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The Layers of the Apocalypse: An Integrative Approach to Revelation's Macrostructure

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Abstract

The structure of John's Apocalypse represents a perennial problem, drawing much attention while managing to elude a consensus around any one structural model. This article posits that the structure of the Apocalypse comprises a tripartite framework of individual layers woven together in a cohesive literary unity. The *surface* structure represents the first layer and provides the most accessible means for understanding the major and minor divisions. A second layer of *intertextual* parallels is evidenced by the way the Apocalypse apparently models portions of the Old Testament. A final layer consists of *intratextual* connections linking repetitive terms and phrases in a complex system of internal cross-references. By recognizing the surface structure, the intertextual layer and intratextual layer, interpreters can further explore how these individual layers influence the structure of the Apocalypse. This approach may also prove useful when investigating the meaning of the text through its structure.

Key Words

Apocalypse, John, intratextuality, intertextuality, structure, Revelation

Introduction

Scenes morph before the reader's eyes, like the turning of a kaleidoscope, with a myriad of symbols, colors, numbers and heavenly beings, leaving many mystified and confused about the structure of the Apocalypse. The rapid shifts in scenery with various intercalations, recapitulations and asides have prompted many interpreters to conclude that Revelation consists of a patchwork of visions composed in various settings over

extended periods of time.[1] Attempts at delineating Revelation's macro-structure are as diverse as the images found within the book.[2] David Barr (1998: 10) correctly observes the tendency of many scholars to discover the exact structural patterns that they expect to find. Furthermore, inter-preters repeatedly express frustration over the multitude of diverse struc-tural outlines.[3] Pierre Prigent's (2004: 93) lament summarizes well their consternation, '[C]an one reasonably expect today to discover a structure that has remained elusive for so long, after so many attempts that critical review has always ended up rejecting?'

   Nevertheless, scholars still revisit the structure of the Apocalypse due to its elusive and enigmatic character. One reason for this continued quest stems from the apparent multiplicity of structural features evident in the text. Those looking for a single overarching structuring principle (i.e., a series of sevens) stumble over odd passages in the text that simply cannot fit neatly into that pattern no matter how one enumerates the visions. While some scholars highlight one textual pattern clearly evident from a surface reading, those who explore Revelation's intertextuality discover remarkable structural similarities with many Old Testament texts (e.g., Dan. 7//Rev. 1, 13, 17 or Ezek. 38–48// Rev. 20–22). Still others meticu-lously comb through the text turning up a vast web of interconnections within the vision (e.g., intercalations, chiasmus and repetitions of words and phrases). This enigmatic nature of Revelation's structure may arise directly from a multilayered aspect produced by its complex composition. Aside from the fact that the Apocalypse represents a written account of visionary experiences,[4] its structure is further complicated by the presence of at least three structural layers. Perhaps we may gain a better grasp of

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   1.   Charles 1920: I, lxxxvii-xci; Aune 1997: cx-cxxxiv; Ford 1975a: 50-57; Kraft 1973: 11-15; Prigent 2004: 84-92.

   2.   See Bornkamm 1937: 132-49; Vanni 1971; Giblin 1974, 1991; Schüssler Fiorenza 1998: 344-66; Collins 2001: 5-55; Hahn 1979: 145-54; Lambrecht 1980: 77-104; Lee 1998: 165-94; Filho 2002: 213-34; Tavo 2005: 47-68.

   3.   Collins 2001: 8; Beale 1999: 108; Sweet 1990: 35; Mounce 1977: 46; Bauckham 1993a: 21.

   4.   For an example of the complexity involved with interpreting visionary com-munication, see Poythress 1993: 41-42. He posits at least four relevant levels of communication: (1) the linguistic level, consisting of the textual record itself; (2) the visionary level, consisting of the visual experience that John had in seeing the beast; (3) the referential level, consisting of the historical reference of the beast and of various particulars in the description; (4) a symbolical level, consisting of the inter-pretation of what the symbolic imagery actually connotes about its historical referent.

Revelation's macrostructure by integrating its structural layers into a cohesive structural hierarchy.[5]

Anatomy books often contain illustrations with transparent overlays of the skeletal, circulatory and muscular systems that demonstrate how each component plays a role in the structure of the human body. Each individual acetate layer reveals features unique to the systems illustrated, but does not represent the complete form of the human body. Likewise, by examining Revelation from a multi-layered viewpoint, one may be able to comprehend more clearly the overall structure.[6] Consequently, this article will explore three interrelated structural layers.

The first layer is the surface or discourse structure designed to guide the reader/auditor through the overall vision. The second is the intertextual layer whereby various Old Testament texts function like a *Vorlage* for portions of John's vision. The third is the intratextual layer that links recurring words and phrases together in a complex cross-reference system. The following investigation will primarily consist of a 'dissection' of the layers by examining the contours and features unique to each of the tripartite layers. Some ways in which the layers might be 'assembled' together to form a cohesive whole will also be considered. Although a complete resolution of all the difficulties is certainly beyond the limits of this investigation, by studying these layers one may arrive at a more accurately nuanced approach for adjudicating the overall structure of the Apocalypse. This may help to resolve some of the tensions between all the various structural schemes by exposing an intricate network of several structural devices binding the text into a single literary composition.

Theoretical Preliminaries

Several reasons exist for affirming the probability of some common ground regarding the macrostructure of John's Apocalypse. First, the book of Revelation represents an intricately woven literary masterpiece exhibiting a cohesive unity. Schüssler Fiorenza (1998: 164) rightly posits that 'structural analysis has driven home that the total configuration (*Gestalt*) and composition of a work cannot be derived from its sources or

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5. Bauckham (1993a: 2) takes a similar approach dividing his analysis of Revelation's structure by examining (1) the obvious surface structure, (2) features not evident from an oral performance, and (3) the 'hidden meaning' only apparent when studied intently.

6. The analogy of transparent overlays was first suggested by Leonard L. Thompson (1991: 126) and adopted by Beale (1999: 115).

traditions but only from the formal expression and theological intention of the author'. Likewise, Barr (1984: 43) maintains that most critical studies have sought to divide the book, but 'John's concern was to bind it together'. Bauckham's (1993a) seminal essay on the structure of Revelation convincingly demonstrates the assiduous and intricate nature of its composition and literary unity. Narrative-critical approaches not only presuppose this unity, but they also help demonstrate how Revelation presents a unified literary composition.[7] Regardless of how one construes the sources and stages of the book's composition, few could deny that in its present form Revelation is a literary unity.[8]

Second, the question surrounding the meaning of a written text is intimately related to genre and structure. Comparative studies of the structures of Revelation and of contemporary Jewish and Christian apocalypses (Hellholm 1986; Aune 1986; Smith 1994) have yielded a number of fruitful insights demonstrating the shared use of particular generic literary conventions. What is more, comparisons between the structures of Old Testament prophetic books and Revelation help establish common generic structural features.[9] An awareness of Revelation's structure assists in the exegetical endeavor and is essential for interpreting the book's message (Bauckham 1993a: 3; Beale 1999: 108; Pattemore 2003: 61). The structural shape and contours of Revelation become necessary avenues for adjudicating textual meaning.[10]

Third, although no formal consensus has emerged, scholars have successfully identified numerous structural features. Most scholars acknowledge that Revelation has a prologue (Rev. 1.1-8) and an epilogue (Rev. 22.6-21).[11] A clearly pronounced series of sevens features prominently in the vision (Rev. 2.1–3.22; 6.1–8.1; 8.2–11.19; 15.1–16.21), but debate

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7. Thompson 1990: 347-63; Resseguie 1998; Lee 2002; Michaels 1991: 604-20.

8. Roloff 1993: 7; Smalley 1994: 97-101; Modeste 1991.

9. Korner 2000: 160-83; Smith 1994: 373-93; León 1985: 125-72; Kuykendall 1986: 130-55.

10. Rissi 1966: 1. He observes, 'In scarcely any other biblical book are the method of exposition and the understanding of the book's literary structure so thoroughly intertwined as they are in the Revelation to John. The question of construction deeply touches the highly problematic character of the book. The organization of the total work itself discloses a distinctive theological interpretation of history'. See also Tenney 1957: 32.

11. Beale 1999: 131; Bauckham 1993a: 21-22; Collins 2001: 19; Kempson 1982: 95-142; Hahn 1979: 147; León 1985: 134. Contra Lambrecht 1980: 18, who ends the prologue with Rev. 1.3; and Schüssler Fiorenza 1998: 175, who starts the epilogue with Rev. 22.10.

exists over the extent of the entire structure based on a series of seven. John includes materials that appear to interrupt or interlink aspects of the narrative, which have been labeled 'interludes', 'intercalations' (Loenertz 1948; Schüssler Fiorenza 1977), 'interlocking' (Collins 2001; Hall 2002) and 'interweaving' (Bauckham 1993a). Another commonly acknowledged structural feature is the intended contrast between the harlot city of Babylon (Rev. 17–18) and the bride city of the New Jerusalem (21–22). These broad areas of agreement suggest that a plausible case exists for positing a macrostructure that incorporates the various structural features of Revelation without doing damage to its complexity.

The term macrostructure refers to the overarching topics of discourse, including themes, plots and other constituents, which dominate the composition and structure of texts (Reed 1993: 93 n. 2). Macrostructures are the highest levels of semantic and conceptual structures that organize the microstructures of discourse and govern their interpretation (van Dijk 1980: v; Porter 1999: 300). A focus on the macrostructure should not neglect attention to semantic, syntactical and constituent analysis, but attempts to gain a panoramic perspective of the entire discourse. This presupposes the textual unity of a composition in that the smaller sequence of microstructures and sentence clusters form a cohesive whole (Cotterell and Turner 1989: 230-34). In addition to unity and cohesiveness, a macrostructure discloses the discourse features of prominence and peak indicating importance and progression within the communicative text (Longacre 1996: 33). A well-ordered text, evidenced by its macrostructure, is not merely a sequence of sentences, clauses and paragraphs, but is governed by a triumvirate of unity, prominence and coherence (Kellum 2004: 138).

I propose an approach to the macrostructure of the book of Revelation that advocates an analysis of several structural layers. The use of the term 'layers' is not entirely unique when applied to the structure of a text. Linguists speak of the layers of syntactical structure to describe the way that various parts of speech (i.e. verb, noun, clause, sentence and paragraph) comprise an entire discourse (Porter 1995: 25). Layers, in this sense, refer to the smallest units of linguistic communication working in relation to the discourse unit following a 'bottom up' approach. The layering of Revelation's macrostructure, however, follows a 'top down' approach in that it refers to particular structural patterns, intended and unintended, existing at various levels throughout the book. These structural patterns are detected by smaller sequences of microstructures, but are interwoven cohesively within the macrostructure. When speaking of the structural layers of the book of Revelation, therefore, I am referring

broadly to the structural patterns in the text as consistent characteristics evident in the macrostructure.

1. *The Surface Layer*[12]

Revelation is an unsealed book (Rev. 22.10). John intends to unveil the message of his vision so that the churches will understand and act accordingly. [13] This is evident with the repeated command 'to hear' (Rev. 2.7, 11, 17, 29; 3.6, 13, 22; 13.9) followed by promised blessings (Rev. 1.3; 14.13; 16.15; 19.9; 20.6; 22.7, 14) for obedience. The infinitive δεῖξαι occurs in the prologue and epilogue (Rev. 1.1; 22.6) in order to indicate the revelatory purpose of the vision (Osborne 2002: 53-54). As such, one would expect a surface structure designed for public reading and comprehension. David Hellholm (1986: 31-32) correctly asserts that the recipients of the Apocalypse were able to detect the surface structure signaled by the presence of delimitation and discourse markers. These markers include, but are not limited to, the repetition of lexemes, certain conjunctions, prepositional phrases, deictic indicators and shifts in tense or person.[14] Therefore, the surface structure of Revelation is something discernable when read or heard (Prigent 2004: 96). This layer is the hierarchical chief of all other layers in that it governs the overall macro-structure (Longacre 1976: 256). The following discussion seeks to high-light some of the main features of the surface structure.[15]

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12. Another possible designation would be 'discourse layer'.

13. Callahan (1995: 460) suggests that the 'auditors who came together to hear the Apocalypse were summoned to a transformative experience. Those first ancient auditors of the Apocalypse came together not merely to be informed, but to be trans-formed, to undergo a collective change in consciousness, an aspiration that makes modern individual and group reading practices trivial by comparison, with the possible exception of the reading of wills. Reading the Apocalypse aloud, and hearing the Apocalypse read aloud, was effectual: through exhortations and exclamations, threats and thunder, the reading of the Apocalypse moved its hearers, effected [*sic*] them; the text *did* something to them.'

14. Beekman, Callow and Kopesec 1981: 115; Porter 1999: 301; Cotterell and Turner 1989: 236-39.

15. Prigent (2004: 98) offers a safe guideline for adjudicating the complex structural scheme of Revelation. He states, 'One should thus read the book of Revela-tion by letting oneself be guided only by the signposts that the author has planted here and there in his text, and one will become convinced, after finishing such a reading, that this narrative thread allows us to hear the revelation.'

1.1 *Major Divisions and Transition Markers*

1.1.1 *'In the Spirit'.* The most plausible phrase for marking major structural divisions of the Apocalypse is the phrase ἐν πνεύματι (Rev. 1.10; 4.2; 17.3; 21.10; contra Prigent 2004: 96). Merrill Tenney (1957: 33) noted how every occurrence of this phrase places the seer in a different location.[16] The phrase indicates a shift of setting from Patmos (Rev. 1.9), to the heavenly throne room (Rev. 4.1-2), into a desert (Rev. 17.3) and finally to a great, high mountain (Rev. 21.10). Kempson (1982: 86) suggests that this phrase fits all the criteria for employing a phrase as a literary structural device. Moreover, the phrase δείξω σοι occurs three times (Rev. 4.1; 17.1; 21.9) in close proximity to ἐν πνεύματι (Rev. 4.2; 17.3; 21.10), suggesting that these two phrases are used in conjunction with each other to signal major structural transitions (Kempson 1982: 110). Interestingly, Rev. 4.1-2 also contains one of the three occurrences of the phrase ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι (Rev. 1.1; 4.1; 22.6), which stresses the apocalyptic nature of Rev. 4.1–22.6 (Beale 1999: 152-70; van Unnik 1963: 92-94).

Revelation consists of four separate interrelated visions introduced by the phrase 'in the Spirit' (Bauckham 1993a: 3). The four major visions of Revelation are posited as the major literary divisions: (1) Rev. 1.10–3.22 envisages the glorified Christ who investigates his churches; (2) Rev. 4.1–16.21 portrays the divine court proceedings and the trial of the nations; (3) Rev. 17.1–21.8 describes the sentencing and destruction of Babylon; and (4) Rev. 21.9–22.4 presents the vindication and reward of the saints comprised of the new heaven and new earth.

1.1.2 *Series of Sevens.* Perhaps one of the most appealing and popular structural schemes organizes the book into a series of sevens triggered by the three or four septets (Rev. 2.1–3.22; 6.1–8.1; 8.2–11.19; 15.1–16.21; see Steinmann 1992). Schemes vary from six (Ford 1975a: 46-50), seven (Korner 2000: 175), and even eight septets (Strand 1987: 401-408; cf. Beale 1999: 115). John demonstrates a proclivity for explicitly arranging his material into groups of sevens. These three or four septets suggest that John might have intended additional septets, although not specifically numbered. Because the number seven carries significant symbolic weight indicating perfection or completion, it logically follows that he would

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16. While Tenney was the first to make this suggestion, other scholars have also adopted it. See Ladd 1972: 14; Kempson 1982: 103-112; Mazzaferri 1989: 338-39; Bauckham 1993a: 3; Beale 1999: 111; Smith 1994: 384-92; Filho 2002: 215.

have presented his Apocalypse in a sevenfold structure to convey its completeness.

One problem with using seven as an organizing principle manifests with the distribution of the word ἑπτά in the book of Revelation.[17] Bauckham (1993a: 7-15, 27, 29-37), for example, has observed several additional series of sevens. This evidence does indeed confirm that the number seven plays a significant role in the Apocalypse. Aside from the explicitly numbered septets, however, efforts at identifying additional unnumbered series seem contrived (Kempson 1982: 76; Mazzaferri 1989: 348-56). A particularly damaging criticism relates to how the 'unnumbered visions' are introduced. Collins (2001: 15-16), improving upon Farrer (1949: 45), introduced the method of interlocking along with the phrase καὶ εἶδον as the structural marker (Rev. 13.1, 11; 14.1, 6, 14; 15.1, 2). She fails to account for an additional occurrence of καὶ εἶδον making eight visions not seven (Bauckham 1993a: 6). It, therefore, does not introduce a new vision series but rather introduces transitions within a vision sequence.

1.1.3 *'And I Saw'.* Minor visionary transitions within these four visions are often signed by verbal phrases pertaining to seeing.[18] The phrase καὶ εἶδον,[19] according to Aune, functions in three ways:

> (1) It introduces a new vision narrative (8.2; 10.1; 13.1; 14.1, 6, 14; 15.1; 19.11, 17; 20.1; cf. Acts 11.5; Dan 8.2; 10.5; 12.5; Ezek 1.4; 3.13; 8.2; 13.1). (2) It introduces a major scene within a continuing vision narrative (5.1; 6.1; 8.13; 13.11; 15.2; 19.19; 21.2; 21.22; cf. Ezek 2.9). (3) It is used

17. Occurring thirty times (Rev. 1.4, 11, 12, 16, 20; 2.1; 3.1; 4.5; 5.1, 5, 6; 6.1; 8.2, 6; 10.3, 4; 11.13; 12.3; 13.1; 15.1, 6, 7, 8; 16.1; 17.1, 3, 7, 9, 11; 21.9).

18. The aorist verb ἤκουσα ('I heard') occurs frequently (Rev. 1.10; 4.1; 5.11, 13; 6.1, 3, 5, 6, 7; 7.4; 8.13; 9.13, 16; 10.4, 8; 12.10; 14.2, 13; 16.1, 5, 7; 18.4; 19.1, 6; 21.3; 22.8) but does not seem to function like a structural marker.

19. A total of 32 occurrences of just καὶ εἶδον not separated by additional words (Rev. 5.1, 2, 6, 11; 6.1, 2, 5, 8, 12; 7.2; 8.2, 13; 9.1; 10.1; 13.1, 11; 14.1, 6, 14; 15.1, 2; 16.13; 17.3, 6; 19.11, 17, 19; 20.1, 4, 11, 12; 21.1). Some instances of καί followed by εἶδον occur with intervening words in subordinated clauses (Rev. 1.17; 6.9; 10.5; 13.2). Three instances occur of καὶ εἶδον separated by a word or words but not directly subordinated (Rev. 1.12; 9.17; 21.22). Similarly, εἶδον frequently occurs in conjunction with καὶ ἰδού (Rev. 4.1; 6.2, 5, 8; 7.9; 14.1, 14; 19.11). Cf. Pattemore 2003: 116. He observes, ''Ιδού most often occurs in direct speech as a marker of semantic emphasis or attention. In narrative, however, combined with εἶδον, it draws emphatic attention to a new visual component. εἶδον, καὶ ἰδού thus marks a stronger shift in focus than εἶδον by itself'.

to focus on a new or significant figure or action that occurs within a continuing vision narrative (5.2, 6, 11; 6.2, 5, 8, 12; 7.2; 9.1; 16.13; 17.3, 6; cf. Acts 11.6; Dan 12.5; Ezek 37.8; 44.4).[20]

This phrase acts as a marker within a vision signaling a transition and demonstrating a progression within the narrative, but it does not necessarily introduce a new vision episode, since the location of the seer does not change (Osborne 2002: 223). Lee (2002: 142-47) suggests that εἶδον introduces the narrative asides of Revelation. The effect of this narration would be like listening to someone excitedly share what he or she saw while sitting in a theater watching a play or movie. Thus it creates a flow similar to 'I saw this and then I saw that, oh and then I saw and heard such and such'.

The phrase μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον [21] occurs four times (Rev. 4.1; 7.9; 15.5; 18.1) and seems to function as an indicator of significant transitions within a vision unit.[22] Each occurrence appears in close proximity to doxological sections. This suggests that the transitions within the vision and the worship of God correspond to each other.[23] The doxologies provide explication (see Tavo 2005: 63-65; Delling 1959: 136; Jörns 1971: 170). On one hand, the doxologies affirm the worthiness and justice of God. On the other hand, the content of the worship expresses God's activity in the redemption and vindication of his people. This second aspect is reinforced by the references to the people of God intimately connected to these transitions and doxologies. Therefore, John not only signals the transition with visual indicators, but he also includes his audience in these transitions by inserting material relevant to their worship setting (Pattemore 2004).

1.2 *Interludes*

A pattern of interludes emerges between the breaking of the sixth and

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20. Aune 1997: 338. Cf. Charles 1920: I, 106; Swete 1977: 66; Beckwith 1919: 494; Allo 1921: cli; Farrer 1949: 47-49: Ford 1975a: 70; Beasley-Murray 1974: 111; Collins 2001: 14-16; Thomas 1993: 45-66; Mounce 1977: 117 n. 1; Beale 1999: 316-17; Osborne 2002: 223.

21. Cf. μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον (Rev. 7.1). So Aune 1997: 276.

22. Contra Korner 2000: 171-75. His stimulating article examines the phrase μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον as a means for the major division blocks. By comparing Revelation with 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, 1 Enoch and Daniel, he demonstrates that they all share the use of equivalent phrases to 'and I saw' for dividing vision episodes. Although he makes an excellent case, he fails to explain why the phrase 'in the Spirit' does not function as the means for dividing the major vision blocks. As such it seems as if his argument is slightly overstated.

23. Rev. 18.20 only calls for worship and is not a doxological section *per se*.

seventh seals (Rev. 7.1-17) and also between the blowing of the sixth and
seventh trumpet (Rev. 10.1–11.14). Both interludes are introduced by
εἶδον, signaling a transition of scenes within the vision. These interludes
appear in the narrative for theological reasons. They are bound to the
preceding sections and provide answers for questions that the audience
might be asking. The sixth seal unleashes devastating catastrophes causing
the earth's inhabitants to cry out, 'who can stand?' The succeeding nar-
rative (7.1-17) answers this question by depicting the protective sealing
and salvation of God's people who are standing before the throne (Beale
1999: 405).

  A similar pattern occurs when the fifth and sixth trumpets unleash
horrible and devastating plagues upon the earth's inhabitants. Their
response is a failure to repent from their sins. The succeeding narrative
(Rev. 10.1–11.14) depicts the people of God in their roles as prophetic
witnesses before the nations (Giblin 1984: 434; Aune 1998a: 555). These
interludes enable the auditors to identify their roles within the narrative
first as protected and then as prophetic witnesses (Dalrymple 2005: 396-
406: Beasley-Murray 1974: 31). The purpose of the interludes, then, is to
challenge the churches to remain faithful and endure through opposition.

1.2.1 *The 'Signs' Narrative*. Revelation 12 represents a dramatic shift in
the flow of John's vision narrative introduced by three occurrences of
σημεῖον (Rev. 12.1, 3; 15.1; see Smalley 2005: 310; Beale 1999: 621).
These are the only three nominative singular occurrences of σημεῖον in
the Apocalypse and they all locate the 'sign' in heaven. The other four
occurrences are all accusative plural and refer to the miraculous signs
performed on earth (Rev. 13.13, 14; 16.14; 19.20; Aune 1998a: 679). The
regular use of σημεῖον in the New Testament carries the sense of a
supernatural sign or miracle which is either true or false (Smalley 2005:
313). The plural occurrences, in Revelation, all refer to miracles performed
on behalf of the beast. The use of σημεῖον in the Apocalypse most likely
parallels the Fourth Gospel, where it is a means of pointing to something
more significant than just the sign/miracle itself (Prigent 2004: 376-77;
Osborne 2002: 456; Köstenberger 2001: 99-116).

  That Rev. 12 initiates a 'fresh start' in the vision finds almost universal
agreement,[24] but the exact beginning of this new section requires fresh
examination. Bauckham (1993a: 15) maintains that it 'seems an uncharac-
teristically abrupt fresh start, devoid of literary links with anything that

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  24. Smalley 2005: 310; Prigent 2004: 366; Osborne 2002: 452; Collins 2001: 28;
Beale 1999: 621; Mounce 1977: 234; Swete 1977: 147.

precedes'. Bauckham, however, seems to miss how Rev. 11.19, rather than Rev. 12.1, constitutes the introduction to the new section of narrative materials.[25] One indication that Rev. 11.19 is more than just a conclusion to the trumpets is that all three occurrences of the aorist ὤφθη (Rev. 11.19; 12.1, 3) share a formal and logical relationship (Aune 1998a). As such, Rev. 11.19 interlocks the succeeding material (Rev. 12.1–15.4) with the preceding material related to the prophetic interlude and the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11.1-18; contra Smalley 2005: 313).

Another interesting delimiting feature of the 'signs' narrative is that it is framed within a literary *inclusio*. The verbal and thematic correlations between Rev. 11.19 and 15.5 comprise this literary *inclusio* as a means to signal the beginning and end of the narrative segment. These are the only two passages containing the exact phrase ἠνοίγη ὁ ναός. Both passages locate this opened temple ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ. The temple in heaven appears in Rev. 14.15 and 17 where an angel comes out to signal the time for harvesting, but these references do not present the interior view of the 'opened temple' as in Rev. 11.19 and 15.5. A final indication that Rev. 11.19–15.5 forms an *inclusio* is that Rev. 15.6 resumes the series of seven bowl judgments that one would expect at the conclusion of the trumpets. Thus the signs narrative functions as an interlude intervening between the series of God's punitive judgments.

As with other interludes, the signs narrative focuses on the role of the people of God concomitant with the series of judgments (Osborne 2002: 452). The first interlude illustrates the protection and ultimate salvation of the saints (Rev. 7.1-17). The second interlude pictures the role of the saints as God's final prophetic witnesses (Rev. 10.1–11.14). This third interlude (Rev. 12.1–15.4) portrays the saints engaged in a holy war against Satan.[26] The narrative falls into three natural divisions of holy war in heaven (Rev. 12), holy war on earth (Rev. 13) and the vindication of the saints followed by the judgment of the wicked (Rev. 14). Amid the scenes of this cosmic spiritual warfare, John makes the purpose of this interlude explicit by interjecting calls for encouragement (Rev. 12.10-12), patient endurance (Rev. 13.9-10), and the ultimate vindication of the saints (Rev. 14.6-13). Finally, Rev. 12.1–15.4 provides the basis and justification for the severity and finality of the judgments rendered upon the inhabitants of the earth.

25. See Aune 1998a: 661-62; see also Beale 1999: 621; Wilcock 1975: 112; Allo 1921: 152-53.

26. Beasley-Murray 1974: 191; Mounce 1977: 234: Barr 1998: 101-131; Beale 1999: 622-24.

1.3 *Two Cities Contrasted: Babylon Destroyed and New Jerusalem Descended*

The last two visions (Rev. 17.1–21.8 and 21.9–22.5) starkly contrast the prostitute city of Babylon the Great with the holy bride city of the New Jerusalem.[27] In the third vision (Rev. 17.1–21.8) John sees a prostitute named Babylon (Rev. 17.15) who represents Rome (Rev. 17.9) and rules over the nations as well as the kings of the earth (Rev. 17.15, 18). The rest of the vision depicts all the events associated with her judgment, including her trial, sentencing, lament (Rev. 18.1-24), the return of Christ (Rev. 19.1-21), his millennial reign (Rev. 20.1-10) and the resurrection followed by the final judgment (Rev. 20.11-15).[28] The fourth vision (Rev. 21.9–22.5) portrays the beauty and brilliance of the bride city of the New Jerusalem coming down to earth from heaven. Osborne (2002: 604) correctly observes that this vision falls into two divisions by first describing the Holy City as an eternal Holy of Holies (Rev. 21.9-27), and then as a new Eden (Rev. 22.1-5). These two final visions, then, serve to contrast the fate of those who worship the beast with the glory awaiting the followers of the Lamb (Rossing 1999: 14-15). When viewed together, these two visions form the peak or climax of the prophecy because they depict the culmination of everything anticipated in John's vision (Bauckham 1993a: 5; Moyise 1995: 64: Lambrecht 2000: Jauhiainen 2003).

John accomplished this contrast through lexical and thematic parallels. Giblin (1974: 488-89) was the first to suggest that the parallels between these two visions should figure prominently in Revelation's structure. A comparison of Rev. 17.1-3 and 21.9-11 reveals the parallel nature of these two passages through the use of repetitive wording (Aune 1998b: 1020-21). Each vision is introduced by one of the angels who held the bowls followed by a transportation 'in the spirit' to a new location.[29] John then

27. Contra Bauckham (1993a: 18) who divides these passages as Rev. 17.1–19.10 and 21.9–22.9. Cf. Aune 1998b: 915.

28. Rev. 21.1-8 interlocks (dovetails) these two visions together by means of prolepsis. John summarizes the content of the next vision followed by a series of announcements concerning the arrival of the new age. One striking structural feature within this transition is a parallel between Rev. 21.6 and 16.17 signaled by the repetition of the proclamation 'it is done'. When the seventh angel pours out the contents of his bowl, a voice issues from the temple and declares γέγονεν. Then at the end of the third vision (17.1–21.8) John saw that the old heaven and earth were replaced by the new and accompanied by celebratory announcements. In Rev. 21.6, Jesus declares γέγοναν. Cf. Bauckham 1993a: 7: Osborne 2002: 597.

29. It is as if the final two visions offer a close-up and expanded view of the events

witnesses two women, one a prostitute and the other a bride, who osten-sibly represent Babylon and the New Jerusalem. John describes their attire, rich in symbolic imagery, in Rev. 17.4-6 (Babylon) and 21.11-27 (New Jerusalem). Finally, the similarities between Rev. 19.9-10 and 22.6-7 suggest an intentional parallel. Both assert the veracity of the vision as the word of God (Rev. 19.9; 22.6). Both contain accounts of John falling down to worship the angel with the angel exhorting him to worship God (Rev. 19.10; 22.8-9). At the conclusion of these parallel visions, the angel firmly enforces the proper response to the content of these visions as worship of God and God only.

2. *The Intertextual Layer*

A second layer influencing the structure of Revelation is best described as the intertextual layer.[30] The designation of intertextuality denotes, in the broadest sense, all interactions among texts (Moyise 2000: 15-17, 40-41; Waddell 2006: 63-66). Among literary critics, intertextuality typically 'encompasses manifold connections between a text being studied and other texts, or between a text being studied and commonplace phrases or figures from the linguistic or cultural systems in which the text exists' (Sommer 1998: 7).

2.1 *Intertextuality, Allusion and Revelation's Structure*
Intertextuality was brought to the forefront in biblical studies with the seminal work of Richard Hays in *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul.* Hays (1989: 14) maintained that the phenomenon of intertextuality, that is, the embedding of fragments of an earlier text within a later one, played a significant role in Israel's scriptural tradition. The problem, however, is that the term has been used in many different ways, so that many today are weary of using it at all (Moyise 2000: 15-17, 40-41).

Intertextuality, broadly conceived, also includes concepts like echo and allusion. Sommer (1998: 8) draws a distinction between intertextuality and allusion. He writes:

> Intertextuality is concerned with the reader or with the text as a thing independent of its author, while influence and allusion are concerned with

associated with the blowing of the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11.15-18) and the pouring out of the bowl of judgments (Rev. 16.1-21).

30. Genette (1997: 1-7) prefers the term transtextuality and defines it as, 'all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts'. This broad definition includes the notion of modeling one text from another.

> the author as well as the text and reader. Intertextuality is synchronic in its approach, influence or allusion diachronic or even historicist. Intertextuality is interested in a very wide range of correspondences among text, influence and allusion with a more narrow set. Intertextuality examines the relations among many texts, while influence and allusion look for specific connections between a limited number of texts.

Therefore, intertextuality represents the rubric of all interaction between texts in general, whereas allusion focuses on the specific occurrences of an intentional appropriation of an earlier text for a particular purpose.

Allusion, then, occurs when an author incorporates the language, imagery and themes of another text without direct citation. Allusions are distinct from formal citations in that there is no introductory formula. Rather, the phrases are woven into the text and are often less precise in wording (Moyise 2000: 18). Nevertheless, allusions still represent an intertextual reference (Hays 1989: 29). David Mathewson (2003: 322) recommends thinking of allusion 'in terms of what appears to be taking place in the text: the author may allude to the wording of an Old Testament text, or he may allude to a recognizable theme found in one or more texts, or even a form or genre'. Allusions include both verbal and thematic parallels to words and themes (Paul 2000: 261). The almost continuous allusion to the Old Testament is not a haphazard use of Old Testament language, but it is a 'pattern of disciplined and deliberate *allusion* to specific Old Testament texts' (Bauckham 1993a: x-xi). These intertextual allusions, therefore, are embedded throughout the framework of Revelation's structure.

The intertextual structural layer examines the relationship between the structure of Old Testament books and similar patterns evident in the Apocalypse. It corresponds to Beale's (1999: 86) category of 'literary prototypes' or 'modeling' (see also Fekkes 1994: 70-71; Schüssler Fiorenza 1998: 135). Sometimes, according to Beale, John takes over Old Testament contexts as models to pattern his creative compositions. Such modeling becomes apparent from a thematic structure that is traceable to only one Old Testament context or from a cluster of clear allusions to the same Old Testament context. In this sense, then, patterns of similarity converge between various Old Testament writings and the Apocalypse that may have implications on the book's structure.

The writings of the prophets were not only the tradition-historical *Hintergrund* for the composition of John's vision; he also wrote in the same tradition as the prophets (Kowalski 2004: 285). He wrote as a prophet in continuity with the Old Testament prophets (Aune 1997: 19; Mazzaferri 1989). The book of Revelation draws more from the prophetic

writings than other New Testament writings (Moyise 1995: 14-16). John would have associated some of his visions with similar Old Testament passages and employed the language of those passages to record what he saw (Beale 1998: 66). These similarities represent John's thoughtful reflection upon, and re-reading of, the Old Testament text as he penned his vision (Feuillet 1963: 65; Kraft 1973: 85). Intertextuality, as it pertains to the structure, only seeks to trace, in broad strokes, the patterns of correspondence shared between Old Testament texts and the Apocalypse. John drew from an assortment of Old Testament text-patterns (*Vorlagen*), but Ezekiel serves as the best example of this technique.

2.2 *The Influence of Ezekiel on the Structure of Revelation*

The book of Ezekiel appears to influence Revelation's structure more broadly than any other Old Testament book (Beale 1998: 61). This observation, in part, results from the plethora of articles, dissertations and monographs devoted to the questions of the relationship between the two books.[31] In fact, the influence of Ezekiel on Revelation as a type of *Vorlage* has reached the status of a scholarly consensus (Beale 1998: 83; Kowalski 2004: 277; Moyise 1995: 83; Vogelgesang 1985: 55, 71). Vanhoye (1962: 440-41) was one of the first scholars to posit a broad similarity between the structures of the two books. Beyond this broad outline, others have demonstrated a fairly detailed correspondence between the final ordering of events in both books (Lust 1980: 179-83). These works have helped establish a plausible case that John may have intentionally structured the Apocalypse in accordance with Ezekiel (Vogelgesang 1985: 55).

Beate Kowalski's (2004) analysis constitutes the best and most comprehensive work on the use of Ezekiel in Revelation. After examining every possible instance of an allusion, she investigates the structural relationship between the two books concluding that Ezekiel supplied the tradition-historical background for the arrangement of the entire vision (Kowalski 2004: 285). She demonstrates the patterns of structural similarity (see table 1).

She observes how both Ezekiel and John experience these visions while in exile with each vision segment introduced by being carried away in the Spirit (*Geistergreifung*). Kowalski equates the hand of God being upon Ezekiel with John receiving instruction from Christ or an angel. She also

31. Vanhoye 1962: 436-76; Goulder 1981: 342-67; Lust 1980; 1981: 179-83; Vogelgesang 1985; Ruiz 1989; Bøe 1999; Wei 1999; Kowalski 2004.

Table 1. Ezekiel and Revelation's structure according to Kowalski (2004: 286-88)

	Ezekiel	**Revelation**
Places of exile	Kebar River (1.1; 3.14 [Tel Abib], 22 [on a plain]) – Carried away in the Spirit (3.12, 14) – Seized by God's hand (1.2; 3.14, 22) – Reaction of Ezekiel: fell facedown (1.28; 3.23) – Reply from God/Spirit concerning his falling facedown: Stand up on feet (2.1, 2; 3.24)	Isle of Patmos (1.9) – Carried away in the Spirit (1.10) – Reaction of John: fell facedown (1.17a) – Reply from Christ: laid his hand upon him and spoke encouragingly (1.17b)
Places of God's Presence	Jerusalem Temple (8.3): North gate of Temple (8.3-6, 14); entrance of the forecourt (8.7-13); temple inner-court (8.16-18); beside the temple (10.3); East gate of the Temple (11.1-23) – Seized by God's hand (8.1, 3) – Carried away in the Spirit (8.3; 11.1)	Heaven (4.1) – Christ's instructions: ἀνάβα ὧδε, καὶ δείξω σοι (4 .1) – Carried away in the Spirit (4 .2)
Places of exile and God's court	Plain (37.1) – Seized by God's hand (37.1) – Carried away in the Spirit (37.1)	Desert (17.3) – Instructions from one of the angels: δεῦρο, δείξω σοι (17.1) – Carried away in the Spirit (17.3)
Places of God's Presence	Jerusalem (40.1): a high mountain in Israel where a city is built (40.2); the entirety of the temple description (40–48) – Seized by God's hand (40.1) – Carried away in the Spirit (43.5) – Reaction of Ezekiel: fell facedown (43.3) – Reply from God/Spirit concerning his falling facedown: carried away in the Spirit (43.5)	Heavenly Jerusalem—a great and high mountain (21.10) – Instructions from one of the angels: δεῦρο, δείξω σοι (21.9) – Carried away in the Spirit (21.10) – Reaction of John: fell facedown (22.8) – Reply from the angel: 'Worship God!' (22.9)

highlights how Ezekiel and John both fall face down in response to vision-
ary content. Finally, she argues that the location and flow of the visions
thematically correspond to each other.

2.3 *The Influence of the Prophetic Oracles on the Structure of Revelation*
An additional example of this type of structural modeling surfaces when
compared with prophetic oracles commonly classified as lawsuit speeches.
The pioneering work of Vermeylen (1989: 28-29) and Bogaert (1989:
152) has helpfully demonstrated a pattern in prophetic oracles (see table 2).

Table 2. A common macrostructure for the Books of the Major Prophets

Oracles of judgment to Judah and Jerusalem	Oracles of judgment to the Nations	Promises of salvation/vindication
Isa. 1–12	Isa. 13–27	Isa. 28–35
Jer. LXX 1; 1–25; 13	Jer. LXX 25; 14–32; 38	Jer. LXX 33–42
Jer. MT 1; 1–25; 13a	Jer .MT 25; 13b–38; 46–51	Jer. MT 26–3
Ezek. 1–24	Ezek. 25–32	Ezek. 33–48

As such, prophetic oracles exhibit a threefold pattern: (1) oracles of judg-
ment against Judah/Jerusalem; (2) oracles of judgment against the nations;
and (3) promises of salvation. Scholars have identified that within the
prophetic genre a sub-genre exists called the *Gerichtsrede* or lawsuit
speech (prophetic lawsuit). During the mid-twentieth century a flurry of
scholarly articles and monographs focused on the *rîb*-pattern in the Old
Testament.[32] Based on the occurrence of the root *rîb* in the prophetic
books, scholars have concluded that prophets frequently evoked lawsuit
and juridical imagery in their oracles. God is often depicted as bringing
charges against Israel or the nations, whereby he finds them guilty and
subsequently renders a just verdict (Isa. 1.2-3, 18-20; 5.1-7; 41.5, 21-29;
42.18-25; 43.8-15, 22-28; 44.6-8; 50.1-3; Jer. 2.5; 25.31; Hos. 2.4-17;
4.1-6; Mic. 6.1-5; Mal. 3.5). God also defends his people from the accu-

32. Gemser 1955: 134-35; Würthwein 1952: 1-16; Huffmon 1959: 285-95; Wright
1962: 26-67; Harvey 1962: 172-96; Limburg 1969a: 291-301; Limburg 1969b;
Nielsen 1978.

sations of the surrounding nations and thus vindicates Israel (Isa. 3.13-15; Judg. 6.30).[33]

From this analysis two distinct types of prophetic lawsuits are posited. The first type of prophetic lawsuit accuses, indicts and threatens the people of God for violations of covenantal stipulations. The second type of prophetic lawsuit specifically addresses the pagan nations. In addition to idolatry, the nations stand trial for their harsh treatment of God's people. These lawsuit speeches are typically succeeded by oracles promising salvation/vindication to the faithful covenant people (Deut. 32.31-43). Prophetic lawsuits, therefore, follow a threefold pattern: (1) covenant lawsuit, (2) lawsuit against the nations and (3) the vindication/salvation of the saints.

John writing as a prophet presents a vision of final judgment in a manner that conforms to the broad pattern of a prophet lawsuit. Revelation 1.9–3.22 represents the covenant lawsuit addressed to new covenant congregations. The inaugural vision of Christ (Rev. 1.9–3.22) establishes John as a prophetic witness heralding the lawsuit from the eschatological judge. Although Christ is the judge of the universe, the first vision emphasizes his role as the judge of the churches. This becomes clear in the letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor, which occupy the central focus of the second half of the first vision. The seven letters exhibit a form and content that closely resembles the covenant lawsuit. Christ investigates his churches and audits them based on their faithfulness to covenantal stipulations. Churches facing accusations are admonished to repent or he will judge them. The purpose of the covenantal lawsuit is so that 'all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds' (Rev. 2.23). Therefore, the first vision corresponds to the covenant lawsuit speech designed to promote repentance and faithfulness.

Revelation 4.1–16.21 and 17.1–21.8 constitute God's lawsuit against the nations. God judges the nations based on the charges of idolatry, obduracy and the shedding of innocent blood. John's entrance into the heavenly courtroom enables him to witness an extended session of the divine council. This session convened for the purpose of installing Christ as the Davidic king and the only one worthy to execute God's judgment on humanity. The series of septets represents a sequence of judgments designed to provoke repentance and also to satisfy the just requirements of God's wrath. These septets function as investigative judgments to

33. For a detailed discussion pertaining to the nature of the prophetic lawsuit speech as a prophetic subgenre, see Bandy 2007: 87-112.

determine the guilt of human beings and to enter their response as evidence in the lawsuit against them. The interludes pertain primarily to the saints. The signs narrative provides the final evidence necessary to convict the nations and render judgment: (1) failure to worship God, (2) idolatry and (3) the slaughter of the saints. The third vision, then, presents that verdict and sentencing of the nations.

Finally, Rev. 17.1–21.8 and Rev. 21.9–22.5 depict the final judgment of the world and the complete vindication and salvation of the people of God. The final two visions represent literary parallels that contrast the judgment of the nations with the vindication of the saints. This forms the climactic rendering of justice as the lawsuit against the nation results in a guilty verdict. Babylon is indicted for intoxicating the inhabitants of the earth with the wine of her fornication and rendering unjust verdicts against the saints (Rev. 18.6). Christ returns to earth as the divine warrior king and judge to execute the sentence decreed against Babylon. After the final resurrection of all individual humans, the saints dwell with God and the Lamb in the New Jerusalem as their eternal reward.

3. *The Intratextual Layer*

In addition to the surface and intertextual layers, we may also detect a number of recurring words, phrases and themes embedded in the text that bind this vision into a cohesive discourse. George Guthrie (1995: 38-39) remarks, '[a]ny discourse unit has a network of relationships, some grammatical and others lexical, which make that unit of text cohesive'. While a text's cohesiveness is more apparent in smaller discourse units, the cohesion of a composition is evident through several 'cohesion fields', like the repetition of topics, subjects, verb tenses, lexemes, phrases, as well as temporal and local frames of reference (see also Dooley and Levinsohn 2001: 33). That the book of Revelation contains numerous examples of these consistent repetitions was noted well by Bauckham (1993a: 22) when he observed:

> A remarkable feature of the composition of Revelation is the way in which very many phrases occur two or three times in the book, often in widely separated passages, and usually in slightly varying form. These repetitions create a complex network of textual cross-reference, which helps to create and expand the meaning of any one passage by giving it specific relationships to many other passages. We are dealing here not with the writing habit of an author who saved effort by using phrases more than once, but with a skilfully deployed compositional device.

This introduces the structural feature, concordant with cohesion, which

may be identified as the *intratextual layer*. The intratextual layer does not so much determine the structure, but rather derives from the structure as an internal interpretive framework.

Scholars have long observed this intratextual phenomenon in terms of recapitulation (Victorinus; Bornkamm 1937; Collins 2001; Lambrecht 1980; Thomas 1993; Giblin 1994; Aune 1997; Beale 1999), chiasms,[34] intercalations (Schüssler Fiorenza 1998: 175-76) and interweaving (Farrer 1964; Sweet 1990; Prigent 2004). Ekkehardt Müller (1994) avers that the repetitions of words in Revelation serve to link passages together as a guide for interpretation. Bauckham (1993a: 22-29) suggests that John composed his Apocalypse expecting his readers to use the Jewish exegetical technique of *gezērâ šāwâ* when interpreting it. Thus, woven into the structure of the Apocalypse is an intricate network of cross-references functioning as intratextual links. The phrase τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ demonstrates how this structural layer aids in exegesis.

The phrase τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ recurs with some minor variation four times in the Apocalypse (Rev. 1.2, 9; 6.9; 20.4) and once with a major variation (Rev. 12.17).[35] It is used to express the contents of the book (Rev. 1.2), the reason for John's exile (Rev. 1.9), why the souls under the altar were beheaded (Rev. 6.9; 20.4) and the basis for those that incur Satan's wrath (Rev. 12.17).

That this phrase recurs at a number of significant places throughout Revelation indicates that it is related to the contents of the book.[36] The most plausible understanding for the phrase 'word of God' is to connect it with the Old Testament prophets and prophecy. Aune (1997: 19) correctly observes that 'John's use of this phrase suggests that he considers himself a prophet in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets who received the word of God (Hos 1.1; Joel 1.1; Jer 1.2, 4, 11)' and 'In the

34. Lund 1942: 325-46; Strand 1978: 401-408; Schüssler Fiorenza 1998: 159-80; Shea 1984; 1985; Lee 1998: 164-94; Shea and Christian 2000: 269-92; Siew 2005.

35. The phrase τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ θεοῦ is used in Rev. 12.17 instead of the phrase τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ as in Rev. 1.2, 9, 6.9 and 20.4. See Aune 1998a: 709-10. Cf. Rev. 12.17 and 14.12.

36. Joseph Comblin (1965: 132-42) reviews the various occurrences of words in the μαρτ- word group to assess the sense of its meaning in Revelation. He takes the repeated phrase τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ (Rev. 1.2, 9; 12.17; 17.6; 19.10; 20.4; 22.16), often coupled with τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, epexegetically so that the 'testimony of Jesus' is equivalent to the 'Word of God'. This testimony of Jesus constitutes the same thing as the contents of the book (Rev. 1.2; 22.16, 18, 20) and is that which causes the persecution and martyrdom of the Christians. See also Dehandschutter 1980: 284; Beale 1999: 184; Aune 1997: 19; Charles 1920: I, 7; Caird 1999: 11; Ladd 1972: 23.

LXX the phrase "word of the Lord" is a stereotypical formula used to categorize a sequence of revelatory experiences (Zech 1.1; Jonah 1.1; Mic 1.1; Zeph 1.1)'. This link to prophecy is further supported in Rev. 19.10 where the 'testimony of Jesus' (ἡ μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ) is identified as 'the spirit of prophecy'.

Revelation 19 may provide a key to identifying this much-repeated phrase. The enigmatic expression μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ comes into sharp focus in Rev. 19.10 (Aune 1998b: 1038). The precise meaning depends on how one interprets the genitive Ἰησοῦ. Most commentators have typically suggested three options. First, some commentators favor the objective genitive, 'testimony about Jesus', asserting that the testimony in question has Jesus for its object.[37] Next, the subjective genitive conveys the meaning 'the testimony borne by Jesus'.[38] As a subjective genitive the testimony is one that Jesus maintained. The final and most probable solution is to regard it as a general genitive, which would read 'the witness by and to Jesus' (Beale 1999: 947) or 'testimony about Jesus in response to his testimony about God' (Osborne 2002: 677). Essentially this is a combination of both the objective and subjective sense in which the witness was first borne by Jesus and then transmitted to believers, and the witness they bear is about Jesus.[39]

An equally vexing problem is the identification of the testimony of Jesus as τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας ('the spirit of [the] prophecy'). Among the various possibilities for interpreting this phrase, the best is to view it as something akin to 'the spirit that inspires prophecy', or 'the prophetic Spirit' (Wilson 1994: 198-201; Waddell 2006: 35-36). Aune (1998b: 1039) notes that this 'phrase occurs with some frequency in the second- and third-century Christian authors as a way of referring to a mode of prophetic inspiration'.[40] Second Temple Judaism placed a heavy emphasis on Spirit-inspired prophecy and a promised messianic era (Osborne 2002: 678; Beale 1999: 948; Aune 1998b: 1039). The 'spirit' in question, then, is a reference to the Holy Spirit who descended on believers at Pentecost

37. See Bruce 1973: 338: Ford 1975a; 1975b: 312; Vassiliadis 1985: 131; Lampe 1984: 253. Charles (1920: II, 130) favors the objective genitive (i.e., 'testimony to Jesus') because he argues that γάρ, in Rev. 19.10, is explanatory.

38. See Farrer 1964: 194-95; Beasley-Murray 1974: 276; Beckwith 1919: 729; Mounce 1977: 342; Trites 1973: 72-80; Mazzaferri 1989: 311.

39. Beale 1999: 947. See also Osborne 2002: 677; Beckwith 1919: 279; Swete 1977: 249; Witherington 2003: 234; Ladd 1972: 251; Caird 1999: 238; Boring 1989: 194; Morris 1987: 228.

40. Cf. Justin, *1 Apol.* 6.2; 13.3; 31.1; *Dial.* 55.1; Athenagoras, *Leg.* 10.4; 18.2; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer*. 1.13.4; Clement of Alexandria, *Protrep.* 9; Hermas, *Mand.* 11.9.

(Beasley-Murray 1974: 276; Lampe 1984: 255-56). He is also the Spirit that has inspired the current prophetic vision of John.

Revelation 19.10 is paralleled in 22.8-9 in which the angel refusing worship identifies himself as a 'fellow servant' with John and with 'your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!' (22.9). Bauckham (1993b: 120) posits that in Revelation the church as a whole fulfills a prophetic role. The command to worship God suggests that

> It is connected with the idea of the church's newly revealed role of confronting the idolatry of Rome in a prophetic conflict, like that of Moses with Pharaoh and his magicians, or of Elijah with Jezebel and her prophets of Baal, and in the power of the Spirit of prophecy winning the nations to the worship of the true God.

Therefore, the faithful believers function as prophetic witnesses rendering testimony against all idolatry (i.e., the Imperial cult).

The examination of this phrase demonstrates how the intratextual layer of Revelation's structure also enables its interpretation. Interwoven words and phrases function as interpretive keys for the vision. This intratextual layer acts like threads binding the vision together. It also presents themes that play a significant role in the purpose of the vision. In the case of the phrase, 'word of God and testimony of Jesus', the readers are encouraged to remain faithful to Christ in the midst of opposition. The believers bear witness both to and against the nations before God. Thus, when God executes his judgments, he is justified in doing so because of the testimony of the saints (Rev. 18.20).

Conclusion

While recognizing the limits of analogies and realizing the vast differences between human bodies and literary texts, it may be helpful to return to the analogy of the layers of an anatomy textbook illustration to grasp how the individual structural layers of the Apocalypse fit together. The surface structure corresponds to the entire corpus and exposes the defining features of the body. The book of Revelation, as a literary discourse, likewise exhibits a linguistic structure essential to all forms of written communication. The surface layer enables the reader/auditor to adjudicate the essential contours and flow of the vision.

The intertextual layer corresponds to the skeletal structure providing a basic framework that supports the weight of the body. The allusions to the Old Testament and the apparent modeling evident in both the macro and micro structural levels of the Apocalypse suggests that the Old Testa-

ment functions like a basic framework for the presentation of his vision.

The intratextual layer may best correspond with the nervous system, which is comprised of a collection of individual nerve cells connected via the synapse to communicate important messages to the brain. It functions in much the same way, except the connections are more diverse and scattered throughout the corpus connected by linguistic and thematic echoes. These linguistic and thematic connections transmit important messages vital for interpreting the whole book.

These individual structural layers of the Apocalypse do not function in isolated atomistic compartments; rather they are interwoven and bound together as a cohesive unity. When read as a complete composition, John's Apocalypse exhibits a literary unity in which all the parts interlock together with beauty, grace and strength.

What exactly is gained by viewing the structure of Revelation in terms of these layers? This approach attempts to reexamine the structure in a manner that takes into account all the structural features evident in the text. While it may not answer all the questions or smooth out all the difficulties commonly associated with the structure of the Apocalypse, it does suggest a new avenue that might help to develop fresh structural arrangements as well as yield new interpretive insights. This approach may prove beneficial for three reasons: (1) it offers an approach to structure that seeks to incorporate all the features evident in the text; (2) it provides a balance to the schemes that emphasize one aspect to the exclusion of others that results in an 'artificial' structure imposed on the text; and (3) it opens up an avenue for interpretation that integrates the linguistic, rhetorical, intertextual, internal and theological contours of the text.

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