Revelation 4-5 and 19a

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Foreword

$\mathcal{T}$he present volume is a discussion draft of work in progress. It is still rough in some ways but far enough along in the incubation process to invite comment from experienced readers.

Below I write for an informed Seventh-day Adventist lay readership. I do not go into a lot of history here, nor do I refer to the original languages often. The main background needed is a careful knowledge of the book of Revelation.

In these pages I have occasion to discuss the published work of Kenneth A. Strand and C. Mervyn Maxwell. These are certainly men I respect, but this does not keep me from disagreeing with them. Actually, it would be impossible not to disagree with at least one or the other, because on certain matters they disagree with each other. The most important example of such differences has to do with where to place Rev 19:1-10 in the overall outline of the book. Strand originally put in a section including Rev 19:1-21:4. Maxwell, on the other hand, put in a section including Rev 17:1-19:10. Here I side with Strand against Maxwell.

It's not just a matter of a few verses either way. In Strand's original framework Rev 19:1-10, with its references to a vast multitude, twenty-four elders, four living creatures, and so on stands in chiastic parallel with Rev 4-5, which refers to these same things in a similar context. Thus, for Strand Rev 4-5 was in section B and Rev 19a was in section B'. This makes sense, since the parallels between the two sections are extensive.

For some reason, however, Maxwell breaks this relationship. For Maxwell Rev 4-5 are in section B, but Rev 19a is in section C(b)'. So his revised version of the outline shows no parallel between the (a) four living creatures, (b) twenty-four elders, and (c) vast multitude in Rev 4-5 and the (c') vast multitude, (b') twenty-four elders, and (a') four living creatures in Rev 19a, even though all the same elements appear and are introduced in chiastically retrograde order (abc in Rev 4-5, c'b'a' in Rev 19a).

Another parallel Maxwell allows to pass with comment 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'").

Maxwell was a very astute scholar. I submit that what we are seeing here is not a lapse on his part, but something more systematic. In this book I would like to examine the nature of his model and offer a way of viewing the same material that differs in some respects from Maxwell but is resolutely consistent with all of our major historic beliefs.

I welcome any comments or criticisms (webmail@historicism.org). We cannot grow in our understanding if we do not wrestle with issues openly.

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