

The Structures of Daniel and Revelation

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I have hesitated to put this content into the public domain because of its technical nature which may discourage many from a thorough reading. And also, most likely, it will be of special interest only to Christians. I really would prefer a wider readership of this web site than just the Christian Community. The contrary argument is their importance. I am firmly convinced that end time theology is severely compromised by an inadequate understanding of structural issues in interpretation, especially of Hebrew literature. The interpretation of the prophetic content in the Bible will be seriously handicapped and at worst erroneous unless the correct structures are determined.

In recent years, there has been a small but relatively steady stream of scholars who have worked in the area variously known as literary analysis or rhetorical criticism. There is now quite a wealth of understanding of Hebrew literary structures which can really help us interpret the Bible. We now make a very simple introduction which enable some sense to be made of the discussion of the structures which have a vital bearing on the interpretation of the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation.

A simple example of this from Mark 2:27 will serve to illustrate this.

A B

The Sabbath was made for man,
B A
not man for the Sabbath.

If a line were drawn connecting the A's and the B's, the lines would form an X, which is like the Greek letter *Chi* which is where the term *chiasmus* comes from. This is often termed a chiasm or inverted parallel structure. Strictly speaking chiasm should be reserved for this simple ABBA pattern. However the term is often used more loosely as in this article, when the inverted parallel structures are more complex.

In Hebrew literature there are many forms of parallelism and although present in many languages, it is common and distinctive in Hebrew literature which uses structure to emphasise and fix or focus ideas and make them more memorable and sometimes to make connections which add meaning.

Three types of parallelism are introduced below, all of which will become important in our understanding of both Daniel and Revelation. Daniel as a devoted, Jewish scholar would have understood these structures and so we need to do so as well in order that we will be able to better understand his writing. Since the examples are given in English it is of

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course necessary that the translation reflects the structure of the Hebrew. Many of our translations today try to do this.

Very common in both the Old and New Testaments is *standard parallelism* illustrated below from Psalm 3:7.

- A. Arise, O LORD!
- A'. Deliver me, O my God!
- B. Strike all my enemies on the jaw;
- B'. break the teeth of the wicked.

In this structure, the parallel lines follow each other in an AA' BB' pattern.

The next example illustrates *step parallelism* and follows an ABCA'B'C' pattern and is taken from Luke 11:9-10

- A. Ask and it will be given to you;
- B. seek and you will find;
- C. knock and the door will be opened to you.
- A'. For everyone who asks receives;
- B'. he who seeks finds;
- C'. and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

For example, this can be used to help us understand Revelation 14 and to help interpret Genesis 1.

The third example illustrates *inverted parallelism* following an ABCDC'B'A' pattern. See Proverbs 6:16-19

There are six things the LORD hates,
seven that are detestable to him:

- A. haughty eyes
- B. a lying tongue
- C. hands that shed innocent blood
- D. a heart that devises wicked schemes
- C'. feet that are quick to rush into evil
- B'. a false witness who pours out lies
- A'. and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers

This example illustrates how recognising this structure can often yield important understanding in interpretation. In this passage, although the heart is mentioned only once it is at the centre and therefore becomes the important focus. Also notice how the A-A', the B-B' and the C-C' pair up so nicely. Especially interesting is pairing "haughty eyes" with "a man who stirs up dissension" – it is not so obvious that these phrases are linked together, but the A-A' pair makes that association definite so that something new is learnt. Note that sometimes, the central phrase (D above) will have a D' too.

Care will be taken in applying these structures. It would be easy to go too far and force chiasmus to text when it is inappropriate. Research has shown that chiasmus was used far more widely in the ancient world than it is today, so that it likely underlies numerous portions of Scripture where it has not usually been perceived. Sometimes, the recognition of the chiasmic structure will reveal textual relationships otherwise obscured as in the

Proverbs 6:16-19 example above. In these situations, they become a valuable exegetical tool. For example, these structures supplied important exegetical evidence in the identification of the horn in Daniel 8 and the understanding of the millennium in the book of Revelation.

Our English translations often represent the simpler forms of parallelism well, but cannot easily represent inverted parallel structures, because they depend on the word order in the original language. For this reason, original language or interlinear versions are often needed to discern their presence. These days, the quality of books and Bible software makes this far more accessible to many of us than used to be the case.

1. The Structure of Daniel

In our view, the importance of structure in the prophetic books, especially Daniel and Revelation is severely underestimated. It is often assumed that for each scholar to come up with their own structure for the book of Revelation is the norm. In our view, John must have written Revelation with a structure in mind and that for correct interpretation we need to determine what that structure is.

Our understanding is that the book of Revelation records the visions John received in the order they were received. There is little disagreement with this in the literature. However, it's the following two key questions which are crucially important.

1. Does the fulfilment of the visions occur in the same order as they are written?
2. If the answer to question 1 is no, then what is the structure of the visions?

Our observation would be that those who strongly emphasise that the interpretation should be literal, often assume that literal interpretation implies the chronological ordering of the fulfilment of the visions. In fact, there is no necessary connection between literal fulfilment and a requirement for chronological order. Indeed, when we examine the content of the visions, a literal interpretation strongly suggests that the fulfilment of some of the visions is chronologically in parallel. This is most evident when we see that a literal interpretation of the vision of the seven seals, the seven trumpets, the seven plagues and Revelation 12-14 would lead us to conclude that they all finish at the end of the age, suggesting that these passages describing visions that are fulfilled chronologically in parallel not sequentially.

Most interesting and very important is the outcome of comparing the structure of the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation. No one that we know disputes that the visions and dreams in Daniel are fulfilled chronologically in parallel. We note that there are four of these when we exclude the seventy sevens prophecy in Daniel 9 which is uniquely different. These are

1. Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2 which pictures 4 earthly kingdoms which we interpret as the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman Empires followed by a spiritual kingdom which God will begin to set up during the Roman Empire, but which will eventually replace the others and last forever.
2. In Daniel 7, Daniel had a dream depicting the same 4 earthly kingdoms followed by the leader of a fifth one whose kingdom will last to the end of the age, but which will eventually be destroyed and be replaced by God's eternal kingdom.

3. In Daniel 8, Daniel had a vision of the Medo-Persian and Greek Empires followed by a leader who emerged out of the region of the Greek Empire. This leader we are told, starts off small, becomes great and will be very successful until destroyed at the end of the age, so he must be the end of the age ruler.

4. In Daniel 10-12, Daniel had a final vision depicting the Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman Empires which is cut short at this point because it was closed to Daniel and sealed until the "time of the end". In fact, this vision is incomplete and as we will see it is completed by John's vision in Revelation 11. An earlier post showed that the time of the end begins with the Roman Empire and extends to the end of the age, roughly corresponding to the period of the book of Revelation.

Further examination of the structure of the book of Daniel shows that it divides into two halves. All scholars agree on this, but the majority make the division between chapter 6 and 7 and recognise that chapters 1 to 6 are history and chapters 7 to 12 prophecy. When divided this way, the events in chapters 1 to 6 are written in chronological order and the visions in chapters 7 to 12 are also recorded in the order they were received. However, there is another, more hidden and very informative way to divide Daniel into two, which leads to two balanced, halves. The first half from Daniel 2:4 to 7 was originally written in Aramaic and the rest in Hebrew. Each of these two parts are framed by two visions with a centre part revealing the persecution and suffering of God's people.

Daniel's preparation (1) (605 BC)

I. Gentile Focus: in Aramaic from 2.4b to 7

A Four Empires (2) (603 BC)

B The present affliction of God's people (3-6)

A' Four Empires and a little horn to the end (7) (552 BC)

II. Jewish Focus: in Hebrew (8 to 12)

A Two Empires and a little horn to the end (8) (550 BC)

B The future affliction of God's people (9) (538 BC)

A' Three Empires (10-12) (535 BC)

We will see that the book of Revelation, very naturally, contains the same broad structure, although it is substantially more complex. We will argue that John deliberately structured the book of Revelation to be like that of Daniel. We believe what Daniel is to the Jews, Revelation is to all God's people, Jews and Christians alike. We argue that the book of Daniel smoothly merges into Revelation to form a complete prophecy; Daniel fits into Revelation like a hand in a glove. For these reasons, it is impossible for the fulfilment of the visions in Revelation to be in chronological order. We argue that when this structure is recognised, the ambiguity in the interpretation of Revelation disappears since only one interpretation becomes possible. We argue that this is so clear that many previously plausible interpretations are ruled out and the understanding converges to a single, unified interpretation. We argue that confusion is removed when this is done.

2. The Links between Daniel's Final Vision and Revelation

In this part we begin to explore the links between Daniel and Revelation. I first saw the following in 2006 and it blew my mind! There is a very strong association between Daniel's final vision and Revelation 10-11. I don't think this has been seen before. If indeed Daniel's final vision ends when the power of the Jews is totally broken, when they are scattered all over the Roman Empire and the Muslims have just begun the construction of the "Dome of the Rock" on the Temple Mount and Daniel is told that the rest of the vision is closed until the time of the end (Daniel 12:9), it would be very surprising if the rest of the vision is not completed elsewhere in the Bible. Careful study shows very clearly that John received what was closed to Daniel and it starts with Revelation 10-11.

To show this, we invite you to examine the following table.

Row	Daniel 10-12	Revelation 10-22
1	10:1-11:1 Man in linen with awesome characteristics (especially 10:4-6).	10:1 Mighty angel with awesome characteristics
2	11:2-12:4 The vision of the Persian, Greek and Roman Empires.	10:2a Holding an open little scroll in his hand.
3	12:5 Two angels one on this bank of the river and one on the opposite bank.	10:2b The mighty angel planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land.
4	12:6 One angel says to the man in linen who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?"	10:3-4 The mighty angel gives a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted the seven thunders spoke. A voice from heaven commands John to seal these words and not to write them down.
5	12:7a The man in linen lifted his right hand & left hand toward heaven.	10:5 The mighty angel raises his right hand to heaven
6	12:7b He swears by the one who lives forever.	10:6a He swears by the one who lives forever and who created the heavens, the earth, the seas and everything in them.
7	12:7c It will be for a time, times and half a time	10:6b There will be no more time
8	12:7d When the power of the holy people has been finally broken all these things will be completed	10:7 In the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, God's plan will be completed
9	12:8 Daniel asks what will be the outcome of this 12:9a Go your way Daniel	10:8-11 Go, take the scroll. John eats scroll. He must prophecy more 11:1-22:9 John reveals God's message
10	12:9b The words are closed and sealed until the time of the end	22:10 Do not seal up the words because the time is near
11	12:10 Many purified, made spotless & refined; wicked will continue	22:11 Let him who does wrong continue, let him who does right continue

12	12:11-12 From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.	22:12a Behold I am coming soon!
13	12:13 As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance	22:12b My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.

The strength of this matching sequence is seen in that it contains thirteen steps with eleven clear parallel allusions in Revelation to Daniel in the same sequence in both books. Many scholars have identified some of these allusions, but none has placed them all in sequence and seen the whole picture. The two shaded portions do not obviously match in their content, but it is inferred that they are related because of their relative position in the overall scheme.

1. Central to our conclusions is row 9 and 10. This is because it becomes apparent that the content of Revelation 11-22 fills out the rest of God's plan, the plan which was closed and sealed to Daniel and is now open to John.

2. Row 7 and 8 supply important contextual details which enable us to establish the relationship between Daniel's final vision and John's prophecy which follows in Revelation 11. The reference here in Daniel 12:7 is associated with the $TT\frac{1}{2}$ (time, times and half a time) which completes when the power of God's people (the Jews) was broken. It is also clear from the next verses in Daniel in rows 9 and 10 that this is not near the end of the age because Daniel requested for more information and was told that the words were closed and sealed until the time of the end. The parallel passages in Revelation 10 in rows 7 and 8, which are in the context of the second woe and is also the period of the sixth trumpet, will be the last period of time (the $TT\frac{1}{2}$ referred to in Revelation 12:14 and also Daniel 7:25) prior to the completion of God's plan with seventh trumpet. The Greek word for time used here is "chronos" which literally means "time" or "period of time". Most versions of the Bible translate this word "delay", because of the assumed interpretation that the seventh trumpet is about to sound without further delay. However, with the new context being described here, translating as "time" makes better sense again revealing the precision in the actual word chosen by John. This period will end when the seventh trumpet sounds and God's plan will be completed. It must therefore follow that John's prophecy in Revelation 11, which completes when the seventh angel sounds the trumpet in Revelation 11:15 must chronologically complete Daniel's vision in Daniel 10-12. Together Daniel's final vision in Daniel 10-12 followed by John's prophecy in Revelation 11:1-14 form a chronologically continuous picture of God's dealings with His people from the third year of Cyrus until the end of the age. As a logical consequence it also follows that Daniel 10-12 deals with the period of the first $TT\frac{1}{2}$ and Revelation 11:1-14 covers the period of the second. What is not revealed to Daniel, but is revealed to John, is what will follow Daniel's final vision, in the time of the end.

3. In row 11 it's apparent that Revelation 22:11 alludes to Daniel 12:10 from the fact that both verses make two declarations about the spiritual outcomes of the righteous and the unrighteous. These verses also say that the righteous will continue in their righteous acts and the unrighteous in their wickedness. The two statements are very similar.

4. From row 12, it's clear that the end of the Daniel 10-12 vision is about an event that sits chronologically between the two TT½'s with a long period of time before it and a long period of time afterwards with Daniel chronologically placed at the beginning of the first TT½. In striking contrast, Revelation 22:12a reveals that John is positioned chronologically before the second TT½ in the last days so that the end of the age will occur "soon" according to God's perspective of time, since only one time period remains to be completed. Scholars frequently interpret "soon" from our human perspective as just a few years and so assume this is the last few years before Jesus return. God's time scale is different.

5. Row 13 is clearly focused on the end of the age rewards. However, in Daniel's case, he will have to wait until the "end of the days", a clear reference to the 1290 and 1335 days in the preceding verse. Given that Daniel received this vision in about 535 BC and that the end has not occurred yet, Daniel has had to wait more than 2,500 years so far, a numerical value not very different from the sum of the two periods in the previous verse if the days are interpreted as years. In contrast, John is told that the reward will be soon.

6. The allusions to Daniel present in the Revelation verses referenced in rows 5 and 6 are rather obvious and many commentaries recognise it.

7. The allusion to Daniel in row 3 is apparent once the different frames of reference of the two prophecies are recognised. Both prophecies centre on Jerusalem, but Daniel's world is dominated by the two rivers. In contrast, the Revelation prophecies have a global perspective.

8. Although the identity of the "man in linen" and the "mighty angel" in row 1 are a matter of debate among scholars, they are either Jesus or a high level angel. The fact that they are both very powerful and near to God is not in doubt. As long as this is recognised their identity does not really matter that much, since the allusion in Revelation to Daniel then becomes very clear.

9. The positioning of Daniel 11:2-12:4 and Revelation 11:2b in the sequence (row 2), suggests that the open little scroll is the Daniel 10-12 vision which was sealed by Daniel in Daniel 12:4 and is now unsealed to John.

10. The content of row 4, now suggests that the seven thunders in Revelation 10:3-4 reveal truth to John that only he is allowed to know at this time. The controversy that surrounds the answer to the question posed by the angel in the parallel passage in Daniel 12:6, suggests that until the time of the end determined by the Lord, only Daniel will understand it. The evidence in support of this is seen in how the interpretation of the answer, the TT½, hugely impacts the whole end time interpretation.

11. The final inference from all of this is that the seven sealed scroll introduced in Revelation 5:1 and opened by Jesus is the "book of truth" referred to in Daniel 10:21 and closed and sealed by the man in linen in Daniel 12:9b. From this "book of truth", the man in linen extracted the prophecies recorded by Daniel 11:2-12:4 and closed and sealed by Daniel in Daniel 12:4. These prophecies are the content of the open little scroll referred to by John in Revelation 10. Although there are other plausible interpretations of these two scrolls, the one suggested here is by far the most likely and it is strange that it has never been considered in any known literature.

The diagram below gives a pictorial representation of the conclusions from the above.

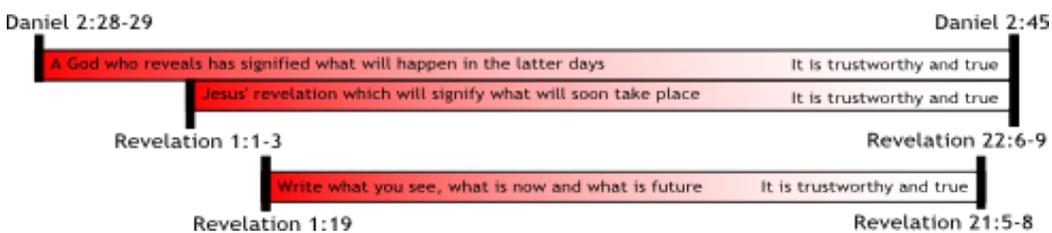
2	<p>Daniel 2:45b NIV "The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy."</p>	<p>Revelation 21:5b ESV Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."</p> <p>Revelation 22:6 NIV The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place."</p>
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The parallels in these passages are very significant especially if the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint, abbreviated LXX) is compared.

1. In row 1, the same Greek word for "revelation" is used.
2. In row 1, the translation "he made known" is based on the same Greek verb "to signify" suggesting a similar use of symbolic, vision language in both Daniel and Revelation.
3. In row 1, what will occur in the "latter days" in Daniel becomes "soon take place" in Revelation.
4. In row 2, the similar words in our translations for "trustworthy and true" reflect the same underlying Greek words and mark a common end point for the revelation.

What is very apparent from this is that the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which spans the whole period of time from the exile to the end of the age, is framed by similar opening and closing phrases as in the book of Revelation. They depict a parallel period of time except that the Book of Revelation encompasses only the second half of that period, what Daniel refers to as "the time of the end" (Daniel 11:40, 12:4, 9) and Peter refers to as "the last days" (Acts 2:17). These features strongly indicate that Daniel and Revelation have similar purpose, scope and structures and are using similar language to prophecy of God's plan for history.

We can represent this structural relationship by a diagram as follows.



The outer structural parallel between Daniel and Revelation pictured above is discussed extensively by Beale. In addition there is a second, inner structural parallel framed by the outer one also shown above. In part, the presence of these two parallel structures in Revelation, explains why there are two, similar concluding visions in Revelation 21:1-22:9 both marked by the same concluding phrase as in Daniel 2:45, "these words are trustworthy and true". It will be seen that the outer parallel structure begins with a vision of the glorious bridegroom and ends with a vision of the glorious bride; whereas the second structure within the outer one begins with a description of the imperfect bride not yet ready, but ends with a vision of the bride now ready.

4. God's Throne of Judgment

The interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2 gives an overview prophecy spanning the period of time from the beginning of the exile to the end of the age when God's eternal kingdom is established. About 50 years later Daniel received another more detailed prophecy in Daniel 7 and 8 which spans the same period of time but provides greater detail. Crucial to that detail is the central role played by the setting up of God's throne in the middle of this time period as the following inverted parallel structure of Daniel's prophecy in Daniel 7:2-14 makes clear; a structure recognised by a number of scholars such as Goldingay who wrote the word commentary on Daniel published in 1989 and Lucas who wrote the Daniel commentary in the Apollo series in 2002.

- A. The four beasts emerge from the sea (2-3)
- B. The first 3 beasts are described (4-6)
- C. The fourth beast is described (7)
 - D. A little horn makes great claims (8)
 - E. A throne scene (9-10)
- D'. The little horn makes great claims (11a)
- C'. The fourth beast is destroyed (11b)
- B'. The first 3 beasts are destroyed (12)
- A'. The Son of Man begins to reign (13-14)

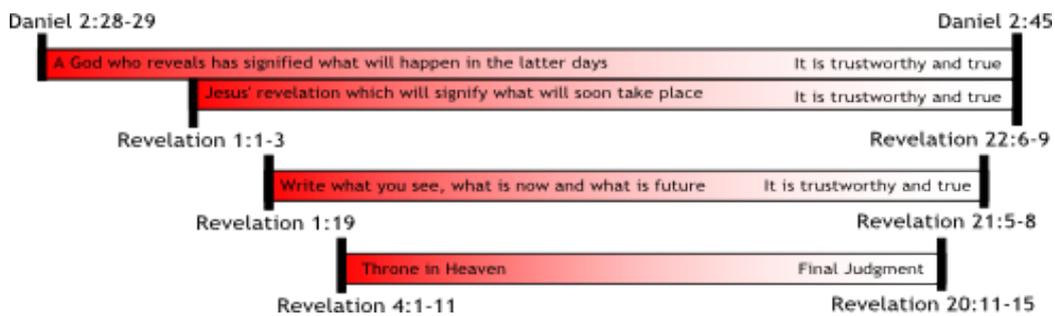
This structure is encouraged from the obvious feature that the beasts are portrayed as being destroyed in the reverse order to their introduction, the central focus is on the throne and the vision comes to a final victorious conclusion. As a result, recognising this structure leads to additional, interpretive and chronological features.

From this structure, there is a clear inference of God's sovereign authority over history as the throne scene clearly depicts His rule and judgment as the central focus of this vision. There is then the striking contrast between the role and history of the four beasts whose rule lasts for a limited time and the rule of the son of man over God's kingdom which lasts forever implied by the association AA'. Then the BCDD'C'B' clauses show the four beasts and the little horn being introduced in chronological order, but their ongoing history is deliberately described in the reverse order to their introduction so that the structural and theological emphasis is maintained at the expense of maintaining the chronological order. The destruction of the little horn is presented in a subtle way since it is implied that he continues to the end and is then dealt with, but his literary position in the description deliberately maintains the inverted parallel structure. Thus it is seen that the presentation of this vision is an extremely clever embedding of history together with theology in an elegant and insightful way.

In the subsequent interpretation given to Daniel and recorded in Daniel 7:15-28 more detail is revealed especially with respect to the activities of the little horn whose eventual demise is as a result of God's direct intervention and the judgment of the heavenly throne court (Daniel 7:28). The vision in Daniel 8 then completes the picture by filling out the rise and fall of the end of the age ruler. So the little horn in Daniel 7 is the founder of the empire whose worship and authority lasts for the time, times and half a time in Daniel 7:25 and whose end comes with the rise and fall of its greatest ruler at the end of the age.

Coming now to the book of Revelation, we see that Revelation 4:1-20:15 provides much greater detail of how God will complete His purpose in the second half of the period of time identified by Daniel. In fact, we can see that this passage is a third inner parallel structure in Revelation to the two discussed in the previous section and begins with the description

of the throne of God in Revelation chapter 4:1-11 and ends with the description of the final great white throne judgment in Revelation 20:11-15.



When John in vision ascends into heaven in Revelation 4:1, he sees the throne already set up. When we examine this throne scene we find there are very strong allusions back to the setting up of God's throne in Daniel 7:9-10 which is precisely in the middle of the vision in Daniel 7. There are also allusions to Ezekiel 1-2.

Although the allusions to Daniel 7 and Ezekiel 1-2 are both strong, it is apparent that those to Daniel 7 incorporate a structuring relationship (unlike Ezekiel 1-2) as well as linked references. This is important in understanding the bigger picture of Daniel's relationship to Revelation.

An analysis of the original text in Daniel 7:9-10 suggests that they embody a structure which can be seen by carefully examining the Aramaic word order and the punctuation.

As I looked on

- A. Thrones were set up
- B. and the Ancient of Days sat
- C. whose robe was snow white and His hair like pure wool
- D. His throne was like flames of fire and its wheels burning fire
- D'. A river of fire flowed and issued from before Him
- C'. A 1,000, 1,000's served Him and a myriad, myriads stood before Him
- B'. the court sat
- A'. and books were opened

It is clearly apparent that Daniel 7:9-10 describes the setting up of God's throne in heaven whereas in Revelation 4, John is seeing the same throne already set up. The role of the "ancient of Days", the Holy Spirit (the river of fire) and the 24 elders all have to do with judgment throughout this period of time.

Therefore, the way in which this vision is described emphasises that the throne has to do with judgment and the history and demise of the beasts and the little horn follows after the throne is put in place. In particular note that Daniel 7:10 specifies that the court sat in judgment and the books were opened. In the final judgment in Revelation 20:11-15, people are judged according what was written in the books. From the structure of Daniel 7:9-10, it is apparent that it is the court that sits on the thrones described in Daniel 7:9. When this description is laid alongside the description of the throne in Revelation 4 it is also apparent that the court comprises the 24 elders and one of their roles is to write in the books. They will also be able to affirm the final judgments handed down by Jesus and testify to His justice. When coming to the book of Revelation, the whole of Revelation 5-20 is about God's judgment that leads to the eventual demise of all powers that oppose

Most commentaries have settled on some form of a linear structure for the book of Revelation. In its simplest form, this is the structure that most listeners perceive when the book is being read. It is obvious to readers and is easily recognised. And Revelation is designed to be read as Revelation 1:3 says. The book gives the sense of a drama with multiple scenes which gradually progress towards a dramatic climax. This drama gives spiritual insight into God's plan and God's control of events, so that in the midst of persecution, Christians and Jews are called to remain faithful and stand firm, but to be assured of God's ultimate victory. At this level, the book can be a blessing to all Christians throughout the church age, providing the listener does not press for a precise, historical understanding. At this level, the book should be understood somewhat analogously to an impressionist painting, which is designed to be seen from a distance, but blurs when the details are examined close up.

The linear structure in its simplest form clearly shows the development of God's plan, but specific chronology cannot be ascertained. This structure and purpose fits the idealist approach to interpretation well as it leads to an understanding and relevance to Christians throughout the church age without being anchored to any specific historical events except the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus which has already occurred and the return of Jesus. Most idealist structures divide the book into seven or eight sections and assume some form of progressive parallelism from one section to the next with increasing intensity and focus on the consummation with each successive section. At this level we agree with the progressive parallelism, but see only four parallel sections within the "Transformation" section below. In its simplest form, there is a clear chronological progression from the initial situation to the final outcome.

- Introduction (1:1-11)
- **The Initial Situation** (1:12-4:11)
- **The Transformation** (5:1-20:10)
- **The Final Outcome** (20:11-22:5)
- Conclusion (22:6-21)

Many scholars would join Revelation 4 with Revelation 5 into one section as it concerns beginning events at the throne of God. However, it is apparent that as the throne of God in Revelation 4 is described it is already set up when John is transported there in vision. Revelation 5 is distinct in that although initiated from the throne it describes the first action in the transformation which follows and is all about the lamb being given authority to break the seven seals in the scroll which are then broken in the chapters which follow.

In the transformation, this plan is revealed in four concurrent periods of judgment. These four periods progressively focus more and more towards the end of the age.

- Introduction (1:1-11)
 - **The Initial Situation** (1:12-4:11)
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1. **The Seven Seals** (5:1-8:5): Man's activity
 2. **The Seven Trumpets** (8:2-11:19): God's response
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3. **The Initiatives of Satan** (12:1-15:4): Satan's activity
 4. **The Seven Plagues** (15:1-20:10): God's response
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- **The Final Outcome** (20:11-22:5)
 - Conclusion (22:6-21)

The structure presented here has been deliberately simplified in order to focus on the overall picture. Each of the sections can be broken down to provide greater detail. There are five things we note about this structure.

First of all, this structure emphasises the overall plan of God in revealing how the world is going to be transformed from the initial situation in John's day to the final outcome after Jesus returns.

Secondly, at this level there are four parts to the transformation. These parts are chronologically in parallel, but progressively focus more and more towards the end of the age.

Thirdly, three of these four parts focus on the concept of a "seven". This is because they describe events initiated by God and which therefore are symbolically and literally complete. The third part (Revelation 12:1-15:5) describes Satan's initiatives which God permits. It is because they are Satan's initiatives that they are not represented as a seven. None of his initiatives complete and in the end they all fail. Those scholars that see this part as structured as an "unnumbered seven" are really missing the point that Satan's initiatives ultimately fail. We should also note that the first part (the seven seals in Revelation 5:1-8:5) is distinct from the other two sevens in that God's initiative through Jesus in breaking the seven seals allows man's activity to proceed so that he reaps what he sows, whereas the other two sevens are God's initiative in judgment.

Fourthly, these four parts are grouped into two pairs. These pairs show evil activity in the first part and God's response in judgment in the second part. The first pair focuses on God's response to man's sinful activity. The second pair focuses on God's response to Satan's activity.

Fifthly, the first pair focuses on God's dealing with man and his powers, both man in opposition to God and those of His people who are His witnesses who work with Him to achieve His goal. In contrast, the second pair focuses on God's dealings with Satan and his powers. It's only in the second half that we get to see the role that Satan has been playing all along. He is the mastermind behind the opposition to God and the second pair reveals how God will deal with this.

Overall, we see that these four parts give four views of God's dealings with the earth to rid it of evil. Each of these four views is like a different scene in a drama or a different camera angle on the whole plan of God and it's only when these four views are put together that the complete picture emerges.

These properties are similar to the structure in the book of Daniel, which also clearly divides into two concurrent halves with each half dividing into two further concurrent sections with a significant interlude in between each of them.

6. The Inverted Parallel Structure of Revelation

In this section, we continue outlining the structure of the book of Revelation. To repeat, what we now know from the previous five sections is that Daniel and Revelation are highly integrated to a depth far greater than what has been previously recognised. That integration has huge benefits for interpretation as many variations become no longer

viable. Many ambiguities which might have seemed plausible no longer fit. The diversity of the many different views can no longer be supported and what we are left with is something significantly different. And the structure in many ways parallels Daniel. What we are left with is a structure which is more symbolic than the idealist views, more literal than the other literal views and the visions cannot be fulfilled in the chronological ordering in which they are written.

Like the book of Daniel, the book of Revelation has an inverted parallel structure in two major parts. This way of viewing the book of Revelation exposes additional and very significant relationships between the sections. These relationships are not apparent in the linear structure which reveals the flow of the visions in the order in which they were given to John.

In particular, it exposes the chronologically parallel segments and the cross-links between the two major parts. It also exposes the links between the beginning and the ending which unlike the book of Daniel has an inverted parallel structure which frames the whole book. Furthermore it reveals more clearly the transitions at the beginning, the end and the middle of each of the two major parts. From these transitions the underlying Revelation theme of a temple cleansing liturgy is seen as God cleanses the earth from sin and evil to prepare it for His presence using symbolic references to the liturgies foreshadowed by the priestly activities associated with the tabernacle and temple in the Old Testament.

The inverted parallel structure also reveals interrelationships and connections to the structure of the book of Daniel that are less apparent in the linear structure while at the same time retaining the same detail. Like the book of Daniel, there are four primary chronological sequences that recapitulate over a concurrent period and are framed by an introduction and conclusion. Like the book of Daniel these four sequences form two pairs. However, their focus is in reverse order to the book of Daniel in that Daniel presents God's people under persecution in the world first then their history in the world second, whereas the book of Revelation presents their history first followed by their persecution second. At the same time, God's sovereignty and judgmental activity are clearly described. This pattern reflects that Daniel focuses on the first half of God's plan starting with the exile and in that period, severe persecution occurred during the exile at the beginning of this period. In contrast, most of the second half revealed in the book of Revelation covers the time period when the church advanced and the worst persecution occurs at the end.

One of the clear patterns to observe in Revelation is that the second half of each of the two parts reflects the response of God in judgment. However, it is also apparent, that the plague judgments are far more severe than the trumpet ones and it will become clear that they begin later in time than the trumpet judgments as the four sequences progressively more towards the end of the age.

We have adopted the view, that Daniel and Revelation are integrated to a far greater extent than has previously been recognised. Thus, it is not just that Revelation makes strong and clear allusions to the book of Daniel, but rather that the two books meld together into a single, unified prophecy. They are therefore structurally linked as well as content linked. The first part (Revelation 5:1-11:19) links to Daniel 8-12 and the second part (Revelation 12:1-20:10) links to Daniel 2-7. Both books have two major parts; the division of the book of Daniel being at Daniel 8:1 and the book of Revelation at Revelation 12:1. However, what is less recognised is that they both make use of the inverted parallel structure. This can easily be seen in a general sense in Revelation 12:1-20:10 as the dragon and the beasts are introduced in this order, but are destroyed in the reverse

order; this is important. As a result, the whole book comprises visions which progress in time and intensity and which are partially concurrent examining events from different perspectives and made up of structures which also exhibit both a linear structure which reflects the progressive unfolding of God's plan (examined earlier) and an inverse parallel structure which reflects the parallel, concurrent features of God's plan. The trumpet visions focus on God's plan for His people as also does Daniel 8-12 and the plague visions focus on God's plan for Satan's kingdom as in Daniel 2-7. These broad features are easily recognisable, although the detail is less clear. The overall inverted structure that emerges is as follows.

- Introduction (1:1-11)
 - The "Initial Situation"
 - A. The Bridegroom (1:12-20)
 - B. The Seven Churches (2:1-3:22)
 - C. The Throne of God (4:1-11)
 - Part I ---- The Seven Seals and the Seven Trumpets
 - D. The Lamb Reigns in Heaven (5:1-14)
 - E. The Seven Seals (6:1-8:5)
 - The 144,000 Secured (7:1-8)
 - The Multitude in Heaven (7:9-17)
 - F. Judgment Begins (8:1-5)
 - E'. The Seven Trumpets (8:2-11:19)
 - The Little Scroll (10:1-11)
 - The Ministry of God's People (11:1-11:14)
 - D'. The Lamb Reigns on Earth (11:15-19)
 - Part II ---- The Initiatives of Satan and the Seven Plagues
 - D. The Dragon Defeated in Heaven (12:1-17)
 - E. The Two Beasts (13:1-15:4)
 - The Final Events (14:1-13)
 - The Final Harvest (14:14-20)
 - F. Judgment Concludes (15:1-8)
 - E'. The Seven Plagues (15:1-20:10)
 - The Prostitute Defeated (17:1-19:10)
 - The Two Beasts Defeated (19:11-21)
 - D'. The Dragon Defeated on Earth (20:1-10)
 - The Final Outcome
 - C'. The Final Judgment (20:11-15)
 - B'. The New Jerusalem (21:1-8)
 - A'. The Bride (21:9-22:5)
-
- Conclusion (22:6-21)

The overlap in the references to many sections is deliberate and reflects the transition from one section to the next. This structure sees the whole book as an inverted parallel structure.

The detail of this inverted structure is further helped by seeing the book of Revelation as a "prophetic liturgy of history". That is the whole sequence of visions is John's experience of God's process of purifying His universe from being a defiled place to be the holy of holies in which God can dwell with His people. Thus the church is the temple of God which is gradually being sanctified so that eventually God will be able to dwell with His people on earth. Vision by vision, as this liturgy is carried out; the lamp which stands in the holy place

(the seven churches) are transformed to eventually become the New Jerusalem through a liturgy centred on the seven seals, the seven trumpets and the seven plagues.

A specific, stand out characteristic of the book of Revelation are the four sequences of seven; the seven churches, the seven seals, the seven trumpets and the seven plagues. These four “sevens” describe God’s initiatives and the outcomes which flow from them; each “seven” is a complete sequence in itself. In contrast, the other passages in between describe the responses to God’s initiatives of the four groups of people with whom this book deals, (1) Israel, (2) the Church, (3) Satan and his kingdom and (4) Babylon (or the world) which is the playground of the kings of the earth. Prior to the start of each sequence we have a beginning and an ending from the previous seven which is also a transition between the two.

It is tempting to consider whether there is any relationship here with Leviticus 26:14ff which describes a sequence of four, increasingly severe sevenfold judgments each triggered by the failure of the people to repent in response to the previous judgments. Undoubtedly, the pattern of the Mosaic Law is a familiar guiding background for John as he writes of the unfolding plan of God during the church age which is revealed in the book of Revelation.

6.1 The Initial Situation and Final Outcome

There is a very clear inverted parallel match between the three parts in the initial situation and the three parts in the final outcome which can be explained as follows

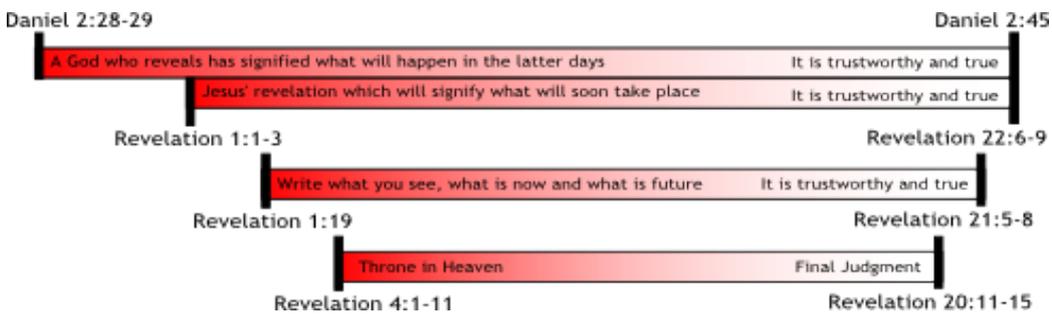
1. “The Bridegroom” section (A) is a description of Jesus in all His glory. He is the head of the church and He is ministering to the churches. “The Bride” section (A’) is a description of the glorious bride (God’s people) that will spend eternity in God’s presence.
2. “The Seven Churches” section (B) is a description of God’s kingdom in community on earth. It is the church imperfect, but in preparation for eternity. It is God’s people being refined and prepared for their eternal role. “The New Jerusalem” section (B’) is a description of the eternal kingdom (God’s people) that is now ready to spend eternity in God’s presence.

The section on the seven churches focuses on the church as it was in John’s day, the “what is now” in Revelation 1:19. There is also a sense, that the seven churches are a typical cross section of the quality of different churches on earth throughout the church age. The descriptions are designed to give us a complete perspective. The picture of the seven churches is, in a sense, always the churches in the world as they are now. This means the description of the seven churches is always current, always relevant throughout the church age. The content here is God’s messages to the different churches to help them forward in their witness. These churches are imperfect; they are a work in progress and so usually God has to bring a challenge, a message of encouragement and also correction.

3. “The Throne of God” section (C) is a description of God’s rule in heaven and whose primary role is the management of God’s plan and judgment. It is also described in Ezekiel 1 and Daniel 7:9-10. In the latter it is located in the middle of the period from the exile to the end of the age. The location of this description of God’s throne in Revelation 4, places it near the beginning of the book of Revelation which describes the final era of history. The

strong evidence is that the throne is set up just after Jesus won the battle on the cross and ascended into heaven. This is also seen in Revelation 12:5 where the man child (Jesus) is snatched up to God and to His throne. The authority and rule of Jesus in heaven is also established and His role of Saviour, Redeemer and Intercessor then matches with God's and His role of judge in "The Final Judgment" section (C'), the completion of God's dealing with evil. Note also how the end of both "The Seven Trumpets" section (see especially Revelation 11:18 which speaks of the "time for judging the dead" now being come) and "The Seven Plagues" section flow naturally into "The Final Judgment" section indicating their chronologically parallel and concurrent fulfilment.

This matching three part opening and closing is also supported by the structural linkages between Daniel and Revelation described earlier. We reproduce the diagram from section 4 to show this.



Another feature that tends to confirm that the above inverted parallel structure is correct is the way in which the ending statements duplicate and match up. Thus Revelation 22:13 NIV "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End" almost duplicates Revelation 21:6a NIV "He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End." Notice how the first of these phrases occurs in Revelation 1:8a NIV "I am the Alpha and the Omega," and the second in Revelation 1:17b NIV "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last." So these two phrases occur in the introduction and are repeated in the conclusion. However, the phrase "the Beginning and the End" is duplicated only in Revelation 21:6a and 22:13 however, the concept is contained in Revelation 10:6 and 7 where the mighty angel swears by the one who created everything and will accomplish everything marking the start and end of the linkage of Daniel's final vision with the book of Revelation (see the earlier sections). Scholars have been uncertain about the structural reason behind the duplicated endings in Revelation 21:6a and Revelation 22:13 and these inverted parallel sections give a logical reason for them.

So the first three sections define the "now" as far as John is concerned. The final three sections define eternity. All of these six sections are relatively static visions; they define a snapshot of circumstances at a particular point in time. The two parts in between define the content of the church age where the progression from John's "now" to the end of the age is filled out. They each contain the past, the present and the future. They comprise the content of the scroll in Revelation 5, whose seals the lamb opened. Jesus' opening of the seals then allows God's plan for the consummation of the age and the implementation of His eternal kingdom to take place. These are contained by Part 1 and 2 which integrate with the equivalent two sections from the book of Daniel effectively providing God's plan from the establishment of Israel as a nation until Jesus returns victoriously to this earth to establish God's eternal rule. Unless the seals are opened, God's plan would have had to move directly to "The Final Judgment" and there would have been no bride.

It therefore becomes apparent that these three parts match very well and also explain some of the repetition that occurs in these parts.

6.2 Part I. The Seven Seals and the Seven Trumpets

The part one sequence, DEFE'D' is a temple liturgy which transforms the earth from a defiled place to the holy of holies in which God can dwell. The focus is worship! At the centre of the liturgy are the prayers of the saints offered before God. The focus is not on the chronology at this level, the focus is the sequence of visions which unfold as a service of worship to God. The end result is heaven opened and the Ark of the Covenant visible, because now the whole earth is holy and can be exposed to the glory of God. The liturgy begins with Jesus as the lamb which has been slain receiving the scroll from the throne as the Great High Priest and therefore beginning the liturgy. At this point of time, at the beginning, only Jesus can enter the holy of holies where God's throne is located.

This links with the seventy sevens prophecy in Daniel, the final objective which is to anoint the Holy of Holies (Daniel 9:24). So in this first half, whose focus is on God's people as is the second half of Daniel, the process takes the world from its defiled condition at the beginning of the church age. Remember, it is defiled because of the work of Satan. The process begins when Satan is cast out of Heaven. Notice how the inverted parallel structure in Daniel 8-12 and Revelation 5-11 both centre around the prayers of God's people in Daniel 9 and Revelation 8:1-5. However, only Revelation 5-11 develops this through the motif of a temple worship liturgy.

The opening of the seven seals allows history to unfold according to God's plan. Jesus death on the cross and His resurrection are an essential requirement for this to be possible which is why only He can open the seven seals. As each seal is opened a further characteristic of man's behaviour is revealed and this sets the backdrop on which God takes initiative to bring about the fulfilment of His plan.

At the conclusion of the sixth seal (Revelation 6:17), the question is asked "Who can stand"? The question is answered in the next chapter which reveal how God will provide spiritual protection for the faithful Jews and how all of God's people will eventually stand in God's presence.

The seven seals are followed by the seven trumpets. God's initiatives in the seven trumpets are limited judgment on mankind with the purpose of warning them and leading the world to repentance and they circumscribe the actions of God's people through much of the church age whose purpose is witness and prophecy. The goal of all this is that people might find God. As Paul said in Acts 17:26-27 (NIV), "From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us."

As part of the sixth trumpet, the visions then reveal the story of those who do repent, who participate in building God's temple and are saved. These people stand in contrast to those who refuse to repent and who receive the limited judgment revealed by the trumpets.

6.3 Part II. The Initiatives of Satan and the Seven Plagues

The part two sequence DEFE'D' focuses on removing evil from the earth. The focus is judgment! Notice how the antagonists are introduced in the order firstly the dragon, secondly the two beasts and thirdly the people, but that judgment occurs after the middle in the reverse order firstly, the people, then the two beasts and finally the dragon.

However, God's initiatives in the seven plagues section are circumscribed by the actions and the judgment of the dragon, his beasts and the world with the seven plagues being the central point of judgment. The focus of the seven trumpets is on what God and His people do with the outcomes being the reaction of the world to this. The focus of the seven plagues section is on what Satan, his kingdoms and the world do with the seven plagues being God's initiatives to deal with this and with the different outcomes on Satan, his kingdoms, the world and God's people. So the focus here in part 2 is on God's response to what His enemies do.

We should also note that the final section (A'), "The Bride" and "The Prostitute Defeated" in Part II are deliberately designed to be a contrast between the perfected bride and the evil prostitute.

6.4 The Transitions

There are also important points of transition between the sections.

In Revelation 4:5 "from the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder." These physical signs start from when the throne is set up and continue on throughout the church age.

In Revelation 8:5, as part of the seventh seal, "Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake." Since the earthquake mentioned in Revelation occurs at the end as part of the Day of Judgment, this earthquake is probably associated with that end too. When the sixth seal is opened there is a "great earthquake".

In Revelation 11:19, as part of the seventh trumpet, "Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm". Now, in addition to the earthquake, there is a great hailstorm.

In Revelation 16:18, as part of the seventh plague, "Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake." This in then followed by a hailstorm which is described in greater detail.

There is important transition in each of these passages. The events pictured in Revelation 4-5, 8:2-8:5 and 11:19 seem to be in this transition between one scene and the next, both ending the previous one and being part of the preliminaries before the start of the next. Thus commentaries differ as to whether they assign these passages as part of the previous section or part of the next section. This also seems to be true of Revelation 15:1-4, 19:1-10 and 22:6-9. Revelation 1:9-20, as well as being part of the introduction also seems to be the transition into the seven churches so is often placed with them in the structure used by many commentaries.

6.5 The Cross-Links between Part I and II

We have deliberately named the sections in Part I and Part II in order to reflect the links between these two parts. Thus Part I starts off with the lamb beginning His reign in heaven and ends with His reign on earth, whereas Part II starts off with the dragons defeat in heaven and ends with his defeat on earth. Then the seven seals describe man's actions whereas the two beasts reflect the dragon's actions. The 144,000 secured and the multitude in heaven describes the way God protected His people from the outset whereas the final events and harvest describe the victorious conclusion of those who turned to God and the ignominious defeat of God's enemies. The parallel nature of the seven trumpets and the seven plagues reveals the cross-links between them. Finally, whereas the sixth trumpet incorporates the ministry of God's people, the parallel positioned "the Two Beasts Defeated" describes the victorious return of the lamb with His people and the final defeat of the kings of the earth and the spiritual forces created by the dragon. Then the final sections pitch the victory of the lamb compared with the defeat of the dragon.

6.6 Overall

Given that in John's day, blessing flows to the reader and the listeners (Revelation 1:3) this structure is attractive as it makes sense from the content. It would be easily and readily perceived as the book is read.

Ultimately, the final justification for this structure will be seen as each of the sections is examined in greater detail. However, the broad structure of an initial situation, followed by a transition to the final consummation of God's plan from four perspectives ultimately leading to the final consummation is clear. Having removed sin from God's heaven as a result of Jesus' victory on the cross, this transition is God's plan to rid the earth of sin as well so that in the eternal kingdom God can come and dwell with His people and man can fulfil God's purpose as described in Genesis 1:26-28. This perspective seriously challenges those theologians who see this purpose of God fulfilled in this world before or by the return of Jesus. Everything will be restored when Jesus returns, not beforehand (Acts 3:21).

Although there are many allusions to the Old Testament in the book of Revelation, more than half are from Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel then the Psalms, in this order of frequency. In proportion to its length Daniel yields the most. In addition to its frequency of occurrence in allusions, Daniel is also in the same literary genre and also substantially influences the structure of the book of Revelation and in this contribution it is unique. Together, Daniel and Revelation, give us the complete picture of God's plan for Israel and the Church, so it is natural for Revelation to contain structures like Daniel.

