

chapter 10 (Ezek. 3), the measuring of the temple in chapter 11 (Ezek. 40). The climax of the whole book is the vision of the temple, and yet at the climax of Revelation, there is no temple (Rev. 21:22).

From these examples we can see that the OT meaning of these ideas is important, but that Revelation uses them with freedom and to its own theological ends.

### STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION

Discussion of the structure of Revelation is rather different from such a discussion of other books of the NT, as Revelation presents itself so clearly as structured. Moreover, it further suggests that its structure gives significant clues to its meaning – much in the way that the meaning of a work of art is often contained in the arrangement of its different elements and their relation to one another. As Revelation has such a wide range of

interpretations, there are almost as many schemes for the structure of Revelation as there are commentators!

Revelation was designed for oral performance ('the one who reads aloud', Rev. 1:3 NRSV) and so we should start by focussing on things that would be noticed by the hearer, such as explicitly numbered series.

Though our concern might be to divide the text up, John's was surely to hold the text together. A clear part of this is the technique sometimes called 'intercalation' or overlapping, where a clearly structured section is interrupted by something different, or when the end of one part overlaps with what appears to be the beginning of another. Thus the series of seven seals in chapter 6 appears to be 'put on hold' and the visions of chapter 7 inserted before the seventh seal is reached in 8:1. A similar thing happens between the

#### THE STRUCTURE OF REVELATION

1:1–8	PROLOGUE
1:9–3:22	VISION OF CHRIST AND THE SEVEN CHURCHES
	2:1–3:22      The seven messages
4:1–5:14	WORSHIP IN HEAVEN
	6:1–8:1 and 8:3–5      Seven seals
	7:1–17      The sealing of God's people
	8:2 and 8:6–11:19      Seven trumpets
	10:1–11      The call to prophesy
	11:1–13      The temple and the two witnesses
12:1–14:20 and 15:2–4	GOD'S PEOPLE IN CONFLICT WITH THE FORCES OF EVIL
	15:1 and 15:5–16:21      Seven bowls
17:1–19:10	FINAL JUDGEMENT: THE VISION OF THE HARLOT BABYLON
19:11–20:15	THE RIDER ON THE WHITE HORSE AND THE 1000 YEARS
21:1–22:5	FINAL VICTORY: THE NEW JERUSALEM
22:6–21	EPILOGUE