



# MOSES AND THE REVELATION

WHY THE END OF THE WORLD IS NOT IN YOUR FUTURE

**MICHAEL BULL**



BIBLE  
MATRIX

## **If we want to understand the book of Revelation, we must remember that it is at the end of the Bible, not the beginning.**

**T**here are many conflicting ideas concerning what this intriguing and terrifying book is about, but the truth is that although it appears to be foreign territory – a hostile landscape filled with animal totems, confounding signs and confronting images including sacrificial virgins clad in pure white, chosen, slain and ascending with a disturbing sexual undercurrent – the Revelation is in fact a denouement, a revelation, of the natural world, like the last act of a whodunit.

To solve the case, we are going to call on the testimony of an expert witness: the prophet Moses. The events, characters and patterns established in the Law are the foundation for the Prophets, and together these provide the context of this enigmatic final prophecy. The last book of the Bible cannot be understood without the first books of the Bible.



DISCOVER  
THE DNA  
OF THE  
SCRIPTURES

## **Moses and the Revelation**

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Totus Christus: A Biblical Theology of the Whole Christ

Bible Matrix: An Introduction to the DNA of the Scriptures

Bible Matrix II: The Covenant Key

God's Kitchen: Theology You Can Eat & Drink

Reading the Bible in 3D

The Shape of Galatians: A Covenant-Literary Analysis

Sweet Counsel: Essays to Brighten the Eyes

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Birds of the Air: Theological Twitter

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BIBLE  
MATRIX

**MICHAEL BULL**

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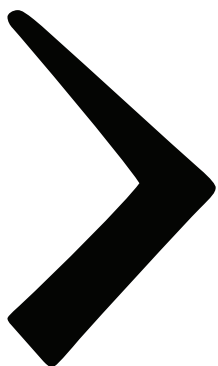
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## PREFACE

**A**fter studying the various major schools of interpretation of the Revelation over a period of two decades, I finally landed upon the lectures of James B. Jordan. He was the first interpreter I had ever heard who truly allowed Scripture to interpret Scripture, and he used the Revelation as a window to explain the rest of the Bible.

Although my work rests squarely upon Jordan's, I believe that a more structured analysis of the prophecy is possible. Using a rubric consisting of the correlation between various biblical literary sequences (which I refer to as the Bible Matrix), the internal logic of the Revelation is revealed in a way that not only further explains the book but also enables Christians to read the Bible with greatly improved comprehension.

The books of David Chilton, Gary DeMar, Peter Leithart, and Jeffrey Meyers have also been formative in what follows here. I am extremely grateful not only for their groundbreaking exegetical work but also for the

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message of hope it carries for the Church and its work in history.

Perceiving the Revelation as a work of literary art is foundational to understanding it. For that reason, this book takes a holistic approach, avoids unnecessary jargon, and ignores the norms of academic presentation in the hope of reuniting the Bible with its intended audience. If what follows here seems frustratingly brief at points, please understand that maintaining a consciousness of the “rhythm” of Revelation is crucial to its method. Many things are stated without qualification because to do otherwise would kill the momentum. If you feel that a point requires further explanation, make a note and use it as a motivation for further study on the foundation of what you have read here. To aid you, I have included a list of recommended reading and listening.

Most importantly, do not read this book without the Bible alongside you. Every reference is a living connection in the biblical nervous system, a link in the organic literary network between Moses and the Revelation. To understand Revelation is to understand the Bible.

Michael Bull  
January 2017

## INTRODUCTION

# MOSAIC BOOKENDS

**T**aken at face value, the New Testament appears to warn its first readers about coming events which were not only momentous but also *imminent*. This means that there is a great discrepancy between the sacred texts and the things which modern Christians are actually taught. C. S. Lewis writes:

The apocalyptic beliefs of the first Christians have been proved to be false. It is clear from the New Testament that they all expected the Second Coming in their own lifetime. And, worse still, they had a reason, and one which you will find very embarrassing. Their Master had told them so. He shared, and indeed created, their delusion. He said in so many words, “this generation shall not pass till all these things be done.” And he was wrong. He clearly knew no more about the end of the world than anyone else. This is certainly the most embarrassing verse in the Bible. (From C. S. Lewis, “The World’s Last Night,” 1960, found in *The Essential C. S. Lewis*.)

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Is Lewis correct in this observation? If Jesus and His disciples were wrong then it follows that nothing else in the New Testament can be trusted. This was the very conclusion reached by atheist Bertrand Russell, who, although he granted that many of the teachings of Christ were excellent, regarded such apparent defects as clear evidence that the Scriptures were not inspired but merely the work of men:

For one thing, [Jesus] certainly thought that His second coming would occur in clouds of glory before the death of all the people who were living at that time. There are a great many texts that prove that. He says, for instance, “Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come.” Then he says, “There are some standing here which shall not taste death till the Son of Man comes into His kingdom”; and there are a lot of places where it is quite clear that He believed that His second coming would happen during the lifetime of many then living. That was the belief of His earlier followers, and it was the basis of a good deal of His moral teaching. (From “Why I Am Not A Christian,” a lecture delivered in 1927 to the National Secular Society in London, found in *Why I Am Not A Christian And Other Essays*, 1957.)

The reason for Lewis’ concern about the Bible’s “most embarrassing verse” and Russell’s logical dismissal of Jesus as the Son of God is our failure to understand what imminent event Jesus was actually talking about. Was it the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple? Was it the



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persecution of Christians under Emperor Domitian? Or does the prophecy describe the entirety of Church history from its earliest days until the end of time?

If we want to understand the book of Revelation, we must remember that it is at the *end* of the Bible, not the *beginning*. What most Christians do not realize is that when the New Testament (including Revelation) is read in the light of the books of Moses, many of the inexplicable things that Jesus and the Apostles said suddenly make perfect sense. Not only is the question of Jesus' trustworthiness answered but the Revelation itself is rescued from the obscurity of the "fringe" of biblical studies and is allowed to shine as one of the most insightful and enlightening books of the Bible.

### **The Four Hurdles of the Apocalypse**

Revelation attracts us because of its mystery, its beauty, and its terror, and also because interpreting it promises access to divine knowledge about future events. But when it comes to its application in everyday life, most pastors are unwilling to venture beyond the letters to the seven churches in their preaching, since these offer some easily identifiable and practical moral advice.

Of course, *the entire prophecy* was intended to be practical for its first hearers, but such usefulness evades modern interpreters who face four major hurdles:

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- 1) Readers are *not familiar* with the rest of the Bible.
- 2) If they *are* familiar with the rest of the Bible, they fail to interpret Revelation *in its light*.
- 3) They are familiar with the Bible, and interpret Revelation in its light, but they do not have a sensitivity to or a working knowledge of *the language of biblical symbolism*.
- 4) Readers are familiar with the Bible, interpret Revelation in the light of that knowledge and understand biblical symbolism, yet they are not familiar with *the biblical literary structure*, a system of related sequences which often serves as “the label on the tin” and is thus the key to the passage.

The first three stumbling blocks sort the scholars from the novices, but the fourth disqualifies even the modern academic. It puts an entire channel of inspired communication outside of the “bandwidth” of the interpreter, and it is the reason why the best Bible commentators in the world – those who *do* know the Bible inside out, *including* its symbols – often do not understand either the *purpose* of the Revelation or the internal logic which governs both its *shape* and its *contents*.

### Familiarity

If the reader is not equipped with a deep familiarity with all of Scripture, reading Revelation is like catching

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only the last five minutes of a movie and attempting to make sense of it. Since the narrative foundations are missing, the details, the dialogue, and the outcomes for the protagonists and antagonists lose much or most of their significance. Context is everything.

### **Intertextuality**

Likewise, if we are not taking note of the repeated themes and following the narrative threads in the Bible, its conclusion – where all loose ends are finally tied up – will not make a lot of sense to us. The Revelation makes some kind of reference to *most* books in the Bible, and to *all* of its major events. Attempting to interpret it by referring to contemporary ancient cultures or modern global events is to take the book completely out of its context. The key to the Revelation is the entire Bible *and nothing else*. All that is required is some visual thinking and some sensitivity to the rhythm of the text, skills which children naturally possess but which have been trained out of us when it comes to reading and understanding Scripture.

### **Symbolism**

But what if you *have* read the Bible, all of it, possibly more than once, and the book of Revelation *still* doesn't make much sense, especially in its particulars? And you

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and I both know that those particulars are *weird*. That could be because you are not reading it the right way.

Once we are willing to read the prophecy in the light of the rest of Scripture, we must understand that it employs past biblical characters and events as symbols to describe future ones, just as the Old Testament prophets did. For instance, when Isaiah mentions the battle of Midian, we know that the conflict which he predicts will in some way repeat the events in Judges 7. When he speaks of the wolf lying down with the lamb, he is alluding to the domestic (priestly) and wild (kingly) beasts dwelling at peace in the ark of Noah before a new covenant was made. Identification of the context and the literary structure reveals that the prophet is poetically describing the state of the nations after the Babylonian exile.

To use a modern example, the Bible needs to be read in the same way that viewers watch the movie *Shrek* and its sequels. To interpret these movies, one must draw upon information that is not contained in the actual narrative. To understand the characters, why they do what they do and say what they say, and especially why they are *funny*, one must be familiar with some fairy tales, nursery rhymes, and also popular culture – especially other movies – in some detail. For example, viewers who do not know the story of *Little*

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*Red Riding Hood* will not catch the humor or meaning of the scene where Shrek sees a wolf in his bed. The joke goes right over their head. Contrast this with viewers who are “in the know.” They do the interpretive work naturally because the references call upon their previous experience and knowledge.

The Revelation works in exactly the same way. The Bible’s gradual accumulation of objects, people and events as symbolic references means that by the time the reader gets to Revelation, every word is a hyperlink. Everything the prophecy contains is a reference to something found somewhere else in the Bible, and not only do we need to have “seen” all of the Bible’s “movie” so far, we also need to bring all of those particulars with us to this book before we begin to read it. Without ready access to that information we are not going to get any of the clever references or pointed jokes. Even worse, our failure to comprehend the text leads to attempts to interpret it which confuse and confound the intent of the author.

### **Literary Structure**

But there is more. Some of these literary references are contained in the *shape* of the story. To illustrate, this is like watching the film *Ten Things I Hate About You* and perceiving that it is based on Shakespeare’s *The Taming*

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*of the Shrew*. Once the penny drops, the viewer can compare it to the original story by corresponding plot points in the movie with similar scenes in the play. The viewer must ask, “What is the same, and what has been changed, and more importantly, why?” This skill is crucial in understanding the final book of the Bible, which is a work of literary art that employs a method of allusory sequencing that seals the book’s meaning from anyone without the key.

The shape of the book of Revelation is that key, and this shape is found throughout the Bible right from its very beginning. And when the significance of the *shape* of Revelation and its clever *references* are pointed out, the book begins to make perfect sense. In fact, once the pattern or sequence is familiar, the reader can almost predict what comes next just as a music lover does when humming or singing along to a favorite tune.

### The Beginning and the End

There are many conflicting ideas concerning what this intriguing and terrifying book is about, but the truth is that although it appears to be foreign territory – a hostile landscape filled with animal totems, confounding signs and confronting images including sacrificial virgins clad in pure white, chosen, slain and ascending with a disturbing sexual undercurrent – the Revelation

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is in fact a denouement, a *revelation*, of the natural world, like the last act of a *whodunit*.

To solve the case, we are going to call on the testimony of an expert witness: the prophet Moses. Why Moses? Because he predicted that God would raise up a prophet like himself from among the people (Deuteronomy 18:15), a man to whom God spoke plainly rather than with veiled speech and dark sayings (Exodus 33:11; Numbers 12:8). Moses' authority as the founder of the nation of Israel necessitated that a case be made for the greater authority of Jesus as its heir to convince Jewish Christians that the Old Covenant in which they trusted was coming to an end (Hebrews 3:1-6).

Thus, the Pentateuch is the frame of reference for every subsequent biblical text. The events, characters and patterns established in the Law are the foundation for the Prophets, and together these two provide the context of the New Testament, including its enigmatic final prophecy. The *last* book of the Bible cannot be understood without the *first* books of the Bible:

- The seed, flesh and skin of **Genesis** is everywhere in Revelation, employed to describe the bestial nature and spiritual nakedness of rulers whose theft of the covenant promises allows them to masquerade as gods and goddesses. The conspiracy of Adam, Eve and the serpent has become

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institutionalized as a false prophet, a harlot and a beast. Revelation is Genesis at full throttle.

- The **Exodus** is also an important backdrop. The saints are called out of a city referred to as Sodom and Egypt, and plagues are poured out. Idolaters worship an image of a beast and the Ark is opened in heaven. There is a mountain burning with fire, much like Sinai, and thunders and lightnings.
- The **Levitical** offerings are referenced repeatedly, and Israel's festal calendar structures the book.
- The saints are counted in a "sacrificial census" just as they are in **Numbers**, and the false prophet Balaam also makes an appearance, the one who caused Israel to become a harlot and serve false gods, like Queen Jezebel.
- Finally, there are preparations for conquest and warnings to those entering a promised inheritance, just as there are in **Deuteronomy**.

So, as the culmination and conclusion of a progressive process of revelation throughout history, is this very obviously Jewish prophecy about the past, the present, the future, or all three? Moses will not only help us to understand *what* is going on in this fascinating book, but also *when* and *why*.



PART ONE

# Moses



# 1

## THE SHAPE OF THE WORD

Someone once ridiculed me for my interest in the book of Revelation, informing me that it is merely the scribblings of a madman. Indeed, at first glance it does appear to be a jumble of random Bible symbols with no obvious purpose or logic.

For this reason, many *dismiss* it as crazy. Some *ignore* it as an interesting but ultimately unnecessary appendix to the Bible. Others become overly *obsessed* with it, as though it were some kind of oriental puzzle box.

However, the book was not intended to be an enigma, a mystery, but a *revelation*. After all, that is what it is called (1:1). But like the best jokes in *Shrek*, the symbols, images and events owe much of their impact to the fact that understanding them requires information which is not actually included in the text. To “get it” we have to be in on the joke, and that is because this book was written for a very special

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audience, one that was not only sensitive to the Bible but also to image and rhythm, sequence and repetition.

Part of the reason that we moderns fail to understand the Bible is that we rarely hear it read aloud. Its first hearers, and many afterwards, listened to it as a congregation. That practice not only made it personal, it also allowed the *shape* of the Scriptures to make an impact upon them. Consequently, we do not have the foundations required to understand the *structural* allusions that are the key to the prophecy.

Some scholars have noted the repetitive structure but few have traced it back to the earliest texts of the Bible, particularly the book of Genesis. Because of this, they fail to make a crucial connection. The text of the Bible is itself “*genetic*.” The fingerprint of a single Author can be identified in every one of its literary sequences.

The Word of God is “spiral-shaped,” like DNA, and the Revelation is the final revolution in the Bible’s grand helix. Once this is understood, it can be seen that John’s prophecy flows naturally and seamlessly out of everything that has gone before. Understanding it as the *expected* outcome of the Gospels and the ministry of the Apostles, and reintegrating it with the rest of the Bible, allows Revelation to be the *powerful, practical* and *open* book it was intended to be.

Using the patterns established in Genesis and

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expanded upon in later Scriptures, we can make sense of both the contents of Revelation and the order in which that content appears. It suddenly becomes apparent that these supposed “scribblings” are the most compact, intricate, multi-layered, symmetrical and structured body of writing one could ever imagine. It has the appearance of something that was *grown* rather than written. It is irreducibly complex.

### **The Bible is a Fractal**

“Fractal” is a word that was invented to describe this kind of “organic” formation. The idea is quite simple: a fractal is an object of which every part is a miniature version of the whole. The most obvious example might be the shape of Romanesco broccoli, where each part is a replica – an *image* – of the whole.

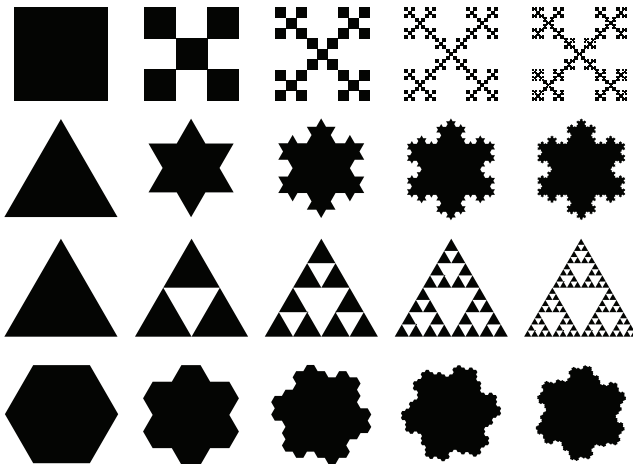
Once you know what fractals are, you will notice them *everywhere*. This is because fractals are found not only in nature, including the systems of the human body, but also in computing, technology and even in the behaviors of financial markets.

How does this apply to the Bible? Well, every part of the Bible is arranged according to the basic shape of the whole. Since the various narratives and prophecies all conform to a fundamental literary “algorithm,” they can be aligned with each other and compared as

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expressions of the same essential process. This allows them to “comment” on each other, giving us further insights on the method of their composition and indeed upon the entire Bible.

This also means that there is a very simple key to every part of the Bible, and thus to the whole thing: the commonality of shape. If you are a caterpillar crawling around inside some broccoli or cauliflower, it might seem very complicated. But viewing the Bible from outside, one can see that no matter how complicated it might appear close up, all of its parts are variations on a single theme, historical and literary constructions founded upon a shared principle.



Examples of fractals

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Moreover, fractal forms make biological structures *efficient, strong, and beautiful*. The Bible is exactly the same, and the basic shape that governs every part of it not only makes it easier to understand but also *easier to teach*. Rather than reading it as a stream of information or a collection of facts, the book becomes a single tree with many branches or a house with many rooms.

Now, unlike most books on Revelation, this one is not going to get you bogged down in the details. Using the keys we find in the books of Moses, we can understand it in much the same way as we can understand broccoli, or trees, or rivers systems, or snowflakes and crystals, or the human vascular system, or any other occurrences of fractals in nature. If we start by looking at the shape of the entire pattern before we zoom in, we will not get lost in the details. We will also see that the *similarities* between the smaller shapes make them miniatures of the whole thing, and their *differences* make sense of where they are positioned within that whole. If that is a little difficult to understand at this point, don't worry. It will soon make perfect sense.

### **The Shape of God**

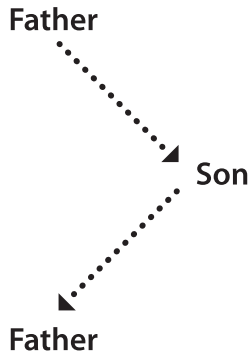
Does God have a shape? Not in the sense in which we usually think about shape. But since God is a relationship, the eternal *to-and-fro* between the Father and the

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Son by the Spirit, that relationship can be expressed as a diagram which *does* have a shape.



If we take time into account, since this process will find its expression in history, each cycle of to-and-fro can be seen to have a beginning and an end. The Father speaks, and the Son responds. The process is symmetrical, yet it has a *direction*. This creates a threefold pattern.



The word from the Father is expressed as **delegation**, and the obedient response from the Son is expressed as **vindication**. The Father loves the Son and trusts Him to do His will (*delegation*). The Son loves the Father and trusts Him and so carries out that word (*vindication*). The word from the Father never returns empty.



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Its “spiritual fruit” is borne out in the Son. This pattern is not only the foundation of all the covenants in the Bible, it is the “deep structure” underlying the composition of every book in the Bible, including the Revelation. Without this understanding, a crucial piece of information is missing, rendering our exegetical work hamstrung before it even begins.

### The Shape of Covenant

This “there and back again” boomerang pattern is the foundation of every covenant, which means every covenant is in fact a tour of duty. God sends someone on a mission (*delegation*) and by obedience, they will make His word fruitful in history (*vindication*). Adding *delegation* and *vindication* to the threefold pattern makes every covenant fivefold:



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This pattern is apparent in Israel's journey from Canaan to Egypt and back again, and due to the nation's failure to trust God in the book of Numbers it is repeated at a smaller scale in the wilderness wanderings.

This covenant pattern is also found in every task we carry out as human beings. All activity is carried out under some kind of authority, even if it is only one's own expectations and assessment.

The pattern can be found in the human work day, since it begins and ends with a journey, and has orders, service and rewards at the center. It can also be identified in a trip to the supermarket, and indeed it is the pattern of a complete human life.

Each of these five steps in a covenant document answers a particular question and also shapes the sequence of events as the mission is fulfilled in history.

**Authority:** *Who is the boss?*

**Delegation:** *Whom has the boss put in charge?*

**Service:** *What do we have to do?*

**Vindication:** *What do we get if we succeed?*

**Reunion:** *What is next?*

In the Bible, this pattern of task-and-accountability begins with the testing of Adam. The Lord tells him to keep (guard) the Garden and then leaves the scene. When He returns to evaluate the man's faithfulness,

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instead of blessings there are curses. Instead of reunion, there is separation, and the future of mankind is only maintained, or rather *purchased*, through the continual shedding of substitutionary sacrificial blood.

In case you are wondering what all of this material has to do with the book of Revelation, I'll give you a glimpse of why it is important. Revelation begins with John's vision of Jesus (**Authority**), and this is followed by the letters to the seven churches (**Delegation**). Revelation describes a "tour of duty," a covenant "mission," and unless we realize that, then we will be left in the dark. Before we go any further with that analysis, we should cover a bit more ground, but I hope you are beginning to see how crucial getting a handle on the literary structure is for understanding the Bible.

### **T.H.E.O.S.**

Since the texts of the Bible follow the covenant pattern, the steps in this fivefold process have been given some "theological" names which form a helpful five letter acronym which makes them easier to remember.

Do not let these terms overwhelm you. They are just technical names for steps in a pattern that is common to all of life.

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**TRANSCENDENCE:** God, the uncreated one, introduces Himself. (**Authority**)

**HIERARCHY:** He then defines the relationship between Himself as the master and His beloved servant/s, (**Delegation**)

**ETHICS:** the methods for carrying out the mission, (**Service**)

**OATH/SANCTIONS:** He outlines the possible outcomes, (**Vindication**)

**SUCCESSION:** and then describes a future role with greater authority. (**Representation**)

Now, what do these five terms actually mean?

- **Transcendence** simply means that God is above His creation as its lawmaker. As the originator, He is the boss.
- **Hierarchy** refers to a tiered authority structure, much like the hierarchical system of folders and files on your computer.
- **Ethics** refers to the Laws of God, which, when obeyed in faith, bring fruitfulness and prosperity.
- **Oath/Sanctions** is twofold, because it refers to the giving of the covenant (which often includes the swearing of an oath *before heaven* to obey the

## THE SHAPE OF THE WORD

Ethics) and then the blessings or curses which will fall *upon the earth* in history when the Lord returns to judge (assess) His servant. Thus, a delegation of covenant authority is also a means of making a person (or nation, in Israel's case) a mediator between heaven and earth.

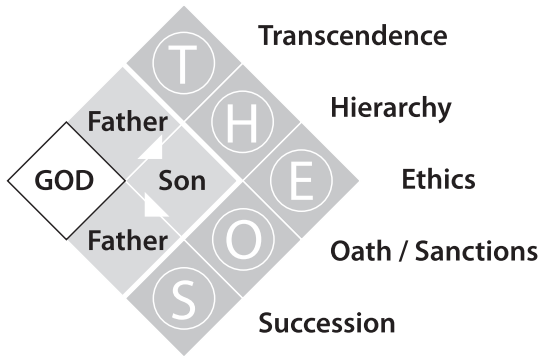
- **Succession** is the confirmation of the faithfulness of God's servant, who, now qualified, becomes His representative on earth, someone who speaks with God's own *Transcendent* authority.

As mentioned, the easiest way to remember these five terms is the acronym T.H.E.O.S. which is the Greek word for "God," found in our word "theology."

Since the threefold pattern in heaven becomes a fivefold pattern in a covenant, we can add to our "diagram of God." The "there-and-back-again" within the Trinity in heaven is the basis for the establishment of God's authority on earth.

You might well ask where the Spirit is represented in the diagram, but He is the "environment," the one who relates everyone and everything to everyone and everything else.

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Covenant is thus a means of maturing and empowering human beings. That was the intention in Eden – to complete the image of God in Adam. As God’s image, Adam was to become the representative of God’s **Transcendent** authority on earth, but that depended upon Adam’s submission to heaven.

Adam was promised a fruitful womb and a fruitful land (**Sanctions**), but the serpent offered these to him without the condition of obedience (**Ethics**). In basic terms, the sin in Eden was Adam’s attempt to seize the  *blessings of God without obedience to God.*

Just as a fractal is a process of “self-similarity,” so a covenant is a means of not only “duplicating” God’s authority in somebody trustworthy on earth (creation: **Oath**) but also making that person fruitful, able to “duplicate” themselves (procreation: **Sanctions**).

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When God gave authority to men and they repeated the sins of Adam, He would delegate *new* authority to prophets to warn the rulers of His coming to judge them. The role of the prophets as God's "repo men" was to *remind* people of the requirements of the covenant and their *accountability* to God for the fruits of righteousness. If they were unfruitful in holiness (*Oath*, Matthew 21:34), the fruit of the land and the womb would be "repossessed" by God (*Sanctions*, Matthew 21:43).

As Christians, God is completing the image of His perfect Son in us by the same process. He calls us, gives us authority, a mission, perseverance to perform it, and will assess our works before blessing us with a realized inheritance as His eternal sons.

### **The Shape of the Torah**

The books of Moses are known collectively as the *Torah* ("teaching") or *Pentateuch* ("five books") and these writings contain all the tools we need to understand the book of Revelation. The problem we have is that they are "hidden in plain sight" and we have not been trained to see them.

Since the Torah is the founding document for the entire Bible, it makes sense that the books of Moses as a unit should themselves follow the order of the fivefold covenant pattern:

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**TRANSCENDENCE:** God, the uncreated one, introduces Himself. (**Genesis**)

**HIERARCHY:** He then defines the relationship between Himself as the master and His beloved servant/s, (**Exodus**)

**ETHICS:** the methods for carrying out the mission, (**Leviticus**)

**OATH/SANCTIONS:** He outlines the possible outcomes – blessings or curses, (**Numbers**)

**SUCCESSION:** and then describes a future role with greater authority. (**Deuteronomy**)

### Jesus, a Better Moses

The language of covenant accountability is found in all the prophets, and they are often misunderstood because they are not read in the light of the blessings and curses of the Mosaic Covenant. For instance, Elisha set bears upon the children of the people of Bethel, home to one of Jeroboam's calf idols, not because he was personally affronted by their insults but because he was an administrator of the covenant. They disrespected him *because they were idolaters*. In the light of Leviticus 26, Elisha's apparent capriciousness is revealed to be a just recompense upon covenant breakers:



## THE SHAPE OF THE WORD

“Then if you walk contrary to me and will not listen to me, I will continue striking you, sevenfold for your sins. And I will let loose the wild beasts against you, which shall bereave you of your children and destroy your livestock and make you few in number, so that your roads shall be deserted.” (Leviticus 26:21-22)

Crucially, this language of accountability is also found in the parables which Jesus spoke to the Jews. Jesus’ words are most often understood as general exhortations applicable in all ages, but the truth is that just like the earlier prophets, the parables and warnings were given in a very specific context: they constitute a “covenant lawsuit” against those who were accountable to God under a distinct historical administration. Jesus was “knocking on their door” (Revelation 3:20) for the same reason that Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses on the door of the Church in Wittenberg. This was not an announcement of something that was inherently new but a call to remember and return to the Word of God.

This means that the New Testament, which includes the book of Revelation, can only be rightly interpreted in the light of the books of Moses and the Prophets. This is especially so regarding the warnings in the book of Hebrews to the Jewish Christians of the first century. Prophetic books only make sense when understood as “covenant lawsuits” for a particular era. This does not

## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

mean that these books are now irrelevant. Nobody interprets the warnings of Jeremiah as being *written* to us today, yet we can still *apply* them. Likewise, the book of Ezekiel, although it speaks of the imminent destruction of Jerusalem, can only be truly understood within its historical context. As with any literature, the rule must be “interpretation *before* application.” We cannot *apply* a text if do not first seek to *understand* it.

However, in legal terms, the Revelation differs from the rest of the New Testament, and that is why it is placed at the end. Like the book of Ezekiel, it is indeed a warning but *not* to those under judgment, and that is because it was now *too late* for those who were condemned. The book was written to the jury because they themselves would be taking part in the execution of the sentence, the covenant **Sanctions** which would cut off the wicked, repossess their authority, riches and glory, and bestow it upon the righteous as an inheritance (**Succession**). The irony of the prophecy is that it is addressed to Gentile churches, inverting the promises of God to Israel. The Jewish rulers were now the “Canaanites,” and the Christian saints would inherit

“great and good cities that you did not build, and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant.” (Deuteronomy 6:10-11)

## THE SHAPE OF THE WORD

Revelation is not about the end of the world. Like Ezekiel, it is about the end of a covenant era. This fact does not minimize its importance, because as we shall see, Israel had represented the entire world before God.

This thesis concerning the prophecy is controversial and raises many questions, but this book will answer them. That is the good news.

The bad news is that holding such a controversial position can be costly. The Revelation of Jesus Christ is not a book intended to be merely observed but experienced, over and over, and assimilated. It is designed to resonate. It is offensive to the cultured sensibilities which shield us because it is supposed to transcend them, to speak not only to us but *through* us. Many of those who have given themselves to it wholeheartedly are seldom seen again. They are devoured. They become alien, strangers, even among Christians. They speak a new language, the “madness” of the prophets whose eyes see the chariots of God (2 Kings 6:17).

If you find the following thesis convincing, you may be ridiculed, ostracized, and even condemned as a heretic. Are you willing to join that number? True reform is glorious but it is never achieved without risk.



# 2

## THE SHAPE OF THE WORLD

**B**esides the captivating dramas and spectacular miracles in the books of Moses, there is much information which most readers tend to skip over. The detailed genealogies and descriptions of architecture are assumed to be superfluous, but in reality the Bible is “front-loaded” with information which is constantly – and often very subtly – referred to later on. Nowhere is this more the case than in the book of Revelation, since it alludes in some way to just about every other book in the Bible.

When it comes to architecture, Revelation contains many references to the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon, both of which were replicas of the original sanctuary in Eden. This common floor plan, or blueprint, sets the scene for what occurs in Revelation. Each design had three levels, representing the domains of the original creation which were corrupted by Man.

## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

### The Most Holy Place

Adam corrupted the GARDEN: *theft from the Father*

---

### The Holy Place

Cain corrupted the LAND: *murder of the Son*

---

### The Court/s Outside

The lines of Seth and Cain intermarried and corrupted the WORLD: *blasphemy against the Spirit*

## Cosmic Language

What is often overlooked is the fact that the major elements of the Tabernacle constituted a process of transformation which is a retelling of the seven days of creation in Genesis 1. Just as blameless animals served as *sacrificial* substitutes for sinful men, so the house of God was an *architectural* substitute for the entire world.

Of course, the first instance of such a mediatory “micro cosmos” was the ark built by Noah, a miniature “creation” which had three levels, with a window in the roof (like the “windows” of heaven) and a door in the base (like the fountains of the deep). It was an image of “the heavens above... the earth beneath... [and] the water under the earth” (Exodus 20:4).

God promised that He would never again destroy the

## THE SHAPE OF THE WORLD

world with a flood, but after establishing Noah as a tried and tested Adam and giving him greater authority, things started to go bad once again. The only way to avoid another “creational” judgment was to establish a nation which would bear the sins of all nations, “all flesh,” and a permanent “microcosmic” house, a *social* construct which would suffer judgment on behalf of the *physical* world. This is why Israel came to be spoken of by the prophets as “the Land” and the other nations as “the Sea.” When Israel sinned, the armies of the nations would rush in like a flood (Daniel 9:26). These local judgments took place on behalf of the entire world in the same way that sacrifices died on behalf of those who offered them. References to Jews and Gentiles under “creation” language are found throughout the books of the prophets, and it can be very confusing without an understanding of sacrificial substitution.

The Gospels contain similar “cosmic language.” For instance, when Jesus speaks of stars falling from heaven, He is quoting a prophecy from Isaiah against ancient Babylon, which was a judgment upon rulers and not a worldwide cataclysm. Genesis tells us that lights rule the heavens in the way that kings rule the earth. And we should remember that the wise men from the east followed a star to the newborn king in Bethlehem.

So, how are we to tell whether the prophets are

## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

speaking of the actual creation or its “legal representatives,” that is, the fall of the “stars of heaven” or the fall of the rulers of the land? The answer is found in which covenant the prophets are calling people to return to, and this can be discerned by identifying the prophet’s audience. The writings of the prophets always look into the future, but it is the *immediate* future. Their calls to repentance in the here and now are always partnered with judgment in the here and *soon*. The Revelation is no different. Jesus says He is coming soon, “without delay,” and He begins by inspecting the lampstand “trees” in the Garden for spiritual fruit that these very churches might not suffer the fate that was coming upon *that generation*. Revelation is the culmination and direct outcome of everything that has gone before in the Gospels and the letters of the New Testament.

### The Land and the World

This method of sacrificial substitution is also why the obsolescence of Israel and its mediatory ministry resulted in the sudden accountability of all nations to the Gospel of Christ (Acts 17:30). The “Land” and “Sea” substitutionary model established in the circumcision of Abraham and Israel’s possession of Canaan was about to be revoked. This leads to some important points to note regarding our English translations:



## THE SHAPE OF THE WORLD

- 1) The word translated “earth” from both Hebrew (*eretz*) and Greek (*gē*) usually means “land.” Its meaning is determined by the context, and the prophetic context in the Revelation is the first century Land of Israel. But we must remember that the Land of Israel was the legal representative of all the “dry land” on the globe.
- 2) The word translated “world” is actually two different Greek words. One is the origin of our word *cosmos*. The other (*oikouménē*) is the source of the word *ecumenical*, and it means not the *physical* creation but the inhabited (that is, *social*) world pictured as a “household.”

This helps us to understand the context of Paul’s sermon to the Greeks at the Areopagus in Athens. The heavenly High Priest had made the earthly one obsolete. Since animal sacrifices were now ineffectual, God no longer overlooked the sins of the nations. Jesus’ resurrection had removed the Jew-Gentile distinction and thus made all people directly accountable to God:

“The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.” (Acts 17:30-31)

## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

The word “world” in verse 31 is a misleading translation. Since *oikouménē* carries the idea of a household or realm, a more helpful English word might be “empire.” The judgment that Paul speaks of is the end of the Jew-Gentile construct set up by God in the book of Daniel, the mixed “household” in which the Jews would dwell under Gentile emperors and serve as witnesses in a larger kingdom than that of the Davidic kings. Despite the foibles and failures of the Jews during this period, the Word of God taught in the synagogues across the empire was producing a harvest of faith, the one Jesus described as being ripe in His day (Luke 10:2; John 4:35).

Thus, when the Revelation appears to speak of judgment upon the earth and the world, it is really speaking of judgment upon those in *Israel* and *Rome* who had rejected the Gospel of Christ. Jesus’ predictions of an imminent “end” were entirely fulfilled.

So, the book of Revelation all takes place within the microcosmic domain whose blueprint is established in the books of Moses. This architectural understanding also helps us with some other New Testament references to the “last days” which are hotly debated. Revelation does indeed describe “the end of the world,” but that end took place through a substitutionary sacrifice: Israel would once again perish in a “flood” of Gentile armies. With that in mind, we can correspond

## THE SHAPE OF THE WORLD

the various characters in this first century *social* drama with their counterparts in the original *physical* world.

### **The Most Holy Place: GARDEN**

Adam, the corrupted High Priesthood as the “man of sin” in the Temple of God, and the Pharisees as a “nest of serpents.”

---

### **The Holy Place: LAND**

The murderous Herods, who slew the sons of Israel and then the sons of God (the Christian saints).

---

### **The Courts of the Nations: WORLD**

Rome, the fourth empire in Daniel’s vision, whose kingly power the priestly nation desired to obtain through compromise, or “intermarriage.”

## **Ezekiel and Revelation**

Ezekiel was a prophecy against the rulers of Jerusalem, a prediction of the destruction of the Temple and a judgment upon the surrounding nations of the day.

Revelation speaks in the same “cosmic language” and is also a prophecy against the rulers of Jerusalem, a prediction of the destruction of the Temple, and judgment upon the surrounding nations of the day.

Since Revelation serves a similar purpose to that of Ezekiel, it also repeats much of the imagery:

## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

- A Son of Man (Revelation 1, Ezekiel 2)
- The Throne-Vision (Revelation 4, Ezekiel 1)
- The Book (Revelation 5, Ezekiel 2-3)
- The Four Plagues (Revelation 6:1-8, Ezekiel 5)
- The Slain Under the Altar (Revelation 6:9-11, Ezekiel 6)
- The Wrath of God (Revelation 6:12-17, Ezekiel 7)
- The Seal on the Saints' Foreheads (Revelation 7, Ezekiel 9)
- The Coals from the Altar (Revelation 8, Ezekiel 10)
- No More Delay (Revelation 10:1-7, Ezekiel 12)
- The Eating of the Book (Revelation 10:8-11, Ezekiel 2)
- The Measuring of the Temple (Revelation 11:1-2, Ezekiel 40-43)
- Jerusalem and Sodom (Revelation 11:8, Ezekiel 16)
- The Cup of Wrath (Revelation 14, Ezekiel 23)
- The Vine of the Land (Revelation 14:18-20, Ezekiel 15)
- The Great Harlot (Revelation 17-18, Ezekiel 16, 23)
- The Lament Over the City (Revelation 18, Ezekiel 27)
- The Scavengers' Feast (Revelation 19, Ezekiel 38)
- The First Resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6, Ezekiel 37)
- The Battle with Gog and Magog (Revelation 20:7-9, Ezekiel 38-39)
- The New Jerusalem (Revelation 21, Ezekiel 40-48)
- The River of Life (Revelation 22, Ezekiel 47)

## THE SHAPE OF THE WORLD

So, the book of Revelation is not speaking directly either about events throughout Christian history or events reported in modern news bulletins. The “coming” of Jesus in judgment against those who slew Him and the first Christian saints was just like all the previous “comings” of God in judgment going right back to Genesis 3.

Like the book of Ezekiel, the Revelation was not written *to* us, but it was written *for* us as a warning. This means that although a faithful *interpretation* places it squarely in the events of the first century, we can still be faithful in *application* when applying its principles with wisdom to situations today.

The “end of the world” of which Revelation speaks is not in your future. But some take this fact too far, and claim that the entire Bible is fulfilled, that there is no future judgment, and no future “coming” of Christ. What they overlook is the fact that the Tabernacle and Temples were substitutes for the real thing, and history is just as symmetrical as the “there and back again” of the covenant pattern. History *began* with the entrance of death into the *physical* order by the sin of one man, resulting in judgment upon the *physical* order, and history will *end* with the destruction of death, the final enemy, and the full restoration of the *physical* order:

## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

### TRANSCENDENCE:

PHYSICAL-SOCIAL-ETHICAL Cosmos

**Adam to Noah:** Judgment upon all flesh.

### HIERARCHY:

SOCIAL-ETHICAL Cosmos: *External Law*

**Abraham/Moses:** Circumcision and the Law.

### ETHICS:

ETHICAL Cosmos: *Law Fulfilled*

**The cross of Christ:** One man dies.

*“Now is the judgment of this world.”*

### OATH/SANCTIONS:

ETHICAL-SOCIAL Cosmos: *Internal Law*

**The Church:** The Spirit of God in the Saints.

### SUCCESSION:

ETHICAL-SOCIAL-PHYSICAL Cosmos

**Restored Creation:** The destruction of death.

The Revelation predicts the destruction of Jerusalem, and its Temple, and the end of the substitutionary animal sacrifices which had allowed history to continue for four millennia. This is why Jesus says that the blood of Abel and all the other slain prophets would be avenged upon that first century generation. It was the end – *the last days* – of the old order.

## THE SHAPE OF THE WORLD

But before the end of the Old Covenant, Jesus established the New. Like all previous covenants, this too will have a day of reckoning. That is described in the only part of Revelation which is still future to us, located at the end in a section which corresponds to **Succession**. All the sufferings and judgments described before that are in our past, not in our future.

As mentioned, for many readers this will be a new and foreign idea, and you are right to be skeptical of such a fundamental paradigm shift. However, I ask you to stick with me as we analyze the text. Even if the analysis does not persuade you, it will increase your appreciation for the integrity of the Bible.

### **A New Heavens and a New Earth**

These microcosmic, substitutionary “creations” also explain the various uses of the phrase “new heavens and a new earth.” Every “new covenant” in the Bible, from the shiny “new world” given to Noah, to the second set of tablets given to Israel, to the “new covenant” made with Israel after the exile, to the actual New Covenant established in the first century, was indeed the beginning of a new relationship between heaven and earth. Each time, God spoke new words (**Transcendence**), installed new leaders (**Hierarchy**), updated His laws for a more mature people (**Ethics**),

## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

updated the curses for a covenant which encompassed a greater territory (**Oath/Sanctions**), and promised an even greater rest and more sublime glory for those who were faithful (**Succession**). Thus, by the time of the writing of the Revelation, the “new Jerusalem” of Ezra and Nehemiah had become an old Jerusalem. An even better one was being established, a city founded in heaven, and thus incorruptible and unshakeable.

Each “new covenant” moved mankind from glory to glory, bringing increasing maturity – discernment and holiness – each time. This is why the Tabernacle of David was more glorious than the Tabernacle of Moses, and the glory of the Temple of Solomon was far greater still. Yet each of these was only a stand in for the glory of the restored creation. When Jesus said “Behold, I am making all things new,” He was speaking of the power of His resurrection working its way from His tomb through human witness to the eventual redemption of “every creature,” the reconstruction/renovation of the original “Temple,” that is, the cosmos created in Genesis 1.

This explains the fundamental three-level structure of the book of Revelation, which moves from Jesus in the Sanctuary (**Garden**), out into the tribes of the **Land**, setting the righteous and wicked against each other, and finally, after the conquest of the old “Land,” out into all the nations of the **World**:



## THE SHAPE OF THE WORLD

### **The Most Holy Place: GARDEN**

Jesus appears to John in the Sanctuary and ministers to the saints (Revelation 1-3)

---

### **The Holy Place: LAND**

Beginning with a single white horse, the four Gospels are sent from the Garden into the Land, bringing enlightenment, division, trials, and finally judgment upon the old order (Revelation 6)

---

### **The Courts of the Nations: WORLD**

On white horses, Jesus and the saints now ride from the ruins of the Land to take the Gospel into all the World (Revelation 19)

So, the sacred architecture established in the books of Moses enables us to understand the substitutionary nature of the judgments in the Revelation, but we must also take note of the *shape* of Israel's mediation for the nations if we are to understand the shape of the prophecy and the rich allusions it employs. This begins with an understanding of the biblical pattern of worship because the Revelation is a sacrificial liturgy. For Jesus to "make all things new" (Revelation 21:5) He had to put the entire world order of the day on the altar.



# 3

## THE SHAPE OF WORSHIP

**T**o be correctly interpreted, Revelation must be understood not only as *literature* but also as *liturgy*. We worship a God for whom even the pronouncement of judgment is a rousing song.

This is why Jesus interrupted John “on the Lord’s day” (Revelation 1:10), that is, while he was conducting worship. John was a Levite whose family had strong ties to the Priesthood, so he would have been familiar with the pattern and purpose of biblical worship.

Just as liturgy trains the saints in the patterns of life, so also heavenly liturgy is “measured out” upon the earth in history in much the same way as Adam’s actions in the Garden would affect the whole world. Since *cultus* invariably begets culture, judgment would once again begin at the house of God (1 Peter 4:17).

From beginning to end, the Revelation is a worship service which recapitulates patterns established in the

## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

Torah. The foundation for all of these patterns is the process of creation in Genesis 1. All worship is thus a weekly “re-creation” in miniature.

The creation week consisted of three days of *forming* and three days of *filling*, followed by Day 7, which was a promise of the *future*. If found faithful, God would give Adam the fruit of the land and the fruit of the womb, two things crucial for historical continuity.

### CREATION

FORMING	DAY 1
	Division between light and darkness
	DAY 2
FILLING	Division between the waters above and below
	DAY 3
	Division between sea and dry land, with primary fruit bearers (grains and fruits) upon the land
<hr/>	
FUTURE	DAY 4
	Sun, moon and stars as heavenly governors
	DAY 5
FUTURE	Swarms, clouds or “hosts” in the sky and the sea
	DAY 6
	Animals and Man on the land
<hr/>	
FUTURE	DAY 7
	Rest, rule and fruitfulness fulfilled as promised

## THE SHAPE OF WORSHIP

These three stages also correspond to the three central stages in the history of Israel. Moses looked forward to the day when the Levitical distinctions of Israel's "childhood" (holy, common, unclean) were gone and all the Lord's people would serve Him with the maturity, wisdom and power of prophets (Numbers 11:29).

### FORMING

PRIESTHOOD is a ministry of *dividing* things, of rules and regulations, symbols and object lessons that train us as "children." Under Moses, God disciplined Israel swiftly.

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### FILLING

KINGHOOD is a ministry of *discerning* things, looking beyond appearances to discover the heart of the matter, and judging wisely. Under David and Solomon, God allowed Israel to experience the long-term consequences of sin and righteousness.

---

### FUTURE

PROPHETHOOD is a ministry that incorporates priestly submission and kingly dominion but also enjoys *direct access* to God. Under Isaiah and Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, Haggai and Zechariah, all Israel died for sin and rose again, every Israelite commissioned as a witness among the nations.

## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

Since God pronounced blessings upon the creation, we know that even this initial work of Father, Son and Spirit was “covenantal.” The **sevenfold** Week was an expansion of the **fivefold** T.H.E.O.S. pattern, which was in turn the outworking of the **threefold** relationship between the Father and the Son. *All* things were created through Him, and He is the light of men (John 1:3-5).

Since the Revelation was composed according to a pattern of worship founded in the creation week, the book begins with Jesus’ appearance to John as “enlightenment” concerning the things which he had seen (*forming*, the establishment of the Church, 1 John 1:1-3), the things which are (*filling*, the persecutions they were currently enduring, Colossians 1:24) and the things which would take place after this (*future*, the imminent judgment of their persecutors, Revelation 1:19). The prophecy actually begins with events which had already taken place, but describes them *from heaven’s point of view*, that is, as liturgy.

Biblical liturgy all takes place within a sacred space whose “elements” represent the entire creation. These “elements”, which is a translation of the Greek word *stoicheia* (see Galatians 4:3, 9-10; 2 Peter 3:10-11) are the furnishings and rites, taboos and laws of spiritual childhood. This is why the basic “elements” of the Tabernacle are images of steps in the creation week.

## THE SHAPE OF WORSHIP

Since we are now making correspondences between related patterns, we will introduce some icons to help you identify the linked steps between various charts. These will make more sense as we progress.

### TABERNACLE



#### DAY 1: ARK OF THE TESTIMONY

Division between moral light and darkness



#### DAY 2: VEIL

Division of the waters  
between heaven and earth



#### DAY 3: BRONZE ALTAR

Division between sea and dry land  
**GOLDEN TABLE**  
Primary fruit bearers



#### DAY 4: LAMPSTAND

Sun, moon and stars as heavenly  
governors



#### DAY 5: INCENSE ALTAR

Swarms, clouds or “hosts” in the sky and  
the sea



#### DAY 6: LAVER AND MEDIATORS

Animals and Man on the land










#### DAY 7: SHEKINAH

The glory of God fills the “world”

## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

This sevenfold pattern is also found in the “ascension offering” which created a pillar of fire and cloud (smoke) rising up to heaven as a *legal witness* that the will of God in heaven had been done on earth. Noah was the first man to make an offering by fire (Genesis 8:20-22).

### SACRIFICE

-  **ARK OF THE TESTIMONY** (*Initiation*)  
A blameless (pure white) animal is chosen
-  **VEIL** (*Delegation*)  
The animal is set apart and cut
-  **ALTAR & TABLE** (*Presentation*)  
The flesh is placed on the altar as a legal representative of the fruit of the womb
-  **LAMPSTAND** (*Purification*)  
Holy fire descends upon the body
-  **INCENSE ALTAR** (*Transformation*)  
Clouds of fragrant smoke *rise* to God and dust and ashes *fall* into the altar
-  **LAVER AND MEDIATORS** (*Vindication*)  
The “mediating” savor is accepted as pleasing to God
-  **SHEKINAH** (*Representation*)  
There is reconciliation and reunion between God and the nations via the mediatory Man



## THE SHAPE OF WORSHIP

Noahic worship was a testimony on an altar of earth, but the Levitical Priesthood was “heavenly,” introducing furnitures covered in precious metal. The “seedtime and harvest” promised to Noah and common to all men were also “sanctified” in Israel’s annual festal calendar as promises of fruitfulness, celebration and rest in a new creation (Leviticus 23).

### FESTIVALS



#### **SABBATH** (*Initiation*)

Weekly rest: only the house of Israel



#### **PASSOVER** (*Delegation*)

Sin removed: Israel *under* the sword



#### **FIRSTFRUITS** (*Presentation*)

Israel as priesthood (Covenant Head)



#### **PENTECOST** (*Purification*)

Israel as lawful kingdom (Spirit)



#### **TRUMPETS** (*Transformation*)

Israel as prophetic army (Covenant Body)



#### **ATONEMENT (COVERINGS)** (*Vindication*)

Sin removed: Israel *bears* the sword










#### **BOOTHS (INGATHERING)** (*Representation*)

Annual rest: a house for all nations

## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

Just like the creation week, and indeed like any good music, the liturgy of worship moves from tension to rest, from mourning to joy. What began as “formless and void” becomes “formed and filled.” The action moves from bloodshed on earth to rule over the nations, and a wonderful example of the pattern is found in Exodus 24.

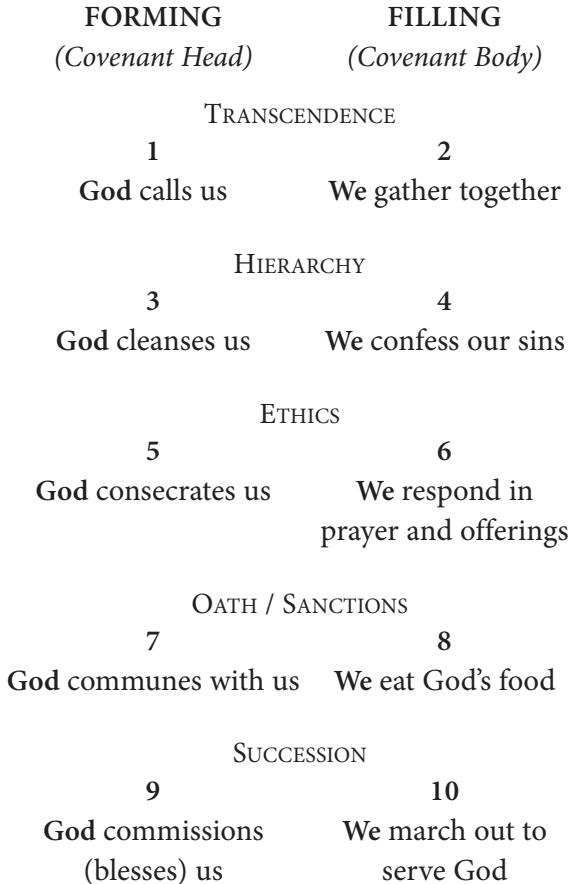
### EXODUS 24

-  **SABBATH** – The call to climb the mountain and worship from afar
-  **PASSOVER** – Moses and the elders are set apart from Israel
-  **FIRSTFRUITS** – Moses alone shall come near the Lord (Covenant Head “in heaven”)
-  **PENTECOST** – Moses tells the people the Laws and they agree to obey them
-  **TRUMPETS** – The altar and twelve pillars are built (Covenant Body “on earth”)
-  **ATONEMENT** – Half of the blood is sprinkled on the children of Israel. Moses and the elders feast before God on the mountain
-  **BOOTHS (CLOUDS)** – The glory-cloud rests upon the mountain

## THE SHAPE OF WORSHIP

The process of biblical worship can be expressed as a fivefold “covenant” pattern (corresponding to the twin tablet arrangement of the Ten Commandments – see Chapter 4) or as a sevenfold “creation” pattern. Both are apparent in the arrangement of the Revelation:


### WORSHIP AS A NEW COVENANT




## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

### WORSHIP AS A NEW CREATION




#### TRANSCENDENCE

-  The saints are officially called to worship  
(*Creation / Sabbath*)


#### HIERARCHY

-  Corporate confession and forgiveness  
(*Division / Passover*)


#### ETHICS

-  By faith, the saints ascend before  
the throne in heaven, singing praises  
(*Ascension / Firstfruits*)
-  The Word is taught  
(*Testing / Pentecost*)
-  The offering is taken  
(*Maturity / Trumpets*)

#### OATH / SANCTIONS

-  Communion is celebrated  
(*Conquest / Atonement*)

#### SUCCESSION

-  Thanksgiving prayer and a recommission to  
preach the gospel (*Glorification / Booths*)

These patterns are the liturgical threads of the fractal structure that governs every part of the Bible. We will now observe how these patterns of heavenly worship were measured out in history upon the earth.

# 4

## THE SHAPE OF HISTORY

**I**n contrast to the often frustrating literary economy of the book of Genesis, the second half of Exodus introduces a level of detail that overwhelms the best intentions of many who set out to read through the entire Bible. For the brave souls who make it out the other side of Leviticus, a return to regular narrative brings some relief, but due to the nature of many of the accounts in Numbers, one cannot help but feel that the giving of the Law ramped up the Bible's level of *weird*.

Gut level instincts are usually correct, but modern Christians have been trained to ignore them when it comes to Scripture. Something did indeed change at Sinai, and that was the institution of a central Sanctuary on earth in the Priesthood of Israel, a feature of worship that had not existed since the destruction of Eden in the Great Flood. The Law divided Israel into classes of holiness and reassembled them as *sacred architecture*.

## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

The detailed liturgical patterns established in the Mosaic Covenant not only help us to fill in the gaps where we were forced to read between the lines in the book of Genesis, they are also the key to subsequent biblical history. And together, biblical liturgy and biblical history are the key to the book of Revelation.

The primary historical patterns (or “covenant-literary templates”) complete the hermeneutical rubric. As literary “temples,” expressions of sacred architecture, they are not to be read as though they are prose. They were designed to be meditated upon until you dwell in them and they dwell in you, and you are able to perceive them wherever God has hidden them in plain sight.

The beauty of having a structure that is common to each template is its usefulness as a mnemonic device, so try to visualize each sequence in *spatial* terms. If you find yourself struggling, these cycles are presented with far more explanation and discussion in my other books: *Reading the Bible in 3D*, *Bible Matrix: An Introduction to the DNA of the Scriptures*, *Bible Matrix II: The Covenant Key*, and the forthcoming *Bible Matrix III: The House of God*. Through repeated exposure, these biblical patterns eventually become intuitive and you will begin to notice them yourself as you read the Bible. Just as it is when learning a new language, the keys are **meditation, repetition and personal use**.

## THE SHAPE OF HISTORY

### THE BIBLE MATRIX

The Bible Matrix is a chiastic (symmetrical) sequence of steps in a process of transformation. Sometimes it appears in a fivefold “**covenant**” form and sometimes in an expanded sevenfold “**creation**” form.

#### COVENANT

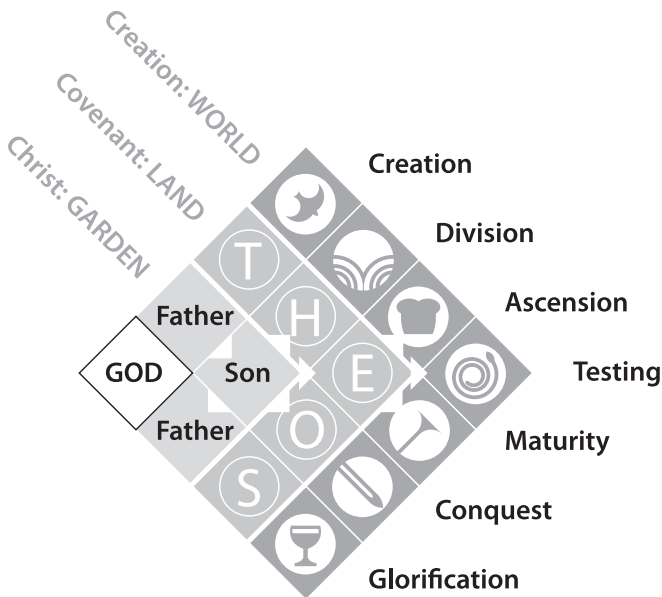
- **Transcendence** (*Authority/Command*)
  - **Hierarchy** (*Delegation/Mission*)
    - **Ethics** (*Lawful Service*)
  - **Oath/Sanctions** (*Vindication/Reward*)
- **Succession** (*Reunion/Rest*)

#### CREATION

- **Creation** (*God gives life*)
  - **Division** (*God sets apart for service*)
    - **Ascension** (*God gives instructions*)
      - **Testing** (*Loyalty is tested*)
    - **Maturity** (*Faithfulness brings results*)
  - **Conquest** (*The servant is assessed*)
- **Glorification** (*Greater authority is given*)

## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

These two structures are intimately related. The first is the fivefold “covenant document” which prepares the servant, resulting in an *Oath* of faithfulness and a commission to proceed with the task.



In the second, the service plays out as sevenfold history. This splits the *Ethics* of the covenant into three parts:

- *Ascension*: The Law is **given**
- *Testing*: The Law is **opened**
- *Maturity*: The Law is **received**



## THE SHAPE OF HISTORY

At *Ascension*, the Law is **external**, a document written on tablets of stone. Through *Testing* – some kind of moral or physical ordeal – the Law becomes **internal**, written on the tablets of the heart (*Maturity*). The Word of God has become “flesh,” that is, given physical form in history through faithful obedience.

You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on [your] hearts, to be known and read by all. And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of [fleshly] hearts.  
(2 Corinthians 3:3)

Obedience through trial vindicates the Word of God, and the servant is qualified, “perfected through suffering” (Hebrews 2:10). He can thus be given great authority because he can now be trusted with it.

This pattern explains the *Testing* of Adam. He was given great promises and a foretaste of the glory of dominion. But his rule over the earth (Kingdom) depended upon his submission to heaven (Priesthood). When the serpent challenged God’s Word and slandered God’s character, Adam seized in “immaturity” what God had intended to give to him freely once he was “mature.” As we shall see, this process of qualification via response to the Word of God serves as the deep structure of the final book of the Bible.


## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

### ADAM




#### TRANSCENDENCE

-  God creates Adam (*Creation*)


#### HIERARCHY

-  He places him into the Sanctuary (*Division*)


#### ETHICS

-  Adam is given promises (WORD), a priestly prohibition (SACRAMENT), and a bride (GOVERNMENT) (*Ascension*)
-  the serpent questions God's authority (*Testing*)
-  Man steals the forbidden fruit and realizes his nakedness before God (*Maturity*)

#### OATH / SANCTIONS

-  Adam blames God. The Lord judges the conspiracy, but instead of slaying Adam he covers the sin and the nakedness with the blood and skin of an animal (*Conquest*)

#### SUCCESSION

-  The promised fruit of the land and the womb are given but with limitations, and access to God requires the shedding of blood. Instead of bearing the sword for God, Adam remains under the tutelage of an angelic sword (*Glorification*)

## THE SHAPE OF HISTORY


All Scripture is founded upon this pattern, but there are key occurrences in Bible history which are worthy of memorization or at least great familiarization:

- **Cain and Abel**, the rivalry between Priesthood and Kingdom in the Garden now corrupts the Land.
- **The Great Flood**, a repeat of the Edenic pattern which *revoked* the atonement once the sin of Adam was full-grown and faithful sacrifice had ceased.
- **The Tower of Babel**, a more mature rebellion than that before the flood, based upon false worship rather than the destruction of worship.
- **The Law of Moses**, the Adamic pattern presented in two fivefold columns as a template for history, from Above (Garden) to Beside (Land) to Below (World).
- **Israel's sin with the golden calf**, which gives us "the image of the beast" and the Levitical sword.
- **Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan**, in which Moses receives the Law upon Sinai at *Ascension*. Jesus receives the scroll at this point in Revelation.
- **The history of Israel**, which sees the humbling prohibition in Eden expanded into Levitical Law, and the covenant *Ethics* into the Triune Office.
- **The history of the world** not only takes us from the physical creation to its restoration, but it also shows us the placement and significance of the Revelation in the big picture.


## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

### CAIN AND ABEL




#### TRANSCENDENCE

-  **A SON OF MAN** – Adam knows his wife and she bears him “a man from the Lord”  
(*Creation / Sabbath*)

#### HIERARCHY

-  **PRIEST AND KING** – She also bears Abel who is a keeper of sheep. Cain works the ground (*Division / Passover*)

#### ETHICS (PRIESTHOOD, KINGDOM, PROPHECY)

-  **AT THE END OF DAYS** – The brothers present their offerings to God in worship. Cain makes his kingly offering first and God is displeased (*Ascension / Firstfruits*)
-  **MAN AS “GOD”** – The Lord calls Cain to rule over sin but he murders his priestly brother (*Testing / Pentecost*)
-  **ABEL’S WITNESS** – God calls Cain to account, and Abel’s blood calls for vengeance (*Maturity / Trumpets*)

#### OATH / SANCTIONS

-  **CAIN IS COVERED** – Vengeance is withheld. Cain goes into exile (*Conquest / Atonement*)

#### SUCCESSION

-  **FALSE INHERITANCE** – Cursed Cain builds a walled city as a refuge (*Glorification / Booths*)


## THE SHAPE OF HISTORY

### THE GREAT FLOOD




#### TRANSCENDENCE

-  **THE SIN OF ADAM** – God creates the World, but its first ruler fails to qualify (*Creation*)

#### HIERARCHY

-  **THE MURDER OF ABEL** – Cain’s rejection of blood sacrifice seizes “the sword” and splits humanity into Priests and Kings (*Division*)


#### ETHICS (PRIESTHOOD, KINGDOM, PROPHECY)

-  **NO MERCY** – Lamech promotes vengeance (WORD), Abel is replaced by Enosh (SACRAMENT), Enoch is taken by God (GOVERNMENT) (*Ascension*)
-  **MEN AS “GODS”** – the “seeds” of the serpent (Kings) and the Woman (Priests) intermarry. Bloodshed replaces animal sacrifice (*Testing*)
-  **NOAH’S WITNESS** – The ark is built and the animals are brought to Noah as they were to Adam (*Maturity*)

#### OATH / SANCTIONS

-  **“ALL FLESH” IS COVERED** – The beasts are saved but the Men are not (*Conquest*)


#### SUCCESSION

-  **A NEW LAND** – Dry land emerges once again. Noah qualifies as Covenant Head, sword-bearer. He drinks wine with God and rests (*Glorification*)


## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

### THE TOWER OF BABEL


#### TRANSCENDENCE


-  **FALSE UNITY** – The resting world has one language and a single “confession” (*Creation*)


#### HIERARCHY

-  **COMPROMISE** – The priestly sons of Joktan (from Shem via Eber) journey from the east (*Division*)


#### ETHICS (PRIESTHOOD, KINGDOM, PROPHECY)

-  **FALSE WORSHIP** – They decide to build a tower to heaven (false church), and a city (false state) (*Ascension*)


-  **INSPECTION BY GOD** – The Lord – as “two witnesses” – comes down to assess them (*Testing*)

-  **PROPHETIC WITNESS** – He then pronounces curses upon them: confusion (false church) and scattering (false state) (*Maturity*)

#### OATH / SANCTIONS

-  **NOAH VINDICATED** – The site is named “Babel” which means “gate of God” (*Conquest*)

#### SUCCESSION

-  **SCATTERING** – Having divided the nations, God disperses them across the entire world (*Glorification*)

# THE SHAPE OF HISTORY

## THE TEN WORDS

**FORMING**

*(Covenant Head)*

**FILLING**

*(Covenant Body)*

GOD ABOVE

TRANSCENDENCE

1

**WORD FROM GOD**

*No false gods*

2

**WORD TO GOD**

*No false oaths*

MAN BESIDE

HIERARCHY

3

**ADAM'S LAND**

*Keep the Sabbath*

4

**EVE'S WOMB**

*Honor your parents*

HOUSEHOLD BELOW

ETHICS

5

**SONS OF GOD**

*No murder*

6

**DAUGHTERS OF MEN**

*No adultery*

OATH / SANCTIONS

7

**FALSE BLESSINGS**

*No theft*

8

**FALSE CURSES**

*No false witness*

SUCCESSION

9

**FORMED HOUSE**

*No coveting a house*

10

**FILLED HOUSE**

*No coveting contents*


## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

### THE GOLDEN CALF




#### TRANSCENDENCE

-  **MOSES ON SINAI** – When Moses delays, the people request of Aaron a golden god (*Creation*)


#### HIERARCHY

-  **A CALL TO JUDGE** – The Lord reveals to Moses the corruption of the people with their Egyptian “deliverer” (*Division*)


#### ETHICS (PRIESTHOOD, KINGDOM, PROPHECY)

-  **MERCY** – On the mountain, Moses intercedes for the people (*Ascension*)
-  **THE BEAST CONSUMED** – He breaks the tablets, grinds the calf to dust, and the people drink it (*Testing*)
-  **FALSE WITNESS** – Aaron repeats his “story,” blaming the people given to him, as Adam did (*Maturity*)

#### OATH / SANCTIONS

-  **THE FIRST PENTECOST** – Moses calls “Who is on the Lord’s side?” Three thousand are slain with the sword, and the faithful Levites are blessed (*Conquest*)

#### SUCCESSION

-  **PROMISES AND WARNINGS** – The Lord promises to lead Moses but also promises a future visitation for this act of idolatry (*Glorification*)



## THE SHAPE OF HISTORY

### DOMINION: SLAVERY TO SABBATH

#### TRANSCENDENCE



**GENESIS** – Israel is called from among the nations (*Creation*)

#### HIERARCHY



**EXODUS** – Israel is cut from the nations (blood then water) (*Division*)

#### ETHICS (PRIESTHOOD, KINGDOM, PROPHECY)



**LEVITICUS** – Israel is presented to God through legal mediators (*Ascension*)



**NUMBERS** – Israel is threshed, and the idolaters are cut off (*Testing*)



**DEUTERONOMY** – Israel is assembled. Moses repeats the Law (*Maturity*)

#### OATH / SANCTIONS



**JOSHUA** – The nations are cut off from the Land (water then blood) (*Conquest*)

#### SUCCESSION



**JUDGES** – When Israel's priestly mediation fails, God raises up wise rulers (*Glorification*)

The reversal of the blood and water relates to Moses tipping water onto the ground which became blood (*vengeance*: Exodus 4:9), and the sacrificial blood which was to be tipped onto the ground as water (*mercy*: Deuteronomy 12:16; 12:24; 15:23).


## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

### PRIESTHOOD OF ADAM




#### TRANSCENDENCE

-  **INITIATION** – Springs water the Land, but there is no Man (*Creation*)


#### HIERARCHY

-  **DELEGATION** – Adam is formed out of the dust to be a human “Tabernacle” (*Division*)


#### ETHICS (PRIESTHOOD, KINGDOM, PROPHECY)

-  **PRESENTATION** – He is given a single, temporary PROHIBITION, then broken and opened to construct Eve (*Ascension*)
-  **PURIFICATION** – The serpent invades the Sanctuary and seduces Eve. Adam and Eve eat, and their eyes are opened as judges (*Testing*)
-  **TRANSFORMATION** – The single PROHIBITION is now obsolete. They hide their nakedness (*Maturity*)

#### OATH / SANCTIONS

-  **VINDICATION** – The Lord calls for a confession and judges them but also offers mercy (*Conquest*)


#### SUCCESSION

-  **REPRESENTATION** – Instead of ingathering, there is scattering. Adam is never again called to speak for God (*Glorification*)


## THE SHAPE OF HISTORY

### PRIESTHOOD OF ISRAEL




#### TRANSCENDENCE

-  **INITIATION** – Rivers of blood (genealogy and sacrifice) flow from Abraham, but there is no mediatorial Man (*Creation*)


#### HIERARCHY

-  **DELEGATION** – Rescued from bondage, Israel constructs the Tabernacle (*Division*)


#### ETHICS (PRIESTHOOD, KINGDOM, PROPHECY)

-  **PRESENTATION** – God establishes priestly PROHIBITIONS. Israel dies and rises to serve in a Gentile court (*Ascension*)
-  **PURIFICATION** – Christ defeats the serpent and establishes a Church which cannot be deceived (*Testing*)
-  **TRANSFORMATION** – The Levitical PROHIBITIONS become obsolete. The witnesses are robed in white (*Maturity*)

#### OATH / SANCTIONS

-  **VINDICATION** – The Aaronic order (one nation) is revoked and replaced by a priesthood of all nations (*Conquest*)

#### SUCCESSION

-  **REPRESENTATION** – With Christ as authorized mediator, rivers of living water flow from the Sanctuary to heal the nations (*Glorification*)

# MOSES AND THE REVELATION

## ISRAEL'S HISTORY

### TRANSCENDENCE



#### DAY 1: PATRIARCHS, ABRAHAM

Light dawns upon the “waters” of the 70 nations  
(*Creation*)

### HIERARCHY



#### DAY 2: EXODUS, MOSES

Israel is separated to mediate for the nations  
(*Division*)

### ETHICS (PRIESTHOOD, KINGDOM, PROPHECY)



#### DAY 3: PROMISED LAND, JOSHUA

Israel possesses the Land and its fruits  
(*Ascension*)



#### DAY 4: DAVID & SOLOMON

Mighty men rule under God (*Testing*)



#### DAY 5: CAPTIVITY TO GENTILES

The prophets testify to the kings. Gentile  
hosts plague Land and Sea (*Maturity*)

### OATH / SANCTIONS



#### DAY 6: JOSHUA (HIGH PRIEST) TO JESUS

Israel ministers within the empire (*Conquest*)

### SUCCESSION



#### DAY 7: JESUS AND THE CHURCH

The saints receive the kingdom, inherit a heavenly  
country and judge the Land (*Glorification*)

## THE SHAPE OF HISTORY

### WORLD HISTORY

#### TRANSCENDENCE



**ADAM TO NOAH** (*Creation / Initiation*)

World united as one blood

#### HIERARCHY



**ABRAM TO JOSEPH**

(*Division / Delegation*)

World divided by blood (Circumcision)

ETHICS (PRIESTHOOD, KINGDOM, PROPHECY)



**MOSES TO AD30**

(*Ascension / Presentation*)

Priesthood centralized on earth



**MINISTRY OF CHRIST**

(*Testing / Purification*)

The harvest begins



**CHRIST TO AD70**

(*Maturity / Transformation*)

Priesthood centralized in heaven

#### OATH / SANCTIONS



**AD70 TO FINAL JUDGMENT**

(*Conquest / Vindication*)

World divided by water (Baptism)

#### SUCCESSION











**FINAL JUDGMENT**

(*Glorification / Representation*)

World united by one Spirit

## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

	COVENANT	CREATION	TABERNACLE	SACRIFICE	FESTIVALS	WORSHIP	DOMINION
							
	TRANSCENDENCE	DAY 1	ARK	Initiation	Sabbath	Call	Creation
	HIERARCHY	DAY 2	VEIL	Delegation	Passover	Confession	Division
	ETHICS (PRIEST)	DAY 3	ALTAR & TABLE	Presentation	Firstfruits	Praise	Ascension
	ETHICS (KING)	DAY 4	LAMPSTAND	Purification	Pentecost	Word	Testing
	ETHICS (PROPHET)	DAY 5	INCENSE	Transformation	Trumpets	Offerings	Maturity
	OATH/SANCTIONS	DAY 6	MEDIATORS	Vindication	Atonement	Communion	Conquest
	SUCCESSION	DAY 7	SHEKINAH	Representation	Booths	Commission	Glorification

# 5

## THE SHAPE OF REVELATION

**N**ow that we have covered all of the primary expressions of the Bible Matrix, identifying the structure of the book of Revelation is short work. But as mentioned, John was to begin the prophecy by writing the things which he had *already seen*. The best approach here is to present the history of the first century (Firstfruits) Church alongside the structure of the book of Revelation. It then becomes clear that the book is not only a worship service and a sacrificial process but also the culmination and climax of all biblical history. Every Scripture has a common shape and Revelation rolls them all into one.

And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:25-27)

# MOSES AND THE REVELATION

## THE LAST DAYS

### TRANSCENDENCE



**Creation** – The perfect life of Christ  
Peace on earth (*Sabbath*)

### HIERARCHY



**Division** – The perfect death of Christ  
Nakedness, flesh torn (*Passover*)

### ETHICS: PRIESTHOOD



**Ascension** – The rule of Christ  
Jesus rules at the Father's right hand  
(*Firstfruits*)

### ETHICS: KINGDOM



**Testing** – The sending of the Spirit  
The harvest begins (*Pentecost*)

### ETHICS: PROPHECY



**Maturity** – The witness of the Apostles  
A Jew-Gentile Body mustered (*Trumpets*)

### OATH / SANCTIONS



**Conquest** – The Herods' Temple destroyed  
All righteous blood avenged (*Atonement*)

### SUCCESSION



**Glorification** – The rule of the Church  
The Gospel carried to all nations (*Booths*)



## THE SHAPE OF REVELATION

### THE REVELATION

#### TRANSCENDENCE



**Creation** – A vision of “Adam” (*Sabbath*)

Seven Attributes: The Tabernacle Man

#### HIERARCHY



**Division** – A new priesthood (*Passover*)

Seven Letters: A Living Lampstand

#### ETHICS: PRIESTHOOD



**Ascension** – The Lamb (*Firstfruits*)

Seven Horns & Eyes: The Missing Table

#### ETHICS: KINGDOM



**Testing** – Law of the Spirit (*Pentecost*)

Seven Seals: A Better Covenant

#### ETHICS: PROPHECY



**Maturity** – Final warnings (*Trumpets*)

Seven Trumpets: Plunder & Plagues

#### OATH / SANCTIONS



**Conquest** – Harlot and Bride (*Atonement*)

Seven Bowls: Blessings & Curses

#### SUCCESSION



**Glorification** – A vision of “Eve” (*Booths*)

Seven Days: The Kingdom Comes

## MOSES AND THE REVELATION

Once the structural correspondences are identified, it is clear that the Revelation is not an appendix to the New Testament but describes the point in history at which the words of Jesus and His Apostles were vindicated.

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke all include what is known as the “Olivet discourse,” in which Jesus foretells the imminent end of the Old Covenant and the gathering of its saints. As the last Apostle, John omits it and instead gives us the Revelation. Following on from the final letters of the New Testament which were written to Jewish Christians, John’s prophecy then warned the Gentile saints. When the Old Covenant and its animal sacrifices finally bit the dust, Gentile Christians, too, would suffer in the fallout. But when the wheels of the heavenly chariots carrying living water to all nations hit the ground unconstrained by obsolete worship, they would hit it *running*.

This means that interpreting the bulk of the prophecy as *already fulfilled* in history does not make it less relevant to us today but more so. Since Jesus’ words concerning not only His resurrection in the Garden but also His judgment upon the Land were fulfilled just as He said, the historical events of AD66-70 (which the modern Church has almost entirely ignored) become evidence of His trustworthiness concerning the future judgment of the World.

PART TWO

# Revelation