

On the chiasmic structure of Revelation

by Douglas E. Cox

A chiasmic outline of the book of Revelation was proposed by Nils Wilhelm Lund, in 1942. [1]
Reviews of his book viewed Lund's claims as too revolutionary.

Chiasm was used as a literary device in the ancient world, in Babylonia, Israel, Greece, and Rome. It fell out of use, however, and in modern times the existence of chiasms in ancient literature was only recognized by a few scholars in the 18th and 19th centuries. This changed in the middle of the twentieth century, when Nils Wilhelm Lund wrote *Chiasmus in the New Testament*. "Since these seminal studies the study of New Testament chiasm has blossomed, until today recognition of chiasmic structure is common in full-scale commentaries and other scholarly works. The study of Old Testament chiasms has likewise begun to come of age." [2]

The outline below puts the center or focus of the book of Revelation occurs in chapter 12, where Satan is cast out of heaven, and the saints are victorious, This incorporates some of Lund's ideas. [3]

Chiasmic structure in Revelation

Prologue (1:1-20)

Seven Epistles to Seven Angels (2:1-3:22)

Seven Seals (4:1-8:1)

144,000 saints and Seven Trumpets (7:1-11:19)

The Two Witnesses (11:1-13)

Woman clothed with the sun (12:1)

Dragon in Heaven (12:4)

Woman flees to wilderness (12:6)

Satan cast out (12:12)

Woman flees to wilderness (12:14)

Dragon persecutes woman (12:15)

Woman's seed keeps the commandments (12:17)

The Two Beasts (13:1-18)

144,000 saints and Seven Angels (14:1-15:4)

Seven Bowls (15:1,5-16:21)

Seven angels: whore of Babylon vs. New Jerusalem (17:1-22:5)

Epilogue (22:6-21)

John names himself [1:1, 4, 9; 22:8]
An angel sent [1:1; 22:6]
Will soon take place [1:1; 22:6]
The servants [1:1; 22:6]
Reader blessed [1:3; 22:7]
The time is near [1:3; 22:10]
Grace to you [1:4; 22:21]
The Alpha and Omega [1:8; 22:13]
The Spirit [1:10; 22:17]
Stars and angels [1:16, 20; 22:16]
John falls at feet [1:17; 22:8]

References

1. Nils Wilhelm Lund. *Chiasmus in the New Testament, a study in formgeschichte*. The University of North Carolina press in Chapel Hill. 1942
2. Quote is from: <http://www.conservapedia.com/Chiasmus>
3. L.L. Thompson, *The Book of Revelation* (New York:Oxford University Press, 1990) p. 45.
4. Elisabeth S. Fiorenza. *Revelation: Vision of a Just World*. Fortress Press, 1998. p. 35-36.
5. Warren Austin Gage, St John's vision of the heavenly city. p. 26.
6. Barbara W. Snyder. *Combat Myth in the Apocalypse*. 1991.
7. G. K. Beale. *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1998. p. 143.
8. David L. Barr. *Reading the book of Revelation: a resource for students*. Brill, 2004. p. 14