  - A. Vision 4: The Enemies of the Church (12.1-14.20)
  - B. Vision 5: The Seven Bowls (15.1-16.21)
  - C. Vision 6: The Destruction of the Church's Enemies (17.1-19.21)
  - D. Vision 7: The New Heavens and the New Earth (20.1-22.5)
- IV. Conclusion (22.6-21)

### A Few Arguments for Parallel Structure

- 1) Each vision begins with a change in what John is seeing and ends with a picture of the final judgment.
- 2) Things that have been destroyed resurface later. For example, wicked men, Babylon the prostitute, and judgment itself.
- 3) Different passages describe the same event. For example, compare 16.12-16; 19.19-21; and 20.7-10. All three passages describe the battle of Armageddon. Also, compare 12.7-11 and 20.1-6.

### An Overview of 'Revelation History'

- 1) In His death and resurrection, Jesus Christ fulfilled all the promises of God and won the decisive battle over Satan, delivering to the dragon a wound from which he will never recover. See 5.6-10; 12.1-5.
- 2) Since the time of Christ's resurrection and enthronement, Satan's influence in this world has been restricted. He is unable to stop the progress of the Gospel and must watch as the elect are drawn to Christ. See 11.1-6; 12.6-9; 20.1-3.
- 3) Enraged at his defeat and limitation, Satan uses several allies – the beast, the false prophet, and the prostitute – to deceive and enslave mankind. See 12.13-17; 13.1-14; 17.1-6.
- 4) Over this whole period, God is sovereign over all that occurs. Some things that occur are 'seals', which bring suffering to God's people in order to refine them and bring them further away from the lures of Satan. Some events are 'trumpets', which administer limited punishments upon the wicked and call them to repent. Some events are bowls, which are final judgments upon the wicked, ending their lives and thus ensuring that they will have no further chances to heed the call to repent. One event can serve all three functions for different people. See chapters 4-11, 15-16. Compare the trumpets and the bowls.
- 5) After an established period of time, Christ will allow Satan increased power in the earth. The Church will suffer such severe persecution that it will appear to have been defeated altogether. See 11.7-10; 16.12-16; 19.19; 20.7-9.
- 6) After a very short period of such persecution, Christ will return in judgment. The wicked will be sent to Hell, along with Satan, and the Redeemed will love forever with God in the New Jerusalem. See 14.14-20; 16.17-21; 19.11-21; 20.9-21.4.

### Suggested Reading

Derek Thomas, *Let's Study Revelation*  
William Hendrikson, *More Than Conquerors*  
G.K. Beale, *Revelation*