

The Structure of Revelation: Appreciating the Tapestry





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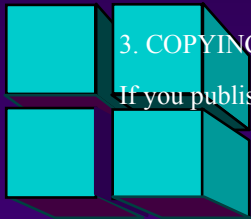
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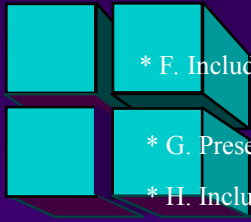
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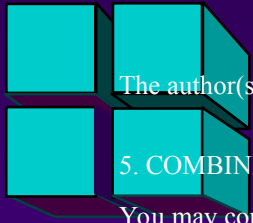


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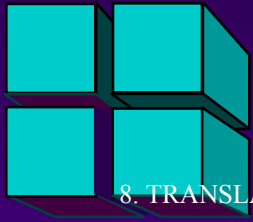
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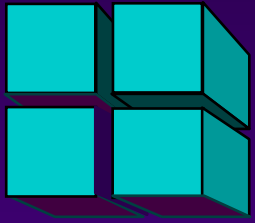
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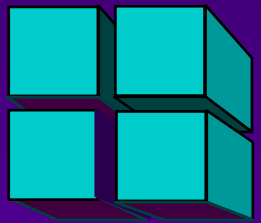
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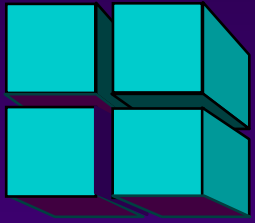


Structures of Revelation

- A. Formal structure: a letter**
- B. Value of outlines**
- C. Rhetorical: looking for Second Coming**
- D. Symbolic characters**
- E. Structures with themes**
- F. Other structures**
- G. Chronological Relation of the Scenes of Revelation**
- H. Conclusion**

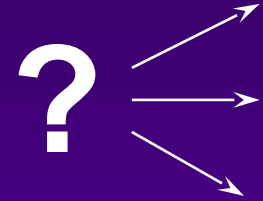


A. Formal Structure: A Letter



Obtaining Outlines

- ❑ Many possible outlines for Rev.
- ❑ We start with more formal signals.



Formal signals



Outline
based on form



Outline
based on content

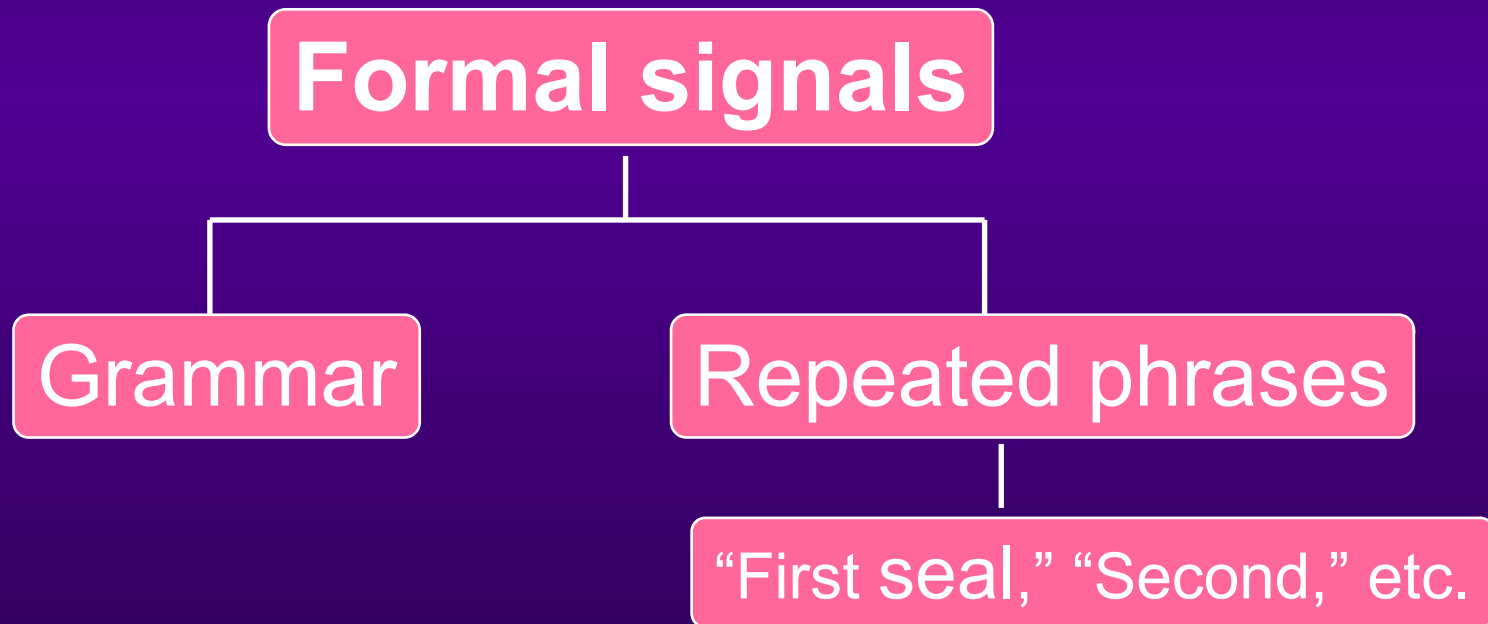


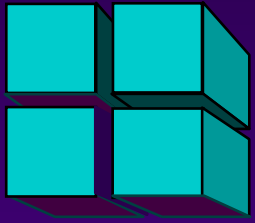
Formal Signals

We watch

□ grammar

□ repeated phrases





Revelation as a Letter

Revelation is

- ❑ a letter,
- ❑ plus preface.

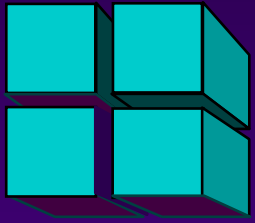
Formal signals



Preface:
1:1-3

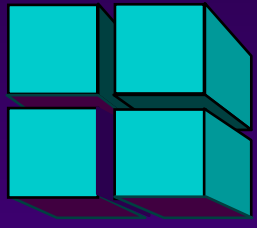
+

Letter:
1:4-22:21



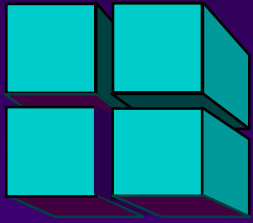
Epistolary Structure

- I. Prologue 1:1-3**
- II. Introduction of Letter 1:4-5a**
- III. Body of the Letter 1:5b-22:20**
 - A. Body-Opening 1:5b-8**
 - *B. Body-Middle 1:9-22:17**
 - C. Body-Closing 22:18-20**
- IV. Conclusion 22:21**



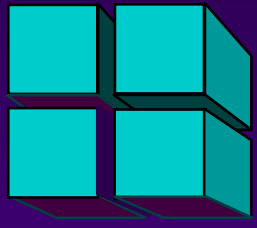
Expanded View of Body Middle

1. Introduction 1:9
2. Visions 1:10-22:5 (each **ἐν πνεύματι**)
 - a. Of Christ 1:10-3:22
 - b. In heaven (**δείξω σοι**) 4:1-16:21
 - c. In the wilderness (**δείξω σοι**) 17:1-21:8
 - d. On the mountain (**δείξω σοι**) 21:9-22:5
3. Conclusion 22:6-17



Finding Section Breaks

- b. Vision in heaven (**δείξω σοι**) 4:1-16:21
 - (1) Throne vision (μετὰ ταῦτα **εἶδον**) 4:1-11
 - (2) Scroll (**καὶ εἶδον** [twice]) 5:1-14
 - (a) scroll 5:1-5
 - (b) lamb (**καὶ εἶδον**) 5:6-10
 - (c) angelic song (**καὶ εἶδον**) 5:11-14
 - (3) 7 **seals** (**καὶ εἶδον** [twice]) 6:1-8:1
 - (a) **1st** (καὶ ἤκουσα ... **καὶ εἶδον**) 6:1-2
 - (b) **2d seal** (ἤκουσα) 6:3-4
 - (c) **3d seal** (ἤκουσα ... **καὶ εἶδον**) 6:5-6
 - (d) **4th seal** (ἤκουσα ... **καὶ εἶδον**) 6:7-8



Markers for Section Breaks

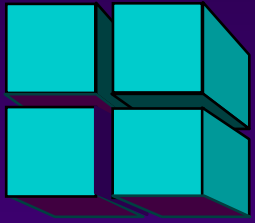
- Major visions
 - in the Spirit; I will show you
ἐν πνεύματι, δείξω σοι
- Sections
 - Numbering, repetition
2d seal, 3d seal, etc.
- Smaller sections
 - “and I saw”
καὶ εἶδον



B. The Value of Outlines

- ❑ Interpret symbols in context.
- ❑ See parallel passages as wholes.
- ❑ Reject disunity.
- ❑ Appreciate the beauty.
- ❑ Focus on relationship, not chronology.

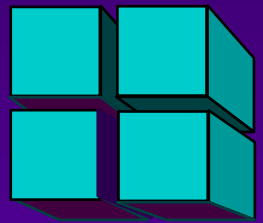




B. The Value of Outlines

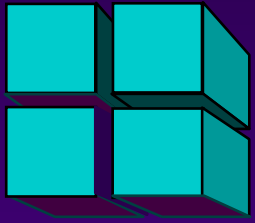
- ❑ Interpret symbols in context.
- ❑ Be aware of parallel passages as wholes, not merely of parallel symbols.
- ❑ Reject those who see disunity.
- ❑ Appreciate the beauty.
- ❑ Focus on relationship, not chronology.





C. Rhetorical Structure:

Looking for the Second Coming



From Form to Plot

- ❑ **Begin with epistolary form**
- ❑ **Go to Rhetorical structure**

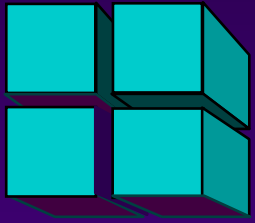
Outline
based on form



Outline
based on content

Preface + Letter →

Visions



Unfolding Thought



I. Prologue 1:1-3

II. Introduction 1:4-5a

III. Body 1:5b-22:20

A. Opening 1:5b-8

B. Middle 1:9-22:17

C. Closing 22:18-20

IV. Conclusion 22:21

I. Prologue 1:1-3

II. Greeting 1:4-5a

III. Body 1:5b-22:20

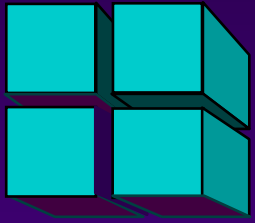
A. Thanksgiving 1:5b-8

***B. Visions 1:9-22:6**

C. Exhortation 22:6-20

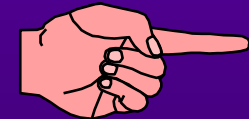
IV. Closing salutation

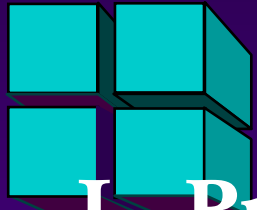
22:21



Divisions in Rev. 1:19

- ❑ “The things that you have seen,” 1:9-20
- ❑ “Those that are,” 2:1-3:22
- ❑ “Those that are to take place after this,” 4:1-22:5
 - ❖ 1:19 ἃ μέλλει γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα
 - ❖ 4:1 ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα





Expansion of Thought

I. Prologue 1:1-3

II. Greeting 1:4-5a

III. Body 1:5b-22:20

A. Thanksgiving 1:5b-8

*B. Visions 1:9-22:6

1. “The things that you have seen,”

1:9-20

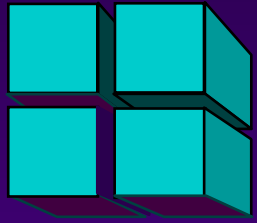
2. “Those that are,” 2:1-3:22

*3. “Those that are to take place,”

4:1-22:5

C. Final exhortations 22:6-20

IV. Closing salutation 22:21

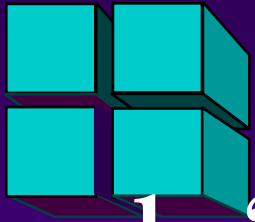


Developing Plot

- ❑ Begin with letter form and Rev. 1:19.
- ❑ Look for language of Second Coming.
- ❑ Similar language applies to earlier “comings.”
- ❑ Earlier judgments anticipate the great judgment.
- ❑ Hence, Second Coming is included.

Look for
his Coming!





7 Cycles

1. "What you have seen," 1:9-20
2. "What is," 2:1-3:22
- *3. "What is to be," 4:1-22:5

7 cycles of
judgment leading to
Second Coming

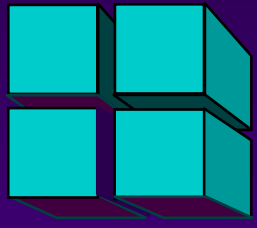
culmination in new Jerusalem



What Are the Cycles?

1. 7 seals 4:1-8:1
2. 7 trumpets 8:2-11:19
3. Symbolic figures 12:1-14:20
4. 7 bowls 15:1-16:21
5. Judgment of Babylon 17:1-19:10
6. White horse judgment 19:11-21
7. White throne judgment 20:1-21:8

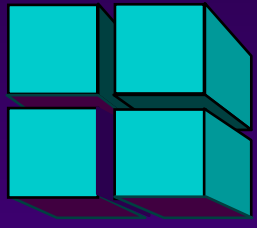
Culmination: new Jerusalem 21:9-22:5



Cycle 1: Rev 6:12-17

Is It the Second Coming?

- ❑ 6:12-17 based on Jesus' Olivet discourse.
- ❑ "The great day of wrath," (6:17) (cf. 1 Thess. 5:2,3, Mal. 4:1, Joel 2:10,11).
- ❑ 7 (or 6?) nature catastrophes
- ❑ 7 categories of affected people
- ❑ "Wrath" of the Lamb
- ❑ Removal of sky (6:14) corresponds to 20:11.

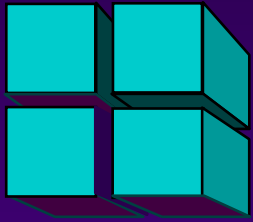


Second Coming in Each Cycle

2. Trumpets: 10:7, 11:15-18 (“judged”).
3. 14:14-20: “son of man” appears with ripe harvest.
4. Bowls: “wrath is completed,” 15:1.
5. 19:1-10: fall of Babylon and marriage supper of the Lamb.
6. 19:11-21: last battle.
7. 20:11-15: Last Judgment.



All are
Second
Coming!



20:11-21:8 United

White Throne
20:11-15

New Creation
21:1-8

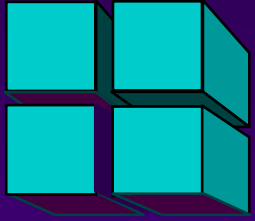
Punishment
20:11-14

Promise
21:1-7

Promise
20:15

Punishment
21:8



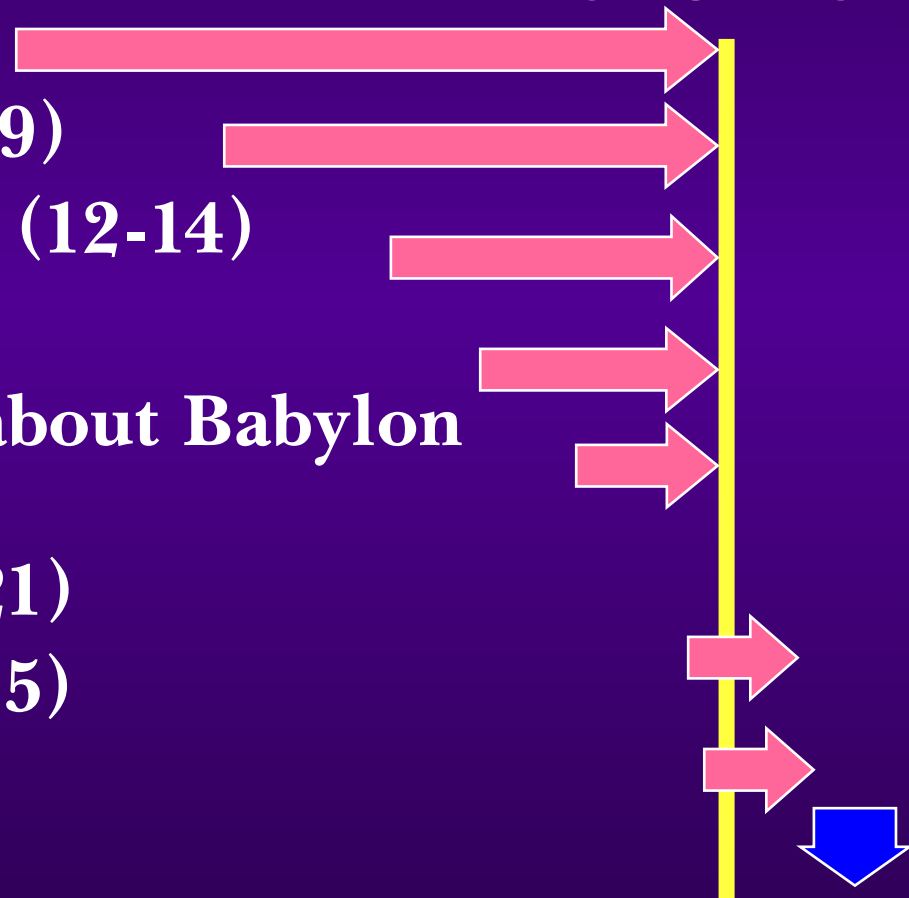


Starting Point of Each Cycle



Second Coming
of Christ

1. 7 seals (6:1-8:1)
2. 7 trumpets (8:2-11:19)
3. 7 symbolic accounts (12-14)
4. 7 bowls (15-16)
5. 7 pronouncements about Babylon (17:1-19:10)
6. white horse (19:11-21)
7. white throne (20:1-15)



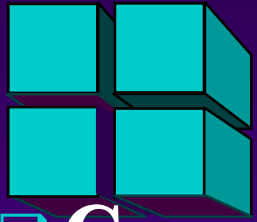
culmination



Overview of Progression

- ❑ **Commission**
- ❑ **Prosecution of war**
- ❑ **Elimination of evil**

culmination in new Jerusalem



Progression of 7 Cycles

□ Commission

1. 7 seals: **scouts**

□ Prosecution of war

2. 7 trumpets: **effects on earth**

3. 7 symbolic accounts: **characters**

4. 7 bowls: **more effects on earth**

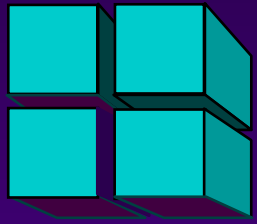
□ Elimination of evil

5. 7 messages about Babylon: **seductress**

6. white horse: **power source**

7. white throne: **all evil**

culmination



Remembering the Cycles:

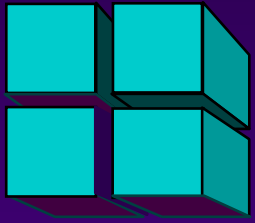
Jericho

Remember!



1. 7 seals
 2. 7 trumpets
 3. Symbolic accounts
 4. 7 bowls
 5. Words on Babylon
 6. White horse
 7. White throne
- send spies
 - march and blow trumpets
 - keep from “devoted” things
 - shout of judgment
 - the walls fall
 - kill (but not Rahab)
 - dispose of the spoil
 - construct new city

new Jerusalem



Detail of Cycle 1: 7 Seals

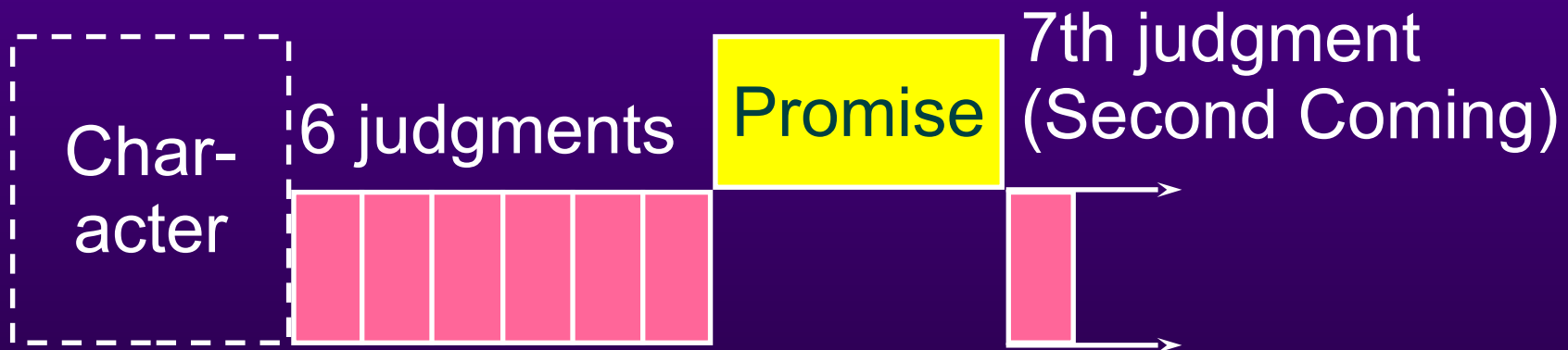
Cycle 1: 7 seals 5:1-8:1

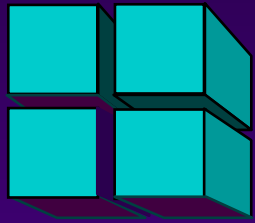
a. Character: the Lamb 5:1-14

b. 6 judgments 6:1-17

a'. Promise for the church 7:1-17

bb. 7th and final judgment 8:1





Detail of Cycle 2: 7 Trumpets

Cycle 2: 7 trumpets 8:2-11:19

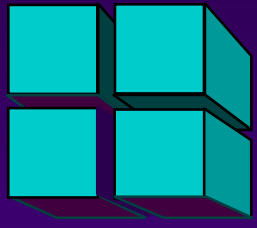
a. Characters: 7 angels 8:2-6

b. 6 judgments 8:7-9:21

a'. Promise for the church 10:1-11:14

bb. 7th and final judgment 11:15-19





Detail of Cycle 3: Symbolic Accounts

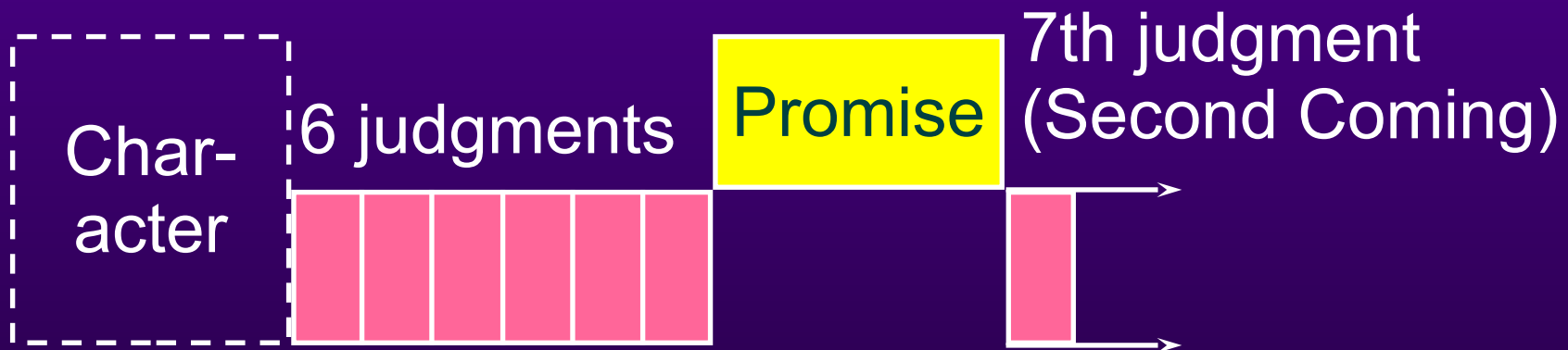
Cycle 3: Symbolic accounts 12:1-14:20

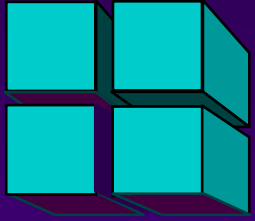
a. Characters: woman and dragon 12:1-6

b. 6 accounts 12:7-14:11

a'. Promise for the church 14:12-13

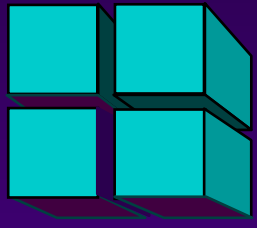
bb. 7th account: final judgment 14:14-20



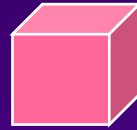
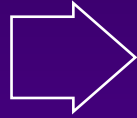
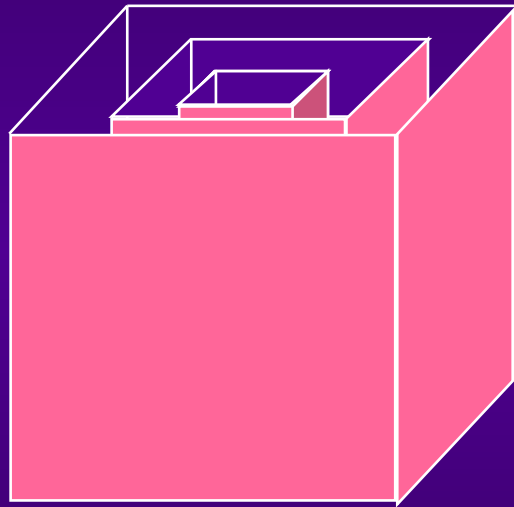


Detail of Cycles

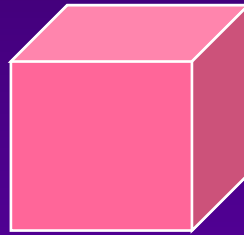
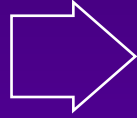




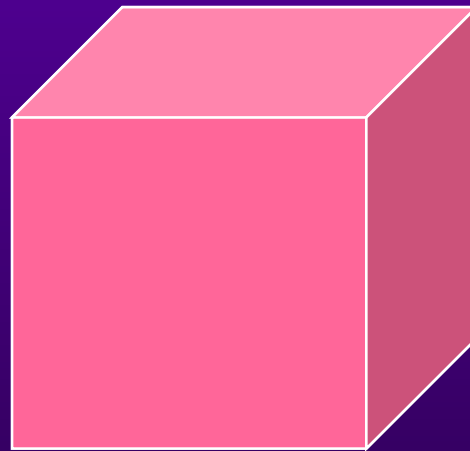
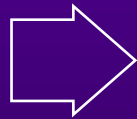
a, b, a', bb in a Larger Pattern



a, b, a', bb

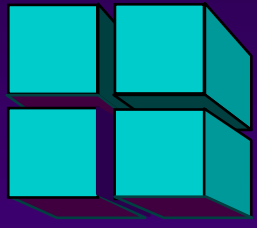


A, B, A', BB



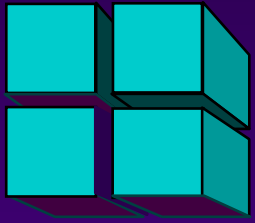
$A, B,$

A', BB



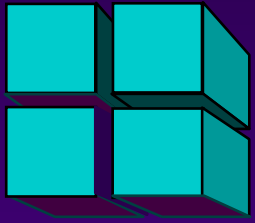
Larger Pattern of Contrasts

- A. Character: recompenser-creator 4:1-11**
- B. 6 cycles of judgment 5:1-19:21**
 - ❖ **Each cycle has a, b, a', bb within it.**
- A'. Promise for the saints 20:1-10**
- BB. 7th judgment: white throne
20:11-21:8**



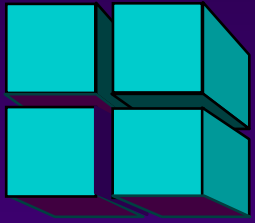
Contrasts in 20:1-10

- a. Character: recompenser 20:1
- b. Preliminary judgment 20:2-3
- a'. Promise for the saints 20:4-6
- bb. Final judgment of opponents 20:7-10



Contrasts in 20:11-21:8

- a. Character: recompenser 20:11
- b. Divine judgment 20:12-15
 - a'. Promise for the saints 21:1-7
 - bb. Exhaustive judgment 21:8



Largest A,B,A',BB Pattern

I. Introduction: participants 1:1-11

II. Body: the message 1:12-22:5

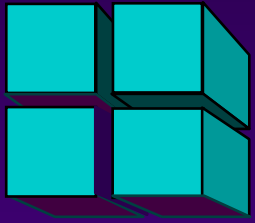
A. The judge 1:12-20

B. Promises and warnings 2:1-3:22

A'. Judgment of the world 4:1-21:8

BB. Final blessing 21:9-22:5

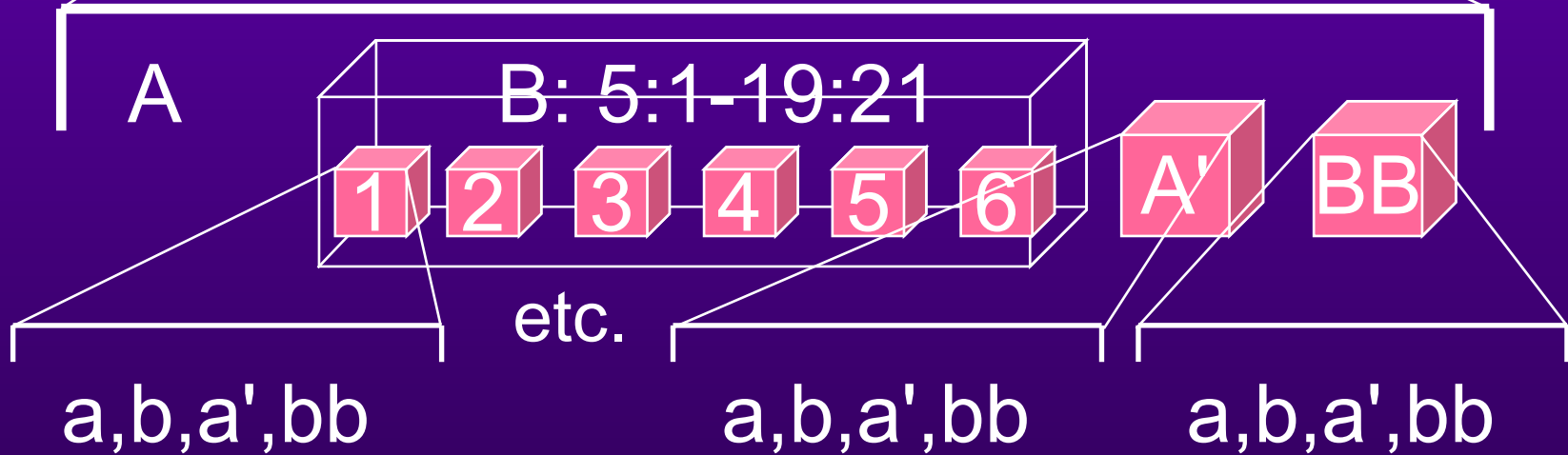
III. Concluding exhortations 22:6-21

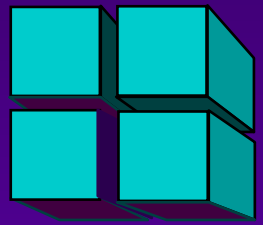


Summary of A, B, A', BB

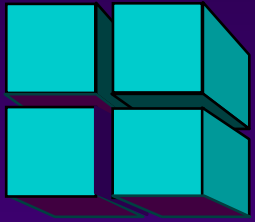
1:12-22:5

A **B** A' BB



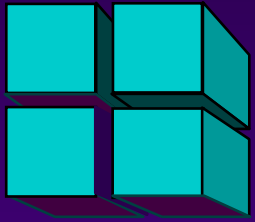


D. Symbolic Characters



Chiasm of Characters

- A. The woman-church in creation 12:1**
- B. The dragon (Satan) 12:3**
- C. The beasts 13:1-18**
- D. The virgin church 14:1-5**
- E. Babylon 17:1-18**
- E. Judgment of Babylon 18**
- D. Reward of the virgin 19:1-10**
- C. Judgment of the beasts 19:11-21**
- B. Judgment of the dragon 20:1-10**
- A. Reward of the creation church 21:1-2**



Movement of Characters

A. The woman-church in creation 12:1

B. The dragon (Satan) 12:3

C. The beasts 13:1-18

D. The virgin church 14:1-5

E. Babylon 17:1-18

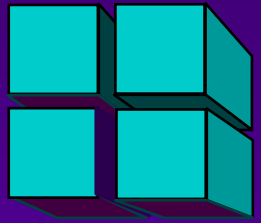
E. Judgment of Babylon 18

D. Reward of the virgin 19:1-10

C. Judgment of beasts 19:11-21

B. Judgment of the dragon 20:1-10

A. Reward of the creation church 21:1-2

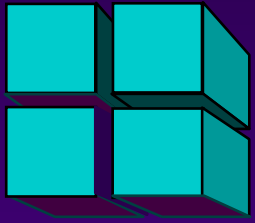


E. Structures with Themes



Overview of Themes

- A. The communication (seer, revelators, audience) 1:1-11
- B. Christophany 1:12-20
- C. Recompense to church militant 2:1-3:22
- D. Throne vision 4:1-5:14
- E. 7 seals: rider judgments 6:1-8:1
- F. 7 trumpets: angelic judgments 8:2-11:19
- G. The redeemed 12:1-6
- H. Deceptive opponent (Satan) 12:7-17
- I. Destructive opponent (Beast) 13:1-10
- H. Deceptive opponent (False P.) 13:11-18
- G. The redeemed 14:1-20
- F. 7 bowls: angelic judgments 15:1-19:10
- E. White horse: rider judgment 19:11-20:10
- D. Throne vision 20:11-15
- C. Recompense to church triumphant 21:1-8
- B. Theophany 21:9-22:5
- A. The communication (seer, revelators, audience) 22:6-21



Core of the Themes

F. 7 trumpets 8:2-11:19

G. vision of the redeemed 12:1-6

H. vision of deceiver 12:7-17

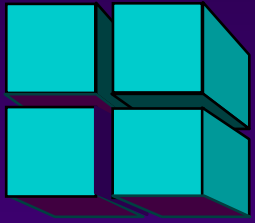
I. vision of destroyer 13:1-10

H. vision of deceiver 13:11-18

G. vision of the redeemed 14:1-20

F. 7 bowls 15:1-19:10





Larger Pattern of Themes

Promises of victory 1:1-5:14

**Judgments on men and nature
6:1-11:19**

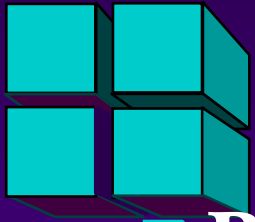
Victors in strife 12:1-6

Villains 12:7-13:18

Victors in strife 14:1-20

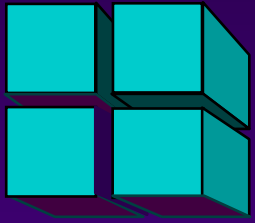
**Judgments on nature and men
15:1-20:10**

Enjoying the victory 20:11-22:21



F. Other Structures

- ❑ Parallels between the 7 trumpets and the 7 bowls
- ❑ The songs of praise, 4:8,11; 5:8-10,11-12,13; 7:9-10,11-12, 11:15,16-18; 15:2-4; 19:1-8.
- ❑ 7 letters vs. the new Jerusalem
- ❑ Repeated appearances of symbolic characters, especially the beast and Babylon
- ❑ Heptads



4 Trumpets and Bowls

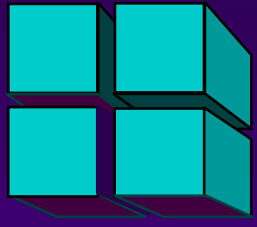
Trumpets



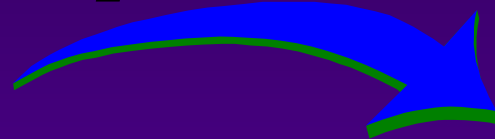
Bowls

1. On dry land
2. On sea
3. On fresh water
4. On heavenly bodies

1. On dry land
2. On sea
3. On fresh water
4. On sun



Intensification *from Trumpets to Bowls*

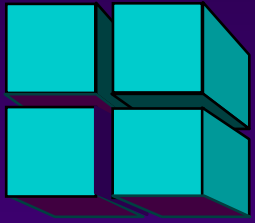


Trumpets

1. 1/3 of earth
2. 1/3 of sea
3. Bitter drinking
4. 1/3 of heavenly bodies

Bowls

1. All land
2. All sea
3. Drinking blood
4. The sun



Last 3 Trumpets and Bowls

Trumpets



Bowls

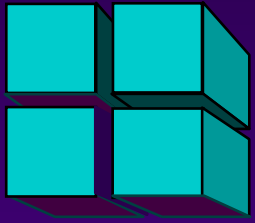
5. On beast worshipers
6. Involving Euphrates
7. Reign of God; judgment of nations

5. On beast worshipers
6. Involving Euphrates
7. Reign of God; judgment of Babylon



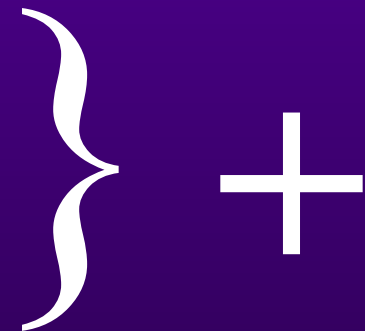
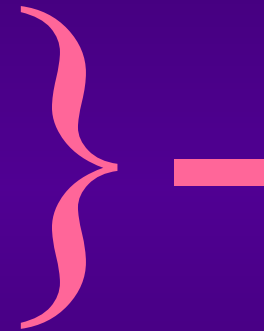
Heptads

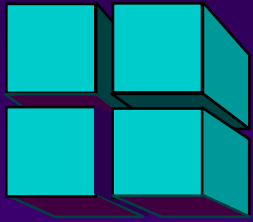
1. 7 letters 1:1-3:22
2. 7 seals 4:1-8:1
3. 7 trumpets 8:2-11:19
4. 7 symbols 12-14
5. 7 bowls 15:1-16:21
6. 7 words about Babylon 17-18
7. 7 last things 19:1-22:21



7 Last Things

- ❑ Final celebration 19:1-10
- ❑ Final battle 19:11-21
- ❑ Elimination of evil 20:1-10
- ❑ Final judgment 20:11-15
- ❑ Final new universe 21:1-8
- ❑ Final city 21:9-27
- ❑ Final paradise 22:1-5





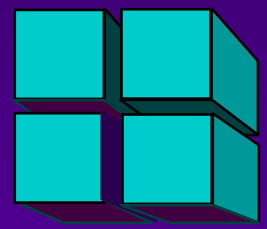
The Two Cities

Church militant

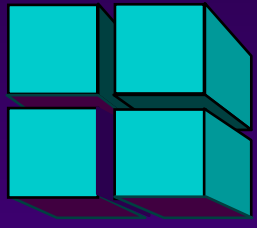
- ❑ Interpreting angel, 17:1-3
- ❑ Vision of City
 - ❖ Harlot, 17:4-18:24
 - ❖ Bride, 19:1-8
- ❑ Truth, 19:9
- ❑ Worship God, 19:10

Church triumphant

- ❑ 21:9-10
- ❑ 21:11-22:5
 - ❖ Bride
- ❑ 22:6
- ❑ 22:8-9



G. Chronological Relation of the Scenes of Revelation



Basic Facts about Chronological Relations

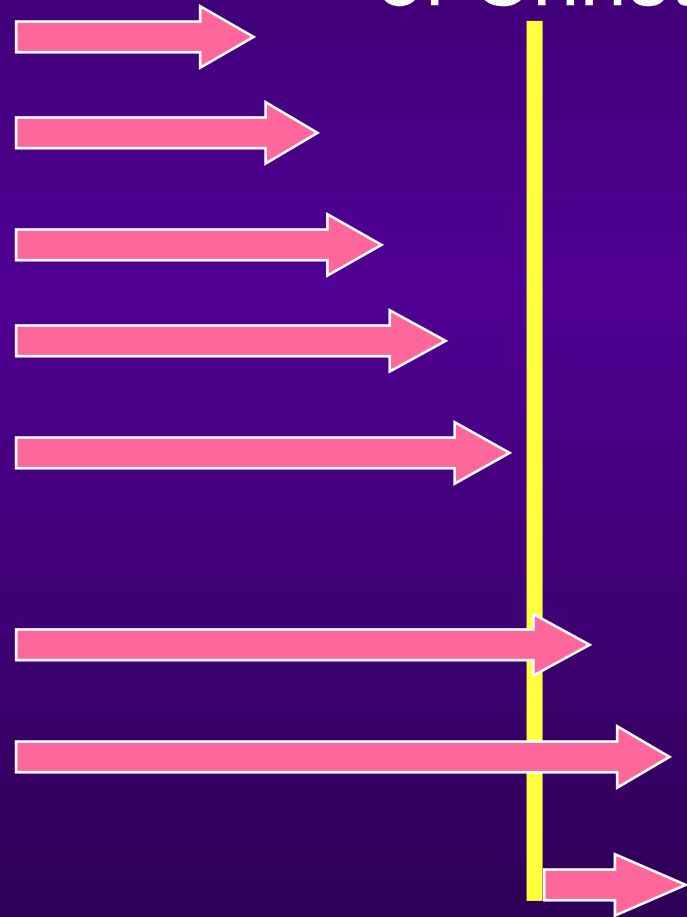
- ❑ Fluidity of language suggests multiple fulfillment
- ❑ Does Second Coming language refer to the Second Coming? Yes.
- ❑ Hence, 7 cycles recapitulate.
- ❑ How?



Recapitulation in Hendriksen

1. 7 seals
2. 7 trumpets
3. 7 symbolic accounts
4. 7 bowls
5. 7 messages
about Babylon
6. white horse
7. white throne
New Jerusalem

★
The appearing
of Christ



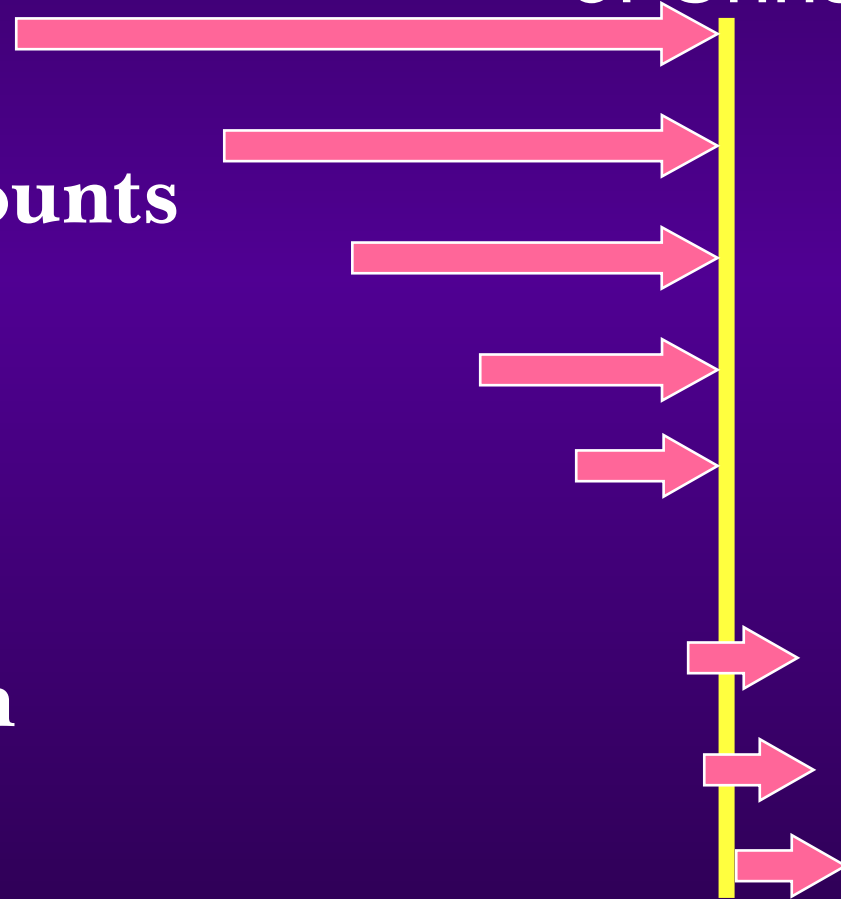


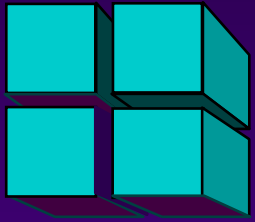
Recapitulation in Poythress



The appearing
of Christ

1. 7 seals
2. 7 trumpets
3. 7 symbolic accounts
4. 7 bowls
5. 7 messages
about Babylon
6. white horse
7. white throne
New Jerusalem





The Nesting Approach



□ 7 seals

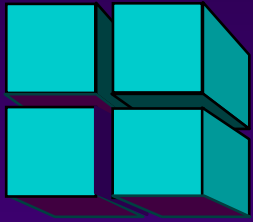


□ 7 trumpets



□ 7 bowls



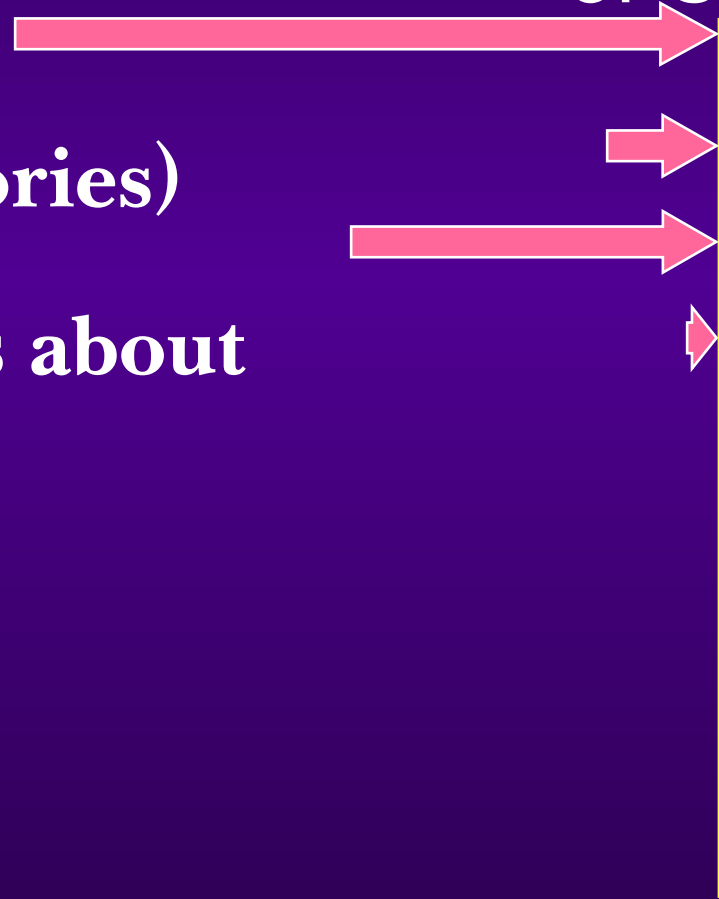


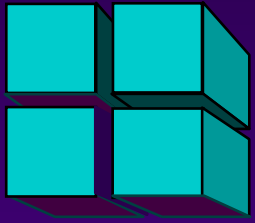
Nesting as Recapitulation



The appearing
of Christ

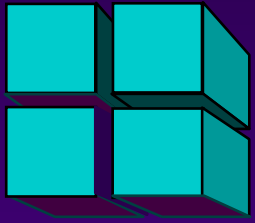
1. 7 seals
2. 7 trumpets
- (3. 7 symbolic histories)
4. 7 bowls
5. pronouncements about
Babylon
6. white horse
7. white throne
New Jerusalem





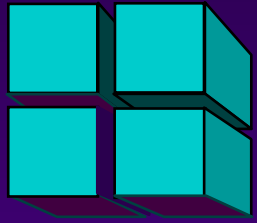
Silence of 8:1 — A Blank?

- ❑ Otherwise unknown in apocalyptic
- ❑ Silence to hear prayers of saints (8:3-5)
 - ❖ Beasley-Murray
- ❑ Primeval silence before new creation
 - ❖ Rissi
- ❑ Standing in awe of God (Hab. 2:20; Zeph. 1:7; see also Isa. 41:1; 47:5; Zech. 2:13; 4 Ezra 7:30-31; 2 Bar. 3:7)



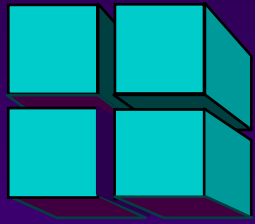
Nesting: the Failure

- ❑ Rev 12-14 requires recapitulation.
- ❑ 8:1 is not blank.
- ❑ Last battle reoccurs: 20:7-9, 19:17-21, 17:12-14, 16:12-16, 9:14, 6:15.
- ❑ Recapitulation, but not nesting, occurs elsewhere in apocalyptic:
 - ❖ Dan 2, 7, 8, 9, 11
 - ❖ Ezek 34, 36, 37, 40
 - ❖ Zech 9:13-17, 10:5, 12:1-9, 14:1-5



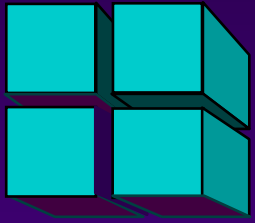
H. Possible Preaching Series

- ❑ 1. Clarity of Rev.: the victory of Christ
- ❑ 2-3. Historical setting
- ❑ 4. Theophany
- ❑ 5. Christocentricity
- ❑ 6-7. Structure
- ❑ 8-11. Four schools of interpretation
- ❑ 12-14. Counterfeiting; spiritual war



Preaching Series (cont.)

- ❑ 15-16. Holiness and the wrath of God
- ❑ 17-18. The Prostitute and modern idols
- ❑ 19. Second Coming
- ❑ 20:1-10. Millennium and its disputes
- ❑ 20:11-22:5. The consummation
- ❑ 22:6-21. Importance of application: taking to heart, "keeping" (1:3).



I. Conclusion



- ❑ Revelation is a beautiful tapestry
- ❑ With multiple dimensions
- ❑ Interlocking