

The Structure of Revelation 1-16

Notice the following brief quotes from Revelation chapters 1-16, each which has been selected to highlight maximally the structure in these chapters.

First take note of Revelation's four sets of 7s.

The Seven Letters to the Churches

“Unto the angel of **(1)** the church of Ephesus write;...” *Revelation 2:1-7*

“And unto the angel of **(2)** the church in Smyrna write;...” *Revelation 2:8-11*

“And to the angel of **(3)** the church in Pergamos write;...” *Revelation 2:12-17*

“And unto the angel of **(4)** the church in Thyatira write;...” *Revelation 2:18-29*

“And unto the angel of **(5)** the church in Sardis write;...” *Revelation 3:1-6*

“And to the angel of **(6)** the church in Philadelphia write;...” *Revelation 3:7-13*

“And unto the angel of **(7)** the church of the Laodiceans write;...” *Revelation 3:14-22*

The Seven Seals

“And I saw when the Lamb opened **one** (or the **first**) of the seals,...” *Revelation 6:1,2*

“And when he had opened the **second** seal,...” *Revelation 6:3,4*

“And when he had opened the **third** seal,...” *Revelation 6:5,6*

“And when he had opened the **fourth** seal,...” *Revelation 6:7,8*

“And when he had opened the **fifth** seal,...” *Revelation 6:9-11*

“And I beheld when he had opened the **sixth** seal,...” *Revelation 6:12-17*

“And when he had opened the **seventh** seal,...” *Revelation 8:1*

The Seven Trumpets

“The **first** angel sounded,...” *Revelation 8:7*

“And the **second** angel sounded,...” *Revelation 8:8,9*

“And the **third** angel sounded,...” *Revelation 8:10,11*

“And the **fourth** angel sounded,...” *Revelation 8:12,13*

“And the **fifth** angel sounded,...” *Revelation 9:1-12*

“And the **sixth** angel sounded,...” *Revelation 9:13-21*

“And the **seventh** angel sounded;...” *Revelation 11:15-19*

The Seven Bowls or Last Plagues

“And the **first** went, and poured out his vial...” *Revelation 16:2*

“And the **second** angel poured out his vial...” *Revelation 16:3*

“And the **third** angel poured out his vial...” *Revelation 16:4-7*

“And the **fourth** angel poured out his vial...” *Revelation 16:8,9*

“And the **fifth** angel poured out his vial...” *Revelation 16:10,11*

“And the **sixth** angel poured out his vial...” *Revelation 16:12-16*

“And the **seventh** angel poured out his vial...” *Revelation 16:17-21*

Thus we have the following:

- A.** **7 Letters to the Churches** (*Rev. 2 & 3*)
- B.** **7 Seals** (*Rev. 6:-8:1*)
- C.** **7 Trumpets** (*Rev. 8:7-11:19*)
- D.** **7 Bowls/Last Plagues** (*Rev. 16:2-21*)

Obviously this really isn't structure, just four 7s... but there is more!

Notice that the 7 seals and 7 trumpets have a more complex structure... both contain the same internal structure which is visible in the additional quotes highlighted in *red*.

The Seven Seals: the Four Horsemen

“And I saw when the Lamb opened **one** (*or the first*) of the seals,...” *Revelation 6:1,2*

“...and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, **one** (*or the first*) of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold **(1)** a white horse...” *vss. 1,2*

“And when he had opened the **second** seal,...” *Revelation 6:3,4*

“...I heard the **second** beast say, Come and see. And there went out **(2)** another horse *that was red*...” *vss. 3,4*

“And when he had opened the **third** seal,...” *Revelation 6:5,6*

“...I heard the **third** beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo **(3)** a black horse...” *vs. 5*

“And when he had opened the **fourth** seal,...” *Revelation 6:7,8*

“...I heard the voice of the **fourth** beast say, Come and see. ⁸And I looked, and behold **(4)** a pale horse...” *vss. 7,8*

“And when he had opened the **fifth** seal,...” *Revelation 6:9-11*

“And I beheld when he had opened the **sixth** seal,...” *Revelation 6:12-17*

“And when he had opened the **seventh** seal,...” *Revelation 8:1*

The Seven Trumpets: the Three Woes

“The **first** angel sounded,...” *Revelation 8:7*

“And the **second** angel sounded,...” *Revelation 8:8,9*

“And the **third** angel sounded,...” *Revelation 8:10,11*

“And the **fourth** angel sounded,...” *Revelation 8:12,13*

“... **Woe, woe, woe**, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the **three** angels, which are yet to sound!” *vs. 13*

“And the **fifth** angel sounded,...” *Revelation 9:1-12*

“**One** (or the **first**) woe is past; and, behold, there come **two** woes **more** hereafter.” *vs. 12*

“And the **sixth** angel sounded,...” *Revelation 9:13-21*

“The **second** woe is past; *and*, behold, the **third** woe cometh quickly.” *Revelation 11:14*

“And the **seventh** angel sounded;...” *Revelation 11:15-19*

Now we begin to see structure.

- A. **7 Letters to the Churches** (*Rev. 2 & 3*)
- B. **7 Seals** (*Rev. 6:1-8:1*)
- ... 1. **... 4 Horsemen** (*Rev. 6:1-8*)
- ... 2. **... Last 3 Seals**
- B'. **7 Trumpets** (*Rev. 8:7-11:19*)
- ... 1'. **... First 4 Trumpets**
- ... 2'. **... 3 Woes** (*Rev. 8:13-9:21;11:14-19*)
- A'. **7 Bowls/Last Plagues** (*Rev. 16:2-21*)

But there is even more!

Again, notice that the 7 seals and 7 trumpets have a more complex structure... both contain some intervening material which is visible in the additional quotes highlighted in *red*.

The Seven Seals

“And I saw when the Lamb opened **one** (or the **first**) of the seals,...” *Revelation 6:1,2*

“And when he had opened the **second** seal,...” *Revelation 6:3,4*

“And when he had opened the **third** seal,...” *Revelation 6:5,6*

“And when he had opened the **fourth** seal,...” *Revelation 6:7,8*

“And when he had opened the **fifth** seal,...” *Revelation 6:9-11*

“And I beheld when he had opened the **sixth** seal,...” *Revelation 6:12-17*

“... And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were sealed **an hundred and forty and four thousand** of all the tribes of the children of Israel. ...*” *Revelation 7:1-8*

“After this I beheld, and, lo, **a great multitude**, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb,...” *Revelation 7:9-17*

“And when he had opened the **seventh** seal,...” *Revelation 8:1*

The Seven Trumpets

“The **first** angel sounded,...” *Revelation 8:7*

“And the **second** angel sounded,...” *Revelation 8:8,9*

“And the **third** angel sounded,...” *Revelation 8:10,11*

“And the **fourth** angel sounded,...” *Revelation 8:12,13*

“And the **fifth** angel sounded,...” *Revelation 9:1-12*

“And the **sixth** angel sounded,...” *Revelation 9:13-21*

“And I saw **another mighty angel come down from heaven**, clothed with a cloud:...” *Revelation 10:1-11:2*

“And I will give *power* unto my **two witnesses**, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. ...” *Revelation 11:3-14*

“And the **seventh** angel sounded;...” *Revelation 11:15-19*

Our previous structure is emphasized once more.

- A. **7 Letters to the Churches** (*Rev. 2 & 3*)
- B. **7 Seals**
- ... 1. ... **1st 6 Seals** (*Rev. 6:1-17*)
- ... 2. ... **7th Seal** (*Rev. 8:1*)
- B'. **7 Trumpets**
- ... 1'. ... **1st 6 Trumpets** (*Rev. 8:7-21*)
- ... 2'. ... **7th Trumpet** (*Rev. 11:14(or 15)-19*)
- A'. **7 Bowls/Last Plagues** (*Rev. 16:2-21*)

But there is more!

Notice that Revelation 1-16 gives a picture of the Second Coming **twice** and **only twice**!

“Behold, he [Jesus Christ] cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.” *Revelation 1:7*

“And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs.” *Revelation 14:14-20*

Our new structure.

- A-1. **2nd Coming** (*Rev. 1:7*)
- A-2. **7 Letters to the Churches** (*Rev. 2 & 3*)
- B. **7 Seals**
- ... 1. ... **1st 6 Seals** (*Rev. 6:1-17*)
- ... 2. ... **7th Seal** (*Rev. 8:1*)
- B'. **7 Trumpets**
- ... 1'. ... **1st 6 Trumpets** (*Rev. 8:7-21*)
- ... 2'. ... **7th Trumpet** (*Rev. 11:14(or 15)-19*)
- A-1'. **2nd Coming** (*Rev. 14:14-20*)
- A-2'. **7 Bowls/Last Plagues** (*Rev. 16:2-21*)

But there is more!

Notice that chapter one mentions the **three** members of the Godhead, commonly called the Trinity while chapter 14 mentions **three** angels' messages.

The Godhead or Trinity

“John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from **(1)** him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from **(2)** the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from **(3)** Jesus Christ,...” *Revelation 1:4-6*

The Three Angels' Messages

“And I saw **(1)** another angel fly in the midst of heaven, ... Saying...” *Revelation 14:6,7*

“And there followed **(2)** another angel, saying,...” *Revelation 14:8*

“And the **third** angel followed them, saying...” *Revelation 14:9-13*

Our new structure.

- A-1. **The (3) Trinity** (*Rev. 1:4-6*)
- A-2. **2nd Coming** (*Rev. 1:7*)
- A-3. **7 Letters to the Churches** (*Rev. 2 & 3*)
- B. **7 Seals**
 - ... 1. ... **1st 6 Seals** (*Rev. 6:1-17*)
 - ... 2. ... **7th Seal** (*Rev. 8:1*)
- B'. **7 Trumpets**
 - ... 1'. ... **1st 6 Trumpets** (*Rev. 8:7-21*)
 - ... 2'. ... **7th Trumpet** (*Rev. 11:14(or 15)-19*)
- A-1'. **The (3) Three Angels' Messages** (*Rev. 14:6-13*)
- A-2'. **2nd Coming** (*Rev. 14:14-20*)
- A-3'. **7 Bowls/Last Plagues** (*Rev. 16:2-21*)

But there is more!

Notice that chapters four and five mention the Trinity while chapters 12 and 13 mention a false or anti Trinity.

The Godhead or Trinity

“...behold, a throne was set in heaven, and **(1)** *one* sat on the throne. ... and *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are **(2)** the seven Spirits of God.” *Revelation 4:2,5*

“And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood **(3)** a Lamb as it had been slain...” *Revelation 5:6*

Recall, that this exactly parallels the depiction of the Trinity in chapter one.

“John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from **(1)** him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from **(2)** the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from **(3)** Jesus Christ,...” *Revelation 1:4-6*

The anti-Trinity

“...and behold **(1)** a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.” *Revelation 12:3*

“...and saw **(2)** a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns... *Revelation 13:1*

“And I beheld **(3)** another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.” *Revelation 13:11*

Our new structure.

- A-1. **The (3) Trinity** (Rev. 1:4-6)
- A-2. **2nd Coming** (Rev. 1:7)
- A-3. **7 Letters to the Churches** (Rev. 2 & 3)
- B. **Trinity** (Rev. 4 & 5)
- C. **7 Seals**
- ... 1. ... **1st 6 Seals** (Rev. 6:1-17)
- ... 2. ... **7th Seal** (Rev. 8:1)
- C'. **7 Trumpets**
- ... 1'. ... **1st 6 Trumpets** (Rev. 8:7-21)
- ... 2'. ... **7th Trumpet** (Rev. 11:14(or 15)-19)
- B'. **Anti-trinity** (Rev. 12 & 13)
- A-1'. **The (3) Three Angels' Messages** (Rev. 14:6-13)
- A-2'. **2nd Coming** (Rev. 14:14-20)
- A-3'. **7 Bowls/Last Plagues** (Rev. 16:2-21)

Do you see the structure? Is it clear that it is there? Well now here is the complete structure.

Structure of Revelation 1-16

- A-1. **John** (Rev. 1:1-3)
- A-2. **The (3) Trinity** (Rev. 1:4-6)
- A-3. **2nd Coming** (Rev. 1:7)
- A-4. **Jesus, Our Great High Priest** (Rev. 1:9(8)-20)
- A-5. **7 Letters to the Churches** (Rev. 2 & 3)
- B. **Trinity** (Rev. 4 & 5)
- C. **7 Seals**
- ... 1. ... **1st 6 Seals** (Rev. 6:1-17)
- ... 2. ... **The 144,000** (Rev. 7:1-8)
- ... 3. ... **Great Multitude** (Rev. 7:9-17)
- ... 4. ... **7th Seal** (Rev. 8:1)
- D. **7 Angels of the Trumpets** (Rev. 8:2)
- E. **Angel at the Altar of Incense** (Rev. 8:3-5)
- D'. **7 Angels of the Trumpets** (Rev. 8:6)
- C'. **7 Trumpets**
- ... 1'. ... **1st 6 Trumpets** (Rev. 8:7-21)
- ... 2'. ... **Angel from Heaven** (Rev. 10:1-11:2)
- ... 3'. ... **Two Witnesses** (Rev. 11:3-13)
- ... 4'. ... **7th Trumpet** (Rev. 11:14(or 15)-19)
- B'. **Anti-trinity** (Rev. 12 & 13)
- A-1'. **The 144,000** (Rev. 14:1-5)
- A-2'. **The (3) Three Angels' Messages** (Rev. 14:6-13)
- A-3'. **2nd Coming** (Rev. 14:14-20)
- A-4'. **The 7 Angels of the Plagues** (Rev. 15:1-16:1)
- A-5'. **7 Bowls/Last Plagues** (Rev. 16:2-21)

We will end here for now, but in the next chapter, the structure will be explained.