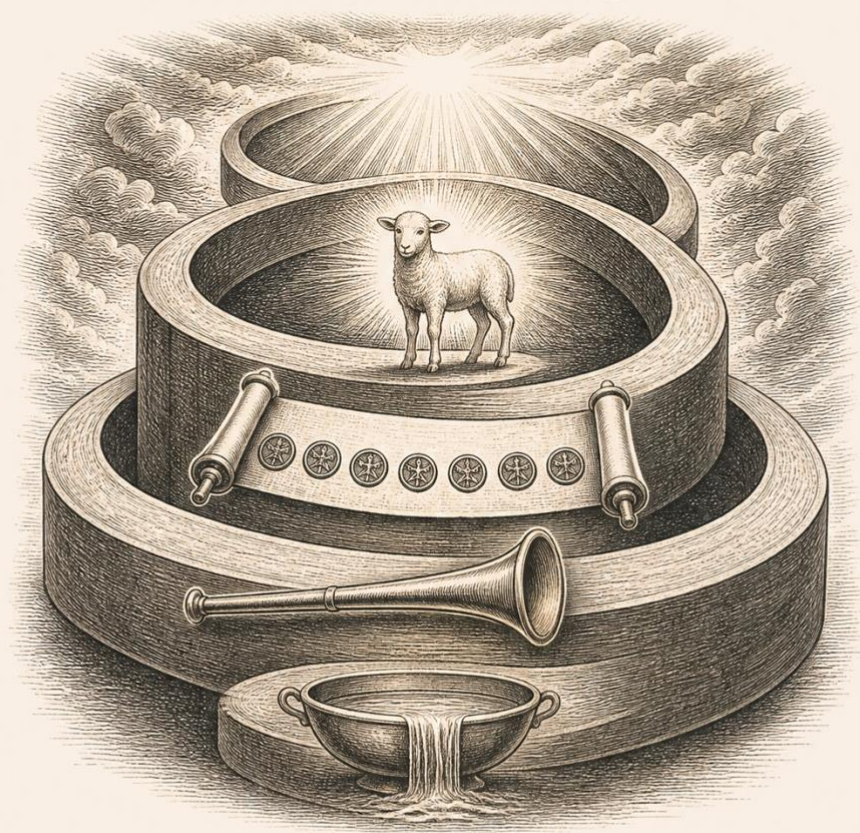


The
PROGRESSIVE
PARALLELISMS
in the
BOOK of REVELATION

Three Sevens — One Sovereign Story



Pastor Baltazar A. Niangar

Pastor Emeritus, Th.B., A.B., D.D

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Biblical Prophecy

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DEDICATION

*“Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy,
and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it,
for the time is near.”*

Revelation 1:3

*To every believer who has read the Apocalypse
with trembling faith and doxological wonder.*

*This study is an invitation to see the whole as God designed it:
one sovereign, spiraling story of the Lamb’s triumph.*

Soli Deo gloria.

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Preface

Few books of the Bible have provoked more controversy and more doxology than the Revelation given to John on Patmos. It is a book that has been allegorized beyond recognition, literalized beyond reason, and feared beyond usefulness. Yet it is also the only book in all of Scripture that opens with a beatitude for the reader: “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy” (Rev. 1:3). God clearly intends for His people to understand it.

This study does not pretend to resolve every debate in eschatology. What it does offer is a key that unlocks the structure of the Revelation’s central prophetic section (chapters 4–22): the principle of progressive parallelism. The three great sevenfold series (seals, trumpets, and bowls) are not successive chronological segments laid end to end. They are parallel visions, each covering the same span of redemptive history from a different vantage point, each concluding at the same climactic moment when God consummates all things.

Once this structural key is grasped, the Revelation opens like a cathedral whose nave, transepts, and choir all converge on a single altar. The confusion lifts. The repetition reveals its purpose. And the worshiper, for that is what every reader is called to become, finds himself drawn not into speculation but into adoration. To God alone be the glory.

Soli Deo gloria.

Introduction: One Vision, Three Sevens

“These three sevens of seals, trumpets, and vials / bowls are parallels because they reveal the similar events as we can see later!”

— Pastor Baltazar A. Niangar

The Book of Revelation is addressed to seven churches in Asia Minor (chapters 2–3), but its prophetic heart beats in chapters 4–22, where John receives vision after vision of what must “soon take place” (Rev. 1:1). At the center of that prophetic heart stands a structural pattern that controls everything: three sets of seven judgments, each set introduced by a heavenly scene, each set culminating in the same final consummation.

The Revelation’s literary architecture follows what scholars call recapitulation or progressive parallelism. The same period of history, the age of the church from Christ’s first coming to His return, is narrated three times, each time with intensifying clarity and force. The seals show God’s sovereign program. The trumpets reveal the conflict between the church and worldly evil. The bowls pour out the completed wrath of God upon unrepentant humanity.

The structural clue is in the transitions: the seventh seal introduces the first trumpet (Rev. 8:1–2). The seventh trumpet introduces the seven bowls (Rev. 15:1). And the seventh bowl ushers in the final climax of chapters 20–22. Rather than a straight line, Revelation moves in a great spiral, each orbit wider and more intense than the last, all converging on the return of the Lamb and the new creation.

CHAPTER 1

The Seven Seals: God's Program Unveiled

*"The Opening of the Seven Seals of the Program of God for the Christians
in the World by Jesus Christ: Chapters 5–8"*

— Revelation 5–8

The vision of the sealed scroll in Revelation 5 is one of the most theologically charged passages in all of Scripture. John weeps because no one is found worthy to open the scroll, the scroll that contains God's sovereign program for history and for His people. Then the elder speaks the words that change everything: "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals" (Rev. 5:5).

But when John turns to see the Lion, he sees a Lamb standing as though it had been slain (Rev. 5:6). This is the interpretive center of the entire book. The One who holds history in His hands is not a conquering Caesar or a military Messiah. He is the slaughtered Lamb. Power in the Kingdom of God is always cruciform. The scroll is opened not by force but by sacrifice.

The Heavenly Throne: Context for the Seals

Before the seals are opened, John is granted a vision of the heavenly throne room (Rev. 4). He sees One seated on the throne, surrounded by twenty-four elders and four living creatures who cry without ceasing: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" (Rev. 4:8). This vision of unceasing heavenly worship is not an interruption to the prophetic narrative; it is the foundation of it. Whatever unfolds on earth happens within the framework of God's unshakeable sovereignty. The throne is established before the first seal is broken.

The twenty-four elders represent the totality of God's redeemed people: the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles of the Lamb. They cast their crowns before the throne, singing, "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created" (Rev. 4:11). Creation itself is the first ground of worship.

The First Six Seals: History Under God's Hand

When the Lamb opens the first four seals, four riders go forth on colored horses: conquest, war, famine, and death (Rev. 6:1–8). These are not futuristic events awaiting a final tribulation period. They are the recurring realities of history throughout the age of the church, the very trials Jesus warned His disciples about in the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:6–8). The seals show us that history, with all its chaos, unfolds under the sovereign direction of the One who holds the scroll.

The fifth seal reveals the souls of the martyrs beneath the altar, crying out, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, before you will judge and avenge our blood?" (Rev. 6:10). The answer comes in white robes and the command to wait a little longer. The martyrs are not abandoned; they are held in the very presence of God, and their blood will be answered. Not yet, but certainly. The sixth seal brings cosmic upheaval that portrays the final judgment, the great and terrible day of the Lord when kings and servants alike cry for the rocks to fall on them (Rev. 6:12–17).

The Sealed Multitude: Security in the Storm

Between the sixth and seventh seals (Rev. 7), John sees a parenthetical vision of tremendous comfort: 144,000 sealed from every tribe of Israel, followed by a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language standing before the throne (Rev. 7:9). These visions answer the question posed at the end of chapter 6: "Who can stand?" The answer is clear: those sealed by God. The 144,000 is a symbolic number representing the complete totality of God's elect people, perfectly sealed, perfectly preserved.

The great multitude is the same people seen from a different angle: not the militant tribe but the worshiping assembly. They have come through the great tribulation (Rev. 7:14), which is not a single future event but the entire age of persecution that the church endures. They have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. And now they serve God day and night before His throne, sheltered in His presence forever.

The Seventh Seal: Silence and the Transition

When the Lamb opens the seventh seal, there is silence in heaven for about half an hour (Rev. 8:1). This awesome silence is the hinge of the Revelation. It is the moment before the full revelation of God's completed judgment. Seven angels are given seven trumpets, and another angel offers incense with the prayers of the saints. Then fire from the altar is thrown upon the earth, and the seven trumpets begin. The seal series does not end with a whimper; it opens the door to the next great parallel vision.

Reflection Questions: Chapter 1

1. What does the image of the slaughtered Lamb holding the scroll reveal about the nature of divine power and authority?
2. How should the reality that history unfolds under God's sovereign hand shape the Christian's response to suffering, persecution, and global upheaval?
3. In what ways does the vision of the sealed multitude (Rev. 7) comfort the believer who fears that the chaos of this age might overwhelm God's purposes?

CHAPTER 2

The Seven Trumpets: The Church in Cosmic Conflict

“The Blowing of the Seven Trumpets reveals the Conflict of the Church and Worldly Evils by the Seven Angels: 8:6–14:20”

— Revelation 8–14

If the seals reveal God’s sovereign program over history, the trumpets reveal the spiritual warfare that characterizes that same history. The trumpet is a military instrument; it signals danger, calls to battle, announces the advance of armies. In the Old Testament, trumpets accompanied the revelation at Sinai (Ex. 19:16) and the fall of Jericho (Josh. 6). In Revelation, trumpets signal the cosmic battle between the Kingdom of God and the powers of darkness.

The trumpet vision runs from 8:6 through 14:20, with a remarkable interruption: chapters 10 and 11 (through verse 14) constitute a second great parenthesis, similar to the interlude in chapter 7. In this parenthesis, John is given a little scroll to eat (Rev. 10), is commanded to measure the temple (Rev. 11:1–2), and hears about the two witnesses who prophesy for 1,260 days (Rev. 11:3–14). These parentheses are not digressions; they are the pastoral heart of the Revelation, reassuring the church in the midst of tribulation.

The First Four Trumpets: Creation under Judgment

The first four trumpets strike the natural world with devastating partial judgments (Rev. 8:7–12). The earth, the sea, the rivers, and the sun are each struck in turn. These judgments echo the plagues of Egypt; they are warnings, not final destructions. Each strikes one-third of its sphere, leaving two-thirds intact. God is not yet destroying the world; He is warning the world to repent. The pattern is consistent with God’s

character throughout redemptive history: He warns before He consummates.

The detail that one-third is struck is significant. It signals partiality, incompleteness. These are the birth pangs, not the final delivery. The church lives through these partial judgments, and they are meant to drive her to prayer and the world to repentance. That the world does not repent (Rev. 9:20–21) is one of the most sobering realities in the entire book.

The Fifth and Sixth Trumpets: Demonic Powers Unleashed

The fifth trumpet (Rev. 9:1–11) is the first woe. A star falls from heaven and opens the bottomless pit, releasing locusts with the power of scorpions. These are not literal insects; they are demonic forces whose torment falls specifically on those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads (Rev. 9:4). The sealed people of God (the church) are protected. The demonic assault is real, but it operates within strict divine limits: “they were allowed to torment them for five months” (Rev. 9:5).

The sixth trumpet (Rev. 9:13–21) releases four angels bound at the Euphrates, leading a vast army that kills a third of humanity. Yet even after these devastating judgments, humanity does not repent: “they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts” (Rev. 9:21). The hardened heart of fallen humanity is the great tragedy of redemptive history. No amount of divine warning, short of regenerating grace, produces repentance.

The Witnesses and the Measuring of the Temple

The interlude of chapters 10–11 places the church at the center of the cosmic drama. John is commanded to measure the temple, a symbolic act signifying divine protection and possession. The outer court is given over to the nations for 42 months (Rev. 11:2), the same period as the 1,260 days of the two witnesses’ ministry. These periods are identical: they represent the entire age of the church, during which the gospel goes forth and the nations rage.

The two witnesses embody the prophetic witness of the church throughout the age, clothed in sackcloth, calling the world to repentance, having power to shut the sky and strike the earth with plagues. They are killed, their bodies lie in the street, and the world celebrates. Then God raises them up and calls them to heaven. The pattern is unmistakable: it is the pattern of the church following her Lord through death to resurrection.

The Seventh Trumpet: The Kingdom Proclaimed

When the seventh trumpet sounds (Rev. 11:15), the great announcement fills heaven: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.” This is the consummation. The twenty-four elders fall on their faces, the temple in heaven is opened, and the ark of the covenant appears. The seventh trumpet does not simply continue the series; it declares the end. And then chapters 12–14 provide a panoramic recapitulation of the entire conflict from a cosmic perspective, featuring the dragon, the two beasts, and the Lamb on Mount Zion. The seventh trumpet introduces the seven bowls (Rev. 15:1), but first God ensures His people understand the spiritual stakes.

Reflection Questions: Chapter 2

1. How does the pattern of “one-third struck” in the first four trumpets reflect God’s patience and His intention to warn before final judgment?
2. What does the failure of humanity to repent even under severe divine judgment teach us about the nature of sin and the necessity of regenerating grace?
3. How does the story of the two witnesses encourage the church in its own calling to prophetic witness in a hostile world?

CHAPTER 3

The Seven Bowls: The Wrath of God Completed

“The Pouring of the Seven Bowls of Worldwide Sufferings reeling God’s Holy Wrath by the Seven Angels of God’s Wrath: 15:6–7”

— Revelation 15–19

The bowl judgments are introduced with a song. Before a single bowl is poured, John hears those who had conquered the beast singing the Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb (Rev. 15:3–4): “Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations!” This is remarkable. The most intense section of divine judgment in all of Scripture begins with doxology. The church does not fear God’s wrath; she sings at the revelation of His justice.

The bowls are described as “the seven last plagues, for with them the wrath of God is finished” (Rev. 15:1). Unlike the seals and trumpets, which strike one-third and carry the character of warning, the bowls are total and final. They fall on those who bear the mark of the beast (Rev. 16:2). They echo the plagues of Egypt with heightened intensity: sores, blood, darkness, scorching heat. The world that refused to repent now experiences the fullness of the wrath it chose by rejecting the Lamb.

The First Five Bowls: Escalating Judgment

The first bowl brings loathsome sores on those who bear the beast’s mark. The second turns the sea to blood like that of a corpse. The third turns the rivers and springs to blood, and the angel of the waters declares: “Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments” (Rev. 16:5). Even in judgment, God is just. His wrath is not arbitrary fury but holy righteousness responding to the blood of His martyred saints (Rev. 16:6).

The fourth bowl scorches humanity with intense heat, and still “they did not repent and give him glory” (Rev. 16:9). The fifth bowl plunges the beast’s kingdom into darkness, and still they cursed God rather than repented. The bowls are not designed to produce repentance; they are the execution of judgment already sealed. The time for warning has passed. This is the consummating righteousness of the Holy One.

The Sixth Bowl: The Gathering at Armageddon

The sixth bowl dries up the Euphrates, preparing the way for the kings of the east. Three unclean spirits like frogs come from the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet: demonic spirits performing signs, gathering the kings of the whole world to Armageddon (Rev. 16:13–16). The word “Armageddon” occurs only here in Scripture. It is not a literal valley in Israel but a symbolic name (Har Megiddo, the mountain of Megiddo) evoking the great battles of Old Testament history. It represents the final, climactic confrontation between the forces of darkness and the Lord of heaven.

Interestingly, Christ inserts a beatitude into this vision of demonic gathering: “Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!” (Rev. 16:15). Even in the darkest hour of cosmic conflict, the word to the church is watchfulness, holiness, and blessing.

The Seventh Bowl: It Is Done

The seventh bowl is poured into the air (Rev. 16:17). A loud voice from the temple cries, “It is done!” The greatest earthquake in history splits the great city, the cities of the nations fall, and Babylon the great is remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fury of His wrath (Rev. 16:19). Chapters 17–19 then unpack the fall of Babylon in magnificent detail: the great prostitute, the beast on which she rides, and the wedding supper of the Lamb that celebrates her destruction.

The fall of Babylon is met with the hallelujah chorus of Revelation 19: “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come,

and his Bride has made herself ready.” The bowls end not in despair but in the greatest celebration in redemptive history. God’s wrath and God’s grace both culminate in the same event: the return of the Lamb for His bride.

Reflection Questions: Chapter 3

1. Why does the book of Revelation begin the bowl section with a song rather than with fear? What does this reveal about the Christian’s relationship to God’s justice?
2. How does the persistent refusal to repent throughout the bowl judgments deepen our understanding of what salvation truly is and why it requires the sovereign grace of God?
3. What does the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19) teach us about the goal of all history and the final destination of the redeemed?

CHAPTER 4

The Fall of the Adversary: Satan's Final Defeat

"The Final Defeat of Satan and all unrepentant sinners"

— Revelation 20–21

Revelation 20 is perhaps the most debated chapter in the New Testament. The millennium, the binding of Satan, the first and second resurrections, the great white throne: every element has generated centuries of theological discussion. But whatever one's eschatological framework, the theological point of the chapter is unmistakable: the adversary of God's people is decisively and eternally defeated.

An angel descends from heaven with a great chain and seizes the dragon (that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan) and binds him for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1–3). The binding is for a specific purpose: "so that he might not deceive the nations any longer." The Millennium, whatever its precise nature, represents a period of Satan's restrained activity during which the gospel advances to all the nations: the mission of the church, empowered by the risen Christ who has "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18).

The Reign of the Saints

John sees thrones, and those seated on them were given authority to judge. He also sees the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years (Rev. 20:4). This is the first resurrection. Those who share in the first resurrection are blessed and holy; over them the second death has no power (Rev. 20:6). The church that suffered martyrdom does not lose. The death of the saints is not the end of the story; it is the beginning of their reign.

After the Millennium, Satan is released for a little while. He deceives the nations and gathers them for a final assault on the beloved city. But fire comes down from heaven and consumes them. The devil is thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet are, “and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Rev. 20:10). The career of the ancient serpent, which began in Eden, ends in eternal destruction. The judgment is irreversible and absolute.

The Great White Throne

Then comes the great white throne: the final judgment of all the dead, great and small, standing before God (Rev. 20:11–15). Books are opened, and another book is opened, which is the book of life. The dead are judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. Death and Hades give up the dead in them. And anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

The great white throne is the moment when every moral account is settled, every injustice answered, every deed brought to light. The righteousness of God, long patient, long-suffering, long warning, is now fully revealed. Those who are in Christ have their names in the book of life, written before the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8). Their judgment is not condemnation but vindication. They stand before the throne not in terror but in the imputed righteousness of the Lamb.

Reflection Questions: Chapter 4

1. How does the binding of Satan to “deceive the nations no longer” connect to the Great Commission and the church’s mission in this present age?
2. What does the image of martyred saints reigning with Christ teach us about God’s economy: the way He reverses the world’s judgments about success and failure?

3. How should the reality of the great white throne shape our daily ethical choices and our understanding of divine justice in a world where evil often seems to go unanswered?

CHAPTER 5

The New Heaven and New Earth: The Eternal City

“The Final Abode of the Righteous in the New Heaven, Earth, with the New Jerusalem”

— Revelation 22

The Revelation ends not with destruction but with construction. After the old heaven and earth pass away (Rev. 21:1), John sees a new heaven and a new earth. The sea (in ancient cosmology the symbol of chaos, threat, and separation) is no more. And the holy city, the new Jerusalem, comes down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:2). The end of the story is not escape from creation but the renewal of creation.

Then comes the announcement that gathers the entire drama of Scripture into a single sentence: “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God” (Rev. 21:3). This is the fulfillment of every covenant promise from Eden forward. God walked with Adam. He dwelt in the tabernacle. He filled Solomon’s temple. He became flesh in Jesus. And now He dwells permanently, perfectly, forever with His redeemed people.

No More Tears: The Inversion of Mourning

God’s first act in the new creation is to wipe every tear from their eyes (Rev. 21:4). Death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. This is not merely the end of suffering; it is the complete overcoming of every consequence of the Fall. The curse is reversed. The mourning of this age is swallowed up in the joy of the age to come.

He who is seated on the throne declares: “Behold, I am making all things new” (Rev. 21:5). Not “I am making all new things” (as if discarding the old) but “making all things new.” The creation that was subjected to futility because of the Fall is not discarded but renewed, redeemed, glorified. This is the hope of the resurrection applied to the cosmos: the same but transformed, continuous yet glorified.

The New Jerusalem: The Church in Glory

The new Jerusalem is the church (the Bride of Christ) in her eternal state. Her dimensions are staggering: a cube of 12,000 stadia on each side (Rev. 21:16), evoking the perfect cube of the Most Holy Place in Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs. 6:20). The city is the Holy of Holies, the place of God’s manifest presence, expanded to encompass the entire eternal dwelling place of the redeemed. Walls of jasper, streets of gold like transparent glass, twelve foundations adorned with jewels bearing the names of the twelve apostles.

Most remarkably: “I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb” (Rev. 21:22). The temple was the place where humanity approached the presence of God through priests and sacrifice. In the new creation, the mediation is no longer needed, not because the Lamb’s work has been superseded, but because it has been fully accomplished. The Lamb is the temple. The Lamb is the light (Rev. 21:23). The nations walk by His light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it.

The River and the Tree: Eden Restored and Surpassed

Revelation 22 opens with the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river, the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, with leaves for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:1–2). Eden’s motifs return (the river, the tree, the fruit), but they are not merely restored. They are surpassed. The tree of life to which Adam was denied access by the cherubim (Gen. 3:24) is now freely available. The curse is lifted. The exile is ended.

And God's servants will worship Him. They will see His face. His name will be on their foreheads. They will reign forever and ever. This is the telos of creation: the free, joyful, unceasing worship and reign of the redeemed in the presence of the Triune God. History began in a garden. It ends in a city. But the city is also a garden, and both are filled with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Reflection Questions: Chapter 5

1. What does the declaration "Behold, I am making all things new" (Rev. 21:5) imply about the Christian hope: is it the destruction of creation or its renewal and glorification?
2. How does the absence of a temple in the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:22) fulfill and surpass everything the temple and its sacrifices pointed to?
3. How does the vision of the new Jerusalem (the church in glory) shape your understanding of what the church is and what it is becoming even now?

Conclusion: The Lamb Has Won

The progressive parallelism of the Revelation reveals a single, coherent theological vision. The three sevenfold series are not competing timelines or contradictory prophecies. They are three revolving lenses trained on the same reality: the sovereign, cruciform reign of the Lamb over all of history, culminating in the new creation.

The seals declare that God's program cannot be thwarted: the scroll is opened by the One who was slain. The trumpets declare that the church is protected in the midst of cosmic conflict: she is sealed, measured, and her witness is vindicated. The bowls declare that evil does not escape God's justice: the wrath of the Holy One is complete and final.

And in the end, the city of God descends. The Lamb is on the throne. Every tear is wiped away. The tree of life is open to all. The curse is lifted. God dwells with man. This is the word that the church in every age, whether under Roman persecution or contemporary hostility, desperately needs to hear: the Lamb has won. He holds the scroll. He opens every seal. He governs every trumpet. He pours every bowl. And He brings every promise to its glorious fulfillment.

Read the Revelation, therefore, not with fear but with worship. Its purpose is not to frighten believers but to fortify them. It is not a code to crack but a song to sing. It ends as it begins, with a beatitude: "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life" (Rev. 22:14). The final word of Christian prophecy is not doom but blessing.

Soli Deo gloria.

Personal Questions and Challenges

On God's Sovereignty in History

1. How does the structure of progressive parallelism (the same period narrated three times with intensifying clarity) reshape your understanding of where we are in redemptive history right now?
2. In what area of your life do you struggle most to trust that history unfolds under God's sovereign hand? How does the vision of the throne room (Rev. 4) speak to that struggle?
3. What would it look like practically to live with the confidence that the Lamb holds the sealed scroll, and that every event of your life is encompassed by His purposeful plan?

On Enduring as the Church Militant

1. The two witnesses (Rev. 11) embody the church's calling to prophetic witness through suffering and death to resurrection. Where in your context is that witness most costly? What sustains you?
2. How does the promise that the sealed saints (Rev. 7) cannot be overcome by the beast shape your willingness to stand for Christ in your workplace, family, and community?
3. What "Babylon" (what human system that exalts itself against the Lord) most tempts you to compromise your allegiance to the Lamb?

On Longing for the New Creation

1. How does the vision of the new Jerusalem (all tears wiped away, all curses lifted, God dwelling with man) change the way you grieve present losses and suffering?

2. The tree of life bears fruit each month and its leaves are for the healing of the nations. What does this image kindle in you: wonder, longing, worship? How might you cultivate that response now?
3. The Revelation closes with the invitation: “Come” (Rev. 22:17). How does the hope of the eternal city make you more willing to extend that same invitation to those around you who do not yet know the Lamb?

Soli Deo gloria.

Glossary

Apocalypse: The Greek word for “revelation” or “unveiling.” It names the book of Revelation and the kind of prophetic writing, rich in vivid symbols, that the book represents.

Armageddon: The symbolic name for the final confrontation between the forces of evil and the Lord (Rev. 16:16). It comes from the Hebrew Har Megiddo, “the mountain of Megiddo.”

Consummation: The completion of God’s purposes at the return of Christ, when judgment is finished and all things are made new.

Cruciform: Shaped like the cross. In this book it describes God’s power as it is shown through the sacrifice of the Lamb rather than through force.

Eschatology: The study of the last things, including the return of Christ, the final judgment, and the new creation.

First Resurrection: The phrase in Revelation 20:5–6 for the life and reign with Christ that belong to believers who die in the Lord. Those who share in it are not touched by the second death.

Great Tribulation: The affliction of God’s people in this present age. In this book it is not a single future event but the whole age of persecution that the church endures between Christ’s first and second comings.

Hades: The realm of the dead. In Revelation 20:13–14 it gives up its dead for the final judgment and is then thrown into the lake of fire.

Millennium: The thousand years of Revelation 20. In this book it is read as a period in which Satan’s deceiving of the nations is restrained while the gospel advances to every people.

Olivet Discourse: Jesus' teaching on the Mount of Olives about the end of the age and His return, recorded in Matthew 24–25 (see also Mark 13 and Luke 21).

Parenthesis: A vision set between two parts of a series that pauses the sequence of judgments to comfort and instruct the church. Examples are Revelation 7 and Revelation 10–11.

Progressive Parallelism: The principle that the seals, trumpets, and bowls are not three successive periods but three visions of the same span of history, each telling it again with greater intensity and each ending at the same consummation. It is also called recapitulation.

Recapitulation: The retelling of the same events or period from a fresh vantage point. See Progressive Parallelism.

Second Death: The final and eternal separation from God, described in Revelation 20:14 as the lake of fire, to which all whose names are not in the book of life are sent.

Telos: A Greek word meaning “end” or “goal.” It names the purpose toward which God is moving creation and history.

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About the Author

Pastor Baltazar A. Niangar is a Pastor Emeritus who holds the degrees of Th.B. (Bachelor of Theology), A.B. (Bachelor of Arts), and D.D. (Doctor of Divinity). He has devoted his life and ministry to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the rigorous theological formation of God's people, and the equipping of pastoral leaders for faithful and effective ministry in church and society.

Pastor Bal served for many years as a pastor and theological educator, and has been a central figure in the work of Holistic Enhancement for Lay-leaders and Pastors (HELP, Inc.) — a parachurch ministry committed to equipping the whole people of God for faithful service across every sphere of life. His monthly theological lectures to the HELP, Inc. fellowship have addressed the most foundational questions of the Christian faith, and these studies — expanded, deepened, and formatted for print — have shaped the theological works he continues to write.

His theological formation reflects sustained engagement with the whole of the Reformed and evangelical tradition. Among those whose thought has most shaped his own are Augustine of Hippo, John Calvin, Abraham Kuyper, Louis Berkhof, Benjamin B. Warfield, Oscar Cullmann, Herman Dooyeweerd, Karl Barth, Paul Jewett, Francis Schaeffer, R.C. Sproul, and Ravi Zacharias. He reads every theological question through the lens of the whole counsel of God, and has spent a lifetime teaching others to do the same.

The present work, *The Progressive Parallelisms in the Book of Revelation*, represents Pastor Bal's engagement with the structure of the Revelation's central prophetic visions. It holds that the seals, trumpets, and bowls are three views of the same age of the church, all arriving at the return of the Lamb and the new creation. Read in this light, the Revelation becomes one sovereign story of the Lamb's triumph, and the reader is drawn from fear into worship.

Other theological works by the author:

Spiritual Unity and Personal Diversity in Christ
Why God Did Decree and Allow Evil to Exist
What the Christian Church Should Be
The Reformed Theological Paradigm
The Holy Loving Triune Lord God
The Seven Loci of Dogmatics
Vital Words Related to Salvation
The Athanasian Creed Understood by Faith
Biblical Salvation: A Study in Soteriology
Comparing and Contrasting Calvinism and Arminianism
Divine Election unto Salvation
In Everything, Give Thanks to God
The Seven Churches of Revelation
The Seven Loci of Christian Theology
Six Calvinistic Schools on Soteriology
Paul's Summary of His Message in the Ministry
Doctrines of Divine Grace Part II
The Work of the Holy Spirit
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The Five Illustrations of Divine Truths
Our Attitude Towards Wealth
The Main Subjects of Luther's Ninety-Five Theses
The Five Solas
The Threefold Understanding of Salvation
The Thinking Process of the Christian Mind: Position, Practice, and Perspective
Millennium in the Bible
The Seventy Weeks of Daniel

He lives with his beloved wife, Estrella. He is the father of Dr. Ellazar and Zarella Grace. He continues to preach, teach, write, and intercede for the reformation and renewal of the Church of Jesus Christ, until the day when faith gives way to sight and the knowledge that is now partial becomes the knowledge that is full.

Soli Deo gloria.