

Part 1

Introduction

Introduction

Below I discuss the work of two men in particular - Kenneth A. Strand and C. Mervyn Maxwell. Both have had a large and beneficial influence on Seventh-day Adventists' understanding of the book of Revelation.

Kenneth A. Strand

Kenneth A. Strand has distinguished himself in a number of areas of Biblical scholarship.¹ The area of interest here concerns only his research into the literary structure of the book of Revelation. Strand's theory of the structure of Revelation takes two forms. He claims first that the book is arranged chiastically, and second that the book divides in half with a different focus in each half. These two claims appear to overlap but must be considered separately. We do this below.

Positive features

In his 1979 book entitled, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation: Hermeneutical Guidelines, with Brief Introduction to Literary Analysis*,² Strand proposes the framework for an outline shown in fig. 1 below.

¹ See Nancy J. Vyhmeister, "Change - The Unchanging Reality" (Andrews University Seminary Studies 32 (1994): 164-65. With this editorial Vyhmeister replaces Strand as editor of A USS and provides a brief review of her predecessor's career. It was an illustrious one. "The subjects on which he has written for AUSS - Revelation, Roman history, Early Church, Reformation, German Bibles, among others - show the breadth of his well-cultivated intellect and insatiable curiosity" (p. 164).

² Published privately by the author (Naples, FL: Ann Arbor Publishers, 1979).

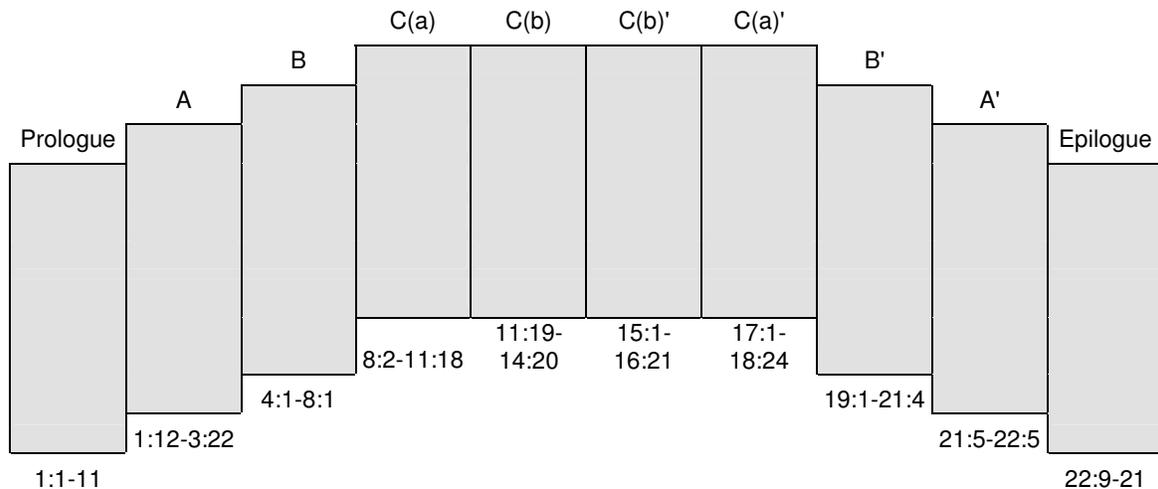


Fig. 1. "Chiastic Structure of the Book of Revelation," adapted from Strand's book, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, p. 52.

In his 1979 book, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, Strand added a footnote to the figure from which the above is adapted. It read, "(Note: The divisions of the text are somewhat tentative)."³ But the outline format Strand proposed at that time has been accepted with modifications by C. Mervyn Maxwell for the latter's commentary, *God Cares*, vol. 2: *The Message of Revelation for You and Your Family*.⁴ We discuss Maxwell's modifications in a later section of the present chapter, but my point here is that Strand's work has been accepted by other scholars working in the same area of research. By now only certain details are subject to question. There is no going back to an earlier day. The chiastic analysis Strand proposed was an outstanding contribution and may be considered established if we judge by its acceptance among his peers.

Negative features

One feature of Strand's model remains problematic. This has nothing to do with his chiasms. Rather it has to do with the concept of dividing the book of Revelation in two, with one half being "historical" and the other "eschatological." The proposed distinction between history and eschatology is always unnecessary, never defined, and sometimes contradictory.

If we augment the chiastic structure of Revelation with the additional, strengthening element that the two halves of the book contrast with each other and have truly different foci, we obscure the main point that the chiasms are designed to convey, i.e. that passages in the two halves are comparable. Thus the two parts of Strand's model are not only independent of each other but, when pressed, actually work at cross purposes.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁴ Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1985.

In general it is true that the book of Revelation starts with historical matters and moves gradually - although not in any straight line as Strand points out - toward those that are eschatological. I grant this much. But saying so has nothing to do with the chiasmic structure of the book. It is not a structural matter at all but has to do with content. So once more Strand has picked up something that others had missed, but in this case I believe he has misconstrued the nature of his discovery.

In every case where Strand applies his theory of two contrasting halves of the book of Revelation in order to exegete a specific passage the division into halves is unnecessary and requires disclaimers in order to maintain descriptive adequacy. This part of the model simply does not work.

This much could be allowed to pass without comment, but in fact it actively obscures a point of great significance that would otherwise be too obvious to miss.

An example Strand gives. Consider an example of the problem under review. Strand argues that in Rev 17 the "is not" phase of the seven-part sequence of powers in vs. 8 must be considered "eschatological."

In each of these chapters [12, 13, 17] the theme of struggle is prominent; but it is important to note that the first two chapters belong to a series or subdivision in Revelation which is historical, whereas chapter 17 is found in the eschatological part of the book. The context in each case reveals this very fact of history for chapters 12, 13, and eschatology for chapter 17; for the people of God are persecuted at the hands of the powers of evil in the first two chapters, whereas chapter 17 portrays judgment on the forces of evil. The presence or absence of crowns (the sign of regal power) in several of these chapters is significant too: in chapter 12, crowns are on the heads; in chapter 13, crowns are on the horns; and in chapter 17, no crowns are mentioned. For interpretational purposes, treatment of these various animals as within the scope of either the historical series or the eschatological series - whichever is appropriate - is vital. To seek a fulfillment in history, for example, for the "is not" phase of the beast of chapter 17, when that phase is obviously a view of judgment, is illogical. Or to treat the whole of chapter 17 as having historical, rather than eschatological, fulfillment is to miss the very point of the chapter and of the whole second part of the book of Revelation in which it occurs.⁵

What sort of fulfillment would qualify as being "historical" or "eschatological"? Strand never supplies a definition. We return to this matter below. For now notice merely that the sixth phase of power in Rev 17:8 and 10 is preceded by five others. Are they also eschatological? They are mentioned in the same verse and chapter - in the same half of the book. If the eschatological nature of phase 6 derives from its location in the book, as Strand argues, then the other phases, since they share that location, should be just as eschatological as the one he singles out.

What do the first five phases of world power refer to in Rev 17? They refer to the same things there that they do elsewhere. If Maxwell is right, these are the same powers

⁵ Strand, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, p. 54.

that we read about in Daniel. If so, phase 1 refers to Babylon, phase 2 to Medo-Persia, phase 3 to Greece, and phase 4 to the secular Roman state.⁶

I admit that I am judging Strand by Maxwell's standard here. In both his 1975 monograph entitled, *Perspectives in the Book of Revelation*, and in the second edition of his 1979 book, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, Strand includes a chart showing how he understands the relationship between the seven phases of Rev 17:8 and 10.⁷ It is a complicated chart and the respective parts of the two verses do not refer to the same things. In my view Maxwell has introduced a vast improvement by showing how both verses relate to the series of world empires in Daniel.⁸ So in Rev 17 I disagree with Strand on more than his use of terms and this part of the discussion reflects both aspects of that disagreement.

If it is true that Maxwell has offered a better alternative by interpreting Revelation in the context of Daniel, and if there are four world empires in Daniel, then how are there seven when we come to Revelation?

Actually there are five in Daniel. In chap. 2 the iron of the Roman state is followed by the iron and clay mixture of the medieval Roman church/state. In chap. 7 the beast is followed by the little horn and when the little horn appears in chap. 8 it is by itself, showing that it is distinct (though not separate) from the beast which supports it. The distinctness of the two is our point here. In chap. 11, where Greece stops at vs. 15, Rome is described first with secular terms (vss. 16-28) and then with religious terms (vss. 29-39). These include "the holy covenant" (vs. 30), "temple fortress," "daily sacrifice," and "abomination" (vs. 31), "covenant" and "God" (vs. 32) - terms not used in earlier verses. In Daniel the fourth world power is always subdivided.

When we come to Revelation the second phase of Roman power is divided again. The fifth empire is the one wounded in Rev 13:3, splitting it into three parts: before the wound, during the wound, and after the wound. The first four (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, secular Rome) plus these last three (religious Rome before, during, and after the wound) make seven in all. The two series correspond perfectly and in a way that offers great insight to the student of prophecy. First consider the Roman Empire (#4). Next the Roman church rises to power as heir to the Roman state (#5). Then the secular power of the Roman church is temporarily removed (#6, "is not"). And finally, for a short time before Christ returns, its secular power is restored (#7). Notice that its religious authority is not affected by any of this.⁹ So when John says "now is not" in vs. 8

⁶ "There is another fairly simple interpretation, one which, however, views the puzzle from the end time rather than from John's day. It sees the five "fallen" heads as Babylon, Persia, Greece, Roman Empire, and Christian Rome. The sixth head (in the end time) "is" Christian Rome in its wounded state, to be followed soon by the seventh head that "has not yet come," Christian Rome in its revived condition. The "hour" when the ten kings reign with the beast is a brief period at the very end of time when with dictatorial intensity they aid the beast in reviving harsh persecution" (Maxwell, *God Cares* 2:471 -72).

⁷ See *Perspectives*, p. 14 and *Interpreting*, p. 56.

⁸ See *God Cares*, 2:471-79.1 find Maxwell's analysis of this passage entirely convincing.

⁹ "Perhaps right here a misunderstanding needs to be cleared up. The wound is mentioned in chapter 13 in a symbol where the church and the state are not differentiated, the two being combined under the one symbol of the leopard beast; but in chapter 17, where a clear distinction is shown between the drunken woman and the beast upon which she rides, the woman is not

he is referring to the "fatal wound" of Rev 13:3. When he says "one is" in vs. 10 he is identifying his timeframe for saying what he does about it.

To seek a fulfillment in history, for example, for the "is not" phase of the beast of chapter 17, when that phase is obviously a view of judgment, is illogical. Or to treat the whole of chapter 17 as having historical, rather than eschatological, fulfillment is to miss the very point of the chapter and of the whole second part of the book of Revelation in which it occurs.¹⁰

According to Maxwell phase 6 refers to the hiatus in persecution that we now enjoy. If this interpretation is correct, and I believe it is,¹¹ then the War of 1812, the Civil War, the Mexican-American War, and both World Wars have all been fought within phase 6. Our grandparents and their grandparents were born during this same period. So why is it "illogical" to seek a fulfillment in history for a portion of the prophecy which deals with our own day and time? Here Maxwell has dramatically advanced our understanding of the passage.

Strand's conclusion does follow from his premise, but the premise is wrong.¹² The Civil War is history, whether or not it occurs during phase 6. So is the Second World War. And what shall we say about the development of our own church from the time of the Millerites onward, leading to the understanding of prophecy under debate here? If this is not history, what is history?

The definition Strand fails to give. Another problem I have with Strand's suggestion that we divide the book of Revelation into contrasting halves is that the crucial terms "history" and "eschatology" are never defined. He does give examples of how he would like us to use the above terms, but never any definitions.

So let me propose a definition. "Eschatology" corresponds to the "time of the end" and beyond, as described by Daniel. The "time of the end" is not the end of time but the end of religious persecution as the 1260 days (or forty-two months, or three and

said to be wounded or out of action, the beast only is affected, and it is completely paralyzed - it 'is not.' (Verse 8.) In chapter 18, meaning a later period, the woman congratulates herself that she is no longer a widow; but it is plain that no part of the prophecy ever represents the Catholic Church as having been wounded or even hurt at all. Her paramour is the one who suffers the wound, and he is completely out of action" (George McCready Price, *The Time of the End* [Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1967], pp. 75-76).

¹⁰ Strand, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, p. 54.

¹¹ "Price also believes it is. "The wound means much more than the temporary interruption of some of the functions of the Catholic Church. To revert to the symbols given in chapter 17, it was not the woman that received the wound, but the beast. Obviously the wound means the taking away of the beastly power to dominate the world and deal with 'heretics.' This deadly wound will not be healed until the old power of persecution is restored" (*Time of the End*, p. 74). (Emphases in original.)

¹² "All of the following three premises are wrong: (1) that Rev 17:8 and 10 are talking about different things, (2) that what vs. 10 has in view pertains mostly to the future, and (3) that one phase can be (must be) eschatological due to its position in the book while other phases in the same verse or verses need not be.

a half times/years)¹³ of papal power during the Middle Ages run their course. The historical dividing line between the time of the end and what precedes it during the 1260 days is the spectacular close of Pope Pius VI's reign at the hands of the French in 1798.¹⁴

If Strand's distinction between "history" and "eschatology" is accepted in principle and if 1798 is the dividing line between the two, this fact raises two empirical problems for Strand's model. The first is that what we are now calling "eschatological" is also a very real period of history. More than this, it is the one we are living in now. So history and eschatology are need not be mutually exclusive. This is one point.

A second point is that, as Seventh-day Adventists understand the various parts of Revelation that Strand outlines, there is a constant crisscrossing of the 1798 threshold. In the first or "historical" half of the book (chaps. 1-14) the first five letters come before 1798, the last two are afterward. Again, the first five seals come before 1798, and the last two are afterward. And in the "eschatological" half (chaps. 15-22) the series of world powers given in Rev 17, according to Maxwell, begins with Babylon during the time of Jeremiah and Daniel. Strand acknowledges this difficulty:

It should be emphasized that although the book of Revelation falls into two main parts, we must not expect every individual item in the first part to be historical and every individual item in the last part to be eschatological, indeed, although the various scenes in the first main part of the book deal with the historical sphere, they generally move to an eschatological climax; and on the other hand, although the point of view in the last main part of the book is that of eschatology, certain items found therein involve prior history. For example, in the historical series, the seventh seal, the seventh trumpet, and the harvest of Revelation 14 are eschatological. And in the eschatological series, the appeal to "watch" in chapter 16 and the cry to "come out" of

¹³ "This period is given no fewer than seven times in Daniel and Revelation. It is given as a number of days (1260 days) in Rev 11:3 and 12:6, a number of months (42 months) in Rev 11:2 and 13:5, and a number of years (three times and a half) in Dan 7:25; 12:7; and Rev 12:14. A clarification of Rev 12:14 is an order of magnitude shorter than the 1260 days. The three and a half "times" in Dan 7:25 and 12:7 are 360 prophetic days or 360 literal years. The three and a half "days" in Rev 12:14 are three and a half prophetic days or three and a half literal years, in any event, here is God's counterpart to the futurist gap. What our Evangelical friends would like us to skip over in silence as having no special importance the Holy Spirit insists on emphasizing seven times over.

¹⁴ "During the French Revolution and under orders from the revolutionary French government. General Alexander Berthier issued a proclamation in Rome on February 15, 1798, informing Pope Pius VI and the people of Rome that the pope should no longer 'exercise any jurisdiction.' Richard Duppa, a British writer who was in Rome at the time, says that the pope was arrested in the Sistine Chapel while he was celebrating the twenty-third anniversary of his coronation. Citizen Haller, the French commissary-general, and Cervoni, who commanded the French troops in Rome under General Berthier, 'gratified themselves in a peculiar triumph over this unfortunate potentate. During that ceremony they both entered the chapel, and Haller announced to the sovereign Pontiff on his throne that his reign was at an end. The poor old man seemed shocked at the abruptness of his unexpected notice, but soon recovered himself with becoming fortitude.' The pope's Swiss guards were dismissed, and Republican soldiers were installed in their place" (Maxwell, *God Cares* 2:328). See also Cedric Ward, "Napoleon and the Pope - What Really Happened in 1798?" *Ministry*, June 1979, pp. 4-7.

Babylon in chapter 18, as well as certain explanations of the heads of the beast in chapter 17, and from the viewpoint of history even though the basic settings are eschatological.¹⁵

The above statement is certainly forthright and honest on Strand's part. I do not think, however, that granting latitude in this way is enough of a concession. The nature of the distinction has been misconceived. The gradual shift from history to eschatology in Revelation is real enough but it is not a fact about structure. Instead it is a fact about content. The terms "structure" and "content" will also require definition and after we have defined them they also will be subject to debate. But my point is that the shift from "history" to "eschatology" should not be dealt with in our outline. That is not where it belongs. Structure and content will fade into each other at some point but here the emphasis must be on content. Thus we can readily accept Strand's valid insights about a general shift from history to eschatology while rejecting his distinction in any structural sense.

Perhaps choosing a specific year to mark the beginning of eschatology in Revelation is too rigid. Gerhard Pfandl, in his published dissertation entitled, *The Time of the End in the Book of Daniel*,¹⁶ points out that expressions such as "the latter days" can have different meanings in different passages.

In Deut 4:30, "the latter days" refer to the days of the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles which for Moses were "in the future." They were the eschatological "latter days" for the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, respectively, in the sense that these two nations ceased to exist as independent monarchies in history, . . .

Hosea 3:5 looks beyond the exile to "the latter days," i.e., the eschatological age of the Messiah, when Israel would wholeheartedly return to Yahweh and his Messiah. . . .

"The latter days" in Ezek 38:16 refer first of all to the time after the exile when this prophecy could have found a fulfillment. Rev 20 indicates that the prophecy of Ezekiel will find a complete fulfillment after the Millennium when the forces of evil are finally eradicated from this world. This gives Ezek 38:16 an eschatological, even apocalyptic, import since the complete fulfillment of this prophecy coincides with the end of history as we know it.¹⁷

If Pfandl is correct, we could say that an eschatological event is one in any age which marks a momentous turning point in human affairs that has not yet happened. By "turning point" I mean when an entire epoch or era comes to an end, and yet life goes on. Even in regard to the second coming and the end of the world, life goes on. Otherwise what does Paul mean when he says that "the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 6:23). At the second coming life goes on forever. But the events surrounding it do clearly mark the end of an epoch. Just so in regard to any earlier events that prefigure these greater and more climactic ones. In the Old Testament passages Pfandl catalogues we may say that eschatology is defined by the magnitude of a set of events rather than by its date.

¹⁵ Strand, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, p. 50.

¹⁶ Adventist Theological Society Dissertation Series, vol. 1 (Berrien Springs: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1992).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 178-79.

The exile of Israel and Judah, the return of Judah from exile, and the birth of Christ were all considered eschatological at one time. In passages such as Gen 49:1,10 and Hos 3:5 the first coming of Christ was to happen *b'eah'arît hayyamîm* "in days to come" or, more literally, "in the latter days." It was an eschatological event. Is it therefore not also a historical event? I would not want to make such a claim. The event was eschatological long ago because it was future and would have momentous significance, and it is historical now because it did come and because it had the level of significance the prophets foresaw. There is no conflict in this example between eschatology and history. We can distinguish between the two where it is useful but must not separate them as though they disagreed.

Although much is said about Christianity being a "historical religion," seldom is the full import of these words carried through consistently into every crevice and corner of the theological interpretation of faith. Moreover, the relationship between the *Heilsgeschichte* with which Christian faith is especially concerned and the ordinary, secular history in which all of us live every moment of our lives remains almost entirely unspecified. So despite its interest in "history" the Christian faith appears to many moderns to be in fact completely irrelevant to the only history which they know.¹⁸

If others work themselves into such corners, Seventh-day Adventists should not. Real events can have deep prophetic meaning and prophetic events in turn can be very real. Otherwise the prophecy was false. Let us do nothing that would remove God from history as we know it, putting God there and man here. Christ has united the two in His person so let us not take them apart. Here is the meaning of Jacob's mystic ladder, which pointed forward to Christ (see Gen 28:10-22; John 1:50-51). Let Him be our Source of instruction in this as in all other things.

C. Mervyn Maxwell

I begin with the negative features of Maxwell's work so I can end with the positive features which outweigh them.

Negative features

C. Mervyn Maxwell sets aside some excellent literature in the process of interpreting Rev 4-5 and 19a. The outline he chooses for Revelation is largely but not entirely based on Strand's earlier work. He changes it in three places. An abbreviated summary of Maxwell's altered outline is shown in fig. 2 below.

¹⁸ Gordon D. Kaufman, *Systematic Theology: A Historicist Perspective* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), p. xii.

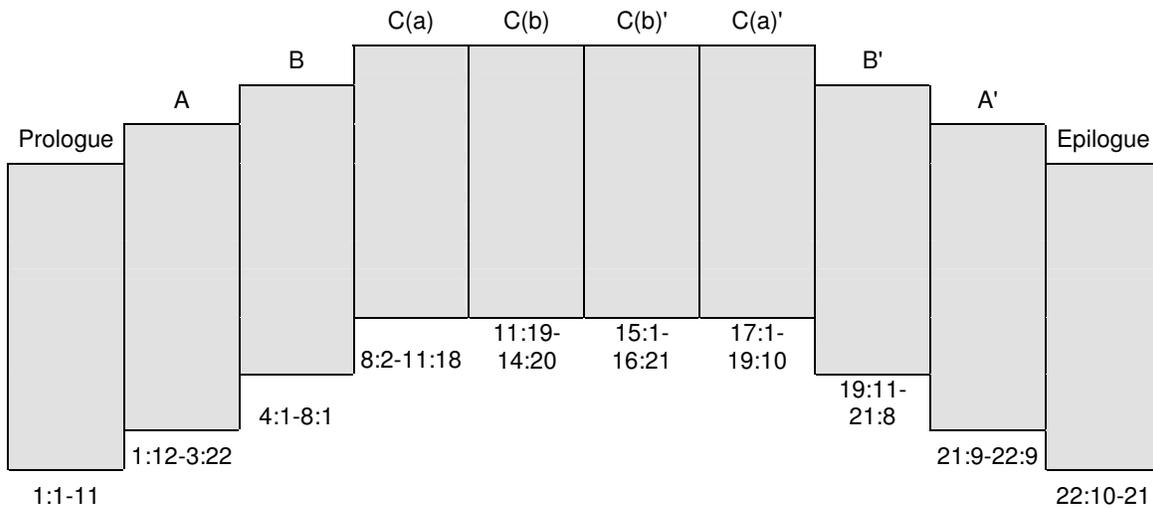


Fig. 2. "The Mirrorlike Organization of the Book of Revelation," adapted from Maxwell's book, *God Cares*, 2:60-61.

The changes Maxwell proposed to Strand's outline are all found in later sections, i.e., the sections that Strand called C(b)', B', A', and Epilogue. The terms are different for Maxwell, since he had a different readership in view, but the only changes of any substance are those shown in table 1 below.

Table 1
Maxwell's Changes to Strand's Outline

	Strand	Maxwell
C(b)'	17:1-18:24	17:1-19:10
B'	19:1-21:4	19:11-21:8
A'	21:5-22:5	21:9-22:9
Epilogue	22:6-21	22:10-21

In my view Maxwell's change in section B' (ending with 21:8 rather than 21:4) is an improvement and should be kept. The change in section A' (ending with 22:9 rather than 22:5) is a mere quibble. NIV offers a section break at 22:8. The fact is no one is sure where this section ends, nor does it matter a lot.

The change in section C(b)', however, is crucially significant and I believe Strand had it right all along. By changing the end of section C(b)' from 18:24 to 19:10 Maxwell makes a major statement about the courtroom scene in Rev 4-5. What he is saying here is that Rev 4-5 does not stand in parallel with Rev 19a and the two passages should not be compared with each other. The obvious parallels that Strand had noticed between the two chapters are deemphasized if not wholly obscured.

It is fair to ask why this should be. I hesitate to speak for Maxwell but it is a fact that the parallels between Dan 7 and Rev 4-5 are also hidden from view. And these are

just as obvious as those between Rev 4-5 and 19a. It is impossible to conceive that so sharp an exegete as Maxwell simply missed the connections we are talking about. The only alternative is to assume that he did not miss them. Why? What do the above parallels say that he would wish to avoid?

They say that the throneroom scene of Rev 4-5 represents the judgment. This conclusion does not fit his model and so he sets the evidence aside. It is his book and he can write it in whatever way he pleases, but when all is said and done the parallels are still there and require just as much attention as they did before. Writing a book does not change what it was written about. What it does do is raise questions as to why one would not want to deal with certain issues. The issues Maxwell seeks to avoid concerning the close relationship between Dan 7, Rev 4-5, and Rev 19a are the subject of this book.

Positive features

Maxwell has given us the benefit of a lifetime of study in church history and Scripture. The special genius of his book lies in controlling a vast array of factual information on the one hand and on the other the art of presenting it in a well digested manner that any interested reader can enjoy. Maxwell was uniquely qualified to do this task and we can all be glad that he did it so well. Placed in perspective my differences with Maxwell are significant but small. I think there are things he has missed and take issue with him in what follows, but in the end the results he brings us to are the right results. I can heartily recommend his book to any student of Revelation.

Another point about these volumes, with special reference to vol. 2, is the use of literary structure as an organizing principle. Other commentaries might deal with structure in some way but no commentary I have ever seen gives it the same level of emphasis that Maxwell does. This places his work in a category by itself. It is true that Strand pointed the way, but it is also true that Strand without Maxwell would not have taken things much farther than Maxwell would have without Strand. We can be grateful to both men.

A third point is Maxwell's decision to avoid the common verse-by-verse format of traditional commentaries. Instead he has offered us a series of essays on individual topics touching on interpretation. The didactic value of this approach is vastly greater than any alternative I know of. In my opinion focusing exclusively on verses is to theology what focusing on words without sentences would be to language. One does not learn a foreign language by memorizing vocabulary lists. There must also be communication. Something meaningful must be said. Language without syntax is just a word list (i.e., it is not language), and verses without the relationships that bind them together is not a meaningful text. So I think Maxwell is far in advance of other writers when it comes to capturing the broader themes in Revelation. This he has done in a truly masterful way.

Other Writers

After giving all due credit to Strand and to Maxwell there are strengths and weaknesses in both men's work. Here I try to point these out honestly without being unfair. It is not my purpose to criticize another's work. It is my purpose to elucidate Rev 4-5 and 19a. This is something that Strand got right and on which others have agreed both before and after Maxwell.¹⁹ It is something that will not just go away. We must deal with it.

R. Alan Anderson

R. Alan Anderson wrote a brief commentary on Revelation for a lay readership some years ago. His book, *Unfolding the Revelation: Evangelistic Studies for Public Presentation*, was first published in 1953 and subsequently reissued in 1961 and 1974.

In his chapter entitled, "The Vision of the Throne; The Lamb and the Sealed Book," Anderson comments as follows on the setting for this vision:

The earthly sanctuary built by Moses contained two apartments. These were called the "holy place" and the "most holy place." No one entered the "most holy place" except the high priest, and then only once a year, on the Day of Atonement. Throughout all their history the Hebrews have understood the Day of Atonement to prefigure the day of judgment when the cases of all will be decided. The earthly sanctuary was a type of the heavenly (see Hebrews 9), and in vision John saw "a door . . . opened in heaven;" not *into* heaven, but *in* heaven. It was the opening of an inner door in the heavenly sanctuary. He was taken in vision to behold the solemn scenes of the judgment when the High Priest performs His closing work of ministry.²⁰

A few pages later Anderson returns to the matter of the prophecy's setting and quotes Daniel to support his position.

"We shall reign on the earth," sing the elders in triumph. Verse 10. They are not on the earth now, nor will they always be in heaven. The earth is their home, and if faithful, we with them shall reign on the earth made new. This is prefigured in the marvelous setting of this great assembly. What majesty! What glory is there! Daniel, describing this, says, "His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and then thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." Daniel 7:9, 10.

¹⁹ I have stated that Strand understood the parallels between Rev 4-5 and 19a correctly. I have also stated that his theory of dividing Revelation in half compromises a correct understanding of those parallels. This requires clarification, in my view Strand's theory provides a theoretical model for any who might wish to avoid synonymous parallelism between the two passages. He himself did not apply it that way, but someone else could. Granting the parallels Strand points out (which Maxwell denies) - the argument would be that similar imagery is used both places but the reference is not to the same events because they occur in different halves of the book. In my view this is a dangerous argument. They are the same events. The two passages are closely and synonymously parallel.

²⁰ *Unfolding the Revelation*, pp. 48-49.

But the prophet John, guided by the Spirit of God, describes the scene in greater detail. That old apostle is invited to join the company of the angelic host. He takes his place beside the living ones and the elders, and from that place of vantage he begins to watch as each event moves forward in a mighty panorama. This great scene is without parallel in all the Scriptures. It is the opening of the judgment, culminating in the second advent.²¹

In his next chapter Anderson goes on to describe how the seven seals were opened one after another as the prophet moves gradually forward from his own time in history to ours. There is no conflict in Anderson's mind between placing Rev 4-5 at the time of the judgment and moving back to an earlier time for the seals. After all, a judgment is by its nature a review of things that have happened before. There is nothing inherently illogical in saying that the judgment reviews past evidence. Andersen's method is entirely straightforward.

Toward the end of his book Anderson comments on Rev 19a (vss. 1-10). The two main parts of the chapter (vss. 1-10, 11-21) tell the story of two suppers.

When Jesus has finished His intercessory ministry, He then comes before "the Ancient of Days" to receive the kingdom and dominion for which He died. Daniel 7:13. This is actually the marriage of the Bridegroom - the Lamb - and occurs before He returns to earth for His saints. His waiting saints, those caught up to meet Him, are then taken to "the marriage supper of the Lamb" in the Father's house. Revelation 19:7-9. Jesus said: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding" Luke 12:34, 36. See *Early Writings*, pages 55, 251, 280; *The Great Controversy*, pages 426-428.²²

When Christ comes to the earth we have the second supper, i.e., "the tragic supper of the birds of prey who come to feed on the flesh of kings and captains, those who, having rejected the invitation to the wedding feast of the Lamb, are destroyed by the brightness of the appearing of our Lord."²³

Anderson's historical writing does not sparkle like Maxwell's. His learning does not have the same depth. But in regard to Rev 4-5 and 19a he was right and we should not be too proud to learn from him when that is indicated.

It would be consistent with everything Anderson writes to suggest that Revelation begins and ends with a vision of Christ (see chaps. 1 and 19b). Within that chiastic frame there are several glimpses of the judgment but two stand out in particular (see chaps. 4-5 and 19a). The intervening material (see chaps. 6-18) consists of evidence brought before the court. Each person is judged within the historical context for his or her life choices and the result is that innumerable sinners are pardoned and given a free and abundant welcome into the New Earth.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 187-88.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

This says something about the book of Revelation and it also says something about the character of God. God is both "just and the one who justifies the man who has faith in Jesus" (Rom 3:26). These are not inconsequential themes, nor are they devoid of theological interest. Seeing the judgment in Rev 4-5 brings all of this into sharp focus. Missing it obscures the point, and if I am correct it is a major point indeed.

William H. Shea

Shortly before Maxwell went to press with *God Cares*, vol. 2, William H. Shea published a paper in a scholarly journal that should have settled the question of how Rev 5 relates to Rev 19a. This paper was called, "Revelation 5 and 19 as Literary Reciprocals."²⁴ The paper is written in dialogue with Strand, i.e., Strand is the only authority cited in footnotes, but with both Maxwell and Shea teaching on the same faculty and with Maxwell's manuscript in the final stages of preparation, I would venture to speculate that the impetus for Shea's paper came from conversations he may have had with Maxwell about its subject matter. Shea's 1984 paper may be considered a review of one part of Maxwell's 1985 book.

Recall that Strand takes Rev 19:1-10 with what follows later in chap. 19. Maxwell takes Rev 19:1-10 with earlier material from the preceding chap. 18. Shea supports Strand and asks, "With the seven brief hymnic statements of Rev 18 constituting a discrete literary unit, how do the hymns which follow in Rev 19 relate to them and to the book of Revelation as a whole?"²⁵

If these four hymns of Rev 19 were added to the seven in Rev 18, we would have a total of eleven hymnic statements to outline and organize by form and content. Do all eleven of these belong together, or should the latter four be separated off from the previous seven as a separate literary unit? Several considerations suggest that the four hymns of Rev 19 belong together as a separate literary unit.²⁶

Summarizing Shea's argument, notice that just as Rev 5 ends with four hymns, Rev 19 begins with four hymns. The parties offering them are the same in both cases, but in reverse order. In Rev 5 we have (A) "the four living creatures and twenty-four elders" (5:8), then (B) "many angels numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand" (5:11), then (C) "every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them" (5:13). In Rev 19 we have (B') "a great multitude" (19:1), (A') the "twenty-four elders and the four living creatures" (19:4), and finally (D) "a voice ... from the throne" (19:5).

In Rev 5 the first ones we hear from (the living creatures and elders) speak again at the end of the series and in Rev 19 also the first ones we hear from (the great multitude) speak again at the end of that series. In both cases there is one unique element. In Rev 5 it is "every creature in heaven and on earth" and in Rev 19 it is the "voice ... from the throne." The sequence here is A B X : B' A' X', where X/X' is used to

²⁴ *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 22 (1984): 249-57.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

represent Shea's C and D elements. This part of Revelation is truly elegant from a literary point of view.²⁷ And Shea has captured that elegance nicely.

More on Strand's outline

In *Interpreting the Book of Revelation* Kenneth Strand used Rev 4-5 and 19a as one of his main examples illustrating the type of close chiasmic relationship that can be found between different sections of Revelation.

As the book of Revelation is read, it is virtually impossible to fail to note that there are many repetitions of symbolisms and apparently even of broader themes. For example, a "bottomless pit" is referred to in both chapters 9 and 20; the twenty-four elders and four living creatures in chapters 4 and 19; the declaration of Babylon's fall in chapters 14 and 18; the sea of glass in chapters 4 and 15; and the seven angels with the seven last plagues in chapters 15-16, 17, and 21.²⁸

He goes on to provide a detailed list of parallels between Rev 4-5 and 19a. This appears on p. 46 of his 1979 book. See table 2 below.

Table 2
Strands' Parallels between Rev 4-5 and 19a

Work Progressing		Work Completed
4:2	Throne	19:4; 20:11
4:4	24 elders	19:4
4:6	4 living creatures	19:4
4:9-11; 5:8-10	Praise given by 4 living creatures and 24 elders	19:4
5:13	Every creature (much people) giving praise	19:1, 6
5:6; 7:10, 17	The Lamb	19:7, 9

²⁷ "Please notice that within this context the "great multitude" of Rev 19:1 (B') is not the same as "every creature in heaven and on earth" (Shea's C, my X). Instead it corresponds to the B element of the earlier list, i.e., to the thousands upon thousands of angels. There is an important difference here. Angels can be in heaven without waiting for the second coming. In this event Rev 19a could happen prior to that event. If the "great multitude" are saints from earth Rev 19a would have to occur at a time in history when the saints are already in heaven. The literary relationships we have been discussing support the former view and coming as it does just before a description of the second coming in Rev 19b, for that reason also it would make good chronological sense to assume that Rev 19a describes the end of the judgment just before Christ returns. Maxwell does interpret Rev 19a in this manner and this is why he cannot allow himself to see any of that chapter's parallels with Rev 4-5. Other interpreters, for whom I have great respect, avoid the parallels by placing this scene at a time in history when the judgment is no longer available as an alternative. In my mind this whole business of turning away from obvious parallels is a very serious matter. Pressed to an extreme it could become a mechanism for not seeing what the Holy Spirit wants to show us. This is not safe ground and we should stay away from it.

²⁸ *Interpreting*, p. 44.

Conclusion

In this book it is my purpose to show that Rev 4-5 and 19a depict identically the same set of events. Both show us the judgment. The only difference is that in Rev 4-5 the judgment is just beginning, while in Rev 19a it is coming to a close. Anything that obscures this close relationship obscures the meaning of both passages and causes us to lose an important fact about - not the structure - but the content of the book.

Revelation is a book about the judgment. It has virtually its entire setting in the judgment. Throughout it summarizes the evidence brought forward in the judgment. The relationship I propose between Rev 4-5 and 19a is not an isolated fact. It is an indication of what we can expect elsewhere as an organizing principle for the content of the book.

The focus here is Rev 4-5 as it relates to Rev 19a. In this relationship I believe we have insight into the nature of the subject matter that builds solidly on the legitimate insights of Strand's initial work while sweeping away one suggestion that has no lasting value. The history in Revelation is that presented in evidence to the heavenly court. The various courtroom scenes bind this historical material together in a cohesive manner, but if this is true anywhere it is especially true of chaps. 4-5 and 19a. These provide a beginning and ending envelope around all the chapters between them.

Saying that we cannot find the investigative or pre-advent judgment in Scripture is like saying we cannot find the book of Revelation in Scripture. It looms large before us.²⁹ This book, more than any other, vindicates the experience of Seventh-day Adventists in history. The great themes of our message and experience are not mentioned in a few verses of Rev 10 only. Nor is it special pleading to say so. The investigative judgment provides a thematic organizing principle for the content of Revelation just as its chiasmic features provide a structural organizing principle.

²⁹ In the same way we might be inclined to think that Dan 11 is obscure and that not much is said about it in the Spirit of Prophecy. But six of the last eight chapters of Great Controversy discuss vss. 40-45 in detail. See Hardy, "Toward a Typological Interpretation of Dan 11:40-45," *Historicism* No. 22/Apr 90, pp. 2-97.