



The Revelation to John begins with the words, 'A Revelation of Jesus Christ...' The Book, according to my analysis of the Greek text, comprises **Seven Sections of 'Sevens'** framed by both **Prologue** and **Epilogue**. At the beginnings of both the **Prologue** and the **Epilogue**, at 1.1 and 22.16, the correspondence is seen: Jesus has sent his angel to testify to John what is soon going to happen. **The Seven Sections**, each of **an Introduction and Seven Parts**, are arranged in **chiasm** and can be described by **1,2,3,C,3',2',1'**, where **1** corresponds to **1'**, **2** to **2'** and **3** to **3'** around a Central Section, **C**. As a design, it appears to replicate that of the seven-branched golden lampstand associated with the Tabernacle and the Temple (of Old Covenant times). And 'lampstands' feature a lot near the beginning of this work! The book essentially declares the message that God is in control and that all evil will be destroyed. Given Christian, first century interpretation of the meanings of 'numbers', and there is much meaning in numbers in this book, the book's structural **chiasm** of **'Seven times Seven7'** (see Zech. 4.2f for a possible corresponding reference) itself expresses the belief of the Church in **'a perfect completion and fulfilment of all God's purposes'**. The church needs only to remain faithful and true to the 'Lord Jesus'.

No relationship exists between the Gospel of John and the Revelation to John as we find with Luke-Acts, though both books feature lots of 'sevens', in both symmetrical and a-symmetrical use: in John's Gospel it is in the number of sections, of feasts, of longer 'I am' sayings and of signs; and in the Revelation it is in the number of sections, lampstands, stars, churches, seals, angels with trumpets/with bowls, visions and 'words', also beatitudes (1.3, 14.13, 16.15, 19.9, 20.6, 22.7, 22.14) and 'peoples' (5.10, 7.9, 10.11, 11.9, 13.7, 14.6, 17.15). But the *menorah* may have influenced the designs of both. As a symbol, it began life, in written terms, in the Book of Exodus. To Orthodox rabbis, it represents 'the life and light of God in the world'. In the Gospel of John, we are distinctly told in the opening piece that 'Jesus is the life and light of God in the world'. Here in the Book of the Revelation, it could be that we are being told through this symbolism that 'the Church of the 'Lord Jesus' is now the life and light of God in the world'.

The above artistic representation includes only a very few revisions to the chart that I published in 1988. The sectional structure of this book was a relatively simple matter to establish because of all the 'sevens'.

What was key to completing the exercise was the discovering of the seven-times repeating opening formula, 'And I saw', *Καὶ εἶδον* (in the Greek). With it, the writer defined the otherwise un-numbered parts of what I now designate his Central and Final sections. What is now designated Section 2' was found to consist of seven parts that had introductory phrases, *Καὶ εἶπέν...* (in the Greek) and variations, 'And he said to me...'; 'And he says to me...'. At first, I viewed the whole seven-section scheme as a linear one. But when I saw the parallels, in sequence, between the introduction and the seven parts of Section 3 and the introduction and the seven parts of what was up until then Section 5, now Section 3' (Seven Angels, with Trumpets in the first, and Bowls in the second; dualities 1 to 1 (8.7 *cf.* 16.2), 2 to 2 (8.8-9 *cf.* 16.3) and so on), I began to test the whole structure for a chiasm. The artwork draws attention also to other dualities that are to be found between Sections 1 and 1' and Sections 2 and 2'. Compare, for example, the passages, 1.9-20 and 19.11-16, for their descriptions of our glorified Lord, with 'eyes afire' and 'a sword coming from his mouth' (as nowhere else in the book): they are introductory to Sections 1 and 1'.

A 'Full Parsing' of the Greek text proved less important with the analysis of The Revelation, than, say, with the analyses of Mark, Luke, Acts and John. As with Matthew, this book is primarily based on a numerical/numerological scheme. Yet, when I did establish that this writer employed the very same style of writing that is to be found in the gospels and the letters it brought much clarity to the parts that make up the wholes. As Augustine said, 'There is no understanding a book without first understanding its structure.' (*On Christian Doctrine*, IV.6-7) The writing style is ABB', where A is introductory, B is the first development and B' is the concluding second development of a piece. With the Letters to the Churches, for example, the letter for the church is the A part. It is then for those with 'ears to hear, to hear what the Spirit is saying': this is the B part. Then there is something for those who would be 'victorious': this is the B' part. It can be noted that parts B and B' flip over from the fourth to the seventh letters. The B and the B' parts parallel and complete each other in normal usage: here it matters not which comes first, so the writer shows a kind of flexibility. One of the rules of ancient rhetoric was that each rhetor should choose a *simple* framework for his work, but not make the signifiers of the structure too obvious: to do so would be detrimental to the quality of the overall presentation as a listening experience. Those who write on The Revelation as an 'extraordinarily complex literary composition' have not yet seen the simplicity of its 'seven times seven' scheme (e.g. Bauckham, *The Theology...* also *Climax of Prophecy*). For more of my own analyses, see *Sliced Bread...*, *New Testament: New Testimony* (4th Edition) and my website: www.davidgpalmer.co.uk ('Samples'). Google 'structure' and revelation' and you will find my work also on the world wide web.

According to the currents and consensuses of scholarship, there are many different and conflicting ways of describing this book's structure, but my analysis of the Greek text and the rhetoric of the book, as is represented by this artwork, defy such a stance. This rhetor wrote, as I find that all the New Testament writers so wrote, to the rules and practice of ancient rhetoric. They all paid attention to: the marshalling of their ideas; the selecting of a simple, suitable and memorable structure; their choice, and use throughout, of a style of writing that would help readers discern where to punctuate and divide up the presentation; and the help that readers needed with both the memorising and the proper presenting of the work. (It was because manuscripts of that era were produced without punctuation as columns of letters without spaces even between words and sentences!) This rhetor of the Revelation well demonstrates that he is a literary artist of his time, one who owed his writing acumen to the Hellenistic writers who preceded him. Can we not now jettison this book's 'chapter and verse' references? The Greek text has its own built-in 'sat nav'!

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Rev Dr David G. Palmer has a **Nationwide Touring Exhibition in Art** of erudite scholarship on all twenty-seven New Testament Books. If you would like his exhibition to visit your way, contact him through his website (overleaf), or by email, david.g.palmer@btinternet.com. His next Exhibition is in South Derbyshire at Swadlincote Methodist Church, West Street, DE11 9DE, 28th-30th May 2015: Thursday 2-9pm (with Talk at 7.30); Friday 10am-8pm; Saturday 10am-2pm, with books, mugs, mats, cards, posters, jigsaws, etc for sale.