

MICROSTRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF REVELATION 20

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Rev 20, a unique and much-discussed chapter, has an interesting structure that yields numerous answers in regard to the thousand-year period. Although many literal and conceptual connections exist between Rev 20 and the preceding chapter—especially the second part of Rev 19—this article focuses on Rev 20.¹

Microstructural analysis requires a syntactical display. Because of the limitation of space, such a diagram is not included in this article; nevertheless, syntactic analysis was the starting point for this research. The reader is referred to the author's dissertation, where the method is explained and a syntactical display of Rev 20 is provided.² In this study, I am concerned with the outline of the chapter, as well as with the structure of its smaller units. Exegetical and theological implications are also considered.

Delimitation of the Passage

Rev 19 portrays a twofold supper. The first is positive and occupies vv. 1-10. The second is negative and appears in the second part of the chapter. The two parts are clearly differentiated by means of the vision/audition formulas used. In Rev 19:1-10 "I heard" is used twice, to introduce vv. 1-5 and vv. 6-10. On the other hand, the three scenes of Rev 19:11-21 are introduced by the phrase "and I saw."³ Rev 19:1-10 seems to form an introductory scene to the material presented in chapters 19 and 20. It describes the celestial celebration after Babylon's fall. The second part of Rev 19 depicts the final battle: The King of kings and Lord of lords sitting on a white horse defeats the beast, the false prophet, and their

¹A list of similarities between Rev 19b and Rev 20 is added as Appendix A. There are also connections to the subsequent material. Striking ones are the terms "the one sitting on the throne" (20:11; 21:5), "the second death" (20:14; 21:8), and "the lake of fire" (20:10,14,15; 21:8).

²Ekkehardt Müller, *Microstructural Analysis of Revelation 4-11*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, 21 (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1996), 50-58, 654-676.

³Rev 19:11-16, the rider on the white horse; 17-18, the angel introducing the supper for the birds; 19-21, the beast and its entourage in opposition to the rider on the white horse.

followers. Once two members of the satanic trinity are destroyed, only Satan remains to be dealt with. This is discussed in Rev 20.

Thus a new, yet related, topic is introduced with Rev 20. In addition, the vision formula in Rev 20:1 seems to point to a new section. Furthermore, in Rev 19:17 an angel stands in the sun announcing the supper for the birds; in contrast, in Rev 20:1 an angel comes down from heaven and seizes the dragon.

Rev 20 ends by mentioning three times the lake of fire which is also called the second death. The picture is bleak. On the other hand, Rev 21 introduces a new heaven and new earth, the holy city, and the fellowship the saints enjoy with their Lord. Not only does it start with the formula "and I saw," but the repetitive use of vision/audition formulas in the very first verses of the chapter seems to point to the fact that a new vision has started with Rev 21. The actors of Rev 20 and 21 are quite different: Satan, the beast, the false prophet, and the dead are not mentioned in Rev 21.

Although Rev 19 and 20 are interconnected, as are Rev 20 and 21 to a certain degree, we are justified in considering Rev 20 only. It appears to be one of several units within the vision of Rev 19-20.

The Structure of Rev 20

The following structural elements in Rev 20 were investigated: the vision/audition formulas, other recurrent formulas, the vocabulary, the actors, basic locations, the time frame, and the content of the passage.

Vision Formulas

Καὶ εἶδον occurs four times in Rev 20. The first occurrence, found in v. 1, introduces the angel who is about to bind Satan. The second, found in v. 4, is in connection with the thrones in heaven and the martyrs. Numbers three and four, following each other closely in vv. 11 and 12, seem to introduce a final judgment scene. These markers point to at least three major blocks of material in Rev 20.⁴ The first and third formulas are followed by a noun in the singular, whereas the second and fourth are followed by a noun in the plural. The second Καὶ εἶδον is related to those who are saved, and the fourth to those who are condemned, thus forming a contrast. The second and third formulas use the same word, "throne," stressing the idea that a certain class of beings participates in at least one phase of God's judgment and apparently finds

⁴David E. Aune states that the vision formula "introduces a new vision report" in Rev 20:1, 4, and 11, *Revelation 17-22*, WBC, vol. 52c (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 1081, 1084, 1100.

the verdict, whereas the execution is left to the sovereign Lord himself.⁵ Audition formulas are not present in Rev 20.

Time Elements

The time element “a thousand years” is found consecutively six times in Rev 20:2-7.⁶ Additional elements are the phrases “for a short time” and “day and night forever and ever.”⁷ A close examination of the more definite time periods connected with the thousand years reveals that the first occurrence of “a thousand years” (20:2) differs from those that follow. The other five come in a distinctive pattern and point to the interconnectedness of the different scenes of Rev 20:

A1	“until the thousand years were <i>completed</i> ”	20:3
B1	“ <i>reigned</i> with Christ for a thousand years”	20:4
A2	“until the thousand years were <i>completed</i> ”	20:5
B2	“will <i>reign</i> with him for a thousand years”	20:6
A3	“when the thousand years are <i>completed</i> ”	20:7

Although A1, A2, and A3 are similar, A3 describes the time after the millennium, whereas A1 and A2 cover the entire period of the millennium. Thus, the time element in Rev 20:7 requires us to accept another block of material in chapter 20 even though it is not introduced by a vision/audition formula. Rev 20:7 clearly draws a line between the events taking place at the beginning and during the millennium (20:1-6) and the events connected with the end of the millennium (20:7-15). If A3 serves as a marker for a new block of

⁵The four occurrences are: (1) Καὶ εἶδον ἄγγελον, (2) Καὶ εἶδον θρόνους, (3) Καὶ εἶδον θρόνον, (4) καὶ εἶδον τοὺς νεκρούς.

⁶Since the number of phrases and words in Revelation often seems to be used intentionally—e.g., μακάριος seven times, Christ seven times, Jesus fourteen times, ἀρνίον twenty-eight times as referring to Jesus—it might be more than a coincidence that the term “a thousand years” is used six times. Primarily, the millennium has to do with the fate of Satan and his followers who do not attain the completeness indicated by the number 7. Cf. the number 666.

⁷The following list depicts time elements present in Rev 20. The first two, as well as numbers 4-7, use the term “a thousand years”:

(1)	χίλια ἔτη	20:2
(2)	ἄχρι τελεσθῆ τὰ χίλια ἔτη	20:3
(3)	μικρὸν χρόνον	20:3
(4)	καὶ ἐβασίλευσαν μετὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ χίλια ἔτη	20:4
(5)	ἄχρι τελεσθῆ τὰ χίλια ἔτη	20:5
(6)	καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν μετ’ αὐτοῦ [τὰ] χίλια ἔτη	20:6
(7)	Καὶ ὅταν τελεσθῆ τὰ χίλια ἔτη	20:7
(8)	ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων	20:10

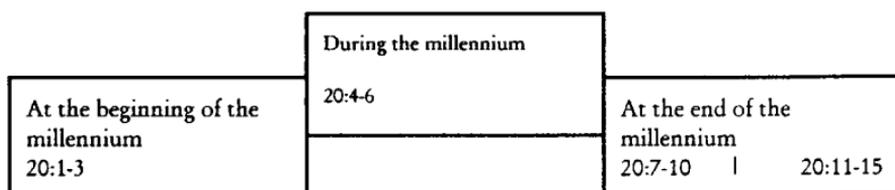
material, as it obviously does, A1 and A2 may suggest different blocks. By adding the vision formulas the following picture emerges:

- 20:1-3 "*And I saw*"
 "until the thousand years were completed"
 20:4-6 "*And I saw*"
 "until the thousand years were completed"
 20:7-10 "*When the thousand years are completed*"
 20:11-15 "*And I saw*"
 "*And I saw*"

Rev 20:1-3 seems to focus especially on the beginning of the millennium; however, it hints at the entire time span of this period. It is the lengthy description of the angel's action that ties it more directly to the beginning of the thousand-year period.

Rev 20:4-6 appears to focus primarily on the time during the millennium, although it also points to the beginning and end of this time span. That the stress lies on the time during the one thousand years can be seen by the fact that reigning with Christ for a thousand years is mentioned twice.⁸

Beginning with Rev 20:7, the period at the end of the millennium prior to the creation of a new heaven and earth is described. This verse contains the last mention of the thousand years. There is no further indication of a specific time period in Revelation. Five of the six times that the expression τὰ χίλια ἔτη occurs are found in the first two sections of Rev 20. The sixth time introduces the last two passages. These two blocks of material in Rev 20:7-10 and Rev 20:11-15 fall under the same heading, "After the Millennium," and are closely interrelated. The same concepts prevail, and both sections end with the lake of fire. The two sections are separated by the seventh time element, "day and night forever and ever," at the end of Rev 20:7-10 and "and I saw" at the beginning of Rev 20:11-15. They seem to recapitulate the same event from different perspectives.



Some interesting features appear in Rev 20: the names Jesus, Christ,

⁸The following pattern that we have previously encountered emerges:

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|----|--|------|
| A | "reigned with Christ for a thousand years" | 20:4 |
| B | "until the thousand years were completed" | 20:5 |
| A' | "will reign with Him for a thousand years" | 20:6 |

and God occur exclusively in verses 4-6; a beatitude is found in verse 6, and this section has a positive outlook about God and his people.

The Actors

The vision formulas and time elements are reinforced by the actors that dominate the four paragraphs of Rev 20. To detect the chief persons in each section the following elements must be looked for: repetition of a designation for a person, the use of synonyms describing the person, and verbs and pronouns referring to the person.

In Rev 20:1-3 an angel is introduced. Although the term "angel" is used only once, five finite verbs, following in vv. 2-3, describe his actions. Thus the angel is prominent, and he is the subject of almost all the subsequent main clauses. In vv. 2-3 Satan also appears as the object of most of the sentences and is referred to by four different names. In addition, four pronouns and one finite verb refer directly to him.⁹ Thus, the first paragraph introduces primarily the angel and Satan; the nations are mentioned in passing.

The next section, Rev 20:4-6, contains a different set of characters. Satan does not appear at all. Although the beast and the rest of the dead are mentioned, the main characters are those who belong to the Lord. They are the souls that have been beheaded, who have not worshiped the beast and its image, who participate in the first resurrection and are called blessed and holy, who are priests and reign with Christ. Furthermore, in this section, God is found twice, Christ occurs twice, and Jesus is mentioned once. Thus, whereas the first paragraph of Rev 20 focuses on the enemy, the second concentrates on the redeemed and their Lord and God; the rest of the dead are commented on in passing.

The third paragraph, Rev 20:7-10, returns to Satan, also called the devil. Whereas in the first paragraph he was passive, now he is active. However, while vv. 7-8 and 10 focus particularly on Satan, there is also emphasis on the nations/Gentiles that were only briefly mentioned in Rev 20:1-3. They seem to be identified with Gog and Magog. Verses 8-9, and perhaps v. 10, contain two verbs that describe their actions and five pronouns that point to them. This paragraph also briefly mentions the saints on one hand and the beast and the false prophet on the other hand; however, the main actors are the nations and Satan.

The final passage introduces the one sitting on the throne (vv. 11-12). However, the main emphasis seems to be on the dead that were previously mentioned in v. 5. In Rev 20:11-15 the expression "the dead," who are "the

⁹It is more than coincidence that all of the four names appear only in two places of Revelation: in Rev 12 and 20. In chap. 12, the first major passage to deal with Satan, his activity is described from before Messiah was born to the last moments of earth's history. In Rev 20 he is about to be destroyed.

great and the small," occurs four times. The possessive αὐτῶν twice points to their works.

<i>Rev 20:1-3</i> The angel Satan The nations	<i>Rev 20: 4-6</i> The redeemed The dead <i>God and Christ</i>	<i>Rev 20: 7-10</i> Satan The nations	<i>Rev 20: 11-15</i> The one on the throne The dead
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The third paragraph picks up the topic of the first, and the fourth passage that of the second; yet, all are interrelated.¹⁰

Basic Locations

In Rev 20:1-3 the angel comes from heaven and Satan is thrown into the abyss. The word "abyss" occurs twice in this passage. Since the nations are mentioned and nations normally live on earth, by implication the earth is also present in Rev 20:1-3. Therefore, a movement from heaven to abyss takes place.

In the third paragraph, this movement is partially reversed. In Rev 20:7 the prison stands for the abyss from which Satan is released.¹¹ The earth is mentioned in vv. 8-9, and here is where the action takes place. Finally, as in Rev 20:1-3 the angel comes from heaven to bind Satan, so fire comes from heaven and devours the nations in Rev 20:9. The first and the third paragraphs thus mention heaven, earth, and abyss directly or indirectly.

The second and fourth paragraphs mention either a throne or many thrones; a location is not directly indicated. By stating that earth and heaven fled from the one sitting on the throne, Rev 20:11 seems to indicate that the throne is not on earth. What about the thrones in Rev 20:4? The book of Revelation refers to the throne of Satan twice. In Rev 2:13 this throne is located in Pergamum. In Rev 13:2 it is handed over to the beast. The fifth angel pours out his bowl on the throne of the beast (16:10). Whenever a throne is that of God's enemies, it seems to be located on earth. In addition to the three occurrences of "throne" in Revelation, there are approximately forty other occurrences where the throne mentioned is God's or Jesus' throne,¹² which is clearly located in heaven.¹³

¹⁰See Appendix B.

¹¹Cf. G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 1021.

¹²God's and Jesus' throne are introduced in Rev 1:4; 3:21, 21; 4:2, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5, 6, 6, 6, 9, 10, 10; 5:1, 6, 7, 11, 13; 6:16; 7:9, 10, 11, 11, 15, 15, 17; 8:3; 12:5; 14:3; 16:17; 19:4, 5; 20:11, 12; 21:3, 5; 22:1, 3.

¹³See Rev 4:2 and the entire vision of the seals.

The plural is found four times: three times it is connected to the twenty-four elders who are also situated in heaven¹⁴; once it describes the position of those who participate in the millennial judgment. Since the term "throne" is associated with heaven as long as it is that of God, Jesus, or his followers, it might be legitimate to suppose that the thrones in Rev 20:4 are also found in heaven.¹⁵ Moreover, the other texts in which "throne" appears in the plural also point to heaven as the location. In Revelation the throne appears on earth only in connection with enemies of God. Rev 20:5 and 13-15 seem to point to the earth.

<i>Rev 20:1-3</i> From heaven (On earth) <i>Into abyss</i>	<i>Rev 20:4-6</i> <i>In heaven</i> (thrones) (On earth)	<i>Rev 20:7-10</i> Out of abyss (prison) <i>On earth</i> From heaven	<i>Rev 20:11-15</i> <i>In heaven</i> (throne) (On earth)
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Vocabulary and Concepts

Time elements, the actors and basic locations, including the vocabulary associated with these, have already been discussed. However, there are additional verbal and conceptual connections between the paragraphs of Rev 20. Indefinite time elements are found at the end of the first section (20:1-3) and at the end of the third passage (20:7-10). In the same two paragraphs the phrases "coming down from heaven" (20:1; 20:9) and "deceiving the nations" (20:3; 20:7,10), as well as the verbs "to cast" (20:3; 20:10) and "to set free" (20:3; 20:7) are used. The second (20:4-6) and fourth (20:11-15) paragraphs are connected by the word "throne," the expression "the second death," and the concepts of the resurrection after the millennium and the judgment.¹⁶

The picture that emerges corresponds with the previous results. The vision formulas, together with the time elements, the actors, the basic locations, and the vocabulary all seem to point to four paragraphs within Rev 20, two of which obviously form one larger block.

Structure of Scenes

In Revelation 20 the structures of the paragraphs are interwoven and interconnected; however, they are not always in chronological order. This

¹⁴See Rev 4:4, 4; 11:16.

¹⁵Cf. Beale, 998-999.

¹⁶Aune calls the second paragraph "a compositional parallel to the more typical judgment scene in 20:11-15," 1079.

may be due to the principle of recapitulation. Sometimes events are anticipated that are spelled out more clearly later on.¹⁷

The First Paragraph (Rev 20:1-3)

The passage begins with a vision formula followed by the indirect object "angel" and two participles. In vv. 2-3 five main clauses are strung together with *καί* and verbs in the aorist active. These clauses describe what the angel is doing to Satan and, at the end, in an added subordinate clause, what the intention of these actions is.¹⁸ Only the last sentence of verse 3 is not introduced by *καί*,¹⁹ as it anticipates Satan's release after the millennium. In Rev 20:1-3 Satan is often referred to, yet he remains inactive.

The terms "the key/to shut," "the abyss," and the "thousand years" each appear twice in this passage, leading to the following pattern:

- A The angel from heaven has the *key to the abyss*.
- B The angel seizes Satan and binds him for *1,000 years*
- A' The angel throws him into the *abyss* and *shuts* it
- B' The angel seals it to prevent deception before *the 1,000 years* are completed.

B and B' identify the one who is affected by the angel's action, as well as the time span. The two parts seem to explain each other. The binding apparently consists of preventing Satan from deceiving the nations.²⁰

Following grammar and syntax closely, an outline of the first paragraph of Rev 20, with the stress on the angel and on Satan, may look like this:

(1)	The angel's action against Satan	20:1-3a
(2)	The intention of this action	20:3b
(3)	Anticipation of Satan's future activity	20:3c

¹⁷In Rev 20:8 the nations are deceived after the millennium. However, the resurrection of the dead is clearly mentioned only in Rev 20:13. In Rev 20:8-9 the war against the beloved city is referred to. Rev 21:2 points to the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven. See also the concept of Babylon that is introduced in 14:8, yet more closely defined in Rev 17-18. Aune discusses this stylistic feature, which is called *hysteron-proteron*, 1084-1085. However, he identifies the beloved city as the earthly Jerusalem, 1096, 1098-1099.

¹⁸This subordinate clause is actually a consecutive clause. Satan is the subject in the sentence.

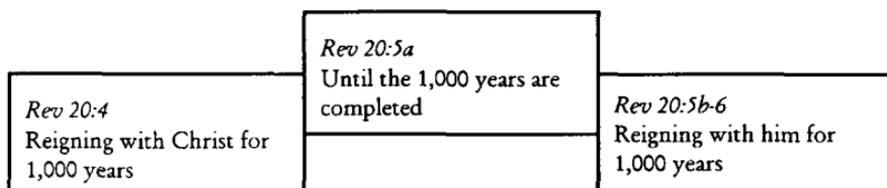
¹⁹Verse 3c is a main clause construed with *δεῖ* and an aorist infinitive passive.

²⁰Robert L. Thomas states: "The binding of a spiritual being such as *ἔδησεν* . . . depicts a mystery to humans accustomed to the material world only. Whatever it is, it is the same as the binding of the angels in 9:14 which prohibited their movement and activity (Swete)," *Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 407.

Rev 20:3c is continued in Rev 20:7.²¹ Verses 4-6 could be viewed as an insertion, yet they are a very important part of Rev 20, the climax of the chapter that binds the other parts together.

The Second Paragraph (Rev 20:4-6)

Verses 4-6, the center of Rev 20, is one of the most clearly structured parts of the chapter.²² Verses 4 and 6 end with an almost identical phrase, "reigning with Christ/him for a thousand years." Verse 5 mentions the same time element.



Verse 4 focuses on those who sit on thrones, on Christian martyrs, and those who have not accepted the mark of the beast. It is very clear that the people in this verse belong on God's side. Verses 5b-6 discuss those who will participate in the first resurrection²³; they are also called blessed and holy and are priests of God and Christ. Thus, it is evident that v. 4 and vv. 5b-6 address believers. This seems to be quite different from v. 5a. Apparently, this verse is an aside briefly pointing to those who do not belong to the Lamb. It comes in the middle of a section that addresses the question: After the satanic trinity is done away with, what will happen to the faithful ones (Rev 20:4-6)?

In addition to nearly identical phrases occurring in vv. 4 and 5b-6, there are other connections between these units. On the literary level, we find the words "God" and "Christ." As previously mentioned, in Rev 20 these two terms occur only in vv. 4 and 6. Their occurrence may give additional evidence for parallelism between vv. 4 and 5b-6.

Moreover, the two units are also connected on the conceptual level; in both a description of God's people is provided. The question arises whether or not the judging in v. 4 might parallel the priestly rule with

²¹Cf. Beale, 986.

²²Cf. Charles Homer Giblin also perceives three sections in this central part; however, he divides them into 20:4a, 20:4b-5a, and 20:5b-6; *The Book of Revelation: The Open Book of Prophecy*, Good News Studies 34 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1991), 185.

²³Aune regards vv. 5b-6 as an interpolation between the similar phrases in vv. 5a and 7 dealing with the completion of the millennium, 1093.

Christ in v. 6. In v. 4 those who were dead “became alive.” In vv. 5b and 6 the first resurrection is recounted. The expression “they became alive” is repeated in v. 5a. However, a negation is added. Thus, the aside dealing with the rest of the dead is linked to the narration of the fate of God’s people.²⁴

The parallel literary and conceptual data are presented in the next table. However, in spite of the parallels between 20:4 and 20:5b-6 there are also differences, such as a matter of form. The beatitude in the last unit does not have a parallel beatitude in v. 4, although the same ideas seem to be addressed there.

<p><i>Rev 20:4</i> Judgment Believers described Became alive</p> <p><i>God, Christ</i> <i>Reigning with Christ for</i> <i>1,000 years</i></p>	<p><i>Rev 20:5a</i> Rest of dead Did not become alive</p> <p>Until the <i>1,000 years</i> are completed</p>	<p><i>Rev 20:5b-6</i> First resurrection Believers described Priests</p> <p><i>God, Christ</i> <i>Reigning with him for</i> <i>1,000 years</i></p>
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The Third Paragraph (Rev 20:7-10)

The third paragraph begins and ends with dependent clauses followed by main and dependent clauses (20:7-8, 10). Verse 9 consists of four main clauses. The future tense at the beginning of the passage prevails and is resumed again at the end of v. 10. Furthermore, the passive voice is found in vv. 7 and 10b, the active in vv. 8-9a, and a mixture of both in vv. 9b-10a.

The phrase *πλανῆσαι τὰ ἔθνη* (20:8) is repeated in 20:10 in a similar way: *ὁ πλανῶν αὐτοὺς*.²⁵ Satan appears in 20:7 and the devil in 20:10.²⁶ Furthermore, time elements are found in 20:7a and 20:10b, along with a progression.

In v. 9 a contrast is presented: *ἀναβαίνω—καταβαίνω* and

²⁴The resurrection theme, as it appears in Rev 20:4-6, may be outlined in the following way:

- (1) They became alive (20:4)
- (2) They did not become alive (20:5a)
- (3) This is the first resurrection/the first resurrection (20:5b-6)

²⁵The phrase in 20:8, gathering for battle, is also found in 16:14 where it refers to the preparation for Armageddon; in 20:8, for the attack on the beloved city.

²⁶Satan’s prison in v. 7 is reminiscent of the abyss in v. 1.

γῆ—οὐρανός. The first two verbs of v. 9 are aorist indicative plural, whereas the last two are aorist indicative singular.²⁷ The camp of the saints and the beloved city are probably synonymous expressions, the particle καί being used expegetically.²⁸ “Fire” occurs in vv. 9-10: in v. 9 it devours the nations; in v. 10 different entities²⁹ are tortured.³⁰

These observations help to establish an outline of the third paragraph, which includes a chiasm:

A	Time element, Satan set free	20:7
B	Activity:	
	a Satan active	20:8
	b Nations active	20:9a
B'	Judgment:	
	b' On the nations	20:9b
	a' On the devil	20:10a
A'	Time element, the devil and others tortured	20:10b

The First, Second, and Third Paragraphs

Drawing together paragraphs one to three and looking for parallels between them, the following more detailed picture emerges. This picture corresponds with what has been found previously:

²⁷This can be graphically presented in the following way:

First main clause:	ἀναβαίνω; direction: on earth	plural	20:9
Second main clause:	verb and indirect objects	plural	20:9a
Third main clause:	καταβαίνω; direction: from heaven	singular	20:9b
Fourth main clause:	verb and indirect object	singular	20:9b

²⁸Cf. Giblin, 188; Thomas, 425.

²⁹The beast and the false prophet are reminiscent of the beast and his image in Rev 20:4.

³⁰The lake of fire occurs also in vv. 14-15. Yet there is a special connection to the lake of fire in Rev 19:20 since in both cases sulfur is mentioned. The two lakes of fire are set in relation to each other; however, one burns before the millennium and the other one after the thousand years. Beale argues strongly for an Amillennialist position, taking Rev 19:11-21 as parallel to Rev 20:7-15, 972-1038. Yet he does not sufficiently take into account the differences between the two passages, which consist of differences in the personnel involved, differences in emphases, differences with regard to the time and to time elements, and differences in focus upon Jesus, to name a few.

Satan judged (20:1-3a)

-An angel coming down from heaven

-Cast into the Abyss

Satan's activity (20:3)

-Abyss and not deceiving the nations

-At the end of the 1,000 years to be set free

Those on the thrones, martyrs, etc. (20:4)

-Reigning with Christ for 1,000 years

The rest of the dead (20:5a)

-Until 1,000 years completed

Participants in first resurrection (20:5b-6)

-Reigning with him for 1,000 years

Satan's activity (20:7-9a)

-At the end of the 1,000 years set free

-Prison and deceiving the nations

Satan and nations judged (20:9b-10)

-Fire coming down from heaven

-Satan cast into the lake of fire³¹

*Paragraph 1**Paragraph 2**Paragraph 3**The Fourth Paragraph (Rev 20:11-15)*

By the use of the vision formula in Rev 20:11 and 12 the fourth passage of Rev 20 seems to be subdivided into two sections.³² The first concentrates on the one sitting on the throne, also mentioning earth and heaven. In the second the throne is still present; however, the emphasis seems to lie on the dead, who are repeatedly referred to. The verbal form "it was found" occurs in vv. 11 and 15 and additionally connects the two parts. The passage consists of main clauses, with the exception of vv. 11 and 15. Verses 12 and 14 contain nominal clauses; all the other sentences are verbal clauses. The aorist tense is used throughout the entire paragraph.

Verse 11 introduces the throne and the one sitting on it, without clearly telling whether this is God the Father or the Lamb.³³ In this verse,

³¹This is different from Beale's analysis that has a chiasm running from 17:1 through 22:5. Within his chiasm Rev 20 consists of the elements: "D—Satan imprisoned for 1,000 years (20:1-3), D'—the saints reign/judge for 1,000 years (20:4-6), C'—the judgment of Gog and Magog (20:7-10; cf. Eze 38-39), B'—the divine Judge (20:11-15)," 983.

³²Cf. Aune, 1081.

³³The word "throne" is in the singular. Thus, it is not likely that the term here refers to the thrones of the 24 elders or the thrones of the redeemed ones. The throne in v. 11 forms a certain contrast to the thrones in v. 4. Satan's or the beast's throne cannot be referred to in the context of this paragraph. It is the throne of the Supreme Judge. In Revelation the throne is most often ascribed

there are two pairs of two. In the first part of Rev 20:11 the person on the throne is presented. The last part of v. 11 may be an incomplete synthetic parallelism describing the results of the appearance of the one sitting on the throne.³⁴

Verses 12 to 15 are closely interconnected; nevertheless, the term "the dead" is limited to the first two verses, whereas the term "the lake of fire" is limited to the last two verses. In addition to the term "the dead," vv. 12 and 13 employ identical material: the words "they were judged" and the phrase "according to their deeds." Thus, Rev 20:12-15 is subdivided into two smaller units. However, connecting these smaller units are the phrases "book of life," "written in books/in the book of life," and "death and Hades."

Rev 20:12 describes the dead before the throne, implying that the resurrection must have already taken place. Thus, the passage does not reflect a strict chronological order. In this verse, special emphasis is laid on books.

A *Books* were opened.

B Another book, the *book* of life, was opened.

A' The dead were judged according to what was written in the *books*.³⁵

The first two sentences in Rev 20:13 are parallel with the exception that in the first main clause the verb precedes the subject, whereas in the second clause two nouns forming the subject precede the verb.³⁶ The last clause of v. 13 describes the logical consequence of the resurrection of

to God the Father and in 3:21 it belongs to Jesus (see also 22:3). Cf. Robert H. Mounce, who considers it most natural to see the Father as the one sitting on the throne. *The Book of Revelation*, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 375. Cf. also Aune, 1100-1110; and Beale, 1031. The reference to earth and heaven in Rev 20:11 might refer to the Creator (cf. 10:6; 14:7), especially if compared with Rev 21:1. Whereas Rev 20:11 may point to the dissolution of earth and heaven, Rev 21:1 introduces the creation of a new heaven and a new earth (note chiasm):

20:11	earth
	<i>heaven</i>
21:1	<i>new heaven</i>
	new earth

³⁴This is actually the subordinate clause in v. 11:

- (1) ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου ἔφυγεν ἡ γῆ καὶ ὁ οὐρανός,
- (2) καὶ τόπος οὐχ εὐρέθη αὐτοῖς.

³⁵In A and B the word "to open" appears. However, the term "book" in its singular and plural forms occurs more often and seems to shape this verse. All the verbs are in the passive voice.

³⁶The parallelism is a complete synthetic parallelism:

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------------|------------|--------------|----------------|
| (1) | καὶ ἔδωκεν | τῇ θάλασσᾳ | τοὺς νεκροὺς | τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ. |
| (2) | καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ | ἔδωκαν | τοὺς νεκροὺς | τοὺς ἐν αὐτοῖς |
| | ἄδης | | | |

the dead, and it is parallel to the last clause of v. 12. However, at the end of Rev 20:12 the judgment affects the dead in general, whereas by using ἕκαστος v. 13 emphasizes a new dimension. The judgment reaches all, yet it is applied on an individual basis.³⁷

By referring again to "death and Hades," v. 14 seems to be closely connected to the preceding verse. The last part of this verse contains a definition of what the lake of fire is all about. This definition comes in a nominal clause.

A *Death and Hades* let go the dead.

B They are judged individually.

A' *Death and Hades* are thrown into the lake of fire.

A and A' concentrate on death and Hades personified, whereas B focuses on real human beings that were dead and came back to life.³⁸ There is also a connection to verse 15 by means of the term "lake of fire," which is found three times in these two verses. In a general statement, the individual aspect is emphasized again at the end of Rev 20.

A Death and Hades were *thrown into the lake of fire*.

B The lake of fire is the second death.

A' Whoever was not found written in the book of life was *thrown into the lake of fire*.

It appears that vv. 12 and 13 are, at least to a certain degree, parallel.³⁹ This is also true for vv. 14 and 15. On the other hand, v. 14 is closely related to v. 13, whereas v. 15 has stronger connections to v. 12. A diagram of verses 12-15 may be displayed in the following way:

Rev 20:12	(A)	Rev 20:13	(A')
The <i>dead</i> before the throne		Sea released the <i>dead</i>	
		Death and Hades released the <i>dead</i>	
<i>Books</i> and the <i>books of life</i> opened		—	
The <i>dead</i> were <i>judged</i>		They were <i>judged</i>	
according to what is <i>written in</i>		—	
<i>books</i>		—	
ACCORDING TO THEIR DEEDS		ACCORDING TO THEIR DEEDS	

³⁷Cf. Thomas, 433.

³⁸Aune takes death and Hades as a symbol standing for "all the unrighteous dead," 1103.

³⁹Rev 20:13 is recapitulating Rev 20:12.

<i>Rev 20:15</i> Those not found <i>written in the book of</i> <i>life were thrown into the lake of fire</i>	(AB)	<i>Rev 20:14</i> Death and Hades <i>were thrown into the</i> <i>lake of fire</i>	(AB')
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Words and phrases that recur are marked in a special way. Since Rev 20:14 is close to the preceding verse, it is listed directly below Rev 20:13 in order to show the connection. The same is true for Rev 20:15 and 12. A has material in common with A', as well as with AB. Additionally, A' has material in common with AB'. However, by displaying the verses in this way it is not suggested that verse 15 should precede verse 14. The order of the text as it comes has to be respected. Thus, Rev 20:12-15 should be outlined in the following way:

A	The dead and the books / verdict (20:12)
A'	The dead and their resurrection / verdict (20:13)
AB'	The lake of fire / execution (20:14)
AB	The lake of fire / execution (20:15)

Summary

A detailed outline of Rev 20 may be presented:

I.	<i>At the beginning of the millennium</i> (20:1-3)
1.	The angel's action against Satan (20:1-3a)
2.	The intention of this action (20:3b)
3.	Anticipation of Satan's future activity after the millennium (20:3c)

II.	<i>During the millennium</i> (20:4-6)
1.	Those who reign with Christ for 1,000 years (20:4)
2.	Those who are dead until the end of the 1,000 years (20:5a)
3.	Those who reign with Christ for 1,000 years (20:5b-6)

- III. *At the end of the millennium* (20:7-15)
- A. Attack and judgment (20:7-10)
1. Satan set free (20:7)
 2. Satan and nations active (20:8-9a)
 3. Nations and Satan judged (20:9b-10a)
 4. Satan and others tortured (20:10b)
- B. Resurrection and judgment (20:11-15)
1. The white throne (20:11)
 2. The judgment (20:12-15)
 - a. The dead and the books (20:12)
 - b. The dead and their resurrection (20:13)
 - c. The execution of death and Hades (20:14)
 - d. The execution of those not found in the book of life (20:15)

Rev 20 belongs to the larger section in which it is embedded.⁴⁰

Themes

The Nations and the Dead

As discussed previously, the first paragraph ends with the anticipation of Satan's release, which occurs in v. 7. The text indicates that setting Satan free is somehow connected to the deception of the nations. The term "nations" portrays a negative group that sides with Satan and will be devoured by fire. It is interesting to note that the first and third

⁴⁰Strong links between Rev 19b and 20c are, for example, "the beast and the false prophet" (19:20; 20:10), "thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur" (19:20; 20:10), and "gathering to make war" (19:19; 20:8). The vocabulary of the different sections surrounding Rev 20 may point to the following larger structure (note chiasm).

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|
| A | Rev 19b and 20a | Prior to the millennium
(Lake of fire - 19:11-21)
(Satan bound - 20:1-3) |
| B | Rev 20b | The saints during the millennium |
| C | Rev 20c and d | After the millennium
(Satan released - 20:7-10)
(Lake of fire - 20:10, 11-15) |

In Rev 19:7 the Lamb's wife has prepared herself, whereas in Rev 21:2 the new Jerusalem is prepared like a bride for her husband. Thus, Rev 19a, discussing the marriage supper of the Lamb, and Rev 21, mentioning the new Jerusalem, may form a thematic inclusion.

paragraphs of Rev 20 both discuss the deception of the nations, whereas paragraphs two and four mention the dead. Thus, the question must be raised whether or not the nations (vv. 3 and 8) are identical with the dead (vv. 5, 12-14).

The word "the dead" (νεκροῖ) occurs five times in Rev 20: the rest of the dead came to life after the one thousand years (20:5), the dead are before the throne (20:12), the dead were judged (20:12), the sea gave up the dead (20:13), and death and Hades gave up the dead (20:13). In the first occurrence the dead of v. 5b stand in contrast to the persons described in v. 4 and to the blessed ones in v. 6. Therefore, they do not partake in the first resurrection and do not include redeemed ones.⁴¹ They come to life only after the millennium, and the second death has power over them. According to v. 14 the second death is the lake of fire. In other words, those who are dead in v. 5a must expect, according to v. 6, to die in the lake of fire after having been resurrected. The dead in v. 5a are called "the rest of the dead," which implies that there is another group that has been dead. This group is described in v. 4; however, the text does not use the term νεκρός to identify these persons. It is not denied that they were dead, but the word "dead" is not applied to them. The four other occurrences of the term belong to the last paragraph of Rev 20. According to the context, it is clear that in each case the time after the millennium is referred to. Therefore, the same group of dead persons is described throughout Rev 20, whether called "the rest of the dead" or "the dead." Rev 20:5, in its immediate context, is an anticipatory description of the fate of the dead that is spelled out in more detail in Rev 20:11-15.⁴² In both cases the end is the lake of fire. Thus, "dead" seems to be a negative term in Rev 20.⁴³

The following outline illustrates the relationship between the dead and the nations.

⁴¹Mounce understands the rest of the dead as "all the faithful except the martyrs, plus the entire body of unbelievers," 370.

⁴²The principle of anticipation is found throughout the book of Revelation. In 3:21 God's throne is mentioned. However, its description comes only with the next vision. Babylon is indirectly mentioned with the sixth plague and directly in 14:8. However, what Babylon stands for is depicted only in Rev 17-18. In 20:8-9 the beloved city is attacked, whereas only in 21:2 does the new Jerusalem come down from heaven. See also the introduction scenes to the visions, as well as the expansion shortly before the glorious climax of the different visions. Aune, commenting on Rev 20:5a states: "This parenthetical remark refers to the brief narrative in Rev 20:12-13, where the dead (apparently the wicked dead) have come back to life and stand before the great white throne, i.e., the second resurrection (although the author does not explicitly enumerate it)," 1090. On page 1104, however, Aune distinguishes two groups among the rest of the dead, namely "both righteous and wicked."

⁴³Cf. Thomas, 418-419.

- First paragraph: After the millennium the nations will be deceived.
- Second paragraph: After the millennium the nations will be resurrected and will die the second death (in the lake of fire).
- Third paragraph: After the millennium the nations will be deceived and will die in the (lake of) fire.
- Fourth paragraph: After the millennium the dead will be resurrected and will die in the lake of fire (the second death).

It would appear that the "nations" and the "dead" describe the same group. The latter term may emphasize—at least to a certain extent—the individualistic aspect, whereas the former may stress the corporate dimension. The phrase "the small and the great" is used four times in the book of Revelation: positive, the small and the great receive their reward (11:18); negative, the small and the great receive the mark of the beast (13:16); positive, the small and the great praise God (19:5); negative, the birds eat the flesh of the small and the great (19:18). Rev 20:12 is unique in that the order is reversed. As in the previous texts, taken in its context, the group has to undergo God's judgment with fatal consequences.⁴⁴ Therefore, the expression "the great and the small" might be used only for unbelievers. Note that Rev 19:18 and 20:12 form an inclusion.⁴⁵

The negative impact is heightened when one takes into account the larger context, namely, the second part of Rev 19. This is also true for the term "rest," which occurs not only in Rev 20:5, but also in 19:21. The rest of the dead in Rev 20:5, who are contrasted with the previous group mentioned in v. 4, have undoubtedly worshiped the beast or his image. They have received the mark. A

"Giblin, however, notes: "Suffice it to say that this judgment is a general one, for 'great and small alike,' and certainly does not exclude Christians (3:5)," 193. Beale states that "'The small and the great' . . . in 20:12 may be an all-inclusive reference to both believers and unbelievers," and while referring to the resurrection in 20:13, that "though the focus is on the unbelieving dead, the resurrection of the saints is likely implied in the wording," whereas he further notes that "It is possible that the righteous are not among those standing before the throne because they are identified with Christ, who is certainly not among the standing throng," 1033, 1034, 1037.

⁴⁵It is difficult to determine why John changed the order of nouns only in Rev 20:12. If it was done intentionally, John might have rearranged the nouns in order to create an inclusion:

19:18 The **small**
 The *great*
20:12 The *great*
 The **small**

By using this technique John may remind his hearers and readers of this group's fate prior to the millennium. The inclusion would fit the structure presented in fn. 40.

similar situation is described in Rev 19:19-21; the kings and their armies have been deceived. They have taken the beast's mark and worshiped his image. Evidently, they are those who are killed prior to the millennium and referred to as "the rest" in v. 19.

Thus, the nations, the dead, the great and the small, and the rest (namely the armies of the kings of the earth) form the same group. They suffer death prior to the millennium, are resurrected after the millennium, are deceived again, and die the second death.

The Groups in Rev 20:4

Rev 20:4 mentions those who are sitting on thrones: the souls of the decapitated ones, those who did not worship the beast or his image, and those who have not accepted his mark. There is a question as to how many groups this verse describes. First, are those who sit on thrones separate from the ones described in the rest of v. 4, or do they include these people? Second, do those described after the ones sitting on thrones are introduced, form one, two, or three groups or subgroups?

The verse contains syntactical irregularities within a string of eight phrases, each introduced by καί:

- (1) And I saw thrones,
- (2) and they sat on them (ἐκάθισαν),
- (3) and judgment was given to them (dative),
- (4) and the souls (accusative) of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God;
- (5) and those who (nominative) had not worshiped the beast or his image,
- (6) and they had not received (ἔλαβον) the mark on their forehead and on their hand;
- (7) and they came to life/lived (ἔζησαν)
- (8) and they reigned (ἐβασίλευσαν) with Christ for a thousand years.

Lines 1 to 3 describe those sitting on the throne. Line 4 mentions the souls; however, they are found in the accusative case instead of in the nominative case. In order to make sense of this construction, the phrase "and I saw" needs to be implied. In other words, line 4 must refer back to the subject and verb of line 1, although two independent clauses occur in between. Why did John not repeat "and I saw" in line 4? Maybe he wanted to avoid the impression that a totally different group was being introduced. By omitting the vision formula, line 4 is directly linked to the preceding material. A new sentence starts with line 5. This time the group mentioned occurs in the nominative case. John is not content to use a verb that includes the personal pronoun; he uses a relative pronoun. Since this pronoun is not repeated in line 6, it seems best to regard at least lines 5 and 6

as describing only one group. This is underlined by the fact that lines 5 and 6 contain negations, stating what these people have not done. Line 4, on the other hand, presents them in positive terms. Since lines 5 and 6 form a relative clause, a main clause should follow; however, it should not be introduced by *καί*. Here another irregularity occurs, and although lines 7 and 8 are the natural complement of lines 5 and 6, by means of the particle *καί* these last two lines also seem to describe the fate of the persons addressed in line 4.

The group addressed in line 4 is characterized by the terms "the souls of the beheaded," "the testimony of Jesus," and "the word of God." The expressions "the word of God" and "the testimony of Jesus" are found in Rev 1:2 and 9. However, an even closer parallel occurs in Rev 6:9, where all three elements are found: "the souls that have been slaughtered," "the word of God," and "the testimony which they had."⁴⁶ Rev 20:4 (line 4) refers back to the martyrs described under the fifth seal.⁴⁸

Lines 5 and 6 refer to "those who had not worshiped (a) the beast or (b) his image" and "had not received the mark (a) on their forehead and (b) on their hand." The book of Revelation offers several parallels (13:15-16; 14:11; 16:2; 19:20). The closest one seems to be Rev 14:9. In this verse the beast and the image are worshiped. At the same time, the mark is received on the forehead or the hand. The context is eschatological in nature.

Thus, it seems that lines 4 through 6 describe two distinct subgroups of God's people.⁴⁹ The first represents Christian martyrs throughout history. The second refers to end-time saints, who in the final crisis remain faithful to God and the Lamb. This may also be indicated by the fact that the first one is found in the accusative, whereas the second one is the subject of the respective clauses.⁵⁰

⁴⁶The word "souls" is found in Rev 6:9, as well as in Rev 20:4. The idea of being killed is also present, although in this case different participles are used.

⁴⁷Aune lists the parallels between Rev 20:4 and 6:9, including the vision formulas, and calls the two texts doublets, 1087-1088.

⁴⁸The first part of Revelation points mostly to historic developments, especially up to the fifth or sixth element of the septets, whereas the second part of Revelation primarily depicts the end-time crisis.

⁴⁹Giblin opts for one group only. However, he holds that "the martyrs typify all the saints. . . . For those enjoying the 'first resurrection' are described as the priestly kingdom," a theme occurring also in Rev 1:5b-6 and Rev 5:9-10 describing a universal people, 187.

⁵⁰Mounce limits lines 4-6 to one group on the grounds that a relative pronoun often "indicates a fuller definition of the previous group just mentioned." The problem is that the relative pronoun in v. 4 should use the accusative case instead of the nominative. Furthermore, it is masculine, whereas the "souls" are feminine, 360, 364-366. Cf. J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, AB, vol.

It has already been pointed out that lines 7 and 8, by beginning with the particle *καί*, seem to refer back to the first part of verse 4. But what about the first lines of this verse? Two conceptual links connect lines 1-3 to lines 7-8. These lines seem to indicate that those sitting on thrones include both the Christian martyrs and God's end-time people. First, those on the thrones are involved in judgment, whereas the martyrs and God's end-time people are going to reign with Christ for a thousand years. Reigning seems to include the function of judging,⁵¹ thus indicating that the two groups are together. In Ps 2:10 the kings of the earth are also called judges.⁵² In Jer 23:5 (LXX) the Branch, the Messiah, judges.⁵³ The most important parallel seems to be Dan 7:22 (Theodotion). The same two words "judgment" and "given" are found there, and the idea of a kingdom bestowed on the saints is also present. Whereas the other texts attribute the kingdom and judgment to the Davidic king or to kings in general, Dan 7:22 and Rev 20:4 both assign it to God's people. Furthermore, Dan 7:22 describes only one group. Second, the words "thrones" and "to reign (as a king)" form the other link. The concepts of throne and kingly rule go together. In Rev 16:10 throne and kingship are directly related to each other, although in a negative context. Twice the kingship motif links the first lines of v. 4 to its last lines. Those who sit on thrones consist at least partially of the martyrs and of those who have not worshiped another being besides God or taken the mark instead of God's seal.

In summary, the ones sitting on thrones in Rev 20:4 are primarily the martyrs throughout history and God's specific end-time people.⁵⁴ The phrase "and they will reign with him for a thousand years" recurs again in Rev 20:6, which forms a beatitude. This beatitude states in universal terms what will happen to those who belong to God and Christ. Therefore, in light of v. 6, reigning with Christ should not be limited only to martyrs.⁵⁵ Interestingly enough, v. 6 uses the expression ἄγιος, which

38 (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 349; against Thomas, 415. Aune supports one group against Bousset, 1088.

⁵¹Cf. Thomas, 413.

⁵²See also Prov 16:10; 29:14; 1Ki 3:28.

⁵³Cf. 2 Tim 4:1.

⁵⁴Beale identifies those on the thrones with Christians: "The first three expressions in Rev. 20:4 underscore the fact that the saints have become part of the heavenly court so that their reigning along with Christ in vv. 4, 6 is partly judicial in nature," 996. Furthermore, he opts for two groups in Rev 20:4 dealing to quite some extent with the relative pronoun οἵτινες, especially as used in the book of Revelation, 996-1001.

⁵⁵Cf. Thomas, 405, 414. Rev 20:4 and 6 might be the fulfilment of Jesus' promise in Rev 3:21, which applies to all overcomers.

is also found in Dan 7:22 and is employed there to describe all of God's people. John may mainly focus on martyrs, without excluding the rest of God's people.⁵⁶

The First Resurrection

The first resurrection is mentioned twice in vv. 5b and 6. The term "first" implies the possibility of a second resurrection, which is also found in Rev 20, however, not by this name.

- A This is the *first resurrection*.
 B Blessed and holy is the one
 A' who has a part in the *first resurrection*.

Those who participate in the first resurrection are the royal priesthood of God and Christ. They are the saints—the people of God. The parallelism between vv. 4 and 5b-6 implies that the same group is addressed in both passages. This group is not affected by the second death, which, according to the definition in v. 14, is the lake of fire burning after the millennium. It is contrasted with the rest of the dead in v. 5a, who come to life only at the end of the millennium. Thus the saints, who rule with Christ for a thousand years, must have been resurrected at the beginning of the millennium. This is the first resurrection. According to v. 5a, the other resurrection takes place after the millennium and might be called the second resurrection that leads to the second death. The saints are not only contrasted with the rest of the dead in v. 5a, but also with the nations in vv. 8-9. The nations surround the camp of the saints. This is another indicator that Rev 20 portrays the nations and the dead—obviously the same group—on the one hand, and the saints, on the other hand.

Those Who Are Tortured

In Rev 20:10 the devil, who has deceived the nations, is thrown into the same lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet were cast. The verse continues: "They will be tormented day and night forever and ever." The question is: Who are "they"? There are several options: It could be Satan and those whom he has deceived; the satanic trinity consisting of the devil, the beast, and the false prophet; or all of them. The direct

⁵⁶It is difficult to tell if he had living saints in mind or not. They might be only implied in this chapter. The answer to this problem depends partially on the translation and interpretation of the word ἐζησαν, which is found twice in Rev 20:4-5. It could be translated "they lived." It can also be an ingressive aorist, which would be translated "they became alive." The term should probably be translated in the same way in both verses. Since v. 5 strongly points in the direction of an ingressive aorist, one would expect it also for v. 4.

antecedent to the verb “to torture” is the beast and the false prophet, as well as Satan. However, the beast and the false prophet are found in a dependent clause, which could be omitted easily without destroying the flow of the argument. The only disadvantage would be that the connection to Rev 19 would not be so clearly stressed as it is with the dependent clause. The focus of the paragraph is on Satan and the nations. The beast and the false prophet come more or less as an aside.⁵⁷ Perhaps the plural could be understood as referring to the devil and to those who allowed themselves to be deceived by him, namely the nations. If this is correct, an interpretation of the everlasting torture in v. 10 is provided by v. 9. It points to final annihilation.

Conclusion

Rev 20 is a unique and much-discussed chapter with an interesting structure. Our investigation has led to the following results and implications:

- (1) The different parts of Rev 20 are interconnected. Recapitulation and hysteron-proteron occur. The chapter consists of four units that form three blocks.
- (2) Rev 20: 4-6 is the center of the chapter. Whereas the entire chapter stresses the concept of judgment, the central part focuses on God’s people, for whom the Lord intervenes and whose privileges are enumerated.
- (3) Although some recapitulation occurs, there is a clear chronological progression in Rev 20. The chapter moves from the beginning of the millennium to the time during the millennium, and finally to the time after the end of the millennium.
- (4) The time elements found in Rev 20 not only affect this chapter, but also seem to influence its literary context. Rev 21 and 22 clearly follow the events of Rev 20.⁵⁸ Chronologically, Rev 19, describing Christ’s Second Coming, precedes Rev 20.⁵⁹ Therefore, a premillennialistic

⁵⁷Mounce favors the satanic trinity. He distinguishes between the fate of the nations, who are devoured by fire from heaven and the fate of Satan, who is cast into the lake of fire. In his opinion this is not the same fate, 373-374. In the light of Rev 20:15, however, where humans are also cast into the lake of fire, such a distinction does not seem to be valid. Aune (1100) and Beale (1028) also opt for the satanic trinity.

⁵⁸The phrase ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ in Rev 21:5 refers back to θρόνον μέγαν λευκὸν καὶ τὸν καθήμενον ἐπ’ αὐτόν in Rev 20:11. In Rev 21:5 this person proclaims that he is now going to make all things new. Progression takes place. Rev 21:7 tells the reader who will be positively affected by this new creation, whereas 21:8 briefly returns to those not redeemed, describing their fate as the second death, the lake of fire. Both of these latter concepts are found in Rev 20:14-15.

⁵⁹Rev 19 describes Armageddon and the Parousia of Jesus. By the concept of the winepress of the wrath of God (τὴν ληνὸν τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ), Rev 14:19—in the context of the coming

interpretation of Rev 20 is called for.

- (5) Rev 20 does not mention a messianic kingdom of peace on earth. The first part of Rev 20 points to the abyss. The last part describes events on earth. These events are the deception of the nations, their attack on the camp of the saints, and the execution of the last phase of God's judgment. Only Rev 20:4-6 refers to a millennial reign. However, this reign is ascribed to the redeemed ones, who sit on thrones and reign with Christ. As shown above, the thrones must be located in heaven.⁶⁰
- (6) The concept of resurrection is stressed repeatedly. The chapter mentions the first resurrection, associating it with those who will be priests and will rule with Christ. A second resurrection is described in vv. 5 and 13. Since the same word $\epsilon\zeta\eta\sigma\alpha\nu$ is used for the resurrection of those in v. 4 as for the resurrection of the group in v. 5, it should refer to a bodily resurrection in both cases.⁶¹
- (7) In an otherwise negative chapter, the central section (20:4-6) holds up hope. It is also the only one that points to the special relationship between God, Jesus, and the saints who are mentioned by name. It is this section that Christians are specifically called to concentrate on without falling prey to chiliastic excitement and millennial fever.

of one like a son of man on the cloud in order to gather a double harvest—and Rev 19:15 are tied together. Additionally, both passages use the same verb “to tread.” Because of its literary links to Christ's Parousia in Rev 1, Rev 14 as well as Rev 19 seem to describe the same event. Rev 19 ends with the fate of the beast and the false prophet, two parts of the so-called satanic trinity which was introduced in Rev 12-13. Time elements in these chapters point to the fact that Satan appears first, followed by the sea beast and the beast arising from the earth, the false prophet. This chronological progression is reversed at the end of the Apocalypse. First, at the Parousia, the sea beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire. Rev 19:20 specifically says “these two,” anticipating the judgment on the third part of their union to be later. Then, Satan is judged. The judgment on him starts with the confinement to the abyss at the beginning of the millennium and ends with his being thrown into the lake of fire at the end of the millennium. The motif of the seven angels with the seven bowls dominates Rev 15-21 and links these chapters. The seven angels occur repeatedly in Rev 15 and 16. However, it is one of the bowl angels who shows John the judgment of the great harlot (17:1), and it is again one of the bowl angels who reveals to John the beauty of the bride, the holy city Jerusalem (21:9-10). See also Joel Badina, “The Millennium,” in *Symposium on Revelation: Exegetical and General Studies, Book 2*, ed. F. B. Holbrook, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, vol. 7 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 235-236.

⁶⁰Cf. *ibid.*, 238-240. Mounce states that Rev 20 “contains no specific indication that their reign with Christ takes place on earth,” 360.

⁶¹Cf. Mounce, 366.

Appendix A
Similarities Between Rev 19b and 20

Words and Phrases	Occurrences	Rev 19b	Rev 20
<i>Structuring formulas</i>			
καὶ εἶδον	(19:11, 17, 19; 20:1, 4, 11, 12)	3	4
<i>Phrases</i>			
λίμνην τοῦ πυρός	(19:20; 20:10, 14, 14, 15)	1	4
λίμνην τοῦ πυρός καὶ θείου	(19:20; 20:10)	1	1
ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός	(19:20; 20:10, 14, 15)	1	3
ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός καὶ θείου	(19:20; 20:10)	1	1
ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ	(19:13; 20:4)	1	1
οἱ μικροὶ καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι	(19:18; 20:12)	1	1
συναγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον/συνηγμένα ποιῆσαι τὸν πόλεμον	(19:19; 20:8)	1	1
τὸ θηρίον καὶ ὁ ψευδοπροφήτης	(19:20; 20:10)	1	1
τοὺς λαβόντας τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ θηρίου καὶ τοὺς προσκυνούντας τῇ εἰκόνι αὐτοῦ	(19:20; 20:4)	1	1
<i>Words</i>			
ἄγγελος	(19:17; 20:1)	1	1
βάλλω	(19:20; 20:3, 10, 14, 15)	1	4
βασιλεὺς/βασιλεύω	(19:16, 16, 18, 19; 20:4, 6)	4	2
γῆ	(19:19; 20:8, 9, 11)	1	3
γράφω	(19:12, 16; 20:12, 15)	2	2
ἔθνος	(19:15; 20:3, 8)	1	2
ἐξέρχομαι	(19:21; 20:8)	1	1
ἔχω	(19:12, 16; 20:1, 6, 6)	2	3
ζῶ/ζωή	(19:20; 20:4, 5, 12, 15)	1	4
θεός	(19:13, 15, 18; 20:4, 6)	3	2

Appendix A
Similarities Between Rev 19b and 20

Words and Phrases	Occurrences	Rev 19b	Rev 20
θηρίον	(19:19, 20, 20; 20:4, 10)	3	2
ἰσσημι	(19:17; 20:12)	1	1
κάθημαι/καθίζω	(19:11, 18, 19, 21; 20:4, 11)	4	2
κρίμα/κρίνω	(19:11; 20:4, 12, 13)	1	3
λευκός	(19:11, 14, 14; 20:11)	3	1
λοιπός	(19:21; 20:5)	1	1
μέγας	(19:17, 17, 18; 20:1, 11, 12)	3	3
μικρός	(19:18; 20:3, 12)	1	2
ὄραω/ἰδοῦ	(19:11, 11, 17, 19; 20:1, 4, 11, 12)	4	4
οὐρανός	(19:11, 14; 20:1, 9, 11)	2	3
πλανάω	(19:20; 20:3, 8, 10)	1	3
πολεμέω/πόλεμος	(19:11, 19; 20:8)	2	1
προσκυνέω	(19:20; 20:4)	1	1
πῦρ	(19:12, 20; 20:9, 10, 14, 14, 15)	2	5
συνάγω	(19:17, 19; 20:8)	2	1

Appendix B : Literary Connections in Rev 20 (Continued)

Literary Connections in Rev 20

Verses Literary Parallels

v. 1									
v. 2									
v. 3									
v. 4	God	beast	come to life	Christ	reign with Chr.	1,000 yrs			
v. 5			come to life		dead		first		
							resurrection		
v. 6	God			Christ	reign with Chr.	1,000 yrs	first	holy	second death
							resurrection		
v. 7									
v. 8									sea
v. 9								holy ones	fire
v. 10									thrown into lake of fire
v. 11									
v. 12					dead				
					dead				
v. 13					dead				sea
					dead				
v. 14								second death	thrown into lake of fire
v. 15									thrown into lake of fire

Appendix B: Literary Connections in Rev 20 (Continued)

Literary Connections in Rev 20

Verses	Literary Parallels
v. 1	
v. 2	
v. 3	
v. 4	
v. 5	
v. 6	
v. 7	
v. 8	
v. 9	
v. 10	
v. 11	found
v. 12	books opened books/book of life written in books according to their deeds
v. 13	gave up the dead gave up the dead according to their deeds death and Hades death and Hades
v. 14	
v. 15	found written in book of life death and Hades