

# The Alternating Visions of Revelation

Dr E W Bullinger, in his respected 'Companion Bible', writes, in his introduction to the book of Revelation, and in appendix 197,

“The key to unlocking the meaning and scope of the book is found in 1:10 (see Isaiah 2:12). John was not in a state of spiritual exaltation on a SUNDAY at Patmos, but taken forward in visions. “I came to be (or found myself) by the Spirit **to the day of the Lord** (cp. Ezekiel 1:1, 8:3) He is then shown, and both sees and hears the things he records.

The day of the Lord being yet future, and dealing with End-Time events, the book is wholly prophecy,” dealing with:

- ‘The tribulation of those days’, Matthew 24:29, the events of the first 5 Seals, ( Revelation 6)
- The coming of Christ for His Saints, at the resurrection – the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal.
- The Great Tribulation –the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal, which breaks down into the trumpets and vials.
- The marriage of the Lamb.
- The return of Christ, His Kingdom, New Heavens and Earth.

Dr Bullinger then, makes a vitally important point which makes our understanding of these events so much easier, in his introduction to the structure of the book. He points out that the book comprises a series of visions of events on the earth and in heaven. **These visions alternate**, of events on earth, in heaven, on earth, etc.

- 4, 5, IN HEAVEN ( The Throne, the Book, and the Lamb.)
- 6:1, to 7:8, ON EARTH (The 6 Seals and 144,000.)
- 7:9 to 8:6, IN HEAVEN (The Great Multitude and 7<sup>th</sup> Seal.)
- 8:7 to 11:14, ON EARTH. (The 6 Trumpets.)
- 11:15-19, IN HEAVEN. (The 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet.)
- 11:19 ON EARTH, (The Earthquake, &c)
- 12:1-12, IN HEAVEN, (Woman, Child and Dragon.)
- 12:13 to 13:18, ON EARTH, (The Dragon and Two Beasts.)
- 14:1-5, IN HEAVEN, (The Lamb and 144,000.)
- 14:6-20, ON EARTH, (The Six Angels.)
- 15:1-8, IN HEAVEN, (The Seven Vial Angels.)
- 16:1, to 18:24, ON EARTH, (The Seven Vials, and Two Babylons.)
- 19:1-16, IN HEAVEN, (The Marriage of the Lamb, &c)
- 19:17 to 20:15, ON EARTH, (The Five Judgments.)
  
- 21:1 to 22:5, NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH.
  
- 22:6-21, CONCLUSION.

This valuable recognition of the alternating visions, enables us to far more easily understand key chapters, like chapter 14, where verses 1-5 are about the Lamb and 144,000 on the Sea of Glass after the resurrection, and verses 6-20, about the messages of the six angels, concerning events to take place on earth over 7 years, which include this event. Consequently, we do not always expect the visions to be consecutive and they can overlap in time, so the book becomes much easier to understand.