



Revelation's Jigsaw Puzzle

Written by Ray Dickinson
For the church of Philadelphia on February 20, 2022

Dear brethren,

We have been studying the book of Revelation for many years. Before this ministry, its prophecies were largely mystical and few strong conclusions could be made about what it all means.

When I was first introduced to this ministry, I was astonished at how clearly the symbols of Revelation could be understood with some logical study and comparison. From the first moments of my knowledge of it, I recognized with joy that this was the voice of Jesus announcing His return.

But there was still much work to be done, and much knowledge to be unpacked from that 22-chapter treasure box! It was a journey of character development and learning what sacrificial love really looks like. Now, 12 years later, many, many gems have been exposed for their brilliance. Yet, if one were to ask questions of us about how the various themes of Revelation fit together harmoniously, even now, we would struggle to answer definitively. Sometimes, it is because we have forgotten important lessons. In other cases, it is because there are still points of wrong understanding. It is often simply that we need to sit down and do our homework!

It is much like assembling a giant and difficult jigsaw puzzle. But there is a system to follow by which such a puzzle may be most easily deciphered. For example, one first sorts the pieces to see what there is to choose from. The edge pieces are always easier, because they can only connect to two other edge





pieces, and getting the frame put together is an important first step for assembling the whole puzzle and beginning to see the big picture it represents.



As Jesus indicated, looking up to heaven was the beginning of our understanding of the Revelation. Without looking up to Orion, the frame would not have been able to be assembled. The Orion message is the frame within which the rest of Revelation's puzzle pieces fit. Not all are directly connected to it, but from that beginning, the rest of the pieces find their place until its first words are fulfilled: The revelation of Jesus Christ. The book is about the mystery of His revelation or revealing or appearing. It is about His Second Coming. And when the puzzle is solved, then Jesus Christ is revealed; then He appears to the earth.

This is the essence of Revelation 10:7:

But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. (Revelation 10:7)

Notice the clear reference to the opening line of the book:

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; [prophecies] and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: (Revelation 1:1)

In familiar chiasmic manner, this idea is repeated near the end:

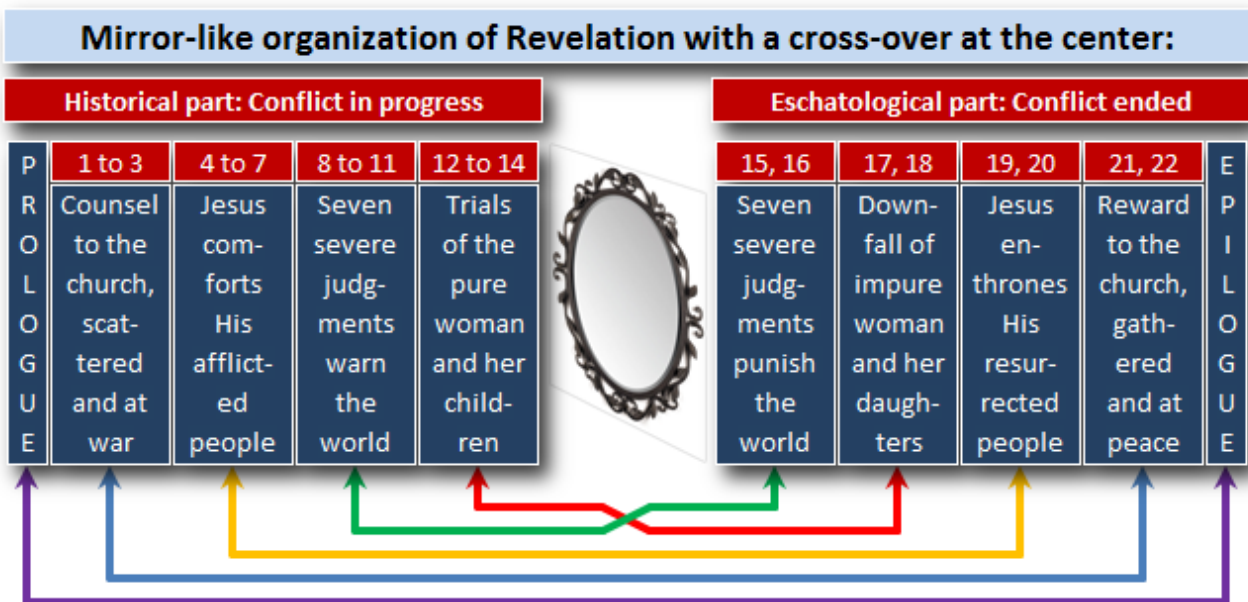
And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. (Revelation 22:6-7)

Jesus reiterates that the sayings of the prophecy of this book are a blessing to those who keep, guard, or maintain them, for they tell of the nearness of His coming!



As we come nearer the end of the prophetic record, our understanding can more quickly develop, just as when you have fewer pieces to fit into the almost-finished puzzle, it comes together faster. We are now in the last rapid moments, but there are still many puzzle pieces that either do not fit correctly that have been forced into a place they don't belong, or they are simply not in place at all. If we go through the Revelation chapter by chapter, we will soon find that there are some chapters for which our understanding is particularly weak in relation to how it all fits together in the short time that remains. And yet, it is clear that there is but a short time remaining indeed!

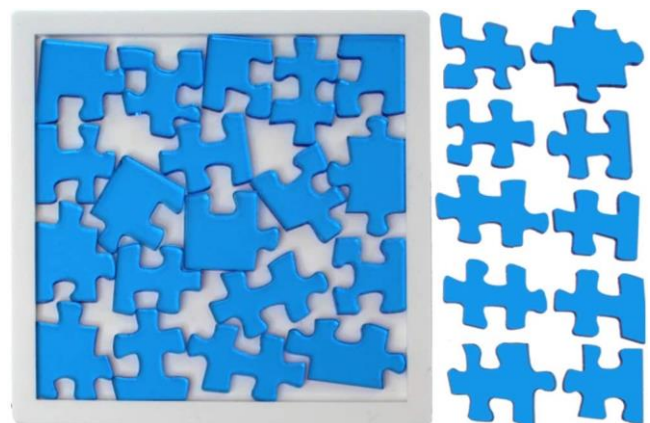
I will be sharing a series of posts to talk about some of those puzzle pieces that are not in their rightful places, and reiterate those that have settled snugly into a well-fitting piece of the picture. As we do this, it is important to keep the structure of the Revelation in mind. During our service, we frequently referenced the following diagram. It is an old one, but still quite useful as it shows the chiasmic or mirror-like structure of the book in broad strokes.



Now, of course there are eschatological (end-time) fulfillments in the chapters on the left of the mirror in addition to historical ones, but you can see that there is a clear literary mirror-like relationship between the two sides. Notice also the special "cross-over" in the middle.

In the coming posts, we will look at some of the puzzle pieces and fit them together, keeping our eye on the big picture. We want to see the whole picture of Jesus' return.

We have seen how we had a significant misunderstanding for a long time about the mighty angel in Revelation 10, thinking it was Jesus, when in fact, it is the Father depicted there! It is understandable to make such an error, because after all, if you have seen Jesus, you've seen the Father! They are very similar. And often, the pieces of the puzzle have just slight variations and look like they could fit in different places. Sometimes you have to use other clues to place them besides the actual content, looking instead at the shape, for example (or in Revelation, it's chiasmic relationship may give a clue).





Do we understand the key sequence of events in Revelation 11 or are there still questions? What about the seventh trumpet and its carillon? When does it sound? Is the earthquake of the seventh trumpet the same as in the seventh plague and/or the sixth seal? We understand much about those puzzle pieces (for example, that it is a carillon of God's clock when the 24 elders and four beasts give praise and worship to God). Now it is time to put the loose pieces together and correct any misalignments or forced-in pieces, whose picture doesn't quite fit. Revelation 17 and 19 are also chapters with key prophecies that need to be put in their proper place. At this late stage, there should be much that we can see to confidently assemble some of those pieces!

Let us "study to show ourselves approved unto God" by putting the puzzle together and verifying that the mystery is finished.