

Crucial Warnings in the Book of Revelation: The Angels That Cry Out in a Loud Voice

By Hugo Leon

Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the warning motif in the book of Revelation and to identify and examine the passages in the book of Revelation that speak of an angel (*aggelon*) that cries out in a loud voice (*phone megale*).¹ Revelation is a book of warnings and no imagery captures our attention better than the angels that cry out in a loud voice. There are exactly eleven of these angels and they share similar characteristics. They all appear to be divine messengers sent from heaven to warn those who dwell on the earth. They are all set in an eschatological context and several appear to bear messages connected with the antitypical Day of Atonement. Furthermore, the eleven angels appear to form a chiasmic structure with the Three Angels of Revelation 14 in the center. The scope of these warnings appears to be global or universal.²

Methodology: The Use of Intratextuality Within the Book of Revelation

This paper is a thematic study and it is also an intratextual study, therefore a few words need to be said about methodology. The structure of the Apocalypse is complex and multilayered.³ There are numerous parallel passages within the book of Revelation.⁴ This is especially true of chiasmic structures in the book of Revelation since they are constructed with inverted parallelisms.⁵ The study of how parallel texts are connected within the same biblical book is called intratextuality and it appears to be an important method of interpretation in the book of Revelation.⁶ Separate but related texts are often set in parallel in the same book. Sometimes one text is more cryptic or nebulous than the others. By comparing the texts side by side, the more clear texts help to explain the more difficult texts. This intratextual method of interpretation appears to have been common among ancient exegetes.⁷ For example Rev. 14:8 mentions the fall of Babylon but goes no further. The reader is left asking the question, who is

¹ These three Greek words appear with morphological variants in the passages mentioned above, with the exception of Rev. 14:8. The words *phone megale* are not used to describe the speaking of the angel in Rev. 14:8 but this angel has been included in our study because it is at the center of our chiasmic structure. The oldest manuscripts of Rev. 8:13 have an eagle (*aetou*) instead of an angel (*aggelou*) crying out in a loud voice.

² Munger sees several angel "heralds" in Revelation connected with universal, eschatological events of judgment. See *Angels in the Book of Revelation*, 292.

³ Bandy, *Layers of the Apocalypse*.

⁴ Siew has an excellent summary of the different types of parallels in the book of Revelation and in biblical texts in general. See *Two Witnesses*, 22-66.

⁵ Breck discusses chiasmic parallelism in his study. See *The Shape of Biblical Language*, 13-33.

⁶ Mueller has written a dissertation demonstrating the importance and complexity of the intratextual connections in the book of Revelation. See Mueller, *Microstructural Analysis of Revelation 4-11*. See also Breck, *Shape of Biblical Language*, 297-315. Bandy, *Layers of the Apocalypse*, 487-490. Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 22-29. Heil, *The Fifth Seal as a Key to the Book of Revelation*. De Villiers, *Sixth Seal*, 5-6. Frank, *Intratextual Reading of the Apocalypse*, 169-174.

⁷ Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 29, 299-300, 302. Diop, *Innerbiblical Interpretation*, 136-141. For a good study on ancient Jewish exegesis see Instone, *Jewish Exegesis Before 70 CE*.

Babylon? Later, in Revelation 16:12-19:4 we have an extensive explanation concerning the identity and fall of Babylon.⁸ Another example is the “testimony of Jesus” in Rev. 12:17. Later in Rev. 19:10 we are told explicitly that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

The repetition of key words and phrases in the book of Revelation also serves as an interpretive tool for the reader.⁹ For example, exegetes as far back as Victorinus at the end of the third century AD commented on the patterns of word repetition in the trumpets and bowls.¹⁰ Other examples of repetition are noted. We find elements from the throne scene of Revelation 4-5 in several introductory scenes (Rev. 6:9-11; 8:2-5; 11:19; 15:5-8; 19:1-9).¹¹ Some words from the description of the risen Christ (Rev. 1:12-18) are repeated in the introduction of the messages to the seven churches.¹² The language of the fifth seal is repeated in several judgment scenes that follow.¹³ The language of the Third Angel is used to describe the fall of Babylon.¹⁴ The book of Revelation also compares and contrasts opposing symbols. We have the seal of God vs. the mark of the beast,¹⁵ the pure woman vs. the harlot woman,¹⁶ the worship of the Creator vs. the worship of the beast, etc.¹⁷ All of these parallels serve a purpose. They create literary connections that help the reader interpret the apocalyptic text of Revelation.¹⁸ As we shall see, John has used this method to place emphasis on the importance of the Three Angel’s Messages of Revelation 14.¹⁹

The repetition of key terms and ideas also appears to influence the macrostructure of the Apocalypse.²⁰ It is important to remember that most ancient scrolls had no visible paragraphs

⁸ De Villiers, *Composition of Rev. 14:1-15:8*, 229.

⁹ Fekkes, *Isaiah in Revelation*, 204. “Rev. 14.6-13 forms a prelude to the bowl series judgment which contains final premonitory exhortations. In vv. 8-11 the fate of those who refuse to disassociate themselves from Babylon and the beast is taken up. The function of this section as an anticipatory warning and its relationship to the main Babylon prophecy of 16.19-19.4 is formally indicated by a literary technique peculiar to John: the repetition of base texts and motifs. Each of the OT texts adopted in 14.8-11 subsequently reappears in the Babylon prophecy of 16.19-19.5. Probably by design, then, 14.8-11 serves as an epitome of Babylon’s judgment, which begins with the fall of the city (14.8 // 16.19; 18:2), and concludes with the eternal consequences of its judgment, reflected in the fate of its clients (14:11 // 19.3, 20).” See also Bandy, *Layers of the Apocalypse*, 161-167, 469-499. Mach, *Macrostructure of the Apocalypse*, 121-122. Pattemore, *Repetition in Revelation*. Kirby, *Repetition in Revelation*.

¹⁰ Giblin, *Recapitulation and Coherence in the Apocalypse*, 81.

¹¹ Heil, *Fifth Seal as a Key to Revelation*, 220-243. Gallusz, *Throne Motif in Revelation*, 240-245.

¹² Mueller, *Microstructural Analysis*, 460-495. Treiyer, *Dia de Expiacion*, 450-451. Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 108-109. Pattemore, *Repetition in Revelation*, 431.

¹³ Heil, *Fifth Seal as a Key to Revelation*, 220-243. Pattemore, *Repetition in Revelation*, 434-436. DeCock, *Symbol of Blood in the Apocalypse*, 168-178.

¹⁴ E. Reynolds, *Sodom, Egypt, Babylon Motif in Revelation*, 237.

¹⁵ Pattemore, *Repetition in Revelation*, 432-433. Barnett, *Polemical Parallelisms*, 111-112.

¹⁶ Pattemore, *Repetition in Revelation*, 433-434. Barnett, *Polemical Parallelisms*, 111-112.

¹⁷ Wilson, *Charts on Revelation*, 56-57.

¹⁸ See Kirby, *Repetition in the Book of Revelation*.

¹⁹ Siew sees *kai eidon allon aggelon* (Rev. 10:1 and 14:6-7) as an important “frame passage” for the chiasmic structure of Rev. 11:1-14:5. See *Two Witnesses*, 80-81. De Villiers also sees the importance of *kai eidon, allon aggelon, phone megale* in Rev. 14:1-20. See *Composition of Rev. 14:1-15:8*, 219-243.

²⁰ Mach, *Macrostructure of the Apocalypse*, 204-246. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation*, 32-35. Frank, *Intratextual Reading of the Apocalypse*, 71-115.

or sentence structure and that the writings of antiquity were meant to be read aloud (Ex 24:7; Deut. 17:19; 31:11; Jos. 8:34-35; 2 Rey. 23:2; 2 Chron. 34:30; Neh. 8:3, 8, 18: 9:3; 13:1; Jer. 36:6, 10, 13-15, 21, 23; 51:61; Luke 4:16; Acts 13:27; 15:21; 2 Cor. 3:15; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27; Rev. 1:3).²¹ The structure of a biblical writing, like the Apocalypse, was mainly understood aurally not visually.²² Therefore, some of the repetitive words or phrases of the Apocalypse serve as major literary markers for its structure.²³ These syntactical markers help us outline the literary structure of the Revelation and this is essential for a proper interpretation of the text. For example, Gallusz has demonstrated the importance of the throne motif on the structure of the Apocalypse.²⁴ Strand and others have seen the importance of sanctuary typology on the structure of the book of Revelation.²⁵ According to Gallusz, J. Ford has demonstrated the importance of the heavenly hymns on the structure of Revelation.²⁶ Donald Guthrie believes the title Lamb or *arnion* can be used to help determine the structure of the book of Revelation.²⁷ In this paper we would like to demonstrate that the angels that speak in a loud voice influence the macrostructure of the Apocalypse.²⁸

The Elusive Language of the Apocalypse

One of the important characteristics of the Revelation that makes it difficult to interpret, is the elusive nature of its apocalyptic language. Often characters and themes are not mentioned directly, but they are alluded to indirectly. For example, Christ is often the unnamed subject of a passage. He is referred to as One like the Son of Man, the Lamb that was slain, a mighty Angel who roars like a lion, Michael or the Rider on the white horse. The same thing occurs with Satan who is referred to as the star that falls from heaven, Abaddon, Apollyon, the Serpent or the Dragon. The sealed appear in multiple scenes with various names like the 144,000 (Rev. 7:4-8; 14:1, 3), the great multitude (Rev. 7:9; 19:6), the victors (Rev. 15:2; cf. Rev. 20:4) and the wife of Christ (Rev. 19:7). The false teachers in the seven churches are also referred to by multiple names like the Nicolaitans, Balaam, Jezebel and the Synagogue of Satan.²⁹

The same can be said about some important themes and motifs in the book of Revelation. Although they are alluded to in a subtle fashion they are never openly named. For example, the themes of the Roman Empire, the USA, the Sabbath commandment, the holy covenant, the Day of Atonement are implicit in the text of Revelation but never mentioned explicitly. In this study we will see that the warning about the sealed vs. the marked runs throughout the Apocalypse

²¹ Oestreich, *This Letter to Be Read to All*, 21-24.

²² De Waal, *Aural-Performance Analysis of Revelation*, 62-67. Barr, *Apocalypse as Oral Enactment*, 243-256. Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 1-3.

²³ Mach, *Macrostructure of the Apocalypse*, 204-235. Kirkland, *Verbal Aspect of Revelation 20*. De Villiers, *Revelation 8:1-6*, 74, 92-93.

²⁴ Gallusz, *Throne Motif in Revelation*, 240-290. Also Waechter, *Literary Structure of Revelation*, 136.

²⁵ Strand, *Victorious Introduction Scenes*, 51-72. Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 30-33. Paulien, *Hebrew Cultus in the Structure of the Revelation*.

²⁶ Gallusz, *Throne Motif in Revelation*, 245-247. Liroy, *Revelation in Christological Focus*, 135.

²⁷ Guthrie, *Lamb in the Structure of Revelation*, 64-71.

²⁸ Mach sees these angels as structural markers. See *Macrostructure of the Apocalypse*, 224-227.

²⁹ Tonstad, *Revelation*, 259-260.

although at times it may be more subtle than overt. Why is the language of Revelation so cryptic? When the disciples asked Jesus why he spoke in parables, He said that the mysteries of the kingdom were open to His followers but they were to remain veiled for His enemies (Mark 4:11-12; cf. Is. 6:10; Jer. 6:10; Ez. 12:2; Dan. 12:10; John 8:47).³⁰ We need the help of the Spirit to understand the symbolic language of the Apocalypse. Jesus repeatedly warns His church in the seven oracles, to have ears that are open to understand what the Spirit is saying to the churches. This warning is repeated in the eschatological section of the book (Rev. 13:9, 18; 17:9; cf. Dan. 12:3, 10; Matt. 24:15).³¹ We would do well to ask God for heavenly wisdom in our quest to understand the message of the Apocalypse (James 1:5).

Warnings in the Prologue: Jesus is Coming to Judge the World

From the very first verses of the prophecy, the Apocalypse claims to be a special revelation of end time mysteries from Jesus to the faithful servants of the seven churches (Rev. 1:1-4).³² In the key verses of the prologue, Jesus is presented as coming with the clouds as eschatological King and Judge (Rev. 1:7-8; cf. Rev. 22:12). This is followed by an encounter with the Risen Christ who is described as wearing the clothing of the Jewish High Priest from the Day of Atonement (Rev. 1:13; cf. Dan. 10:5).³³ He is also given the apocalyptic title, One like the Son of Man (Rev. 1:13), which comes from the eschatological judgment scene of Daniel 7. In the description that follows more symbolism connected with judgment appears. Jesus has white hair like the Danielic Ancient of Days (Rev. 1:14; cf. Dan. 7:9) and He has a twoedged sword coming out of His mouth (Rev. 1:16). His countenance shines like the sun (Rev. 1:16) and in his hand He has the keys of hell and death (Rev. 1:18). All of these images serve as a warning that the day of judgment is coming and the one who will preside in this judgment is Christ.

Warnings to the Seven Churches: A Shadow of Things to Come

In the messages to the seven churches Christ presents Himself as High Priest and Judge. In the introduction to each message phrases from the description of the Risen Christ are repeated to emphasize Christ's role as supreme Judge. Divine warnings against apostasy and idolatry

³⁰ Thompson, *Those Who Are Wise*, 215-220.

³¹ Enroth, *Hearing Formula in the Book of Revelation*, 598-608.

³² White, *19LTMs, Ms 165, 1904, par. 7 & 8*. "But John was acquainted with God. And even on that lonely island he held precious communion with God. Angels of God were round about him. Hearing a voice like a trumpet, he turned to see the speaker, and beheld Christ, who had come to open before him heavenly mysteries. And John was instructed to write in a book what he saw, and to send it to all the churches... Every laborer should feel at perfect liberty to come right to God with the greatest confidence, and hear what He has to say to the churches. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches." [Revelation 3:22.]" White, *RH September 25, 1883, par. 6*. "The book of Revelation is also replete with warning and instruction for the last generation. The beloved John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, portrays the fearful and thrilling scenes connected with the close of earth's history, and presents the duties and dangers of God's people. None need remain in ignorance, none need be unprepared for the coming of the day of God." White, *8T, 302.3*. "The testimony of Christ, a testimony of the most solemn character, is to be borne to the world. All through the book of Revelation there are the most precious, elevating promises, and there are also warnings of the most fearfully solemn import."

³³ Reis, *Echoes of the Most Holy*, 327-340.

abound but the churches are encouraged to overcome. These admonitions prefigure the warnings against idolatry that will be presented in the eschatological part of the book. Each message ends with a warning to let him that hath an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches. This call to the wisdom of the Spirit foreshadows the call to wisdom of the Spirit in the eschatological section of the Apocalypse (Rev. 13:9, 18; 17:9; 19:10). In the message to Ephesus Jesus warns against the Nicolaitans and then warns His people to repent, "or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place." The warning against the false teachers in Ephesus foreshadow the false teachers that will appear in the time of the end (false prophet, 3 frogs, harlot). In the message to Smyrna, Jesus warns the church about the blasphemy of the synagogue of Satan. He then warns that the Devil will provoke "ten days" of tribulation and counsels the church to remain faithful unto death. The warning about the ten days of tribulation foreshadows the 1260 days (42 months, 3 and ½ times) of tribulation in the eschatological section. The warning about persevering in faithfulness unto death foreshadows the need for patient endurance during the tribulation of the eschaton (Rev. 13:10; 14:12). In the message to Pergamum Jesus reminds the members of the martyrdom of Antipas and He warns that Satan and his throne dwell among them. He then warns the church about the false teachers symbolically named Balaam or the Nicolaitans who will attempt to lead the people into idolatry. He then warns the church to repent, "or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." The presence of Satan in Pergamom foreshadows the Satanic activity in the eschatological section of the book (5th and 6th trumpets, frog spirits, unclean birds in Babylon, etc.) The martyrdom of Antipas in Pergamos foreshadows the martyrdom of the faithful in the eschaton (Rev. 6:11; 12:11; 20:4). Again, in the message to Thyatira, Jesus warns against the idolatrous doctrines of the false teacher symbolically named Jezebel. He threatens to throw Jezebel and her followers into a bed of great tribulation unless they repent. Then He says, "I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." The judgment of Jezebel foreshadows the judgment of the harlot Babylon in Rev. 17-19. The message ends with a call for the remnant in Thyatira to persevere in faithfulness until the *parousia*. The experience of the remnant of Thyatira foreshadows the experience of the remnant in the eschaton (Rev. 12:17; 14:12). In the message to Sardis, Jesus tells the church to watch, hold fast and repent. This is followed by a stern warning. "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." This is followed by some imagery that comes from the eschatological Day of Atonement (white raiment, blotting names out of the book of Life, and confessing men before the Father and the angels). The DOA language in Sardis foreshadows the events of the DOA in the eschatological section of Revelation. In the message to Philadelphia Jesus presents Himself as the one who holds the key of David. He then makes reference to the opening of the door of the most holy place on the Day of Atonement (Rev. 3:7, 8). Again, Jesus mentions the false teachers known as the synagogue of Satan (Rev. 3:9). This is followed by more Day of Atonement imagery in the promise to seal and preserve His people from the hour of temptation that will come upon all the earth (Rev. 3:10, 12). This sealing foreshadows the sealing of Rev. 7. Finally, in the message to Laodicea Jesus threatens to spue His lukewarm church out of His mouth. Jesus warns the Laodiceans to cover their nakedness with a white robe. This foreshadows the white robes and the purity of the 144,000. The

eyesalve of Laodicea foreshadows the need for the Spirit of prophecy among the remnant (Rev. 12:17; 19:10). In short, the risen Christ warns His churches to prepare for the coming end time judgment.³⁴

The Seven Angels of the Seven Churches as Human Messengers

In the prologue of Revelation Jesus is depicted as holding seven stars in his right hand (Rev. 1:16). These seven stars are later identified as the seven angels of the seven churches (Rev. 1:20). Some scholars have seen an allusion to the *maskilim* of Dan. 12:3 (cf. Dan. 8:10) in the symbol of the seven stars.³⁵ Thus, the seven angels of the seven churches symbolize human messengers or teachers who must understand God's prophetic warnings and transmit these to the churches (cf. Dan. 11:33, 35; 12:3-4, 10).³⁶ At the beginning of each message to the seven churches, the message is addressed, "to the angel of the church of..." Each message ends with a call to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. If there is parallelism between the beginning and the end of each message, then this call to the wisdom of the Spirit may be primary directed to the "angels" or the human messengers/teachers of each church. The angel messengers of the seven churches foreshadow the angel messengers of the eschatological section of the Apocalypse. Just as the seven angel messengers bring God's warnings to the seven churches, so the angel messengers of the eschatological part of Revelation will bring God's warnings to all the inhabitants of the earth. Just as the "angels" of the seven churches appear to be human messengers/teachers, so some of the angel messengers in the eschatological section of the Apocalypse appear to represent human messengers.³⁷

Warnings in the Eschatological Section of the Apocalypse (Rev. 4 – Rev. 20)

The main body of the Revelation begins and ends with a heavenly court scene that focuses on the One seated on the celestial throne (Rev. 4-5 and Rev. 20:11-15). In between these two throne scenes, we have three cycles of seven judgments (seals, trumpets and bowls) (Rev. 6:1-16:21). This is followed by an expansion of the seventh bowl plague which describes the fall of

³⁴ White, *ST April 22, 1889, par. 2*. "These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand." Revelation 2:1. These words are spoken to the teachers in the church—those entrusted by God with weighty responsibilities. The sweet influences that are to be abundant in the church are bound up with God's ministers, who are to reveal the love of Christ. The stars of heaven are under His control. He fills them with light. He guides and directs their movements. If He did not do this, they would become fallen stars. So with His ministers. They are but instruments in His hands, and all the good they accomplish is done through His power. Through them His light is to shine forth." For a discussion of the various interpretations of the angles of the seven churches see Ferguson, *Angels of the Churches in Rev. 1-3* and Dean, *Identifying the Aggelos in Rev. 2-3*.

³⁵ Beale, *NT Use of the OT*, 5058.

³⁶ White, *AA*, 586.3. "These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand." Revelation 2:1. These words are spoken to the teachers in the church—those entrusted by God with weighty responsibilities."

³⁷ White, *1888*, 926. "The first, second, and third angel's messages are the messages to be given to the world. We hear not literally the voice of the three angels, but these angels in Revelation represent a people who will be upon the earth and give these messages. John saw "Another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the whole earth was lightened with his glory." Revelation 18:1. That work is the voice of the people of God proclaiming a message of warning to the world."

Babylon (Rev. 17:1-19:10). At the end of this section, we find scenes depicting the second coming and the events of the 1000 years (Rev. 19:11-20:15). In connection with the three cycles of judgment we have three main warnings.

1. The warning to be sealed in the forehead with the seal of God.
2. The warning against worshiping the beast or his image or receiving his mark on the right hand or forehead.
3. The warning to avoid fornicating with the harlot or drinking her wine.

The Angels That Cry Out in a Loud Voice: Heralds of the Eschatological Warnings

The angels that cry out in a loud voice all appear within this important section and they are very much connected with these three, crucial, eschatological warnings. We will now list the eleven angels in the order that they appear in the text.

1. Angel of Throne Scene Rev. 5:2
2. Angel of Sealing Rev. 7:2
3. Angel/Eagle of Three Woes Rev. 8:13
4. Mighty Angel With Book Rev. 10:1
5. First Angel Rev. 14:6-7
6. Second Angel Rev. 14:8
7. Third Angel Rev. 14:9-11
8. Angel of Wheat Harvest Rev. 14:15
9. Angel of Grape Harvest Rev. 14:17
10. Glorious Angel Rev. 18:1
11. Angel of Great Supper Rev. 19:17

Thematic Outline Formed by the Angels That Cry Out in a Loud Voice

- A. The Initiation of the Eschatological Judgment (Rev. 5:2-5)
- B. The Sealing of the 144,000 Before the Judgment Closes (Rev. 7:1-3)
- C. The Three Woes Against the Unsealed After the Judgment Closes (Rev. 8:13)
- D. The Initiation of the End Time Judgment and the Preaching of the Gospel (Rev. 10:1-3)
- E1. The First Angel: A Warning to Be Sealed During the Hour of His Judgment (Rev. 14:6-7)
- E2. The Second Angel: A Warning Against Babylon and Her Followers (Rev. 14:8)
- E3. The Third Angel: A Warning Not to be Marked/Worship Beast or Image (Rev. 14:9-12)
- D1. The Harvest of the Sealed at the End of the Judgment (Rev. 14:15-16)
- C1. The Harvest of the Marked at the End of the Judgment (Rev. 14:17-20)
- B1. The Last Call to Come Out of Babylon Before Her Judgment (Rev. 18:1-4)
- A1. The End of the Eschatological Judgment (Rev. 19:17-21)

The Chiastic Structure Formed By the Angels That Cry Out in a Loud Voice

If we examine the list carefully, we can easily see that in the center are the Three Angels of Revelation 14:6-12. These three angels form the focal point and climax of all the warnings in the entire book of Revelation. See the chiastic structure below.

Throne Scene of Rev. 4-5 – Frame Passage

A Angel of Throne Scene Rev. 5:2

B Angel of Sealing Rev. 7:2

C Angel/Eagle of Three Woes Rev. 8:13

D Mighty Angel Rev. 10:1

E1 Message of First Angel Rev. 14:6-7

E2 Message of Second Angel Rev. 14:8

E3' Message of Third Angel Rev. 14:9-11

D' Angel of Wheat Harvest Rev. 14:15

C' Angel of Grape Harvest Rev. 14:17

B' Glorious Angel Rev. 18:1

A' Angel of Great Supper Rev. 19:17

Throne Scene of Rev. 20:11-15 – Frame Passage

The Frame Passages of the Proposed Chiastic Structure

Revelation 4:1-20:15 appears to be a major literary unit in the prophecy of the Apocalypse.³⁸ The beginning (Rev. 4:1)³⁹ and the end of this section (Rev. 21:1)⁴⁰ are marked off by the phrase “and I saw” (*kai eidon*). The opening scene of this literary unit is the throne scene of Rev. 4:1-5:14. This passage presents the first of several heavenly throne scenes in the Apocalypse (cf. Rev. 7, 14, 19, 20, 22).⁴¹ It is important to note that Revelation 4 and 5 appear to be a single literary unit.⁴² Scholars have noted the importance of these two chapters in the literary structure of the first half of Revelation and possibly the structure of the book as a whole.⁴³ In our chiastic structure these chapters are important because they contain the first of the eleven angels that speak in loud voice (Rev. 5:2) in the book of Revelation. Thus, Revelation 4-5 sets the tone for the theme of the entire literary structure of Revelation 4-20. The closing scene of

³⁸ Many Revelation scholars would agree that Rev. 4:1 is major transition point in the literary structure of the Apocalypse. See Beale, *Revelation*, 317. Gallusz, *Throne Motif*, 102-103. Those who organized the prophecy of Revelation into chapters also saw an important transition at Rev. 21:1. There is a major thematic shift at this point from judgment to the New Jerusalem. See Beale, *Revelation*, 1039. Also E. Mueller, *Microstructural Analysis of Rev. 20*, 228.

³⁹ Mueller, *Recapitulation in Rev. 4-11*, 263.

⁴⁰ Waechter, *Literary Structure of Revelation*, 116, 120.

⁴¹ These chapters present a scene where the throne of God is central to the text. For a great study on the throne scenes of Revelation see Gallusz, *The Throne Motif in the Book of Revelation*

⁴² Davis, *The Heavenly Court Scene of Revelation 4 – 5*, 17-21. Haukaas, *Revelation 1:7, 8*, 134-135. Mueller, *Microstructural Analysis*, 496, 498-504.

⁴³ Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 163-164. Haukaas, *Revelation 1:7, 8*, 134. La Rondelle, *End Time Prophecies*, 113-114. Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 25-26, 29-30, 108.

this literary unit is the white throne scene of Rev. 20:11-15.⁴⁴ This white throne scene is the climax of the heavenly judgment. (cf. Matt. 25:31-46)⁴⁵ Like Revelation 4 and 5 it focuses on the One seated on the throne.⁴⁶ The great white throne is a symbol of sovereignty and judgment.⁴⁷ Both passages allude to the judgment scene of Daniel 7.⁴⁸ Both passages mention a book or books that will be opened.⁴⁹ These two throne scenes appear to form an *inclusio* that demarcates the limits of this important section (Rev. 4-20). In his seminal study on chiasmic structures in the New Testament, Lund states that larger chiasmic units are frequently introduced and concluded by “frame-passages.”⁵⁰ Furthermore, the extremes of a chiasmic unit are usually parallel and reflect the same theme as the center of the chiasm.⁵¹ Both of these criteria appear to be present in this chiasmic structure. The judgment theme of these two frame passages emphasizes that the entire section of Rev. 4 – Rev. 20, including our chiasmic structure (Rev. 5-Rev. 19), will be based on the theme of the heavenly, end-time judgment of Daniel 7. As we shall see later on, the center of our chiasmic structure also emphasizes this same Danielic, end-time theme of judgment (cf. Rev. 14:7-8).

The Use of *Aggelos* in the Book of Revelation

The Greek word *aggelos* appears 76 times in 72 verses of the Revelation. It has the meaning of a messenger, an envoy, one who is sent, an angel. These messengers are ministering agents that do the will of Christ and act in behalf of our salvation (Matt. 24:31; Heb. 1:14; 1 Pet. 3:22). In the book of Revelation *aggelos* usually refers to a celestial spirit, faithful or fallen, but it can also refer to a human messenger (Rev. 1:20). In some passages *aggelos* can even refer to Christ Himself (Rev. 10:1; 18:1; cf. Acts 7:35, 38).⁵² The majority of the verses containing the word *aggelos* in the book of Revelation occur between Rev. 5 and Rev. 19 (59 of 76). Most of these angels appear in the context of events connected with the eschaton. Aside from the angels already mentioned in our chiasmic structure, we have several other groups of angels. We have the myriads of angels around the throne in Rev. 5, the four angels holding back the four winds

⁴⁴ Snyder, *Combat Myth in the Apocalypse*, 86. E. Mueller has written a great article on the microstructure of Revelation 20. See *Microstructural Analysis*, 227-255.

⁴⁵ Lambrecht, *Final Judgments and Ultimate Blessings*, 367. Lioy, *Revelation in Christological Focus*, 153. Spencer has written an excellent paper on Ellen White and the two judgment scenes of Matt. 25:31-46 and Rev. 20:11-15. See the following website <http://selfportraitsogod.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Executive-Judgment-Matthew-25.pdf>.

⁴⁶ Beale, *Revelation*, 1031. Lambrecht, *Final Judgments and Ultimate Blessings*, 366-367. Gallusz, *Throne Motif*, 149. Lioy, *Revelation in Christological Focus*, 152-153.

⁴⁷ Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation*, 192.

⁴⁸ Snyder, *Combat Myth in the Apocalypse*, 110-111, 322-325. Beale, *Revelation*, 1031. Haukaas, *Study of Revelation 1:7, 8*, 156-157. Moyise believes Rev. 20:11-15 alludes to Daniel 7, See *OT in Revelation*, 54. See also Lambrecht, *Final Judgments and Ultimate Blessings*, 366. Gallusz, *Throne Motif*, 147-148. Mealy, *After the Thousand Years*, 158, 168-169.

⁴⁹ Beale, *Revelation*, 1031-1033. Lambrecht, *Final Judgments and Ultimate Blessings*, 366. Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, 106.

⁵⁰ In his book Lund describes his seven, “laws governing chiasmic structures”. See, *Chiasmus in the NT*, 40-41. Also Siew, *Two Beasts and Two Witnesses*, 38-41. Breck, *Shape of Biblical Language*, 299.

⁵¹ Lund, *Chiasmus in the NT*, 41. Breck, *Shape of Biblical Language*, 299.

⁵² See Gundry, *Angelomorphic Christology*. Shea, *Mighty Angel*.

of strife in Rev. 7:1, the angel at the altar in Rev. 8, the angels of the seven trumpets, the four angels bound at the river Euphrates, the angels of the seven last plagues, the angel of the millstone at the fall of Babylon. Most, if not all, of these angels appear to be connected with the judgments of God in the last days.

The Cycles of Judgment in the Revelation Are Executed By Angels

The three septets of judgment are connected with the work of angels (Rev. 6:1, 3, 5, 7; 7:1-2; 8:2-8, 10, 12-13; 9:1, 11, 13-15; 11:15; 15:1, 6-8; 16:1-5, 8, 10, 12, 17). The judgment of Babylon (Rev. 16:17-19:4) is really an expansion of the seventh bowl plague. This expansion of the seventh bowl plague is also connected with the appearance of several angels (Rev. 17:1; 18:1, 21; 19:10). Furthermore, the harvest of the grapes (Rev. 14:17-20) and the supper of the vultures (Rev. 19:17-21) are also mediated by angels. Finally, the strong angel that binds Satan in the abyss (Rev. 20:1-3) is also linked with the theme of judgment. This confirms that there is a strong connection between the angels and the theme of judgment in the book of Revelation.

The Use of *Phone Megale* in the Book of Revelation

In the book of Revelation, the Greek word *phone* or voice appears 56 times in 45 verses. It can refer to the sound of a human voice or speech and in some cases, it can refer to the sound of an inanimate object like a trumpet or thunder (Rev. 10:3-4, 7). Like *aggelos*, the word *phone* is mostly confined to Rev. 5 to Rev. 19. Aside from the voices connected with the angels in our chiastic structure there is the voice of the angels around the throne in Rev. 5, the voice of the four beasts who show John the contents of the seals, the voice of the martyrs, the voice of the great multitude, a voice from the four horns of the altar, the voice of the seven thunders, several voices from heaven, the voice of the 144,000, several voices from the temple, the voice of Babylon's musicians, the voice of the bridegroom, the voice of the bride, the voice of much people praising the fall of Babylon, and a voice from the throne. Once again, the majority of these voices appear to be connected with the judgments of God in the last days.

The words *phone* and *megale*, with their variants, appear together in 21 verses of the Revelation.⁵³ Nineteen of the twenty one verses are found between Rev. 5:2 and Rev. 19:17. Aside from the angels mentioned in our chiastic structure we find several groups that speak in a loud voice. We have the celestial court around the throne in Rev. 5, the martyrs under the altar, the great multitude, several voices from heaven⁵⁴ and a voice from the temple during the seventh bowl plague. These loud voices are almost all connected with the judgments of God in the last days. Outside of the book of Revelation, *phone megale* appears only 15 times in the entire NT. In the gospels, *phone megale* is connected with Jesus,⁵⁵ the angelic harvesters in the Olivet Discourse⁵⁶ and with unclean spirits.⁵⁷ It is interesting to note that the First and Third

⁵³ Rev. 1:10; 5:2, 12; 6:10; 7:2, 10; 8:13; 10:3; 11:12, 15; 12:10; 14:7, 9, 15, 18; 16:1, 17; 18:2; 19:1, 17; 21:3.

⁵⁴ Rev. 11:12, 15; 12:10; 16:1.

⁵⁵ Matthew 27:46, 50; Mark 15:34, 37; Luke 23:46; John 11:43.

⁵⁶ Matt. 24:31.

⁵⁷ Mark 1:26; 5:7; Luke 4:33; 8:28..

Angel of the Three Angels of Rev. 14:6-12 contain the words *phone megale* but the Second Angel does not. Some scholars see this as a type of *inclusio* in the Three Angels.⁵⁸

The OT Context of the Angels That Cry Out in a Loud Voice

Interestingly, Greg Beale notes a possible OT background to the angel of Rev. 5:2 that cries out in a loud voice. Beale connects the angel from heaven sent to earth to pronounce judgment on Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:13-14, 23) with the angel of Rev. 5:2. The “watcher and an holy one” from Daniel 4 comes down from heaven to announce the decree of the heavenly court (Dan. 4:13, 17, 23-25; cf. Dan. 4:32, 37).⁵⁹ The Angel of Rev. 5:2 is a representative of the Divine Council. The wording of Daniel 4:13-14, 23 LXX and Rev. 5:2 is similar and both angels pronounce a message of judgment.⁶⁰ Both speak in a loud voice (*phone megale*).⁶¹ This OT connection appears to connect the angels that speak in a loud voice in the book of Revelation with the theme of judgment.

There is another possible OT background to the angels who speak in a loud voice in the prophecy of Revelation. At the beginning of the judgment scene of Ezekiel 9 we have the Spirit⁶² crying out in a loud voice (*phone megale*) to the six angels with the destroying weapons in their hands (Ez. 9:1 LXX).⁶³ The loud voice of Ezekiel 9:1 may represent the vengeance and wrath of God.⁶⁴ Many scholars have noted a strong connection between the sealing of Revelation 7 and the judgment scene of Ezekiel 9. This is of interest to us because the sealing passage of Revelation 7 contains one of the angels that speak in a loud voice (Rev. 7:2). It is also interesting to note that some scholars have seen a parallel between the seven angels of judgment from Ezekiel 9 (the six destroying angels and the angel with the inkhorn) and the seven angels of the trumpets (Rev. 8:2) and the bowl plagues (Rev. 15:6) in the book of Revelation.⁶⁵ As you may recall the angel that introduces the last three of the seven trumpets speaks in a loud voice (Rev. 8:13). This OT background of Ezekiel 9 gives the eleven angels that speak in a loud voice in the book of Revelation a strong connection with the theme of judgment.

⁵⁸ Waechter, *Literary Structure of Revelation*, 112.

⁵⁹ Z. Stefanovic, *Wisdom to the Wise*, 156, 157-158, 162.

⁶⁰ Beale, *Revelation*, 338.

⁶¹ Z. Stefanovic sees a parallel to the loud cry of Dan. 4:14 in Rev. 14:7. See *Wisdom to the Wise*, 156.

⁶² According to the context of Ez. 8:2-3, it is the Spirit of God that cries out in Ez. 9:1.

⁶³ Vogelgesang, *Ezekiel in Revelation*, 29-30. White, *5T*, 207. “Ezekiel 9:1, 3-6 quoted. Jesus is about to leave the mercy seat of the heavenly sanctuary, to put on garments of vengeance, and pour out His wrath in judgments upon those who have not responded to the light God has given them.”

⁶⁴ Ellicott, *Commentary for English Readers*, Ez. 9:1. Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, *Commentary*, Ez. 9:1.

⁶⁵ Valentine, *Temple Motif in Revelation*, 221-222, 231. White, *5T*, 212. “The day of God’s vengeance is just upon us. The seal of God will be placed upon the foreheads of those only who sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land... Our own course of action will determine whether we shall receive the seal of the living God or be cut down by the destroying weapons. Already a few drops of God’s wrath have fallen upon the earth; but when the seven last plagues shall be poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation, then it will be forever too late to repent and find shelter. No atoning blood will then wash away the stains of sin.” White, *Lt31a (October 27, 1894) par. 21*. “We are amid the perils of the last days, the time will soon come when the prophecy of (Ezekiel 9) will be fulfilled; that prophecy should be carefully studied, for it will be fulfilled to the very letter.”

The Symbolism of the Angels That Cry Out in a Loud Voice

The angels that speak with a loud voice in the book of Revelation appear to be connected with important messages and events that will take place during the Day of Atonement (Rev. 4:1). The figure of an angel symbolizes that the message is of heavenly origin.⁶⁶ The loud voice emphasizes the grave importance and crucial nature of the message.⁶⁷ The prophet Isaiah connected a loud voice with a call to repentance in the last days (Is. 58:1).⁶⁸ The OT connection with the watchers of Dan. 4 implies that the angels in Revelation are also representatives of the Divine Council sent down from heaven to warn humans to repent. Just as the angel came down to warn Nebuchadnezzar of impending judgment, so the angels that cry out in a loud voice have come down to warn the inhabitants of the earth of impending judgment. Furthermore, a loud voice may symbolize the spiritual power that will accompany the preaching of the message (Rev. 18:1).⁶⁹ Finally, a loud cry may also symbolize the global nature of the message. The loud cry of the Three Angels will be heard by every nation, kindred, tongue and people (Rev. 14:6; 18:1; cf. Rev. 10:2, 5).⁷⁰ Ellen White understood the significance of the angels that cry out in a loud voice. See the following quotations.

⁶⁶ Shore, *Having Ears to Hear*, 102.

⁶⁷ White, *Lt193 (July 31, 1901) par. 13*. “The words “saying with a loud voice” show the importance of the message.”

⁶⁸ White, *Ms162 (December 25, 1905) par. 28*. “The message must go to every nation, tongue, and people. “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sin.” The work specified in the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah is to be carried forward with zeal, sanctified earnestness, and determination. There is a special work to be done, in which the people of God are to act a decided part. White, *Ms16 (February 20, 1900) par. 23*. “The Sabbath truth is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, as represented in the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah.”

⁶⁹ White, *Lt121 (August 13, 1900) par. 13*. “The truth for this time, the third angel’s message, is to be proclaimed with a loud voice—meaning with increasing power—as we approach the great final test.” White, *Ms16 (February 20, 1900) par. 1*. “It is represented as being given with a loud voice; that is, with the power of the Holy Spirit.” White, *Ms16 (February 20, 1900) par. 20*. “Every organization among our people, as well as every individual, is responsible to God to give the last message of warning to the world with a loud voice. Strong, decided appeals are to be made. White, *Ms51-1900, par. 24*. “The third angel proclaims his message in no whispered tones, in no hesitant manner. He cries with a loud voice, while flying swiftly through the midst of heaven. This shows that the work of God’s servants is to be earnest and rapidly performed.” White, *Ms59 (September 20, 1899) par. 21*. “But the mighty Angel demands attention. He cries with a loud voice. He is to show the power and authority of His voice to those who have united with Satan to oppose the truth.” White, *Lt183 (September 20, 1902) par. 6*. ““Saying with a loud voice.’ A strong, decided influence is to be exerted to arouse the idolatrous world to take heed to the message.” White, *Mar*, 173.4. “The angels are represented as flying in the midst of heaven, proclaiming to the world a message of warning, and having a direct bearing upon the people living in the last days of this earth’s history. No one hears the voice of these angels, for they are a symbol to represent the people of God who are working in harmony with the universe of heaven.”

⁷⁰ Munger, *Angels in Revelation*, 292. White, *Ms146 (December 5, 1897) par. 5*. ““Fear God and give glory to him” is the burden of our message “for the hour of his judgment is come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” Proclaim it with a loud voice, not in silent whispers, not in suggestions now and then, but let it ring through our churches...” White, *Ms61 (September 17, 1909) par. 13*. “The truth is now to go forth with a power that it has not known for years. The message of present truth is to be proclaimed everywhere. We must be aroused to give this message with a loud voice, as symbolized in the fourteenth chapter of Revelation.”

“Prophecy declares that the first angel would make his announcement to “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” The warning of the third angel, which forms a part of the same threefold message, is to be no less widespread. It is represented in the prophecy as being proclaimed with a loud voice, by an angel flying in the midst of heaven; and it will command the attention of the world.” {GC 449.2}

“When God sends to men warnings so important that they are represented as proclaimed by holy angels flying in the midst of heaven, He requires every person endowed with reasoning powers to heed the message. The fearful judgments denounced against the worship of the beast and his image (Revelation 14:9-11), should lead all to a diligent study of the prophecies to learn what the mark of the beast is, and how they are to avoid receiving it.” {GC 594.2}

The Context and Message of Each Angel That Cries Out in a Loud Voice

The Angel of the Heavenly Court Scene

The first angel that cries out in a loud voice occurs in the heavenly courtroom scene of Rev. 4-5. Because the door to the Most Holy Place is open (Rev. 4:1), this scene occurs during the antitypical Day of Atonement (cf. Dan. 7:9-14; 8:13-14).⁷¹ Rev. 5 focuses all attention on the book sealed with seven seals. In the scriptures heavenly books are connected with judgment.⁷² In Rev. 5:2 a strong or mighty angel proclaims in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” Since the book has to do with the judgment of mankind, the opening of the book can only be performed by a celestial judge. No man is found worthy to open the book. This brings the seer to tears but one of the elders consoles the prophet and tells him the Lion of the Tribe of Juda has prevailed to open the book. When John looks he sees Jesus represented as a Lamb that was slain taking the book from the hand of the Father. This action symbolizes the power and authority of Christ to preside as Cosmic Judge in the heavenly sanctuary (Rev. 5:7-14; cf. Dan. 7:13-14; 12:1; John 5:22, 27; Rev. 3:5; 13:8).⁷³ When the Lamb takes the book all the heavenly court worships the Him. The message of this angel is a warning to the inhabitants of the earth that the end time judgment of mankind has commenced.

⁷¹ Anderson, *Unfolding the Revelation*, 48-49, 56. E. Gane, *Heaven’s Open Door*, 26-30. Treiyer, *Dia de Expiacion*, 434-436, 445, 456.

⁷² Baynes, *Function of the Motif Heavenly Book*, 247-249, 251-252. White, *Ms 164 (May 19, 1904) par. 11 & 12*. “Many talk of principle, going according to principle. What principle? Is it a principle borne of the human defective character, or is it a principle that is found in the Word of God, which everyone will have to meet in the day of final accounts, when every case is to be brought in review before God, and every case is to be decided? By what? Well, we read of a book in Revelation that was in the hand of One. There it was seen, and no one could open the book. And there was great mourning and weeping and agony because they could not open the book. But one says, “Here is One, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, He can open the book.” He takes the book, and then O what rejoicing there was! The book was opened, and now it can be read, and every case will be decided according to the things that are written in the book. A person’s word is nothing. The name that stands in that book does not have one tittle of influence, but it is the One who writes the very purposes of the heart, and every member of the human family is to decide whether the works of that one have been to glorify God or glorify himself.”

⁷³ Middleton, *Violence of the Lamb*, 144-147.

The Angel of the Sealing

The second angel that cries out in a loud voice (Rev. 7:2-3) appears in the interlude between the sixth and seventh seal. The seals follow the theme of the covenant curses and by the sixth seal we are in the time of the *parousia*. This places the sealing interlude in the time of the end. The angel ascends into the sky from the east and in his hand is the seal of the living God. He tells the four angels at the four corners of the earth to restrain the four destructive winds until the 144,000 have been sealed on their foreheads. In the book of Revelation, the sealed are the ones who fear God, give Him glory, worship Him and have victory over the beast, the image and the mark (Rev. 15:2-4; 19:5-8; cf. Rev. 20:4; 22:3-4). The angel with the seal in his hand reminds us of the heavenly man dressed in linen with the inkhorn in the prophecy of Ezekiel 9. Both heavenly beings place a protective mark on the people of God that firmly resist idolatry. Some scholars have connected this heavenly messenger with an angelomorphic representation of Christ.⁷⁴ Jewish tradition teaches that all people will be sealed for life or death on the Day of Atonement.⁷⁵ This message is a warning to the people of God that they must be sealed in the forehead if they are to survive the great tribulation of the last days (Rev. 7:13-14).

The Angel of the Three Woes

The third angel that cries out in a loud voice (Rev. 8:13) appears in the introduction to the three trumpet woes.⁷⁶ Because we are in a post-sealing time (Rev. 9:4), we know that this scene is eschatological. The angel is seen flying through the midst of heaven pronouncing a threefold woe on the inhabitants of the earth.⁷⁷ In the book of Revelation, the inhabitants of the earth are the ones who persecute the saints, worship the beast and fornicate with the harlot (Rev. 6:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 17:2, 8). According to the text, the trumpet woes are directed against the unsealed (Rev. 9:4), the unrepentant and the idolatrous (Rev. 9:20-21). The unsealed share many characteristics with the marked in the second half of the book of Revelation. This message warns the inhabitants of the earth of the importance of accepting the protective seal of God on the forehead.

The Angel With the Open Scroll

⁷⁴ White, *10LTM, Ms 59, 1895, par. 32*. "John's attention was called to another scene: "And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God." Revelation 7:2. Who is this? The Angel of the covenant. He comes from the sunrising. He is the Dayspring from on high. He is the Light of the world. "In Him is life; and the life was the light of men." John 1:4. This is the One Isaiah describes: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6. He cried, as One who had superiority over the hosts of angels in heaven "to whom it was given to hurt the earth, and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." Revelation 7:2, 3."

⁷⁵ Newton, *Prophecies of Daniel*, 265-267. Paul, *Heavenly Tablets*, 350-351. Snyder, *Combat Myth in the Apocalypse*, 330.

⁷⁶ The oldest manuscripts of Rev. 8:13 have an eagle crying out instead of an angel.

⁷⁷ The Greek of this text is very similar to the Greek of Rev. 14:6-7A.

The fourth angel that cries out in a loud voice (Rev. 10:1-3) appears in the interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpet. He descends from heaven with a small, open book in his hand. This book represents the unsealed, end time prophecies of Daniel, the only section of the OT that was sealed until the time of the end. The fact that the prophecy of Daniel is unsealed confirms that this scene is eschatological. The angel is described as having divine characteristics. In fact, many believe this is another angelomorphic representation of Christ.⁷⁸ The angel places one foot on the sea and another foot on the land and he roars like a lion. The fact that the angel roars like a lion alludes back to the Lamb that takes the book in the judgment scene of Rev. 5. Then the angel, in a manner reminiscent of the man clothed in linen of Daniel 12, lifts his hand to heaven and swears an oath by the Creator that there should be time no more. The time period referred to here is the prophetic period of the 2,300 days leading up to the antitypical Day of Atonement prophesied in the book of Daniel (Dan. 7:9-14; 8:13-14; 12:1, 3, 10).⁷⁹ The angel then instructs John to eat and prophesy the contents of the small, unsealed book. The cleansing of the sanctuary is alluded to again when the angel gives John a reed like a rod and tells him to, “rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.”⁸⁰ The message of this angel serves as warning to the people God that the measuring or the eschatological judgment predicted in the prophecy of Daniel has commenced.

The First Angel of Rev. 14

The next angel that cries out in a loud voice appears in the central section of Revelation (Rev. 12-14) and he is the first of the Three Angels of Rev. 14:6-12. This angel is seen by John flying through the midst of heaven proclaiming his message to those who dwell on the earth (Rev. 14:6). The angel calls on all nations, kindreds, tribes and peoples to fear God, give Him glory and worship the Creator because the hour of his judgment has come (Rev. 14:7).⁸¹ The fact that the hour of his judgment has already begun is an allusion to the commencement of the antitypical Day of Atonement (Rev. 3:7-8; 4:1; 5:1-14; 6:9-11; 10:6; 11:1, 19; cf. Dan. 7:9-14; 8:13-14; 12:1, 10). In the book of Revelation, the sealed are the ones who fear God, give Him glory and worship Him (Rev. 15:2-4; 19:5-8). In contrast, the marked refuse to repent and give God glory (Rev. 16:9; cf. Rev. 9:20-21). The message of this angel serves as a warning to the inhabitants of the earth that the end time judgment has begun and it is of the utmost importance that all receive the protective seal of God in the forehead.

The Second Angel of Rev. 14

⁷⁸ White, *19MR*, 319. “The mighty Angel who instructed John was no less a personage than Jesus Christ.” See also Gundry, *Angelomorphic Christology in Revelation*, 378-385, 394-396. Beale, *Revelation*, 522-525. Hoffmann, *Angelomorphic Christology and Revelation*, 77-87. Shea, *Mighty Angel*, 283-286, 289-291.

⁷⁹ Shea, *Mighty Angel*, 310-312.

⁸⁰ Strand, *Old Testament Background to Revelation 11:1*, AUSS, Vol. 20, No. 3, 257-261.

⁸¹ The group mentioned here is almost identical to the group who is dominated by the beast in Rev. 13:7. See Munger, *Angels in Revelation*, 247.

The next angel that cries out in a loud voice proclaims the celestial verdict against Babylon and her followers (Rev. 14:8). It is implied that this warning comes from the Heavenly Council of Rev. 5. The angel warns against any illicit relationship with the great harlot. The harlot is guilty of seducing all the nations to drink the wine of the wrath of her fornication or idolatry. An extensive explanation of the harlot and her abominable wine will be given in Rev. 16:12-19:4. This angel foreshadows the angel of Rev. 18 that will repeat the same message of judgment against Babylon. The message of this angel warns the inhabitants of the earth against fornicating with the end time harlot by accepting her idolatrous wine.

The Third Angel of Rev. 14

The next angel that cries out in a loud voice is the Third Angel (Rev. 14:9-12) of Revelation 14. This angel pronounces a solemn warning against the worshipers of the beast and his image and those who would receive the mark of the beast on their right hand or on their forehead. The marked will drink the wine of the wrath of God. They will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. The reference to the holy angels and the Lamb echoes the judgment scene of Revelation 5. The punishment of this group will be described in greater detail in the harvest of the grapes (Rev. 14:17-20), the seven last plagues (Rev. 15-16) and the vision of the Rider on the white horse (Rev. 19:11-21). The message of the Third Angel finishes with a brief description of the 144,000 as commandment keepers who have the faith of Jesus (Rev. 14:12). The purpose of this message is to warn the inhabitants of the earth against worshiping the beast, his image or receiving his mark.

The Angel of the Wheat Harvest

The next angel that cries out in a loud voice is the angel of the wheat harvest (Rev. 14:15-16). This angel follows the end time blessing for those who die in Christ during the mark of the beast crisis (Rev. 14:13). The angel also follows the appearance of the Son of Man sitting on a white cloud coming to the earth with a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand (Rev. 14:14; cf. Rev. 1:7). The angel messenger comes out of the heavenly temple and tells the One sitting on the cloud to reap because the time (*hora*) has come and the harvest is ripe. The “time” referred to here is the hour (*hora*) of his judgment (Rev. 14:7). In the context of the parables of the harvest from the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43) and the coming of the Son of Man in the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:30-31), this group appears to allude to the gathering in of the righteous from the four corners of the earth at the time of the *parousia*. In the book of Revelation, it is the sealed who will be delivered by Christ at the *parousia* (Rev. 7:9-17; 14:1-5; 15:2-4; 19:5-8; cf. Rev. 3:10-12). The purpose of this message is to warn the inhabitants of the earth of the need to be sealed prior to the Second Coming of Christ.

The Angel of the Grape Harvest

The next angel that cries out in loud voice is the angel of the grape harvest (Rev. 14:17-20). An angel comes out of the heavenly temple with a sharp sickle (Rev. 14:17). Another angel comes out from the altar and cries out to the first angel to thrust in his sickle and gather the

grape clusters of the vine of the earth because the grapes are fully ripe (Rev. 14:18; cf. Rev. 18:5). The angel gathers the vine of the earth and casts it into the great wine press of the wrath of God (Rev. 14:19). The wine press of the wrath of God echoes the language of the Third Angel (Rev. 14:10) and this lets us know that the grapes are a symbol of the marked who worship the beast and his image. The grape harvest of the marked is set in contrast with the wheat harvest of the sealed. The wine of the wrath of God also foreshadows the punishment of Babylon (Rev. 16:19) and the punishment which comes from the Rider on the white horse (Rev. 19:15). This connects the grapes with those who have fornicated with the harlot and those who are punished by the Rider on the white horse. The winepress is trodden outside of the city and it produces a grisly lake of blood 1600 furlongs in length and about a horses bridle in depth (Rev. 14:20). Another description of the punishment of the marked will be seen in the seven last plagues (Rev. 15-16) and in the vision of the Rider on the white horse (Rev. 19:11-21). The purpose of this message is to warn against the worship of the beast or his image and the reception of his idolatrous mark.

The Glorious Angel

The next angel that cries out in a loud voice is found in the Fall of Babylon section (Rev. 17-19:5) which is really an expansion of the seventh bowl plague (Rev. 17:1). In language reminiscent of the First Angel, an angel descends from heaven with great power and lightens the whole earth with his glory (Rev. 18:1). Some scholars believe this to be another angelomorphic description of Christ. The glorious angel then repeats in a loud voice an expanded version of the message of the Second Angel (Rev. 18:2-3).⁸² This is followed by a voice from heaven that warns, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." The call to come out of end time Babylon before she is desolated echoes the abomination warning from the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20; cf. Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11).⁸³ The call to come out of Babylon also forms a parallel with the Third Angel of Rev. 14. This parallel helps us understand that to fornicate with Babylon or to drink her wine is equivalent to worshiping the beast, his image and receiving his mark.⁸⁴ In other words, the two warnings are synonymous, and they speak of the same end time apostasy.⁸⁵ The purpose of this angel is to warn all the nations of the world about the abominable wine of the harlot and the worship of the beast.

⁸² White, *2MR*, 228.1. "The Revelator says, "I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen" [Revelation 18:1, 2]. This is the same message that was given by the second angel..."

⁸³ White, *15MR*, 228.2. "Let us read and study the twelfth chapter of Daniel. It is a warning that we shall all need to understand before the time of the end."

⁸⁴ Liu, *Image of the Beast*, 163-165. White, *RH December 6, 1892*, par. 16. "The second angel's message is, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." And in the loud cry of the third angel's message a voice is heard from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.""

⁸⁵ White, *7BC*, 984.8. "As God called the children of Israel out of Egypt, that they might keep His Sabbath, so He calls His people out of Babylon, that they may not worship the beast or his image." White, *1SG* 193.2. "The message of the fall of Babylon, as given by the second angel, is again given... The work of this angel comes in at the

The Angel of the Great Supper of God

The last angel that cries out in a loud voice is found in the vision of the Rider on the white horse (Rev. 19:11-21). This vision is a continuation of the judgment scene from Rev. 19:1-9 and the two scenes are literary reciprocals of the judgment scene of Revelation 4-5.⁸⁶ The Rider is Christ and He is depicted coming to judge and make war against the beast, the false prophet, the kings of the earth and their armies (battle of Armageddon). John sees an angel standing in the sun calling in a loud voice to gather the fowls of the earth to the supper of the Great God (Rev. 19:17). The fowls “flying in the midst of heaven (*mesouranemati*)” are harbingers of impending doom and they echo the fearful warning of the angel of Rev. 8:13 who was also seen flying in the midst of heaven (*mesouranemati*) pronouncing impending doom.⁸⁷ In the OT, the idea of fowl eating dead corpses is associated with the sin of idolatry and the curses of the holy covenant (Deu. 28:26; 1 Kings 14:11; 16:4; 21:24; Ps. 79:2; Is. 18:6; Jer. 7:33; 15:3; 16:4; 19:7; 34:20; cf. Matt. 24:28; Luke 17:37). It is also associated with the eschatological battle against Gog (Ezekiel 39:4, 17-20). The list of the those who will be food for the fowls (Rev. 19:18) echoes the list of the unsealed (Rev. 6:16) and the list of the marked (Rev. 13:16). Rev. 19:20 specifically states that the people who will be food for the fowls are the ones who have been deceived by the false prophet to worship the beast, his image and to receive his mark. The beast and false prophet will be thrown into a lake of fire and brimstone. This echoes the punishment of the Third Angel (Rev. 14:10). The message of this angel functions as a warning against rejecting the seal of God or accepting the mark of the beast.

The Subunits of the Chiastic Structure of the Angels That Cry Out in a Loud Voice

A and A' (The Angel of the Court Scene and the Angel of the Great Supper)

The first set of parallels in our chiastic structure is the angel of the court scene of Rev. 5 and the angel of the Great Supper of Rev. 19. The two angels are connected with the end time judgment. The angel of Rev. 5:2 initiates the end time judgment by asking who is worthy to open the book of judgment sealed with seven seals. The angel of Rev. 19:17 mediates the final punishment of the wicked at the end of the eschatological judgment (Rev. 19:17-21). The Lamb who takes the book in Rev. 5 is synonymous with the One who rides the white horse in Rev. 19.

B and B' (The Angel of the Sealing and the Glorious Angel)

right time, and joins in the last great work of the third angel's message, as it swells into a loud cry.” White, (*Manuscript 52, 1900*). 7BC 985. “The three angels’ messages are to be combined, giving their threefold light to the world. In the Revelation, John says, [Revelation 18:1-5 quoted.] This represents the giving of the last and threefold message of warning to the world.”

⁸⁶ Shea, *Rev. 5 and 19 as Literary Reciprocals*, 249-257. Hardy, *Revelation 4-5 and 19a*.

⁸⁷ Munger, *Angels in Revelation*, 269.

The sealing angel of Rev. 7:1-3 and the glorious angel of Rev. 18:1-5 are parallel. Both angels allude to Christ. The two scenes depict a delay in the last judgments of God until the people of God can be sealed or marked for protection before the final outpouring of the wrath of God.

C and C' (The Angel of the Three Woes and the Angel of the Grape Harvest)

The angel of the three woes of Rev. 8:13 and the angel of the grape harvest of Rev. 14:17-20 are parallel. They both depict the punishment of the wicked after the close of probation. The angel of Rev. 8:13 introduces the three trumpet woes which are punishments against the unsealed (Rev. 9:4) and the angel of the grape harvest depicts the punishment of the marked (Rev. 14:19-20). The unsealed and the marked are the same group.

D and D' (The Angel With the Open Book and the Angel of the Wheat Harvest)

The angel with the open book of Rev. 10 and the angel of the wheat harvest of Rev. 14:15-16 are parallel. The first angel presents the initiation of the end time judgment and the initiation of the end time preaching of the gospel. The second angel is connected with the wheat harvest which is the gathering in of those who have accepted the end time gospel (Rev. 10:11; 14:6-7). The wheat harvest is the final result of the preaching of the gospel.

E, F and E' (The Three Angels of Rev. 14:6-12)

At the center of the chiasm are the Three Angels of Rev. 14:6-12. The first angel announces that the end time judgment has begun and he calls on the earth dwellers to worship God and remain loyal to him by being sealed. The second angel warns against the danger of committing idolatry during the time of the last judgment. This message foreshadows the call to come out of Babylon in Rev. 18. The third angel warns about the danger of committing idolatry during the time of the last judgment.

The Intratextual Connections Between the Angels That Cry Out in a Loud Voice

There are several motifs that are held in common by the angels that cry out in a loud voice. The theme of the initiation of the antitypical Day of Atonement appears in the message of the angels from Rev. 5, 7, 10 and the First Angel of Rev. 14. The theme of the seal of God appears in connection with the angels of Rev. 7, 8, the First Angel of Rev. 14, the angel of the wheat harvest and the angel of Rev. 19. The theme of the end time preaching of the gospel to all the world appears in connection with the angel of Rev. 10, the First Angel of Rev. 14 and the angel of Rev. 18. The theme of the harlot appears in connection with the Second Angel of Rev. 14 and the angel of Rev. 18. The theme of the mark appears in connection with the Third Angel of Rev. 14, the angel of grape harvest and the angel of Rev. 19. These intratextual connections serve to connect and unite the angels that cry out in a loud voice.

The Centrality of the Three Angels

The Three Angels of Revelation 14 appear to be the focal point of all the angels that cry out in a loud voice in the book of Revelation. This is reflected by the central position of the Three Angels in the chiasmic structure formed by these heavenly messengers. The Three Angels also appear to be a point of transition. From the angel of Rev. 5:2 all the way up to the Three Angels we have several references to the initiation of the eschatological judgment or antitypical Day of Atonement. After the Three Angels there are no more references to the initiation of the end time judgment. Instead, there are several references to the execution phase of the eschatological judgment. The focus of the warnings from the angel of Rev. 7 until the Three Angels is on the need to be sealed in the forehead with the protective seal of God. After the Three Angels, the focus of the warnings is to avoid the worship of the beast and his image and the reception of the mark. There is also a focus on avoiding the wine of Babylon after the Three Angels. Thus, the Three Angels are the climax of the three critical warnings of the Apocalypse. The First Angel warns about the need for the seal of God, the Second Angel warns about the harlot and her wine and the Third Angel warns about the worship of the beast and his image and the reception of the mark. If the Revelation is a book about end time warnings, then the Three Angels of Revelation 14 are the climax of this prophecy.

The Unity of the Warnings of the Three Angels of Rev. 14

Although the Three Angels of Rev. 14 seem to proclaim three different warnings, in reality, they are repeating the same warning three times with different symbols. The warning about the seal, the warning about the mark and the warning about the harlot are synonymous and they all focus on the important decision the inhabitants of the earth will need to make in the time of the end (Rev. 3:10). The inhabitants of the earth will have to choose between the seal or the mark, the Lamb or the beast, Christ or the harlot. By the literary structure of the angels that cry out in loud voice, the book of Revelation brings the reader/hearers of the prophecy to the critical point of decision.⁸⁸ Interestingly, all these warnings are parallel with the end time abomination warning from the book of Daniel and the Olivet Discourse (Dan. 12:11; Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14). Why has God repeated the same warning three times in the book of

⁸⁸ White, *EW*, 118.1. "I then saw the third angel. Said my accompanying angel, "Fearful is his work. Awful is his mission. He is the angel that isto select the wheat from the tares, and seal, or bind, the wheat for the heavenly garner. These things should engross the whole mind, the whole attention." White, *SH*, 103. "When Christ entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to perform the closing work of the atonement, He entrusted His servants with the last message of mercy to be given to the world. This is the warning of the third angel of Revelation 14. The prophet sees that immediately following its proclamation, the Son of man is coming in glory to reap the harvest of the earth. The most fearful threatening ever addressed to mortals is contained in the third angels message (Revelation 14:9-12). It must be a terrible sin which calls down the wrath of God unmingled with mercy. People are not to be left in darkness concerning this important matter. The warning against this sin is to be given to the world before the arrival of Gods judgments, that all may know why these judgments are to be inflicted and may have opportunity to escape them. In the issue of the great contest, two distinct, opposite classes are developed. In one class is everyone who "worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand," and thus who bring upon themselves the awful judgments threatened by the third angel. The other class, in marked contrast to the world, are those who "keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.""

Revelation using different symbols? It is because this warning is so important it needs to be repeated for emphasis. See the following quotations from Ellen White.

Revelation is a sealed book, but it is also an opened book. It records marvelous events that are to take place in the last days of this earth's history. The teachings of this book are definite, not mystical and unintelligible. In it the same line of prophecy is taken up as in Daniel. Some prophecies God has repeated, thus showing that importance must be given to them. The Lord does not repeat things that are of no great consequence. 8MR 413.2

To the period just prior to the appearing of the Son of man, the prophecies of Scripture point, and here their warnings and threatenings pre-eminently apply. The prophetic periods of Daniel, extending to the very eve of the great consummation, throw a flood of light upon events then to transpire. The book of Revelation is also replete with warning and instruction for the last generation. RH September 25, 1883, par. 6

Echoes of the Angels and the Warning in Revelation 20

Although we do not have an angel that cries out in a loud voice in Rev. 20, we do have an angel who descends from heaven to bind Satan and seal him in the abyss for 1000 years (Rev. 20:1-3). These events echo the Azazel ritual from the Day of Atonement. Next, John sees the souls that have been beheaded during the mark of the beast crisis (Rev. 20:4). This scene echoes the warning of the Third Angel. Rev. 20:10 says that Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone where the false prophet and the beast are, and they will be tormented forever and ever. The language of this text echoes the punishment of the Third Angel (Rev. 14:10-11). Finally, the throne scene of Rev. 20:11-15 appears to be the last phase of the executive judgment.⁸⁹ The wicked who are not written in the book of life will be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15). According to Rev. 13:8 and 17:8 it is the worshipers of the beast that are not written in the book of life. Jesus is the one who controls the book of life (Rev. 3:5; 13:8) and He is the one who decides who gets thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15). Thus, Rev. 20 ends with another echo of the warning of the Third Angel.

⁸⁹ White, *RH April 21, 1896, par. 9*. "Let the human agent consider the solemn fact that the day of reckoning is just before us, and that we are daily deciding what our eternal destiny shall be. The Master examines every individual case, dealing personally with the talents entrusted by him. O solemn day of reckoning!—that day which will bring paleness to many faces,—that day in which the words shall be spoken to many, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." It will be an awful thing to be found "wanting" when the book of accounts is opened in that great day. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [the graves of those who persisted in transgression and sin until death overtook them] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Upon the decisions reached in that day depends the future, eternal interest of every soul. We shall have unspeakable joy, or unutterable woe and misery, the horrors of despair."

Echoes of the Warning in the Vision of the New Jerusalem

In Rev. 21 we have two exclusion lists that echo the warnings of the Second and Third Angels. In Rev. 21:8 a list of people is given who will be thrown into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. The list includes the abominable (*ebdelygmenois*) which alludes to those who have drunk the abominable (*bdelygmaton*) wine of the harlot (Rev. 17:4-5). The wicked from this list have their place in the lake of fire. This echoes the warning of Rev. 20:15 and it alludes to the worshipers of the beast who are not written in the book of life (Rev. 13:8; 17:8). Again, in Rev. 21:27, we have another exclusion list that states that only those who are written in the book of life will be allowed into the New Jerusalem. Among those who will be excluded is anyone who worketh abomination. The word abomination (*bdelygma*) echoes the warning against the harlot to avoid her abominable wine of fornication (Rev. 17:4-5). As we saw before, the mentioning of the book of life echoes the Third Angel because it is the worshipers of the beast that are not written in the book of life (Rev. 13:8; 17:8).

Echoes of the Warning in the Epilogue of the Apocalypse

The epilogue of Revelation contains several important verses that echo the warning of the Three Angels. In Rev. 22:8-9, John is tempted to worship his angelic guide. The angel tells John not to worship him but to worship God. This is an echo of the warning of the First Angel who tells the inhabitants of the earth to fear God and worship the Creator (Rev. 14:6-7). Rev. 22:10-12 warns that the end time judgment is soon to close and the destiny of all those who dwell on the earth will be declared unchangeable. All the inhabitants of the earth will be divided into two groups, the clean and the impure, the righteous and the unrighteous (Rev. 22:11; cf. Dan. 12:10). This separation of all the earth dwellers into two groups echoes the idea of the sealing and the marking. It also alludes to the OT Day of Atonement when all the people of Israel were either cleansed of sin or they were cut off from among the people (Lev. 23:29-30). In Rev. 22:14 we have a *macarism* for those who keep the commandments. They will be allowed to enter into the New Jerusalem. The keeping of the commandments echoes the warning of the Third Angel where the sealed are referred to as those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus (Rev. 14:12). The *macarism* of Rev. 22:14 is followed by another exclusion list that describes those who will be denied entrance into the holy city (Rev. 22:15). The exclusion of the wicked from the New Jerusalem echoes Rev. 21:27 and the warning of the Third Angel since it is the worshipers of the beast that will be excluded from the holy city. Finally, a curse is pronounced on those who would add or take away from the words of the prophecy of Revelation. The plagues written in the book will be added to those who add to the words of the prophecy. The names of those who take away from the words of the prophecy will be taken out of the book of life and they will be excluded from the holy city. Once again, this curse echoes the language of the Third Angel because it alludes to the worshipers of the beast who are not written in the book of life and who will be excluded from the New Jerusalem (Rev. 13:8; 17:8; 21:27).

Conclusion

We have examined the important motif of the angels that cry out in a loud voice in the Apocalypse. There are exactly eleven of these angels and they form a chiastic structure with the Three Angels of Rev. 14 in the middle. These heavenly messengers warn about the need to be sealed with the seal of God, the need to avoid the worship of the beast and his image and the reception of his mark and the need to avoid the abominable wine of the harlot. These three warnings are actually one. The warning is repeated in three different ways because of its crucial importance. The warnings in the messages to the seven churches foreshadow the warnings of the angels that cry out in a loud voice. The warnings in the vision of the New Jerusalem and the epilogue echo the warnings of the angels that cry out in a loud voice. Furthermore, several of the angels that cry out in loud voice are connected with allusions to the initiation of the antitypical Day of Atonement. The warning of the angel of Rev 18 is parallel with the warning of the Third Angel and it echoes the abomination warning of the Olivet Discourse and the book of Daniel.

Thank you for taking the time to read this paper. It is the prayer of the author that this short essay may serve as an inspiration for further study in this important area of biblical apocalyptic interpretation. To God be the glory and maranatha!

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