

The Book of Revelation

Introduction

Author: John the Apostle

Written to: the seven churches of Asia Minor (Revelation 1:11)

Date: around 90s CE

Apocalyptic: a type of writing popular amongst Jews and Christians during times of distress and persecution, featuring an unveiling or unfolding of things not previously known and which could not be known apart from the unveiling, angelic mediation, evocative imagery, the struggle between cosmic forces of good and evil with the belief that the present seeming triumph of evil is short-lived and will be set right by God in the end.

Literal language: language to be accepted and understood as is, often describing actual persons, places, things, or events.

Figurative language: language in which the words used stands for, represents, or describes something else.

Historicist interpretation: the belief that Revelation describes a continual series of events from John's day until the day of Jesus' return which can be seen through the historical record. A view that has lost its popularity as history continues to unfold.

Preterist interpretation: the belief that most or all of Revelation describes events fulfilled in the first century or first few centuries after Jesus. Some Preterists believe Revelation 4-11 describes the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE and Revelation 12-19 the fall of the Roman Empire to Christianity from 100-350 CE; other preterists believe that Revelation 4-19 describes only the destruction of Jerusalem; some have gone so far as to believe that all of Revelation, along with all of prophecy, has been fulfilled by the end of 70 CE.

Futurist interpretation: the belief that most of Revelation has yet to be fulfilled; generally premillennial in belief. Some futurists believe Revelation has been partially fulfilled and await an actual millennium; many are dispensational premillennialists, expecting a rapture, a seven year tribulation, a thousand year reign, and the final judgment.

Spiritualist interpretation: the belief that most of Revelation describes the spiritual conflict between the powers of darkness and the powers of God with highly evocative imagery as seen throughout the Bible. Generally amillennial, and, to an extent, sees Revelation as having "cyclical" application, describing realities which do not significantly change throughout time.

Premillennialism: the belief that we are living in the time before the thousand year reign of Jesus with the expectation of a reign in the physical world of that precise length.

Amillennialism: the belief that the millennium described in Revelation 20 is an image of the reign of Christ for a long period of time, not demanding an actual 1000 year reign in the physical realm.

Postmillennialism: the belief that the millennium of Christ's reign has past and we are living in a new and better world. A view which has lost its popularity after the horrors of the 20th century.



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Interpreting Revelation

Dangers in interpreting Revelation:

- The tyranny of the present.
- No relationship to original context.
- Seeking one-to-one equivalence.
- Understanding Revelation without reference to the rest of the New Testament.

How do we avoid these dangers?

The Four Levels of Interpreting Revelation:

1. The Literal: The Images John Sees

- What is John seeing?
- What is the relationship between what John is seeing and what he has seen?

2. The Figurative: The Meaning of the Images

- To what, if anything, do these images refer?
- What types of truths are exemplified by the image?
- How is this image used in other parts of Revelation?
- How is this image used in other books of the Bible?
- What, then, is the meaning of the image?

3. Immediate Context: Its First Century Application

- Why is this image part of Revelation?
- Can we find specific referents to the image in first century society?
- What message does this image and its meaning communicate to the Christians of Asia Minor in the first century?
- How would this image or series of images work to encourage the Christians of the first century?

4. History of Interpretation and Modern Encouragement

- How has this image been understood and interpreted over the past two thousand years?
- How profitable are those understandings and interpretations to truly understanding Revelation?
- What are the similarities and differences between our situation in the twenty-first century and the situation of the first century Christians to whom John writes?
- What parallels exist between the situation and conditions described through Revelation's imagery and our own situation and conditions?
- How can this image or this series of images work to encourage Christians today?

Revelation and the New Testament

Premises:

- The sum of God's word is truth (Psalm 119:160), and His truth is consistent and without contradiction.
- The book of Revelation is part of the New Testament, and is not alien or foreign to it.
- It is best to understand more obscure and less clear books or passages in terms of less obscure and clearer books or passages in the New Testament.
- The book of Revelation is more obscure and less clear than many other sections of the New Testament.
- Therefore, Revelation should be understood in terms of the rest of the New Testament; the rest of the New Testament should not be forced to fit an understanding of Revelation.

Passages for Consideration:

- Matthew 25:1-46
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11
- 2 Peter 3:9-12
- John 18:36, Colossians 1:13
- Ephesians 6:10-18
- Romans 8:16-25, 1 Corinthians 15:1-58

Dates upon which people were certain Jesus would return based upon Revelation, among other books:

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| • 170s | • 1535 |
| • 410 | • 1556 |
| • 500 | • 1593 |
| • 589 | • 1600 |
| • 596 | • 1610s |
| • 666 | • 1620s |
| • 700 | • 1630s |
| • sometime between 799-806 | • 1655 |
| • 1000 | • 1666 |
| • 1033 | • 1688 |
| • 1233 | • 1689 |
| • 1260 | • 1700 |
| • sometime between 1300-1340 | • 1733 |
| • 1370 | • 1734 |
| • ca. 1419 | • 1741 |
| • 1420 (February) | • 1755 |
| • 1484 | • 1763 (February 28) |
| • 1490s | • 1773 |
| • 1500 | • 1787 |
| • 1524-5 | • 1789 |
| • 1528 | • 1794 |
| • 1533 (October 9 at 8am) | • 1799 |

- 1816
- 1819
- 1830-5
- 1832
- 1833
- 1836
- 1838
- 1843-4 (March 1843, October 22, 1844)
- 1848
- 1857
- 1860
- 1861
- 1864
- 1866
- 1874
- 1878
- 1881
- 1888
- 1895
- 1900
- 1910
- 1914
- 1933
- 1975
- 1985
- 1989
- 1999
- 2000
- 2007
- 2012

People believed to be the "Antichrist," the "beast" of Revelation 13:16-18:

- Caligula
- Nero
- Domitian
- Diocletian
- Goths
- Huns
- Tartars
- Frederic II of the Holy Roman Empire (HRE)
- Name your pope
- Roman Catholic church
- Turks
- Saracens
- Charles I of England
- Emperor Rudolf II of the HRE
- Louis XIV of France
- French Revolutionists
- Any King of England
- Napoleon
- League of Nations
- Jews
- Mussolini
- Hitler
- the UN
- European Common Market
- Saddam Hussein
- Bill Gates
- Barack Obama

People believed to be the return of the Messiah:

- John of Leiden, 1530s
- William Hackett, 1591
- A child born in Paris, 1792
- Claude-Henri de Rouvroy, comte de Saint-Simon, early 1800s
- Jean-Baptists Digonnet, 1840s
- Various individuals in SC, 1889
- Cyrus Teed, late 1800s
- Luc Jouret, 1970s-1994
- Shoko Ashara, 1980s-1990s
- David Koresh, 1980s-1990s

Source: *Apocalypses: Prophecies, Cults, and Millennial Beliefs through the Ages*, by Eugen Weber

Revelation 1:1-20: Introducing Revelation

Perhaps no book of the Bible is as controversial as the book of Revelation. For the past two thousand years believers have been amazed, astounded, and often rather confused by all the pictures and images presented in Revelation. Many people have no confidence in their understanding of Revelation; many others are quite convinced they have the key to understanding Revelation and often seek to understand the rest of the Bible through Revelation. We have all heard of strange theories and suggestions based upon what someone imagines Revelation as describing. It is easy to understand why many Christians are a bit fearful of Revelation and feel as if they will never have a good understanding of what it means.

All of this confusion, division, contention, and despair regarding Revelation is quite unfortunate; Revelation was written to encourage, strengthen, and reinforce the faith of Christians suffering persecution at the hands of powerful foes in the first century. Revelation, when understood properly in its context and within the greater story told throughout the Bible, can encourage and strengthen us in our faith in compelling and majestic ways.

Revelation 1:1-20 introduces us to Revelation and provides many insights as to how to go forward. Revelation comes from the Greek *apokalupsis*, which means a revealing or unveiling (cf. Revelation 1:1). The Revelation is not designed to conceal or hide; quite the contrary! Instead, the revelation is of God, given to Jesus Christ and presented to John by an angel to reveal and make known to His servants those things which are about to take place (Revelation 1:1-2). Revelation will present a picture of the end of all things and the ultimate judgment scene, but it begins and remains rooted in its own time at the end of the first century CE (ca. 93-96), and it is designed to make things clearer. Those who read it aloud and hear it are blessed if they will keep what they have heard (Revelation 1:3): Revelation is not just a picture of a series of events but expects those who hear it to do something about it and take their place within it.

From Revelation 1:4-9 we understand that the Revelation was given to John, most likely the Apostle who is also responsible for the Gospel and Letters of John, while he was exiled on the island of Patmos for his faith. The Revelation is written as a letter to the seven churches of Asia, which are seven specific local congregations in the Roman province of Asia which is in modern-day western Turkey (Revelation 1:4, 11). Yet the messages to those churches, as well as the rest of Revelation, are designed for the exhortation and encouragement of all Christians. The Revelation is provided through the work of all three members of the Godhead, the Father who was, is, and will be, the "sevenfold" Spirit, and Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:4-5). In Jesus believers were made a kingdom and a priesthood; this is spoken of in the past tense, indicating that Jesus' Kingdom is here and now, and believers are to be His ministers before Him (cf. Colossians 1:13, 1 Peter 2:3-8). Jesus is described as the ruler of kings on earth (Revelation 1:5): throughout Revelation, even though we will encounter powerful persecutors empowered by the forces of darkness, we are given confidence that Jesus is still in control.

The vision begins in Revelation 1:10-20: John is in the Spirit on the Lord's day and hears a voice behind him. He turns to see who speaks to him, and he is confronted with a majestic image of a powerful ruler, full of powerful details (Revelation 1:10-16). John is overtaken and falls at his feet as one dead; this ruler tells him to not be afraid, but to stand, for He is the Lord Jesus, the First and the

Last, the Living One, who died but lives forevermore, and who has control over Death and Hades (Revelation 1:17-18). The imagery is quite powerful, and while we have no doubt that John is seeing such things in his vision, it points us to its reference in Daniel 7:9-14: the Ancient of Days (in Daniel, the Father) and the "one like a son of man" (in Daniel, the Messiah). Yet, in John's vision, the characteristics of the Ancient of Days are seen in the "one like a son of man," thereby indicating the unity between the Father and the Son and the authority vested in the Son.

So many times we think of Jesus as a gentle man, almost soft, unobtrusive, someone whom we would never fear. And yet here in Revelation 1:12-16 Jesus is described in powerful terms, an imposing figure, One who rightly deserves worship. If we were John, we would also have our faces plastered on the ground and be as one dead, quite afraid! Jesus is meek and gentle (cf. Matthew 11:29), but He is also Lord Almighty, and we should keep both attributes in mind as we remember Jesus and seek to serve Him.

Revelation 1:20 is an important "landmark" in Revelation. In it Jesus describes the meaning of the seven stars in His hand and the seven lampstands around Him: they represent the angels for the churches and the churches themselves, respectively. This shows us that Revelation is something which needs interpreting: John says what he sees, but he means what he means! Yes, he sees stars and lampstands, but he means angels and churches: the images in the vision have references, representing other things. It can be profitable for us to consider why certain images accurately reflect characteristics of what they represent: a lampstand is a vessel to contain light, and the church should be the vessel in which the truth and glory of Jesus should be placed (cf. Matthew 5:13-16, 1 Timothy 3:15). White represents purity and holiness; it thus makes sense that Jesus' hair should be reckoned as white, along with the imagery of redemption and purity in Isaiah 1:18 (cf. Revelation 1:14).

Revelation, therefore, uses all sorts of images to describe conditions which the early Christians would face. Those images represent something else, and any profitable study of Revelation will seek to understand what exactly Jesus is communicating to His churches through them. They can be understood and we can be encouraged by them; they reinforce and illuminate the truths we find throughout the rest of the Bible. Let us praise and serve the Risen Lord Jesus, He who died but lives forevermore, and keep the things He has revealed to us!

1:4: seven spirits: Isaiah 11:2

1:5: firstborn from the dead: Psalm 2:7, 89:27 -> Colossians 1:15, 18

1:7: even those who pierced him...wail on account of him: Zechariah 12:10 -> John 19:31-37

1:7: amen: "so be it" in Hebrew

1:10: in the Spirit: Ezekiel 3:12, 14, 8:3, 11:24, 37:1, 43:5

1:10: voice like a trumpet: Exodus 19:16 -> Matthew 24:31, 1 Corinthians 15:52, 1 Thessalonians 4:16

1:12: seven golden lampstands: Exodus 25:31-37, 1 Kings 7:49, Zechariah 4:2, Revelation 1:20

1:13: one like a son of man: Daniel 7:13

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1:13: clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest: Exodus 28:4, 29:5, Leviticus 16:4, 1 Samuel 18:4, 24:5, 11, Ezekiel 26:16, Daniel 10:5

1:14: The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow: Daniel 7:9, Isaiah 1:18

1:14: eyes were as a flame of fire: Daniel 10:6

1:15: his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace: Ezekiel 1:7, Daniel 3:24-25, 10:6

1:15: voice like the roar of many waters: Ezekiel 1:24, 43:2, Daniel 10:6

1:16: seven stars: Revelation 1:20

1:16: two-edged sword: Isaiah 11:4, 49:2, Ephesians 6:17, 2 Thessalonians 2:8, Hebrews 4:12

1:16: his face was like the sun shining in full strength: Matthew 17:2

1:17: I fell at his feet as though dead: Isaiah 6:5, Ezekiel 1:28, Daniel 8:17, 27

1:17: I am the first and the last: Isaiah 41:4, 44:6, 48:12

1:17: the living one...alive forevermore: Deuteronomy 32:40, Psalm 42:2

Revelation 2:1-3:22: Letters to the Seven Churches in Asia

John has seen the Risen Lord standing in the midst of seven lampstands, representing the seven churches of Asia (Revelation 1:12-20). Jesus is not an absent landlord: He is intimately aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the churches of His people. Before the Revelation proper can be given, He has messages to give for His people in their specific circumstances in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea: the letters to the seven churches in Asia (Revelation 2:1-3:22).

Each letter maintains a similar layout: Jesus speaks to the congregation through the "angel" of that congregation, and speaks of Himself in terms of the descriptions given in Revelation 1:12-20 (save the reference to Jesus as the Son of God in Revelation 2:18, a reference to Jesus used often in 1 John; e.g. 1 John 4:15). Jesus then commends each church for all that is commendable (save for Laodicea, for which there is no commendation). Jesus will then set forth His concerns, critiques, and condemnations for each church (except for Smyrna and Philadelphia, for which there are no critiques). Jesus concludes each letter with a promise for those who "overcome" and the exhortation for all who have ears to hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Jesus finds many reasons for encouragement. Ephesus has patience and works, has not grown weary, has exposed false apostles for what they are, and hates the works of the Nicolaitans (Revelation 2:2-3, 6). Despite poverty, tribulation, and persecution from the Jews, Smyrna is truly rich and has stood firm for Jesus (Revelation 2:9). Pergamum has held fast to Jesus' name and did not deny the faith despite dwelling in the midst of "Satan's throne" and official Roman persecution (Revelation 2:13).

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Jesus knows of Thyatira's love, faith, ministry, patience, and works (Revelation 2:19). Some in Sardis maintain righteousness and holiness and are worthy of life (Revelation 3:5). Philadelphia, despite weakness and persecution by the Jews, has maintained the faith and has not denied it, and will be preserved through the hour of trial (Revelation 3:8-10).

Yet Jesus has many concerns for His churches. Ephesus has left its first love, and without returning to their former works, will lose their place (Revelation 2:4-5). Pergamum and Thyatira have some among them who have compromised too much with the pagan world around them, participating in sexual immorality and food sacrificed to idols (Revelation 2:14-16, 20-23). Sardis has the reputation for life, but is actually dead; they need to wake up and repent (Revelation 3:1-4). Laodicea is lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, and is about to be spit out: they claim to be wealthy and in need of nothing but in fact are in need of everything. In humility they must turn back to Jesus for true wealth, clothing, and healing (Revelation 3:15-18).

Jesus is preparing His churches for tribulations and difficulties which are about to come upon them, encouraging them to remain steadfast despite the challenges. This is told to Smyrna and Philadelphia explicitly (Revelation 2:10, 3:10), and will affect the other churches as well. All the churches do well to "clean up" the challenges existing within the congregation so that they will be ready and able to stand firm when the external difficulties come upon them!

Jesus provides promises to those who "overcome": John is responsible for 24 of the 28 uses of *nikao*, overcome, in Scripture, and 17 of those are in Revelation. Those who overcome will eat of the tree of life in the Paradise of God (Revelation 2:7), will not be harmed by the second death (Revelation 2:11), will receive the hidden manna, and a white stone with a new name on it (Revelation 2:17), will receive authority over the nations to rule with a rod of iron and be given the morning star (Revelation 2:27-28), will be arrayed in white garments, will not have their names blotted out of the book of life, and Jesus will confess their names before the Father (Revelation 3:5), will be made a pillar in the house of God, and will have the name of God and the name of the city of God written on them (Revelation 3:12), and will sit with Jesus on His throne, as He sits with the Father on His throne (Revelation 3:19). In the midst of persecution, poverty, and trial, the hope of victory, power, wealth, and eternal life would encourage and sustain the Christians of the churches of Asia.

What are we to make of these letters? Jesus is sending messages to specific churches in their specific contexts, exhibiting a familiarity with each particular city and its history and environment. Smyrna, as a city, died and lived again, and was wealthy (Revelation 2:8-9). Pergamum was the center of Roman power in the area, full of idols and paganism, and thus understood as where Satan and his throne dwelt (Revelation 2:13). The glory days of Sardis were in the past; it had only been conquered twice when its defenders were not particularly alert (Revelation 3:1-3). Laodicea was famous for its wealth, its school of ophthalmology and its eye-salve, and notorious for the lukewarm quality of its water (cf. Revelation 3:15-18). Nevertheless, each letter also concludes with the exhortation for those who have ears to hear what the Spirit says to the churches (Revelation 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:29, 3:4, 3:13, 3:22). In these seven churches we see the same types of strengths and weaknesses, and benefits and challenges as have existed in churches throughout time and continue to exist to this day. Some churches stand firm for the truth but lose their love and zeal for God, like Ephesus; other churches maintain love and zeal but have many compromising the truth, like Thyatira. Some churches seem alive but are dead, like Sardis; not a few churches are complacent but really weak, like Laodicea.

We can gain much encouragement from the letters to the seven churches in Asia. We should stand firm and not deny the faith even in the face of poverty, persecution, or tribulation. We must be on guard against the dangers of false teachings and the tendency to compromise with the world. Jesus reproves and chastens those whom He loves; we should be zealous and repent of all sin (Revelation 3:19). Let us listen to the word of the Lord, opening the door for Him, and share with Him in His feast forevermore (Revelation 3:20)!

2:1, 3:1: seven stars, seven lampstands: Revelation 1:13-20

2:6, 15: Nicolaitans: derived from Nicolaus of Acts 6:5. According to Clement of Alexandria, they claim to follow Nicolaus, who, when reproached because of growing jealousy of his beautiful wife, responded that anyone who wanted her could take her as wife; thus, by "apostolic" teaching, they participated in promiscuous and communal intercourse with women, and also maintained pagan ideas of creation, not separating out food sacrificed to idols (Stromata 3.4; cf. Bede, Explanation of the Apocalypse 2.16). In another place Clement says that the Nicolaitians abused Nicolaus' saying, "one must misuse the flesh," and asserts Nicolaus has nothing to do with them (Stromata 2.118.3-5), but Irenaeus accuses Nicolaus of this heresy (Against Heresies 1.26.3; Oecumenius does as well). Victorinus of Petrovium says they taught that food offered to idols could be exorcised and eaten, and anyone who committed sexually deviant behavior could receive the peace on the eighth day (Commentary on the Apocalypse 2.1). Thus, possibly a Gnostic group, but one certainly compromising Christian standards in terms of sexuality and food sacrificed to idols.

2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:29, 3:4, 3:13, 3:22: ear: Isaiah 6:9-11, 50:4, Matthew 11:15 & etc.

2:7, 11, 17, 26, 3:5, 3:12, 3:21: overcome: John 16:33; of 28 NT uses of "overcome," 24 by John, 17 in Revelation.

2:7: tree of life: Genesis 3:22, Proverbs 3:18

2:7: Paradise of God: Genesis 2:8, Ezekiel 28:13, Revelation 22:2

2:8: first and the last, dead and lived again: Revelation 1:18

2:10: ten days:

2:10, 3:11: crown of life: Psalm 103:4, 1 Corinthians 9:25, 2 Timothy 4:8, James 1:12, 1 Peter 5:4; crown as *stephanos*, crown of victory, not *diadema*, crown of rule

2:11: second death: Matthew 10:28, Luke 12:4-5, Revelation 20:6, 14, 21:8

2:12: sharp two-edged sword: Revelation 1:16

2:13: Satan's throne: Pergamum known for large altar to Zeus, center of healing by Asclepius, seat of Roman government in Asia

2:14: Balaam: Numbers 23-24, 31:16

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2:14, 20: things sacrificed to idols: cf. Acts 15:29, 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

2:15, 20: fornication: Psalm 106:39 / Jeremiah 3:9

2:17: hidden manna: Exodus 16:32-34, Deuteronomy 8:3, 1 Kings 8:9, John 6:35, 48, 50, Hebrews 9:4

2:17: white stone: Acts 26:10; prized as amulet or mark of group membership

2:18: new name: 1 John 3:1

2:18: Son of God: the claim of Caesar, prominent in Thyatira

2:18: flame of fire...burnished bronze: Revelation 1:14-15

2:20: Jezebel: 1 Kings 16:31-33, 18:4, 2 Kings 9:22

2:27: rule: Matthew 19:28, Luke 22:28-30, 2 Timothy 2:12, Revelation 1:6, 5:10, 20:6, 22:5

2:27: rod of iron: quotation of Psalm 2:9 -> Revelation 19:15; cf. Psalm 110:5-6, Isaiah 11:4, Micah 5:15, Revelation 1:5, 12:5.

2:28: morning star: Isaiah 14:12, 2 Peter 1:19, Revelation 22:16

3:1: seven Spirits of God: Revelation 1:4

3:2: be watchful: Matthew 24:42, Luke 12:34; Sardis fell twice to invaders because defenders did not pay sufficient attention (in days of Cyrus I, Antiochus III)

3:3: as a thief: Matthew 24:43-44, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3, 2 Peter 3:10

3:4: not defile garments...walk in white: Zechariah 3:3-5

3:5, 3:18: white garments: Daniel 7:9, Ecclesiastes 9:8, Revelation 19:8

3:5: book of life: Exodus 32:32, Psalm 69:28, Daniel 7:10, 12:1, Luke 10:20, Philippians 4:3, Revelation 13:18, 17:8, 20:12, 15, 21:27

3:5: confess before Father: Matthew 10:32, Mark 8:38, Luke 12:8

3:7: true: of 27 times used in NT, 22 by John

3:7: key of David: Isaiah 22:22

3:8: door: 1 Corinthians 16:9, 2 Corinthians 2:12, Colossians 4:3

3:9: bow down: Isaiah 45:14, 49:23, 60:14, Zechariah 8:22-23

3:12: pillar...temple: Galatians 2:9, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, Ephesians 2:20-22, 1 Timothy 3:15, 1 Peter 2:3-7

3:13: name of city...new Jerusalem: Revelation 21:9-22:5

3:14: Amen, faithful and true witness: Isaiah 65:16

3:14: beginning of creation of God: John 1:3, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Colossians 1:15, 18

3:16: lukewarm: the water sources for Laodicea were notorious for being lukewarm.

3:18: I counsel to buy: Isaiah 9:6, 55:1

3:18: gold refined by fire: Psalm 12:6, Job 23:10, 1 Peter 1:6-7

3:18: eyesalve to anoint eyes: 2 Peter 1:9; Laodicea was world-famous for its school of ophthalmology and its eyesalve.

3:19: chasten: Proverbs 3:12

3:21: as I overcame, and sat down with my Father: Psalm 110:1, Mark 16:19, Acts 2:33-35, 1 Peter 3:22

Revelation 4:1-5:14: The Throne and the Lamb in Heaven

Having written down the letters to the seven churches, John is now invited to glimpse a vision of the power and majesty of the heavenly court. He is again in the Spirit (Revelation 4:1-2), and begins to describe the details of the heavenly court in ways quite reminiscent of similar scenes in Isaiah 6:1-5 and Ezekiel 1:26-28.

John begins with the throne of God (Revelation 4:2-3). He tells the reader that One sits upon the throne but provides no detail about His form: to look upon Him, John says, is like jasper, sardius, and a rainbow around the throne like emerald. These are the most precious jewels imaginable; they may also represent God's purity, justice/wrath, and mercy. John well describes God essentially as an emanation of light (Exodus 28:17, Psalm 104:2, Ezekiel 28:13, 1 Timothy 6:16), along with the rainbow, the reminder of His covenant with all mankind (cf. Genesis 9:12-17).

John then describes the twenty-four thrones around the throne of God, and the twenty-four elders upon those thrones (Revelation 4:4). These twenty-four elders most likely represent two sets of twelve, the twelve patriarchs of the Old Testament and the twelve apostles of the New Testament, and therefore are the embodiment of the people of God throughout time. They are dressed in white garments, indicating their purity, and have golden crowns of victory. They also have harps and bowls of incense, representing the songs and prayers of God's people (Revelation 5:8). Thus the people of God surround God's throne in purity and triumph; they are shown constantly casting their crowns

before God's throne, prostrating before Him and declaring His worthiness as the Creator of all things (Revelation 4:10-11).

John then further sets the scene in Revelation 4:5-6a: lightning and thunder, evoking God and Israel at Sinai in Exodus 19:16, the seven torches as the seven spirits of God, representing the Holy Spirit (cf. Revelation 1:4), and something like a sea of glass, like crystal. Such details express the majesty and awesomeness of God as well as the distance between God and man.

John then speaks of four living creatures in Revelation 4:6b-9. Like the *seraphim* in Isaiah 6:2-3, they surround the throne of God and ceaselessly declare, "holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come," (Revelation 4:8). Yet much of the description is like the *cherubim* of Ezekiel 1:10, 18, 10:14-15, 20-22: four creatures with the heads of a lion, a calf, a man, and an eagle, likely representing nobility, strength, wisdom, and swiftness, respectively (also as leaders of their representative animal categories; others have seen in the four the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). They have eyes everywhere and see all things; they obtain no rest from their ceaseless praise of God.

John then focuses on a scroll in the hand of the One upon the throne, written on both sides and sealed with seven seals (Revelation 5:1). An angel cries out asking who is worthy to open the scroll, and no one is found, leading John to weep and lament (Revelation 5:2-4). One of the elders then comforts John, declaring that there is One who is worthy: the Lion of Judah, the Root of David (Revelation 5:5).

At this time John then sees standing in the midst of the throne and of the elders a Lamb as though it had been slain, with seven horns (representing honor, strength, and power; cf. Deuteronomy 3:17, 1 Kings 22:11, Psalms 18:2, 75:4, 89:17, 112:9, 148:14, Daniel 7:24, Zechariah 1:18-21) and seven eyes (the seven Spirits of God, a representation of all sight, thus omniscience and omnipresence: Zechariah 4:10, Revelation 1:4-6), who takes the scroll from the One upon the throne (Revelation 5:6-7). John then sees a threefold set of praises and honor given to the Lamb: first, a new song of the four living creatures and the elders (Revelation 5:8-10), then an innumerable number of angels with the living creatures and elders, declaring a sevenfold declaration of the Lamb's glory (a doxology; cf. Revelation 5:11-12), and finally all created things in the universe proclaim blessings, honor, glory, and dominion to the One on the throne and to the Lamb (Revelation 5:13-14).

The Lamb of God, which is the Lion of Judah and the Root of David, is Jesus of Nazareth, who died in order to ransom all men from the power of sin and overcame death in the glorious victory of His resurrection (cf. Romans 5:6-11, 1 Corinthians 15:1-58). We do well to note the emphasis John places on the description of Jesus as the Lamb: only in Revelation 5:5 is He described as a lion, but in Revelation 5:6, 5:12, 6:1, 16, 7:9-10, 14, 12:11, 13:8, 14:2, 4, 15:3, 17:14, 19:7, 9, 21:22-23, and 22:1-3 He is called the Lamb. This is not to deny that Jesus is the Lion of Judah, but to remind us that throughout Revelation, as throughout the whole New Testament, Jesus' victory is won through His sacrifice. He overcame the power of sin, suffering, and death through suffering and dying. His people will overcome through Him also by dying to sin and suffering whatever they are called upon to suffer (cf. Romans 6:1-23, 1 Peter 1:3-9).

It is hard not to be overcome and awed by the majesty of the scene which John presents of Heaven with the One upon the throne and the Lamb. What John sees is not something that is yet to come; it

existed in his present day, and it exists to this day and will exist for eternity. John is writing to Christians in Asia Minor who are suffering persecution and who may feel that God and His power are quite distant: through this scene they could see that the victory had already been won. Their songs and prayers surround the throne of God. As they praised, glorified, and honored the name of the One who sits upon the throne and of the Lamb while on earth, so they would also do so in heaven as it is being done in heaven. No matter how dark or difficult our days may seem while on this earth, we can be sure that God sits upon His throne, the Lamb reigns in Heaven, and if we overcome in Jesus, we also will sing the new song of redemption by the Lamb forevermore!

4:1: after these things: Revelation 7:1, 9, 15:5, 18:1, 19:1, 20:1

4:1: door opened: Ezekiel 1:1, Matthew 3:16

4:1: first voice: Revelation 1:10

4:2: in the Spirit: Revelation 1:10

4:2: throne, one sitting: 1 Kings 22:19f, Psalm 47:8, 89:4, 97:2-3, Isaiah 6:1-6, Ezekiel 1:26-28

4:3: jasper...sardius...emerald: Revelation 21:11-21; these three as most precious stones; perhaps representing God's purity, wrath, and mercy, respectively? Note as well that God not pictured in any form but as emanation of light, cf. Exodus 28:17, Psalm 104:2, Ezekiel 28:13, 1 Timothy 6:16

4:3: rainbow: Genesis 9:12-17

4:4: 24 elders: based on priestly order or 1 Chronicles 24:7-19? Most common explanation: twelve patriarchs of OT and twelve apostles of NT, representing the embodied perfection of the people of God; cf. Daniel 7:9-10, Revelation 4:10, 5:5, 6, 8, 11, 14, 7:11, 13, 11:16, 14:3, 19:4, 21:12, 14

4:4: white garments: Daniel 7:9, Ecclesiastes 9:8, Revelation 3:5, 18, 19:8

4:4: crowns of gold: as *stephanos*, crown of victory; Psalm 103:4, 1 Corinthians 9:25, 2 Timothy 4:8, James 1:12, 1 Peter 5:4, Revelation 2:10, 3:11

4:5: lightnings and voices and thunders: Exodus 19:16, Deuteronomy 5:22-24, 1 Samuel 2:10, Revelation 8:5, 11:19, 16:18

4:6: sea of glass: sea as preciousness, purity, and distance; Exodus 24:10, 1 Kings 7:23-26 (bronze laver as a sea), Ezekiel 1:22, 26, Revelation 15:2

4:6-8: four living creatures: as seraphim, Isaiah 6:2-3; as cherubim, Ezekiel 1:10, 18, 10:14-15, 20-22

4:7: lion, ox, man, eagle: Ezekiel 1:6, 10, 22, 26; as representing nobility, strength, wisdom, and swiftness, respectively; also leaders of representative groups of animals (wild land animals, tame animals, all creation, and birds, respectively); often associated with the four Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)

4:8: holy, holy, holy: the *trisagion*, representing totality more than Trinity

4:11: worthy: Revelation 3:4, 5:2, 4, 9, 12, 16:6

4:11: glory, honor, power: as representing totality

4:11: created: Genesis 1:1-31, Psalm 33:6-7

5:1: scroll...seven seals: Ezekiel 2:9-3:3

5:2: strong angel: Revelation 10:11, 18:21

5:5: Lion of Judah: Genesis 49:8-12; Messiah as Lion of Judah in apocryphal 2 Esdras 11-12

5:5: Root of David: Isaiah 11:1-10, Mark 12:35-37, Romans 15:12, Revelation 22:16

5:5: overcome: John 16:33, Hebrews 2:14-15, 1 John 3:8

5:6: Lamb...slain: Revelation 1:18, Isaiah 53:4-7, John 1:28-29, 1 Peter 1:18-19, Revelation 5:12, 6:1, 16, 7:9-10, 14, 12:11, 13:8, 14:2, 4, 15:3, 17:14, 19:7, 9, 21:22-23, 22:1-3

5:6: seven horns: as representation of weapons, strength, and honor, thus omnipotence; Deuteronomy 3:17, 1 Kings 22:11, Psalms 18:2, 75:4, 89:17, 112:9, 148:14, Daniel 7:24, Zechariah 1:18-21

5:6: seven eyes: as representation of all sight, thus omniscience and omnipresence: Zechariah 4:10, Revelation 1:4-6

5:8: harps: as songs of the saints; psalms 33:2, 98:5, 147:7 Revelation 14:2, 15:2

5:8: incense: Psalm 141:2, Revelation 8:3-4

5:9: new song: Psalms 33:3, 40:3, 98:1, 144:9, 149:1, Isaiah 42:9-10; new as *kainos*, new in quality: not recently produced nor anything like it before

5:9: with Your blood: Ephesians 1:7, Revelation 1:5

5:9: every nation: Daniel 7:13-14

5:10: kingdom and priests: Exodus 19:6, Daniel 2:44, 7:13-16, 1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 1:6

5:10: reign: 2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 11:18, 12:12, 13:8

5:11: multitude: Psalm 68:17, Daniel 7:10, Hebrews 12:22

5:11: angels: Luke 15:10, 1 Peter 1:10-12

5:12: power...blessing: sevenfold doxology of praise

5:12: power, wisdom: 1 Corinthians 1:24

5:12: riches: 2 Corinthians 8:9, Ephesians 3:8

5:12: strength: Luke 11:22

5:12: honor: Philippians 2:11

5:12: glory: John 1:14

5:13-14: cf. Psalms 146:6, 148, Philippians 2:9-11

Revelation 6:1-8:1: The Seven Seals

John has been granted a vision of Heaven, highlighting the rule of God on His throne and the glory and honor given to Him (Revelation 4:1-11). John sees that God holds a scroll with seven seals upon it, and learns that the Lamb of God, Jesus, is worthy to open the seals, and He is greatly praised by all creation and the angelic host (Revelation 5:1-14). The time has come for the Lamb to open the seals.

As the first four seals are opened, horses and their riders come forth (Revelation 6:1-8). The first horse is white and goes off to conquer (Revelation 6:1-2). The second horse is red, and its rider was given a sword to take peace away from the earth (Revelation 6:3-4). The third horse is black, and its rider carries a balance, and a voice calls out highly inflated prices for wheat and barley, while oil and wine remain, indicating scarcity (Revelation 6:5-6). The fourth horse is pale, perhaps the pallor of illness or death upon a man, and Death rides it with Hades following behind, and sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts bring forth death (Revelation 6:7-8).

The fifth seal is opened, and John sees souls under an altar, those slain as martyrs for God (Revelation 6:9). They cry out to God, wanting to know when their blood will be avenged; they are given white robes and told to wait a little longer until the full number of martyrs is reached (Revelation 6:10-11).

The sixth seal brings forth all sorts of momentous events: earthquakes, the sun turning black and the moon to blood, stars falling from the sky, the heavens rolled up as a scroll, and the movement of mountains and islands (Revelation 6:12-15). Everyone on earth, from kings to slaves, hide and want to find some way of escaping face of the One upon the Throne, and the wrath of the Lamb (Revelation 6:16-17).

Before the seventh seal can be opened, God's people must themselves be sealed. John sees the angels who hold back the four winds at the four corners of the earth, and they are exhorted to do no harm to the creation until the people of God are sealed (Revelation 7:1-3). John speaks of these as 144,000 from the "tribes of Israel," listing 12 tribes of 12,000 people each, following the standard pattern of

the tribes of Israel except omitting Dan, counting Levi, and speaking of Manasseh and Joseph but not Ephraim (Revelation 7:4-8; cf. Genesis 35:22-26).

Then John sees a great multitude from every people and nation before the throne and before the Lamb, praising and glorifying God and the Lamb as seen previously in Revelation 5:9-14 (Revelation 7:9-12). They are the ones who came out of the tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and they are always before the throne of God, serving Him constantly, sheltered by His glory (Revelation 7:13-15). They do not hunger or thirst, are not oppressed by heat, and are shepherded by the Lamb who guides them to springs of living water, and God wipes every tear from their eyes (Revelation 7:16-17).

Then John sees the seventh seal opened (Revelation 8:1). All is silent for about a half an hour. Another series of events will soon take place before John's eyes.

The opening of the seven seals has fascinated and mystified people for generations; the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" is one of the most defining images of Revelation. The meaning behind these events is quite disputed, and we can understand why: these images seem quite strange.

Nevertheless, the images are consistent with many themes found throughout the Old and New Testaments. Four horses and their riders are sent out in Zechariah 1:8-10 and 6:1-8; judgment is suspended until the righteous are sealed in Ezekiel 9:1-8. We can gain some insight into the meaning of these images through their continued use throughout Scripture.

The horses and their riders evoke the hand of God among the people: the white horse and rider as conquering by the promotion of the Gospel and/or victory in battle, the red horse and rider as persecution of believers or conflict among nations, the black horse and rider as scarcity on account of famine, extortion, or mismanagement, and the pale horse and Death as the representative judgment of God against a nation: sword, famine, pestilence, and death (Revelation 6:1-8; cf. Leviticus 26:21-26, Ezekiel 4:10, 16, 14:12-21, Matthew 10:34-39).

The altar of the fifth seal is the altar of sacrifice, and since the blood of the sacrifice would collect under the altar, and life is in the blood, so the lives of the Christians who died for their faith remain under the altar (cf. Exodus 29:12, Leviticus 4:7, 18, 30, 17:11-14). Their blood must be avenged, not because of hatred or ill will against their fellow man, but on account of the divine mandate in Genesis 4:10, 9:5-6 and Numbers 35:33 regarding the pollution that comes from unavenged blood. God remains a God of justice as well as a God of love!

All of the events of the sixth seal evoke the signs of the days of judgment and reckoning in Isaiah 13:10-13, 34:4, Jeremiah 4:19-28, Hosea 10:8, Joel 2:30-32, Amos 8:8-9, and even Jesus in Matthew 24:29-34. These all speak of nations great and small falling.

Many relate the events surrounding the six seals to Israel in the days of the destruction of Jerusalem around 70 CE or to the Romans and their Empire in the first centuries CE. This is to be expected, since the referents for the images speak of judgment upon Babylon, Israel, and Judah. They are how God visits judgment upon people, and reflect God's continued activity and presence in His creation.

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Yet however God judges the nations, He has sealed His own people with His name. The "144,000" do not necessarily escape the trials and tribulations of the seals, but they have the spiritual security of being God's people. Throughout the New Testament, Christians in the church are spoken of in terms of the people of Israel (Romans 2:28-29, 9:6, Galatians 6:15-16, Philippians 3:3): so it is with the 144,000 in Revelation 7:1-8. They are the "12 x 12 x 1000," the very large number who are religiously complete before God; they are Christians living on earth and serving God, often called the "church militant."

They are joined in their praise and service by the innumerable people of God who have gone on to their reward and continually stand before the Throne and the Lamb (cf. Revelation 7:9-17). They are the "church triumphant," and they have received the wonderful promises of God. They do not hunger or thirst; they do not suffer from heat; they have living water, being shepherded by Jesus, and God wipes every tear from their eye. It is all love, joy, peace, glory, and grace, and it is wonderful!

While we will never exhaust the mysteries of the seven seals, we can gain encouragement from them. Events transpire as they have in the past: people stand for God's Word and are persecuted for it. Nations conquer and are conquered; there are times of plenty and times of scarcity; people always find ways of making war on each other. Nations rise and fall. The people of God must endure such things as they always have. Yet they have their own seal upon them which God has given them; they are His and live to praise Him. They cherish the hope of the promise of joining that "church triumphant," able to stand before the throne and the Lamb in love, joy, peace, glory, and grace, and receive rest. Let us stand firm for the cause of the Lord so as to obtain that wonderful inheritance, glorifying and honoring He who sits upon the throne and the Lamb!

6:1, 16, 7:9-10, 14: Lamb: Revelation 1:18, Isaiah 53:4-7, John 1:28-29, 1 Peter 1:18-19, Revelation 5:6, 12, 12:11, 13:8, 14:2, 4, 15:3, 17:14, 19:7, 9, 21:22-23, 22:1-3

6:1, 3, 5, 7: four living creatures: Revelation 4:6-8, and likely in order: lion, ox, man, eagle.

6:1: voice of thunder: Exodus 19:16, 19, Revelation 4:5, 8:5

6:1: "come": some manuscripts added "and see," following John 1:46, but this is not in the earliest manuscripts. The word for "come" also can mean "go."

6:2-8: white, red, black, pale horses: cf. Zechariah 1:8-10, 6:1-8; horse as symbol of battle, cf. Job 39:19-25, Jeremiah 4:13, Habakkuk 1:8

6:2: white horse: as holiness and purity, cf. Revelation 2:17, 3:4-5

6:2: bow: as weapon, for hunting (Genesis 27:3), or in war, cf. Genesis 48:22, 1 Chronicles 5:18, Psalm 7:12, 45:5, 46:9, Jeremiah 51:56, Hosea 1:5, Habakkuk 3:8-13

6:2: crown: as *stephanos*, crown of victory; cf. Psalm 103:4, 1 Corinthians 9:25, 2 Timothy 4:8, James 1:12, 1 Peter 5:4, Revelation 2:10, 3:11

6:2: conquering, to conquer: Greek *nikao*, same word as "overcome"; cf. John 16:33, Ephesians 2:17, Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26, 3:5, 3:12, 3:21, 5:5, 12:11, 15:2

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6:3: red: as blood, violence, thus persecution: cf. Matthew 10:21, 34-39

6:4: slay: Revelation 5:6, 6:9.

6:4: great sword: sword as *machaira*, Roman short sword: cf. Genesis 22:6, 10, Matthew 10:34, John 18:10f ; greatness in terms of the extent of use

6:5: black: as mourning, grief; cf. Isaiah 50:3, Jeremiah 4:28, 14:2, Lamentations 5:10, Revelation 6:12

6:5: scales: instrument of measurement, only for grain in times of scarcity; cf. Leviticus 26:26, Ezekiel 4:10, 16

6:6: quart...three quarts: Greek *choenix*, about a quart of measurement; one quart of grain would feed one man for one day, and barley is of lesser quality, often fed to cattle.

6:6: denarius: Roman unit of money, the average daily earning of a day laborer (cf. Matthew 20:2): by value in silver, about \$3.62, but in purchasing power, about \$20. These prices are about 8 to 10 times above normal, indicating scarcity; cf. Deuteronomy 28:23-24, Ezekiel 5:16, 14:21

6:8: pale: Greek *chloros*, indefinite color, akin to green, as used in Mark 6:39, Revelation 8:7, 9:4; perhaps the color of one near death

6:8: Death...Hades: Luke 16:19-31, Acts 2:27-31, Revelation 1:18, 6:8, 20:13-14

6:8: sword: Greek *rhomphaia*, the great Thracian sword; cf. Revelation 1:16, 2:12, 19:15, 21

6:8: kill with sword, famine, pestilence, wild beasts: cf. Ezekiel 5:12, 16-17, 14:12-21, Leviticus 26:21-26

6:9: under the altar: here and Revelation 16:7 as referring to altar upon which sacrifices were offered; as blood, representing life of animal, would collect under altar, so the souls of those having offered their lives for Jesus are under the altar; cf. Exodus 29:12, Leviticus 4:7, 18, 30, 17:11-14, Deuteronomy 12:23, Matthew 24:9/Mark 13:9-13/Luke 21:12, 18, John 16:2, Philippians 2:17, 2 Timothy 4:6

6:9: souls: Greek *psuchen*; cf. Matthew 20:28, Revelation 12:11

6:9: slain: cf. Revelation 5:6, 9

6:9: word of God and witness: cf. Revelation 1:9, 12:11

6:10: How long...those on earth: cf. Psalm 6:3, 13:1f, 35:17, 74:9ff, 79:5-10, 80:4, 89:46, 90:13, 94:3, Isaiah 6:11, Jeremiah 47:6, Habakkuk 1:2, Zechariah 1:12

6:10: avenge our blood: cf. Genesis 4:10, 9:5-6, Numbers 35:33, Deuteronomy 32:43, Job 16:18, Isaiah 26:21, Ezekiel 24:7

6:11, 7:9, 14: white robe: cf. Revelation 2:17, 3:4-5

6:11: a little longer: same construction as John 7:33, 12:35, but cf. Revelation 12:12, 20:1-7

6:11: rest: cf. Hebrews 4:1-11, Revelation 14:13

6:11: fellow servants: cf. Revelation 20:4

6:12: earthquake: Exodus 19:18, Psalm 97:5, Ezekiel 32:7, 34:12, 38:19-20, Joel 2:10, Amos 8:8, Haggai 2:6, Hebrews 12:26-27

6:12: sun black as sackcloth, moon to blood: cf. Isaiah 13:10-13, 29:6, 50:3, Jeremiah 4:19-28, Joel 2:30-32, Amos 8:9, Matthew 24:29-34/Mark 13:24, Luke 23:45, Acts 2:16-21

6:13: cf. Isaiah 34:4, Joel 2:10, 31, 3:12-16

6:14: heaven...scroll: Psalm 102:25-26, Isaiah 13:13, 34:4

6:14: mountain and island removed from its place: cf. Jeremiah 4:24, Ezekiel 26:15-18, 27:35, Nahum 1:5

6:16: cf. Isaiah 2:19-21, Hosea 10:8, Luke 23:28-31

6:16: hide: cf. Genesis 3:8

6:17: day of wrath, who can stand: Isaiah 13:6-9, Joel 2:1, 11, 31, Nahum 1:6, Zephaniah 1:14-15, Malachi 3:2

7:1: after this: one of three interludes regarding the saints; cf. Revelation 10:1-11:14, 20:1-6

7:1: four corners of earth: cf. Isaiah 11:12, 24:16, Ezekiel 7:2, Matthew 24:31, Revelation 20:8

7:1: four winds of earth: Jeremiah 49:36, 51:1, Daniel 7:2ff, Zechariah 6:1-5

7:2: from the rising of the sun: Ezekiel 11:23, 43:2, Matthew 2:2

7:2-8: cf. Ezekiel 9:1-8

7:3, 4: seal: as marking, safeguarding possessions, and to validate documents: cf. Genesis 41:42, Esther 3:10, 8:2, Song of Solomon 8:6, Daniel 6:17, Matthew 27:66, John 6:27, 2 Corinthians 1:22, Romans 4:11, Ephesians 1:13, 4:30, 2 Timothy 2:19, Revelation 13:16; as name of God and Lamb, Revelation 3:12, 14:1

7:4: 144,000: as 12 x 12 x 1000; 12 as the religiously full number (as in 12 tribes, 12 apostles; cf. Matthew 19:28, Revelation 4:4), and 1000 as full and complete, large number (cf. Revelation 5:11, 20:4-6), representing all Christians on earth, the "church militant"

7:4: every tribe of the sons of Israel: in Revelation 7:5-8, not every actual tribe is listed; Israel as the people of God, cf. Romans 2:28-29, 9:6, Galatians 6:15-16, Philippians 3:3; tribes and numbers as symbolic, not real, distinctions; cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 2:14-17

7:5-8: Judah...Benjamin: cf. Genesis 35:22-26. Dan is omitted; Ephraim also omitted, but with Manasseh are the half-tribes of Joseph; Levi given full listing (cf. Numbers 1-2). Omissions due to idolatry (cf. Genesis 49:17, Judges 18, 1 Kings 11:26, 12:25-33)?

7:9: great multitude: cf. Genesis 13:16, 15:5, 32:12

7:9: every nation...tongues: Revelation 5:9, 11:9, 13:7, 14:6, 17:15

7:9: palms: Leviticus 23:26-32, 39-44, John 12:13

7:10-12: cf. Revelation 5:9-12

7:12: thanksgiving: cf. Psalm 103:2

7:13: elder: cf. Revelation 5:5

7:14: lord: Greek *kurios*, as respectful "sir," otherwise only used of God and Christ in Revelation

7:14: great tribulation: Matthew 24:21, 29/Mark 13:19, John 16:33, Acts 14:22, 2 Timothy 3:12, Revelation 2:10, 3:10

7:14: washed their robes, made them white in blood of the Lamb: cf. Psalm 51:7, 110:3, Isaiah 1:18, Matthew 26:28, Acts 22:16, Ephesians 1:7, 4:24, Colossians 3:10, 1 Peter 1:18-19, 1 John 1:7, Revelation 1:5, 5:9-10, 12:11

7:15: cf. 2 Corinthians 5:6-8, Philippians 1:23, 1 Thessalonians 4:14

7:15: serve day and night: cf. 1 Chronicles 9:33

7:15: shelter: or "spread the covering of his glory", Greek *skenoun*, related to word used to describe Word dwelling among us in John 1:14; also associated with Hebrew *Shekinah*, the Presence of the glory of God (cf. Exodus 24:16-18, 40:34-38, 2 Chronicles 7:1-3)

7:16: hunger...thirst...heat: Isaiah 25:4, 49:10; cf. Psalm 66:12, Matthew 5:6, 20:12, John 6:35, James 1:11

7:17: shepherd: Psalms 23:1, 80:1, Isaiah 40:11, Jeremiah 31:10, Ezekiel 34:12, 37:24, John 10:11, 14, Hebrews 13:20, 1 Peter 2:25

7:17: lead them...living water: Psalms 23:2, 36:9, 42:1, Isaiah 49:10, John 4:10, 14, 7:37-38

7:17: wipe every tear: Psalm 126:5, Isaiah 25:8, Matthew 5:5, Revelation 21:4

8:1: silence for half an hour: Habakkuk 2:20, Zephaniah 1:7-10, Zechariah 2:13; thirty minutes as not terribly long but quite suspenseful in silence; also, as displacing usual ceaseless praise as seen in Revelation 4:8, 5:9, 11-12

Revelation 8:2-11:19: The Seven Trumpets

John is in the midst of a vision of Heaven; he has seen the One who sits on the throne and the Lamb as having been slain (Revelation 4:1-11). The Lamb has a scroll with seven seals and has opened the seven seals, ostensibly allowing the scroll to be opened (Revelation 5:1-8:1). As the seventh seal is opened, silence comes over Heaven for a half hour, and then seven trumpets are given to the seven angels before God's throne (Revelation 8:1-2). Another angel takes a golden censer, fills it with the incense, the prayers of the saints, and the fire from the altar, and casts it upon the earth (Revelation 8:3-5). The time had come for the angels to sound the trumpets (Revelation 8:6).

As the first four angels sound their trumpets, John sees great environmental damage take place. Hail and fire mixed with blood destroy a third of the land, trees, and grass (Revelation 8:7). A mountain burning with fire is cast into the sea, turning a third of it to blood and killing a third of the sea creatures (Revelation 8:8-9). A star, Wormwood, falls from the sky, making a third of the freshwater brackish and poisonous (Revelation 8:10-11). A third of the stars, moons, and other lights in the sky are struck and are darkened (Revelation 8:12).

Yet this is just the beginning. An eagle cries out to warn people regarding the woes that will come with the next three trumpet blasts (Revelation 8:13).

The fifth trumpet, or the first woe, leads to the opening of the pit of the abyss, and fearsome locust creatures come out, prepared as for war, which are commanded not to attack vegetation but people, particularly those who did not have the seal of God, causing them such great pain and distress that many seek to die but will not find it (Revelation 9:1-10). Their king is the Destroyer, called Abaddon or Apollyon (Revelation 9:11).

The sixth trumpet, or second woe, leads to the releasing of the four angels at the Euphrates and a cavalry of two hundred million who kill a third of mankind with their plagues of sulfuric fire and smoke and brimstone (Revelation 9:12-19). And yet, despite all of these plagues and great devastation, those on the earth who remained did not repent of their idolatry, sorcery, murder, adultery, and theft (Revelation 9:20-21).

The second woe only fully comes to an end in Revelation 11:14, yet there seems to be some sort of an interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpet/second and third woe as there was between the sixth and seventh seals (cf. Revelation 7:1-17). John sees a strong angel coming down from heaven, standing on earth and sea, holding a little book, proclaiming that the delay shall be no longer, but the mystery shall be finished with the seventh trumpet (Revelation 10:1-7). John is then exhorted to take the little book and eat it, and it is sweet to the taste but bitter in the stomach, and he will again prophesy about peoples and nations and kings (Revelation 10:8-11). John is then given a reed to measure the temple of God, but only the inner court, since the outer court will be trampled by the Gentiles for forty-two months (Revelation 11:1-2). Two witnesses, the olive trees and lampstands before God, will prophesy to the people for 1,260 days, wearing sackcloth and having power to shut up

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the heavens and bring fire upon their enemies (Revelation 11:3-6). The beast from the abyss will rise up and kill them, and the people of earth will make merry and give gifts to each other, but after three and a half days God will raise them up and will go up into heaven in a cloud, leading the people to fear and give God glory (Revelation 11:7-12). A great earthquake then kills seven thousand people, and the second woe is ended, but the third woe comes quickly (Revelation 11:13-14).

When the seventh trumpet sounds, great voices in Heaven cry out that the kingdoms of the world are now the kingdom of the Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign forever; the twenty-four elders give thanks to the Almighty "who is and was," for He has taken His power and now reigns, having poured out His wrath upon the nations and rewarded His servants (Revelation 11:15-18). John then sees the Temple, the Holy of Holies, opened up, so as to be able to see the Ark of the Covenant, followed by lightning, voices, thunders, an earthquake, and great hail (Revelation 11:19).

The seven trumpets prove more challenging and mystifying than the seven seals. All sorts of interpretations and identifications are advanced to explain John's meaning, yet few prove very satisfying.

We do well to remember that while John sees what is in the vision, the various aspects of the vision have meaning based in the long-standing themes of the Old and New Testaments. Furthermore, the seven trumpets come forth based upon the opening of the seventh seal: as a seal is a mark of identification and surety that a document has not been corrupted, a trumpet blast proclaims a message and/or sounds a warning for war and judgment (Ezekiel 33:1-6, Hosea 5:8-9). Throwing the coals of the altar upon the earth is a sign of impending judgment and destruction of Jerusalem in Ezekiel 10:1-7; the plagues unleashed by the first five trumpets have much in common with the plagues God cast upon Pharaoh and Egypt to liberate the Israelites from the bondage of slavery, Ezekiel's warning to Gog about what God will do to him and his land if he attacks the people of God, and Zephaniah's declaration of what God will do to the land of Judah because of their transgression (Exodus 7:1-12:32, Ezekiel 38:18-23, Zephaniah 1:3). The fearsome locusts, beyond their association with one of the plagues upon the Egyptians, are similarly described in Joel 1:4-2:25. The "Destroyer" is as the destroying angel of God (Genesis 19:1-29, 2 Kings 19:35). The terrifying and ominous army to the east, coming to destroy, is a theme repeated throughout Israel's history with Assyria and Babylon (cf. Habakkuk 1:6-11).

God tells Ezekiel to eat a scroll in Ezekiel 2:8-3:3, and it is sweet to the mouth but bitter in the stomach. Measuring a temple features prominently in Ezekiel 40:1-48:35, Amos 7:7-9, and Zechariah 2:1-5 to lay out the plan for the restoration of the people of God and cutting off of those who refuse and rebel; in the New Testament, the people of God are the temple (1 Corinthians 3:14-16, 6:19-20, Ephesians 2:20-22, 1 Peter 2:5, 9). Forty two months, 1,260 days, and three and a half years are roughly the same amount of time, and is heavy with symbolism: Antiochus IV Epiphanes desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem by offering pig's flesh on the altar and that devastation lasted from 167 to 164 BCE. This time period now becomes a way of expressing a time of persecution by an oppressive power (cf. Daniel 9:27, 12:7). The integrity of the church will be maintained, but there will be distress from those who are without. The two witnesses prophesy and are described in terms of the images of the high priest and governor of Israel as well as the exploits of Moses and Elijah (1 Kings 17:1, 18:41-46, 2 Kings 1:10-14, Zechariah 4:1-14); many seek to identify them as Elijah and Enoch, Moses and Elijah, the Old and New Testaments, but they likely represent the proclamation of the Gospel according to the witness of the God in Christ through the Holy Spirit and the witness of believers. The

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beast features prominently in Daniel 7:21-25 and 8:23-24 as the power of the oppressive nation, and Sodom and Egypt both represent the world, iniquity, and oppression (Genesis 13:13, 19:4-11, 24, Exodus 1:1-14:31). Jerusalem is the city in which the Lord was crucified, and it is expanded to include the whole world, since all see the events taking place. Yet the witnesses are raised and ascend to heaven: the proclamation of the Gospel cannot be so easily defeated, and no matter what the oppressive power may attempt to do, God's people will continue to proclaim it.

The seventh trumpet is described in terms of the end of time: the kingdoms of men now are the Kingdom of God, and He reigns; the time of judgment and resurrection is now seen in the past (cf. Psalm 2:1-12, Acts 17:30-31, Romans 2:5-11, 1 Corinthians 15:20-57, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:10, 2 Thessalonians 1:5-11). The Temple is now open; the Ark can be seen; God's promises are fulfilled.

Yet Revelation is not over; there are still eleven more chapters to go! We do well to remember that John has ingested the scroll, which is to absorb the message of God, and must now again prophesy regarding peoples, tongues, nations, and kings. Through the images of the temple, the witnesses, their death at the hand of the beast and their subsequent resurrection, we get a glimpse into what John will see more fully in Revelation 12:1-20:10. Through the seventh trumpet blast we get an idea of what will take place as described in Revelation 20:11-22:6.

In Revelation 4:1-10:11, John sees the vision of Heaven and how things look from the heavenly perspective; God in Christ directs the action, and there is no opposition. In Revelation 11:1-14 John receives an overview of the challenges which lay ahead: the persecution of believers by an oppressive, hostile power, but the promise of Revelation 11:15-19 should sustain them: they will overcome through God in Christ, for the kingdoms of the world will become the Kingdom of God in Christ. No matter how difficult or challenging the situation may seem, we do well to remember that God is in control, He will not delay, and those who oppose Him will suffer His wrath in judgment, and believers must continue to overcome all evil through the blood of the Lamb. Let us glorify and praise the Lord and His Christ!

8:2: seven: as perfect, complete

8:2: seven angels: in apocryphal Tobit 12:15 and pseudepigraphal 1 Enoch 20, seven angels as always standing before God, named Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Raguel, Sariel, and Remiel

8:2: standing before God: 1 Kings 17:1, 18:15, 2 Kings 3:14, 5:16

8:2, 8:6: seven trumpets: as preparation and/or warning, especially for battle; Exodus 19:16, 19, Numbers 10:1-10, Joshua 6:1-21, Isaiah 27:13, 58:1, Ezekiel 33:1-6, Hosea 5:8-9, 8:1, Amos 2:2, 3:6, Joel 2:1-2, 11, Zephaniah 1:15-16, Zechariah 9:14, Matthew 24:31, Revelation 9:21

8:3: altar: Exodus 27:1-8, 30:1-10, Hebrews 9:3-6, Revelation 6:9, 9:13, 14:18

8:3: golden censer: Leviticus 10:1, 16:11-13, Numbers 16:46

8:3: much incense: as intercessory petitions by Jesus, Holy Spirit; Luke 22:31-34, Romans 8:26-27, 34, Hebrews 7:25

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8:3: prayers of the saints: Psalm 141:2, Luke 1:9-11, Revelation 5:8

8:4: smoke rose: cf. "sweet smelling savor," Genesis 8:21, 2 Corinthians 2:15, Ephesians 5:2, Philippians 4:18

8:5: fire...threw on earth: Ezekiel 10:1-7, Luke 12:49, 18:1-8

8:5: thunder...earthquake: Exodus 19:16-20, Isaiah 29:6, Joel 3:14-16, Revelation 4:5, 6:12, 11:19, 16:18

8:7-13: cf. Exodus 7:1-12:32, Ezekiel 38:18-23, Zephaniah 1:3

8:7: hail, fire, and blood: Exodus 9:23-24, Job 38:22-23, Psalms 18:13, 78:48, 108:32, Isaiah 28:2, 17, 30:30f; bloody hail and fire cast on earth as recompense for bloodshed?; Genesis 9:6, Numbers 35:33, Psalm 79:10, Isaiah 26:21, Joel 3:19

8:7, 9, 10, 11: third part: not full, but enough to warn against perpetuating evil conduct (cf. Revelation 9:20-21); land as becoming waste because of sin: Jeremiah 7:20, Zephaniah 1:2-3, Nahum 1:6

8:7: green grass: Isaiah 40:6, Luke 12:28

8:8: great mountain, burning with fire, into the sea: Psalm 46:2, Isaiah 2:2, Jeremiah 51:25, 42, Zechariah 4:7, Matthew 21:21, Mark 11:23; some resonance with eruption of Vesuvius in 79?

8:8: third of the sea to blood: Exodus 7:20-21

8:10-11: star Wormwood: wormwood as name for *artemisia* class of plants, quite noxious; Deuteronomy 29:17-18, Isaiah 14:4-23, Jeremiah 9:14-15, 23:15, Lamentations 3:15-19, Amos 5:7, 6:12, Jude 1:13

8:11: water made bitter: water poisoned by salt or some other substance; cf. Exodus 7:24, 15:25-26, Deuteronomy 28:59-60

8:11: bitter: Ruth 1:20ff

8:12: Exodus 10:21-23, Isaiah 13:9-11, 24:19-23, 34:4-5, Jeremiah 4:23, 15:9, Ezekiel 32:7-12, Amos 8:9, Joel 2:1-2, 10, 28-32, 3:4, 15, Luke 21:28, Revelation 6:12-14, 11:8

8:13: eagle: Greek *aetos*, word for birds of prey, an eagle or a vulture (for latter, cf. Matthew 24:28, Luke 17:37); here, as in Revelation 12:14, most likely an eagle; Exodus 19:4, Deuteronomy 28:49, Job 9:26, 39:29, Jeremiah 4:13, Lamentations 4:19, Hosea 8:1, Habakkuk 1:8; image of eagle flying with pronouncement also used in pseudepigraphal 2 Baruch 77:21-22

8:13: woe: Revelation 9:12, 11:14

9:1: star fallen to earth: representation of Satan (Luke 10:18, Revelation 12:9) or angel (Revelation 20:1)? Stars as living creatures in 1 Enoch 86:1, 88:1

9:1: key: as means of access, a symbol of power and authority; cf. Matthew 16:19, Revelation 1:18

9:1, 2, 11: bottomless pit: Genesis 1:6-7, Psalm 74:13, Isaiah 14:21-22, 51:9, Amos 9:3, Luke 8:31, Revelation 11:7, 17:8, 20:1, 3; possible connection with Mark 7:1-23? Also described vividly and grimly in 1 Enoch 18:12-16, 21:1-10

9:2: smoke...darkened: Amos 8:9, 2 Corinthians 4:3f

9:3-10: locusts: Exodus 10:3-6, 14-15, Deuteronomy 28:38-42, Psalm 105:34f, 1 Kings 8:35, 37, 2 Chronicles 7:13f, Joel 1:4, 7-18, 2:3-11, 25

9:3: scorpions: Deuteronomy 8:15, Ezekiel 2:6, Luke 10:19, 11:12

9:4: not hurt grass...neither green thing: that which locusts generally eat; Exodus 10:15, Joel 2:3

9:4: seal of God: cf. Revelation 7:3-8; Exodus 8:22-23, 9:4, 6, 26, 10:23, 12:1-28, Psalm 46:1-3, Isaiah 54:10, 61:1-3, 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

9:5: torment: Mark 5:7, Luke 8:28, 2 Peter 2:8, Revelation 11:10, 12:2, 14:11, 18:7, 10, 15, 20:10

9:5: five months: as definiteness; cf. Matthew 25:1-13, 15. Perhaps based on life-cycle of some locusts?

9:6: seek death: Job 3:21, 7:15, Jeremiah 8:3

9:7-10: cf. Joel 1:1-2:17; locusts as demonic?

9:7: horses as prepared for battle: as strength

9:7: crowns of gold: Psalm 103:4, 1 Corinthians 9:25, 2 Timothy 4:8, James 1:12, 1 Peter 5:4, Revelation 2:10, 3:11, 6:2; crown as stephanos, crown of victory, not diadema, crown of rule

9:7: human faces: as humans

9:8: hair as women: as beautiful; 1 Corinthians 11:3-15, 1 Timothy 4:1

9:8: teeth as lions: as devouring; Joel 1:6, 1 Peter 5:8

9:9: breastplates of iron: as strength, hardness, and/or intransigence

9:9: noise of wings....chariot...battle: as strong force, intimidating; Joel 2:5

9:10: tails and stings like scorpions: as painful, destructive, but not fatal

9:11: king: yet Proverbs 30:27

9:11: Abaddon, Apollyon: Hebrew and Greek for "destruction" and "one who destroys," respectively; representation of Satan or angel of God (cf. Genesis 19:1-29, 2 Kings 19:35, Isaiah 37:36, 1 Corinthians 10:10, 2 Peter 2:6, Revelation 12:3)? Abaddon in OT: Job 26:6, 28:22, 31:12, Psalm 88:11, Proverbs 15:11, 27:20

9:13: horns of the altar: Exodus 30:2

9:14: angels: Revelation 7:1

9:14: great river Euphrates: Mesopotamian river recognized as boundary between the Levant and the "East," in John's day, functional border between Roman Empire and Parthian Empire to the east; cf. Genesis 15:18, Exodus 23:31, 1 Kings 4:21, Psalm 72:8, Isaiah 8:5-8, Jeremiah 46:6-10, 51:63, Revelation 16:12-14

9:16: twice ten thousand times ten thousand: two hundred million; some manuscripts read eighty thousand, but two hundred million has better attestation; as beyond numbering; cf. Psalm 68:17, Daniel 7:10

9:17: horses: cf. Job 39:19-25, Psalm 33:16-17, Proverbs 21:31, Isaiah 31:1, Habakkuk 1:6-11, Zechariah 9:10

9:17: breastplates as of fire, hyacinth, and brimstone...from mouths fire, smoke, and brimstone: fire as from furnace; hyacinth as bluish in color, like the flame of burning sulfur; brimstone as indicating wrath of God

9:18: plague: Luke 10:30, Acts 16:33

9:20-21: cf. Romans 1:18-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 4:17-19, Colossians 3:5-6

9:20: idols: Deuteronomy 4:28, Psalms 115:4-8, 135:15-18, Isaiah 44:12-20. Daniel 5:23, 1 Corinthians 10:19, Colossians 3:5, 1 John 5:21

10:1-7: cf. Daniel 10:5-6, 12:6-7

10:1: strong angel: Revelation 5:2; some suggest it is Jesus, but most likely an angel of rank or stature

10:1: clouds: Isaiah 60:8

10:1: rainbow: as display of God's mercy and power; Genesis 9:11-17, Isaiah 54:9, Ezekiel 1:28

10:1: pillar of fire: Exodus 13:21-22

10:2, 8-11: little book: Greek *biblaridion*, diminutive of "book," thus, "booklet"; as Revelation 12:1-19:21/22:6?

10:2: right foot upon the sea...left foot upon the land: indicating immense size, a message for the world; Isaiah 5:30, Luke 21:25

10:3: as a lion roars: Proverbs 19:12, Isaiah 5:29, 31:4, Amos 3:8

10:3-4: seven thunders...voices: cf. Psalm 29:3-9

10:4: seal up: Deuteronomy 29:29, Isaiah 8:16, 29:11, Daniel 8:26, 12:4, 9, 2 Corinthians 12:4

10:5-6: lifted up right hand...swore: Genesis 14:22, 22:15-16, Deuteronomy 32:40, Judges 8:19, 2 Samuel 2:27, Jeremiah 38:16, Daniel 12:7

10:6: created: Acts 17:23-24

10:7: trumpet: 1 Corinthians 15:52

10:7: mystery of God: Romans 11:25, 16:25-26, Ephesians 3:3-9, Colossians 2:2

10:7: good tidings...prophets: Luke 24:44-47, Acts 3:21, 1 Peter 1:10-12, 2 Peter 3:1-13

10:8-11: cf. Jeremiah 15:16, 20:7-9, Ezekiel 2:8-3:3, 14

10:10: sweet: Psalms 19:10, 104:34, 119:103, Proverbs 16:24

10:11: prophesy over peoples...kings: Jeremiah 1:9-10, 25:15-30, Revelation 5:9, 14:6, 17:15

11:1-2: cf. Ezekiel 40:1-48:35, Amos 7:7-9

11:1: reed: Isaiah 28:17, Ezekiel 40:3-5, 42:15-20, Zechariah 2:1-5, Revelation 21:15

11:1: rod: Jewish measurement of 6 cubits; a cubit is the length from the tip of the middle finger to the elbow, approximately 18-22 inches; hence, rod is about nine feet.

11:1: measure the temple of God: temple as *naos*, the inner temple; temple as church: 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19-20, 2 Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 2:20-21, 2 Peter 2:5, 9

11:1: altar: akin to altar of incense?; Exodus 27:1-8, 30:1-10, Hebrews 9:3-6, Revelation 6:9, 8:3, 9:13, 14:18

11:1: those who worship therein: worship as *proskunein*, "to prostrate"; those in inner Temple as priests, John 4:20-24, Revelation 1:6, 5:10

11:2: court: Tabernacle had only one court, Exodus 27:9; Solomon's Temple had inner, outer, priestly, and upper courts (1 Kings 6:36, 7:12, 2 Chronicles 4:9, Jeremiah 36:10); Herod's Temple had many courts, one notably the "Court of the Gentiles"

11:2: leave out: Greek *ekbale*, "cast out": 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

11:2: holy city: Isaiah 48:2, 52:1, Matthew 27:53, Revelation 21:1-2, 10, 22:19

11:2: given to the nations...tread underfoot: Psalm 79:1, Lamentations 1:10, Luke 21:24

11:2: forty-two months: some suggest 6 x 7, but more likely as 3 and a half years, as time of domination by Gentiles; cf. Daniel 9:27, 12:7, Revelation 13:5, 7; Antiochus IV Epiphanes as setting up abomination in Temple from 167 to 164 BCE; thus, as time of persecution of church

11:3: two witnesses: interpreted variously as Enoch and Elijah, Elijah and Moses, the Old and New Testaments, "priest" and "governor", as proclamation of the Gospel; why two witnesses, cf. Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15, Ecclesiastes 9:9-12, Matthew 18:16, 2 Corinthians 13:1, 1 Timothy 5:19, Hebrews 10:28; for witness, cf. Luke 24:48, John 15:27, Acts 1:8, 2:32, 3:15, 13:31, Revelation 1:2, 9, 6:9, 11:7, 12:11, 17, 19:10, 20:4

11:3: 1260 days: as 42 months or 3 and a half years; cf. Revelation 12:6

11:3: clothed in sackcloth: as in mourning, Genesis 37:34, 1 Chronicles 21:16, Esther 4:1-2, Job 16:15, Isaiah 22:12, Lamentations 2:10

11:4: cf. Zechariah 4:1-14

11:4: olive trees: Psalm 52:8, Jeremiah 11:16, Romans 11:17

11:4: candlesticks: Matthew 5:14-16, Luke 11:33, Revelation 1:20

11:5: fire from their mouth: 2 Kings 1:10-14, Isaiah 11:14, Jeremiah 5:14

11:6: shut the sky: 1 Kings 17:1, 18:41-46, Isaiah 5:6, Luke 4:25, James 5:16-18

11:6: turn water to blood, smite earth with plague: Exodus 7:1-12:51

11:7: finished their testimony: Luke 13:32, John 17:4, Acts 20:24, 2 Timothy 4:7

11:7: beast: Daniel 7:21-25, 8:23-24, 2 Thessalonians 2:8-9, Revelation 13:1, 7, 11, 17:6-8, 19:19-20

11:7: abyss: Luke 8:31, Romans 10:7, Revelation 9:1-2, 11, 17:7-8, 20:1, 3

11:8: great city...where also their Lord was crucified: Jerusalem, to some degree, in mind; Matthew 23:36-37, Luke 13:33-34, Galatians 4:25; yet cf. Revelation 18:18, 24

11:8: Sodom: as moral degradation; Genesis 13:13, 19:4-11, 24, Isaiah 1:9-10, Jeremiah 23:14, Ezekiel 16:53-55, Amos 4:11, Matthew 10:15, 2 Peter 2:6, Jude 1:7

11:8: Egypt: not used anywhere else in reference to Jerusalem, but often a spiritual type of the world, oppression, slavery; cf. Exodus 1:1-14:31, Psalm 78:43-51

11:9: suffer not...tomb: Psalm 79:2-3, Ecclesiastes 6:3, Isaiah 33:1, Jeremiah 7:33

11:10: dwell on earth: Revelation 13:14

11:10: rejoice...make merry: Judges 16:23-24, Psalms 35:24-26, 89:42, Jeremiah 50:11, Obadiah 1:12, Micah 7:8, John 16:20

11:10: sending gifts: Esther 9:19, 22

11:10: two prophets tormented them: 1 Kings 18:17, 21:20, 22:8, 18, Jeremiah 38:4, John 7:7, Acts 5:33, 7:54-57, 17:5-6

11:11: breath of life...stood up: as resurrection; Genesis 2:7, Isaiah 26:13-19, Ezekiel 37:1-14, Romans 8:2, 11

11:12: great fear: Joshua 2:9, Jeremiah 33:9, Acts 5:5, 11

11:12: went up...in a cloud: 2 Kings 2:11, Acts 1:9-11, 1 Thessalonians 4:17, Ephesians 2:5-6

11:13: great earthquake: as judgment; cf. Revelation 6:12, 8:5, 11:19, 16:18

11:13: seven thousand: as 7 x 100, perfect, complete x large number

11:13: gave glory: Matthew 5:14-16, 1 Peter 2:10-11

11:15: kingdom...Christ...reign forever: Exodus 15:18, Psalm 146:10, Isaiah 9:7, Daniel 2:44, 7:14, 18, 27, Luke 1:33, 1 Corinthians 15: 22-28, Hebrews 1:8

11:16: twenty-four elders: Revelation 4:4, 10, 5:5, 6, 8, 11, 14, 7:11, 13, 14:3, 19:4

11:17: Lord God Almighty: cf. Genesis 17:1, Revelation 1:8

11:17: you have taken power...begun to reign: cf. 1 Corinthians 15:22-28, Revelation 19:6, 11-21, 20:1-3

11:17: "who is and was": note lack of "is to come"; cf. Revelation 1:4, 8, 4:8, 16:5. "is to come" was added in some later manuscripts (later Greek and Latin), but the vast majority of witnesses (including $\text{P}47$, \u0391 , \u0392 , and early Latin and Syriac manuscripts)

11:18: nations raged: Psalm 2:1-3, Matthew 2:3, Acts 4:25-26

11:18: your wrath: Romans 5:9, Revelation 6:15-17, 14:10, 15:1, 7, 16:1-21, 19:15

11:18: time...dead to be judged: Daniel 12:1-2, John 5:28-29, Acts 17:30-31, Romans 2:5-11, Hebrews 9:27, Revelation 20:4-5

11:18: rewarding of your servants: Romans 2:5-11, 8:17-18, 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10

11:19: God's temple: John 2:19, Revelation 14:15-17, 15:5-8, 19:11

11:19: the Ark: Exodus 25:21-22, Numbers 4:5, 15, Hebrews 9:4-8

11:19: flashes of lightning...heavy hail: Exodus 9:18-29, Joshua 10:11, Job 38:22-23, Psalms 18:12, 105:32, Isaiah 28:2, 30:30, 32:19, Ezekiel 13:11, 38:22, Revelation 4:5, 8:5, 7, 16:18, 21

Revelation 12:1-14:20: The Dragon, the Beasts, and the Lamb

Revelation 11:13-18 would seem to make a perfect ending for John's vision: the Judgment has been accomplished, and God reigns over all. Nevertheless, John continues to see many fantastic images, even more puzzling and bizarre than before!

He now sees a woman about to give birth and a dragon prepared to consume the child when it is born (Revelation 12:1-4). The child is born and taken up into heaven to his throne; the woman flees to the wilderness and is nourished there (Revelation 12:5-6). Then there is war in heaven between the dragon and Michael and his fellow angels: the dragon is defeated, and cast down to the earth, and warnings are given about his wrath (Revelation 12:7-12). The dragon then pursues the woman from before but is continually frustrated in his endeavor to vanquish her (Revelation 12:13-17).

In great wrath, the dragon stands by the shore of the sea while a beast comes forth: it has ten horns, seven heads, and seven diadems, with one of its heads appearing to have been slain but was now healed, and it is described in terms of a lion, bear, and leopard (Revelation 13:1-3). The dragon gives his authority to the beast, and the beast speaks blasphemy and makes war on the saints and overcomes them (Revelation 13:4, 6-7). Another beast comes forth from the ground: it has the appearance of a lamb but speaks as a dragon, and it is given authority by the first beast to cause all to worship the beast, deceiving with signs from heaven and a marvelous image (Revelation 13:11-15). The people of the earth do in turn worship him, and they maintain its mark so they can buy and sell (Revelation 13:5, 16-17). The beast has the number of a man: 666 (Revelation 13:18).

Yet John then sees the Lamb on Mount Zion with the 144,000 who bear His name, the ones who remained as virgins and who follow the Lamb wherever He goes (Revelation 14:1, 4-5). John hears the thunderous sound of harpers singing the new song before the throne of God (Revelation 14:2-3). An angel then "gospels the Gospel," proclaiming good news to all mankind: God's hour of judgment had come, and all should fear Him and worship Him their Creator (Revelation 14:6-7). Another angel proclaims the downfall of Babylon; a third angel warns those who have obtained the mark of the beast of the eternal condemnation which awaits (Revelation 14:8-11). John then sees the One like a son of man on a cloud, and an angel from the temple exhorts Him to reap the earth with a sharp sickle, and He does so (Revelation 14:14-16). Another angel then comes forth from the heavenly temple with a sharp sickle and with it gathered the grape clusters of earth into the winepress of the wrath of God which is then trodden outside of the city, with extraordinary amounts of blood pouring forth (Revelation 14:17-20).

This story seems to come out of nowhere and may disorient the reader, but John provides plenty of contextual hints and descriptions which allow us to understand the picture he sees. The woman is arrayed with sun, moon, and stars, consistent with a picture of Israel from Genesis 37:9-11, yet

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continues to exist and look to God for sustenance after the birth of the Child, which is more consistent with the church (cf. Revelation 12:13, 16-17): therefore, the woman likely represents the collective people of God throughout time. The Child, described as One who rules with a rod of iron, is the Christ, based on Psalm 2:9 and Revelation 2:27. The dragon is also called the serpent, the Devil, and Satan (Revelation 12:9), consistent with Satan as God's adversary as a serpent or a monster in Genesis 3:1-15 and Isaiah 51:9. The first beast is described as a hybrid of the beasts Daniel sees coming out of the water in Daniel 7:3-8; in that context, they represent the successive empires of Babylon, Persia, and Macedonia. As one who blasphemes God and makes war on His saints, the beast represents the ultimate earthly power arrogating itself against God; at that time, Rome (cf. Revelation 13:1, 6-7). It has what seems to be a death wound that healed (Revelation 13:4): Rome had looked quite fragile and perhaps on the verge of collapse in the year of the four emperors in 69 CE, but Vespasian re-established its power. Some associate "666" with Nero; he was quite the godless tyrant, persecuting the people of God, and there was some concern that he either had not really died or had been brought back to life: Nero *redivivus*, either as himself or in the form of another (e.g., Domitian). The second beast imitates God and the Lamb: he attempts to look like the lamb and does signs that in previous days validated people's belief in God, yet now does so to serve the beast (Revelation 13:11-15; cf. Numbers 16:35, 1 Kings 18:20-40, 2 Kings 1:10-14): as such, he represents the civil religion which encourages and promotes the earthly power arrogating against God.

John thus describes the forces arrayed against the people of God: the earthly power and its religion empowered by the Evil One. For a time they are given the power to persecute and even overcome the saints. The rest of the world honors and worships at the feet of that earthly power. We can easily understand how this situation would lead many of God's people to despair.

Nevertheless, the Evil One is not acting from a position of power: instead, he has already been defeated! He has been cast down from heaven, and his time on earth is short (Revelation 12:9-12). The "Gospel" is "gospelled" (Revelation 14:6-7); these are the first and only times John talks of the "Gospel" as such, and they come at a crucial moment. God is the Creator and thus Controller of all things; the Lamb has gained the victory in His life, death, resurrection, and ascension. God's judgment of condemnation and wrath comes quickly upon "Babylon," an image which will feature quite prominently in future chapters, and upon all those who have accepted the mark of the beast, the sign of the one given power over the people. The earth is then fully harvested, both grain and grapes; atonement comes to those who belong to God, and condemnation to the full for those who have turned away from Him. The conclusion is fixed and certain; the time will be short.

John does not sugarcoat reality for those to whom he writes: some will go to into captivity, and some will be killed (Revelation 13:10). Yet this is the "faith and patience" of those who follow God: if they put their trust in the blood of the Lamb and proclaim the word of their testimony, they will overcome the Evil One (Revelation 12:9). Through the earthly powers Satan persecutes those who keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus, yet if they endure, even to death, they receive the blessing of God, rest from their labors, and their works follow after them (cf. Revelation 12:17, 14:12-13).

For generations many have speculated regarding the identity of the beast, his mark, and his number. Such speculations tend to tell more about the speculators than anything about what John saw. Likewise, this section of Revelation proves especially terrifying and disturbing for many readers. Nevertheless, Revelation 12:1-14:20 proves critical to the vision which John sees: it explains why even

though God and the Lamb rule in the heavens, things do not seem to be going so well on the earth. The Evil One has been given a rather long leash on the earth and uses the powers of empire and religion to deceive the many and persecute the saints. Yet God gives us hope that it will not always be so! In such an environment, we do well to heed the good news of the angel: fear God who is our Creator and worship Him (Revelation 14:7). Learning about the dragon and the beasts should not cause us to waver or fear, for they have already been defeated by Christ, and we can gain the victory over them through Christ as well. Let us maintain faith and patience and glorify God!

12:1: a great sign: as *semeion*, Revelation 12:3, 15:1

12:1: woman: based on description in Revelation 12:1-2, Israel, and yet, in Revelation 12:6, 13, 16, the church? Thus, woman as the collective people of God? cf. Isaiah 49:14-23, 54:5-7, 60:1-4, Hosea 2:19-20, Micah 4:10, John 3:29, 2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:25-27, 32

12:1: sun, moon, stars: cf. Genesis 37:9-11, Psalms 89:35-37, 104:2, Song of Solomon 6:10, Malachi 4:2

12:1: crown: Isaiah 62:3, Zechariah 9:16

12:2: travailing in birth: Isaiah 54:1, 66:7-8, Micah 5:2-3, John 16:21, Galatians 4:26-27

12:3: great red dragon: as Satan, Revelation 12:9; Psalm 74:12-14, Isaiah 27:1, 51:9

12:3: seven heads: Isaiah 9:15, Revelation 13:1, 3, 17:9-10

12:3: ten horns: horns as power, Daniel 7:6-8, 20, 24, 8:10, Revelation 17:3, 7, 12, 16

12:3, 13:1: seven diadems: as *diademata*, authority/rule; Revelation 19:12

12:4: his tail: Revelation 9:10, 19

12:4: third part of stars: Revelation 8:12

12:4: devour the child: Exodus 1:16, Jeremiah 51:34, Matthew 2:3-16, John 8:44, 1 Peter 5:8

12:5: she delivered a son: Isaiah 7:14, 66:7-8, Micah 5:2-4, Matthew 1:25

12:5: male child, rule all nations with rod of iron: the Christ; cf. Psalms 2:9, 110:1-7, Revelation 2:27, 19:15

12:5: child caught up to God: Jesus' ascension, Daniel 7:9-14, 27, Mark 16:19, Acts 1:9-11; same term, *harpazo*, as in 2 Corinthians 12:2, 1 Thessalonians 4:17

12:5: to his throne: 1 Corinthians 15:25

12:6: wilderness...place prepared...nourished: wilderness as place of isolation, preparation, Exodus-Deuteronomy, [1 Maccabees 2:29], Matthew 2:13, 4:1-11; for nourishment, cf. 1 Kings 17:1-7, 19:5-8, Matthew 4:11

12:6: 1260 days: as 42 months or 3 and a half years, as time of domination by Gentiles; cf. Daniel 9:27, 12:7, Revelation 11:2-3, 13:5, 7

12:7: war: Ephesians 6:10-18, Revelation 13:7, 19:11-20

12:7: Michael: Daniel 10:13, 21, 12:1, Jude 1:9

12:7: and [Michael's] angels: Matthew 13:41, 16:27, 24:31, 26:53, 2 Thessalonians 1:7

12:7: and [Satan's] angels: Matthew 25:41, Revelation 12:9

12:8: prevailed not: Matthew 16:18, Romans 8:31-39, Revelation 12:11

12:9: cast down: Luke 10:18, John 12:31, 16:11

12:9: serpent: Genesis 3:1-15, Isaiah 27:1, 65:25, Revelation 12:14-15, 20:2

12:9: Devil: Greek *diabolos*, term for an accuser: Matthew 4:1-8, 13:39, Luke 8:12, John 8:44, 1 Timothy 3:6-7, Hebrews 2:14, 1 John 3:8-10, Jude 1:9

12:9: Satan: Hebrew term for adversary: Numbers 22:22, 1 Chronicles 21:1, Job 1:6-12, 2:1-6, Psalm 109:6, Zechariah 3:1-5, [1 Enoch 40:6, 2 Enoch 29:4-5], Matthew 4:10, Luke 13:16, 22:3, 31, Acts 5:3, 26:18, Romans 16:20, 2 Corinthians 2:11, 11:14, 12:7, 2 Thessalonians 2:9, Revelation 2:9, 13, 24, 3:9

12:9: deceiver of the whole world: Matthew 24:24, Romans 16:18, 2 Corinthians 11:3, Ephesians 4:14, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11, 1 Timothy 2:14, 3:13, 1 John 5:19, Revelation 13:4, 19:20, 20:3, 8, 10

12:10: heard a great voice: Revelation 11:15, 19:1-7

12:10: salvation, power, kingdom: 1 Chronicles 29:11, Psalms 2:8-12, 22:28, 45:6, 110:5-6, 145:11-13, Daniel 2:44, Matthew 6:10, 26:64, 28:18, Luke 11:2, Philippians 3:20-21, Colossians 1:13, 2:15, Hebrews 2:14-15, Revelation 1:17

12:11: they overcame: John 16:33, Romans 8:31-39, 1 Corinthians 15:57, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, Ephesians 6:13-18, 2 Timothy 4:7-8, Hebrews 2:14-15, 1 John 2:13-14, 1 John 4:4, 5:5, Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26, 3:5, 12, 21

12:11: blood of the Lamb: 1 Peter 2:18-25, Revelation 7:10-14, 14:1-4, 15:3

12:11: word of their testimony: John 20:30-31, Romans 10:9-10, Philippians 2:11, Hebrews 3:1, Revelation 1:2, 9, 6:9, 11:7, 12:17, 19:10, 20:4

12:11: love not their lives: Matthew 10:39, 16:25, Mark 8:35, Luke 9:24, 14:26, 17:33, John 12:25, Acts 20:24, 21:13, Hebrews 11:35-38, 1 John 3:16, Revelation 2:10, 13, 6:9-11, 7:13-17, 16:6-7, 17:7, 18:24, 19:2, 20:4

12:12: rejoice: Psalm 96:11, Isaiah 49:13, Revelation 18:20

12:12: woe: Revelation 8:13, 9:12, 11:14

12:13: persecute: John 15:20, 16:33, Acts 14:22, 2 Timothy 3:12

12:14: two wings of the eagle: Exodus 19:4, Deuteronomy 32:10-14, Isaiah 40:31

12:14: wilderness: Psalm 55:6, Revelation 12:6, 17:3

12:14: from the presence of the serpent: Psalm 74:13-14, Ezekiel 32:3

12:14: time, times, half a time: likely 3 and a half again; Daniel 7:25, 12:7, esp. 1 Kings 17:6, 19:5-8, Luke 4:25, James 5:17

12:15: cast...river: Psalms 18:4, 42:7, 65:7, 93:3-4, 124:4, 144:7, Isaiah 8:5-8, 28:2, 43:2, 59:19, Revelation 17:15

12:16: earth opened its mouth: Numbers 16:1-3, 31-33

12:16: [dragon's] mouth: cf. Genesis 3:13, John 8:44

12:17: make war: Genesis 3:15, Revelation 11:7, 13:7, 17:8, 17:14, 18:20, 19:19, 20:8-9

12:17: rest of her offspring: as persecution of church? cf. Matthew 25:45, Acts 9:4, Romans 8:29, Galatians 3:16, 29, Hebrews 2:11

12:17: commandments of God: 1 John 2:3-6

12:17: testimony of Jesus: John 18:37, 1 Corinthians 2:1, Revelation 1:2, 9, 6:9, 12:11

13:1 [12:18]: And he stood: Greek *estathe*; better attested than "Then I stood," (Greek *estathen*); third person $\text{Ϝ}47$, κ , A, C, a few Latin and Syriac manuscripts vs. first person 051, M , many Latin manuscripts; thus, referring to dragon/Satan, not John

13:1: sea: as Gentile nations, Isaiah 17:12, 60:5, Jeremiah 51:42, 55-56, Ezekiel 26:3, Daniel 7:2

13:1-2: beast out of the sea: the beast (*therion*; cf. Genesis 37:33) as a composite of "beasts" in Daniel 7:1-8, 20-24, along with characteristics of the dragon in Revelation 12: thus, as ultimate representation of worldly power empowered through Satan and the forces of evil; cf. Revelation 17:3-16

13:1: seven heads: seven as perfect; perhaps reference to previous and existing powers: Akkad, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome?; perhaps first seven substantive Roman emperors: Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, adding the three emperors of 69 to get to 10 for horns (Galba, Otho, Vitellius)?

13:2: in Daniel 7, lion as Babylon, bear as Persia, leopard as Macedonia, ten-horned beast as Rome

13:2: mouth of a lion: 2 Timothy 4:17

13:3: mortal wound: as imitation of Lamb, Revelation 5:6; Nero *redivivus*, as in Sibylline Oracles 4:119-122, 137-139, 5:143-148, 361-364?

13:3: wondered: Acts 8:10-13, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12, Revelation 17:8, 13

13:4: worshiped dragon...beast: Greek *proskuneo*, prostration, rendering obeisance; Psalm 106:37-38, Daniel 11:36-37, 1 Corinthians 10:20-22, 2 Corinthians 4:4, 2 Thessalonians 2:4, Revelation 9:20

13:4: who is like the beast?: said of God, Exodus 15:11; cf. Revelation 18:18

13:4: who is able to war: Deuteronomy 9:2, 1 Samuel 17:24, Daniel 7:21-22; the answer is in Revelation 17:14

13:5: haughty and blasphemous words: Roman rulers as taking on divine titles (*Sebastos*, *Theos*, *divus*, *Deus*, etc.); Daniel 7:20, 25, John 19:15, 2 Thessalonians 2:4

13:5,7: forty-two months: as 1260 days or 3 and a half years; Daniel 9:27, 12:7, Revelation 11:2, 3, 12:6

13:6: note identification of "[God's] dwelling" as "those who dwell in Heaven"; cf. Ephesians 2:22, Hebrews 12:22-23, Revelation 21:2, 9-27

13:7: authority: Exodus 9:16, Isaiah 10:5-20, Jeremiah 27:6-7, 51:20-24, Daniel 5:18-23, Luke 4:6, John 19:11

13:8: either "has been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that has been slain" or "written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"; both make sense of the Greek and they are true statements; the former is consistent with the structure in Revelation 17:8; cf. John 17:24, Acts 2:23, 4:24, Ephesians 1:4-11, 1 Peter 1:20

13:8: book of life: Exodus 32:32-33, Isaiah 4:3, Daniel 12:1, Luke 10:20, Philippians 4:3, Revelation 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, 15, 21:27

13:8: foundation of the world: Ephesians 1:4, Titus 1:2, 1 Peter 1:19-20, Revelation 17:8

13:8: Lamb...slain: Revelation 1:18, Isaiah 53:4-7, John 1:28-29, 1 Peter 1:18-20, Revelation 5:6, 12, 6:1, 16, 7:9-10, 14, 12:11, 14:2, 4, 15:3, 17:14, 19:7, 9, 21:22-23, 22:1-3

13:9: ear: Isaiah 6:9-11, 50:4, Matthew 11:15 & etc., Revelation 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:29, 3:4, 3:13, 3:22

13:10: cf. Isaiah 33:1, Jeremiah 15:2, 43:11, Matthew 26:52

13:10: sword: Genesis 9:5-6, Isaiah 26:21, Matthew 26:52, Revelation 16:6

13:10: endurance: Lamentations 3:26, Matthew 10:22, Luke 18:1-8, 21:19, Colossians 1:11, Hebrews 10:36-37, James 5:7-8, 2 Peter 3:8-13, Revelation 1:9, 2:2, 19, 3:3, 10, 12:17, 14:12, 16:15, 17:14, 21:7-8, 22:7, 10, 12, 14

13:11: another beast: as false prophet in Revelation 16:13, 19:20; throughout description, as imitation yet counterfeit of the One True God

13:11: spoke like a dragon: as Satanic, Revelation 12:15, 16:13-14, 19:20; cf. Daniel 7:8, 24-25, Matthew 7:15-20, 2 Thessalonians 2:4

13:13: doing signs: Exodus 7:11-12, 22, 8:7, 18-19, 9:11 (= Jannes and Jambres, 2 Timothy 3:8), Deuteronomy 13:1-3, Matthew 24:24/Mark 13:22, Acts 8:9-11, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10, 2 Timothy 3:13

13:13: making fire come from heaven: as demonstration of YHWH's divinity and sovereignty in 1 Kings 18:20-40; cf. Numbers 16:35, 2 Kings 1:10-14, Job 1:16, Luke 9:54-56, Mark 16:20, Acts 2:1-4, 2 Corinthians 12:12, Hebrews 2:3-4, Revelation 8:7, 11:5

13:14, 15: it is allowed: Deuteronomy 13:1-4, 2 Thessalonians 2:9, Revelation 19:20

13:14-15: image of the beast: reminiscent of Nebuchadnezzar and his image in Daniel 3:1-30

13:15: gave breath: contra Psalms 115:5, 135:16, Jeremiah 10:14, 51:17, Habakkuk 2:19

13:16: small and the great: this and following as representation of totality; 2 Chronicles 15:13, Psalm 115:13, Acts 26:22, Revelation 11:18, 19:5, 18

13:16: rich and poor: Job 34:19, Psalm 49:2

13:16: free and bond: 1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 6:8, Colossians 3:11, Revelation 6:15, 19:18

13:16: marked...right hand or forehead: mark as *charagma*, as sign of power over thought and deed, Exodus 13:9, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21; cf. Ezekiel 9:4, 2 Timothy 3:8, Revelation 7:3, 14:9, 11, 20:4

13:17: Revelation 6:6; imprints of Caesar's face and divine titles often on Roman coinage

13:18: wisdom: Daniel 12:10, Hosea 14:9, Mark 13:14, Revelation 17:9

13:18: calculate: seemingly an invitation to exercise *gematria*, an ancient code using numerical values for letters

13:18: number of a man: perhaps to say an actual individual in mind, or perhaps a contrast between imperfect, ungodly man and perfect, holy God: in this case, since 6 aims for but is just short of 7, 666 as "unholy trinity" in comparison to 777 the holy and complete trinity, aiming for God's power and sovereignty but remaining imperfect and unholy

13:18: 666: a few texts have 616; number variously associated with various figures; Nero Caesar, written in Hebrew characters, adds up to 666; perhaps Nero Caesar as representative godless, oppressive ruler, and anyone like him as Nero *redivivus* (Domitian et al)?

14:1: and I saw: Revelation 4:1, 6:8, 14:14, 15:5

14:1: Mount Zion: Psalms 2:6, 9:11, 132:13-14, 135:21, Isaiah 2:2-4, 8:18, 28:16, Joel 2:32, 3:17, Micah 4:1-8, Zechariah 9:9, Romans 9:33, Galatians 4:26, Hebrews 12:22-24

14:1: 144,000: likely the same as Revelation 7:1-8

14:1: His name: 2 Timothy 2:19, Revelation 3:12

14:2: voice of many waters: Psalm 93:4, Ezekiel 43:2, Revelation 1:15, 19:6

14:2: great thunder: Exodus 19:16, 20:18, Revelation 6:1, 10:3-4, 19:6

14:2: harpists...harps: Psalm 150:3-6, Revelation 4:6, 5:8, 15:2-4

14:3: new song: Psalms 33:3, 96:1, 98:1, 107:1-3, 144:9, 149:1, Isaiah 42:10, Revelation 5:9, 15:3; contrast with Exodus 15:1-18

14:3: before four living creatures...elders: Revelation 4:2-8, 7:9-12

14:3: the throne: Revelation 4:2-11

14:3: no man learn the song: cf. Psalm 25:14, Matthew 11:25-27, 1 Corinthians 1:18, 2:14

14:4: have not defiled themselves with women...virgins: as having not committed idolatry; Deuteronomy 23:9-11, 1 Samuel 21:5, Jeremiah 18:13, 31:4, 21, Lamentations 2:13, Amos 5:2, 2 Corinthians 11:2, 1 John 5:21

14:4: follow the Lamb: Matthew 16:24, Mark 2:14, 10:21, Luke 9:59, John 1:43, 10:27, 12:26, 13:36, 21:22, 1 Peter 2:21, Revelation 7:15-17

14:4: purchased: as redeemed, Psalm 74:2, Acts 20:28, 1 Corinthians 6:20, Ephesians 1:14

14:4: firstfruits: Jeremiah 2:3, Romans 16:5, 1 Corinthians 16:15, James 1:18

14:5: in their mouth...no lie: Psalm 32:2, Proverbs 8:8, Isaiah 53:9, Zephaniah 3:13, 1 Peter 2:22

14:5: without blemish: Ephesians 1:4, 5:27, Colossians 1:22, 1 Peter 1:19, Jude 1:24

14:6: flying in mid-heaven: *mesouranema*, point at which sun meets the meridian; Revelation 8:13, 14:6, 19:17

14:6: eternal gospel: only use of "gospel" in any of John's writings; Matthew 24:14, Romans 1:16, 16:25, Galatians 1:6-9, Ephesians 3:9-11, Colossians 1:23, 2 Thessalonians 2:16, Hebrews 13:20

14:6: to preach: as *euangelizo*, "to proclaim the good news."

14:6: every nation...people: Daniel 4:1, 6:25-26, Revelation 10:11, 13:7

14:7: fear...glory: Psalm 89:7, Isaiah 42:12, Matthew 5:16, 9:8, 15:31, Luke 1:50, 12:5, 17:18, Acts 10:2, 22, 35, Revelation 4:9, 15:4

14:7: hour of judgment: Jeremiah 1:6, Malachi 3:5, John 12:23, 31-32, 16:8-11, Revelation 11:15-18, 18:10

14:7: worship Him...waters: Nehemiah 9:6, Psalms 33:6, 95:5, 146:5-6, Acts 14:15, 17:23-25, Revelation 4:11

14:8: fallen is Babylon...wine of wrath: Babylon yet to appear in the narrative, will represent the earthly power vaunting itself against God and His purposes; cf. Isaiah 21:9, Jeremiah 25:15, 51:7-8, 64, [2 Baruch 11:1, Sibylline Oracles 5:143], Revelation 16:19, 17:1-18, 18:2-21

14:8: fornication: as idolatry, Ezekiel 16:15-22

14:9: worship, mark of beast: Revelation 13:3-6, 11-17, 14:11

14:10: drink wine of the wrath of God...unmixed: literally, "mixed undiluted" or "mingled unmixed"; ancients as both mixing wine with spices and cutting wine with water, 1 part wine to 3 or 4 parts water, both of which lead to great potency: Job 21:20, Psalms 60:3, 75:8, Isaiah 51:17, 21-22, Jeremiah 25:15-17, 27-29, 51:7, Habakkuk 2:16, Romans 1:18, 3:5, Ephesians 5:6, Colossians 3:6, Revelation 16:19, 18:6

14:10: fire and brimstone: Genesis 19:24, Deuteronomy 29:23, Job 18:15, Psalm 11:6, Isaiah 30:27-33, 34:9-10, Ezekiel 38:22, Matthew 25:41, Hebrews 10:32-35, Revelation 9:17-18, 19:20, 20:10, 21:8

14:11: smoke: Genesis 19:28, Isaiah 33:14, 34:8-10, Joel 2:30, Revelation 18:18, 19:3

14:11: torment forever: [2 Esdras 7:36, 1 Enoch 27:2-3, 48:9], Matthew 25:41-46, Luke 16:23, Jude 1:7, Revelation 20:10

14:11: no rest: Deuteronomy 28:65, Isaiah 57:20, Revelation 4:8

14:12: patience: Luke 21:19, Romans 5:3, James 1:2-4, Revelation 3:10, 13:10

14:13: write: Revelation 1:11, 2:1, 10:4, 19:9, 21:5

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14:13: blessed: one of the seven blessings in Revelation; Revelation 1:3, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, 14

14:13: dead who die in the Lord: Numbers 23:10, Psalm 116:15, Romans 14:8, 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, Philippians 1:21-23, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 5:10

14:13: rest from their labors: Isaiah 35:10, 57:2, Luke 16:25, 2 Thessalonians 1:6-7, Hebrews 4:1-11, Revelation 6:9-11, 7:9-17

14:13: works follow: Ecclesiastes 12:14, Matthew 25:35-40, 1 Corinthians 15:58, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Galatians 6:7-8, 1 Timothy 6:19, 2 Timothy 1:12, 4:7-8, Hebrews 6:10-11, 1 Peter 1:3-9

14:14-16: cloud: Isaiah 19:1, Jeremiah 4:13, Matthew 17:5, 24:30, 26:64, Luke 21:27, Acts 1:9-11, Revelation 1:7, 10:1, 20:11

14:14: one like a son of man: Daniel 7:13-14, Revelation 1:7, 13

14:14: golden crown: crown as *stephanos*, for victory; Psalm 21:3, Hebrews 2:9, Revelation 6:2, 11:17, 19:12

14:14-17: sharp sickle: Joel 3:12-13, Matthew 13:24-30, 37-43, Mark 4:29

14:15: temple: Revelation 11:1-2, 19

14:15: reap...harvest: Jeremiah 51:33, Matthew 9:38, 13:30, 37-41, Luke 10:2

14:15: ripe: Greek *xeraino*, referring to wheat or barley and not grapes; cf. Revelation 14:4, Matthew 3:12, 23:32, 1 Thessalonians 2:16, James 5:7

14:18: altar: Revelation 6:9-10

14:18: gather clusters: Joel 3:12-13, Luke 6:44

14:19: cf. Revelation 19:15-21

14:20: winepress: Isaiah 63:1-7, Lamentations 1:15

14:20: outside the city: location for defiled, unclean, unholy things; cf. Joel 3:2, 12, Zechariah 14:1-4, Hebrews 13:11-12, Revelation 21:27

14:20: blood: Isaiah 34:5-7, 66:24, Ezekiel 39:17-21, Revelation 19:14-21

14:20: 1600 stadia: Roman *stadium* was about 607 feet/185 meters, so about 184 miles; 1600 as four, the number of the world, times itself, along with ten times ten: earthly completeness

Revelation 15:1-16:21: The Seven Bowls



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The vision which Jesus grants to John seems to follow a cyclical pattern: the opening of the seven seals led into the sounding of the seven trumpets (cf. Revelation 6:1-11:19). An interlude takes place between the sixth seal/trumpet and the seventh seal/trumpet (Revelation 7:1-17, 10:1-11:14). The images alternate between scenes of judgment and vindication. The 144,000 introduced in Revelation 7:1-8 are found again in Revelation 14:1-5; the seventh trumpet proclaimed the concluded judgment (Revelation 11:15-10) while judgment is seen again in Revelation 14:14-20. Therefore, we should not be surprised when the description of the seven bowl judgments amplify and reinforce these cycles (Revelation 15:1-16:21).

After having seen the earth reaped and gleaned, John then sees the seven angels with the seven plagues which will be poured out of seven bowls (Revelation 15:1, 7). He also sees the sea of glass as from Revelation 4:6 but this time as of fire, and near it those who conquered the beast, and they sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, praising the Lord God Almighty without any reference to themselves (Revelation 15:1-4). John then sees the sanctuary of the tent of witness opened, the seven angels with the seven bowls come forth, and such great smoke from the glory of God so that none could enter until the plagues were finished (Revelation 15:5-8).

The angels were then to pour out the bowls (Revelation 16:1). The seven bowls conclude a threefold pattern of sevens, indicating completeness: the seven seals (Revelation 6:1-8:1), the seven trumpets (Revelation 8:2-11:19), and now the seven bowls (Revelation 16:1-21). These bowls are vessels whose contents are quickly and easily poured out, and they contain the wrath of God (Revelation 16:1). The events described follow the patterns of the plagues in Exodus 7:14-12:32 as well as the seven seals and seven trumpets but in a much more complete, thorough, and devastating way, indicating the finality of the judgment involved.

As the first four bowls are poured out, sores break out on those who bore the mark of the beast and prostrated before its image, the sea and the sources of fresh water were turned to blood, and the sun scorched people with fire (Revelation 16:2-9). These judgments are deemed appropriate since they exact justice upon those who killed the saints and prophets, and the people continue to blaspheme and do not repent.

The fifth bowl is poured out directly upon the throne of the beast and darkness covers his kingdom. This darkness is so profound that it causes great anguish among the people, and yet they still do not repent (Revelation 16:10-11). The sixth bowl is poured out upon the Euphrates river and its water is dried up; meanwhile, frogs come forth from the mouths of the dragon, beast, and false prophet (the second beast of Revelation 13:11-18), which are called unclean spirits who do signs and persuade the kings of the earth to assemble at "Armageddon" (Revelation 16:12-16).

One might expect a vast battle to begin, but as the seventh bowl is poured out, a voice comes forth from the temple proclaiming, "it is done" (Revelation 16:17). Flashes of lightning, thunder, and a great earthquake take place (Revelation 16:18; cf. Revelation 8:5, 11:19). Babylon, the great city, is divided into three parts by it, islands flee away, mountains are not to be found, and almost one hundred pound hailstones fall from the sky onto people (Revelation 16:19-21). They curse God because of the severity of the hail (Revelation 16:21).

People have sought to identify these descriptions with concrete historical events for centuries; the results are varied and tend to tell more about the interpreters than the text itself. As the seven seals

indicated the sorts of judgments that were soon to happen, and the seven trumpets began to proclaim the execution of those judgments, so the seven bowls represent the completion and ultimate fulfillment of God's judgments upon those who stand against Him: Satan, the world secular and religious powers empowered by Satan who arrogate against God, and those who follow after them. People rely on their health and the quality of their land and water; if they stand opposed to God, God removes these blessings from them. World powers rail at God and persecute His people: as God directly challenged the authority of Pharaoh and overthrew him, so will He do to Rome all other powers that may stand against him, attacking the very "throne of the beast." People will conspire to go to war; God will meet them there. Whenever people arrogate against God and resist His purposes, the time will come when His wrath will be revealed. And, as before, despite the suffering and misery, people will remain rebellious and hardened against God (Isaiah 8:21, Jeremiah 5:3, 6:29-30, Ezekiel 24:13, Romans 1:21).

Meanwhile, the people of God stand and praise the Lord God Almighty. Some have died for their faith, but their "defeat" is really victory, for they have overcome the beast through their death. They proclaim the song of Moses and the Lamb, recounting both the victory of God over the oppressive pagan power in the days of the Exodus as well as the victory of God over the oppressive spiritual powers of darkness through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (Exodus 15:1-18, Romans 8:1-2, 31-39, Ephesians 6:12, Revelation 12:9). They no longer experience distress, pain, and misery as it is poured out upon those who oppose God (Revelation 7:16).

The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet cause great distress and pain for the people of God. Yet John is beginning to see their end: as God's judgments were brought against Egypt, Assyria, Israel, and Babylon in turn, so they will come upon Rome and every other world power arrogating itself against the Lord God Almighty. The victory is in sight: Rome as the whore Babylon must first be introduced in her fullness, and disposed of in turn, and the grand pageant will reach its glorious end. Let us not be distressed by opposition or discouraged away from the faith; let us stay awake and obtain the blessing of the people of God!

15:1-8: cf. Revelation 7:1-8:5, 14:1-5

15:1: sign: Revelation 12:1, 3

15:1: heaven: Revelation 4:1, 8:1, 11:19

15:1: seven plagues: Leviticus 26:24, 28, Revelation 9:20, 11:6, 21:9

15:2: sea of glass: Exodus 24:10, Ezekiel 1:22, Revelation 4:6

15:2: fire: as sign of judgment, Zechariah 13:9, Malachi 3:2-3, Matthew 3:12, 1 Corinthians 3:12-15, Hebrews 12:29, 1 Peter 1:7

15:2: those who had conquered the beast: i.e. martyrs; Revelation 7:9-17, 12:9, 14:1-5; Matthew 16:25, Jude 1:3

15:2: harps: Revelation 5:8, 14:2

15:3: song of Moses: Exodus 15:1-18, Deuteronomy 32:1-43

15:3: song of the Lamb: Revelation 5:9-10, 7:10-11, 14:3

15:3: Great and wonderful your works: Exodus 15:11, Job 5:9, Psalms 40:5, 92:5, 98:1, 111:2, 139:14, Daniel 4:2-3

15:3: Lord God Almighty: Genesis 17:1, Revelation 4:8, 11:17

15:3: just and true your ways: Psalm 145:17, Isaiah 45:21, Hosea 14:9, Zephaniah 3:5, Romans 11:33

15:3: king of nations: Greek manuscripts divided between *ethnon*, nations (A, 051, Ɔ) and *aionion*, ages (P47, C, 1006, 1611, 1841); both are true; based on Jeremiah 10:7, "nations" may be preferable

15:4: fear and glorify your name: Psalm 86:9, Jeremiah 5:22, 10:7

15:4: You alone are holy: as Greek *hosios*, "sacred," not standard *hagios*; 1 Samuel 2:2, Psalms 99:3, 111:9

15:4: all nations...worship you: Psalm 86:9

15:4: righteous acts: Psalms 98:2, 145:17

15:6: sanctuary: Hebrews 8:2-5, 9:11-12, Revelation 14:15; where throne of God is in Revelation 16:17

15:5: tent of witness: Exodus 25:9,21, Numbers 9:15, 17:7, 18:2

15:6: pure, bright linen: Greek *linon* (P47, Ɔ, 046); some scribe(s) misread and wrote *lithon*, "stone" (A, C, 2053, 2062); also as dress of high priest as well as Lord Christ; Exodus 28:5-8, Ezekiel 44:17-18, Revelation 19:8, 14

15:6: golden sashes: Daniel 10:5, Revelation 1:13

15:7: four living creatures: Revelation 4:6-9

15:7: bowls of gold: Greek *phiale*, a broad shallow vessel or a deep saucer: as having prayers of the saints, Revelation 5:8; as full of plagues, Revelation 15:1, 6, 8, 16:1-21; thus, 2 Corinthians 2:15

15:8: cf. Exodus 40:34-35, 1 Kings 8:10-11, Isaiah 6:1-4

15:8: smoke: Exodus 19:18, Deuteronomy 29:20, Psalms 74:1, 104:32, Habakkuk 3:3, Isaiah 4:5

16:1-21: compare the plagues on Egypt, Exodus 7:14-12:32, and the seven trumpets, Revelation 8:2-11:19, yet cf. Revelation 9:20-21 vs. 16:5-7

16:1: loud voice: as of God Himself

16:2, 11: sores: Greek *helkoi*, abscess or ulcer (cf. Luke 16:21): Exodus 9:8-12, Deuteronomy 28:27, 35, Job 2:7, Acts 12:23

16:3: sea...blood: Isaiah 57:19-20, Zechariah 10:11, Revelation 6:8, 8:8-9, 13:1

16:3, 4, 6: blood: as defiling and unclean, Leviticus 7:26-27, 15:19-33, 17:10-16, 21:1, Numbers 5:2, 19:11-19

16:4: rivers and springs...blood: Exodus 7:17-21

16:5: who is and was: Revelation 1:4, 8, 4:8, 11:17

16:6: shed the blood of saints and prophets: 2 Chronicles 36:15-16, Matthew 23:31-36, Luke 13:33-34, Acts 7:52, Revelation 2:13, 6:9-11, 7:13-14, 12:11, 16:6-7, 17:6, 18:24, 19:2, 20:4

16:6: blood to drink: Isaiah 49:26

16:6: what they deserve: as penalty for sin, Numbers 35:33, Deuteronomy 32:42, Psalms 89:14, 97:2-3, Obadiah 1:15-16

16:7: altar: Revelation 6:9-11, 8:3-5, 9:13, 14:18, 15:3, 16:7

16:8-9: cf. Judges 5:20, Deuteronomy 28:22-24, Psalms 97:3, 7, 104:4, Isaiah 26:11, 47:13-14, Ezekiel 23:25, 47, Joel 1:14-20, Jonah 4:8, Luke 21:25, comp. Revelation 7:16, 8:12, 13:13

16:9, 21: blasphemed: Isaiah 8:21, Jeremiah 5:3, 6:29-30, Ezekiel 24:13, Romans 1:21, Revelation 13:1, 6

16:9, 11: not repent...give him glory: cf. Romans 11:22, Revelation 2:21, 9:20-21, 14:7

16:10: throne of the beast: cf. Revelation 13:2, 4

16:10: darkness: Exodus 10:21-29, Psalm 69:23, Isaiah 26:10, Revelation 8:12

16:12: great river Euphrates: Isaiah 44:27-28, Jeremiah 50:38, 51:36, Revelation 9:13-21

16:12: waters dried up: Exodus 14:21, Joshua 3:17, Isaiah 11:16, Jeremiah 51:36, Zechariah 10:11; Herodotus, *The Histories* 1:191, tells of how Cyrus the Persian dammed the Euphrates upstream so as to conquer Babylon

16:12: kings from the east: Psalm 72:10-11, Isaiah 60:4-11, Revelation 16:14, 17:12-14

16:13: mouth: Revelation 12:15-16, 13:5, 14-17

16:13: dragon: as Satan, Revelation 12:3, 9

16:13: beast: as world power arrogating itself against God, Revelation 13:1-10

16:13: false prophet: previously called second beast out of the ground, Revelation 13:11-18, 19:20, 20:10; Deuteronomy 13:1-5, Mark 13:22

16:13: frogs: as plague, Exodus 8:2-14, Psalms 78:45, 105:30; as unclean, Leviticus 11:9-11

16:14: spirits: 1 Kings 22:21-33

16:14: demons: 1 Timothy 4:1, Revelation 9:20, 12:9

16:14: performing signs: Matthew 24:24, 2 Thessalonians 2:9, Revelation 12:1, 13:13-14

16:14: kings...assemble for battle: Psalm 2:2, Revelation 17:14, 19:19-21

16:14: great day of the Almighty: Joel 2:11, 31, Amos 5:18, Zephaniah 1:14

16:15: coming like a thief: Matthew 24:43-44, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-10, 2 Peter 3:10, Revelation 3:3

16:15: blessed: the third of seven blessings in Revelation; cf. Revelation 1:3, 14:13, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, 14

16:15: keeping his garments on: Revelation 3:4, 19:8

16:15: naked..exposed: Revelation 3:18

16:16: Armageddon: from Hebrew *har megiddo*, "Mountain of Megiddo." Megiddo is a city in the plain (not in the mountains) in the Valley of Jezreel, a pivotal city on a crossroads and the site of innumerable battles from Pharaoh Thutmose III in the 15th century BCE to modern wars; in the Bible, cf. Judges 5:19-21, 2 Kings 9:27, 23:29, Zechariah 12:11; for mountain, cf. Ezekiel 38:8, 21, 39:2, 4, 17

16:17: into the air: Ephesians 2:2

16:17: it is done: Revelation 21:6

16:18: Revelation 8:5, 11:19

16:18: earthquake: Haggai 2:6-7/Hebrews 12:26-27, Revelation 6:12-17

16:18: such as had never been: Matthew 24:21

16:19: great city: Revelation 11:8, 13, 14:8, 17:18, 18:10, 16, 19, 21, 19:2

16:19: three parts: Ezekiel 5:1-12

16:19: Babylon the great: Revelation 14:8, 17:18

16:19: cup of wine of fierceness of wrath: Revelation 14:8, 10

16:20: every island fled away: Isaiah 24:15, Ezekiel 26:18, Revelation 6:14

16:20: mountain: Psalm 97:5, Jeremiah 4:24, Revelation 6:14-16

16:21: hailstones: Exodus 9:13-35, Joshua 10:11, Psalms 18:6-17, 78:47, 105:32, Isaiah 28:2, 15-18, 30:30, Ezekiel 13:11-13, 38:21-22, Revelation 8:7

16:21: weight of a talent: approximately 100 lbs.

16:21: plague was so severe: Revelation 18:8

Revelation 17:1-19:10: Babylon the Whore

From Revelation 6:1-16:21, John's vision is punctuated by three cycles of seven judgments: the seven seals (Revelation 6:1-8:1), the seven trumpets (Revelation 8:2-11:19), and the seven bowls (Revelation 14:1-16:21). The rest of John's vision will feature pictures of the Jesus the Lamb and two women: the faithful woman of Revelation 12:1-14 who will become the Bride of the Lamb in Revelation 19:5-10, 21:1-22:6, and Babylon, the woman empowered by the dragon and his beasts, of whom and whose fate John sees in Revelation 17:1-19:5.

John is carried in the Spirit into the wilderness where he sees the woman Babylon (Revelation 17:1-18). Babylon derives from Hebrew *babel*, "confusion," so named because of the Tower of Babel and the confusion of languages there (Genesis 11:1-9). The Chaldean, Neo-Babylonian Empire will overthrow the Kingdom of Judah and destroy Jerusalem and its Temple in 586 BCE. The prophets of Israel frequently denounced Babylon for its arrogance, idolatry, and behavior toward Israel (Isaiah 13:1-14:23, Jeremiah 50:1-51:64); John is thus shown a picture of the "new Babylon," Rome, in very much the same way: Rome is now the human world power empowered by the Evil One who is hostile toward God and His people.

Babylon is described as a whore, seducing all the people of the world into coming and participating in her sexual immorality (Revelation 17:1-5). She is described as drunk on the blood of the saints (Revelation 17:6). She exhibits great pride in her standing and power (Revelation 18:7). When she is mourned by kings and merchants, it is because of the loss of the great market for all sorts of luxury items and slaves (Revelation 18:9-20). Plenty of actual prostitution went on in the Roman Empire; the luxurious, debauched lifestyle of the Romans is well-attested in ancient literature. The mention of slaves is important since the entire Roman enterprise was built on the back of slaves (Revelation 18:13). Yet the full concern of the whoredom of Babylon is her idolatry: she promulgates the service of many idols, including Rome herself and her emperors, represented by the beast, and persecutes the Christians, the people of the True God, because of her devotion to her idols and the power provided by the Evil One. Idolatry described in terms of whoredom and sexual immorality is pervasive in the Old Testament (Isaiah 1:21, Ezekiel 16:15-43, 23:1-49, Hosea 1:1-3:5), as well as the nations acting as whores on account of idolatry (Isaiah 23:15-17, 47:5-15, Nahum 3:1, 4).

Babylon is supported by the beast envisioned in Revelation 13:1-10. We are given the picture of what the beast's heads and horns mean in Revelation 17:9-13: the seven mountains upon which Babylon is

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seated/seven kings and ten successive kings. Rome is famous for being settled upon seven hills; its Empire was established and perpetuated by the efforts of its emperors. Speculation abounds regarding the specifics of the kings, but we do well to see in them that the Roman power has existed, exists at the present, and has a future before it will ultimately be vanquished. Its end will come from those within it who support it as well as its surrounding enemies: the lust for power consumes the one who maintains it, and so it will be with Rome, all according to the purpose of God's will (Revelation 17:15-18).

As the luxuriantly dressed whore, Rome as Babylon attempts to appear as legitimate, wealthy, beautiful, enticing, and worth the investment, yet internally is corrupt, evil, illegitimate, and seeking after the wrong pursuits with the wrong means, and thus incurring God's condemnation. The angels proclaim the destruction of the new Babylon as accomplished fact: it will be desolate, even though it once enriched the kings and merchants of the earth, sharing the fate of old Babylon (Revelation 18:1-3; cf. Isaiah 13:19-22, 14:3-23, 34:11-15, Jeremiah 50:2, Zephaniah 2:13-15). God's people are exhorted to come out of new Babylon, lest they share in the plagues and judgments coming upon her, just as with old Babylon (Revelation 18:4-6; cf. Isaiah 48:20, 52:11, Jeremiah 50:8, 51:6-9, 45, Zechariah 2:7). The judgment comes quickly; the smoke of her burning will go up forever, and the sounds of joy, commerce, and life will not be heard in her again (Revelation 18:7-9, 21-24). The merchants enriched by the new Babylon will stand afar off and mourn and weep for their lost income (Revelation 18:11-17), just as their ancestors did for Tyre in Ezekiel 26:1-28:19 (and there is a school of thought which suggests that Ezekiel uses Tyre as a cipher for old Babylon), a powerfully evocative message for those of us who lived through the economic challenges of 2008-2009. The kings, the merchants, and the mariners may weep over the new Babylon, but only inasmuch as they have personally experienced loss; they seek to stay away from the devastation, demonstrating the ephemeral nature of their attachment to the whore Babylon (Revelation 18:10-17). The whore Babylon, Rome in the first century, shared the fate of old Babylon, and every "Babylon" which has arisen after her will suffer the same. The reason is succinct: in her was found the blood of the saints (Revelation 18:24).

While the condemnation of Babylon has caused great mourning and lamentation from those seduced by her on the earth, it is the cause of great rejoicing in heaven and among the people of God (Revelation 18:19-20). The scene returns to heaven, and John hears the threefold hallelujahs of the heavenly multitude, the twenty-four elders, and the four living creatures (Revelation 19:1-5). This is the only time "hallelujah" is found in the New Testament, and it is upon the occasion of God's true and righteous judgments upon Babylon the whore, her corruption of the earth, and her persecution of the saints.

Babylon the whore, the Satanically empowered imitation of the good, the fraudulent mistress who seduced so many to follow after her, is therefore destroyed; the Lord God Almighty reigns, and therefore the time of the marriage of the Lamb will be soon (Revelation 19:6-7). At this time the scene then shifts to the Bride, the honest and good woman who has persevered in her trust in God and the Lamb from beginning to end: she has made herself ready, and she is clothed with bright and pure linen, the good works of the saints (Revelation 19:7-8). The fourth of seven beatitudes in Revelation is offered to those invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9).

John is understandably overcome with joy and exaltation, and bows down before the angelic messenger; he is told not to do so, since he is a fellow servant of God with him and all who hold to the

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testimony of Jesus. Instead he is to bow down before God (Revelation 19:10). John is then told that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, and we do well to keep that in mind. Those who accept and proclaim the testimony of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, will be invited to the marriage supper and make up the Bride of Christ, His church (2 Corinthians 11:2-3, Ephesians 5:22-33). Those who reject the testimony of the Lamb are under the power of the dragon, having been seduced by whichever "Babylon the whore" is presently ascendant. Let us be encouraged in our faith in the Lamb, come out and stay away from Babylon the whore, and strive to be part of the Bride of Christ!

17:1: come...show you...great prostitute: in contrast with being shown the Bride, Revelation 21:9-10

17:1: prostitute: Isaiah 23:15-17, 47:5-15, Nahum 3:1, 4

17:1: many waters: physically true of Babylon in Mesopotamia, Psalm 137:1, Jeremiah 51:13; as reference to power over peoples and nations; Isaiah 8:7-8, Jeremiah 47:2, Revelation 17:15, 18

17:2: drunk with wine: Isaiah 29:9, Habakkuk 2:5, 15, Revelation 14:, 28

17:2: sexual immorality: as idolatry; Judges 2:17, Deuteronomy 31:16, 1 Chronicles 5:25, Psalm 73:27, Isaiah 1:21, Ezekiel 16:15-43, 23:1-49, Revelation 2:20-23

17:3: carried away in the Spirit: Ezekiel 3:12, 8:3, 11:24, 2 Peter 1:21, Revelation 1:10, 4:1, 19:11

17:3: wilderness: as spiritual protection in Revelation 12:6, 14, but here as place of spiritual deprivation, perhaps as demonstration of absence of God; often place of visions, Exodus 3:1, 1 Kings 19:4, Matthew 4:1, Luke 1:80

17:3, 7-8: beast: same beast as in Revelation 13:1-11, 16-18

17:3, 4: scarlet: as color of the dragon, Revelation 12:3; as royal color, Matthew 27:28-31; as color of sin, Isaiah 1:18

17:3: names of blasphemy: Emperor as *Sebastos* or *Augustus*, "to be revered"; *divus/theios*, "divine"; many often called themselves *soter*, "Savior"; they all as *Dominus* or *Kurios*, "Lord"

17:3: seven heads, ten horns: Revelation 13:1; cf. that which is under possession of Satan, Matthew 4:8-9, Luke 4:5-7

17:4: gold, jewels, pearls: still in contrast with the Bride, yet obtained through worldly economic system; cf. Revelation 18:11-19, 19:8, 21:18-21

17:4: golden cup: Proverbs 9:13-18, Jeremiah 51:7

17:5: James 4:4, 1 John 2:16

17:5: mystery: Greek *mysterion*, something hidden but to be revealed by Holy Spirit; Matthew 13:11, Mark 4:11, Luke 8:10

17:5: Babylon: from Hebrew *Babel*, "confusion"; site of Tower in Genesis 11:1-9; Chaldean, Neo-Babylonian Empire as overseeing destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in 586 BCE; thus the iconic earthly power arrayed against God and His people, and fitting image of Rome; Revelation 14:8, 16:19, 17:18

17:5: mother of harlots and abominations: as lust, Genesis 3:1-5, Matthew 4:1-11, 2 Peter 1:4, 1 John 2:15-17

17:6: drunk with blood of the saints: Proverbs 2:18, 7:25-27, Matthew 23:35, Revelation 13:15-17, 16:6, 18:24; for Nero's persecution, see Tacitus *Annals* 15.44

17:8: was, is not, is to come: Revelation 13:3, 12, 14; Nero *redivivus*?

17:8: abyss: Revelation 9:1-3, 11, 11:7, 20:1-2

17:8, 11: perdition: Greek *apoleia*, destruction or utter ruin; only usage of term in Revelation

17:9: wisdom: 1 Corinthians 2:6-8, James 1:5, Revelation 13:18

17:9: seven mountains: seven as complete, mountains as seat of power; cf. Jeremiah 51:24-25, Daniel 2:35, 44-45; Rome as city built on seven hills; others claim Jerusalem is as well; since mountains as seat of power, some suggest they refer to empires (Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, Roman)

17:10: seven kings: perpetual dispute over nature of these kings, attempt to get Roman imperial history to fit it [(Julius Caesar), Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, (Otho/Galba/Vitellius), Vespasian, Titus, Domitian]; yet seven as complete, perhaps a demonstration of being in the midst of the kings of the Empire?

17:10: little while: Matthew 24:21-22

17:12: ten horns: Daniel 7:7-12

17:12: one hour: Revelation 18:10, 17, 19; cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:3, Revelation 16:15

17:14: war on Lamb: Revelation 16:14, 19:11-21; cf. 1 Enoch 91:12, 96:1, 98:12, *Wisdom of Solomon* 3:5-8

17:14: Lord of lords, King of kings: Deuteronomy 10:17, Daniel 2:47, Matthew 28:18, Ephesians 1:20-23, 1 Peter 3:22, Revelation 19:11-21

17:14: chosen and faithful: Matthew 22:1-14, Ephesians 1:4, 2 Thessalonians 2:14, Revelation 14:4-5

17:15: peoples, multitudes, nations, tongues: Revelation 5:9, 13:7

17:16: make her desolate and naked...burn her: Leviticus 20:14, 21:9, Ezekiel 16:39-41, Nahum 3:5

17:16: devour flesh: Psalm 27:2, Micah 3:2-3

17:17: God put it into their heart: Judges 7:22, 1 Samuel 14:20, 2 Chronicles 20:23. Isaiah 10:12, Revelation 11:2, 13:5, 7

17:17: kingdom to the beast: Daniel 7:23

17:18: great city...dominion over kings of the earth: in the first century, Rome; contrast Revelation 21:24

18:1-24: cf. Isaiah 13:19-22, Jeremiah 50:1-51:64, Ezekiel 26:1-28:19

18:1: lightened with his glory: Ezekiel 43:1-2, John 1:9

18:2: Fallen, fallen: Isaiah 14:12, 21:9, Revelation 14:8, 16:19

18:2: a haunt for unclean bird...detestable beast: Isaiah 13:19-22, 14:3-23, 34:11-15, Jeremiah 50:2, Zephaniah 2:13-15; contrast Revelation 21:27

18:3: Isaiah 47:15

18:4: come out of her: Genesis 12:1, 19:12-14, Exodus 3:10, Numbers 16:23-26, Isaiah 48:20, 52:11, Jeremiah 50:8, 51:6-9, 45, Zechariah 2:7, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, 7:1, Ephesians 5:11, 1 Timothy 5:22, 1 Peter 2:11-12

18:5: sins reached up to heaven: 2 Chronicles 28:9, Ezra 9:6, Amos 2:1, Jeremiah 51:9

18:6: pay her back: Exodus 21:23-25, Psalm 137:8, Jeremiah 50:15, 29, Matthew 7:2, Luke 6:25

18:6: double portion: Exodus 22:4, 7, 9, Isaiah 40:2, 61:7, Jeremiah 16:18, 17:18, Zechariah 9:12, Revelation 19:2

18:6: cup: Revelation 16:19

18:7: glorified herself: 2 Samuel 22:28, Psalm 30:6, Proverbs 11:2, 16:8, 29:23, Isaiah 3:16-17, Jeremiah 50:29, Ezekiel 27:3

18:7-8: I sit as queen, I am no widow...plagues...judged her: Isaiah 42:7-9, 47:1-9, Ezekiel 26:16, 28:2, Revelation 3:17

18:12-13: see lament for Tyre in Ezekiel 27:12-25

18:13: cinnamon: Exodus 30:23, Proverbs 7:17, Song of Solomon 4:14

18:13: spice: Greek *amomon*, sweet-smelling balsam

18:13: incense: Exodus 30:34-38

18:13: chariot: Greek *rhede*, four-wheeled wagon or carriage, not 2-wheeled war chariot (Greek *harma*, as in Acts 8:28, 29, 38, Revelation 9:9)

18:16: great city: Ezekiel 27:32, Revelation 13:4

18:17-19: Ezekiel 27:28-30

18:17: shipmasters...sailors: Acts 27:27, 30

18:18: what city is like the great city: Ezekiel 27:32

18:19: cast dust on their heads: gesture of mourning, Joshua 7:6, 1 Samuel 4:12, Job 2:12, Ezekiel 27:30

18:20: Rejoice over her: Deuteronomy 32:43, Jeremiah 51:48, Luke 21:28, Revelation 12:12; contrast Revelation 11:10, 12:12

18:20: judgment: Deuteronomy 19:16-19, Revelation 6:9-11, 16:6-7, 19:2

18:21: strong angel: Revelation 5:2, 10:1

18:21: stone: Jeremiah 51:63-64, Ezekiel 26:21, Matthew 18:6-7

18:22-23: heard no more: Jeremiah 7:34, 16:9, 25:10, Ezekiel 26:13

18:22: harpers...trumpeters: symbols of joy and gladness, 2 Chronicles 29:25, Amos 6:5-7, Luke 15:25

18:23: deceived by your sorcery: Nahum 3:1, 4, Galatians 5:19-21, Revelation 13:13-16, 17:8

18:24: in her: Babylon/Rome now as representation of city as rebellion from God, cf. Genesis 4:18-22?

18:24: blood of martyrs: Ezekiel 24:6, Revelation 2:13, 6:9-11, 7:13-14, 11:8, 18, 12:11, 16:2, 6-7, 17:6, 19:2, 20:4

19:1: great multitude in heaven: Revelation 5:11, 7:9-17

19:1, 3, 4, 6: Hallelujah: term occurs only in this scene in the New Testament; Hebrew "all y'all praise the LORD"; cf. first verses of Psalms 106, 111-113, 117, 135, 146-150; threefold "Hallelujahs" (Revelation 19:3, 5, 6) evoke threefold sanctus of Isaiah 6:1-3 and the Trinity

19:1: salvation...glory...power: in Greek, with the definite article, adding emphasis (the salvation, the glory, the power)

19:2: true and righteous are your judgments: Psalms 89:14, 97:2, Revelation 14:7-13, 15:3, 16:7

19:2: corrupted the earth: Ephesians 4:22

19:2: he hath avenged: satisfaction of Revelation 6:9-11, 7:14

19:3: smoke goes up: Isaiah 34:9-10, Revelation 14:10-11, 18:9

19:4: twenty-four elders: Revelation 4:4, 6, 8, 5:6, 11, 14, 7:11, 11:16, 14:3

19:4: four living creatures: Revelation 4:6-9, 5:6-14, 6:1-7, 7:11, 14:3, 15:7

19:5: throne: as majesty and power of God

19:5: Praise....great: Psalms 134:1, 135:1, 20

19:5: fear him: Ecclesiastes 12:13, Luke 1:50, 12:4-5, Acts 10:34-35, Colossians 3:22, 1 Peter 2:17

19:5: servants: some in heaven (Revelation 10:7, 11:18, 15:3, 22:3), yet focus on earth (Revelation 2:20, 7:3)

19:6: thunders: Revelation 14:2

19:6: the Almighty: 2 Corinthians 6:18, Revelation 1:8, 4:8, 11:17, 15:3, 16:7, 14, 19:15, 21:22

19:6: His Kingdom: Psalms 22:27-28, 97:1

19:7: Rejoice, be exceeding glad: Matthew 5:12

19:7: marriage: Isaiah 50:1, Jeremiah 2:32, Ezekiel 16:1-63, Hosea 1:1-3:5

19:7: his wife: the betrothed, the people of God; betrothal as of high commitment, Exodus 22:16, Matthew 1:18-20, Luke 1:27, 2:5; Israel as God's wife, Isaiah 54:1-8, Ezekiel 16:7, Hosea 2:19-20; church as Christ's betrothed/wife, Romans 7:1-4, 2 Corinthians 11:2-3, Ephesians 5:22-33; foreshadowing Revelation 21:2, 9-10

19:8: fine linen: Revelation 15:6

19:8: bright, pure: as clean and holy; Ephesians 5:27

19:8: righteous acts of the saints: Isaiah 61:10, Ephesians 2:10, Philippians 2:12-13

19:9: blessed: the fourth beatitude of seven in Revelation

19:9: bidden: as called by the Gospel; 1 Corinthians 1:9, 2 Thessalonians 2:14

19:9: marriage supper: Matthew 22:1-14, 25:1-13; as eschatological banquet, Isaiah 25:6, Matthew 8:11

19:10: fall down...do not: "fall down" and "worship" as Greek *prokuneo*; cf. Revelation 22:8-9

19:10: fellow servant: Greek *sundoulos*, a fellow slave; Hebrews 1:13-14, Revelation 6:11, 12:17

19:10: testimony of Jesus: Luke 24:45-48, John 8:28, 12:47, 14:24, 18:37, 2 Peter 1:21, Revelation 1:1

19:10: worship God: Matthew 4:10, John 9:35-38

Revelation 19:11-20:15: Victory and Judgment

John has seen the presentation and condemnation of the whore Babylon, an image of Rome, in Revelation 17:1-19:10. Great joy has accompanied her downfall, yet the dragon, beast, and false prophet, the main antagonists portrayed in Revelation 12:1-16:21, remain. John will now be shown two more scenes of victory, first over the beast and false prophet (Revelation 19:11-21), and then over the dragon (Revelation 20:1-10). Judgment can then take place (Revelation 20:11-15).

The Revelation heads toward its climactic end with three scenes of victory: the first came over Babylon (Revelation 19:1-10), and the second in Revelation 19:11-21 over the beast and the false prophet of Revelation 13:1-18: the image of the power of the Roman Empire enshrined in its Emperor and its religion. Revelation 19:11-21 seems to be an expansion of what was seen in the sixth bowl in Revelation 16:12-16: the gathering of the beast, the false prophet, and the kings of the earth at Har-Magedon for the great day of God the Almighty [the (in)famous Armageddon]. The nature and result of this battle is made explicit in Revelation 19:11-21: Jesus gains the victory over all of these forces arrayed against Him. He is portrayed in the same images as seen in Revelation 1:1-3:21, the true Ruler, with many signs of authority in contrast to the Satanically empowered authority of the beast, and He casts the beast and the false prophet into the lake of fire while slaughtering the rest of His foes with the sword which came forth from His mouth. In contrast to the glorious marriage supper of the Lamb promised in Revelation 19:7-9, fulfilled in Revelation 21:1-22:6, the birds of the air are summoned for the great supper of God, to consume the flesh of all the dead of that battle left in the field, reminiscent of God's judgment on Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 39:4, 17-20. While the heavenly armies are present with Jesus, they are not said to have done anything: Jesus conquers through the power of His sword, the Word of God and His judgments (John 12:48, Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 4:12). In this way John is shown the ultimate victory of Jesus over the Roman Empire, its power and paganism, and represents a reminder that worldly powers come and go but the word of the LORD remains forever (Isaiah 40:6-8).

Babylon, the beast, and the false prophet have been eliminated, but the dragon who empowered them remains. John is shown the victory over Satan the dragon in Revelation 20:1-10: Satan is bound in the Pit for a thousand years while Christ and His saints reign in the first resurrection; after the thousand years Satan is released to deceive the nations for a short time; he gathers Gog and Magog (in Ezekiel 38:1-39:20, Gog is ruler of Magog; here Gog and Magog now stand for the threatening "heathen" worldly powers) against the camp of the saints and the beloved city; yet Gog and Magog are destroyed by fire and Satan cast into the lake of fire along with the beast and false prophet where they are tormented day and night.

Perhaps no section of the Bible has led to as much speculation and the construction of whole theological systems than Revelation 20:1-10 and its "millennium," or one thousand year period. For

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our purposes we do well to see that the thousand years is not the primary force or purpose in the passage: God in Christ is showing John the ultimate end of Satan *after* the end of the beast and false prophet. We have no reason to abandon our previous endeavors and adhere to a completely different system at this point; we must understand Revelation 20:1-10 in terms of the rest of Revelation and the New Testament, and not the other way around. Throughout Scripture, a "thousand" never means an actual, literal one thousand, but refers to an indeterminate multitude of things or length of time (Deuteronomy 7:9, Joshua 23:10, 1 Chronicles 16:15, Job 9:3, 33:23, Psalms 50:10, 90:4, 105:8, Ecclesiastes 6:6, 7:28, 2 Peter 3:8). Furthermore, this scene of Satan's binding comes immediately after judgment on the beast and the false prophet, identified contextually as the Roman empire and religion, and after Satan's condemnation we have the final judgment scene (Revelation 20:11-15). Therefore, the best contextual understanding of the "millennium" is that it represents the time between the defeat of Roman power and particularly pagan religion, ca. 325 CE, until when Satan is again fully loosed, which could be happening now or could happen some time in the future. Such a view of Satan presently bound is consistent with Matthew 12:29, and Luke 8:31, 11:22 and does not mean that Satan is entirely inactive; it just means that he is restrained in ways he was not in the days of the Roman Empire. We are not to look to the future in order to find the millennium; we presently are in the millennium of Christ's reign, part of His present Kingdom (Colossians 1:13), or we are witnessing those final days when Satan is fully loosed, people are fully led away from the truth of God in Christ, and we are about to see the ultimate fulfillment of all that is seen in Revelation 20:7-22:6.

After Satan is taken out of the way, John is shown the final judgment scene, expanding upon the picture glimpsed with the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15-19 and the harvesting of Revelation 14:14-20: a great white throne with all the dead before God in Christ, the opening of books, judgment on the basis of what they had done, redemption for those whose names were in the book of life, condemnation for those whose names were not found there in the second death, the lake of fire, or hell, and Death and Hades cast into that lake of fire as well (Revelation 20:11-15). The picture John sees is entirely consistent with the expectation of judgment on the final day, the day of resurrection, as envisioned in Daniel 12:1-2, Matthew 16:27, 25:31-46, John 5:28-29, Acts 17:30-31, Romans 2:5-10, 1 Corinthians 15:20-57, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, and 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10.

The message of Revelation 19:1-20:10 ought to encourage faithful Christians of all generations: God will gain the victory. First century Christians suffering under the persecutions of the Roman power were given reason for confidence that God would overcome that beast and false prophet, and it was a most extraordinary thing when a form of Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, signaling the downfall of paganism in a world it had dominated for thousands of years. For 1700 years paganism has been relegated to the periphery, and most in Western culture have given at least lip service to God and Jesus as the Christ since. We see that changing to an extraordinary degree in our own day, perhaps heralding the loosening of Satan; yet even then we may know that such means his time is even shorter, and the day of judgment will come soon. Let us praise God for His victory in Christ, serve Jesus as Lord, and wait fervently for the day of judgment which comes quickly!

19:11: and I saw: beginning of seven parts of overall section, repeated in Revelation 19:17, 19, 20:1, 4, 11, 21:1

19:11: heaven opened: contrast Revelation 4:1, 11:19, 15:5

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19:11: white horse: as the steed upon which a victorious Roman general would sit, so also Revelation 19:14

19:11: Faithful and True: Isaiah 25:1, Matthew 24:35, John 14:6, 2 Timothy 2:13, 1 Peter 1:25, Revelation 1:5, 3:7, 14, 6:2

19:11: in righteousness he judges and makes war: Psalms 45:3-5, 72:1-2, [Wisdom of Solomon 17:23-27]

19:12: eyes...flame of fire: Revelation 1:14, 2:18

19:12: diadems: crowns of rule; plural denotes many crowns and thus rule over multiple lands [so Ptolemy in 1 Maccabees 11:13, etc.]; Revelation 12:3, 13:1, 14:14

19:12: name...no one knows: Genesis 32:29, Judges 13:18, Luke 10:22

19:13: robe...sprinkled in blood: Isaiah 63:1-6, Joel 3:9-13

19:13: name...Word of God: Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 14, 26, Jeremiah 23:29, [Wisdom of Solomon 18:15-16], John 1:1, 14, Hebrews 1:1-2, 1 John 1:1

19:14: armies...white horses...fine linen, white and pure: as angels and/or the redeemed; army [Greek *strateuma*] as little as a bodyguard detachment (Acts 23:10, 27) to millions (Revelation 9:16); Psalm 132:9, Daniel 7:10, Matthew 25:31, 26:53, Mark 8:38, Luke 9:26, 2 Thessalonians 1:7, Revelation 6:11, 7:14, 12:11, 14:14, 15:2, 19:8

19:15: mouth...sharp sword: Isaiah 11:4, 49:2, John 12:48, Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 4:12, Revelation 1:16, 2:12, 16

19:15: rule them with a rod of iron: Psalm 2:7-12, Revelation 2:27, 12:5

19:16: winepress of the fury of the wrath of God: Isaiah 63:1-6, Joel 3:12-14, John 5:22, Revelation 14:20, 16:19

19:16: thigh: Genesis 24:2-4, 46:26, 49:10 (LXX)

19:16: King of kings and Lord of lords: Deuteronomy 10:17, Psalm 136:3, 1 Corinthians 11:3, Colossians 2:10, Revelation 17:14

19:17: cf. 1 Samuel 17:46, Deuteronomy 28:26, Isaiah 34:6, Jeremiah 46:10, Ezekiel 39:4, 17-20, Revelation 13:16, 16:14, 20:8

19:17: birds: Matthew 24:28, Revelation 8:13

19:18: kings: Revelation 16:13-16, 17:1-2, 12-18, 18:3, 9

19:19: beasts...kings of earth...armies: cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:8, Revelation 13:1-10, 16:13-16, 17:12-14

19:20: false prophet: the second beast from Revelation 13:11-18

19:20: lake of fire: as suffering the fate of the whore Babylon, Revelation 17:16, 18:8-9; reminiscent of destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Genesis 19:23-26

19:21: rest killed: note no need for army to assist; contrast Qumran *War Scroll* cols. 5-6; Daniel 7:11

20:1: angel...key: Revelation 9:1-3, 11

20:1: abyss: Luke 8:31, 2 Peter 2:4-5, Revelation 9:1-3, 11:7, 17:8

20:2: dragon...serpent...Satan: Matthew 12:29, 2 Corinthians 11:3, Revelation 12:9-17

20:2: bound him: Matthew 12:29, Luke 8:31, 11:22

20:2: pit: Psalms 7:15, 9:15, 35:7, 40:2, 55:23, 69:15, 88:6, Proverbs 22:14, Isaiah 24:22, 38:17, Zechariah 9:11

20:3, 4, 5, 6, 7: thousand years: origin of the concept of the "millennium" and "millennial reign" of Jesus, yet most likely indicates the reign of Christ for a long period of time between the vanquishing of Rome and the final judgment and end envisioned in Revelation 20:10-22:6; thousand as 10 to the 3rd power; for "thousand" as an indeterminate multitude, cf. Deuteronomy 7:9, Joshua 23:10, 1 Chronicles 16:15, Job 9:3, 33:23, Psalms 50:10, 90:4, 105:8, Ecclesiastes 6:6, 7:28, 2 Peter 3:8; for Christ's reign from Pentecost until His return, cf. Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, John 6:39-54, 11:24, 12:48, Acts 2:16-17

20:3: sealed it: Matthew 27:66, Revelation 5:1; as fulfillment or end of Revelation 6:11, 11:2-3, 12:6, 12, 14, 13:5

20:3, 8, 10: deceived the nations: Revelation 12:9, 13:13-14, 18:23, 19:20

20:4: thrones: Psalm 122:4-5, Daniel 7:9, 22, Matthew 19:28, 1 Corinthians 6:2

20:4: souls: Luke 18:29-30, Revelation 6:9, 12:11, 15:2

20:4: beheaded: standard means of execution for Roman citizens, thus a reference to Christians who maintained loyalty to Jesus over Caesar

20:4: worshipped not the beast: Revelation 13:11-18, 14:9, 11, 15:2, 16:2

20:4, 6: reign with Christ: Psalm 45:16, Colossians 3:1, Revelation 5:9-10

20:5: rest of the dead: those as unregenerate; Matthew 8:22

20:5: first resurrection: perhaps as spiritual regeneration; Romans 6:1-7, 13, 8:10, Ephesians 2:1, Colossians 3:1; perhaps as symbol for victory over paganism; Isaiah 26:19, Hosea 13:14, Ezekiel 37:1-14

20:6: Blessed: fifth of seven beatitudes in Revelation; Revelation 1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 22:7, 14

20:6: priests of God: 1 Peter 2:4, 9, Revelation 1:6

20:6, 14: second death: as cast into lake of fire, thus condemnation; Matthew 10:28, Luke 12:4-5, Revelation 2:11, 20:12-15

20:8: Gog and Magog: in Ezekiel, Magog reckoned as fearsome northern peoples ruled over by Gog, likely the people of the central Asian steppes who threatened havoc for generations (Scythians in OT; later threats included Huns, Mongols, Turks), in Revelation, Gog and Magog therefore as representing faraway/"foreign"/"heathen" world powers opposed to God; Ezekiel 38:1-39:20, Revelation 19:17-21

20:8: to the war: Daniel 11:10-45, Zechariah 14:1-11, [Sibylline Oracles 3:663-672], Revelation 16:13-16

20:8: sand of the sea: Revelation 12:17

20:9: camp of the saints: camp as *parembole*, referring to military camp in Acts 21:34, 37, 22:24, 23:10, 16, 32; Hebrews 11:34, 11, 13; Revelation 11:2?

20:9: beloved city: as spiritual Zion, Hebrews 12:22-24

20:9: fire came down from heaven: 2 Kings 1:9-12

20:10: lake of fire..tormented forever: Matthew 25:41, 46, Revelation 9:5, 14:10-11

20:11-15: as judgment scene; cf. Daniel 12:1-2, Matthew 16:27, 25:31-46, John 5:28-29, Acts 17:30-31, Romans 2:5-10, 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10

20:11: great white throne: as authority and purity; Daniel 7:9, Matthew 19:28, Revelation 4:2, 16:7, 19:2

20:11: earth and sky fled away: Psalm 102:25-27, Isaiah 51:6, Haggai 2:6, Mark 13:31, 1 Corinthians 7:31-32, Hebrews 1:11-12, 12:26-28, 2 Peter 3:10, Revelation 6:12-14, 16:18-21

20:12: dead, great and small: everyone; Revelation 11:18, 13:15-16, 19:5, 18, Romans 14:10, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 2 Timothy 4:1, 1 Peter 4:5; as the resurrection, John 5:28-29, Acts 24:15, 1 Corinthians 15:20-57, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

20:12: books were opened: Psalms 69:28, 112:6, Daniel 7:10, Malachi 3:16, [1 Enoch 90:20, 2 Baruch 24:1, 4 Ezra 6:20]

20:12, 15: book of life: Exodus 32:32-33, Isaiah 4:3, Luke 10:20, Philippians 4:3, Revelation 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 21:27

20:13: sea, Death, Hades: sea as place of mystery, if lost at sea, could not receive proper burial; in ancient world, thus believed as place of wandering, homeless souls; Revelation 1:17-18, 6:8

20:13: gave up the dead: as in Revelation 20:12, indication of comprehensive completeness of judgment of all people: cf. above references, Ephesians 4:8, 1 John 3:1-3

20:13: dead judged...by what they had done: Psalm 62:12, Ecclesiastes 12:14, Romans 2:5-10, 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, Hebrews 4:13

20:14: Death, Hades thrown into lake of fire: destruction of death and the underworld; cf. Hosea 13:14, 1 Corinthians 15:23-26, 50-57

Revelation 21:1-22:21: The Bride in Glory

The grand moment has arrived; the end has come. John has seen the end of the whore Babylon in Revelation 17:1-19:10, the end of the beast and the false prophet of Revelation 13:1-16:20 in Revelation 19:11-21, the end of Satan, the one behind it all, in Revelation 20:1-10, and the final judgment of everyone and the condemnation of the ungodly to hell in Revelation 20:11-15. Jesus will now show John a beautiful picture of the wondrous glory awaiting the faithful, foreshadowed in Revelation 11:15-19, 16:17 and consistent with the promises of Romans 8:17-25, 2 Corinthians 2:9-10, and 2 Peter 3:13.

Revelation 21:1-8 set the tone for the rest of the passage. John will see the new heavens and the earth, the holy city, the new Jerusalem, the dwelling place of God and man, a place of life and joy, where all is new, assured by God in Christ for those who will drink freely of the water of life, inheriting the promises, full and unbroken association between God and redeemed mankind, where sin and its practitioners no longer exist.

In Revelation 21:9-27, John is shown the Bride as the holy city, the new Jerusalem, foreshadowed in Revelation 19:7-9. We are invited to see the contrast between the Bride, the new Jerusalem, and the whore Babylon, throughout. The city is described as having wondrous glory, expressed through heavenly light, twelve gates of pearl, a perfect cube of a city of great size, a wall, a city of gold, with twelve foundations of precious jewels (Revelation 21:9-21). The city has no temple in or heavenly lights to shine upon it, for God and the Lamb are its Temple and Light, and the nations and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it; its gates are never closed, since there is no night there, and nothing unclean is in it (Revelation 21:22-27).

In Revelation 22:1-5, the imagery shifts toward paradise, the river of water of life proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb, and the tree of life on both sides of the river, with the fruit that leads to the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:1-2). There is no curse there, the throne of God is there, and His servants shall see Him face to face (Revelation 22:3-5).

Revelation 22:6-21 serve to conclude the Revelation, assuring the reader/listener of the authority and authenticity of the prophecy, as well as the imminent fulfillment of what has been recorded. The words are not to be sealed up, unlike in the days of Daniel, since the time is near (Revelation 22:10; cf. Daniel 8:26, 10:14, 12:4, 9). The Lord attests to the prophecy; He is coming soon; the book should not at all be distorted by any later scribe on pains of the the plagues of Revelation (Revelation 22:11-19). The letter ends with the expectation of the Lord's return and a standard conclusion to a letter (Revelation 22:20-21).

Thus the canon of Scripture ends, and it does so in a spectacular fashion. All of the hopes and expectations built up since the beginning of Genesis find their fulfillment in the glorious vision of the Bride of Christ in her glory. The "new heavens and earth," a promise seen in Isaiah 65:13-25, 66:22-24, come about either from the conflagration (2 Peter 3:1-13) or the transformation (Romans 8:18-25) of the old. God is making all things new: this is the hope of the resurrection and life in the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20-58, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 4:16-18, 5:16-17, Philippians 3:20-21, Colossians 3:1-4). In this life, the people of God are reckoned as the new Jerusalem, envisioned previously in Isaiah 60:10-20 and Ezekiel 48:31-35, coming down from heaven: the ideal city built by God (Hebrews 11:10, 13-16), not the distortion of man at Babel or the shadow of old Jerusalem (Genesis 11:1-9, 1 Kings 11:36). God now dwells among His people, without a need for a temple, in a perfect cube, as expressed in a shadow in the Holy of Holies and the intended relationship between God and Israel (Leviticus 26:11-12, 1 Kings 6:20). Most of Revelation has featured God's judgments upon the nations; those that remain now fulfill the desire God had for Israel, that all the kings of the earth and nations would bring their glory into the city of God (Psalm 72:10-11, Isaiah 60:2-5). Finally, and ultimately, the end is as the beginning: as God made man in the Garden of Eden, through which a river ran and in which could be found the tree of life (Genesis 2:8-16, 3:22-24), so now, through the perspective of Ezekiel on the river in Ezekiel 47:1-12, man now can live in the presence of God in Christ forever, face to face, and drink of the water of the river of life and eat the fruit of the tree of life forevermore, images pointing to unbroken association between God in Christ and His redeemed people in the resurrection through the empowerment and enlightenment of the Spirit (cf. John 4:10-11, 7:38-39). The curse of mankind, leading to sin, death, and suffering, is no more, brought to nothing by the Tree of life on which the Savior was crucified and overthrown through His resurrection in power and the resurrection of the believers on that final day (Genesis 3:17, Romans 8:18-25, Galatians 3:13, Hebrews 12:22). The nations find their healing there; we find God's ultimate purpose in the Garden of Eden, in Abraham, Israel, the prophets, Jesus, and the church, all brought to complete fruition on the day of the glorification of the Bride, the church, the people of God, and their eternal home in the presence of God in the new heavens and the new earth!

Perhaps Revelation 22:6-21 seems incoherent, but it firmly assures us that these things will come to pass. The victory has been won in Christ; sin and death can be defeated through Him; the day is coming when God will redeem the body, release the creation from bondage, destroy death the final enemy, and God will be "all in all" (Romans 8:17-25, 1 Corinthians 15:20-28). The final day has not yet come, but it is coming; it is nearer now than it ever has been (Romans 13:11). We have every reason to trust in God's promises; as we can see, literally everything which God has been working on and toward will find their fulfillment and satisfaction on that great and glorious day. We do well to join with John and Christians throughout the ages in the grand cry: Amen! Come, Lord Jesus (Revelation 22:20)!

21:1-22:5: cf. 2 Corinthians 2:9-10

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21:1: Then I saw: seventh repetition since Revelation 19:1, opening final scene

21:1: new heaven and new earth: Isaiah 65:13-25, 66:22-24, [1 Enoch 45:4, 72:1, 91:16, 2 Baruch 32:6, 2 Esdras 7:75], 2 Peter 3:13

21:1: first heaven and first earth...passed away: either in conflagration, 2 Peter 3:1-13, or through restoration/transformation, Romans 8:17-25; Psalm 102:26, Isaiah 34:3-4, 51:4-6, 16, Revelation 6:14, 16:20, 20:11

21:1: sea: [*Sibylline Oracles* 5:447, *Ascension of Moses* 10:6]; as restless insubordination; Job 38:8-11, Psalm 89:9, Isaiah 57:20, Daniel 7:3, Habakkuk 2:14, Revelation 13:1, 20:13, 21:10

21:2: holy city, new Jerusalem: new as Greek *kainos*, new in kind; [Tobit 13:16-18, 2 Esdras 7:26, 10:44-59, 2 Baruch 4:2-6, *Sibylline Oracles* 5:420-427]; Isaiah 60:10-20, Ezekiel 48:31-35, Haggai 2:9, Matthew 5:14, Galatians 4:26, Hebrews 11:10, 13-16, 12:22-24; described in Revelation 21:9-21; contrast Revelation 11:2

21:2: coming down: note direction

21:2: prepared as bride...husband: Ephesians 5:22-33, Revelation 19:7-9

21:3: great voice: Revelation 16:17, 19:5

21:3: tabernacle: Greek *skene*, tent; Exodus 40:16-34, 1 Kings 8:10-11; of Jesus, John 1:14

21:3: He will dwell with them: expanded in Revelation 21:22-27; Isaiah 7:14 (Immanuel = God with us), Matthew 1:23

21:3: they...His peoples...God...their God: note plural of peoples, Genesis 17:5, Revelation 21:24, 26, 22:2; Leviticus 26:11-12, Song of Solomon 6:3, Isaiah 51:16, Jeremiah 31:33, Ezekiel 37:27

21:4: cf. Isaiah 25:8, 35:10, 51:11, 65:19-20, John 11:25, 1 Thessalonians 4:13, 2 Timothy 1:10, Revelation 7:17

21:5: One on the throne: the second time God the Father speaks in Revelation; cf. Revelation 1:8

21:5: making all things new: described in Revelation 22:1-5; Isaiah 43:18-19, 1 Corinthians 15:20-58, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 4:16-18, 5:16-17, Philippians 3:20-21, Colossians 3:1-4

21:5: words are faithful and true: expanded upon in Revelation 22:6-10; John 14:6

21:6: It is done!: expressed in Revelation 22:11-15; so Revelation 11:15-19, 16:17; John 19:30

21:6: Alpha and Omega: first and last letters of Greek alphabet; Revelation 1:8, 17-18, 22:13, 16

21:6: beginning and the end: Isaiah 41:4, 43:10, 44:6, 48:12, Romans 11:36, Ephesians 4:6

21:6: spring of the water of life: cf. Isaiah 55:1, Matthew 5:6, John 4:10, 14, 7:37-38, Revelation 22:1, 16-17

21:7: the one who conquers: John 16:33, Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26, 3:5, 3:12, 3:21, 5:5, 12:11

21:7: inherit: Matthew 19:29, 25:34, Hebrews 1:14, 1 Peter 1:4, 3:9

21:7: my son: as promise to David's descendants, 2 Samuel 7:14; in Christ, Psalm 89:27, Hebrews 1:5; to those that are Christ's, Romans 8:15-17, Galatians 3:26, Ephesians 1:14

21:8: cf. Psalm 145:20, Acts 19:19, Romans 1:18-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21, Revelation 22:18-19

21:8: fearful: "cowards" as better translation; Hebrews 10:38-39

21:8: sexually immoral: Greek *pornos*, often "fornicator," best "one performing sexually deviant behavior"; Romans 13:13, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, 6:9-11, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:3-5, Colossians 3:5-6

21:8: idolaters: as literal, 1 Corinthians 5:11, 6:9, 10:7, 21; as covetous/greedy, Ephesians 5:5

21:8: second death: Revelation 20:14-15

21:9-22:5: contrast of Bride with whore Babylon, Revelation 17:1-19:4

21:9: seven bowls: cf. Revelation 15:1-17:1; likely same angel as in Revelation 17:1, heightening contrast between Bride and whore

21:9: Bride, wife of Lamb: Revelation 19:7-9, 21:2; as the church, Romans 7:1-4, 2 Corinthians 11:2-3, Ephesians 5:22-33

21:10: in the Spirit: Revelation 1:10, 17:3

21:10: great, high mountain: Psalm 48:2, Isaiah 2:2, 48:18, Ezekiel 40:2-3, Daniel 2:34-35

21:11: glory of God...jasper: Romans 2:7, 5:2, 8:18, Colossians 1:27, 1 Thessalonians 2:12, 2 Thessalonians 2:14, Hebrews 2:10, 1 Peter 5:1, 10, Revelation 4:3; glory of God as theophany, presence of God (later Hebrew *Shekinah*), Exodus 16:10, 40:34, Leviticus 9:23, Numbers 14:10, 1 Kings 8:11, Ezekiel 11:23, 43:2-5

21:11: her light: Greek *phoster*, as heavenly light (so Genesis 1:14 LXX, Philippians 2:15); as reflection of Christ, Matthew 5:14, Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Philippians 3:21, 2 Peter 1:19, 1 John 3:2

21:12: wall: Isaiah 26:1-3, 60:18, Zechariah 2:5

21:12: gates...twelve angels: Genesis 3:24, Isaiah 60:18, Ezekiel 48:30-35, Luke 13:29

21:14: cf. Psalm 120:1-2, Matthew 5:14, 23:8-10, 28:18, 1 Corinthians 1:13, 3:11, 4:15, Ephesians 2:20, Hebrews 9:15, 11:40, James 1:18

21:15: measuring rod of gold: Proverbs 16:16, Ezekiel 40:2-3, Revelation 11:1

21:16: foursquare: cube considered as most perfect geometric form (so in terms of virtue, Plato *Protagoras* 339B, Aristotle *Nichomachean Ethics* 1.10.11, *Rhetoric* 3.11); altar as cube, Exodus 27:1, 28:16, 30:2; as Most Holy Place, 1 Kings 6:20; in vision of new Jerusalem and Temple, Ezekiel 41:4, 21, 43:16, 45:2, 48:20

21:16: 12,000 stadia: 1,380 miles/2,221 kilometers for a total area of 2,250,000 square miles; as 12 (religious completion) x 1,000 (indeterminately large)

21:17: 144 cubits: approximately 216 feet/72 meters, as 12 x 12

21:18: city of gold: Job 23:10, Zechariah 13:9, Malachi 3:3, 1 Peter 1:7, Revelation 3:18; cf. Josephus, *Wars of the Jews* 5.5.6 for comparison with Herod's Temple

21:19-21: jewels of foundation: Isaiah 54:11-12, Malachi 3:16-17, [Tobit 13:16]; as engraved stones on Urim and Thummim, Exodus 28:17-20; as associated with Eden, Ezekiel 28:13-14

21:19: jasper: Revelation 4:3, 21:11, 18

21:19: sapphire: as lapis lazuli; Exodus 24:10

21:20: sardius: Revelation 4:3

21:20: topaz: Job 28:19

21:21: pearl: Matthew 13:45-46

21:21: street of city: perhaps as way of life, Proverbs 4:18, Isaiah 35:8

21:22: its temple the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb: God as Lord, cf. 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; God as Temple, John 1:14, 2:19-21, Ephesians 2:22; church as Temple because of Spirit's presence, 1 Corinthians 3:14-16, Ephesians 2:20-21, 1 Timothy 3:15, Hebrews 3:6, 1 Peter 2:5

21:23-27: cf. Isaiah 60:3-21

21:23: light: Genesis 1:3, Psalms 27:1, 36:9, 139:12, Isaiah 60:19-20, John 1:4-5, 9, 8:12, 2 Corinthians 4:6, 14-16

21:24-27: cf. Isaiah 2:2-4, 11:12, 45:22, 49:6-7, 51:5, 55:5, 56:6-8, 66:19, Jeremiah 3:17, Daniel 7:14, Zephaniah 2:11, Zechariah 2:13, 8:20-23, 14:9, 16-17, [Tobit 13:11, 14:6, 1 Enoch 10:21, 48:4-5, Testament of Levi 18:9, Testament of Naphtali 8:3-4, Testament of Asher 7:3, *Sibylline Oracles* 3:710-723, Psalms of Solomon 17:34], Revelation 5:9, 7:9

21:24: kings of earth...their glory: Psalm 72:10-11, Isaiah 52:15, 60:2-5

21:25: gates: Isaiah 60:11; past time of Luke 13:25

21:27: cf. Luke 10:20, Philippians 4:3, Hebrews 12:23, Revelation 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, 15, 22:19

22:1: river of water of life: Genesis 2:8-16, Psalm 46:4, Ezekiel 47:1-12, Joel 3:18, Zechariah 14:8, [2 Enoch 8:5], John 4:10-11, 7:38, Revelation 22:17; as consistent with fountain of life, Psalm 36:9, Proverbs 10:11, 13:14, 14:27, 16:22, Jeremiah 2:13, 17:13, [1 Enoch 96:6], Revelation 7:17, 21:6

22:1: bright as crystal: Revelation 4:6

22:1: flowing from throne: Isaiah 44:3, Ezekiel 36:25-27, John 4:10-14, 7:37-39

22:1: God and the Lamb: merger and mixture of the two: Ephesians 5:5, Revelation 5:6, 13, 6:16, 7:10, 17

22:2: tree of life: Genesis 2:9, 3:22-24, Psalm 1:3, Proverbs 3:18, 11:30, 12:28, 15:4, Jeremiah 17:8, Ezekiel 47:12, Revelation 2:7; as cross of Christ, Acts 5:30, 10:39, 13:29, Galatians 3:13, 1 Peter 2:24

22:2: twelve kinds of fruits: Galatians 2:22-24

22:2: leaves: Ezekiel 17:22-23, 31:4-6, Daniel 4:11-12, Matthew 13:31-32

22:2: healing of the nations: Ezekiel 47:12, Malachi 4:2, Revelation 20:14

22:3: anything accursed: Genesis 3:17, 4:11, 12:3, 27:29, Deuteronomy 27:15-26, 28:15-68, Zechariah 14:11, Romans 8:18-25, Galatians 3:13, Hebrews 12:22, Revelation 21:4

22:4: see His face: contrast John 1:18, 1 John 4:12; Exodus 33:20-23, 34:29-35, Matthew 5:8, 18:10, John 14:8-9, 1 Corinthians 13:12, Hebrews 12:14, 1 John 3:1-3, Revelation 4:2-11; "see His face" as being presented before one, cf. Genesis 43:3, 5, Exodus 10:28-29

22:4: name on their foreheads: Revelation 3:11-12, 7:2-8, 14:1

22:5: light: 1 Timothy 6:16, Revelation 21:23-24

22:5: reign...forever and ever: Romans 5:17, Revelation 5:10, 20:4

22:6: trustworthy and true: Revelation 3:14, 19:9-11; consider threefold testimony of God, Christ, mediating angels, Revelation 1:1, 22:6, 16

22:6: God of the spirits of the prophets: Deuteronomy 18:18, Acts 1:16, Hebrews 12:9, 1 Peter 1:11, 21

22:6, 7, 12, 20: shortly come to pass/coming soon: note emphasis; Luke 18:8, Acts 12:7, 25:4, 22:18, Romans 16:20, Hebrews 10:36-37, James 5:7-9, 1 Peter 4:7, Revelation 1:1, 2:16, 3:11

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22:7, 14: blessed: final two of the seven beatitudes of Revelation; cf. Revelation 1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6; James 1:25, Hebrews 5:8-9; sixth as echoing the first, helping to bring Revelation to a close

22:8-9: cf. Revelation 19:10

22:8: I, John: as attestation, John 19:35, 1 John 1:1-3

22:10: do not seal: contrast Daniel 8:26, 10:14, 12:4, 9, Revelation 10:4

22:11: cf. Ezekiel 3:27, Daniel 12:10, Hosea 4:17, Matthew 7:6, 12:33, 15:14, John 3:18-21, Romans 1:18-32, 2 Corinthians 7:1, 2 Timothy 3:13, Hebrews 6:1

22:12: reward: Greek *misthos*, pay, wages, recompense, as in Matthew 6:2-4, 5-6, 16-18, 20:8, John 4:36, Acts 1:18, James 5:4, 2 Peter 2:13, 15, Revelation 11:18

22:12: to render to each man according to his work: Matthew 16:27, 25:31-46, Romans 2:6-10, Ephesians 6:8, Colossians 3:25, 1 Peter 1:17, Revelation 20:13

22:13: Alpha and Omega: cf. Revelation 1:8, 17, 21:6; John 17:5, 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, Hebrews 1:10-12

22:13: First and the Last: Isaiah 43:10, 44:6, 48:12, Revelation 2:8

22:13: beginning and the end: Isaiah 40:14, 25, Revelation 21:6

22:14: wash their robes: some manuscripts, "do His commandments" (℞, some Syriac, Bohairic manuscripts, Tertullian), similar phrases in Greek; Hebrews 9:14, Revelation 7:14

22:14: tree of life: Revelation 22:2

22:14: enter city by the gates: Psalm 118:19, John 10:9, Revelation 21:10-18; as obedient to God, Matthew 19:17, 28:20, Luke 6:46, John 8:31, 1 John 2:3-4, Revelation 19:8

22:15: outside: cf. "outer darkness," Matthew 8:12; Revelation 21:8, 27

22:15: dogs: Philippians 3:2, 2 Peter 2:20-22; as male temple prostitutes, Deuteronomy 23:18, hence, pejorative for those involved in homosexual behavior

22:16: root and descendant of David: 2 Samuel 7:12-16, Psalm 132:11, Isaiah 11:1, 10/Romans 15:12, Isaiah 53:2, Jeremiah 23:5, Ezekiel 34:24, 37:24-26, Matthew 22:42, Mark 12:35-37, Revelation 5:5

22:16: bright morning star: Numbers 24:17, Job 38:32, Psalm 130:6-7, 2 Peter 1:19, Revelation 2:28

22:17: Spirit: Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29, 3:6, 13, 22

22:17: come: three witness (Spirit, bride, reader), perhaps to Christ to come or to the actor (the thirsty); Deuteronomy 19:15, Matthew 18:16, 2 Corinthians 13:1, 1 Timothy 5:19, 1 John 5:7-8, Revelation 11:3

22:17: water of life without price: Isaiah 55:1, John 6:35, 7:37-39, Revelation 21:6

22:18-19: note restriction to *book of this prophecy*, as warning to later scribes and copyists; Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32, 18:20-22, Proverbs 30:5-6, [1 Enoch 104:10, *Letter of Aristeas* 310-311], Galatians 1:6-9, Revelation 18:8, 19:20, 21:8, [Eusebius' quotation of Irenaeus, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.20.2]

22:19: book of life: Revelation 3:5, 20:11-15

22:20: Come: Aramaic *Marana tha*, cf. 1 Corinthians 16:22; Matthew 24:42-47, 28:20, Hebrews 4:16, 2 Peter 3:10-12

22:21: grace of Lord Jesus be with all: here and in Revelation 1:4; epistolary conclusion; cf. 1 Corinthians 16:23, 2 Corinthians 13:14, Galatians 6:18, Ephesians 6:24, Philippians 4:23, Colossians 4:18, 1 Thessalonians 5:28, 2 Thessalonians 3:18, 1 Timothy 6:21, 2 Timothy 4:22, Titus 3:15, Hebrews 13:25