

Historicism and the Judgment

A Study of Revelation 4-5 and 19a

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Introduction

My purpose in this presentation is to show that there is abundant biblical evidence for a pre-advent judgment in heaven, that it starts in the timeframe of the last of the seven letters of Rev 2-3, and that it is prominently visible throughout the book of Revelation. We now consider three questions.

Question 1: When Do the Events of Rev 4-5 Occur?

The throne scene takes place in the timeframe to which the seven letters have brought us, i.e., the timeframe of the letter to Laodicea, in and after 1844. Our critics (Ford and others) argue that Rev 4-5 is a judgment scene, and that it begins in the first century. From this they draw that our church's understanding of prophecy is fundamentally wrong. Our defenders (Maxwell and others) say it isn't wrong and argue, by contrast, that Rev 4-5 is an enthronement, which again would be in the first century. Thus the two sides disagree on many things, but both models place the throne scene in the first century. What implications would follow if we were to place it in a different timeframe? I submit that the seven letters, in bringing us down through time to our own day, place the setting for the throne scene in and after October 22, 1844. While this scene looks forward thematically to what would follow in chap. 6, historically it looks back to chaps. 2-3.

Let us start at the beginning by asking why the chapters appear in the sequence they do. Why did the Holy Spirit lead John to place the letters to the seven churches between chap. 1, where Christ walks among the lampstands, and the throne scene of chaps. 4-5? There was a reason for this, and we would do well to find out what it was. I suggest that the point we would miss if Rev 1 and 4-5 appeared next to each other, without the letters in between them, has to do with establishing a correct timeframe for the throne scene.

This is a uniquely historicist sort of question to raise, since no other school of interpretation takes any interest in following prophecy step by step through the successive ages of church history. I submit that to understand Rev 4-5 well we must fully embrace the implications of our historicist understanding of Rev 2-3.

Historical Lessons from Rev 2-3

Stairs illustration. The next time you have occasion to climb a set of stairs ask yourself, Where am I now? Stairs do not leave you in the same place you were. In the same way, the letters to the seven churches do not leave us at the end in the same timeframe where we were

the beginning. The last of the churches is Laodicea, which means "a people judged." The idea of judging is meaningless without a corresponding judgment. For more than 150 years we have taught (a) that we are the church of Laodicea and (b) that the judgment is taking place now. What I propose here is bringing the two claims together and supporting them from Rev 4-5. There is no new doctrine here, but only a new way of defending two established doctrines in a unified manner.

If the throne scene occurs in the timeframe to which the letters have brought us, then even though the material is presented in successive chapters, the throne scene does not follow the message to Laodicea in time but occurs simultaneously with it. Laodicea is judged during the time of the judgment. The judgment occurs during the time of Laodicea. These things are happening now.

Please notice that by comparing the letters with stairs which bring us gradually through time I am capturing the historicist idea exactly. Preterism is unwilling to go beyond the prophet's lifetime, so the preterist would remain forever at the bottom of the stairs. Climbing them is not a goal for a person with such views. Futurism skips over large portions of history arbitrarily – leaving out much in the middle, so the futurist would endeavor to get from bottom to top all in one great leap. Idealism never comes to grips with the facts of history in the first place, so for the idealist there are no stairs and the comparison doesn't apply. Only historicism follows the gradual unfolding of God's providences through history as a means of interpreting prophecy. For the historicist the seven churches lead gradually, step by step, from the first century to the present. So having followed God's leading through history in this way, we should notice very carefully where He has brought us as a result. He has brought us to the time of the judgment.

Letter to Sardis. When the letter to Sardis says there would be "persecution for ten days" (Rev 2:10), that does not mean that persecution in the early Christian church would be limited to one town of Asia Minor for a little over one week. Instead it means that there would be persecution for ten years and, since historicism applies the letters to epochs of history as well as literal places, the persecution referred to in this way could be universal. And in fact it was. The reference is to the great persecution of Diocletian, which raged with varying degrees of intensity over much of the empire (especially in the east) from AD 303 to 313.

There is no adequate way to explain the significance of the ten days of persecution while limiting one's perspective to first century Asia Minor. We should learn what we can from the geographical settings of the towns to which John addressed these letters, but must not limit ourselves to the prophet's lifetime. Doing that is not historicism, but preterism. The great linguist, Noam Chomsky, once said that we should seek out facts of language that can be explained well by one model and only poorly by another.¹ In this way we advance our knowledge of what human language is instead of just learning one more rule of grammar. We are not linguists here, but the principle is the same. Rev 2:10 is a passage that can only be explained well by one model, and that model is historicism.

Letter to Philadelphia. Christ tells the church of Philadelphia, "See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut" (Rev 3:8). The Greek word here translated "before" is

¹ "[T]he important problem in linguistics is to discover a complex of data that differentiates between conflicting conceptions of linguistic structure in that one of these conflicting theories can describe these data only by *ad hoc* means whereas the other can explain it on the basis of some empirical assumption about the form of language" (*Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* [Cambridge, MS: MIT, 1965], p. 26).

enōpion, so the symbolism involves a spatial metaphor, and yet the application of the metaphor unfolds primarily in time. The "door" (vs. 8) is what separates the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary from the second apartment. The "key" (vs. 7) is the message preached by William Miller and others, which, when understood with reference to Christ's high priestly ministry, opens the period under review to our understanding. Notice that the church of Philadelphia does not go through the door but that it stands "before" them. Going through it represents the transition from Philadelphia to Laodicea, when so many were disappointed and turned away. "I have placed before you an open door" (Rev 3:8). "After this I looked and saw a door standing open in heaven (Rev 4:1). We must learn to see the connection between these two passages. The door that John sees "standing open" at the beginning of chap. 4 is the same one mentioned in the letter to Philadelphia during the time leading up to 1844. What John sees in Rev 4-5 would occur not in the timeframe of Philadelphia, but later, in the timeframe of Laodicea – the church associated with judgment.

Different places, same timeframe. John says, "After this I looked . . ." (Rev 4:1). What he sees on earth is the tepid church of Laodicea. What he now sees in heaven is the throne scene of Rev 4-5. The words "after this" probably refer to the act of looking. He looks in two places, but not at two substantially different times.² When a pastor looks down at his notes and then up at the congregation, he is not doing this in different eras of history.

In the same way, when Christ says, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this" (Rev 4:1), He is not taking us back to an earlier age – to the first century for example. "Come up here" is a transition not from one time to another, but from one place to another. The events John sees in heaven are just beginning. It is the start of a long process.

Thematic considerations

Thematic considerations must be distinguished from historical ones. Thematically the throne scene of Rev 4-5 introduces the seven seals of Rev 6 (and 8:1), so from this point of view it looks forward to later chapters. Historically its point of reference derives from the series of churches, so it also looks back to earlier chapters. There is room for both perspectives. Historically the throne scene occurs during the time covered by the letter to Laodicea; thematically it introduces the seals.

Copyright illustration. Check the copyright date of any book that might be nearby. When was it written? When did you buy it? When did you first open it? When did you finish reading it? What period of time does it discuss? It is in the nature of written communication that such factors have no bearing on each other – with one exception. A book is always written before it is read. Apart from this, a work that discusses past events can be new (or old) and a work that discusses future events can be old (or new).

Discussion. The transition between Rev 5 and 6 is a perfect place for Revelation's focus to turn back to the first century. The contents of a document are unrelated to the time when it is opened. I repeat that there is an important thematic connection between the throne scene and

² There is a parallel for this type of time relationship at the beginning of Dan 11 and the beginning of Dan 12. Dan 11:44-45 focuses on earthly things, Dan 12:1-2 on heavenly things occurring at the same time. The king comes to his end and no one will help him. Why? Because Michael stands up and causes him to come to his end by coming in person with all the angel armies of heaven.

the seals, just as there is between the acts of opening the scroll and of reading it. But the break between Rev 5 and 6 is not thematic in nature; it is historical. There is no link between these two chapters that has any connection with time. The scroll's contents preserve a record of events that have already occurred. Opening "a scroll sealed with seven seals" in Rev 5:1 is similar to opening "the books" in Dan 7:9. The "books" Daniel describes are not codices.

Once the historical focus drops back to the first century, the seals go over the same span of time as the churches did previously. By going back over the same periods of history that the letters to the churches have already introduced, we learn more about the history of those times than we could have in any other way. Our picture of the church becomes more complete by doing this. This is what it means to repeat and enlarge. The present model is fully consistent with this important principle.

Summary

The churches take us from the first century to 1844 and beyond. The seals take us from the first century to our own day as well, but from a different perspective. In between the end of the churches and the beginning of the seals there must be some point where time drops back to make this repetition possible. Identifying the correct point of transition is important because of what it implies about Rev 4-5. If the transition comes before those chapters, they describe events in the first century. If the transition comes afterward, they apply in modern times. This in turn affects our understanding of the parallel scene in Rev 19a. And our understanding of these two scenes together affects our concept of the entire book. Here I argue that the transition back to the first century comes not before Rev 4-5 but after. The throne scene looks back to the churches historically, while thematically it looks forward to the seals.

Question 2: Where Does the Throne Scene Occur?

The throne scene of Rev 4-5 occurs in the second apartment, not the first. There are a number of reasons for saying so. And, while much of what I say can be interpreted from other points of view, some of the evidence cannot be. The text of the passage provides conclusive evidence that the first apartment is not a possible venue for the events of Rev 4-5.

In Rev 4-5 what is around the throne?

"Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders" (4:4).

"In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back" (4:6).

"They [numberless angels] encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders" (5:11).

These verses tell us that four living creatures, twenty-four elders, and innumerable angels surround the throne. There is also a reference to a rainbow encircling the throne (4:3).

Circles. What do they tell us about the location of the throne? What they tell me is that the throne of God is at the center of the room. And that is an extremely important fact. See fig. 1.

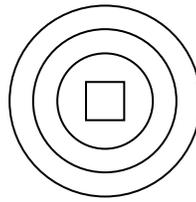


Fig. 1. The place of the throne of God at the center of everything in Rev 4-5.

The first apartment. There is much here that reminds us of the ancient sanctuary. What was located at the center of the first apartment of the sanctuary? Well, nothing. The organizing principle for furniture in the first apartment was outward, away from the center.

North side: "Moses placed the table in the Tent of Meeting on the north side of the tabernacle outside the curtain and set out the bread on it before the Lord, as the Lord commanded him" (Exod 40:22-23).

South side: "He placed the lampstand in the Tent of Meeting opposite the table on the south side of the tabernacle and set up the lamps before the Lord, as the Lord commanded him" (Exod 40:24-25).

West side: "Moses placed the gold altar in the Tent of Meeting in front of the curtain and burned fragrant incense on it, as the Lord commanded him" (Exod 40:26-27).

The second apartment. What was along the sides of the second apartment? Again, nothing. The ark of the covenant was the only item of furniture and it was placed in the middle of the room. The cherubim were on the ark, the law, the manna, and Aaron's rod inside it. The organizing principle for furniture in the second apartment was inward, toward the center.

"The cherubim are to have their wings spread upward, overshadowing the cover with them. The cherubim are to face each other, looking toward the cover" (Exod 25:20).

"He placed the cherubim inside the innermost room of the temple, with their wings spread out. The wing of one cherub touched one wall, while the wing of the other touched the other wall, and their wings touched each other in the middle of the room" (1 Kgs 6:27).

In Rev 4-5 what is before the throne?

"Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God" (4:5).

"Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal" (4:6).

We have discussed the emphasis in Rev 4-5 on what surrounds the throne, but there is still a sense of directionality. Two items were "before" the throne.

The seven lamps. Verse 5 tells us that the seven lampstands were before the throne. Some take this to mean that the throne is represented by the table of consecrated bread – opposite the lampstands on the north side of the room. And indeed, if vs. 5 were the only passage to consider, one could make a strong case for identifying the table with the throne. But vs. 5 is not the only passage, and the lampstands are not the only things before the throne.

The sea. Verse 6 says that also before the throne is a "sea." There was no water in the sanctuary. And yet water was integrally connected with the priests' ministry. If the present scene has anything to do with the sanctuary, and if the word "sea" has anything to do with water, then what we are talking about in vs. 6 must correspond to the laver.³

Standing beside the table of consecrated bread, it would be accurate to say that the lampstands were directly opposite, but not that the laver was directly opposite. The laver was ninety degrees to the left. So while a model equating the table with the throne might appear to work well in vs. 5, it fails in vs. 6. And this tells me that it doesn't really account for vs. 5 either. The impression that it does is a false impression.

Discussion. It is not my purpose to press the details of this scene to the breaking point, but we must learn from the information Scripture provides. What I wish to emphasize here are broad principles of organization that can help us understand the sanctuary symbolism of Rev 4-5. The only way to get to the principles is through the details. See fig. 2 and 3.

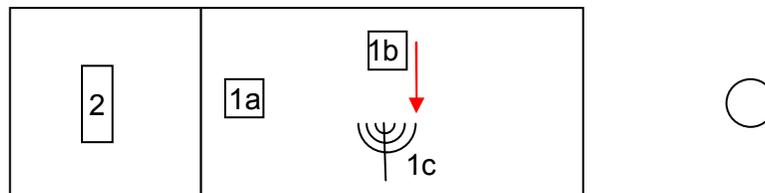
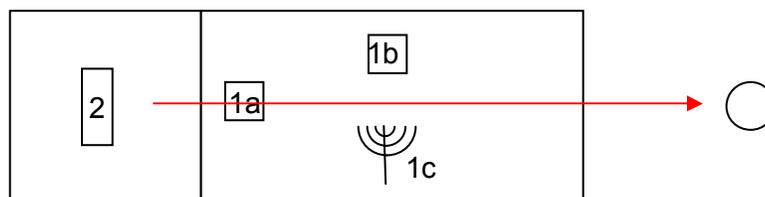


Fig. 2. Diagram of the sanctuary, in which the table of consecrated bread (1b) functions as the throne and the lampstand (1c) is "before" it.



³ The laver of Solomon is repeatedly called a "sea" in 1 Kgs 7:23, 24, 25, 25, 39, and 44. There is a sapphire pavement under the throne in Exod 24:10, and in Ezek 1:26 and 10:1 the throne itself looks like sapphire. But the word we are looking for is "sea," not "sapphire."

Fig. 3. Diagram of the sanctuary, where the throne is in the second apartment and everything in the first apartment is "before" the throne, and the laver is "before" it as well.⁴

Summary

A first apartment model, where the throne is placed at one side of the room, cannot account for the fact that the four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, and the innumerable multitude of angels surround the throne and form a series of concentric circles around it. If they radiated outward from a piece of furniture on the north side of the room – or on any side of the room – we would not be talking about circles, but semicircles. The throne is not off to one side; it is at the center of everything. The placement of furniture that would be required in the first apartment is the logical opposite of what we find in Rev 4-5.

Similarly, a first apartment model cannot account for the fact that the lampstands (vs. 5) and the sea (vs. 6) are both "before" the throne. Thus a first apartment model fails on both counts. By contrast, a second apartment model succeeds on both counts. I submit that the throne scene of Rev 4-5 occurs in the second apartment.

Question 3: What Does the Throne Scene Depict?

So far we have discussed two questions – when the throne scene takes place, and where it takes place. The question "when" leads to 1844 and the question "where" leads to the second apartment. So what was happening in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary (question 2) on and after October 22, 1844 (question 1)? Not an enthronement.

Expectations of the two models.

It is not just intuition or knowledge of other facts that lead to the conclusion that Rev 4-5 is a judgment scene. Consider the expectations of the two models (enthronement v. judgment). These expectations must be isolated, understood, and measured against the details of the text.

Enthronement

1. Relatively short amount of time.
2. No reason for repetitive activity, because it is in the nature of a throne to place one above all. With one there can be no repetition.
3. The emphasis will be on a beginning point. The events of chap. 5 are consistent with the enthronement model in this respect.

Judgment

1. Relatively long amount of time.
2. Highly repetitive, as case after case is brought before the court.
3. Long processes can have beginning points just like short processes. Bear in mind that whatever starts in Rev 4-5 is completed in Rev 19a. It should not take that long to finish an enthronement. The fact that there is a parallel scene toward the end of the book favors the long process model.

⁴ The altar of incense is not opposite the bread, but it is "before the throne" (see Rev 8:3).

The activity of those who speak

The four living creatures. The activity of the four living creatures shows that the events portrayed in the throne scene must take a long time.

"Day and night they [the four living creatures] never stop saying: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.'" (Rev 4:8).

What sort of activity would allow these events to occupy a long period of time? An enthronement could be finished in a fairly short time, but whatever is happening here takes a much longer time.

The twenty-four elders. The activity of the twenty-four elders, relative to the four living creatures, shows that the activity being portrayed is repetitive in nature.

"Whenever [Greek *hotan*] the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: . . ." (Rev 4:9-10).

There is a question why the four living creatures praise God as they do, and why, when they do this, the twenty-four elders get up off their thrones, bow down before God and lay their crowns on the floor. Notice this is not something which happens only once. The elders do not remain in a prostrate position. They get back up again, put their crowns on their heads, and sit down on their thrones. We must come to this conclusion because the next time the four living creatures praise God, the actions we have just described are repeated. Bear in mind that praise is a response to something. What are the creatures and elders responding to? And why does their praise take such a repetitive form? An enthronement model does not account well for the repetition inherent in what the creatures and elders say and do.

The third point mentioned in the exhibit has to do with starting. This would be consistent with either model. I grant that an enthronement model lends itself naturally to an emphasis on beginnings, but long processes have beginning points too. Thus, both models account equally well for point 3. But they do not account equally well for points 1 and 2.

The evidence of other passages

So far we have been discussing internal features of the text of Rev 4-5. Now we broaden our perspective to include other passages as well.

There are three words in a parallel passage toward the end of the book (Rev 19:1-2) that must be mentioned here. We will have occasion to return to Rev 19 below, but when we do that I don't want to be dealing with vocabulary. Here's the passage:

After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, ² for true and just are his judgments [*kriseis*]. He has condemned [*ekrinen*] the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged [*exedikēsen*] on her the blood of his servants." (Rev 19:1-2)

The three words we will want to notice here are *krisis* "judgments," *ekrinen* "He has condemned," and *exedikēsen* "He has avenged." These are juridical expressions, i.e., terms drawn from the context of a court. The degree to which the judgment language of Rev 19:1-2 confirms that Rev 4-5 is a judgment will be the degree to which we see the two passages as parallel to each other. There are a number of reasons to believe they are very closely parallel. We return to this matter below.

My reconstruction

As I understand the scene portrayed in Rev 4-5, a case is announced from the throne and fully explained. God reveals the full extent of His efforts to save a given individual and announces whether His efforts have been successful or not. The four living creatures and twenty-four elders listen carefully to what God says and are overwhelmed with a sense of His wisdom and love – whether the person in question is saved or lost. Throughout the proceedings they are constantly learning more about God's desire to save, His efforts to save, and His attitudes toward those He deals with. The more they learn about His holy character as a result of this process, the more they want to praise and serve Him.

What God says is perfectly clear, even though it is described with the metaphor of thunder (vs. 5). Those in attendance respond in an entirely rational way, despite whatever impression one might gain from a superficial reading of vs. 8. There is nothing empty or thoughtless in the repetition we find here. This all makes perfect sense when we understand the context for it. In case after case God's exerts His vast energies to save one more here, one more there, and those in attendance are repeatedly amazed at His wisdom and His love in doing so.

The question before the court is not whether we are sinners. We are. The question is how to save as many sinners as possible without being unfair to other sinners, who can't be saved. We speak of a "plan of salvation." It is God's plan to save. When His plans succeed, that it is to His glory. Even when someone cannot be saved, God is honored when the length and depth of His efforts on that person's behalf are revealed. This is why the books of record are opened before the onlooking universe. It is not in God's interest to catch us in our words or to belittle us by magnifying our failings. To the extent that Satan has had his way in our lives, that only honors Satan. God's only and sole desire is to save – to fill heaven with the results of His efforts – but He must do this in a way that is fair to all concerned, without either changing His law or slighting those who are lost. It is an amazing spectacle. The judgment is a self-revelation of the Father, just as the gospel is a self-revelation of the Father, and in both cases the Father reveals Himself through His Son.

When the above strands of evidence are all considered together, they make a very strong case for seeing Rev 4-5 as the beginning of the investigative or pre-advent judgment, in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, starting on October 22, 1844. We have always taught Laodicea is us and that the judgment is now, even if we have used other passages to make our point. But what I am saying here is that we can use Rev 4-5 as well; it also supports what we have said about the judgment. And it does one other thing. It teaches the inestimably valuable point that the judgment is an occasion for joy. None of our other arguments has captured this perspective, but Rev 4-5 and Rev 19a taken together thrust it upon us with unavoidable force. Is this insight valuable? Then the model which brings it to us is valuable.

Parallel passages

There are a number of passages that supply parallels for Rev 4-5 and which support the above model. Below I discuss some of these. What follows is not intended to be a complete list.

Parallels between Rev 4-5 and Dan 7

How many are present? The first parallel with Dan 7 has to do with how many holy beings are present at the judgment. (All agree that Dan 7 portrays a judgment.) There is a difference in the word order between Theodotian's Greek translation of Daniel and the UBS Greek text of Revelation, but the number indicated is the same in both cases.

"Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him" (LXX χίλιαι χιλιάδες ἐθεράπευον αὐτὸν καὶ μύριαι μυριάδες παρειστήκεισαν αὐτῷ) (Dan 7:10).

"Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand" (Greek καὶ ἦν ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτῶν μυριάδες μυριάδων καὶ χιλιάδες χιλιάδων) (Rev 5:11).

What is opened? Another parallel with Dan 7 – from the same verse – has to do with the opening of books. The "books" in Dan 7:10 are of course scrolls. So the difference between "books" and scrolls is not a difference, nor is the difference between scrolls and "scroll."⁵

"The court was seated, and the books were opened" (Dan 7:10).

¹ Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a *scroll* with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. ² And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the *scroll*?" ³ But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the *scroll* or even look inside it. ⁴ I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the *scroll* or look inside. ⁵ Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the *scroll* and its seven seals." . . . ⁷ He came and took the *scroll* from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. ⁸ And when he had taken it [*to biblion*], the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the *scroll* and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (Rev 5:1-9, emphasis added).

There is no reference to the scroll in Rev 5:7 in the Greek, as there is in NIV's English. Similarly, there is no reference to the scroll in vs. 8 in NIV's English, although there is in the Greek. This difference is merely stylistic. My point is that there are seven references in Rev 5 to

⁵ A book of life is mentioned in a number of passages (see Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27). This, together with the "scroll" mentioned in Rev 5:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, and 9 (of the Greek) should amply justify the proposed parallel with a passage (Dan 7:10) which uses the word "books" (Aramaic *siprîn*) in the plural.

a scroll, and each additional reference strengthens the connection with Dan 7. The two scenes must be studied together. There is a close connection between them.

Parallels between Rev 4-5 and Rev 2-3

In Rev 3:14 the name "Laodicea" means "a people judged." A second expression from vs. 14 that is consistent with a courtroom setting is "faithful and true witness." The judgment takes place in heaven at the time that the One who is "faithful and true" bears "witness." How could one separate the two processes? "Judgment," "witnesses." These terms belong together – with each other and with the events that follow in chaps. 4-5.

Parallels between Rev 4-5 and Rev 19a

Literary structure. The scenes portrayed in Rev 4-5 and 19a are chiasmic counterparts of each other within the book of Revelation (following Kenneth Strand). In his book, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, Strand sees Rev 4-5 and 19a as parallel passages and places them in chiastically related sections of his outline (B, B').⁶ Not only is this true, but major elements within the two passages are introduced in chiastically opposite order. The connection between them is overwhelmingly strong.⁷

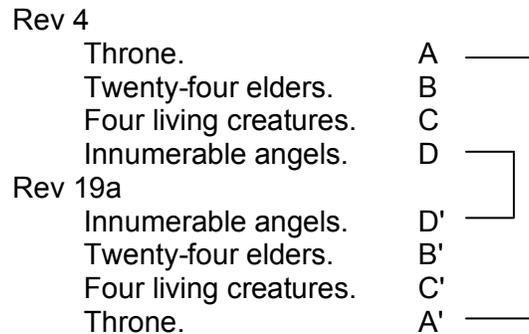


Fig. 1. The references to the central throne of God and to the gallery with its innumerable angels are introduced in reversed order in Rev 4 and 19a.

Train illustration. I once heard a sermon in which the following illustration was used. There is a train. It goes into a tunnel. After a mile or so a train comes out the other end of the tunnel. Which train is it? Obviously, the one that went in is the one that comes out. My point is that if what ends in Rev 19a is a judgment, then what begins in Rev 4-5 is a judgment. What goes into the tunnel in chaps. 4-5 is what comes out again in chap. 19a.⁸ These are not two sets of events, but one set of events seen on two different occasions.

⁶ Ann Arbor, MI: Ann Arbor Publishers, 1979, p. 52. This book was preceded by idem, *Perspectives in the Book of Revelation: Essays on Apocalyptic Interpretation* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ann Arbor Publishers, 1975). C. Mervyn Maxwell, in *God Cares*, vol. 2 (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, *), does not see them as being parallel.

⁷ See William H. Shea, "Revelation 5 and 19 as Literary Reciprocals," *AUSS* 22 (1984: 249-57).

⁸ Some argue that concluding is not the same as introducing, so the scenes are not necessarily the same. It is true that concluding is not the same as introducing, but this leaves open the

My reconstruction

The judgment is not primarily conducted to reveal something about us, although that is included, but rather it is to reveal something about God. Now, in the first part of Rev 19, it is time for closing arguments. As I understand this scene, each group present is given opportunity to express an opinion as to whether, in their view, God's dealings with mankind have been fair.

We begin in the gallery, then proceed to the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures, working our way inward to the throne. At last the question comes to Christ on the throne, whether God has been fair to Him. Was it really fair that "He humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!" (Phil 2:7)? He bore punishment for the sins of all mankind but deserved none of it. How fair is that? This is one of the questions that must be answered before the entire body of those present, or it will be answered in innumerable private conversations afterward. Best to meet the issue and get everything out into the open.

When this question is brought to Christ He does not answer it with a superficial "yes" or "no." Instead His response is the command of vs. 5: "Praise our God, all you his servants; you who fear him both small and great!" This response does not appear to address the question, but actually it does. At issue is whether God's government is one that His creatures can accept. In urging the assembled multitude to accept it He is giving an answer which is entirely direct and which meets the minds of all present. Those in attendance are there because they have always delighted to obey Christ's commands in the past and they rejoice to obey this command as well (vs. 6). In response to Christ's words the entire hall explodes in an indescribable paean of praise that must surely have lingered in John's memory until the day he died.

In describing the level of sound he heard, John uses expressions such as *ochlou pollou* "great multitude," *hudatōn pollōn* "many waters," and *brontōn ischurōn* "mighty thunder" (my glosses). The sense of the passage has been captured exactly by the NIV translators: "Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: . . ." (Rev 19:6). God's efforts to save have been a resounding success and now those present offer a deafening response of joyful acclamation. If only we could capture this same spirit as we contemplate the judgment here! Surely it is instructive that those who are actually there and know what's being said view it as an occasion for joy. The only ones complaining are here on this dark earth. What a study in contrasts this provides!

Conclusion

The judgment and the gospel are not inimical to each other, as some might suppose, but instead are every whit the same. The judgment is to the onlooking universe what the gospel is to the inhabitants of planet Earth. To accomplish His purpose effectively God comes down to the level of specific details by discussing every paragraph on every page of the heavenly books of record. He does this not to demonstrate that we are sinners – the universe knows that – but to reveal Himself through His dealings with us in the person of His Son. In fact we might say that in the Old Testament, as in the New, we never see the Father except as He is revealed to us through the Son. The judgment is not an exception to this rule, but its perfect and culminating illustration. In opening the infinitely detailed record of our lives to the onlooking universe God is

question what is being introduced and what is being concluded. A sermon has an introduction and a conclusion, but this fact does not make it two sermons.

exposing the infinitely wise and loving ways that He has worked to save us through His Son. Here is the focus of the gospel, the focus of the judgment, and the source of all the praise documented in Rev 4-5 and 19a.

This is the mystery of mercy into which angels desire to look—that God can be just while He justifies the repenting sinner and renews His intercourse with the fallen race; that Christ could stoop to raise unnumbered multitudes from the abyss of ruin and clothe them with the spotless garments of His own righteousness to unite with angels who have never fallen and to dwell forever in the presence of God. {GC 415.2}

Appendix 1

Spirit of Prophecy

Some of the statements Ellen White makes about Rev 4-5 seem to emphasize the first apartment. Others emphasize the second apartment. In studying these statements we must bear in mind that the same person wrote all of them. We must not separate them from each other as though they disagreed. There is no disagreement.

First apartment emphasis

See PP 356; GC 414-15. One statement used in two places.

The holy places of the sanctuary in heaven are represented by the two apartments in the sanctuary on earth. As in vision the apostle John was granted a view of the temple of God in heaven, he beheld there "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne." Revelation 4:5. He saw an angel "having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." Revelation 8:3. Here the prophet was permitted to behold the first apartment [415] of the sanctuary in heaven; and he saw there the "seven lamps of fire" and "the golden altar," represented by the golden candlestick and the altar of incense in the sanctuary on earth. Again, "the temple of God was opened" (Revelation 11:19), and he looked within the inner veil, upon the holy of holies. Here he beheld "the ark of His testament," represented by the sacred chest constructed by Moses to contain the law of God. {GC 414.3}

When John sees lampstands in Rev 4:5 he is beholding the first apartment. Certainly. The lampstands are in the first apartment. Within this passage, where does Ellen White say the sea of glass is? She says nothing about the sea of glass here. Within this passage, where does she say the throne is? She doesn't.

So, whereas we should be careful to let Ellen White say what she says, we should be careful not go beyond her intent and try to make her say what she does not say. In the above statement she says nothing that would indicate where the throne is located in Rev 4-5.

Second apartment emphasis

See FE 394.1; SpTEd 19.1; RH, February 25, 1896 par. 5. Here Ellen White simply quotes Ezek 1:3-10. One statement used three times. Here's the passage:

^{KV} Ezekiel 1:3 The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him. ⁴ And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. ⁵ Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. ⁶ And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. ⁷ And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished

brass. ⁸ And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. ⁹ Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. ¹⁰ As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle.

See 5T 751. Four living creatures associated with the throne.

Ezekiel, the mourning exile prophet, in the land of the Chaldeans, was given a vision teaching the same lesson of faith in the mighty God of Israel. As he was upon the banks of the river Chebar, a whirlwind seemed to come from the north, "a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber." A number of wheels of strange appearance, intersecting one another, were moved by four living creatures. High above all these was "the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it." "As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning." "And there appeared in the cherubims the form of a man's hand under their wings." {5T 751.2}

See 1SP 399.2; 4aSG 102.3; SR 184.2; TA 109.4. Four angels associated with the ark of God. One statement used four times.

Four heavenly angels always accompanied the ark of God in all its journeyings, to guard it from all danger, and to fulfill any mission required of them in connection with the ark. Jesus the Son of God, followed by heavenly angels, went before the ark as it came to Jordan, and the waters were cut off before his presence. Christ and angels stood by the ark and the priests in the bed of the river until all Israel had passed over Jordan. Christ and angels attended the circuit of the ark around Jericho, and finally cast down the massive walls of the city, and delivered Jericho into the hands of Israel. {4aSG 102.3}

See 1BIO 120.4; Broadside3, April 7, 1847 par. 3; RH, July 21, 1851 par. 10; WLF 18.3; 1SG 158.1; ExV 16.1; LS 100.3; AG 71.4; EW 32.3; 252.1; CET 91.3. The throne associated with (but never identified with) the ark. One statement used eleven times.

In the holiest I saw an ark; on the top and sides of it was purest gold. On each end of the ark was a lovely cherub, with its wings spread out over it. Their faces were turned toward each other, and they looked downward. Between the angels was a golden censer. Above the ark, where the angels stood, was an exceeding bright glory, that appeared like a throne where God dwelt. Jesus stood by the ark, and as the saints' prayers came up to Him, the incense in the censer would smoke, and He would offer up their prayers with the smoke of the incense to His Father. In the ark was the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of stone which folded together like a book. Jesus opened them, and I saw the ten commandments written on them with the finger of God. On one table were four, and on the other six. The four on the first table shone brighter than the other six. But the fourth, the [33] Sabbath commandment, shone above them all; for the Sabbath was set apart to be kept in

honor of God's holy name. The holy Sabbath looked glorious—a halo of glory was all around it. I saw that the Sabbath commandment was not nailed to the cross. If it was, the other nine commandments were; and we are at liberty to break them all, as well as to break the fourth. I saw that God had not changed the Sabbath, for He never changes. But the pope had changed it from the seventh to the first day of the week; for he was to change times and laws. {EW 32.3}

See PUR, July 17, 1902 par. 9. God enthroned in the second apartment:

In this vision, Isaiah saw the Lord seated on a throne in the most holy place, above the ark containing His commandments, and surrounded by the cherubim and His appointed attendants—His ministers. From this holy place the glory shone forth. Those who are now engaged in carrying forward the Lord's work in the earth, should keep their eyes fixed on the place where the Lord God of heaven is enthroned. From Him they should obtain their orders. {PUR, July 17, 1902 par. 9}

Appendix 2

More on the Sequence of Events

In the present appendix I build on the time-honored historicist position that the seven churches represent seven eras of church history. Consistent with this is the idea that the events of Rev 4-5 take place in the timeframe to which the last of the churches brings us and that, as such, it must be considered a judgment rather than an inauguration. As John follows the church down through history he finally comes to our day. What he sees in this period is Laodicea when looking at the earth and the scene described in Rev 4-5 when looking into heaven. The letter to Laodicea and the events of Rev 4-5 do not occur at different times. Only the venue is different. The timeframe for both is on and after October 22, 1844. This same timeframe applies also to Rev 19:1-10 (Rev 19a).

The outlines of Strand and Maxwell

The present model raises a number of questions, which deserve more space than they can receive here, but I'll try to summarize. It is widely understood that C. Mervyn Maxwell stands on Kenneth Strand's shoulders in respect to his chiastic analysis of the book of Revelation.⁹ But he does not simply borrow Strand's outline. He modifies it in certain ways. These modifications range from inconsequential to dramatically significant. We now compare the two outlines.

Strand's Outline

| Prologue | A | B | C | D | C' | D' | B' | A' | Epilogue |
|----------|-----------|---------|-----------|-------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 1:1-11 | 1:12-3:22 | 4:1-8:1 | 8:2-11:18 | 11:19-14:20 | 15:1-16:21 | 17:1-18:24 | 19:1-21:4 | 21:5-22:5 | 22:6-22:21 |

Maxwell's Outline

| A | B | C | D | C' | D' | B' | A' |
|----------|---------|-----------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1:1-3:22 | 4:1-8:1 | 8:2-11:18 | 11:19-14:20 | 15:1-16:21 | 17:1-19:10 | 19:11-21:8 | 21:9-22:21 |

The three changes discussed here are as follows: (1) Maxwell removes the distinction between Strand's Prologue and section A, taking both as his section A, and that between Strand's section A' and Epilogue, taking both as his section A'. (2) Maxwell moves the division between sections B' and A' from 21:4/5 to 21:8/9. And (3) Maxwell moves the division between sections D' and B' from 18:21/19:1 to 19:10/11. The first change is entirely superficial. The second change is almost equally insignificant. The third change has dramatic implications for the way we view the relationships between chaps. 4-5 and 19a and a number of other structures and exegetical facts about the book of Revelation, but is unwarranted.

In Maxwell's model the important thing to notice is that Revelation consists of a series of sanctuary introductions and whatever follows them. Reading through Revelation becomes a tour of the sanctuary from one end to the other and the places we read about along the way map onto time in a linear manner. Thus, the first roughly 11 chapters occur earlier and pertain to the first apartment, while the last 11 occur later and pertain to the second apartment. If this is a caricature, it is a recognizable one.

⁹ See Maxwell, *God Cares*, vol. 2 (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1985), pp. 60-61; Strand, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, 2nd ed. (Ann Arbor, MI: Ann Arbor Publishers, 1979), p. 52.

Maxwell's outline is a fairly straightforward ABCD:C'D'B'A' chiasm. This is a mixed structure in which two pairs of sections (CD and C'D') are related in a linear rather than chiastic manner. Here Maxwell follows Strand and is correct in doing so. The mixed nature of their chiasm is an interesting fact about the Strand/Maxwell model and one to which we return below.

In my view none of the changes Maxwell makes to Strand's earlier outline are necessary and the one change that has real significance is indefensible. At issue is whether the structures we propose enable us to see (Strand), or prevent us from seeing (Maxwell), a connection between a certain list of elements in Rev 4-5 and 19a, i.e., a central throne, four living creatures, twenty-four elders, and an innumerable multitude of angels. The same list appears in both sections and its parts are introduced in reverse order. See table (below). This is the sort of thing one would expect to find in sections that are related chiastically.

Table
Chiastic Relationships Between
Rev 4-5 and Rev 19a

| Rev 4-5 | Rev 19a |
|----------------|----------------|
| Throne | Multitude |
| 24 Elders | 24 Elders |
| Four Creatures | Four Creatures |
| Multitude | Throne |

The above lists are interesting for more than one reason. Notice that the sequence found in the above resembles the structure of the book of Revelation as a whole in that it is a mixed chiasm, with one pair of elements not reversed. The structure in the table is an ABCD:D'B'C'A' chiasm, which closely (though not exactly) resembles the ABCD:D'C'B'A' chiasm that Strand and Maxwell propose for the overall structure of the book. In the table the elements BC and B'C' are not reversed. In Maxwell's outline of Revelation his sections CD and C'D' are not reversed. As a whole, ABCD:D'B'C'A' is chiastic, although BC:B'C' taken separately is not. This is what I meant earlier by calling this a mixed chiasm. My point here is that what we find in the table is the same type of mixed structure that spans the book as a whole.

Let us carry this comparison one step further. To do so we will have to temporarily rename some things. In Maxwell's outline of Revelation as a whole, let sections CD and C'D' be represented temporarily as single units, thus X and X'. In this case we have ABX:X'B'A' for the structure of the book (where X is CD and X' is C'D'). In the table (above) let us do the same type of substitution, thus AXD:D'X'A' (where now X is BC and X' is B'C'). So an abstract representation of the book's structure would be ABX:X'B'A' and that of the material in the table AXD:D'X'A'. With this latter temporary grouping in place, notice that there is a numerical progression from one throne, to 24 elders/four creatures, to an innumerable body of angels in Rev 4 and, correspondingly, a progression running in the opposite direction from an innumerable body of angels, to 24 elders/four creatures, to one throne in Rev 19a.

Summarizing, it is not only the case that in Rev 4-5 and 19a there is a list of elements which correspond to each other, that they are introduced in reverse order, and that the way this is done a neat numerical progression results. It is also the case that the relationships come together in a way that resembles the overall form of the book in which it occurs. That's quite a bit of structure. Surely too much to miss. And yet Maxwell misses it. How?

Actually this is a searching question. Maxwell's book, *God Cares*, vol. 2, was published in 1985. A year earlier, while the manuscript was still in preparation, William H. Shea (a fellow professor in the seminary at Andrews University) showed convincingly that Maxwell's changes to sections D/B' of Strand's outline were untenable. Moving the section break from 18:24/19:1 (Strand) to 19:10/19:11 (Maxwell) was not a correction of some slip on Strand's part, nor was it even structurally viable, as Shea points out in his paper. On the contrary, it runs counter to important structural facts about the chapter. Shea summarizes his argument as follows:

From such a comparison it seems reasonable to conclude that the four hymns of Rev 19:1-8 constitute a literary unit of their own – one that is separate from Rev 18 – and that they belong more directly to those elements of the literary structure of the book of Revelation which involve the rest of chap. 19.¹⁰

Moving the dividing line between D' and B' without any apparent structural justification and in the face of carefully reasoned advice to the contrary from a respected colleague raises the question why Maxwell felt so strongly about making this particular change.¹¹ If there was no reason for the change that arises out of the text of Rev 19a, could the reason have arisen from the text of another passage – Rev 4-5 for example? Maxwell was much too good a scholar to simply miss something like this. The connection between Rev 4-5 and 19a appears to be one that Maxwell wished to avoid. Why?

There is more. Another connection Maxwell misses is that between Rev 5:11 ("Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand") and Dan 7:10 ("Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him"). John's many literary references are notoriously allusive. In 5:11, however, he comes as close as anywhere in the book of Revelation to directly quoting one of his sources. Again, this is simply too much to miss, and yet Maxwell misses it. And this after just completing a commentary on the book of Daniel (*God Cares*, vol. 1). Nowhere in his discussion of Rev 5 does he mention the possibility of a textual relationship between Dan 7:10 and Rev 5:11.

I suggest that these facts are not random. They form a connected pattern. It is not a sinister pattern, but a noble one. One possible factor behind this string of otherwise inexplicable oversights is that, when Maxwell was writing *God Cares*, vol. 2, others within the church, or on its fringes, were trying to argue that Rev 4-5 is a judgment scene whose timeframe is in the first century, thus sweeping away the significance of everything we had ever taught about 1844. Maxwell tried to protect the church from such conclusions by saying, yes, the setting for Rev 4-5 is in the first century, but it's not a judgment scene. It's an inauguration. He was wrong on both counts. It *is* a judgment scene and it does *not* take place in the first century. It takes place in the timeframe to which the seven churches of chaps. 2-3 have brought us.

I submit that the letter to Laodicea (a name which refers to people being judged) provides the context for the scene which immediately follows. On earth a body of people are judged, and in heaven at the same time there is a judgment. What could make more sense than that? How could the word "Laodicea" mean what it does in the absence of a corresponding judgment? And why would the judgment to which the Laodiceans are subjected take place in any other timeframe? If the timeframes for the letter and the judgment were different, we would

¹⁰ "Revelation 5 and 19 as Literary Reciprocals," *AUSS* 22, 2 (1984): 256.

¹¹ See GC 2:60-61.

have to say that some other group was being judged. It is not accidental that Laodicea comes at the end of the series of churches. Similarly, it is not accidental that the scene adjacent to Laodicea involves an innumerable company of angels and that those closest to the throne alternatively listen to something and then praise God for what they hear. This fact tells us where the wisdom the creatures and elders are responding to comes from. The cyclic nature of their activity shows that repeatedly an explanation is being followed by a response. Could they be working their way through a docket? I think that saying so would be consistent with what we know about Laodicea. Is it also consistent with what we know about the structure of the rest of the book?

A proposed alternative outline

Assuming for argument that the present model is correct, how well does it fit into the very tightly organized outline provided by Strand and Maxwell? Or does it? Perhaps it's just an idea that seems to make a certain amount of sense in isolation but can't be integrated into what we know of the structure of Revelation. I submit that the model is entirely consistent with the rest of the book, and in ways we might not expect.

Recall that Strand and Maxwell propose an outline format in which some elements are and some are not related to each other chiastically. I point out above that the relationships between the four elements of throne, elders, creatures, and multitude in Rev 4 and 19a are of just this same sort. Like the book as a whole, they also represent a mixed chiasm in which some elements do, and some do not, relate to each other chiastically. If we were scientists, rather than biblical scholars, we might wish to speak of self-similarity at this point, where the parts of something resemble the whole. This is the concept behind fractals.

In regard to the overall outline of Revelation, what I propose is that we take Strand's final version of the outline as a starting point and that we subdivide two of its sections. Let us rename his sections CD and C'D' as DE and D'E' respectively. (Doing this introduces no changes. We are merely applying different labels to sections he put forward.) This makes room for the next step, which is to subdivide Strand's sections B and B' as BC and B'C' respectively, dividing these internally at 5:14/6:1 and 19:10/11. This might be taken as vindication for those who support Maxwell's version of the outline, since we, like him, are proposing a division at 19:10/11, although for different reasons and with different results. See proposed outline below.

Proposed Outline

| A | B | C | D | E | D' | E' | B' | C' | A' |
|----------|----------|---------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|---------|------------|------------|
| 1:1-3:22 | 4:1-5:14 | 6:1-8:1 | 8:2-11:19 | 12:1-14:20 | 15:1-16:21 | 17:1-18:24 | 19:1-10 | 19:11-21:8 | 21:9-22:21 |

Notice that what I propose does no violence to the type of format Strand builds into his outline. The constituent parts within sections BC and B'C', and DE and D'E', are not related to each other chiastically (BC:B'C' is not a chiastic relationship, nor is DE:D'E'), but the blocs that contain these sections *are* related chiastically. This is a type of relationship that the outline already had before, and now we extend the same idea further.

If we were to express these relationships abstractly, as we did earlier, we could rename BC as X, DE as Y, D'E' as Y', and B'C' as X'. Thus, at this more abstract level, what we have is a structure of the form $AXY:Y'X'A'$ (where X is BC, Y is DE, Y' is D'E', and X' is B'C'). Again, this

is a restating of my proposed outline, and yet it follows the same groundplan as the one that both Strand and Maxwell used.

Discussion

At a symposium in 2006 I suggested that all the material of Rev 1-5, and all the material of Rev 19-22, is presented in chronological order. I still think so. In chap. 1 we see Jesus among the seven candlesticks talking to John on the island of Patmos. This scene clearly takes place in the first century. The letters to the seven churches take us like stairs that bring us step by step through history down to our own day just before the second coming. At the same time that the people of Laodicea here on earth are being judged, as their name implies, a judgment is taking place in heaven. All of this is presented in historical sequence and occupies sections A and B of my proposed outline.

The events of Rev 19-22 are also presented in historical sequence. These chapters correspond to sections B', C', and A' of my outline. The judgment comes to an end (Rev 19:1-10), Jesus leads the angel armies of heaven to the earth to rescue His people (19:11-21), Satan is bound to the now desolate earth and the millennium begins (20:1-6). When the millennium ends the wicked are consumed (20:7-15), and the earth is then brought back to its original beauty (21:1-27). I with Strand see much of chap. 22 as an epilogue.

If this is true, how can sections A and B correspond to B', C', and A'? Doesn't the symmetry break down? At first glance, yes. Consider that the parts of BC and B'C' are not related chiasmatically, and yet no one would dispute the fact that section B corresponds to B'. So if we bring section B together with everything before B on the one hand, and on the other section B' and everything after B', is this not symmetrical? In view of the mixed nature of the chiasm we are dealing with I submit that such a comparison is justified. But bear in mind that the claim was not that chaps. 1-5 and 19-22 occupy corresponding sections. Instead the claim was simply that the material within chaps. 1-5 and 19-22 are laid out in historical sequence. This much would be true in any case. What I am saying is that the observation can be mapped onto the outline in a reasonable manner.

On a thematic level the outer chapters offer a framework for viewing the inner ones. And the inner chapters set forth the types of evidence, and background information, brought before the court during its proceedings as each case comes in review before God. "The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, *that this man was born there*" (Psalm 87:6, KJV). Thus, asking whether the investigative judgment can be found in the New Testament is like asking whether the book of Revelation can be found in the New Testament. The judgment is a major theme of Revelation and runs through it like a thread. No, like a net.

The position Maxwell took on Rev 19a, and with it Rev 4-5, had the praiseworthy goal of defending the church against an attack on its understanding of the judgment. It is deeply ironic that the topic has been somewhat obscured by his efforts. We need to see the pervasive beauty of the judgment in the book of Revelation and Maxwell would be the first to agree if he were still with us, whether or not he would also see light in the details of the argument by which I seek to accomplish the goal. In the past I have said, often and with conviction, that *God Cares*, vol. 2, is a work of genius. It is a commentary that proceeds, not by isolating passages, but by placing each passage in the perspective of other passages and of the book as a whole. This alone sets it apart. But beyond this, it is supremely well written. There are these few things I think we would benefit from revisiting, but as a whole the work stands and we can all be very glad that it does.