

# META TAYTA IN REVELATION: AN EXAMINATION OF SEQUENTIAL PATTERN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

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The phrase *μετὰ ταῦτα* functions as a sequence marker in narrative passages in both the LXX and the New Testament. Of the thirty-five occurrences of *μετὰ ταῦτα* in the New Testament, it occurs only two times in the epistles (Heb 4:8; 1 Pet 1:11), due to the fact of their non-narrative genre. Almost one-third of the occurrences of the phrase are in the book of Revelation (Rev 1:19; 4:1 [2x]; 7:1, 9; 9:12; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1; 20:3). This suggests that the book of Revelation, with an apocalyptic genre, is presented in a narrative framework. This study examines the ten occurrences of *μετὰ ταῦτα* in the book of Revelation, focusing on their immediate literary contexts. The analysis concludes that *μετὰ ταῦτα* functions as a sequence marker for two narratives in the book of Revelation: the sequence of the apocalyptic events portrayed in the visions as they are unveiled by the heavenly Revealer, and the sequence of the visions themselves as they are seen by the earthly visionary. It seems that the sequence of the visions does not necessarily go together with the sequence of the events portrayed in the visions.

*Key Words:* apocalyptic, time indicator, time sequence, , vision, audio-visual

## 1. Introduction

In addition to its apocalyptic genre, the book of Revelation is also marked with the significant occurrence of the phrase *μετὰ ταῦτα*, "after these things," which serves as a literary device marking time sequences in biblical narratives.<sup>1</sup> Of the thirty-five occurrences of *μετὰ ταῦτα* in the NT, ten

<sup>1</sup> Lexicons confirm the use of the preposition *μετά* with the accusative. Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, with a rev. supplement (1996), s.v. "meta," explains that *μετά* denotes "sequence or succession of time." Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (1993), s.v. "meta," indicates that the LXX uses the preposition with accusative with the same meaning as it is in the NT: "after, following, subsequently." Frederick W. Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., rev. by Frederick

are found in the book of Revelation (Rev 1:19; 4:1 (2x); 7:1 (μετὰ τοῦτο), 9; 9:12; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1; 20:3).<sup>2</sup> This fact confirms the literary style of Revelation as apocalyptic narrative.<sup>3</sup>

While some scholars are silent about the function of μετὰ ταῦτα in Revelation,<sup>4</sup> others suggest that μετὰ ταῦτα functions as a transitional phrase leading from a section/vision to the next section/vision of the book.<sup>5</sup> Scholarly comments have mainly focused on the function of μετὰ

William Danker (2000), s.v. "meta," indicates that μετὰ with accusative (including ταῦτα) functions as a "marker of time after another point of time." In this paper the phrase μετὰ τοῦτο is also counted as μετὰ ταῦτα.

- <sup>2</sup> The phrase μετὰ ταῦτα occurs thirty-five times in the New Testament. See Mark 16:12; Luke 5:27; 10:1; 12:4; 17:8; 18:4; John 2:12 (μετὰ τοῦτο); 3:22; 5:1; 5:14; 6:1; 7:1; 11:7 (μετὰ τοῦτο); 11:11 (μετὰ τοῦτο); 13:7; 19:28 (μετὰ τοῦτο); 19:38; 21:1; Acts 7:7; 13:20; 15:16; 18:1; Heb 4:8; 9:27 (μετὰ τοῦτο); 1 Pet 1:11; Rev. 1:19; 4:1 (two times); 7:1 (μετὰ τοῦτο); 7:9; 9:12; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1; 20:3. The phrase occurs mostly in the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation. The fact that it occurs only three times in the whole NT epistles is understandable due to the fact that epistles are not narratives. At the same time, the significant occurrence of the phrase in Revelation indicates that the book is heavily loaded with narrative elements.
- <sup>3</sup> By definition, apocalypse has been understood as a genre signified by narrative framework: Apocalypse is defined as "a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial, insofar as it involves another, supernatural world." John J. Collins, "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre," in *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, ed. John J. Collins, Semeia 14 (Missoula: Scholars, 1979), 9, quoted in Richard Bauckham, "The Theology of the Book of Revelation," *New Testament Theology*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 6. See also John M. Court, "Revelation," *New Testament Guides*, ed. A. T. Lincoln (Sheffield: JSOT, 1994), 80; Arthur W. Wainwright, *Mysterious Apocalypse: Interpreting the Book of Revelation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1993), 143.
- <sup>4</sup> For examples, Roy Allan Anderson, *Unfolding the Revelation*, rev. ed. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1974); Craig S. Keener, *Revelation*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000); Edmondo F. Lupieri, *A Commentary on the Apocalypse of John*, trans. Maria Poggi Johnson and Adam Kamesar (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 112, 132; Charles T. Chapman Jr., *The Message of the Book of Revelation* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995); Margaret Barker, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ Which God Gave to Him to Show to His Servants What Must Soon Take Place (Revelation 1:1)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), among others.
- <sup>5</sup> See for examples, Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, rev. ed., *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 62, 118-119; Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 634, "The introductory μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδος

ταῦτα in Rev 1:19 and 4:1.<sup>6</sup> These two passages are considered by many as literary indicators for the structural arrangement of the book.<sup>7</sup>

Gregory K. Beale has summarized the various interpretations of the function of the clause ἃ μέλλει γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα “things about to take place after these things” (Rev 1:19).<sup>8</sup> Beale himself suggests that the phrase ἃ μέλλει γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα in 1:19 echoes Daniel’s eschatological past-present-future<sup>9</sup> and brings into view the entire vision of the Apocalypse (Rev 1-22).<sup>10</sup>

However, it should be noted that Dan 2:28 uses ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι (v. 29, ὅσα δεῖ γενέσθαι) instead of ἃ μέλλει γενέσθαι. This makes ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι in Dan 2:28, 29 verbatim closer to ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι in Rev 1:1 than to ἃ μέλλει γενέσθαι in 1:19. Daniel begins the unfolding of the dream and its

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(*meta tauta eidon*, after these things I saw) always indicates a transition to a new section (4:1; 7:1, 9; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1).” Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 333, that says that the phrase μετὰ ταῦτα, particularly in Rev 4:1 (a), 7:1 (μετὰ τοῦτο), 7:9, 15:5, 18:1, and 19:1, marks “the sequence in John’s receipt of the revelation . . . the beginning of a new vision.” So also Jürgen Roloff, *The Revelation of John*, Continental Commentary, trans. John E. Alsup (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993), 68.

- <sup>6</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, “Revelation 1.19 and the Narrative Voices of the Apocalypse,” *New Testament Studies* 37 (1991): 604-620; G. K. Beale, “The Interpretative Problem of Rev. 1:19,” *Novum Testamentum XXXIV* 4 (1992): 361-386; Fr. Sieg, “The Introductory Formula of Rev 4:1-2a in the Context of Traditions,” *Filologia Neotestamentaria XVIII* (2005): 33-43.
- <sup>7</sup> See for example: John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ: A Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), 48, 102-103; Thomas, 115; Roloff, 38.
- <sup>8</sup> Beale summarizes the opinions of scholars on the function of the clause ἃ μέλλει γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα in Rev 1:19 as follows: (1) Rev 4:1-22:5, a section concerning the final tribulation before the second coming of Christ; (2) a combination of both present and future elements in the following visions; (3) the visions to be revealed later (chaps. 4-22) after the introductory vision (1:11-20); (4) the visions in chaps. 2-3 only; (5) the totality and the meaning of history (all of chaps. 1-22); (6) an eschatological phrase from Dan 2:28-29, 45.
- <sup>9</sup> So also Richard Lehmann, “Relationship Between Daniel and Revelation,” *Symposium on Revelation—Book I*, Daniel & Revelation Committee Series, vol. 6, ed. Frank B. Holbrook (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1992), 140.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 381-386. In these pages, Beale provides reasons for his conclusions: (1) Daniel 2:28, 29, 45 appears to be used contextually in Rev 1:19c; (2) Rev 1:19a is a commission to write the entire book; (3) Rev 1:9-11 and 1:12-20 function together as a larger literary unit, which introduces the whole book, serving as a prophetic command to John to write all the visions he witnessed.

interpretation from v. 27 and ends it in v. 45.<sup>11</sup> The phrase ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν "things must take place in the latter days" occurs at the introduction (v. 28), and τὰ ἐσόμεια ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν "what will come to pass after this" appears at the close of the narrative (v. 45).<sup>12</sup> Between the introduction and the close, Daniel outlines the dream and its interpretation with clear sequence markers.<sup>13</sup> One of the sequence markers is μετὰ σε "after you" (v. 39). Jon Paulien affirms that these textual sequence markers signify a chronological sequence in the fulfillment of the interpretation of the dream. The kingdoms come one after the other, from the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar to the kingdom of God.<sup>14</sup>

This motif is similar to what the book of Revelation suggests, where the phrase ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει occurs in the prologue and the epilogue of Revelation (1:1 and 22:6),<sup>15</sup> and ἃ μέλλει γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα (1:19) appears in between. For this reason, it seems that ἃ μέλλει γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα functions more as a sequence marker between the prologue and the

- <sup>11</sup> Daniel begins his explanation after Nebuchadnezzar asks him a question: "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?" (Dan 2:26). Then vv. 27-45 is the answer of Daniel, without any interruption by the king, consisting of the dream and its interpretation. Verses 46, 47 give the response of the king to Daniel. Therefore, as far as the dream and its interpretation by Daniel are concerned, Dan 2:27-45 could be considered as a literary unit.
- <sup>12</sup> In vv. 27-30 Daniel has not told about the dream. He does it from vv. 31-45a. In v. 45b, τὰ ἐσόμεια ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν, "Things that shall be in the latter days," Daniel repeats what he mentions previously, ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν "Things that shall take place in the latter days" (v. 28), and ὅσα δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν "all that shall take place in the latter days" (v. 29).
- <sup>13</sup> The sequence markers occur not in the dream but in its interpretation: "You are this head of gold" (v. 38)—"after you (μετὰ σε)" (v. 39a)—"and another, the third kingdom" (v. 39b)—"and the fourth kingdom" (v. 40)—"And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up (στήσει, future tense of ἵστημι) a kingdom which shall never be destroyed" (v. 44). "The kings" in the phrase "the days of these kings" does not refer to the King Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the kingdom after him, the king of the third kingdom, and the king of the fourth kingdom. Instead, it refers to the kings of the divided kingdom (v. 41). This is indicated by the use of the third person plural ἔσονται "they will be," two times in v. 43. Therefore "the kings in v. 44" refer to its immediate antecedent in v. 43.
- <sup>14</sup> Jon Paulien, "The End of Historicism?: Reflections on the Adventist Approach to Biblical Apocalyptic—Part Two," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17/1 (Spring 2006): 183-186.
- <sup>15</sup> For a discussion on the prologue and the epilogue of Revelation, see Richard Sabuin, "Repentance in the Book of Revelation" (Ph.D. diss., Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, 2006), 87; Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Berrien Spring, MI: Andrews University Press, 2002), 37.

epilogue than representing the entire vision of Revelation. This function is similar to that of *μετὰ σε* in Dan 2:39 which occurs between the introduction and the end of the account of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (vv. 27-45).<sup>16</sup>

Based on the parallel motif of Dan 2:28-29, 45 and Rev 1:1; 22:6, and in the light of Paulien's proposal of the chronological sequence in the interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, one may expect to see textual sequence markers in the Apocalypse, between the prologue and the epilogue, that regulate the order of the receiving of the visions and the sequence of the apocalyptic events portrayed in the visions of the book.

This paper attempts to do the task of analyzing the role of *μετὰ ταῦτα* as a possible sequence marker in Revelation, a possibility that has not been explored extensively yet. To achieve an interpretation, questions are raised: What is the antecedent of *ταῦτα* in *μετὰ ταῦτα* in Rev 1:19 and in the other occurrences in Revelation? Also, what is the use of *γινόμεαι* with its different tenses in Revelation 1:19; 4:1; 16:17; 21:6? These occurrences need special attention, because this verb appears together with *μετὰ ταῦτα* in the phrase ἃ μέλλει γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα (1:19; 4:1).

## 2. *Μετὰ Ταῦτα* in the Gospel of John

Before analyzing *μετὰ ταῦτα* in Revelation, it seems there is a need to see how John uses *μετὰ ταῦτα*. Of the thirty-five occurrence of *μετὰ ταῦτα* in the NT, John uses it twenty-two times: twelve times in his Gospel (John 2:12 [*μετὰ τοῦτο*]; 3:22; 5:1, 14; 6:1; 7:1; 11:7 [*μετὰ τοῦτο*]; 11:11 [*μετὰ τοῦτο*]; 13:7; 19:28 [2x]; 19:38; 21:1) and ten times in his Apocalypse (Rev 1:19; 4:1 [2x]; 7:1 [*μετὰ τοῦτο*]; 9; 9:12; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1; 20:3.). This represents almost two-thirds of the total use in the NT.<sup>17</sup>

John uses *μετὰ τοῦτο* in John 2:12 to indicate a time sequence that was already started in 1:29, "The next day," continued in vv. 35, 43, "The next day," and in 2:1, "On the third day." The use of *μετὰ τοῦτο* (singular) indicates that it refers only to one event that happens, particularly on the third day, the wedding in Cana (2:1-11). The event following the wedding is

<sup>16</sup> This possibility is worthy of attention since Dan 2 uses also the preposition *μετά* (v. 39, *μετὰ σε* "after you"), although without the demonstrative pronoun *ταῦτα*. It is a common understanding that a pronoun usually has its antecedent. In Dan 2:39 the antecedent of *σε* in *μετὰ σε* is Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom. Pauline, 184, suggests "That the head of gold is not limited to Nebuchadnezzar personally, but represents his whole kingdom, becomes clear in that all the succeeding metals represent whole kingdoms, not just a series of kings."

<sup>17</sup> I assume that the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation are authored by the same John.



designated as μετὰ τοῦτο “after this thing” (2:12) and refers to Jesus going to Capernaum. Another event follows—Jesus cleansing the temple—marked by the temporal phrase ἐγγύς ἦν τὸ πάσχα, “the Passover was near.” The sequence of time and events from John 1:29 to 2:12 may be diagrammed as follows:

Time Sequence Marker	Events
τῆ ἐπαύριον (1:29)	John pointing to Jesus (1:29-34)
τῆ ἐπαύριον (1:35)	Jesus calling His first disciples (1:34-42)
τῆ ἐπαύριον (1:43)	Jesus going to Galilee (43-51)
τῆ ἡμέρα τῆ τρίτη (2:1)	The wedding at Cana (2:1-11)
μετὰ τοῦτο (2:12)	Jesus going to Capernaum (2:12)
ἐγγύς ἦν τὸ πάσχα (2:13)	Jesus cleansing the temple

Table 1: The Sequence of Time and Events from John 1:29 to 2:12

The diagram demonstrates that after a time sequence marker there is an event following it. The phrase μετὰ τοῦτο functions as a time sequence marker introducing an event: Jesus going to Capernaum. The antecedent of τοῦτο is the wedding at Cana. In this sense, the use of the singular μετὰ τοῦτο is understandable.

The explanation above justifies the function of μετὰ ταῦτα in 3:22, where μετὰ ταῦτα is in the plural form and indicates at least a couple of previous events: Jesus cleansing the temple (2:13-25), and Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus (3:1-21). Also, the plural μετὰ ταῦτα in 5:1 refers to more than one previous event which μετὰ δὲ τὰς δύο ἡμέρας occurs, “after the two days” (4:43), namely, Jesus going and being welcomed by the Galileans (4:43-45), and Jesus healing the son of a royal official (4:46-54).

In 5:14 μετὰ ταῦτα appears again in the story of the healing on the Sabbath (5:1-18). This story consists of at least five scenes of meeting: the first meeting of Jesus with the sick man (vv. 6-9); the first meeting of the sick man with the protesting Jews (vv. 10-13); a second meeting of Jesus with the sick man (v. 14); a second meeting of the sick man with the Jews (v. 15); the meeting of Jesus with the Jews (vv. 16-18). The use of μετὰ ταῦτα in 5:14 is explainable since it points to the two previous meetings: the instruction of Jesus with the sick man and the interview of the sick man by the Jews. The occurrences of μετὰ ταῦτα in 5:1 and 5:14 demonstrate that μετὰ ταῦτα may function to mark the sequence from one story to another and the sequence from one scene to the following scenes within one story.

The use of μετὰ ταῦτα, together with the other time sequence indicators, is connected to the movement of Jesus from one place to another as shown in the table below:

Time Sequence Marker	Jesus Movement
τῇ ἐπαύριον "on the next day" (1:43)	Jesus going to Galilee
μετὰ τοῦτο "after this" (2:12)	Jesus going to Capernaum
ἐγγύς ἦν τὸ πάσχα "the Passover was near" (2:13)	Jesus going to Jerusalem
μετὰ ταῦτα "after these things" (3:22)	Jesus going to the land of Judea
μετὰ δὲ τὰς δύο ἡμέρας "after two days" (4:43)	Jesus going to Galilee
μετὰ ταῦτα "after these things" (5:1)	Jesus going to Jerusalem
μετὰ ταῦτα "after these things" (6:1)	Jesus going beyond the Sea of Galilee
μετὰ ταῦτα "after these things" (7:1)	Jesus going around in Galilee
τῇ ἐπαύριον "on the next day" (12:12)	Jesus going to Jerusalem
μετὰ ταῦτα "after these things" (21:1)	Jesus appearing at the Sea of Galilee

Table 2: μετὰ ταῦτα with other Time Sequence Indicators

The table above shows that the movements of Jesus from one place to another are always signified by a temporal indicator. The phrase μετὰ ταῦτα plays a dominant role as a time sequence marker in the Gospel of John in relation to the movements of Jesus.<sup>18</sup> The table also explains the use of μετὰ ταῦτα in 6:1. It points back to all the events of chap. 5, when Jesus was in Jerusalem. In 7:1, it points back to all the events in chap. 6, when Jesus was beyond the Sea of Galilee. The plural μετὰ ταῦτα is used to show a variety of places and/or stories which precede its use.

The going of Jesus to Jerusalem (12:12) is followed by a series of events that eventually lead him to the cross where He completed His mission of salvation when He said, "it is finished" (19:30).<sup>19</sup> After His death, Jesus is buried (19:38-42), raised (20:1-10), appears to His disciples (20:11-21:23).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The table above shows an outline of the Gospel of John based on the movement of Jesus. Interestingly, this outline using the time sequence marker begins with ἐν ἀρχῇ, "in the beginning" (John 1:1).

<sup>19</sup> The expression τετέλεσται, "It has been finished," occurs uniquely in the Gospel of John. The synoptics put it differently: "And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit" (Matt 27:50); "And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last" (Mark 15:37); "And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, 'Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.' Having said this, He breathed His last" (Luke 23:46).

<sup>20</sup> μετὰ ταῦτα occurs two times in these sections (19:38 [μετὰ τοῦτο]; 21:1). In 19:38, μετὰ τοῦτο refers to the previous single event, namely, the death of Jesus. In 21:1, μετὰ ταῦτα refers backward to the previous appearances of Jesus (chap. 20). These appearances of Jesus are also marked by temporal indicators that suggest that the appearances are chronological:

It seems that John arranges his Gospel within a time sequence framework, starting from ἐν ἀρχῇ “in the beginning” (1:1), and ending with τετέλεσται “it is finished” (19:30). This motif, as explained below, is repeated in a similar way in the book of Revelation.

The phrase μετὰ ταῦτα, together with some other time sequence indicators, plays an important role in linking the movement of Jesus from one place to another, from the time He began His earthly ministry until he finished it. In this sense, μετὰ ταῦτα does not function merely as a literary appendage, but is purposely used by John to mark out the chronological sequence of the accounts of his Gospel. The phrase always has a clear antecedent of either plural ταῦτα or singular τοῦτο.

### 3. Μετὰ Ταῦτα in Revelation

#### 3.1 Μετὰ Ταῦτα in Rev 1:19

The first occurrence of μετὰ ταῦτα in Revelation is in 1:19: “Write therefore the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall take place after these things (μετὰ ταῦτα).”<sup>21</sup> The first task is to find the antecedent of the ταῦτα.<sup>22</sup> The first possible antecedent is the audio-visual experience of John in 1:10-20. In this case, 1:19 might be read, “Write therefore the things which you have seen, the things which are and the things that you will see after these visions.”

This suggestion seems to be interesting but lacks both grammatical and literary support. As had been noted previously in the gospel of John, the plural ταῦτα must have a plural antecedent. However, the vision of

Time Sequence Marker	The Appearances of Jesus
“in the first day of the week” (20:1)	Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene (20:1-18)
“the same day at evening, being the first day of the week” (20:19)	Jesus appearing to His eleven disciples minus Thomas (20:19-23)
“after eight days” (20:26)	Jesus appearing to His eleven disciples (20:24-31)
μετὰ ταῦτα “After these things” (21:1)	Jesus appearing to His seven disciples (21:1-23)

Table 3: The Appearances of Jesus are Marked with Temporal Indicators

<sup>21</sup> Unless specifically notified, all English Bible texts are quoted from the New American Standard Version.

<sup>22</sup> It has been argued above, based on the use of μετὰ ταῦτα in the Gospel of John, the μετὰ ταῦτα or μετὰ τοῦτο must have an antecedent.



1:10-20 focuses on only one central person, Jesus Christ.<sup>23</sup> The plural ταῦτα requires a plurality of antecedents which cannot be met by the single vision about the Revealer Jesus Christ. Moreover, the content of the book mentioned in 1:1 is described simply as “the things which must shortly take place.” The words ἃ εἰσὶν “things which are,” and μετὰ ταῦτα “after these things” are absent. Why then are these words added in 1:19?

This question leads to the second option of the antecedent of ταῦτα, namely, the things which are. In this sense, “after these things” means after the things which are, where the neuter plural demonstrative pronoun ταῦτα refers to the neuter plural relative pronoun ἃ “(things) which.” So, the phrase μετὰ ταῦτα means after ἃ εἰσὶν, and ἃ μέλλει γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα means things which shall take place after the things which are. Therefore, the phrase μετὰ ταῦτα in 1:19 does not signify the sequence of the vision John is receiving. Instead, it signifies the whole sequence of the apocalyptic events described in the book of Revelation.

The phrase μετὰ ταῦτα is linked with a verb which is followed by an infinitive, μέλλει γενέσθαι. This construction is similar to the phrase “δεῖ γενέσθαι” in Rev 1:1-2. In these two verses John has introduced a number of audio-visual verbs<sup>24</sup> such as the infinitive δεῖξαι “to show” (v.1), and the aorist εἶδεν “he saw” (v. 2). By using these audio-visual verbs, John is distinguishing the visions per se from the apocalyptic events and messages portrayed in those visions.<sup>25</sup> Following this argument, 1:19 might then be understood that what John has seen consists of both the present “things which are” and the future “things which shall take place after these things [things which are].” The translation of 1:19 could be “Write therefore the

<sup>23</sup> Although Jesus Christ is not mentioned by name in this vision, Rev 1:1 mentions the name Jesus Christ as the source of the revelation, followed by the content of the revelation, “the things which must shortly take place.” The Revealer-Content motif in 1:1 is elaborated in the vision of 1:10-20. Here, the Revealer is described at length in vv. 12-18, and the content of the book is specified in v. 19: “the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall take place after these things.”

<sup>24</sup> By audio-visual verbs, is meant verbs that connotes the idea of seeing, looking or showing, hearing or listening, that are represented by Greek verbs βλέπω, ὁράω, δείκνυμι, and ἀκούω. Charles H. Dyer, “The Identity of Babylon in Revelation 17-18,” Part 1, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 44 no 575 (Jl-S 1987): 306, calls them the “verbs of perception.”

<sup>25</sup> The events and messages portrayed in the visions are described by John as ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει “things which must take place shortly,” and τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ “the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

things which you have seen, both the things which are, and the things which are about to take place after these things.”<sup>26</sup>

The antecedent of ταῦτα in the phrase μετὰ ταῦτα in Rev 1:19 refers to ἃ εἶσιν “things which are” in the same verse. This does not necessarily regulate the sequence of the visions John had seen or would be seeing, but rather the sequence of the apocalyptic events portrayed in those visions. The question is: what then are the present events labeled as “things which are,” and the future events labeled as “things which are about to take place after these things”?

### 3.2 Μετὰ Ταῦτα in Rev 4:1

The phrase μετὰ ταῦτα occurs two times in Rev 4:1, at the beginning and at the end of the verse: “After these things (μετὰ ταῦτα) I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things (μετὰ ταῦτα).’”

The first μετὰ ταῦτα comes with an audio-visual verb εἶδον “I saw.” It occurs in the same setting for the first time in 1:12 as described below:<sup>27</sup>

εἶδον in Rev 1:12	εἶδον in Rev 4:1
Audio-visual verb εἶδον “I saw,” a first person testimony of John of his audio-visual experience	Audio-visual verb εἶδον “I saw,” a first person testimony of John of his audio-visual experience
Audio-visual verb ἤκουσα “I heard,” a first person testimony of John of his audio-visual experience	Audio-visual verb ἤκουσα “I heard,” a first person testimony of John of his audio-visual experience
Source of Voice: Jesus’ voice (vv. 10 – 18)	Source of Voice: “the first voice which I had heard” (4:1) <sup>28</sup>
Time indicator: ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ, “on the Lord’s day” (1:10)	Time indicator: μετὰ ταῦτα, “after these things” (4:1)

Table 4: εἶδον in Rev 1:12 and εἶδον in Rev 4:1

<sup>26</sup> Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 98, translates Rev 1:19, “The things which you saw, namely, the things which are and the things which are about to take place after these.” The “things which are” refers clearly to the seven messages sent to the churches (chaps. 2-3). In 4:1, John is told that he will be shown “the things which must take place after these things,” namely, the things recorded in chapters 2-3. See also Aune, *Rev 1-5*, 105-106.

<sup>27</sup> The verb occurs the very first time in Rev 1:2, but in the third person singular εἶδεν. However, it does not occur in the same setting as in 4:1 as described above.

<sup>28</sup> The first voice John heard was the voice in 1:10. This is evident for two reasons: (1) the first occurrence of the verb ἤκουσα is in 1:10 and the second is in 4:1, and (2) the voice, both in 1:10 and in 4:1, is described as sounding like a trumpet.

The table demonstrates that μετὰ ταῦτα in 4:1a appears in the setting of a verb which describes the audio-visual experience of John. John's audio-visual experience in chap. 4 onward happens after the audio-visual experience he had in 1:10-3:21. Thus, μετὰ ταῦτα in 4:1a functions as a time sequence marker from one vision of John to another and not as a time sequence marker of the apocalyptic events portrayed in the visions.<sup>29</sup>

The occurrence of the phrase μετὰ ταῦτα in Rev 4:1b looks similar to the one in 1:19. It is joined together with ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι, which echoes the phrase in 1:19. As in 1:19, μετὰ ταῦτα is mentioned in a direct sentence by Jesus to John in 4:1b. The voice says to John, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." In this sentence there is an audio-visual verb δεῖξω "I will show," and the phrase ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι "things that must take place." In this case, the showing is the vision, and "things that must take place" represent the content of the vision, namely, the heavenly realities. Therefore, μετὰ ταῦτα in Rev 4:1b serves as the chronological sequence marker of the apocalyptic narratives described in the vision shown to John.

What is the antecedent of ταῦτα in 4:1b? I have argued<sup>30</sup> that the original readers of Revelation read the book with the awareness of the purpose and the content of the book.<sup>31</sup> Any reemphasis of the purpose of the book would help the readers to understand the message of the book of Revelation. In 1:19, the content of the book is reemphasized: καὶ ἃ εἶσιν καὶ ἃ μέλλει γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα "both things which are and things which are about to come after these things." The original readers would have understood that what follows after 1:19<sup>32</sup> would be visions about (1) things that were happening in their time (local), and (2) things that will happen in their future (historical and eschatological).<sup>33</sup> Therefore, Rev 2 and 3 picture the situation of the Christian church in the first century A.D., and at

<sup>29</sup> The antecedent of the plural ταῦτα in 4:1a is everything included in the audio-visual experience of John 1:10-3:21: the hearing of a voice (v. 10); the imperative to write (vv. 11, 19); to see the source of the voice (vv. 12-18); the response of John (v. 17); and the receiving of the messages to the seven churches (chaps. 2, 3).

<sup>30</sup> Richard A. Sabuin, "Historicism: An Adventist Approach?—A Response to the Challenges to Historicism," *Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary* 11.2 (2008): 159-174.

<sup>31</sup> The purpose and the content of the book is stated in Rev 1:1: δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει "to show his servants what must soon take place" (1:1; 22:6).

<sup>32</sup> I am aware of the fact that the original readers of Revelation did not have the text with the divisions of chapters and verses.

<sup>33</sup> The terms *local*, *historical*, and *eschatological* were not originated by the first century readers. These terms are used in this article with reference to the subdivisions of the book.

the same time project what would happen to the church from the first century onward.<sup>34</sup>

In 4:1, Jesus once again says to John: *δείξω σοι ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα* "I will show to you the things which must take place." With the absence of the phrase "the things which are" which occurs in 1:19, the original readers might have understood that, while chaps. 2 and 3 describe what was going on with the Christian church in Asia Minor (local fulfilment) as well as the church since the first century A.D. along the timeline of history (historical fulfilment),<sup>35</sup> what follows 4:1 no longer has local fulfilment. What remain are historical and eschatological fulfilments—future from the perspective of the original audience.<sup>36</sup> In this sense, the antecedent of

<sup>34</sup> The book of Revelation should not be compared with the occasional epistles of the NT. It is an apocalyptic letter. Its original audience read it with a full awareness of its apocalyptic nature, because they had been familiar with apocalyptic works such as 1 and 2 Enoch. For the information about the familiarity of 1 and 2 Enoch in the early church, see E. Isaac, "1 Enoch: A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 8. See also some parallels between 4 Ezra and Revelation in B. M. Metzger, "4 Ezra: A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol 1, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 522. Stefanovic, 21, states, "Some of the Jewish apocalyptic works, like 1 Enoch (Ethiopic Enoch), 2 Enoch (the Slavonic Enoch), 4 Ezra, and 2 Baruch, were widely popular and read in the first century A.D." Kenneth A. Strand, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation: Hermeneutical Guidelines, with Brief Introduction to Literary Analysis*, 2nd ed. (Ann Arbor, MI: Ann Arbor, 1979), 17, sees these as "extra-biblical apocalypses written shortly before the time of Revelation or approximately contemporary with it." For a comprehensive discussion of the apocalyptic nature of the Seven Churches, see Wahlen, 146-156.

<sup>35</sup> A dual application of an apocalyptic narrative appears also in Daniel 2. Here, Daniel, before unfolding the interpretation of the dream, emphasizes three times that the dream is about: *ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν* "what will take place in the latter days" (v. 28), *ἅα δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν* "what would take place in the future" (v. 29a), and *ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι* "what will take place" (v. 29b). Nevertheless, in the interpretation, Daniel includes the present reign of Nebuchadnezzar with future events by saying, "You are the head of gold" (v. 37). Nebuchadnezzar not only receives a present application of the interpretation but he is shown that his kingdom is part of an apocalyptic narrative whose interpretation covers the entire cosmic sweep of history up to the coming of God's kingdom.

<sup>36</sup> Modern scholars recognize that there is a division between the historical and the eschatological sections of the book. To mention some, Kenneth A. Strand, "Foundational Principles of Interpretation," *Symposium of Revelation—Book I*, Daniel & Revelation Committee Series, vol. 6, ed. Frank B. Holbrook (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1992), 29, considers chaps. 1-14 as the historical section and 15-22 as the eschatological section of the book; Stefanovic, 36, argues that Rev 1-11:8 is the historical section and 11:9

ταῦτα in 4:1b is the same with the antecedent of ταῦτα in 1:19, namely, "things which are."

### 3.3 Μετὰ Ταῦτα with Audio-Visual Verbs

In addition to μετὰ ταῦτα in Rev 4:1a, the use of this phrase in 7:1, 9; 5:15; 18:1; and 19:1 is accompanied by the two audio-visual verbs εἶδον "I saw" (7:1, 9; 5:15; 18:1), and ἤκουσα "I heard" (19:1). Dyer mentions that μετὰ ταῦτα in these verses has a temporal use because it comes with verbs of perception: "The time sequence was in his observation of the visions and not necessarily in the unfolding of future events. When John wanted to indicate a gap of time in future events, he did not include a verb of perception."<sup>37</sup>

In addition to the verbs of perception as indicators of the temporal use of μετὰ ταῦτα in Revelation, all those verbs are in first person singular form indicating his own audio-visual experience. John is telling his own story of what he experienced: εἶδον and ἤκουσα. The table below puts together all the usages of μετὰ ταῦτα with these two verbs in Revelation which mark out the chronological sequence of John's visions:

Time Sequence Markers	John's Audio-Visual Experience
ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ "On the Lord's Day" (1:10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I heard (ἤκουσα) behind me a loud voice (1:10)</li> <li>• I saw (εἶδον) Him (Jesus) (1:17)</li> <li>• I saw (εἶδον) seven golden lampstands [the seven churches] (1:12, 20; 2:1-3:21)</li> </ul>
Μετὰ ταῦτα "After these things" (4:1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I saw (εἶδον) the throne of God (4:1-2)</li> <li>• I heard (ἤκουσα) the first voice (4:1)</li> <li>• I saw (εἶδον) a scroll (5:1), a strong angel (5:2), a Lamb (5:6)</li> </ul>

Table 5: Uses of μετὰ ταῦτα in Revelation with εἶδον and ἤκουσα

to chap. 22 is the eschatological section of the book; Roy C. Naden, *The Lamb among the Beasts* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1996), 20-21, draws a dividing line of the book between 12:10 and 12:11; Reynolds, 265, says, "In any case, chaps. 1-11 fall in the historical section of the book and chaps. 15-22 fall in the eschatological section of the book." Jürgen Roloff, *The Revelation of John*, trans. John E. Alsup, *Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993), 15, sees 1:1-3:22 as the first section and 4:1-22:5 as the second section. Frederick J. Murphy, *Fallen Is Babylon: The Revelation to John, New Testament in Context* (Harrisburg, PA: TPI, 1998), 50, divides the book by visions. The introductory vision is 1:9-3:22, and 4:1-22:5 consist of two great cycles of visions.

<sup>37</sup> Dyer, 306.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I heard (ἤκουσα) the voice of many angels (5:11), the voice of every created thing (5:13)</li> <li>• I saw (εἶδον) the opening of the six seals, and I heard (ἤκουσα) the voice of the four living creatures (chap 6)</li> </ul>
Μετὰ τοῦτο "After this thing" (7:1) <sup>38</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I saw (εἶδον) and I heard (ἤκουσα) the sealing of the 144,000 (chap. 7)</li> </ul>
Μετὰ ταῦτα "After these things" (7:9) <sup>39</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I saw (εἶδον) the great multitude around the throne (7:9-17)</li> <li>• I saw (εἶδον) and I heard (ἤκουσα) the seven angels with the seven trumpets, and the sounding of the six trumpets (8:2-9:21)</li> <li>• I saw (εἶδον) a mighty angel whose face is like the sun, with a little scroll, and the two witnesses (chaps. 10, 11) A great sign appeared (σημεῖον μέγα ὤφθη): the woman and the dragon (12:1-17)<sup>40</sup></li> <li>• I saw (εἶδον) a beast coming up out of the sea and then I saw (εἶδον) a beast coming up out of the land (13:1, 11).</li> <li>• I saw (εἶδον) the Lamb standing on Mount Zion (14:1)</li> <li>• I saw (εἶδον) the three angels flying in the midst of heaven (14:6-12)</li> <li>• I saw (εἶδον) the two harvests (14:14-15:4)</li> </ul>
Μετὰ ταῦτα "After these things" (15:5) <sup>41</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I saw (εἶδον) seven angels with the seven</li> </ul>

Table 5: Uses of μετὰ ταῦτα in Revelation with εἶδον and ἤκουσα – Continued

<sup>38</sup> The singular μετὰ τοῦτο occurs only here in Revelation. It may well refer to a single event of the opening of the sixth seal (6:12-17), the only singular event before John saw the sealing of the saints (7:1-8). In 7:1 John says: "After I saw the opening of the sixth seal, I saw the sealing of the 144,000."

<sup>39</sup> The plural μετὰ ταῦτα "After these things" with the verbs of perception have appeared just before the vision of the seven churches (1:19), just before the vision of the seven seals (4:1), and now, just before the vision of the seven trumpets (7:9). This μετὰ ταῦτα in 7:9 could serve as the time sequence marker to introduce the seven trumpets, because John does not mention μετὰ ταῦτα in chap. 8. In this sense, the antecedent of ταῦτα in 7:9 is the series of the seven seals excluding the seventh (8:1).

<sup>40</sup> Although the εἶδον does not appear there, ὤφθη "it was seen," the aorist passive indicative third singular form of ὁράω is used. This form of the verb occurs three times in Revelation (here, and 11:19; 12:3).

<sup>41</sup> Again, we have μετὰ ταῦτα just before the seven last plagues as we do before the seven churches (1:19), the seven seals (4:1), and the seven trumpets (7:9).

	last plagues (chaps 15, 16) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I saw (εἶδον) a woman sitting on a scarlet beast (chap 17)</li> </ul>
Μετὰ ταῦτα, "After these things" (18:1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I saw (εἶδον) an angel calling people out of Babylon (chap 18)</li> </ul>
Μετὰ ταῦτα, "After these things" (19:1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I heard (ἤκουσα) the voice singing Alleluia (19:1 – 10)</li> <li>• I saw (εἶδον) the Rider on the White Horse and the fate of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet (19:11 – 20:15)</li> <li>• I saw (εἶδον) the new heaven and the new earth (21:1 – 22:5)</li> </ul>

Table 5: Uses of *μετὰ ταῦτα* in Revelation with *εἶδον* and *ἤκουσα* – Continued

From the table above, there are several things to be observed. John receives his first vision on the Lord's day (1:10). Afterward, he uses *μετὰ ταῦτα* accompanied by an audio-visual verb to mark the sequence of the visions he saw (4:1; 7:1, 9; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1). First John saw Jesus Christ and the seven lamp stands—the seven churches, and heard the messages to those churches. Second, he saw the whole vision of the seven seals. After he saw the sealing of the saints, he saw the series of the seven trumpets and the great conflict described in chaps. 12-14. After that, he saw the series of the seven last plagues. Subsequently, he saw the rise and fall of Babylon. Next, he saw the celebration of the saints of their victory against Babylon. Finally, John saw the new heaven and the new earth.

John uses a time sequence marker with a verb of perception every time he introduces a series of seven: the series of the seven churches is introduced by "on the Lord's day" (1:10); the series of the seven seals is introduced by *μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον* (4:1); the series of the seven trumpets is introduced by *μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον* (7:9); and the series of the seven last plagues is introduced by *μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον* (15:5). This is perhaps the way John highlights the importance of each series of seven. It is also of interest to note that he uses seven time sequence markers to indicate the chronology of the visions he saw.

### 3.4 *Μετὰ Ταῦτα* with Apocalyptic Use

There are another two occurrences of *μετὰ ταῦτα* to be discussed, in Rev 9:12 and in 20:3. The phrase *μετὰ ταῦτα* in 9:12 refers back to just the apocalyptic events portrayed in the fifth trumpet also the events of the

previous five trumpets.<sup>42</sup> There is no verb of perception employed here. The phrase does not indicate the sequence of the vision but the sequence of the apocalyptic events—the woes, from one to another.

In 20:3, *μετὰ ταῦτα* appears with the same function as it had in 9:12. Although there is no audio-visual verb attached to it in 20:3, John does “see” an angel in the introductory verse of the vision (20:1). *Μετὰ ταῦτα* is used to mark the sequence of the apocalyptic events portrayed in the vision; what an angel does to Satan, described in a series of verbs.<sup>43</sup> Compared to *μετὰ ταῦτα* in 9:12 and 20:3, *μετὰ ταῦτα* in 1:19 and 4:1 have two special characteristics that do not appear in 9:12 and 20:3: (1) *μετὰ ταῦτα* in 1:19 and 4:1b occurs within a direct sentence by the same speaker,<sup>44</sup> and (2) *μετὰ ταῦτα* in 1:19 and 4:1b occurs with the infinitive verb *γενέσθαι* “to take place.”

There appears to be a special role for the verb *γίνομαι* in the book of Revelation. Of the twenty-nine occurrences of this verb,<sup>45</sup> only ten are used in a direct sentence (1:19; 2:10; 3:2; 4:1b, 11:15; 12:10; 16:17; 18:2; 21:6; 22:6), with half of them spoken by Jesus or by God (1:19, 2:10; 3:2; 4:1b; 21:6). And among these five direct sentences, only in three of them is *γίνομαι* used to portray a past or future event (1:19; 4:1b; 21:6).<sup>46</sup>

The function of *γίνομαι* (*γενέσθαι*) in 1:19 and 4:1b has already been discussed above in relation to *μετὰ ταῦτα*. The combining of *γενέσθαι* and *μετὰ*

<sup>42</sup> In Rev 8:13, just before the blowing of the fifth trumpet, the word *οἶαι* is mentioned three times. It is also said in 9:12, “The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.” Connecting these two verses, it may be argued that the fifth trumpet is the first woe, the sixth trumpet is the second woe, and the seventh trumpet is the third woe (11:14).

<sup>43</sup> “And he laid hold (*ἐκράτησεν*) of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound (*ἔδησεν*) him for a thousand years, and threw (*ἔβαλεν*) him into the abyss, and shut (*ἔκλεισεν*) it and sealed (*ἐσφράγισεν*) it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released (*δεῖ λυθῆναι*) for a short time” (Rev 20:2, 3). The five verbs used to describe the seizing of Satan serves as a series of events that happen before the *μετὰ ταῦτα*.

<sup>44</sup> In 1:19 (cf. 1:8), the voice comes from “I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever!” In 4:1 the voice comes from “the voice I [John] had first heard” referring to 1:19.

<sup>45</sup> In the book of Revelation, the verb *γίνομαι* occurs twenty-one times in aorist indicative *έγένετο* (Rev. 2:8; 6:12 [3x]; 8:1, 7, 8, 11; 11:13, 15; 12:7, 10; 16:2, 3, 4, 10, 18 [3x], 19; 18:2), two times in present imperative *γίνου* (2:10; 3:2), four times in aorist infinitive *γενέσθαι* (1:1, 19; 4:1b; 22:6), and two times in perfect indicative singular *γέγονεν* (16:17) and plural *γέγοναν* (21:6).

<sup>46</sup> The other two uses of *γίνομαι* in direct sentences are in the imperative *γίνου* (2:10, 3:2) that is used to instruct the church to be faithful (2:10), and to wake up (3:2).

ταῦτα creates a time sequence marker of what will happen after “things which are” (1:19; cf. 4:1b). However, γίνομαι appears in 21:6 without μετὰ ταῦτα. The Alpha and Omega simply says to John, γέγοναν “they have taken place.”<sup>47</sup>

At this point, the original readers would have understood that they had just finished reading about the things that must take place (4:1), the historical and the eschatological section of the book—from ἃ εἰσὶν “things which are” (1:19), through ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι “things that must take place” (4:1), until γέγοναν “they have taken place” (21:6).<sup>48</sup> The final question is whether the sequence of the apocalyptic events is parallel to the sequence of the visions.

### 3.5 Comparing the Two Sequences

After reading the three sequences of seven churches, seals and trumpets which “have dominated John’s visions almost from the start,”<sup>49</sup> the original readers were shown an account of the great conflict between Christ and Satan as described in 11:19-15:4.<sup>50</sup>

While 4:1 introduced the original readers to future events, a question could be raised why the vision in 11:19-15:4 is inserted, which goes back to the beginning of the conflict in heaven and then forward to the singing of the victorious song of the Lamb by the conquering saints by the sea of glass.<sup>51</sup> This section contains events that already happened from the perspective of the original readers.

<sup>47</sup> In 16:17 there is also a voice saying, γέγονεν “it has taken place.” This word is singular, while γέγοναν (21:6) is plural. Therefore, γέγονεν could not refer to ταῦτα “these things” (1:19; 4:1). It refers particularly to the series of the seven last plagues, because it occurs exactly in the seventh plague, the last of the last plagues. Moreover, γέγονεν is not spoken by the Alpha and Omega but by the seventh angel of the last plagues.

<sup>48</sup> Although after 21:6 there is additional explanation about the New Jerusalem (21:7-22:5), this explanation does not point to another event. The event is already introduced in 21:1, 2.

<sup>49</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, “Interpreting the Book of Revelation,” *Guides to New Testament Exegesis*, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992), 63. The three sequences of seven are the seven churches, the seven seals, and the seven trumpets.

<sup>50</sup> For a discussion on the central piece of the structure of the book, see Richard Sabuin, *Repentance in the Book of Revelation: The Significance of Repentance from the First Century A.D. up to the Eschaton* (Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Publishing, 2010), 50-59.

<sup>51</sup> Revelation 11:9 and 15:1-4 are included in this section because 11:19 mentions the opening of the temple of God to introduce the vision that begins in 12:1 and 15:1-4 presents the song of victory of those who conquer the beast (chap. 13), and is a

It's insertion has interrupted the plot of the apocalyptic narratives that had been established in the minds of the readers. Instead of continuing the narrative of the previous chapters, the central piece of Revelation covers the account of the great conflict: which started in heaven (11:19-12:12), continued on earth (12:13-14:13), and ending at the eschaton with a celebration in heaven (14:14-15:4). This section could be seen as the thematic key to the whole book or as "the micro-apocalypse within the macro-apocalypse."<sup>52</sup>

The case above serves as an example that the sequence of the apocalyptic events portrayed in the visions does not parallel the sequence of the visions itself. Although the visions in Rev 12-14 come after the vision in chaps. 10-11, they picture an earlier phase of salvation history.

The same is the case of Rev 17 and 18. These chapters present God's judgement against Babylon (17:1-18) and the fall of Babylon (18:1-24). However, this presentation is only an elaboration of the wrath that had already been poured upon Babylon. This wrath had already been mentioned in the seventh plague: "God remembers Babylon the Great, and is ready to pour His wrath upon it" (16:19). These two chapters belong to the series of the seven last plagues, particularly the seventh one. Therefore, although the visions of Rev 17 and 18 were received by John after the vision in chap. 16, the apocalyptic events portrayed in Rev 17 and 18 do not happen after the events in 16:19.<sup>53</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

The book of Revelation contains two narratives: the narrative of John's reception of the visions, and the narrative of the apocalyptic events presented in those visions. Both narratives are sequential and marked by the

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celebration after the great harvest of the earth (14:14-20). See also Edwin Reynolds, "Ten Keys for Interpreting Revelation," *Journal of Adventist Theological Society* 11 (2000): 265, who recognizes that the vision in chaps. 12-14 "points all the way backward to the beginning of rebellion in heaven and points forward to the glorified redeemed standing victorious with the Lamb on Mt. Zion."

<sup>52</sup> Joel N. Musvosvi, "The Issue of Genre and Apocalypse Prophecy," *Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary* 5 (2002): 54.

<sup>53</sup> I consider the two examples of a comparison between the sequence of the apocalyptic narrative and the sequence of the visions are adequate to prove that the two sequences are not parallel. There is a need of a more detail discussion about the structure of the book of Revelation in order to display the time sequence of the apocalyptic events shown in the visions of the Apocalypse.



time sequence marker *μετὰ ταῦτα*. The sequence of the narrative of the receiving of the visions follows naturally the sequence of the chapters of the book. It begins with the vision described in 1:10-11 and ends with what John sees and hears about the new heaven and the new earth (21:2-3). The sequence of the apocalyptic narrative begins with the "things which are," (19:1), continues with "things that are about to take place after these things" (1:19; 4:1b), and ends with "they have taken place" (21:6).<sup>54</sup> This sequence involves some interruption and elaboration within the sequence of the visions. Some visions that John receives afterward unfold the apocalyptic events already portrayed by the previous visions. Therefore, both sequences are not parallel.

By beginning the apocalyptic narrative in Revelation with "things which are" (Rev 1:19) and ending it with "they have taken place" (21:6), John probably follows the sequential pattern of his Gospel that begins with "in the beginning" (John 1:1), and ends with "it is done" (19:30). Combining his Gospel and the Apocalypse, it seems that John has presented a complete narrative of salvation from "in the beginning" up to the final climax when there will be a new heaven and the new earth.

<sup>54</sup> When the original readers read *γέγοναν* "they have taken place" (21:6), they would understand that the local, historical, and eschatological events have ended. The additional explanation about the New Jerusalem (21:9-22:5) is also given by "one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues (21:9). One of the seven angels who poured out the seven last plagues is also given the responsibility to give a revelation about the New Jerusalem. The original readers would understand that the last events would cover a series of events from the seven last plagues to the coming down of the New Jerusalem to the earth. Therefore, these events are eschatological. What lies beyond the eschatological events is revealed by the words that God's people "shall reign for ever and ever" (22:5).