

The Book of Revelation

A Commentary on the Greek Text

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Pumpkin Cottage Publications
Exegetical Commentaries on the New Testament Greek Text
21. The Book of Revelation
2021
ISBN 978-0-6489888-2-3 eBook PDF
1. Bible - N.T. - Commentaries. 1. Title

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Preface



I grew up in Killara, a leafy suburb of Sydney on the northern railway line. It had three shops, a community hall, kindergarten, primary school, Scouts hall, playing fields and parks, and three churches. I started out in the Church of England and then migrated to the Congregational church after being bashed up at Sunday school one day. I was finally forced back to the CofE church for Confirmation when I was

fourteen years old. In those days, every CofE teenager was Confirmed - it was like a coming out parade. My father was Presbyterian, but the Presbyterian church was a little wooden building in a state of total disrepair, and of little attraction to my mother. My mother was CofE, Christmas and Easter, which was about the level of her attendance. So, my parents were nominal Christian, as were most Australians at this time. Typical of the time, their moral compass was the Ten Commandments and the teachings of Jesus, especially, "do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

My earliest memory of the CofE priest was of an elderly man called Reverend Charlton. He always wore a cassock around town, even at the Sunday School picnic where we would chase him and tug on his cassock to get sweets from him. My mother said he was past it because he always prayed for the late King rather than Queen Elizabeth. Then came Reverend Fox, affectionately known as *Foxie*; he too wore his cassock around town. Here they were, dressed in the garb of an English Vicar, a garb that dates back to the middle ages, doing what an English Vicar has done for centuries. And there was I sitting in the midst of this unchanged world, Western Civilization, the font for which was the teachings of Christ.

Today, I can hardly recognize the society of my childhood. In many ways I feel like John, trapped firmly in a pagan world, the church struggling and compromised, with no sign of Christ's return. In some ways I feel like Augustine as he witnessed the sack of Rome in 410AD and the disintegration of Christian culture. Over a period of some fifty years, I have witnessed the destruction of Christendom, not from without, but from within. Marxist ideology has permeated the West, replacing Christ's "do unto others" with the oppressive ideal of equity in diversity. Capitalism, now without its moral compass, has replaced the

customer first, staff second and shareholder third model with *the bottom-line* model. Executive pay-rates have exploded, employees squeezed and integrity devalued. "I think and it is true" has replaced "I think and therefore I am." We are witnessing the same secular polarization in politics and academia that was evident in Germany and Russia in the early twentieth century, and we all know where that ended up.

Worst of all, the church is increasingly adapting to the secular ideology of our age. The recent plebiscite in Australia on Gay Marriage was lost well before the vote was taken, but the greater concern was the large number of church leaders who felt compelled to argue for diversity against Biblical truth. Gay couples have as much claim to the grace of God as any person, but that doesn't make homosexual sex (nor adulterous sex) either natural or moral. The West is increasingly in the hands of progressive politicians, activists, and academia, but it is the secularization of the church, the adoption of secular ideology, syncretism, that is the far greater problem. In my own branch of the Anglican church, we Evangelical Anglicans increasingly adopt marketing strategies to incorporate people into the Christian fellowship rather than depend on gospel communication in the highways and byways of the secular city.

So, John, in the Revelation, addresses our world situation. The Christian church is an institution increasingly distrusted by the wider society. Yes, some of it is of our own making, but irrespective of our failings, negative sentiment is growing. We are also a church compromised by secular ideology and so we are shifting in our commitment to the apostolic gospel. To this situation John brings a word from Christ, reminding us that it is time for us to assess our Christian walk, our strengths and weakness, and face our failings square on. To enable us to press forward in faith, John takes us into the heavenlies to view the divine perspective of reality. And guess what, Satan's play-thing, the secular city (Babylon, the beasts and their associates, the antichrist) lies in ruin, the day of judgment is already underway, Christ has won the victory, celebrations are in full-swing. If we are to share in the celebrations and reign with Christ then we must turn again to Christ ("repent") and press forward in faith (persevere, endure, "conquer").

It is my hope that these notes aid your task of knowing the mind of Christ.

Bryan Findlayson, 2021.

*

Notes

Commentary Intention: This exegetical commentary aims to provide a foundation for expository preaching, assisting fellow pastors with *rusty* Greek to come to grips with the text. The Greek level is college years 2/3, with a focus on syntax to aid an understanding of the text - accents are only used where necessary. Highly technical issues are avoided, with the exposition primarily guided by the expressed views of respected published commentators. Where possible, the commentary is structured to conform with the readings of the Revised Common Lectionary.

Format: RCL study units - synopsis, context, structure, interpretation, homiletical suggestion and exegesis: the Greek word or phrase; a limited parsing; the English text (NIV and/or NIV11); a literal English translation (TNGEI, Accordance, Louw & Nida); syntax where necessary; comment, often with a published translation.

Copyright: No copyright provision covers this commentary, nor is citing expected. Where citing is required for academic purposes; Findlayson, *The Book of Revelation; A Commentary on the Greek Text, 2021*.

Abbreviations: See Series Addendum.

Print: Format; A5. For mono laser "render colour black."

Greek: Nestle-Aland / UBS 4 Greek New Testament.

Greek Glossary; See Series Addendum.

Inclusive language: Numerous older translations and paraphrases are used throughout the studies to enhance the meaning of the text. Latitude is given to sexist language, although alterations are sometimes made to the original text.

Primary English Text Bible: The New International Version, NIV, 1985, and / or NIV11, 2011, copyright by International Bible Societies and published by The Zondervan Corporation. All rights reserved worldwide. The full text is not provided under copyright requirements and it is recommended that a copy of the NIV be at hand when consulting these notes.

Author: Findlayson, Bryan. Anglican Diocese of Sydney, Australia. b 1942. MTC. ThL 1970, MC Dip (Hons) 1971; P 1972 by Abp Syd; C Narrabeen 1971; C Cronulla 1972-1975; C Engadine. 1975-1978; CIC Helensburgh 1978-89; Sabbatical 1989-1990; R Cronulla 1990-1999; Retired.

Dedication: To my children, Marelle, Paul and Justyne.

Typos: Forgive me! I keep finding clangers, but at some point you have to give up.

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Key:

Level of complexity: **1**, non-technical, to **5**, requiring a knowledge of Greek.

Deceased: **D**. For publications no longer in print, search bookfinder.com

Other identifiers: Recommended **R**; Greek Technical **G**; Theology **T**

The above is only a selection of some of the English Bible Commentaries on Revelation

Analysis

Prologue, 1:1-20

- i] Greeting, doxology and prophetic sayings, 1:1-8
- ii] John's vision of the risen Christ in Patmos, 1:9-20

The letters to the seven churches, 2:1-3:22

The Christian church, compromised and struggling to survive

- i] Ephesus, 2:1-7
- ii] Smyrna, 2:8-11
- iii] Pergamum, 2:12-17
- iv] Thyatira, 2:18-29
- v] Sardis, 3:1-6
- vi] Philadelphia, 3:7-13
- vii] Laodicea, 3:14-22

The vision of God and the Lamb, 4:1-5:14

- i] Adoration of the Creator, 4:1-11
- ii] Adoration of the Lamb, 5:1-10
- iii] Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, 5:11-14

The messianic judgments, 6:1-16:21

The heavenly perspective: in Christ's victory judgment is complete

1. The judgment of the seven seals, 6:1-8:5

- i] The opening of the first four seals, 6:1-8
- ii] The opening of the fifth seal, 6:9-11
- iii] The opening of the sixth seal, 6:12-17
- iv] *Interlude:*
 - a) The sealing of God's servants, 7:1-8
 - b) The Lamb is the shepherd, 7:9-17
- v] The opening of the seventh seal, 8:1-5

2. The judgment of the seven trumpets, 8:6-11:18

- i] Sounding the first four trumpets, 8:6-13
- ii] Sounding the fifth trumpet, 9:1-12
- iii] Sounding the sixth trumpet, 9:13-21
- iv] *Interlude:*
 - a) The mighty angel and his scroll, 10:1-11
 - b) The two witnesses, 11:1-14
- v] Sounding the seventh trumpet, 11:15-18

3. The battle with the beasts. 11:19-15:4

The divine protection of God's people in conflict with evil

- i] God's people are secure, 11:19
- ii] The woman and the dragon, 12:1-6
- iii] War in heaven, 12:7-17
- iv] The beast from the sea, 12:18-13:10
- v] The beast from the land, 13:11-18
- vi] The triumph of the redeemed and the Lamb, 14:1-5
- vii] The church militant, 14:6-13
- viii] Life and judgment, 14:14-20
- ix] The saints are triumphant, 15:1-4

4. The judgment of the seven bowls, 15:5-16:21

- i] The angels prepare for judgment, 15:5-8
- ii] The outpouring of the first four bowls, 16:1-9
- iii] The outpouring of the fifth and sixth bowl, 16:10-16
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The reign of Christ, 17:1-22:5

1. The ruin of the harlot Babylon, 17:1-19:10

The self-destruction of antichrist's kingdom

"Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute"

- i] The great harlot, Babylon, 17:1-6a
- ii] The beast, the harlot and the ten kings, 17:6b-18
- iii] The judgment of Babylon, 18:1-8
- iv] The three woes - a lament for Babylon, 18:9-19>
- v] Babylon remembered, 18:20-24
- vi] The marriage of the Lamb - vindication, 19:1-10

Interlude:

The demise of the Beast, 19:11-21:8.

- i] The coming king and his armies, 19:11-16
- ii] The defeat of the beasts, 19:17-21
- iii] The millennial bondage of Satan, 20:1-3
- iv] The millennial reign of the saints and defeat of Gog, 20:4-10
- v] The final judgment, 20:11-15
- vi] New heavens and a new earth, 21:1-8

2. The dawning of the City of God, 21:9-22:5

The revelation of the bride of Christ, the new creation, the city of God

"Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb"

- i] The new Jerusalem, 21:9-21
- ii] Paradise regained, 21:22-22:5

Epilogue, 22:6-21

- i] General testimonies to Christ, 22:6-11
- ii] The testimony of Jesus, 22:12-21

Introduction

We are not sure who wrote the Revelation, although early tradition holds that John the apostle was the author. It is written as a letter with associated apocalyptic visions using conventional symbols of the time. It makes particular reference to seven churches in the Roman province of Asia in western Asia Minor, but of course, its message is applicable to all Christian churches, both then and today.

John calls his work a "prophecy". His prophecy addresses the Christian church, a church compromised by adapting to secular culture and drifting in its commitment to the apostolic gospel. He therefore announces to the church that "the kingdom of God is at hand." In John's prophetic perspective, the kingdom is realized; the Great Day of the Lord is upon us, the day of judgment at hand - it is unfolding before our very eyes. Given this reality, it is time for the church to face its many sins and repent, for it is only those who "conquer", those who persevere in faith, who will be saved.

Structure

The structure of the book of Revelation is an ongoing matter of debate, but one of the more suggestive and widely accepted models is the one developed by Farrer, *A Rebirth of Images*, 1949. He argues that the structure is sabbatical; six groupings of seven followed by a sabbath rest, the sabbath rest of God, the new Jerusalem, Rev.21-22. This approach is interesting, but somewhat of a stretch when it comes to the fine details. None-the-less, something like Farrer's structure is evident.

The Revelation begins with **The Prologue**, 1:1-20 (possibly just v1-8), and ends with **The Epilogue**, 22:6-21. In the prologue John establishes his thesis:

The kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the gospel

Following the prologue, we have **The Letters to the Seven Churches**, 2:1-3:22.

In 4:1-5:14 we have John's inaugural vision of heaven, **The Vision of God and the Lamb** - the kingdom come. The Christian community may be struggling and compromised, but it is not the powers of darkness who rule in this age.

Then follows **The Messianic Judgments**, 6:1-16:21. The first block of seven, *The Judgment of the Seven Seals*, presents as heavenly visions, 6:1-8:1. This is where it becomes complex because, instead of placing a *digressio* / hymnic interlude at the end of the 7 visions, John places it between the sixth and seventh vision, with the seventh vision serving to lead

into the next block of seven, *The Judgment of the Seven Trumpets*, 8:2-11:18. The judgment of the seven trumpets gets the same treatment between the sixth and seventh trumpet, although not the next block, *The Judgment of the Seven Bowls*, 15-16.

Between the Seven Trumpets and the Seven Bowls is *The Battle with the Beasts*, 11:19-15:4. This section expands on the theme developed in the Interludes #1 and 2: 7:1-17; 10:1-11:14, namely, "the people of God in their conflict with the forces opposed to God."

Then follows **The Reign of Christ** in two visionary blocks, the two cities, namely, Babylon and the New Jerusalem - *The Ruin of the Harlot Babylon* and *The Dawning of the City of God*: 17:1-3 parallels 21:9-10, and 19:9-10 parallels 22:6-9. Between these two blocks is a *digressio* / interlude - *The Demise of the Beast*, 19:11-21:8. This prophecy deals with the transition between the fall of Babylon and creation of the New Jerusalem.

The Revelation ends with **The Epilogue**, 22:6-21.

Thesis

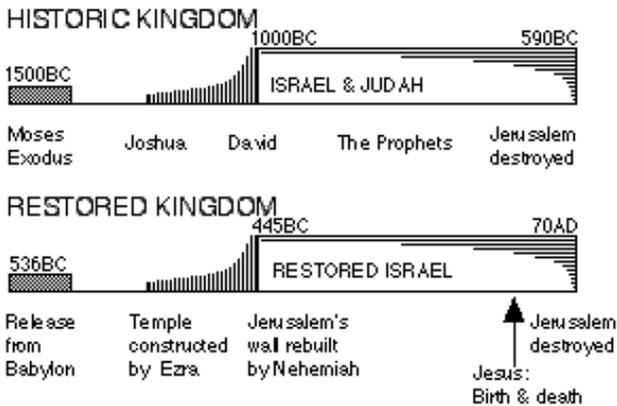
The kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the gospel

The experience of God's people in the here and now stands in contrast to another reality, the eternal reign of Christ, 4:1-5:14. The gospel proclaims the reality of the kingdom of God / the reign of God; in this reality grace is all - new life in Christ expedited by Christ. From our perspective, Christ is the slain Lamb, but if we look past the fog of earthly strife, we may see him on his throne, the glorious Lion, the reigning one. So, there is another reality which stands in contrast to the experience of God's people, namely, the messianic judgment, 6:1-20:15. The seals are broken and the powers of darkness, Babylon, the Beast and his associates, are already judged and lay in ruin; their threats are but the death-rattles of a wild beast. Beyond the day of judgment there is another reality which stands in contrast to the experience of God's people, namely, the glory for which we hope. The city of God, the new Jerusalem, is a glory which is even now taking shape before our eyes, 21:1-22:5.

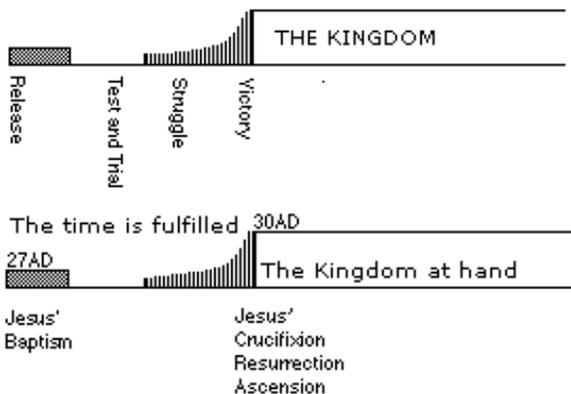
In the seven letters to the churches, 2:1-3:2, we see the Christian fellowship *warts and all*. It stands at the crossroads of history, of God's *now / not yet* reign, compromised in the face of a hostile environment. Yet the church, which has survived to this moment of time between the cross and Christ's return, will soon share in "what must soon take place", 1:1. To this end the church must repent and persevere in faith - it must "conquer".

The prophetic perspective

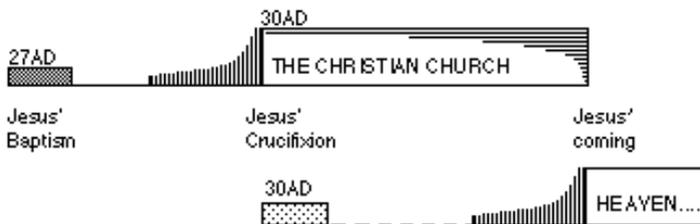
John, in his revelation from Christ, confronts us with the reality of the Great Day of the Lord, a day of blessing / glory, a day of cursing / disaster / judgment, a day for the full realization of the kingdom of God. John draws us into the imagery of the prophets of the historic kingdom (eg., Ezekiel and his apocalyptic visions), who, on looking back to the shallow victory won by David, proclaims that the Great Day was a day of disaster for their age. Yes, Goliath had fallen, but the sinful state of the people of Israel pointed to another Day. There would have to be a new David, a new messiah for a new kingdom, a new Zion. The prophets of the restored kingdom proclaimed the same message to the people of Israel (eg., Zechariah in his apocalyptic visions) - a Day that is still coming. Nehemiah's kingdom was no Great Day of the Lord, it was but a shadow of the historic kingdom; its temple an embarrassment



The gospel proclaims that *the time is fulfilled*, the victory is won, the kingdom come; it proclaims that the Great Day is upon us, that the powers of darkness are subdued, the great Satan defeated by a cross, and glory won by an empty tomb. Faced with the risen Christ, the disciples were forced to conclude that *the kingdom of God is upon us*; the Great Day is at hand.



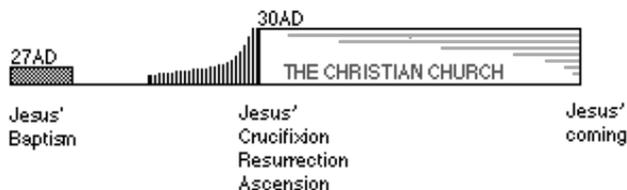
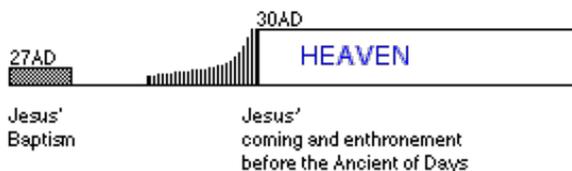
Yet, the disciples of Christ soon discovered another reality. If the cross and empty tomb proclaim the victory, the kingdom come, the Great Day won, where is the glory in full measure? Is the New Testament church just another repeated image of a future reality? The answer is "yes and no." The Christian community is indeed caught in a fading age, facing *interesting times*, but it is also on a journey, in like manner to the children of Israel all those years before. So, the church faces struggle as it awaits its Armageddon, a battle for which victory is assured, a *not yet*. Even so, this is not the end of the story.



Through his apocalyptic visions, John confronts us with two realities, an eschatology with is inaugurated, as well realized - the *not yet* reality of God's kingdom, and its *now* reality (illustrated by the two images below).

In terms of the kingdom *now*, we join John in the throne-room of the Ancient of Days to witness an exuberant celebration and affirmation of the divine. The Great Day of the Lord is come, the reign of God is realized, and the Lamb that was slain, the Lion of Judah is breaking open the seals, the trumpets are blowing, the beasts destroyed and the bowls spilt. The harlot of Babylon is in ruin and the New Jerusalem, the city of God, resides in all her glory. The kingdom is *now* and so we find ourselves reigning with Christ in eternity.

A KINGDOM NOW and NOT YET



John confronts us with this dichotomy by means of apocalyptic imagery. Although its time frame is linear, apocalyptic makes the impact of the visions immediate. John's present experience may well be the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70 with the tyrannical power of Rome even now impacting on his seven churches. These troubles serve as a paradigm for a greater tribulation, that of the last day. For John, and for his readers, the last day is a future day framed by their present experience, a day that is even now impacting upon them.

The following image illustrates the perspective of John's prophecies, how in the eye of the prophet the *not yet* imposes itself on the *now*.



In this fading age, this fluttering of God's eyelid, this moment in eternity, the secular city is like a beast in its death-throws, dangerous but done. If we look beyond our immediate experience, the Whore of Babylon is in ruins and the City of God stands before us in all her glory. If we are to share in this glory we must conquer - we must repent and persevere in faith.

Interpretive Approaches

When it comes to interpreting the signs unveiled in the Revelation, a number of approaches have emerged over the years. The following classifications may be helpful, although they can only serve as a guide:

Historicist: With this approach, the visions are equated with events in our present age, ie., 70AD to the return of Christ. The Reformers tended to adopt this method of interpretation, eg., the Antichrist is identified with the Pope. In later times, Napoleon was identified as the antichrist, and in the early twentieth century it was Hitler. Few recognized commentators accept this method today.

Preterist: With this approach, the visions, signs and symbols are aligned with events at the time the book was written, ie., it describes past events as if they were prophecy. There are two main groups. The first group holds that the book was written late in the 1st. century. For them, the book is all about the Roman Empire, "Babylon the Great", the persecutor of the Christian church, an empire destined to destruction; see the commentaries by Charles and Sweet for this approach. The second group holds that the book was written, or purports to be written, prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, and so the book addresses the rejection of the Messiah, the persecution of the church and the destruction of Jerusalem; see Kraybill, *Apocalypse Now*, Christianity Today, 1999.

Idealist: This approach spiritualizes the visions, taking them to refer to all periods of history such that they allude to no specific events in history. So, the book describes the symbolic battle of good against evil, of the church struggling, and at time victorious, through the ages; see the commentaries by Hendriksen and Hughes. Some who fall into this camp do, at the same

time, see a consummation of all things in Revelation, an ultimate salvation and judgment at the return of Christ; see the commentary by Beale.

Futurist: In this approach to the book of Revelation, the visions from chapter 4 onward are viewed as predictive, symbolically describing events leading up to the last day. This approach presents in two main forms. The first, dispensationalism, either pre-millennial, or post-millennial. This approach is very popular, but is not widely accepted by New Testament scholars. The restoration of Israel, the rebuilding of the temple, the rapture, etc., are all elements central to this approach. The second is a less predictive form which doesn't strictly define the series of events leading to the end. With this approach the visions speak of Christ's return after the church (not Israel) has suffered in the tribulation; see the commentaries by Mounce, Osborne and Beasley-Murray.

Modern commentators, including those listed as proponents of a particular approach to the book of Revelation, tend often to be lateral (eclectic!), rather than linear. So, for example, Beale says of himself that he is a "modified idealist", Koester, on the other hand, rejects such classifications, but he is usually viewed as a preterist-idealist. Modern commentators display, in varying degrees, a blend of preterist, idealist and futurist.

These notes reflect an eclectic approach to interpretation, in the greater part idealist, even theological, such that John's words are treated as a divine revelation for all believers throughout the ages. Yet, at the same time, they may also be classified as preterist and futurist. Although the words of a prophet will apply to future generations, they are primarily addressed to their own generation. It is the struggle of his own generation that John addresses (ie., preterist), but their struggle serves as a paradigm for our struggle (ie., idealist). When John addresses the troubles affecting his churches, he does so within the context of the troubles that will engulf the world at the end of the age, the troubles associated with the Great Day of the Lord (ie., futurist).

So, the players in John's apocalyptic revelation have performed in his past, in his present, in our present and in the future. Take Babylon, the corrupt evil city, with its associates, the Beast ("satanically-manipulated political power", Richardson) and the Prophet (beast from the land = "Satanically-manipulated ideologies", Richardson) = Antichrist / Gog. The historic Babylon was all this, as was Babel before it, and now they are nothing. For John, Rome, the Emperor and the instruments of the State, are all this, and will soon be nothing. We today, witnessing the collapse of Western civilization as it abandons its founding principles, the teachings of Christ, know well that the secular city will soon be

nothing. And into the coming ages it will always be so until, at Armageddon, Satan and his associates end up as nothing.

As for the Christian community of John's day, so today, we dance with the devil; some members remain true, but most are compromised. This situation must be addressed, for the day of judgment is now and God's eternal city is already before us. In this fading age, compromised by the secular city, Christ calls on his church to repent and persevere in faith.

Theological Aim

Many aims are suggested, eg., Sweet argues that John is addressing the materialism and idolatry affecting 1st. century Christianity, and so to this end he argues for the uniqueness of Christ and the need to be faithful to the end. Beale, on the other hand, thinks John is calling for a faithful witness in the face of the temptation to compromise belief and action under the pressure of a godless pagan society, ie., the problem of secularization. Smalley thinks "the seer's chief concern is to present a drama about God's salvation through his judgment to a community which was itself infected with falsehood." Smalley argues that John's community, based in Ephesus, was torn on the doctrine of the humanity and deity of Christ, leaning toward either a Ebionitic stance, or pre-gnostic / docetic stance.

We are on safer ground if we accept that the Revelation can only properly be interpreted under the guiding principle of the gospel. Without a focus on the gospel, speculative and fanciful interpretations dominate. John's aim is the **εὐαγγέλιον**, the "important news", that "the kingdom of God is at hand" - the full appropriation of the promised blessings of the covenant is now ours / life eternal is now ours, as a gift of grace through faith in the faithfulness of Christ. This reality is *now* and *not yet* / realized and inaugurated. This reality demands that we turn to Christ (repent) and rest on him in faith (persevere, conquer). See *The Gospel in Revelation*, Goldsworthy, 1994.

Authorship

Most modern scholars agree with Dionysius, the bishop of Alexandria in the third century, who argued that John, the author of Revelation, is not John the apostle, the author of the gospel of John and the epistles of John. He made three points: First, John the prophet, the author of Revelation, makes no claim that he is John the son of Zebedee, brother of James, etc. The name John is a common name. Second, there is strong affinity in thought and language between the gospel and the epistles of John, but little between them and the book of Revelation. Third, the Greek in the gospel and epistles of John is faultless, but the Greek in Revelation is crude.

Of course, this argument proceeds from the assumption that the gospel and epistles of John are from the hand of John the apostle, the beloved disciple. As the gospel says of itself, the author of the gospel is a person who edits the tradition he has received from John, the beloved disciple, cf., Jn.21:24, "we know that his testimony is true." The gospel is Hellenistic in thought and well written, while Revelation is Semitic, highly influenced by the Old Testament, and poorly written. An Aramaic fisherman is more likely to write in poor Greek, and think like a Jew.

Still, it should be noted that the difference in thought between the gospel and revelation is not as great as Dionysius claimed, eg., "the Word of God", "the Lamb of God", etc. Then there is the tradition that it was John the apostle who exercised authority over Asia Minor from his base at Ephesus, not John the prophet. The early church fathers ascribed the book to John the apostle, eg., Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian. Eusebius, referring to the writings of Papias, argues that the book was from the hand of John the Elder, but Eusebius is quite possibly misunderstanding what Papias was saying. Papias often refers to the apostles as elders. As it stands, there seems no substantial reason to discount the tradition that the Revelation was from the hand of John the beloved disciple.

Maybe we should lean toward Kiddle who noted in his Moffatt commentary published in 1940, that "the authorship of the Revelation may prove the one mystery of the book which will never be revealed in this world."

Date

Noting our friend Dionysius again, he argued that the Revelation should not be interpreted in a literal sense. This is a widely held view among those commentators who tend to be amillennial in their approach to the book - more theological than historical. Trying to work out the date of writing by identifying which Roman emperor identifies with the remaining king of the antichristian empire is fraught, cf., 17:10ff.

Persecution is often viewed as the context within which the book was written. The first major persecution of the Christian church was at the end of the reign of Nero, around 68AD. The second major persecution inflicted on the Christian church was toward the end of the reign of Domitian, around 95AD. This period of persecution was widespread and fits well with John being punished for being a Christian minister. Irenaeus, writing in the latter part of the second century, held the view that Revelation was written during the reign of Domitian. Sweet sums up the majority of modern scholars when he says "to sum up, the earlier date may be right, but the internal evidence is not sufficient to outweigh the firm tradition stemming from Irenaeus."

Although persecution is viewed as the context for Revelation, a fair reading of the seven letters does not evidence widespread persecution. A latter date may

be preferred by most scholars, but the internal and external evidence gives support to an earlier date. Smalley suggests a date just before the fall of Jerusalem when Titus was emperor of Rome. The lingering stains of Nero's pogrom, harassment of the church by Jewish authorities, a decline in fervour and a general adjustment to the secular environment, provides a compelling context for the writing of Revelation.

Literary Genre

Revelation, more than any other New Testament book, requires a recognition of the form of literature being employed. The text of the book moves from narrative, to poetry, from hymns to prose, oracles to apocalyptic visions, all requiring a recognition of the form of literature being used. Where literary forms are ignored, we end up with apocalyptic visions read as actual accounts of events yet to be fulfilled, eg., the millennium. The *prophecy-school* approach prompts age-long debates between postmillennialists (a 1,000-year reign of Christ prior to his second coming and the formation of the new heavens and new earth) and premillennialists (a 1,000-year reign of Christ after his second coming and before the formation of the new heavens and new earth). I fall into the amillennial camp, holding that the 1,000 years is nothing more than an image of this present age, an age which was initiated with the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, an age which will end at his return.

Of all the literary forms in Revelation, the most difficult to interpret is the apocalyptic texts. These texts align with a form of writing which was popular among the Jews from the second century BC into the first century AD. It was a particularly vivid way of expressing Biblical truths. The author would describe how they had received a revelation from God, often by an angel, and how they were instructed to write the revelation in a scroll for posterity. This revelation turns out to be weird and wonderful, requiring a divine explanation. See Leon Morris, *Apocalyptic*, IVF, 1972, and Bauckham, *The Climax of prophecy*, p38-91, T&T Clark, 1993.

Millennialism

A dispensationalist approach to the Revelation of John is widely accepted in some quarters. This view was popularized some years ago in Hal Lindsay's, *The Late Great Planet Earth*. In this view there is an immanent "coming [of Christ] for his saints" when believers are raptured. Jesus comes secretly and raises the dead and transfigures the living to himself in the air. This is the resurrection at the first coming of Christ. Then follows seven years when the world is evangelized, Israel converted, the great tribulation occurs and the Antichrist is revealed. After this, Jesus returns with his saints to judge the world and usher in his millennial

kingdom. For some, this kingdom is an eternal one, reigning over new heavens and new earth. For others it lasts for a thousand years. Those who believe in the millennial kingdom fall into two groups:

a) Premillennial. This view maintains the sequence of events above with the millennial kingdom centred in Jerusalem and a new temple, a kingdom ruled by Christ and his saints with great power and glory. The reign of the earthly kingdom ends when Satan is loosed for a time. He attacks the holy city, but is ultimately defeated and judged. This ushers in the new heavens and new earth.

b) Postmillennial. This view sometimes holds to a literal thousand years. "A period in the later days of the church militant, when, under the special influence of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of the martyrs shall appear again, true religion is greatly quickened and revived, and the members of Christ's churches become so conscious of their strength in Christ that they shall, to an extent unknown before, triumph over the power of evil both within and without", Strong. The return of Christ comes at the conclusion of this millennial kingdom.

The dispensational approach tends to proof-text scripture and so is more imposed than derived. One disastrous by-product of dispensational thought is that it encourages support for the state of Israel in its occupation, subjugation, and in some cases, persecution of the Palestinian people, 10% of whom are Christian.

Grammatical Note:

This corrected edition uses a descriptive classification for a genitive of source, rather than an ablative classification. See *A Note on the Genitive* in the **Series Addendum**, page 69.

Commentary

1:1-8

Prologue, 1:1-8

Greeting, doxology and prophetic sayings

Synopsis

Following a rather solemn introduction which serves as a kind of preface, v1-3, John relays a greeting to the reader from God [the Father], the Holy Spirit and Jesus, with particular reference to the seven churches in the province of Asia, v4-5a. Then, he gives an overview of Jesus' redemptive ministry through to the fulfillment of all things, he proclaims Jesus as Lord, v5b-7, and concludes with a divine declaration of sovereignty, v8.

Teaching

The Kingdom of God is at hand: hear and keep the exhortations in this book.

Issues:

i] Context: The Revelation begins with a prologue, 1:1-20 (possibly just v1-8), and ends with an epilogue, 22:6-21. In the prologue John establishes his thesis: The kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the gospel. The kingdom at hand is established in v5, "Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, is the first born from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth", cf., also v7. The appropriate response is set out in v9, namely that glory through tribulation is ours by patient endurance - perseverance in faith / strive to conquer. Following the prologue, we have the seven letters / exhortations to the churches, 2:1-3:22. Then, in 4:1-5:14, we have John's inaugural vision of heaven - the kingdom come. The Christian community may be struggling and compromised, but it is not the powers of darkness who rule in this age. This is followed by the messianic judgments, the first block of seven, *the judgment of the seven seals*, presented as heavenly visions, 6:1-8:1. This is where it becomes complex because instead of placing a *digressio*, a hymnic interlude, at the end of the 7 visions, John places it between the sixth and seventh vision, with the seventh vision serving to lead into the next block of seven, *the judgment of the seven trumpets*, 8:2-11:18. The judgment of the seven trumpets gets the same treatment between the sixth and seventh trumpet, although not the next block, *the judgment of the seven bowls*, 15-16. The structure is clear enough, the reason for it is not.

Between *the seven trumpets* and the *seven bowls* is *the battle with the beasts*, 11:19-15:4. This presents differently to the surrounding seven judgments. Quite a

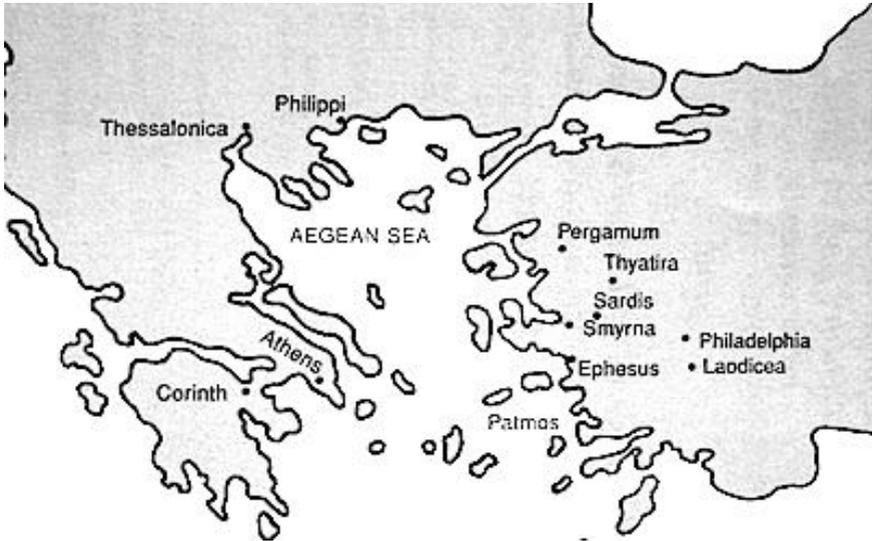
few commentators follow Farrer and argue that it is an unnumbered series of seven visions (Collins in *Crises and Catharsis*, 1984, argues for 7 visions, but it is a stretch). We are best to follow Bauckham who argues that this section expands on the theme developed in the Interludes #1-2: 7:1-17; 10:1-11:13/14, namely, "the people of God in their conflict with the forces opposed to God."

Then follows two visionary blocks, The Two Cities (Babylon and the New Jerusalem - The ruin of the harlot Babylon, and the dawning of the City of God), which are evidenced by linguistic parallels: 17:1-3 parallels 21:9-10, and 19:9-10 parallels 22:6-9; see Bauckham, p4. Linguistic markers define the two sections as 17:1-19:10, and 21:9-22:9. The markers are evident when the book is read aloud. Between these two blocks is a *digressio* / interlude, dealing with the transition between the fall of Babylon and creation of the New Jerusalem - The demise of the Beast, 19:11-21:8.

ii] Background: The book of Revelation itself sets the scene for us. John is in exile on the small island of Patmos due to his work for the gospel. He writes this circular letter to seven churches in Asia Minor under his authority, congregations which are struggling with troubles from within and from without. So the letter, with its prophetic word to the seven church, serves to encourage members to repent (turn from their sins - syncretism is often identified as the church's main failing) and persevere in faith / strive to conquer. The use of apocalyptic imagery, with its vivid word pictures, is a particularly effective medium to alter a person's perspective from earthward to heavenward.

There is much debate about the situation faced by the believers in the seven churches. The letter does not specify any particular trouble, but during the first century, the Christian church faced sporadic, although often localized, persecution. Martyrdom was by no means an unusual occurrence. As Jesus said, "In the world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." Trouble has always been part of the deal for a believer, but so has ultimate victory. Some commentators think that the trouble facing the church at the time of writing is the persecution enacted under the reign of the Emperor Domitian, 95AD, others opt for an earlier date around 68AD, during the reign of Nero.

These notes align with the earlier date, but suggest that persecution is not really a major issue. Yes, there are problems with the Roman authorities, Jewish authorities, pagan cults and the general population, but John's main concern is for the problems that exist within the Christian church - the adoption of false teachings, adjustments / compromise with the surrounding pagan culture, waning fervour and commitment. These are the problems John wants his readers to address.



So, John confronts the church with reality - the kingdom of God is at hand. In the throne-room of the Ancient of Days there is exuberant celebration and affirmation of the divine. Christ is crowned the Lord of all, judgment is underway and the New Jerusalem even now before us. Faced with this reality believers must repent and persevere in faith. And so, John writes, and let those who hear his words "take to heart what is written ... because the time is near."

The map of Asia Minor is taken in part from John Strelan's excellent commentary on Revelation, *Where Earth Meets Heaven*, Openbook, 1994, first published in the Chi Rho Commentary series.

iii] Structure: *The opening greeting, doxology and prophetic sayings:*

Title: The revelation of Jesus Christ, v1-2.

Beatitude / blessing, v3:

Prescript - greeting and blessing, v4-5a:

From - John.

To - the seven churches in Asia.

Greeting and blessing.

Doxology - Christ's redemptive ministry, v5b-7:

Conclusion - a divine declaration, v8

"I am the Alpha and the Omega"

iv] Interpretation:

The revelation / vision of John is a classic example of apocalyptic literature, although both the prologue and epilogue present in the form of a letter, a letter addressed to the seven churches that are in Asia. John is referring to the Roman province of Asia consisting of the western part of modern Turkey. Like any letter, it introduces the author and recipients, places the letter within a historical context, and gives a rough idea of its contents, namely, the divine plan.

John tells us that his letter / book is a **Αποκαλυψις**, a revelation, an unveiling, which in Jewish literature of the time fell into the genre of apocalyptic, of the revealing of heavenly things, past, present and future. This unveiling involves a linked chain of persons: God to Jesus (to an angel ??) to John and then to the churches. Yet, this linked chain does not denote distance, but rather a breaking into our world by the divine. John tells us that the purpose of this unveiling is to show us "what must soon take place", namely, the realization of the kingdom of God.

The greeting is typical of New Testament letters, but certainly not in the *from whom*, v4b-5a. This is particularly so of the reference to Christ; we are provided with a detailed description of who he is and what he has done, v5b-6a. This virtually serves as a shorthand statement of the gospel - Jesus is Lord. John follows up with a common ascription of praise, v6b.

The extended doxology covering v7-8 comes in the form of two prophetic sayings which serve to establish John's thesis concerning the realization of the kingdom of God - Jesus is Lord. The first saying is crafted out of two significant Old Testament verses, Dan.7:13 and Zech.12:10ff - the heavenly enthronement of the Son of Man, the one who was pierced = the enthronement of the suffering Son of Man = the day of judgment is at hand. This prophetic saying is confirmed by a second saying which serves as a pronouncement from God: "I am the beginning of history and the end of history, and the Lord of all that lies between." The enthronement of Christ, and all that this entails, is now in the hands of the Ancient of Days.

Homiletics: *Divine omnipotence:*

Believers in the first century, who lived under the terror of the Roman emperor Domitian, may well have wondered if God was in control. In the face of the violence, death and destruction of State authorized persecution, where was the protecting hand of the Lord?

We have all experienced the chaos of life, and it is because we believe in a loving sovereign God that we are easily perplexed by the reign of evil. If God is for us, how is it that the circumstances of life seem to work against us?

Of course, the simplistic solution for suffering is to look to divine intervention, yet our God is not an interventionist God. On many occasions, during the history of the people of Israel and the Christian church, God's people have waited in vain for his hand to stay an evil power. We too wait in vain when we look to God to give us long life, health, wealth and happiness. Even when prayer is used as a lever to prompt divine action, the troubles often continue. We may then speculate on the "why" of our suffering. Like Job's friends, the troubles can easily be put down to "indwelling sin", or "little faith". Both of these are common suggestions, but in the end, they are inane ones.

When John addresses the seven churches in Asia he proclaims a central theological truth that has the power to confront their pending troubles. God in Christ is supreme over all things. He is the "Almighty" one. It is this truth which gives encouragement and support in times of crisis.

How then does Christ's supremacy intersect with our troubles? As the one who is the beginning and end of all things, nothing can frustrate his eternal will. Whatever may occur, God's ultimate intentions for us are good; he "loves us." We may be caught up in the chaos of this age, but in the hand of Almighty God, this chaos cannot frustrate His sovereign intentions for us. So, we need to take our eyes off the trouble, off the shadows, and look to Jesus the source of truth and life, v5. We are forgiven and so have the right of heavenly rule and the right of free access into God's presence, v6. Above all, the day is soon coming when Jesus will return to judge this age and its evil and so vindicate his people, v7.

We stand blessed under the hand of the Almighty God for the shadows will soon wane in the brilliant light of eternity.

Text - 1:1

Prologue, v1-8: i] Title, v1-2. God the Father has unveiled a mystery to the Son regarding the realization of the kingdom of God, namely that the messiah has won a victory over sin and death, a victory about to be fully realized in the coming kingdom. God, through Jesus, has determined to unveil this mystery to his prophetic servants, in this case John, via an angel; John's task is to pass it on to the churches and bear witness to the authenticity of his words.

αποκαλυψις [ις εως] "**The revelation**" - REVELATION, UNVEILING. Nominative absolute. The sense "unveiling" can point to the process and / or the content. For John it refers to the unveiling of a mystery, the *now / not yet* reality of the kingdom and of the need for endurance in the face of this reality, so

Goldsworthy. For many commentators it is the unveiling of history, eg., Beasley-Murray, but this seems unlikely. "This is the revelation of Jesus Christ", REB.

Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [ος] "**from Jesus Christ**" - The genitive is possibly possessive, "of Jesus Christ", but usually treated as source / origin, "from", as NIV. This book is the revelation of Jesus Christ, not John.

αὐτῷ dat. pro. "**him**" - [WHICH GOD GAVE] TO HIM. Dative of indirect object. John has received a revelation / unveiling which God [the Father] has given to Jesus.

δειξαι [δεικνυμι] aor. inf. "**to show**" - The infinitive is probably expressing purpose; "in order to show." "God gave it to make plain to his servants what is about to happen", Peterson.

τοῖς δούλοις [ος] dat. "**[his] servants**" - Dative of indirect object. The genitive **αὐτοῦ**, "his", is possessive. Here quite possibly used in a narrow sense, so prophets, rather than believers in general. In the OT the "king's servants" were his cabinet.

εἰν + dat. "**soon**" - [THE THINGS WHICH TO HAPPEN IS NECESSARY] IN [SPEED, QUICKNESS]. The preposition is likely to be adverbial here, so "in [speed]" = "quickly", as NIV.

γενεσθαι [γίνομαι] aor. inf. "**take place**" - TO HAPPEN. The infinitive serves as the subject of the impersonal verb "is necessary". The accusative pronoun **ἃ**, "which", serves as the accusative subject of the infinitive.

εσημανεν [σημαινω] aor. "**he made it known**" - [AND] SIGNIFIED, MADE CLEAR, SPECIFIED. The AV rightly translates this word "signify", "to communicate by symbols", Beale; this unveiling will signify (present as a sign to the realization of the kingdom of God) rather than portray its coming in factual terms - to communicate "truths through pictorial or symbolic visions", Osborne.

αποστειλας [αποστειλλω] aor. part. "**by sending**" - HAVING SENT. The participle is adverbial, best treated as temporal, or instrumental, as NIV. "He disclosed it by sending it through his angel to his servant John", Moffatt.

δια "-" - THROUGH [THE ANGEL OF HIM]. Instrumental / agency; As is typical in apocalyptic literature, an angel conveys the message from the divine to humanity. "Christ then sent his angel with the message to his servant John", CEV.

τῷ δουλῷ [ος] dat. "**to [his] servant**" - TO THE SLAVE, SERVANT [OF HIM, JOHN]. Dative of indirect object. **Ἰωαννη**, "John", is dative, standing in apposition to "servant".

v2

ὅσα pro. "**everything [he saw]**" - [WHO (JOHN) GAVE TESTIMONY of] WHATSOEVER [HE SAW]. Accusative direct object of the verb "to see." Note that

the verb "bore witness" is aorist. Mathewson suggests that the perfective aspect indicates the whole book is in mind.

του θεου [ος] gen. "[word] of God" - [THE WORD] OF GOD [AND THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST]. The genitive can be taken as adjectival, idiomatic / source, or possessive, or verbal, subjective; so also the genitive **Ιησου Χριστου**, "of Jesus Christ", although possibly objective, "the testimony about Jesus Christ." This "word" and "testimony" "relate to the content of the book", Beasley Murray; "John publicly proclaimed the message given to him by God and affirmed by Jesus Christ, telling all that he had seen", Barclay..

v3

ii] Beatitude / blessing, v3. The blessing is upon those who read, presumably read the book / letter / prophecy to the congregation, and those who hear and "take it to heart." The blessing probably entails the salvation which is promised in the book. The blessing is offered **γαρ**, "because" the revelation is about to be fulfilled.

ὁ αναγινωσκων [αναγινωσκω] pres. part. "**the one who reads aloud**" - [BLESSED *is*] THE ONE READING [AND THE ONES HEARING]. The participle, as with "the one's hearing", serves as a substantive. "Read aloud", NIV, is appropriate because even if John is not referring to someone who reads the book to a congregation, everyone at this time read aloud, even when to themselves. Given the singular for the one who reads, and the plural for those who hear and keep, a congregational setting may be assumed.

της προφητειας [α] gen. "[the words] of this prophecy" - [THE WORDS] OF THE PROPHECY. The genitive is adjectival, possibly attributive, "prophetic words."

τηρουντες [τηρω] "[and] take to heart" - [AND] KEEPING [THE THINGS]. Beale suggests that the "one's hearing ... and *the ones* keeping" may be a hendiadys for "obey", but "hearing" and "keeping", in the sense of believing, are two separate actions; "hear and believe."

γεγραμμενα [γραφο] perf. mid./pas. part. "**what is written**" - HAVING BEEN WRITTEN. The participle serves as a substantive, accusative direct object of the participle "keeping".

εν + dat. "in [it]" - Local, expressing space.

γαρ "because" - Introducing a causal clause explaining why it is necessary to hear and keep / take the heart / believe the book / prophecy, "because" the fulfillment of the prophecy is at hand.

v4

iii] Prescript - Greeting and blessing, v4-5a. John addresses his words to seven particular churches. These may be within John's pastoral care, although it is

more likely that the number 7 is an apocalyptic device, a number that tells us that John's words come with divine authority. The greeting is typical, although with a Christian twist - "grace", a typical Greek greeting, is united with "peace" (*shalom*), the Hebrew greeting. The greeting is from the one whose name cannot be declared openly, Ex.3:14-15, and also from the "seven Spirits." This is a reference to the Holy Spirit by means of the perfect complete number, a number with cosmic significance. Beasley-Murray notes that John has the same "was / is / will be (coming)" formula for Jesus as for the *Father*, v4. Jesus was the witness to God's promised grace (the gospel), is now the first fruits of the resurrection, and will come to reign. In all three titles there is a possible allusion to Psalm 89:27.

τοις .. εκκλησιαις dat. "**to the [seven] churches**" - Dative of indirect object, the object being unstated (an ellipsis) / recipient; "John [*writes (verb) these words (object)*] to the seven churches (indirect object)". "John sends his greetings to the seven churches in Asia", Cassirer.

ἑπτα "**seven**" - Some argue that "seven" represents the universal church, but it probably just symbolizes completeness, a divine characteristic; a number of "cosmic significance", Aune.

ταις "-" - THAT ARE [IN ASIA]. The article serves as an adjectivizer, turning the prepositional phrase "in Asia" into an attributive relative clause; "which is in Asia."

ἐν "**in [the province of Asia]**" - IN [THE ASIA]. Expressing space/sphere. The article τη defines the specific region of Asia, not the Roman province of Asia, the two known regions being Europe and Asia.

χαρις ὑμιν και ειρηνη "**grace and peace to you**" - GRACE TO YOU AND PEACE. "Grace" the distinctive Christian greeting and "peace" the distinctive Hebrew greeting. The construction may be used to express a wish, "may grace and peace be given to you."

ὑμιν dat. pro "**to you**" - Dative of interest, advantage.

απο + gen. "**from**" - Expressing source / origin.

ὁ ὢν "**him who is**" - THE ONE BEING/IS. The present participle of the verb to-be functions as a substantive. The Greek is emasculated here (a solecism) due to the Jewish desire not to mention the sacred name. John treats the divine name as indeclinable, since απο, "from", should be followed by a genitive rather than the nominative case. Note also, the "who was", which takes a similar grammatical construction; the past tense would certainly jolt a Jewish reader. cf. Ex.3:14-15.

ὁ ερχομενος [ερχομαι] pres. part. "**[and] the one who is to come**" - [AND] THE ONE COMING. The participle functions as a substantive. There is nothing unusual in the descriptive title for God, "the one who is and ever was", but the third descriptor is somewhat unexpected. We would expect, "the one who will

ever be / the eternal one", but it's not what John says. John seems to be describing God in the terms of the one who is about to bring all things to their end, "coming" in the sense of God's last days judgment, "of God's decisive intervention in history, namely the eschaton", Osborne. We have witnessed God's eternal power active in the past and the present, and will witness it in the future.

απο + gen. "**from**" - [AND] FROM. Expressing source / origin.

ἑπτα πνευματων "**the seven spirits**" - The number seven is again being used of "cosmic significance", of completeness, here with reference to the Holy Spirit. So, the greeting is from the eternal "one who ..." (Father??) and from the Holy Spirit. There are other possible meanings, eg. a reference to members of the glorious heavenly assembly of created beings who serve the Lamb, or the seven archangels, or the seven angels of the trumpets and bowls.

ενωπιον + gen. "**before [his throne]**" - BEFORE, IN FRONT OF [THE THRONE OF HIM]. Spatial.

v5a

The greeting of grace and peace also comes from Jesus. Jesus is given three titles: First, he is the "faithful witness". This title refers to his work of revelation, particularly during his life on earth. Jesus' second title is "the firstborn from the dead." This title refers to Jesus' resurrection - he is the first to rise. His third title is, "ruler of the kings of the earth." Christ is now enthroned beside the Ancient of Days and all are even now bowing before him, ie., the kingdom has come.

απο + gen. "**[and] from**" - [AND] FROM [JESUS CHRIST]. Expressing source / origin.

ὁ μαρτυς ὁ πιστος "**the faithful witness**" - THE FAITHFUL THE WITNESS. It is possible that we have here two separate words standing in apposition to each other, "the witness, the faithful one", but although the adjective "faithful" takes an article and is in the nominative case (rather than the genitive) it is likely that it functions adjectivally, as NIV. Since the phrase stands in apposition to the genitive "Jesus Christ", a genitive, rather than a nominative case, would be expected, but the allusion to Psalm 89 has controlled the case. The articles serve to specify the title; Jesus is "the faithful witness", "Jesus Christ, who declared the truth and whose words can be trusted", Barclay. The word "witness" moves toward the meaning "martyr" in Revelation; "witness unto death."

ὁ πρωτοτοκος adj. "**the firstborn [from the dead]**" - THE FIRSTBORN [OF THE DEAD]. The adjective serves as a substantive, nominative in apposition to "the faithful witness." If John is alluding to Psalm 89:27, firstborn is being used in the sense of rule / authority / sovereignty, so "firstborn over death", but if the common NT sense is being used then Jesus is "the firstborn from death", the first of a resurrected community of believers (the genitive **των νεκρων**, "of the dead", being

adjectival, partitive, or separation, "from the dead"). Both senses may be intended, ie. Christ "is sovereign over life and death", Osborne.

των Βασιλεων [ευς εως] gen. "of the kings [of the earth]" - The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / subordination, "ruler over the kings of the earth." The genitive της γης, "of the earth", is adjectival subordination, "who rules over the earth", but possibly possessive, "the kings who belong to the earth." Christ also reigns over the kings who are the enemies of Christ.

v5b

iv] Christ's redemptive ministry, v5b-7. John, having told us who Jesus is, v5a, now proceeds to tell us what Jesus has done, v5a-6, and will do, v7.

τω αγαπωντι [αγαπαω] pres. part. "to him who loves [us]" - TO THE ONE LOVING [US]. As with "having freed", the participle serves as a substantive. As in v4, Dative of indirect object, eg. "I address these words to the one who loves us ...", or dative of ascription / recipient. Mathewson classifies it as "a dative of possession in a doxology."

λυσαντι [λυω] aor. part. "freed" - HAVING LOOSED. Note the variant "washed". Both participles, "having loved" and "having loosed" are coordinated with the verb "has made" in v6. "Who liberated us from our sins", Barclay.

εκ "from [our sins]" - Expressing separation; "away from."

εν "by" - IN. Here the preposition has an instrumental sense, expressing means, "by the blood" = by Christ's sacrifice = agency, Moule IB. "With reference to Christ's blood" is possible, ie. adverbial / accompaniment, or manner. "By shedding his blood", Moffatt.

v6

Jesus loved us and gave his life for us to free us from the bondage of sin, enabling us to be "kings and priests." This was the hope of Israel, Ex.19:5-6, a hope now fulfilled in the church. We have royal standing in the sight of God and access into his presence.

ποιησεν [ποιεω] aor. "has made" - [AND] HE MADE. Probably best in the sense of "appointed." The clause should properly begin with ὅς, "who has made ...", or even an attendant participle, rather than a finite verb. According to Aune, John is seeking "to place great emphasis on this statement", Aune.

ἡμας acc. "us" - A dative variant exists, "for/to us", implying that believers are not the kings and priests, but are given a kingdom where priests serve them. The accusative is accepted by most commentators, but it is an interesting idea.

βασιλειαν, ἱρεις "a kingdom and priests" - "Kingdom" serves as the accusative complement of the direct object "us", while "priests" stands in apposition to "kingdom" - priestly service (mediation) is part of the business of

reigning. Allusion to Ex.19:6, where Israel is both a kingly and priestly nation, "You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." The word "kingdom" here is probably not referring to place, but role, ie. the saints will participate with Christ in ruling his kingdom; we will reign with Christ, cf. 2:26, 3:21, 5:10, 20:4. In fact, "kingdom" is probably plural, so "kings and priests", the pl. nom. taking the same form as the acc. sing. "He lets us rule as kings and serve God his Father as priests", CEV.

τῷ θεῷ [οἷ] dat. **"to God"** - TO GOD [AND FATHER OF HIM]. Dative of interest, advantage; "for his God and Father."

αὐτῷ dat. **"to him"** - TO HIM [THE GLORY AND THE DOMINION INTO THE AGES OF THE AGES]. Dative of possession; the glory and power belong to him, ie., to "the one loving" and "the one having freed". The doxology is quite conventional and is obviously directed to Christ.

εἰς **"for ever"** - TO [THE AGES]. Temporal use of the preposition.

v7

The doxology to Christ continues, describing what will be. Christ is now establishing his rule on earth. The end is near at hand - "he is coming." John uses two Old Testament texts to craft this verse: Daniel's coming "Son of Man", Dan.7:13, and Zechariah's "pierced" one, Zech.12:10. The Son of Man is the one who comes with the clouds to stand before the Ancient of Days and take possession of a kingdom. The pierced one stands before Israel as the rejected one, although John has him pierced before the world. The spearing of Jesus at the crucifixion serves as an initial fulfillment of this prophecy. Thus, Christ's coming is at hand and those against him will mourn on that day. Beasley-Murray, quoting Boussett, suggests this verse sets the theme for the book. Here then is John's thesis "the kingdom of God is at hand", Christ, the victorious one, is crowned Lord. Note the OT allusions from Dan.7:13 and Zech.12:10.

ἰδοὺ **"look"** - BEHOLD. Demonstrative particle.

ἔρχεται [ερχομαι] pres. **"he is coming"** - HE COMES. The present tense indicating ongoing action, but not necessarily future action, none-the-less, seeing it is coordinate with **οψεται**, which is future, it is possibly a futuristic present. The "now / not yet" time signature of this book must not be overlooked. It is important to note here that Christ's "coming" is to the Ancient of Days to take up his authoritative role as Lord of the universe, cf. Dan.7:13. It is possible to speak of an act of divine judgment as a "coming" of Christ, for example, the destruction of Jerusalem is such a "coming." The warnings in chapters 2 and 3 primarily concern Christ's coming in judgment, with a possible reference to Christ's second coming. None-the-less, here Christ's "coming" is not to the world, but to his heavenly throne.

everything between. Here used to underline God's omnipotence; He is Lord over all time. Note the textual addition exegeting "alpha and omega" - "beginning and end." "I am the beginning and end of all history." Note also that omega is not spelled out since the word **ωμεγα** did not exist until the seventh century.

κυριος [ος] "**Lord**" - [SAYS] LORD, MASTER [GOD]. Often the divine title given to Jesus, but here of God. This title was used instead of the divine name, Yahweh.

ο ὢν "**who is**" - THE ONE BEING [THE ONE WAS, AND THE ONE COMING]. This participle, as with **ὁ ἐρχομενος**, "who is to come", serves as a substantive, standing in apposition to "Lord".

ο παντοκρατωρ "**the Almighty**" - Also standing in apposition to "Lord". This reference to the omnipotent one is used eight times in Revelation and only one other time in the NT, 2Cor.6:18.

1:9-20

John's vision of the risen Christ in Patmos, 1:9-20

John's call to the prophetic ministry

Synopsis

John is a prisoner in a work gang on the island of Patmos. It is a Sunday, and he hears a trumpeting voice from behind him, commanding him to write to seven churches in Asia Minor about his vision. In his vision, he sees seven golden lamp-stands with someone like a son of man standing in the midst of them. This man is glorious beyond measure, standing with seven stars in his right hand and a double-edged sword coming from his mouth. John is transfixed by the vision, but the glorious Son of Man tells John not to be afraid for he is the ever living one, the one who holds the keys of death and Hades. John's task is to write what he sees.

Teaching

The Kingdom of God is at hand: Christ reigns in glory.

Issues:

i] Context: See 1:1-8. Commentators are divided as to the extent of the prologue of this letter. Most opt for v1-8, but the account of John's vision, v9-20, seems to be part of a carefully crafted introduction. The opening paragraph declares the divine origin of the book and serves to define the title **Αποκαλυψις**, "The Revelation", v1-2. The second paragraph consists of a blessing upon the readers, a from whom and to whom, a blessing, a doxology, and two prophetic sayings which establish John's thesis that the kingdom is come, v3-8. We then come to the passage before us which serves as an account of the vision and commission of John, v9-20. This is presented in similar fashion to the experience of the Old Testament prophets, especially Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. It is this vision of the risen Christ that prompts John to write his letter / sermon / book.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8

iii] Structure: *John's vision of the risen Christ:*

Setting for the vision, v9;

John's initial experience, v10-11;

The vision of the one like the Son of Man, v12-20:

The unveiling, v12-16;

A word from Christ, v17-20:

Commissioning, v17-19;

Explanation - the seven lamp-stands and stars, v20:

The seven lamp-stands and stars = the seven churches.

iv] Interpretation:

John's vision of the risen glorious Christ is a vision for a troubled church. Christ stands as the almighty and powerful one, holding within his hands the struggling servant community. Although small and insignificant, overwhelmed by the rush of historical events and compromised by the secular State, the community of believers is upheld by the one who is the First and the Last, the Almighty Judge, the one with power over life and death itself. John's vision is a vision that drives away fear.

In typical fashion John begins his letter / prophecy with an opening greeting, prayer and ascription of praise to God, v1-8. In the passage before us, John opens by declaring his standing with his readers - "partners / companions" in the kingdom, a kingdom realized through patient endurance - repentance and faith. John goes on to set the scene: He notes his situation at Patmos, which, at the time, served as a site for a labour camp; he notes his spiritual state in the Spirit (the Lord's Day gives a focus on the resurrection of Christ); and he notes the divine direction he is given to write the content of a vision he is about to experience, v9-11. John then recounts the vision of the Son of Man, v12-18. The vision of Christ has a threefold structure: Christ's character, v12-15; his ministry, v16-17a; his resources, v17b-18. Finally, John tells us of the commission given him by the Lord, v19. John is to write what he "has seen" of the state of the church in the world, "what is" (in the terms of a divine glory unaffected by human sin), and "what is about to happen" (in the terms of the full realization of the kingdom of God).

John's definition of terms: Seven stars, Seven golden lamp-stands, and Seven angels, v20. In this verse John provides an explanatory note regarding the seven stars and the seven lamp-stands - a kind of interpretive key; "*as for the symbols (mystery) of the seven stars they represent*" The seven stars represent the angels of the seven churches, but the lamp-stands also represent the seven churches. The difference is probably that the stars represent the church in its *not yet* reality, while the lamp-stands represent the church as it is *now*, a light to the nations. Yet, what about "the angels"? Osborne nicely summarizes the different interpretations for the angels of the churches. The following are worth noting:

Patron angels of the churches / city - Beale, Beasley-Murray,
Blount, Osborne, Alford.

Heavenly counterparts of the churches - Caird, Mounce, Sweet.

Messengers / evangelists / leaders of the churches - Lenski,
Hendriksen, Strelan.

An ideal representation of the Christian church - Smalley, Preston
& Hanson.

The last interpretation seems best. The letters to the churches may be addressed to the "angel of the church", but they go to the church itself. So in the end, "the angel of the church" is God's church in Ephesus, etc., while "the seven stars are reminders of the spiritual nature of God's church, and the lamps of its material embodiment (a light shining in the wilderness)", Smalley. Although this seems the best interpretation we need to remember that the first fits well with the Jewish idea of every community having a guardian angel who identifies with that community. Often, with Revelation, no clear interpretation presents itself and so we are left to rely on the general thrust of the imagery.

Homiletics: *One like a Son of Man*

It is very difficult for us to identify with the book of Revelation. The Christian church in the West is far too privileged to appreciate the strength of the book. It is a book for a martyr church; it is not a book for a flabby secularized church. Our privileged position is particularly enhanced by market-based Christianity. The secular city is clearly breaking down, the urban sprawl is dehumanizing us and so people are hurting, people are afraid, people are lonely. It is easy, therefore, for churches to tap into those community needs and thus manipulate people into the life of the church. Yet, to what degree has there been any real change in the life of those socialized into the faith?

A believer is someone journeying on the narrow way that leads to life. Salvation depends on orientation rather than outward form, actions, intent or words. How easy it is to travel the broad way, the well-trod way, the way that leads to death? We have to face the possibility that popularized Christianity has little affinity with the Lord's remnant people. Christ's followers are likely to be few. Has it not always been so? In Israel, during the time of Elijah, only 7000 refused to bow the knee to Baal.

It is usually the small group into discipleship, or community which finds itself under pressure, sometimes even pressure from the mainline denominations themselves. It is the struggling church that can appreciate the vision of the Living One, the First and the Last, who stands in the heavenly realms, holding in his hand the eternal lives of his little flock.

If the denominational churches in Western society can move through this final stage of nominalism toward a genuine "last-days" "remnant" community of believers, then we may expect that our situation will begin to align with the seven churches in the book of Revelation. It is then we become a danger to the Evil One's

program. His "beast", the "Antichrist", the secular city, organized secular society, will then be unleashed on us. We then inevitably become a martyr church, and it is then we need to see the big picture. We serve under the one whose eyes are "blazing fire", his feet like bronze glowing in a furnace, who holds in his hands his gathered people. He is the one who is the first and the last. His mouth often chastises us, but also powerfully judges those who stand against him and his people. No trouble can ultimately harm us, no power can break us.

This then is the path for a servant people under the "Living One".

Text - 1:9

i] Setting - John's call, v9: Following his greetings to the churches of Asia and his praise to God, John relates his vision of the Lord Jesus. John, like his readers, is a partaker of the kingdom of God and one who bears the difficulties that go along with those who share in Christ's reign. John is imprisoned on Patmos, an imprisonment that is a consequence of his Christian witness. This verse is seen by some to contain John's thesis, namely that glory through suffering is achieved by patient endurance. It certainly reveals something of a proper response to the gospel, although the seven letters give us a better picture - Christ calls on his church to repent and persevere in faith.

ὑμῶν gen. pl. pro. "**your**" - [I JOHN, THE BROTHER] OF YOU. The genitive is adjectival, relational. Reference to the readers, plural.

συγκοινωνος [ος] "**companion**" - [AND] PARTICIPANT (one who shares in the same experience as another). Standing in apposition to "John".

ἐν + dat. "**in [the suffering]**" - IN [AFFLICTION]. Local, expressing context / circumstance.

βασιλεια [ος] "**kingdom**" - [AND] KINGDOM. Used in Revelation of divine reign experienced both now and in the future. Both "suffering" and "patient endurance" tell us something about how the kingdom is realized.

ὑπομονη [η] "**patient endurance**" - [AND] ENDURANCE. The capacity to remain firm to one's convictions over a long period of time.

ἐν + dat. "**in [Jesus]**" - Local, expressing space / incorporative union. Similar idea to Paul's "in Christ" ... identified with, in union with, one with John, as a fellow participant with his readers in union with Christ, shares Christ's bitter-sweet journey.

εγενομην [γίνομαι] aor. "**was**" - I WAS. The aorist may imply that John is no longer on the island at this point in time.

ἐν + dat. "**on [the island]**" - Local, expressing space; "on", as NIV.

τη καλουμενη [καλεω] pres. pas. part. "**of**" - THE ONE BEING CALLED. The participle serves as an adjective, idiomatic / location, limiting "island", "which is called ..."; "on the island called Patmos", ESV.

Πατμῷ [ος] dat. "**Patmos**" - Dative in agreement with "island". Patmos is a small island in the Dodecanese group off the coast of Asia Minor and was used by the Romans as a quarry and manned by prisoners of the State.

διὰ+ acc. "**because of**" - BECAUSE OF [THE WORD OF GOD]. This preposition, when followed by the accusative, takes a causal sense, "because of", "on account of." John was a leader in the Christian church and, because of his Word ministry, his preaching, he had obviously come to the attention of the authorities and as a consequence, was imprisoned. "In the interests of" is a possibility, but unlikely, as is a final sense, "in order to *receive* the word of God ..."

Ἰησοῦ [ους ου] gen. "**[testimony] of Jesus**" - [AND THE TESTIMONY] OF JESUS. Both genitives, "of God" and "of Jesus", may be taken as verbal, plenary, i.e., both subjective and objective; "word from or about God and testimony by or to Jesus", Beale. John's situation is probably related to his preaching about / concerning both God and Jesus, i.e., an objective genitive.

v10

ii] John's initial experience, v10-11. It was on this island, on the "Lord's Day" (Sunday), while John was at prayer, that he heard the Lord Jesus speak and saw his glory.

ἐν "**on**" - [I WAS] IN [THE SPIRIT] ON [THE LORD'S DAY]. "On" the Lord's day is an adverbial use of the preposition, temporal, while "in" the Spirit is local, metaphorically expressing space.

τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ "**the Lord's day**" - Presumably this means Sunday, so Aune, but the eschatological end-day is possible.

ἐγενομην ἐν πνεύματι "**I was in the Spirit**" - Although a literal translation of the Gk., the sense of this phrase is unclear. John is possibly saying he was in a trance-like state, a state of ecstasy, but more likely "I was overcome by the Spirit of the Lord", much like the Old Testament ecstatic prophets were overcome.

ἤκουσα [ακουῶ] "**I heard**" - [AND] I HEARD. "Heard the voice of Jesus."

οπίσω + gen. "**behind [me]**" - Spatial; "after, behind."

ὡς "**like**" - [A GREAT SOUND] AS. Comparative; "loud and clear as the sound of a trumpet blast."

σαλπιγγος [ξ γος] gen. "**a trumpet**" - The genitive is ablative, source / origin; "as if from a trumpet."

v11

Jesus instructs John to write down his experience, so his book is not just his own reflections, but a prophetic revelation.

λεγουσῆς [λεγω] gen. pres. part. "**which said**" - SAYING. The participle serves as the complement of the direct object "a loud voice", "I heard a loud voice

..... saying." Normally as a double accusative construction, but "saying" is genitive, presumably attracted the the genitive "trumpet".

γραφον [γραφω] aor. "**write [on a scroll what you see]**" - [WHAT YOU SEE] WRITE [INTO A BOOK]. John is to write down an account of all that he is about to see; the aorist probably indicating the whole book is in mind

ταις επτα εκκλησαις [α] dat. "**[send it] to the seven churches**" - [AND SENT] TO THE SEVEN CHURCH, TO EPHEBUS]. Dative of indirect object, then εις either for a dative of interest, "for" things / places, so εις Εφεσον, "for Ephesus", although more likely spatial, of movement toward, so Moule. The identification of seven churches is obviously symbolic, but the significance of the churches themselves is somewhat elusive. The most likely suggestion is that Asia Minor had, by this time, become the dominant Christian province in the Empire. The different churches, with Ephesus at their centre, serve as a representative expression of organized Christianity, ie., the number seven representing completeness. If John had been writing in the nineteenth century, the focus would have been on England, if today, it would be on America.

v12

iii] The vision of the Son of Man, v12-20: a) The unveiling, v12-16. John's vision of Christ is a vision of glory; it is a vision to uplift the soul of a people oppressed by the powers of darkness. The church may be small and insignificant and under the thumb of a powerful advisory, but the Lord Jesus stands head and shoulders over the ravings of corrupted politicians, elitists, media, The setting for the vision is temple-like.

επεστρεψα [επιστρεφω] aor. "**I turned around**" - I TURNED BACK, TURNED, TURNED AROUND.

βλεπειν [βλεπω] pres. inf. "**to see [the voice]**" - The infinitive is adverbial, expressing purpose, "in order to see". Although a literal translation of the Gk., it actually makes no sense in English. John turned around to see the person who was speaking with him. The NRSV "to see whose voice it was who spoke to me" is messy to say the least. "I turned around to see who was speaking to me", NJB.

μετ [μετα] + gen. "**to [me]**" - [WHICH WAS SPEAKING] WITH [ME]. Expressing association; "with me" = "to me."

επιστρεψας [επιστρεφω] aor. part. "**when I turned around**" - [AND] HAVING TURNED [I SAW]. The participle is adverbial, temporal, as NIV; "on turning, I saw ..."

χρυσας [ους ου] acc. "**golden [lamp-stands]**" - [SEVEN] GOLDEN [LAMP-STANDS]. We would expect an adjectival genitive, attributive, as NIV, or of material, "lamp-stands made out of gold." The lamp-stands represent the seven

churches as they presently exist, their weaknesses and their strengths, v20, cf. Zech.4:2-6.

v13

The Son of Man stood amid the lamp-stands. He is the glorious Son of Man from Daniel, Dan.7:13. His dress too is glorious; it could be priestly garb or royal garb, but whatever, it is impressive.

εν + dat. "**among**" - IN [MIDDLE]. Local, expressing space.

των λυξνιων [ος] gen. "**the lamp-stands**" - OF THE LAMP-STANDS. The genitive is adjectival, partitive.

ομοιον υιον ανθρωπου "**someone like a son of man**" - LIKE SON OF MAN.

The adjective ομοιον serves as a comparative, while the genitive ανθρωπου, "man", is adjectival, relational. The accusative υιον, "son", should properly be a dative after ομοιον, of the person or thing compared, cf. MHT IV. This is a direct quote from Daniel 7:13, referring to the divine man who receives dominion. It is tempting to flesh this term out, eg. "what looked like a human being", TEV., or even "a divine figure that bore a human image", but it is really not wise to attempt a dynamic equivalent of such a significant Old Testament title.

ενδεδυμενον [ενδυω] perf. part. "**dressed in**" - HAVING BEEN DRESSED IN *clothing*. As with περιεζωσμενον, "having been wrapped around", the participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting / describing the garb of the son.

προς +dat. "**around [his chest]**" - [TO THE FEET AND HAVING BEEN WRAPPED AROUND] AT [THE BREAST WITH A GOLDEN SASH]. It is rare for προς to be followed by the dative. On such occasions the preposition takes a positional sense, "at", or here best rendered "around".

v14

His hair is white like that of the Ancient of Days - dignified and wise. Yet, he is not aged and devoid of power, for his eyes flash with energy.

ως "[his head and hair were white] like [wool, as white] as [snow]" - [AND THE HEAD OF HIM AND THE HAIRS WHITE] LIKE, AS [WHITE WOOL], LIKE, AS [SNOW AND THE EYES OF HIM] LIKE [A FLAME OF FIRE]. Comparative. A literal translation leaves us thinking that his scalp and hair are a white wool colour and snow colour. The sense is "his hair was like snow-white wool." cf. Dan.7:9f.

πυρος [ρ ρος] "[blazing] fire" - [FLAME] OF FIRE. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "flame", "burning flame", the comparative phrase functions adjectivally, limiting "eyes"; "his eyes blazed / shone brightly", cf. Dan.10:6

v15

His feet are metallic and strong and his voice, the voice of God himself, Ezk.43:2. This king will stand forever.

ὅμοιοι adj. + dat. "**like [bronze]**" - [AND THE FEET OF HIM *was*] LIKE, AS [FINE BRONZE]. Here followed by the dative complement **χαλκολιβανῶ**, "bronze", a rare word possibly meaning "fine" or "very shiny bronze", cf. **υἱόν**, "son", v13.

ὡς "-" - AS IF, AS. Here probably adverbial, expressing manner, so Mathewson.

πεπυρωμενης [πυρω] gen. pas. part. "**glowing**" - [AS IF IN A FURNACE] HAVING BEEN MADE TO GLOW. The participle is possibly adjectival, attributive, limiting "furnace"; "a furnace which is glowing." Since the participle modifies the dative **καμινῶ**, "furnace", it should also be dative and not genitive. Beale suggests the reference purposely follows the Theodotion syntax of Daniel 3:21, 23, 26. Aune classifies it as a genitive absolute, so temporal; "his feet were like bronze as it is burning in a furnace", Mathewson. Possibly the sense is "highly refined"; "his feet were like highly refined polished bronze."

εν + dat. "**in [a furnace]**" - Local, space, or instrumental, means, "by a furnace", or adverbial, temporal, or modal, expressing manner.

ῥοδατων [ρ τος] gen. "**[rushing] waters**" - [AND THE VOICE OF HIM AS THE SOUND] OF WATERS [MANY, MUCH]. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / source; "like the sound that comes from a giant waterfall", cf. Ezk.43:2.

v16

In his hands he holds seven stars representing the seven churches. Given that seven is a sign of completeness, the seven churches represent the church as a whole, all believers. He holds them, protecting them, uplifting them. Out of his mouth comes a sword, a word of judgment, a word critical of his people, but also a word of devastating power against those that would harm his church. His face shines in radiance, the radiance of God's presence.

εχων [εχω] pres. part. "**he held**" - [AND] HAVING [IN THE RIGHT HAND OF HIM]. Throughout the Revelation John often uses the participle "to have, hold" as if it were a finite verb. Technically we would classify this usage as a periphrastic construction with an assumed / missing verb to-be. Given the context, other classifications may be appropriate: object complement; attendant circumstance; adverbial, modal; adjectival, attributive; Most translations will often treat anarthrous examples of the participle as a finite verb, and this is certainly the way the NIV handles it.

αστερας επτα "**seven stars**" - STARS SEVEN. As in v20 these stars are most often taken as the angels representing the seven churches addressed by John. As

to the identity of these angels, there are numerous suggestions, eg., guardian angels. As already noted it is possible that the stars represent an idealized expression of the believing people of God - God's people are held in the hand of the glorified Christ. See v20.

εκπορευομενη [εκπορευομαι] pres. part. "**coming out**" - As with "having", the syntactical function of this participle is unclear. The ESV treats it as a finite verb, "from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword", ie., technically a periphrastic construction with an assumed verb to-be. It is not clear whether aspect is being emphasized.

εκ +gen. "**of [his mouth came]**" - FROM [THE MOUTH OF HIM A SHARP TWO-EDGED SWORD GOING FORTH]. Expressing source / origin; protruding from his mouth. The imagery may be depicting the word of the risen Christ, a word of chastisement for those who believe, but a word of judgement for those who don't, ie., it's a word that cuts both ways. As is always the case with the imagery in Revelation, it is unclear how far we should take it. A general application of the imagery is always safer than a more specific application, although it is always possible to fall back of the defence of *poetic license!!!*

εν + dat. "**in [all its brilliance]**" - [AND THE FACE OF HIM SHINING] IN [ITS POWER]. Here forming an adverbial phrase, modal, expressing the manner of the sun's "shining"

v17

b) A word from Christ, v17-20. The vision is so powerful it drives John to the ground. But, then comes the gentle touch of the master to lift him up. Who then has John witnessed? He is the "First and Last", the Alpha and Omega, he is the Lord almighty. He is the resurrected one, the living one. He is the one who has authority over death and over the place of the dead (Hades). He is the life-giver. He is Jesus our Lord, v17-18.

ὅτε "when [I saw him]" - [AND] WHEN [I SAW HIM]. Temporal conjunction serving to introduce a temporal clause.

επεσα [πιπτω] aor. "**I fell**" - Prostrated rather than fainted. Lying face down is the typical response of those confronted by the risen Christ, or in fact by any theophany. This response should prompt us to question the present *frivolity* favoured in Christian worship in the West, imposed, we are told, for the purpose of accessing the unchurched. Why not go all the way? Recently a clergyman performed a parachute jump from the church steeple, prior to morning prayer, in attempt to boost attendance. I guess he had a Biblical precedent, Lk.4:9!.. It is very easy for *the still small voice*, present with the gathered two or three, to be suppressed by the *babel*.

προς +acc. "**at [his feet]**" - AT [THE FEET OF HIM]. Spatial; "he prostrated himself before/in front of him."

ὡς "**as though [dead]**" - AS IF [DEAD]. Probably adverbial, expressing manner.

την δεξιαν adj. "**right**" - [AND HE PLACED] THE RIGHT [HAND OF HIM]. Accusative direct object of the verb "to place." The commissioning hand.

επ [επι] + acc. "**on [me]**" - UPON [ME]. Spatial

λεγων [λεγω] pres. part. "**and said**" - SAYING. Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the verb "he placed", "he placed and said ..." It could also be classified as adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of the action "to place", "he placed saying ..." The participle "saying" often introduces speech in the Revelation, with the context determining its classification: attendant circumstance; adverbial, modal, expressing manner; an object complement; an incomplete periphrastic construction missing the verb to-be. It is likely that we have Semitic idiom here, similar to the way the participle "saying" introduces speech in the synoptic gospels; παρακαλει αυτον πολλα λεγων, "he begs him much saying." In the case of the synoptic gospels, "saying" is classified as either adverbial, modal, or attendant circumstance, "he begged him earnestly and said", or just "he begged him earnestly" i.e., redundant.

μη φοβου [φοβευ] pres. pas. imp. "**do not be afraid**" - DO NOT FEAR. The present imperative may indicate a command to cease an action in progress, or "cease an action viewed as a process", Mathewson. John need not fear because of who Jesus is.

ὁ πρωτος και ὁ εσχατος "**the first and the last**" - [I am] the first and the last. Predicate nominative. A restatement of v8, cf. Isa.44:6.

v18

και "-" - AND. Probably here serving to introduce an exegetical clause expanding / specifying / explaining the meaning of Jesus' claim that he is "the first and the last, that is / namely the living one". A second και is also probably exegetical, "that is / namely, the one who was dead and is now alive"

ὁ ζων [ζωω] pres. part. "**I am the living one**" - THE LIVING ONE. The participle serves as a substantive. This may be read as a title, eg. "the eternally living one", a divine title popular with the rabbis, or as a descriptive, eg. "the one who has/gives life."

εγενομην [γινομαι] aor. mid. "**I was [dead]**" - I BECAME [DEAD]. Possibly "I died", but better, "I was dead." The exegetical sense could be emphasized by "the one who was dead, but (και) is now alive....", although this is not grammatically correct.

ἰδοῦ interjection "**behold**" - [AND] LOOK, PAY ATTENTION. "I was dead, and see, I am alive" "Behold" is a bit archaic.

ζῶν [ζῶω] pres. part. "[**I am**] **alive**" - [I AM] LIVING. The participle with the present tense of the verb to-be εἰμι forms a present periphrastic construction expressing a durative aspect - he will live forever.

εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων "**forever and ever**" - INTO THE AGES OF THE AGES. Here the preposition εἰς, "into", is temporal. The phrase "into the ages" is idiomatic for "forever, evermore, eternally." The additional genitive "of the ages" makes it emphatic, "for ever and ever", but we could also classify it as partitive, given that "the ages" are just one part of all the ages, which sequence of ages God reigns over. There is high mystery here that needs to be preserved (something greatly appreciated by generation X/Y); "See, I live into the aeons and ages that exist beyond the stars."

τοῦ θανάτου [οἶ] "[**I hold the keys**] of death [**and Hades**]" - [AND I HAVE THE KEYS] OF DEATH [AND OF HADES]. This genitive, along with ᾗδου, "Hades", is adjectival, attributive, giving the sense "the keys which / to unlock death and the place of the dead." This final descriptive of the one who is the beginning and the end, uses popular Jewish imagery to make the point that Jesus has mastery over death; he can release us from its hold. It was understood that God possessed the keys to unlock the chains of death and the catacombs that hold the dead captive. It was popularly believed that Hades was the catacombs that housed the dead. Hades is distinct from Hell (Gehenna), the fiery place of punishment, so named after the ever-burning rubbish tip outside Jerusalem. It is not wise to take the image literally, in the sense that the dead are housed in such a place, eternally living in a place of fiery bondage, an idea developed from a faulty interpretation of 1 Peter 3:18ff.

v19

John's commission. John is commanded by the Lord to write down the visions, visions that speak of now and of days to come.

οὖν "**therefore**" - Inferential, drawing a logical conclusion.

εἶδες [ὄραω] aor. "**you have seen**" - [WRITE THE THINGS] YOU SAW [AND THE THINGS *which* ARE]. John is to write concerning the visions. The following two clauses expand the subject matter, things happening now and things in the future. The book is often divided between these two: the letters to the churches, the now, and the prophecies, the then. This dichotomy is often forced and as a consequence damages a proper understanding of chapters 4-22.

γενεσθαι [γίνομαι] aor. inf. "**what will take place**" - [AND THE THINGS ABOUT] TO HAPPEN. The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of the verb μέλλει, "about"; "the things which are to be hereafter", Phillips.

μετα + acc. "**later**" - AFTER [THESE THINGS]. Temporal use of the preposition. What are the "these things"? cf., Rev.4:1; 9:12; John 13:7.

v20

Finally, we are given an explanatory note concerning the symbols of the stars and the lamp-stands. The secret meaning behind John's vision of the stars and lamp-stands is revealed by the Lord. It seems likely that these visionary symbols represent the people of God: a) angelic stars - what the church is in Christ; b) lamp-stands - what the church is now (a light to the world??). John does seem to be giving us a key to the visions at this point, a key to unlock the mystery of the visions.

των μυστηριων [ον] acc. "**the mystery**" - A rare absolute accusative. A secret truth/meaning now revealed, so here the meaning of the two symbols used so far, namely, stars and lamp-stands.

των επτα αστερων gen. "**of the seven stars**" - OF THE SEVEN STARS [WHICH YOU SAW ON THE RIGHT OF ME]. The genitive may be treated as adjectival, epexegetic, specifying / explaining the mystery, but possibly adverbial, reference / respect, "the mystery, with respect to the seven stars, is this" The secret meaning concerning the symbol of the stars is that they represent "the angels of the seven churches." As noted above, there is much debate as to the identity of these angels, eg., Beasley-Murray in his commentary, pp 69-70, argues convincingly that each angel is an existential representation, a perfect heavenly counterpart of a Christian congregation here on earth. The stars, or more properly the seven planets, were often represented on Roman coinage and served to depict the authority and power of the state. The people of God under the lordship of Christ, both here and in eternity, now control the destiny of the universe. See "Interpretation" above.

τας ... λυχνιας [α] acc. "**[and] the [seven golden] lamp-stands**" - We would expect a genitive, as for "stars", but we have an irregular accusative. John tells us that this symbol represents Christian churches. As for the number "seven" it again expressing completeness, ie., "the church in its universality", Smalley.

των επτα εκκλησιων [α] gen. "**of the seven churches**" - [THE SEVEN STARS ARE THE ANGELS] OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES [AND THE SEVEN LAMP-STANDS ARE THE SEVEN CHURCHES]. The genitive is adjectival, possibly idiomatic / subordination "over the seven churches", but attributive, limiting by describing "angels" is more likely; "the seven angels which are a perfect representation of the seven churches."

2:1-7

The letters to the seven churches, 2:1-3:22

i] Ephesus

Argument

In the letter to the church at Ephesus, Jesus announces that he knows of their toil for the gospel, their endurance, and their opposition to false teachers, Matt.24:11. Yet, their love has grown cold, Matt.24:12, and for this they must repent, or no longer be regarded a fellowship of believers. Let the church hear what the Spirit says: those who endure to the end inherit paradise.

Issues

i] Context: See 1:1-8. The prologue has set the ground for Jesus' revelation (unveiling) to John. Believers in the community of the church experience the *now / not yet* reality of the kingdom of God. In this age, the kingdom / God's reign, although realized, is experienced as if only inaugurated, not fully realized, so consequently we find ourselves within a cosmic battle between good and evil, Christ and his church battles against the powers of darkness and their minions - secular powers and authorities, philosophies, religions, ..., opposing and infiltrating the church, assailed from without and from within. As a consequence, we must repent, we must turn from our worldly attachments and put our trust in Christ, and then press forward in faith, enduring, persevering, conquering, 1:9. Yet, whatever our experience may be, Christ is in control, not only of his churches, 1:12-13, 16a, but also over the powers of darkness, 1:18. Christ reigns because he has already won the victory, the kingdom of God is now, judgment enacted, glory realized.

In the letters to the seven churches, 2:1-3:22, our view is earthward as we are introduced to seven Christian churches, churches representative of the first century and of successive ages. They are all struggling to some degree, although only rarely have members faced imprisonment or death. They have some good points worth noting, but also have some problems within the fellowship, often some form of accommodation with secular society. So, each church fellowship is encouraged to both repent (turn from their *accommodation* with the world), and to persevere - all who persevere, who conquer, are blessed (the sense is *persevere in faith*).

Some of the older commentators, for example Charles, regard the letters as actual letters sent to the seven churches and later used to introduce the Revelation. Dispensational commentators interpret the letters as if prophesying a plan about the seven future historic periods of the Christian church, see Thomas. More critical

commentators view them as nothing more than a rhetorical device, but as Sweet notes, they evidence pastoral insight; John may personally know the individual churches. This personal link with the churches seems likely, but at the same time the message of Christ moves beyond the individual churches to the Christian church at large. The letters serve as "a royal or imperial edict", Aune, an edict to all believers throughout the ages, so also Osborne,

Both Beale and Beasley-Murray stress the similarity of style between the seven letters and the messages of the prophets to Israel, eg., Jer.29:1-23. The instruction to "listen" serves as a "prophetic warning to open one's mind and heart to kingdom truths", Osborne. As Jesus would often say, "he who has ears to hear, let him hear" = believe.

Each letter has a similar structure, although not all elements are found in each letter, eg., Smyrna and Philadelphia have little in the way of weaknesses and Sardis and Laodicea has little in the way of strengths:

Introduction:

to whom - the church addressed;

from whom - "These are the words of him"

Analysis of the church:

strengths - "I know your deeds"

weaknesses - "Yet I hold this against you ..."

Instruction:

repent

Promise - "listen to what the the Spirit says to the churches"

he who endures is blessed - "to everyone who conquers"

The strength and weakness of the seven churches serves to provide an overview of the Christian church, *warts and all*, for John's time, as well as ours. When the commentators are compared, we end up with numerous outlines of their good points and their bad points. This derives from John's purposely vague analysis of each church. It's as if John wants us to find one of the seven that seems to fit our own church situation and then for us to fill in the details. So, take for example Laodicea, the lukewarm church, 3:14-22. It claims to be "rich", but in Christ's view it is "poor", but in what sense is it "rich", and in what sense is it "poor"? The church in Laodicea needs to buy "white clothes" to cover its "nakedness", and so again we must fill in the details, which of course we all do from our own perspective (for myself its all about grace, but!). Christ tells the Laodicean believers to "be earnest / zealous", but about what? Is it earnest about witnessing, faithfulness, faith, obedience,? And how actually does a church open its door and invite Christ in, v20? So, John provides us with a general description of the seven churches rather than the exact details of their strengths

and weaknesses. When it comes to their response, repentance is the prime directive, yet what type of repentance does John have in mind? Is it "repentance" in the sense of "turn back to / turn around to God", in a spiritual sense, "turn back in faith to Christ", or is an ethical sense in mind, a turning from attachments with the world that are compromising the Christian community? Is it both? Having repented, they are to press forward in faith for it is the one who endures, perseveres, conquers (perseveres in faith???), who is blessed.

A summary of the strengths and weakness, along with Phillip's description of the churches, is as follows:

Ephesus - a loveless church:

endure, cannot bear evil, not weary and hate false teaching;
left their first love.

Smyrna - a persecuted church:

bear with poverty;
???

Pergamum - an over-tolerant church:

hold fast to Jesus, do not deny the faith;
syncretic, inclined to false teaching.

Thyatira - a compromising church:

possess love, faith, service and endurance;
tolerate immorality and eating food offered to idols.

Sardis - a sleeping church:

???;
a reputation of being alive but are dead.

Philadelphia - a church with opportunities:

keep true to the Word and do not deny Christ;
???

Laodicea - a complacent church:

???
lukewarm in their faith.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8. Ephesus, situated where the Cayster river meets the Aegean sea, was by the 1st. century AD a powerful trading port and viewed as the greatest city in Asia Minor. It housed one of the wonders of the ancient world, the temple of Artemis, a temple built completely of marble, four time the size of the Parthenon in Athens - it was the largest building in the ancient world. The temple was served by thousands of priests and priestesses, many functioning as sacred prostitutes. It housed what was claimed to be a meteorite, a rock believed to be the goddess Artemis. Other temples were scattered throughout the city to

service numerous pagan cults. It was in this environment that a small church, founded by Paul in 52AD, struggled to exist, cf., Eph.4:14 and 1-2 Timothy.

iii] Structure: *The letter to the church in Ephesus:*

Introduction:

to whom, v1a;

"to the angel of the church in Ephesus."

from whom, v1b.

"He who holds the seven stars ... and walks among the seven golden lampstands."

Analysis of the church:

strengths, v2-3;

weaknesses, v4.

Instruction:

repent, v5-6;

Promise

the who endures is blessed, v7

iv] Interpretation:

In the seven letters to the churches, 2:1-3:2, we see the Christian fellowship warts and all. As it was for the church in the first century, so it is for us. We stand at the crossroads of history, of God's *now / not yet* reign, compromised in the face of a hostile environment. We have survived to this moment in time between the cross and Christ's return, and if we are to share in God's promised reward we must repent, we must turn around to Christ and renew our faith in him, and then we must press forward in faith, we must endure, persevere, conquer.

The Ephesian church is like countless others, standing against evil, enduring hardships, but again, like so many others, no longer with a fire in its belly. So, the time has come for repentance. Jesus reminds the Ephesian believers that it is only those who endure who will be given "the right to eat from the tree of life."

Text - 2:1

Ephesus - a loveless church, v1-7: i] Introduction, v1: The Lord instructs John to write to the Ephesian believers. This is presumably what is meant by "the angel of the church"; see 1:20 - "Christ speaks to the spirit of the church: namely, to the church in its spiritual, as well as earthly, expression", Smalley. The description of Jesus holding the "seven stars" and walking among the "seven golden lampstands", probably expresses the idea that Jesus is lord over the church,

"upheld by him and subject to his power", Beasley-Murray, and involved in the church (present when it meets), "companion of the churches", Sweet.

τῷ ἀγγέλῳ [ος] dat. **"to the angel"** - [WRITE] TO THE ANGEL. Dative of indirect object. See "Interpretation", *A definition of terms*, 1:9-20, for the different meanings attributed to "the angel of the church."

τῆς ... ἐκκλησίας [α] gen. **"of the church"** - If we take "the angel" as in some way representing the church, the genitive would be classified as adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic, limiting "angel"; "the angel which represents the church in Ephesus."

ἐν + dat. **"in [Ephesus]"** - Local, expressing space.

ταδε λεγει **"these are the words of"** - THUS SAYS. Used in the LXX of the announcement of a prophet, eg., Amos 1:6; "Hear the words of"; "listen to what I say", CEV.

ὁ κρατῶν [κρατεῶ] pres. part. **"him who holds"** - THE ONE HOLDING [THE SEVEN STARS IN THE RIGHT *hand* OF HIM *and* THE ONE WALKING IN MIDST OF THE SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS SAYS THUS]. As with "the one walking", the participle serves as a substantive, nominative subject of the verb λεγει, "say". "Who holds the seven stars firmly in his right hand", Cassirer.

ἐν + dat. **"among"** - IN [MIDST]. Local, expressing space.

τῶν ... λυξινῶν [ος] gen. **"the [seven golden] lampstands"** - OF THE [SEVEN GOLDEN] LAMPSTANDS. The genitive is adjectival, partitive. The lampstands represent the Christian church as it exists, *warts and all*. "Striding through the seven radiant lights."

v2

ii] Analysis of the church, v2-4: a) strengths, v2-3. The church is affirmed for its actions, effort and fortitude, and its intolerance of false teachers, v2; it is steadfast, it endures and has not flagged, v3.

τὰ ἔργα [ον] acc. **"[I know your] deeds"** - [I KNOW] THE WORKS [OF YOU]. Accusative direct object of the verb "to know". The genitive pronoun σου, "you", is best treated as verbal, subjective, so also for "endurance of you"; "I know the life you have lived", Barclay. This statement is used in five of the letters. Revelation is about strengthening the faith of the faint-hearted rather than encouraging good works. So, "works" should always be viewed in the context of "faith, such that "works" are the fruit of "faith"; "faith ... demonstrated by actions", Smalley.

καὶ ... καὶ ... καὶ ... καὶ .. **"and"** - AND [THE LABOUR] AND [THE ENDURANCE OF YOU] AND. This coordinate use of the conjunction is a stylistic feature of Revelation.

κοπον [ος] "**hard work**" - LABOUR. "I know how hard you have toiled as believers (for your "Christian profession", TH)."

ὅτι "**that**" - Introducing an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what the Lord knows.

βαστασαι [βασταζω] aor. inf. "**[you cannot] tolerate**" - [YOU ARE NOT ABLE] TO BEAR [EVIL = EVIL MEN]. Complementary infinitive, completing the negated verb "to be able."

τους λεγοντας [λεγω] pres. part. "**those who claim**" - [YOU HAVE TESTED] THE ONES CALLING [THEMSELVES APOSTLES]. "You have tried to find out the genuineness of those people who say that they are Christ's messengers, and you have found that they are lying", TH.

και "**but**" - AND [ARE NOT]. Aune thinks the conjunction here is adversative, as NIV, but Mathewson disagrees.

ψευδεις adj. "**false**" - [FOUND THEM] LIARS. Accusative complement of the accusative direct object "them" of the verb "to find" standing in a double accusative construction.

v3

δια + acc. "**for [my name]**" - [YOU HAVE ENDURANCE / PERSEVERANCE AND BEAR UP = PERSEVERE] BECAUSE OF [THE NAME OF ME, AND HAVE NOT FLAGGED / BECOME WEARY]. Causal, "because". The "name" = the person, so "because of me", often also indicating the authority of the person, so "because of who I am"; "you have struggled on through thick and thin because of your relationship with me / because you love me / believe in me / believe that I am the Christ the Son of the living God." The intended aspect of the surrounding verbs is unclear, given that we have present and aorist verbs together, so ignored by the ESV, "I know you are enduring and bearing up." The final verb **κεκοπιακες** "you have not flagged", again expressing the steadfastness / fortitude of the Ephesian congregation, is perfect, at least expressing a present condition. Sweet makes much of the aorist **εβαστασας** as though the hardships prompting the "bearing up" were at an end, but this is a stretch.

v4

b) weaknesses, v4. Morris nicely skirts the glaring problem we have with this verse when he states that "they have completely forsaken their first fine flush of enthusiastic love." The problem we face is identifying the object of the love. Is it "you no longer love me (Jesus)", Weymouth, or "you have given up loving one another", Moffatt, so Beasley-Murray. Commentators increasingly think there is no intention, in statements like this, to differentiate between the act of Christian

love toward Christ / God and one's fellow believers, for the one demands the other, so Mounce, Osborne, ...

αλλα "yet" - BUT. Strong adversative.

κατα + gen. "**against [you]**" - [I HAVE *this*] AGAINST [YOU]. Here expressing opposition; "against".

οτι "-" - THAT [YOU ABANDONED]. Introducing an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what the Lord "has" against the Ephesian congregation. A statement like this may be constructed, as in English, **τι εξω**, "I have something against someone", in which case **οτι** would introduce an exegetical clause specifying the "something". So, we may have an ellipsis, **τι**, "something", being assumed.

σου gen. pro. "**you [had at first]**" - [THE FIRST LOVE] OF YOU. The genitive is usually treated as verbal, subjective, as NIV.

v5

iii] Instruction - repent, v5-6. The Ephesians are asked to recognize that when it comes to love, they are turncoats. To this end they must repent / turn around to the Lord, otherwise As to when Jesus will "come", and what is involved in having their lampstand shifted, is by no means clear. "I will come" may refer to either the return of Christ, the parousia, so Aune, Sweet, Osborne,, or a local chastisement / judgment, so Caird, Beasley-Murray, Mounce, The approach taken in these notes is that both events are in John's mind. John has a prophetic perspective such that he speaks to an immediate situation in the context of the parousia, blending both events together. See "Interpretation" in the Introduction. As for "I will remove your lampstand": Taking the lampstand to represent the church in its present state on earth, its removal may refer to a local chastisement - the loss of their capacity to witness to the city of Ephesus, a loss of gospel opportunities; like Israel, no longer a light to the world. If judgment is in mind, then Jesus is warning the church that they may be viewed as apostate, no longer a fellowship of believers. According to Ignatius the church did repent and went on to flourish. Of course, "these things are examples for us", 1Cor.10:6.

ουν "-" - THEREFORE. Inferential; drawing a logical conclusion.

μνημονευε [**μνημονευω**] pres. "**consider**" - REMEMBER. The present tense, being durative / imperfective, may give the sense "keep on remembering" = "never forget", TH.

ποθεν "**how far**" - FROM WHERE [YOU HAVE FALLEN]. Interrogative spatial conjunction; "from where?" "Never forget, when it come to Christian love, you are turncoats / backsliders."

μετανοησον [**μετανοεω**] aor. imp. "**repent**" - [AND] REPENT, [AND DO THE FIRST WORKS]. The aorist imperative indicates a decisive act. "Repent" in the

sense of "turn about." If ethical, then "live again the life you lived when you first became Christians", Barclay. If spiritual, then "turn back to God" = "refocus your lives on Jesus / renew your trust in Jesus."

ει δε μη "if [you do] not repent" - BUT IF NOT. Assuming the presence of a subjunctive "repent" we may certainly have a conditional clause, as NIV, but usually treated as an exceptive clause expressing a contrast by designating an exception; "otherwise I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place."

σοι dat. pro. "[I will come] to you" - [I WILL COME] TO YOU [AND REMOVE THE LAMPSTAND OF YOU. Dative of destination / termination. "I will come to you and take away your radiant light, no longer a light to the world / no longer a people of God."

v6

Those wicked people, tested and tried, who claim to be apostles, are now named. There is no extant references to the Nicolaitans. The church Fathers, writing years later, claimed it was a gnostic sect, but it is more than likely that they had no idea of who they were. The chances are it is a created word covering all false sects within the Christian church. The word means "conquerors of the people" and it is likely that John uses it in an inclusive sense covering all "those who claim to be apostles" and so lead God's people into error.

αλλα "but" - Strong adversative; "however".

τουτο pro. "this in your favour" - [YOU HAVE] THIS. Forward referencing demonstrative pronoun, accusative direct object of the verb "to have." "But there is something I will praise you for."

οτι "-" - THAT [YOU HATE]. Introducing an exegetical clause specifying "this". "Despise" rather than "hate".

των Νικολαιτων [ης ου] gen. "[the practices] of the Nicolaitans" - [THE WORKS] OF THE NICOLAITANS [WHICH I ALSO HATE]. The genitive is adjectival, usually treated as verbal, subjective, but descriptive, idiomatic is also possible, "the works which are performed by the Nicolaitans."

v7

iv] The promise, v7. God's word to the church is that those who persevere in the conquest of the powers of darkness in and through Christ, find, both in the present and in the future, the fullness of life that was lost to humanity in the garden of Eden.

ο εξων [εχω] pres. part. "whoever has [ears]" - THE ONE HAVING [EARS LET HIM HEAR]. The participle serves as a substantive. The "let him hear" is similar to the OT "Hear the word of the Lord", cf., Jer.2:4.

τί pro. "**what**" - WHAT [THE SPIRIT SAYS]. Interrogative pronoun serving as a relative pronoun.

ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις [α] dat. "**to the churches**" - Dative of indirect object. In Revelation, there is no distinction between the work of the exalted Christ and that of the Spirit - the Spirit speaks / Christ speaks. Note λέγει, "speaks", is a present tense, so a durative "is saying"; he speaks continually.

τῷ νικῶντι [νικᾶω] dat. pres. part. "**to the one who is victorious**" - TO THE ONE CONQUERING. This independent dative may be treated as adverbial, reference / respect, "with respect to the one who is victorious", resumed by the pronoun αὐτῷ, "to him", dative of indirect object after the verb "to give"; "to the one who is victorious, I will give to eat to him" The present tense, being durative, suggests ongoing conquering. Revelation is focused on the conquest of the powers of darkness through perseverance / endurance / fortitude.

φαγεῖν [εσθίω] aor. inf. "**to eat**" - The verb "to give", followed by an infinitive, takes the sense "to grant", such that the infinitive serves to introduce a dependent statement of indirect speech expressing what Jesus grants, namely, the right to eat from the fruit of life; "I will allow the one who conquers to eat of [the fruit] of the tree of life", Aune. An exegetical classification would also be appropriate, specifying what is granted, "namely, to eat from the tree of life." A promise that the believer will share in the heavenly messianic banquet.

ἐκ + gen. "**from**" - Expressing source / origin. The phrase is possibly elliptical, "eat of the fruit of the tree of life", in which case the preposition stands in the place of a partitive genitive.

της ζωης [η] gen. "**[the tree] of life**" - The genitive is adjectival, attributive, "the life-giving tree", idiomatic / producer, "the tree which gives life", so Wallace.

ἐν + dat. "**in**" - Local, space.

του θεου [ος] gen. "**[the paradise] of God**" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive. Cf., Gen.2.9, imaging the restoration of Eden, but now a heavenly reality. In Christ, this reality is *now*, we are even now seated with Christ in the heavenlies, alive in him. The word "paradise" is used for the heavenly representation of the garden of Eden. The word is actually used in the LXX for the "garden" in Gen.2:8 and 15.

2:8-11

The letters to the seven churches, 2:1-3:22

ii] Smyrna

Argument

In the letter to the church at Smyrna, Jesus announces that he is well aware of the afflictions they have to bear. In the face of this trouble, they must not be afraid, for it is only for a limited time. Let them hear what the Spirit says: those who endure to the end "will not be hurt by the second death."

Issues

i] Context: See 2:1-7.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8. Smyrna was a city renowned for its wealth. It had a large Jewish population and was a centre for Emperor worship. The city is some 70 km. north of Ephesus, East of the Aegean gulf, and is one of the few seven cities in existence today, going by the name Izmir. We can only assume that the Christian church was planted there during Paul's third missionary journey while he was based at Ephesus. Hostility toward the church came both from the Jewish population and the followers of the Roman cult, and for this reason, martyrdom was common. From a letter written to Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, by Ignatius early in the 2nd., century, we know that the church was flourishing at the time. In around 150AD Polycarp was martyred in Smyrna.

iii] Structure: *The letter to the church in Smyrna:*

Introduction:

to whom, v8a;

"to the angel of the church in Smyrna."

from whom, v8b:

"He who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again."

Analysis of the church:

strengths, v9;

weaknesses, ??.

Instruction:

do not be afraid, v10;

Promise

the one who endures is blessed, v11.

iv] Interpretation:

In the seven letters to the churches, 2:1-3:2, John reveals the *not yet* reality of the kingdom of God, a kingdom inaugurated, yet to be realized. He lets us see the Christian fellowship warts and all. As it was for the church in the first century, so it is for us. We stand at the crossroads of history, of God's *now / not yet* reign, compromised in the face of a hostile environment. We have survived to this moment in time between the cross and Christ's return, and if we are to share in God's promised reward we must repent, we must turn around to Christ and renew our faith in him, and then we must press forward in faith, we must endure, persevere, conquer.

Throughout history, segments of the Christian church have faced horrific persecution. The church in Smyrna well represents the suffering church, although their troubles were limited, both in severity and duration. In the last century, countless numbers of Christians have suffered for their faith. Jesus' message to the suffering church is "don't be afraid, the time is short, glory is at hand."

When it comes to this glory, John uses a very Jewish image. The notion of resurrection became common among religious Jews; there is death, and then with the coming of the messiah, there is a resurrected new life. Yet, this was only so for those who were buried in the Holy Land, if you were buried in "Babylon", then you faced the second death, you remained in the grave. John has a different take on this issue!

Text - 2:8

Smyrna - a persecuted church, v8-11: i] Introduction: The Lord instructs John to write to the believers in Smyrna. The title used of Jesus in 1:17 is repeated here, "the First and the Last", and "the living one" = "the one who was dead and is alive." The title reflects the difficult situation faced by the church; Jesus is Lord, risen from the dead.

τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν ... ἐκκλησίας γραφόν. Ταδε λεγει **"to the angel of the church in [Smyrna] write: These are the words ..."** See 2:1.

νεκρος [ος] **"died"** - [THE FIRST AND THE LAST WHO BECAME] DEAD. Predicate nominative.

ἐζησεν [ζωω] aor. **"came to life again"** - [AND] LIVES. Aune suggests that the aorist is inceptive, "came to life", but Mathewson argues it simply expresses "the state of Jesus being alive"; "who was dead and is alive."

v9

ii] Analysis of the church, v9. Jesus indicates that he is well aware of the tribulations of the congregation, and their extreme poverty, although he reminds

them that they are spiritually rich. Jesus also knows of the accusations made against the church by the local synagogue, Jews who might better be called children of Satan rather than children of God.

σου gen. pro. "**your**" - [I know the afflictions] of you. The genitive is usually viewed as verbal, subjective, "the afflictions you are going through."

θλιψιν [ις εως] "**afflictions**" - THE AFFLICTION. Accusative direct object of the verb "to know." Troubles prompted by a hostile environment, both Jewish and pagan; "I know of your tribulation", Phillips.

την πρωχειαν [α] "**your poverty**" - [AND] THE POVERTY. Syntax as above. The word is expressing real deprivation, possibly because the Christian community is isolated from the wider community; "you are deprived of the necessities of life."

αλλα "**yet**" - BUT [YOU ARE RICH]. Strong adversative. Presumably, "but you are rich *toward God*."

εκ + gen. "**[the slander] of**" - [AND THE SLANDER] FROM. Expressing source / origin, or possibly means, "the slander *heaped upon you* by those who make themselves out to be Jews", Cassirer.

των λεγοντων [λεγω] gen. pres. part. "**those who say**" - THE ONES SAYING. The participle serves as a substantive.

ειναι [ειμι] pres. inf. "**[they are Jews]**" - [THEMSELVES] TO BE [JEWS AND ARE NOT]. The infinitive introduces an object clause / dependent statement of indirect speech expressing what they are "saying." The accusative subject of the infinitive is εαυτους, "themselves."

του σατανα [ας α] gen. "**[but are a synagogue] of Satan**" - [BUT *they are* A SYNAGOGUE] OF SATAN. The genitive is adjectival, possessive; "I hear the lie in the claim of those who pretend to be good Jews [but] who in fact belong to Satan's crowd", Peterson. These Jews are not the children of Israel, the children of God, but they follow another power, namely, Satan; they are pseudo-Jews, in no way the holy people of God.

v10

iii] Instruction, v10: The believers in Smyrna will face persecution, but it will not be sustained, so they must not fear, but rather set their sight on the ultimate goal, the victor's crown, life eternal.

πασχειν [πασχω] pres. inf. "**[what you are about] to suffer**" - [FEAR NOTHING THE THINGS YOU ARE ABOUT] TO SUFFER. The infinitive is complementary, completing the verb "to be about to." The implication is that they are indeed about to suffer, but should not be afraid; "have no fear of what you will suffer", Phillips. The negation μηδεν is emphatic by position; they are "not to be afraid at all" of the troubles that lie ahead.

βαλλειν [βαλλω] pres. inf. "[the devil] will put" - [THE DEVIL IS ABOUT] TO CAST. The infinitive is complementary, completing the verb "to be about to."

εξ [εκ] + gen. "some of [you]" - OF [YOU INTO PRISON]. The preposition serves here as a partitive genitive, as NIV.

ινα + subj. "to [test you]" - THAT [YOU MAY BE TESTED]. Introducing a final clause expressing purpose, "in order to", or better, consecutive expressing result, "with the result that you will be tested"; "the devil is about to throw you into jail and you will be sorely tested." As Smalley notes, "it was firmly believed in primitive Christianity that the Jewish and pagan enemies of the church were prompted by Satan." Satan is the one who tests our faith in an attempt to undermine it. Of course, God is sometimes viewed as the one who tests his people. This is reflected in the interpretation of "lead us not into temptation" which paraphrases the prayer "let us not be tested beyond what we are able to bear / unto death." Yet, it seems more likely that the sense is "lead us not into temptation / testing, BUT (αλλα as a strong adversative = "and we know you wouldn't do that") deliver us from (the testing of) the evil one."

ημερων [α] gen. "[ten] days" - [AND YOU WILL HAVE AFFLICTION TEN] DAYS. Genitive of time. The number ten probably indicates a limited time-frame, or certainly restricted time-frame (by God???), cf., Dan.1:14; "you will suffer trials for a short time", TH. The alternate reading εχητε, "you may have", rather than εχετε, "you will have", ends up giving a different sense, namely that the trials / affliction will be heaped on those / prolonged for those, who don't yield to the evil one, see Sweet p32.

αχρι + gen. "even to" - [BE FAITHFUL] UP TO [DEATH]. Temporal use of the preposition. As NIV, "until you die"; "be faithful unto death", ESV.

και "and" - Here with a consecutive flavour; "and so I will give you"

σοι dat. pro. "[I will give] you" - [I WILL GIVE THE CROWN OF LIFE] TO YOU. Dative of indirect object.

της ζωης [η] "[the crown] of life / life [as your victor's crown]" - [THE CROWN] OF LIFE. The genitive is adjectival, probably epexegetic, "the reward consists of eternal life in Christ", Smalley; "the crown which is life", Mathewson. The "crown" is the victor's laurel wreath awarded at ancient games, as NIV11 // Barclay.

v11

iv] Promise, v11. The believers in Smyrna may suffer tribulation, but for those who finish the race, who persevere through good times and bad, Jesus promises life eternal.

ο εχων ταις εκκλησιαις "whoever has ears to the churches" - See v7.

ὁ νικῶν [νικῶ] pres. part. "**the one who is victorious**" - THE ONE CONQUERING. The participle serves as a substantive, subject of the negated verb "will not be hurt."

οὐ μὴ + subj. "[**will**] **not [be hurt] at all**" - NEVER [WILL BE HURT]. Subjunctive of emphatic negation; "will not in any way be hurt."

ἐκ "**by [the second death]**" - FROM [THE SECOND DEATH]. Instrumental use of the preposition expressing means, as NIV. The second death refers to "the punishment of the wicked after their resurrection at the end of the age", Koester, cf., 20:6, 14.

2:12-17

The letters to the seven churches, 2:1-3:22

iii] Pergamum

Argument

In the letter to the church at Pergamum, Jesus announces that he is well aware of how the powers of darkness swirl around this little fellowship of believers, and how they have remained faithful. Yet, the Lord notes that the church is somewhat syncretic and has absorbed some heretical teachings. Let them hear what the Spirit says: those who endure to the end will receive "some of the hidden manna ... and also ... a white stone with a new name."

Issues

i] Context: See 2:1-7.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8. Pergamum is usually held to be the Roman provincial capital, some 80km. north of Smyrna and 20km from the Aegean Sea. The fortified city was perched on a high hill overlooking the Caicus valley. It was a centre for the emperor cult and housed some imposing temples, especially to Zeus, and Asclepius, the god of healing. Both used the symbol of a snake. This was obviously a dangerous city for the gathering of a Christian fellowship.

iii] Structure: *The letter to the church in Pergamum:*

Introduction:

to whom - Pergamum, v12a;

"to the angel of the church in Pergamum."

from whom, v12b:

"He who has the sharp double-edged sword."

Analysis of the church:

strengths, v13;

weaknesses, v14-15.

Instruction:

repent, v16;

Promise

the one who endures is blessed, v17

iv] Interpretation:

In the seven letters to the churches, 2:1-3:2, John reveals the *not yet* reality of the kingdom of God, a kingdom inaugurated, yet to be realized. He lets us see the Christian fellowship warts and all. As it was for the church

in the first century, so it is for us. We stand at the crossroads of history, of God's *now / not yet* reign, compromised in the face of a hostile environment. We have survived to this moment in time between the cross and Christ's return, and if we are to share in God's promised reward we must repent, we must turn around to Christ and renew our faith in him, and then we must press forward in faith, we must endure, persevere, conquer.

The believers in Pergamum are like so many throughout the ages, faithful, but flawed. Like Pergamum, the church in Western societies is a church that exists within a secular and increasingly pagan culture, faithful in the face of opposition, yes, but like Pergamum, drifting, syncretised to secular ideology - too much tolerance, too little discipline.

John draws on the story of Balaam and Balak from Numbers 22 to illustrate the problem infecting the church in Pergamum. Balaam, although viewed as a prophet (Num.24:17), was a flawed prophet. He led Israel into apostasy such that the people played the harlot with the Gods of Moab. For the early Christians he was a Simon Magus type (Act.8:9-24). Some believers in Pergamum are following the lead of false teachers, just as Israel followed "Balaam"; like the Ephesian believers, they are followings the teachings of the "Nicolaitans", those "conquerors of the people." It seems likely that the false teachers were promoting tolerance toward pagan culture, eg., participation in the pagan cult of the city as a civic duty. Those who are guilty of syncretism need to repent, otherwise they will stand condemned before God.

For those who remain true to the faith, those who endure, Jesus promises that they will receive "some of the hidden manna ... and also ... a white stone with a new name." John's imagery is, as usual, colourful. First century Jews believed that manna would again fall from heaven with the coming of the Messiah, and so we have here an image of the abundant life-giving blessings promised for the present and for the age to come. For this new age, we even have a new name.

Text - 2:12

Pergamum - an over-tolerant church, v12-17: i] Introduction, v12. The Lord, the judge over heaven and earth, instructs John to write to the believers in Pergamum.

τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν ... ἐκκλησίας γραφόν. Ταδε λεγει "to the angel of the church in [Pergamum] write: These are the words ..." See 2:1.

ὁ ἔχων [ἔχω] pres. part. "**him who has**" - THE ONE HAVING [THE SHARP TWO-EDGED SWORD]. The participle serves as a substantive. John's image of one who wields a sword from his mouth, 1:16, is the image of one who has the authority to

judge, to pronounce innocent or guilty. Jesus is "the administrator of divine judgment", Beasley-Murray. "Two-edged" may be a way of saying that God's judgment cuts both ways, blessing and cursing, or it may just be accentuating the sword, it is a "sharp-biting sword", Peterson.

v13

ii] Analysis of the church, v13-15: a) Strengths, v13. Jesus indicates he is aware of the evil environment they live within and how they have remained faithful, even under the threat of martyrdom.

που όπου "[I know] where [you live -] where" - Local, expressing space.

του σατανα [α ας] gen. "Satan [has] his [throne]" - [WHERE THE THRONE] OF SATAN *resides*. The genitive is adjectival, possessive. Possibly a reference to Rome, seeing that Pergamum was a provincial capital, the seat of the Roman governor and a site for Emperor worship. None-the-less, probably just serving to describe resident evil; "where Satan rules."

μου gen. pro. "my [name]" - [YOU POSSESS / TAKE HOLD OF / HOLD FAST TO THE NAME] OF MY. The genitive is adjectival, possessive. "The name" refers to the person, and in the case of Jesus, his authority.

μου gen. pro. "[your faith] in me" - [AND DID NOT DENY THE FAITH] OF ME. The NIV treats the genitive as verbal, objective, "faith in me", but it could also be subjective / possessive; "you have not denied my faith", either in the sense of "Christian faith", or "faith" = "faithfulness (the cross) *on your behalf*."

και "not even" - AND. Most likely ascensive, as NIV; "even in the days of Antipas", ESV.

εν "in" - Temporal use of the preposition; "during the time"

Αντιπας gen. proper. "of Antipas" - Indeclinable noun, but none-the-less, it would be genitive, adjectival, idiomatic / temporal, limiting "the days"; "the days when Antipas was alive." Note that the appositional clause "my faithful witness who was killed among you where Satan lives" is nominative, ie., a nominative of apposition, although the indeclinable "Antipas" is obviously genitive. Best viewed as an anacoluthon (broken syntax), but it could classify as a nominative of appellation. Nothing is known of Antipas, other than later references using the Revelation as a source. The term "my faithful witness" was later adopted to denote a martyr.

μου ... μου pro. "my [faithful witness]" - [THE WITNESS] OF ME [THE FAITHFUL] OF ME. Possibly objective genitive, "who has witnessed to me and been faithful to me", Hermer, or adjectival, possessive.

ὡς pro. "who [was put to death]" - Nominative subject of the verb "to kill."

παρ [παρα] + dat. "in [your city]" - AMONG [YOU WHERE SATAN DWELLS]. Local, expressing space. John reinforces the presence of evil powers in Pergamum.

v14

b) Weaknesses, v14-15. As indicated in "Interpretation" above, "the teachings of Balaam", in like manner to "the Nicolaitans" (the conquerors of the people), amounted to a flirtation with idolatry and immorality. This most likely involves adjusting Christian ethics in line with the pagan environment (syncretism), or at least associating with such. Beasley-Murray, Sweet, Beale, ... identify the problem in the terms of eating sacrificial meat at religious festivals as a civic duty. Paul deals with this issue in 1 Corinthians, making the point that pagan gods may be no gods, but that doesn't stop Satan from using pagan festivals to his own end. Of course, "they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality" may be something more than the exercise of a civic duty.

αλλ [αλλα] "nevertheless" - BUT. Strong adversative, as NIV.

κατα + gen. "against [you]" - [I HAVE A FEW THINGS] AGAINST [YOU]. Here expressing opposition. "However, there are a few matters I have to bring against you", Cassirer / "I do have a few criticisms of you to make", Barclay.

ὅτι "-" - THAT. Possibly causal, "because you have some there", so Thomas, or introducing an object clause / dependent statement of perception / indirect discourse stating what Jesus "has" against them, so Osborne. Mathewson suggests it is exegetical, specifying ολιγα, "the few things", namely that you have some members there who cling onto false teachings" The point is clear enough.

κρατουντας [κρατω] pres. part. "who hold to" - [YOU HAVE THERE] *the ones* HOLDING ONTO [THE TEACHINGS]. The participle serves as a substantive. They have εκει, "there", ie., "you have in your midst", Osborne.

Βαλααμ "of Balaam" - This noun is indeclinable, but genitive is assumed, presumably adjectival, possessive, "the teachings which belong to Balaam", or verbal, subjective, "the teaching that Balaam taught / what Balaam taught"

εδιδασκεν [διδασκω] imperf. "[who] taught" - [WHO] WAS TEACHING [TO PUT A SNARE BEFORE THE SONS OF ISRAEL]. The imperfect, being durative, may indicate ongoing teaching, so Osborne.

τω Βαλακ dat. "Balak" - TO BALAK. Dative of indirect object. Balak, the king of Moab, attempted to hire Balaam to bring down a curse on the invading Israelites. Tradition has it that Balaam did just that, but whatever happened, Balaam's faulty teaching / prophecy led Israel to play the harlot with the gods of Moab.

βαλειν [βαλλω] aor. inf. "to entice [the Israelites] to sin" - TO PUT [A SNARE BEFORE THE SONS OF ISRAEL]. The infinitive introduces an object clause /

dependent statement of indirect speech expressing what Balaam instructed Balak, namely, "that he should place a snare before the sons of Israel."

των ... Ισραηλ gen. "**the Israelites**" - The genitive is adjectival, relational.

φαγειν [εσθιω] aor. inf. "**so that they ate**" - TO EAT [FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS AND TO COMMIT FORNICATION]. The infinitive, as with πορνευσαι, "to commit fornication", is adverbial, probably consecutive, expressing result. As a result of the snare proposed by Balaam, and set by Balak, the people of Israel ended up in pagan idolatry (*they played the harlot with the gods of Moab*) and sexual immorality. The verb πορνευσαι is used in Revelation either metaphorically of idolatry, or of actual sexual immorality. John draws on the Balaam and Balak allusion to infer that the believers in Pergamum have similarly *played the harlot*, in their case by their association with the Emperor cult at civic festivals - thus the reference to eating "food sacrificed to idols."

v15

Charles suggested that the two adverbs of manner, ούτως and ὁμῶς, "in this way likewise", form an *inclusio* which serves to exegete v14, but the interpretation proposed by Smalley seems more likely; "οὕτως, 'likewise', = just like *the Ephesian believers και συ*, 'you also', have those who hold to the teachings of των Νικολαιτων, 'of the Nicolaitans' = of the conquerors of the people = false teachers"

κρατουντας [κρατω] pres. part. "**those who hold**" - [LIKEWISE YOU ALSO HAVE] ones HOLDING. The participle serves as a substantive.

των Νικαλοιτων [ης ου] gen. "**[the teaching] of the Nicolaitans**" - The genitive may be treated as adjectival, possessive, or verbal, subjective; "the doctrines taught by the false teachers / the conquerors of the people". See 2:6

v16

iii] Instruction, v16. It is not Rome that holds the sword of justice, it is the Lord, and he will come soon to punish evil, and this punishment will extend to those in the church who fail to repent. Just as Balaam inevitably died by the sword for leading Israel astray, so these new age *Balaamites*, the Nicolaitans / the conquerors of the people / the false teachers, will inevitably face the judgment of God unless also they repent.

ουν "**[repent] therefore**" - Inferential, drawing a logical conclusion.

ει δε μη "**otherwise**" - BUT IF NOT. Introducing an exceptive clause, expressing a contrast by designating an exception.

σοι dat. pro. "**to you**" - [I AM COMING QUICKLY] TO YOU. Dative of direction / destination.

μετ [μετα] + gen. "against [them]" - Expressing association / accompaniment; "I will engage in battle with them." The expression "I will wage war against" makes the same point, although μετα is not used to express opposition, but see BAGD 509.3a. The battle with "them" is κατα σου, "against you", in v14, and this ταχυ, "soon".

εν + dat. "with [the sword]" - BY [THE SWORD]. Here instrumental, expressing means.

του στοματος [α ατος] gen. "of [my] mouth" - OF THE MOUTH [OF ME]. The genitive is probably adjectival, possessive, with the mouth, or the words formed by the mouth, being the sword. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / source, "the sword that comes out of the mouth", TEV. The imagery presumably describes God's word of judgment upon the sinner.

v17

iv) Promise, v17. The Lord promises that those who stand firm against the false teachers will share in the glory of eternity - their entry ticket is reserved for them and awaits collection.

ὁ εχων ταις εκκλησιαις. τω νικωντι "whoever has ears to the churches. To the one who is victorious" - See v7.

του μαννα gen. "some of the [hidden] manna" - [TO THE ONE VICTORIOUS / OVERCOMING, I WILL GIVE] OF THE MANNA [THE ONE HAVING BEEN HIDDEN]. Indeclinable noun, the genitive being best viewed as partitive, so Charles, Smalley, ... with τινες, "certain" = "some", assumed; "I will give a *portion* of the hidden manna." The participle του κεκρυμμενου, "the one having been hidden" is adjectival, attributive, as NIV. "I shall give him some of the manna hidden from sight", Cassirer. A bowl of manna was stored in the ark out of sight and stayed there until the Ark was captured by the Philistines on the battle field of Ebenezer, 1Sam.4. There is no mention of the manna when the Ark was returned, 2Sam.5, although tradition has it that Jeremiah hid the ark and its contents at the time of the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians and that it will be restored with the coming of the Messiah. So, sharing in the hidden manna images the messianic feast in paradise. Those who endure will share in the feast.

αυτω "-" - TO HIM. Dative of indirect object; "him" = "the one overcoming."

αυτω "that person" - [AND I WILL GIVE A WHITE STONE] TO HIM. Dative of indirect object.

ψηφον λευκην "a white stone" - Again we are left to struggle with John's imagery. The point of the promise is clear enough, the one who is victorious, conquers, overcomes, is blessed eternally; paradise is theirs. One of the better ideas proposed is that the stone is a *tessera*, a small piece of granite or marble

serving as token of admittance to a major public event, in this case, the gathering of believers in heaven.

γεγραμμενον [γραφω] perf. mid./pas. part. "**with [a new name]**" - [AND UPON THE STONE A NEW NAME] HAVING BEEN WRITTEN. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "stone". Inscribed on the *tessara* is the person's new name, a name only they know. Again, the imagery is somewhat illusive, possibly for a new age the believer should have a new name, just as Jesus gave special names to his disciples on earth, cf., Isa.62:2. Maybe "the new name" = "a new character, an eschatological reality of the new age. Prophetic imagery is, by its very nature, illusive.

επι + acc. "**on it**" - UPON. Local, expressing space.

ει μη "-" - [WHICH NO ONE KNOWS] EXCEPT. Introducing an exceptive clause, expressing a contrast by designating an exception.

ὁ λαμβανων [λαμβανω] pres. part. "**the one who receives it**" - THE ONE RECEIVING. The participle serves as a substantive. "Only the person who receives the *tessara* will know the name inscribed upon it."

2:18-29

The letters to the seven churches, 2:1-3:22

iv] Thyatira

Argument

In the letter to the church at Thyatira, Jesus announces that he is well aware of the growth in their faith and love. Yet, the Lord notes that like the believers in Pergamum, the church is somewhat syncretic, allowing themselves to be infected by pagan idolatry and immorality. There have been opportunities for the church to repent, but it has failed to do so, and therefore tribulation must ensue. Nonetheless, those who have remained faithful will not be unduly burdened. Those who endure to the end will receive divine "authority" and get to see "the morning star."

Issues

i] Context: See 2:1-7.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8. Thyatira was an unimportant trading centre with little recorded history and few archaeological remains. It lay on the overland route between Pergamum and Sardis on the south bank of the Lycus river. As a trading centre it would have had numerous craft guilds. One of the trades was the dyeing and manufacture of woollen goods, cf., Act.16:14. Being a trading and manufacturing town, and not a centre of Roman administration, life was lived at a pragmatic level. At this time, the guilds tended to include a pagan god in their craft and this was celebrated at communal meetings, often with associated debauchery. The temple to the pagan sun-god Apollo, well known at the time, was likely a cultural focus in Thyatira. Again, this type of environment was very compromising for believers, given that attendance was expected. To this end Jezebel, like Balaam and the Nicolaitans, provided the answer, join in with the "sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols."

iii] Structure: *The letter to the church in Thyatira:*

Introduction:

to whom, v18a;

"to the angel of the church in Thyatira."

from whom, v18b:

"He who is the Son of God."

Analysis of the church:

strengths, v19;

weaknesses, v20-24.

Instruction:

"hold on to what you have until I come", v25;

Promise

the one who endures is blessed, v26-29.

iv] Interpretation:

In the seven letters to the churches, 2:1-3:2, John reveals the *not yet* reality of the kingdom of God, a kingdom inaugurated, yet to be realized. He lets us see the Christian fellowship warts and all. As it was for the church in the first century, so it is for us. We stand at the crossroads of history, of God's *now / not yet* reign, compromised in the face of a hostile environment. We have survived to this moment in time between the cross and Christ's return, and if we are to share in God's promised reward we must repent, we must turn around to Christ and renew our faith in him, and then we must press forward in faith, we must endure, persevere, conquer.

John outlines in some detail the weaknesses of the church at Thyatira. It is a church compromised by sexual immorality and pagan idol-worship. This is a church which is allowing itself to be sucked into the secularism of the age, adjusting its beliefs and practices in line with the surrounding pagan culture. This problem has developed, not by pressure from without, but by pressure from within. Heretical teachers or teachings, a Jezebel revealing "Satan's so-called deep secrets", is promoting a compromise with pagan shibboleths. So, the problem John identifies is syncretism. John's description of the problem is probably literal. Church members have adjusted their lifestyle to that of their neighbours, becoming involved in pagan public life, an involvement which has inevitably led them into a participation in the pagan cult. This behaviour may stem from the best of intentions, of building bridges to the pagan community for gospel opportunities. John's / Jesus' reference to the "sexual immorality" and "adultery" of some members in the church may also be literal, but it may also just be metaphorical. The church at Thyatira is like Israel, an unfaithful bride of Christ who chases after foreign gods / another husband, cf., Hosea. Like Israel, the church is unfaithful to God, flirting with other belief systems, and so will have to face the judgment of the one "who searches mind and heart", cf., 2 Kings 9:22.

Thankfully, it is not all bad news. Those who hold firm to their faith, those who are "victorious", will receive divine authority over the nations, v26. John is adapting Psalm 2:8-9, and is probably referring to the authority possessed by believers to proclaim the gospel to the ends of the earth. Those who are faithful to this end will get to see "the morning star", "the assurance

of the coming dawn, when lamplight will be swallowed up in the light of eternal day", Wilcock.

Text - 2:18

Thyatira - a compromising church, v18-29: i] Introduction: The Lord, the one with piercing eyes and trampling feet, the judge over heaven and earth, instructs John to write to the believers in Thyatira.

τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν ... ἐκκλησίας γραφόν. Ταδε λεγει **"to the angel of the church in [Thyatira] write: These are the words ..."** See 2:1.

τοῦ θεοῦ [ος] gen. **"[the Son] of God"** - The genitive is adjectival, relational.

ὁ ἔχων [εχω] pres. part. **"whose"** - THE ONE HAVING. The participle serves as a substantive.

ὡς **"like [blazing fire]"** - AS [A FLAME OF FIRE] - Comparative.

πυρος [ρ ρος] gen. **"fire"** - OF FIRE. The NIV treats the genitive as adjectival attributed, but possibly idiomatic / material, "a flame consisting of fire." Apollo, the pagan sun-god, is no match for the brilliance of the Lord.

ὅμοιοι adj. **"[feet] like"** - [AND THE FEET OF HIM] SIMILAR TO. Predicate adjective.

χαλκολιβανῶν [ον] dat. **"burnished bronze"** - BRONZE. Dative complement of ὅμοιοι, "similar to."

v19

ii] Analysis of the church, v19-24: a) Strengths, v19. This is a church of good works, of love and faith / faithfulness, of service and perseverance, a church of growth and vigour, unlike the first three churches which were on a slide in the face of tribulation. The strong praise for this church is but a prelude to what follows, so Sweet.

σου gen. pro. **"[I know] your [deeds]"** - [I KNOW THE WORKS] OF YOU. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, or verbal, subjective. Obviously extending to love, faith, service and patient endurance; "I know *your* love, and *your* faith"

τὴν πίστιν [ις εως] **"faith"** - [I KNOW YOUR WORKS AND THE LOVE AND] THE FAITH. Accusative direct object of the verb "to know." "Faith" in God is the likely sense, rather than "faithfulness". "I know how you have fulfilled your Christian duty", which duty is then detailed in two pairs, "love and faith", and "service and endurance."

τῶν πρώτων adj. **"[more than] you did at first"** - [AND THE SERVICE AND THE ENDURANCE OF YOU, THE LAST MORE] OF THE FIRST. The adjective serves as a substantive, the genitive being ablative, of comparison; "more now than you did at first", TEV.

v20

b) Weaknesses, v20-24. "Tolerance for the heretic", Osborne, is their main weakness. The church has given "Jezebel" her head, allowing her to lead them astray into syncretism; they are compromised, adjusting their life to the values of the pagan / secular society, "the whore of Babylon". Involvement in pagan worship by some members, probably by nominal association, is condemned. John's pointed criticism of their sexual immorality may indicate lax sexual morals, but may also be metaphorical, referring to the tendency of some members to chase after other gods, to play the harlot with other belief systems.

αλλα κατα ... οτι "Nevertheless, [I have this] against [you]" - See 2:4.

την γυναικα Ιεζαβελ "that woman Jezebel" - [YOU PERMIT] THE WOMAN JEZEBEL. The accusative "Jezebel" stands in apposition to "the woman." John again draws on OT imagery to describe the problem facing the believers in Thyatira. "That woman", or if the variant σου is read, "your woman", Jezebel, the idolatrous queen of Israel, the wife of Ahab, is used to illustrate a pervasive evil influence infecting the church and leading members into fornication and idolatry. Jezebel may represent an individual, a teacher in the church (she "calls herself a prophet"), the wife of the leader, or party, even theological movement (so Alford). John's prophetic imagery, as usual, does not specify the actual evil.

η λεγουσα [λεγω] pres. part. "who calls [herself a prophet]" - THE ONE CALLING [HERSELF A PROPHETESS]. The participle serves as a substantive.

και ... και "[by her teaching she misleads]" - AND [SHE TEACHES] AND [DECEIVES MY SERVANTS]. The syntax from this point is "problematic", Aune. The act of "teaching and seducing" is somewhat awkward together such that the NIV, TEV, etc., rework the clause "she lures my servants by teaching", Cassirer. Although rare, και can take a consecutive sense and it is possible that the second one here does just that; "and she instructs *the church* and as a result she beguiles / lures my servant to practise sexual immorality"

εμουσ adj. "my [servants]" - The use of the adjective rather than the personal pronoun μου is possibly emphatic.

πορνευσαι [πορνευω] aor. inf. "sexual immorality" - TO FORNICATE [AND TO EAT SACRIFICED FOOD / MEAT]. As with φαγειν, "to eat", the infinitive probably introduces an object clause / dependent statement of indirect speech expressing the content of the seducing; "beguiling / luring my servants to practise sexual immorality" Mathewson suggests it is adverbial, consecutive, expressing the result of the teaching and seducing / luring.

v21

αυτη dat. pro. "[I have given] her" - [AND I GAVE TIME] TO HER. Dative of indirect object.

ἵνα + subj. "**to [repent]**" - THAT [SHE MIGHT REPENT]. Introducing a final clause expressing purpose, "in order that she might repent."

εκ + gen. "**of**" - [AND SHE DOES NOT WISH TO REPENT] FROM [THE FORNICATION OF HER]. Expressing separation, "away from"; "she does not care to turn her mind from unchastity", Berkeley.

αυτης gen. pro. "**her [immorality]**" - The genitive is usually taken as adjectival, verbal, subjective, drawing out the action of the verbal noun, "engagement in illicit sex, act of fornication, prostitution, sexual immorality" which she does, but possessive, is also an acceptable classification where the emphasis falls on her character, the sexual corruption which she possesses.

και "**but**" - AND. Usually taken as an adversative here, so Aune,

μετανοησαι [μετανοεω] aor. inf. "-" - [SHE IS NOT WILLING] TO REPENT. The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of the negated verb "to will, want, wish." "I gave her time to repent, but she refused to repent of her sexual immorality", ESV.

v22

ιδου "**so**" - BEHOLD. Emphatic injunction; imp. of ειδον, now an idiomatic "take note / pay attention."

κλινην [η] "**a bed of suffering**" - [I AM THROWING HER INTO] A BED of?????. The bed is undefined so we end up with numerous guesses, eg., "sickbed", ESV, "bed of pain", REB. The imagery is possibly of a prostitute's infected bed, a bed infected with venereal diseases, "a bed of infection for her and her lovers, infected with a disease which, unless they repent, will eat away at them." As noted above, a metaphorical sense for the immorality of the church is possible, and the language of this verse certainly supports this view. "Jezebel's accommodation of Greco-Roman religious practice is compared to immorality and adultery", Koester, in much the same way as Israel's flirtation with pagan gods is described as adulterous by Israel's prophets, particularly Hosea.

τους μοιχευοντας [μοιχευω] pres. part. "**those who commit adultery**" - [AND] *I am throwing* THE ONES COMMITTING ADULTERY [WITH HER INTO GREAT AFFLICTION]. The participle serves as a substantive, object of an assumed "I am throwing."

μετ [μετα] + gen. "**with**" - WITH [HER]. Expressing association.

εις + acc. "-" - INTO [GREAT AFFLICTION]. Spatial, metaphorical. Those who commit adultery with the harlot Jezebel, find themselves in the same infected bed, and so suffer accordingly.

εαν μη + subj. "**unless [they repent]**" - Best classified as introducing an exceptive clause expressing a contrast by designating an exception. Jezebel's lovers face the same end as Jezebel, unless they repent.

εκ + gen. "of [her works]" - FROM [THE WORKS OF HER]. Expressing separation.

αυτης gen. pro. "her" - of her. As in v21.

v23

εν + dat. "-" - [AND I WILL KILL THE CHILDREN OF HER] WITH [DEATH]. The preposition is probably adverbial here, modal, expressing the manner of the killing, "and her children I will kill with pestilence", REB, but possibly instrumental, expressing the means of the killing, "by pestilence." Judgment is certainly not metaphorical ("I will exterminate", Moffatt - a touch of Dr. Who!!!), but obviously "her children" are, in that they represent the followers of Jezebel, just as Jezebel, the evil wife of Ahab, herself is metaphorical in that she represents the evil influence that is leading the church astray.

ὅτι "[will know] that" - [AND ALL THE CHURCHES WILL KNOW] THAT. Introducing an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what the churches will know.

ὁ εργαζων [εραυνωω] pres. part. "I am he who searches" - [I AM] THE ONE SEARCHING [THE KIDNEYS = MINDS AND HEARTS]. The participle serves as a substantive, predicate nominative of the verb to-be. Note the presence of the personal pronoun εγω, "I", emphatic by position and use. Our God is the one who knows our innermost secrets, cf., Jer.17:10.

εκαστω dat. adj. "[I will repay] each" - [I WILL GIVE TO YOU], EACH. The adjective probably serves as a substantive standing in apposition to "you", "I will give to you, each one of you"; "Each person's conduct will decide what reward or punishment I will assign to them", cf., Barclay. Barclay generously includes "reward", but probably punishment is what is in mind; "I will require every one of you according to what your deeds have deserved", Cassirer, cf., Jer.17:10.

υμιν dat. pro. "of you" - [I WILL GIVE] TO YOU, [EACH]. Dative of indirect object.

κατα + acc. "according to" - ACCORDING TO [THE WORKS OF YOU]. Expressing a standard, "in accordance with, in conformity with,"

v24

δε "now" - but/and. Transitional, indicating contrasting step; "but to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching", ESV.

τοις λοιποις adj. "to the rest" - [I SAY TO YOU], TO THE ONES REMAINING, [TO THE ONES IN THYATIRA]. The adjective serves as a substantive standing in apposition to the dative of indirect object, "you."

υμιν dat. pro. "of you" - [I SAY] TO YOU. Dative of indirect object.

τοῖς dat. art. "-" - THE ONES. The article serves as an adjectivizer turning the prepositional phrase "in Thyatira" into an attributive adjective limiting "the ones remaining", "who are in Thyatira", ie., those not following Jezebel.

ἐν + dat. "in" - IN [THYATIRA]. Local, expressing space.

ὅσοι pro. "to you who [do not hold to her teaching]" - AS MANY AS = THOSE WHO [DO NOT HAVE = HOLD TO THIS TEACHING]. Serving as the nominative subject of the verb "to have / hold"; "those who have not followed this evil teaching", TEV. The teaching of Jezebel, not her method of teaching, but the content of her teaching. Is the teaching of Jezebel the same, or different to, the Nicolaitans, or even the teachings of Balaam?

οἵτινες pro. "-" - those WHO [DO NOT KNOW]. The pronoun serves as a substantive, nominative subject of the verb "to know." As David's Gk. notes, "the entire clause stands in apposition to the ὅσοι clause." So, the teachings of Jezebel are the "deep things of Satan."

του σατανα [ας α] gen. "Satan's [so-called deep secrets]" - [THE DEEP THINGS] OF SATAN. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / source, "from Satan; "the deep things / the mysteries which Satan reveals." TH has this as verbal, subjective, "truths / secrets Satan reveals", but unlikely to be objective, "secrets about Satan." "Deep" in the sense of mysterious, but possibly "weighty, important", TH. Koester suggest two possible approaches to "the deep things of Satan":

First, the phrase is a parody on the "deep things of God", 1Cor.2:10. The deep things of God, revealed by the Spirit, stand against those who thought that their spiritual wisdom allowed them to eat meat offered to idols without compromising their faith and this because they know that there is only one God and that participation in pagan celebrations is nothing more than a sham. Yet, as Paul points out, not only does such behaviour potentially lead a believer of weak faith astray, it ignores the Satanic reality entwined in pagan idolatry, so Osborne, Smalley.

Second, leaning toward the view that Jezebel represents a heretical teacher, rather than a theological perspective, some commentators (cf., Mounce) argue that Jezebel instructs believers on the secret knowledge of Satan's involvement in the world such that members of the church are able to participate in pagan celebrations without being affected by them, ie., they are taught to understand the demonic dimension of idolatry and are prepared to resist it. Koester thinks this second option is unlikely.

ὡς "-" - AS [THEY SAY]. Here this comparative particle with λεγουσιν, "they say", produces a Semitic idiomatic saying, something like "as X have / has said." The plural "they" indicates a vague subject, following "Semitic idiom", David's

Gk. So lit., the clause runs as follows: "but I say to you, to the ones remaining, the ones in Thyatira - as many as those who - as I have just said = *I say to you*, I am not putting on you another burden"; "I say I will not burden you with anything else", Koester.

εφ [επι] + acc. "**on [you]**" - [I AM NOT PUTTING] ON [YOU ANOTHER BURDEN]. Spatial, "upon, on." "I will lay no further burden upon you, except that you hold on to what you have until I come!", Phillips. Some commentators (eg., Beale) suggest that the "burden" is the requirement on Gentiles for table fellowship with Jews, Acts 15:24. John seems more concerned by an association with pagan cultic life and the Satanic influences that ensue.

v25

iii] Instruction, v25. Christ lays no other burden on his church other than to hold fast to the faith, to hold fast to the apostolic gospel.

πλην "**except**" - Here as an adversative / contrastive conjunction, "I do not lay on you any other burden, but that / except that"; "however, in any case", BDF #449. Possibly paired with v24b, ου ... άλλο, "no other". πλην, "than"; "I lay upon you no other burden but to hold fast what you have until I come", TNT.

ὃ pro. "**what [you have]**" - [HOLD FAST TO] WHAT [YOU HAVE]. Taking the pointing as read, the pronoun introduces a relative clause serving as the object of the verb "to hold fast." Presumably "what you have" is the Christian faith = "you must continue to believe strongly in me", TH. The heretics hold firm to the teachings of Balaam and the Nicolaitans, John's readers are to hold fast to "the body of accepted Christian doctrine", Osborne. Koester suggests that the call "to hold fast" serves to define the "what" in terms of brotherly love and a resistance to idolatry, but this is somewhat of a stretch.

αχρις οὔ ἄν + subj. "**until [I come]**" - An indefinite temporal construction, normally αχρι, "until", with οὔ, pro., and possibly with an indefinite ἄν + subj., giving the sense "up to the time when"; "[be faithful] to the end when [I return]."

v26

iv] Promise, v26-28. For those who endure, those who hold firmly to the apostolic gospel, Christ promises the blessing of eternal life. As for the present, the church is given the responsibility of making known the gospel, a divine message which no dark powers can emasculate. To make the point, John quotes Psalm 2:8-9. This Psalm was taken to apply to the messiah, but here it is applied to the Christian church, the body of Christ. It is an amazing thought, but believers are given the privilege of sharing messianic rule with Christ. Although not stated, this rule, in the here-and-now, is usually understood in the terms of gospel communication, the power of which breaks the bonds of pagan myths, setting the seeker free.

ὁ νικῶν [νικᾶω] pres. part. "**to the one who is victorious**" - THE ONE CONQUERING [AND THE ONE KEEPING]. As with ὁ τηρῶν, "the one enduring / keeping", the participle serves as a substantive. The durative present tense is probably driven by the intended aspect of "keeping". Given that the conquest of the powers of darkness is complete in Christ, a believer need only face the death-rattles of darkness with perseverance / endurance / fortitude. Note the slight change in wording from the promise in the previous letters to the churches; "Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give" John picks up on this phrase in v28. The "one enduring / keeping" simply reinforces the "hold fast what you have until I come", v25.

καὶ **and** - Possibly exegetical here; "to the one who conquers, that is, the one who does my will to the end."

ὀτηρῶν [τηρῶω] pres. part. "**does**" - THE ONE KEEPING. The participle as above; the present tense is imperfective / durative, i.e., he keeps on keeping on. It is likely that "keeping" parallels "holds fast to", v25, just as "my works" parallels ὄ, "what". So the sense is "the one who conquers and perseveres with my works."

μου gen. pro. "**my [will]**" - [THE WORKS] OF ME. The genitive is usually treated as adjectival, verbal, subjective, but possessive, or better, idiomatic short-talk, is possible, "the one who perseveres unto the end with the works *which I have instructed my followers to do*, I will give him"; "to him who perseveres in doing my will to the end", REB = "keeps my words", Aune. Of course, it is certainly possible that a subjective / possessive sense is intended such that the "works / deeds" are actually Jesus' deeds. Osborne takes this line arguing that Christ's deeds "are the basis for Christian victory. The evil deeds of Jezebel (2:22) or the incomplete deeds of the individual Christian (2:23) are insufficient." With this approach "keeps" = "believes".

αὐτῷ dat. pro. "-" - [I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS] TO HIM. Dative of indirect object. Quote: Psalm 2:8-9.

ἐπὶ + gen. "**over [the nations]**" - Here expressing subordination, as NIV, an uncommon use of the preposition. The Psalm has "I will give you the Gentiles", which John takes to mean the right to exercise "authority over" the Gentiles. This authority is usually understood to mean the right to proclaim the gospel of God's grace to the Gentiles / nations, but v27 may be indicating something more.

v27

ἐν + dat. "**with [an iron sceptre]**" - [AND HE WILL SHEPHERD THEM] WITH [A ROD MADE OF IRON]. The preposition here is adverbial, modal, expressing manner, but possibly instrumental, expressing means. The imagery of shepherding / ruling / governing with an iron rod illustrates a complete controlling rule.

ὡς "like [pottery]" - AS [THE VESSELS MADE OF CLAY IS BROKEN]. Comparative; "smashing them to pieces like earthenware", REB - as earthenware pottery is easily smashed. Since the victory of the cross and the defeat of Satan and his minions, Christ exercises complete authority over the nations / Gentiles. Secular authority may seem all powerful, but it is nothing more than a sham, the death-rattles of a wild beast. Note the typical use of a singular verb with a plural neuter subject, "the vessels ... is broken."

ὡς "just as" - AS [I ALSO HAVE RECEIVED *authority* FROM THE FATHER OF ME]. Comparative; "like I received *it* from my Father" = "in line with / in accord with *the authority* that was bestowed upon me by my Father." The object of **εἰληφα**, "I have received", is assumed to be **εξουσία**, "authority", given that for Jesus to give the church authority over the nations he must have received authority from the Father.

v28

αυτω dat. pro. "**I will give] that one**" - [AND I WILL GIVE THE MORNING STAR] TO HIM. Dative of indirect object. The singular "him" refers to "the one who is victorious", v26, this one refers to those believers who persevere in the faith, so "I will reward them with the morning star." For **δωσω**, "I shall give", "I shall bestow the morning star", Cassirer, is probably short-talk for "I will grant him (them) to see the morning star", Moffatt. The morning star / day star refers to Venus, a planet, although the ancients didn't know the difference. For them it was the largest star and served to herald the coming day by appearing just before dawn. So, as Moffatt has it, the promise is that those who demonstrate fortitude, who persevere, will see the morning star and the coming dawn of the new age.

v29

ὁ εχων [εχω] pres. part. "**whoever has [ears]**" - THE ONE HAVING [EARS LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES]. See 2:7.

3:1-6

The letters to the seven churches

v] Sardis

Argument

In the letter to the church at Sardis, Jesus announces that he is well aware of their reputation, of their being a spirit-filled church, but in actual fact they are a spiritually dead church with only a small core of faithful believers. So, it is time for the church to repent, otherwise it will face divine chastisement. Those who persevere will find their names in "the book of life" and they will be "acknowledged" before God.

Issues

i] Context: See 2:1-7.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8. Founded in 1200BC, Sardis stands some forty miles southeast of Thyatira on a high hill in the Hermus basin. The hill has a steep precipice on three sides leading up to Mount Tmolus. This made the city very defensible and enabled it to grow into an important trading centre. It was one of the first city states to mint gold and silver coinage. Its power grew to a point where it felt able to challenge the empire of Persia, although Cyrus ended up taking the city by stealth. It later came under the control of Alexander, then Antiochus III in 214BC, and finally Rome. By this time the city was living on its past glory, but none-the-less, it sported magnificent ancient buildings. The temple to Artemis even rivalled the one situated in Ephesus. The city sported a sizable Jewish community with the synagogue renowned as one of the largest in the ancient world. The synagogue was connected to a gymnasium, indicating a convergence of Jewish and Hellenistic life. Hemer in Supplement 11, Sheffield JSOT, 1986, argues that this evidences a Jewish accommodation with Hellenistic life which may well have extended to the Christian community. So again, we may be looking at the problem of syncretism.

iii] Structure: *The letter to the church in Sardis:*

Introduction:

to whom, v1a;

"to the angel of the church in Sardis."

from whom, v1b.

"He who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars"

Analysis of the church:

strengths, ???;

weaknesses, v1c-2.

"a reputation of being alive, but you are dead."

Instruction:

"what you have received and heard; hold it fast and repent", v3-4;

Promise

the one who endures is blessed, v5-6

iv] Interpretation:

In the seven letters to the churches, 2:1-3:2, John reveals the *not yet* reality of the kingdom of God, a kingdom inaugurated, yet to be realized. He lets us see the Christian fellowship warts and all. As it was for the church in the first century, so it is for us. We stand at the crossroads of history, of God's *now / not yet* reign, compromised in the face of a hostile environment. We have survived to this moment in time between the cross and Christ's return, and if we are to share in God's promised reward we must repent, we must turn around to Christ and renew our faith in him, and then we must press forward in faith, we must endure, persevere, conquer.

The words of Christ to the church in Sardis are the harshest of all the letters to the churches. This is a compromised church, living on the faded glory of a previous time; her only good is a good reputation. To the casual onlooker, this is a flourishing church, but not so as far as Christ is concerned. The church has failed to follow through on its mission for Christ; it has failed to complete. The church "set herself the task of avoiding hardship, by pursuing a policy based on convenience and circumspection, rather than whole-hearted zeal", Kiddle. Yet, the church is not completely dead; there remains a small group of believers who hold their first love, a faith in Christ alone. None-the-less, without repentance the church at Sardis will face divine chastisement by stealth, in the same way as the city itself fell to its enemies. Some commentators think John is referring to the last judgment, although Wilcock thinks that "some more immediate punishment" is in mind. John probably has both a local chastisement and the last judgment in mind. For those who are victorious, who persevere, there is a guaranteed inclusion in the book of life and an acknowledgment before God the Father. The promises are substantial, but the language is not as effusive as the promises made to the other churches.

Text - 3:1a, b

Sardis - a sleeping church, v1a, b: i] Introduction: The letter is introduced in similar form to the previous four, except that the description of the exalted Christ

emphasizes his divine authority over the church. This is a church asleep on the watch, and by doing so, they show little regard for the one they serve.

τω αγγελω της εν ... εκκλησιας γραφον. Ταδε λεγει "to the angel of the church in [Sardis] write: These are the words ..." See 2:1.

ὁ εξων [εχω] "him who holds" - THE ONE HAVING. The participle serves as a substantive, nominative subject of the verb "to say."

του θεου [ος] gen. "[the seven spirits] of God [and the seven stars]" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive, but Mathewson also suggests source, "from God." Again, John uses the number seven to represent completeness / perfection, so this is probably a reference to the complete / perfect "spirit", ie., the Holy Spirit, as in 1:4, see also 5:6; "the Sevenfold Holy Spirit", Osborne. Yet, what of the "seven stars"? John has already mentioned the seven stars held in the right hand of God in 1:16. "And the seven stars" may be "even the seven stars", ie., και is possibly ascensive, although Smalley argues that it is expegetic, "namely"; "the seven spirits of God, ie., the seven stars." So, Smalley argues that the stars are nothing but a symbol of the "seven spirits.". Yet, it seems more likely that the seven stars represent the seven angels of the churches, the seven churches in their spiritual reality, their *not yet* perfection in Christ, although in eternal terms a perfection that is *now* in Christ. So, the imagery here emphasizes the eternal sovereignty of Christ with respect to the Christian church, both in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and its eternal standing in Christ.

v1c

ii] Analysis of the church: Weaknesses, v1c-2. Here is a church that is lethargic, they have slipped into the lifestyle and belief system of the surrounding pagan culture. Like the guards that twice failed to keep watch over the city of Sardis, allowing an easy capture by their enemies, so the church is no longer watchful, no longer watching to their faith, allowing spiritual lethargy to take hold; they have lost the fire in their belly. Beale thinks that the "unfinished works" relate to evangelism, they are "not witnessing to their faith before the unbelieving culture"; they are compromised by the pressure of pagan society. Unlike Christ, who holds in his hands both the seven spirits and the seven stars, the lampstand of Sardis is but a flickering flame. Osborne takes a more general line when he argues that the incomplete works in the sight of God are more in the nature of "love, faith, service, endurance", etc. Smalley also gives weight to the plural τα εργα, "works" arguing that the incomplete / half-hearted nature of the works relate to a lack of "love, faith, ministry and steadfastness", cf. 2:19.

σου gen. pro. "[I know] your [deeds]" - [I KNOW] OF YOU [THE WORKS, DEEDS]. The genitive is usually taken as verbal, subjective, "the works done by you"; "I know what you have done", Phillips. Note that the pronoun precedes the

noun rather than following it. This unusual placement makes the pronoun emphatic.

ὅτι "-" - THAT [YOU HAVE A NAME]. Here epexegetic, specifying "the works"; "that you have a reputation", Phillips.

ὅτι "[**you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead**]" - THAT [YOU LIVE AND ARE DEAD]. Here epexegetic, specifying "a name", their reputation. Taking **καί** as adversative, their reputation is of a church that is alive, a Spirit filled church, **but** in reality, it is dead, "nothing more than a corpse", Cassirer. "Just as the city in general was living off a former but no longer existing fame, so the same attitude had infected the church", Beale. The church was spiritually dead and in imminent danger of eternal death.

v2

γρηγορων [**γρηγορεω**] pres. part. "**wake up**" - [BECOME] WATCHING. The participle, with the present imperative **γινου**, "becoming" = "be", forms a periphrastic present emphasizing the durative aspect of the imperative, not so much "be watchful", but "show yourself to be watchful", Mounce, etc. The church has fallen asleep and must wake up and stay awake - "begin living as disciples again." The present tense, being imperfective / durative, gives the sense "be constantly vigilant", Smalley.

στηρισον [**στηριζω**] aor. imp. "**strengthen**" - STRENGTHEN, MAKE FIRM, SUPPORT / INVIGORATE, RENEW [THE THINGS REMAINING]. The aorist is possible ingressive, "start strengthening." This second imperative drives home the point that the church must strengthen the little that has survived of their faith. The **τα λοιπα**, "the things remaining", is plural, so the life of the church as a whole???

αποθανειν [**αποθνησκω**] aor. inf. "**[about] to die**" = [WHICH ARE ABOUT] TO DIE. The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of the verb "about". Osborne draws out the durative sense of the imperfect **μαλλον**, "about", noting that "the process of dying had been going on for some time", but Smalley, also Mathewson, argues that process is not intended here, ie., it is an epistolary imperfect. This irregular classification is somewhat of a stretch so, although "at the point of death" sounds right, probably "strengthen what you still have that is dying", Koester, better reflects an imperfective aspect.

γαρ "**for**" - Here more reason than cause, explaining why Christ is calling on the church to "wake up!"

σου gen. pro. "**your [deeds]**" - [I HAVE NOT FOUND THE WORKS] OF YOU. The genitive is usually treated as verbal, subjective, "I have found that nothing you have done is complete in the eyes of my God", Moffatt, but adjectival, possessive is also possible, they are "your deeds", your doing.

πεπληρωμενα [πληρωω] perf. mid./pas. part. "**unfinished**" - HAVING BEEN FULFILLED, COMPLETED. The participle serves as the substantive complement of the object "the works" standing in a double accusative construction; "I have found that you are not completely obeying God", CEV, is a bit nominalist, better, "*you may look busy*, but nothing of God's work has been completed", Peterson.

ενωπιον + gen. "**in the sight of**" - BEFORE. Spatial, metaphorical; "in the eyes of God", Smalley.

μου gen. pro. "**my [God]**" - [THE GOD] OF ME. The genitive is adjectival, relational, but possibly idiomatic / subordination, "over me."

v3

iii] Instruction, v3-4: "what you have received and heard; hold it fast and repent." The instructions to the church come with a warning. This church has compromised the apostolic gospel with secular ideology and so they need to wake up, remind themselves of the foundational truths of the Christian faith, reaffirm them, and restore them to their proper place in the life of the congregation. If they fail to recommit themselves to the apostolic gospel they will be caught out, both in the immediate present, but also in the last day. And it's easy to be caught out because Christ comes in judgment when we least expect it. Thankfully, there is a core of believers, a remnant, who remain true to the gospel. From the perspective of heaven, they even now process in Christ's victory parade.

ουν "[**remember**] **therefore**" - Inferential, drawing a logical conclusion; "therefore, bear in mind / take to heart (remember)"

πως "**what [you received]**" - HOW [YOU HAVE RECEIVED AND HEARD]. Here used to introduce an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what the readers need to remember, namely, "what you were taught"; "remember, therefore, the teaching you received", REB. Note that the verb "you have received" is perfect, so possibly "what you have received *and still hold*", Zerwick, although there is some evidence that in the late first century the perfect tense is sometimes used with a punctiliar / perfective aspect, as if an aorist. Note also the reverse order of the action; receive and (then) hear. The same reverse action is used for "keep" and "repent", ie., repentance comes before keeping. The word order is probably used to give emphasis to the receiving that should follow hearing, and the keeping that should follow repentance. This construction is known as a hysteron-proteron, the last first, see Mathewson.

και "**and**" - Coordinative, linking the two imperatives, "remember" and "keep / hold" together. The second **και** does the same thing, linking "keep / hold" with "repent".

τηρει [τηρω] pres. imp. "**hold it fast**" - KEEP, HOLD. "Put into practice", TH. The present tense, being durative, indicates ongoing action, a keep on keeping on.

The object is unstated, so possibly "hold to *these things*", Phillips, ie., the things taught.

μετανοησον [μετανοεω] aor. imp. "**repent**" - [AND] REPENT. The action of this third imperative is perfective, punctiliar. Repentance involves a turning back to God and holding onto him firmly. Thus the expansion, "repent and believe." So, this is not a call to feel sorrow for past failures, but a call to action under God to address those failures - try to sort it and don't do it again.

ουν "but" - THEREFORE. Inferential, drawing a logical conclusion, the logical conclusion of failing to comply with the three imperatives "remember", "keep" and "repent"; "if, therefore, you do not watch, keep alert, wake up,", ie., do not take to heart and hold fast to the apostolic gospel, and do not repent of past failings, then

εαν + subj. "**if**" - if *as may be the case*, [THEREFORE, YOU DO NOT KEEP WATCH, ALERT, THEN I WILL COME AS A THIEF ...]. Introducing a third-class conditional clause where the stated condition has the possibility of coming true. "Keep alert" usually has the sense of holding firmly to Christ / the faith - firm in belief / faith in Christ, and to what is believed.

ως "like [a thief]" - AS [A THIEF]. Functioning adverbially as a comparative, "like a thief in the night", Peterson, or modal, "in the manner of," "just as a thief does", CEV. The actions of a thief are clandestine and unexpected; such is the coming of Christ, cf., Matt.24:43-44.

ου μη + subj. "**[you will] not [know]**" - [AND] NOT NOT = NEVER [WOULD YOU KNOW WHAT KIND OF HOUR]. Subjunctive of emphatic negation.

ποιαν ωραν "what time" - WHAT KIND OF HOUR. Adverbial construction, temporal. Virtually an idiomatic phrase meaning "when", with the limiting / qualifying function of the pronoun, **ποιαν**, "what kind of [hour]" = "at what point of [time]", having lost its force.

επι + acc. "**to [you]**" - [I WILL COME] UPON [YOU]. Spatial, as NIV, "come upon you", Berkeley, but possibly expressing influence / opposition, "against you", ESV.

v4

αλλα "yet" - BUT. Adversative / contrastive.

εχεις [εχω] pres. "**you have**" - Note the singular, "ye". The words are addressed to the angel of the church at Sardis, not a plural "you", the congregation at Sardis. As already noted, the angel of the church is probably an ideal representation of the church, so the words are ultimately addressed to the congregation as a whole; see Interpretation - a definition of terms, 1:9-20. In addressing the angel, Christ notes, "ye have names in Sardis", ie., the angel has names / believers who belong to his team. If we follow the interpretation above

then Christ's words to the angel are the same as saying "there are a few in Sardis,, who have kept their robes unstained", NJB.

ονοματα [α ατος] "[a few] people" - [YOU HAVE A FEW] NAMES. Accusative direct object of the verb "to have." "Names" = names written in the book of life = "believers". The "name" represents the people, technically classified as a synecdoche where the whole is referred to by a part of the whole.

εν + dat. "in [Sardis]" - Local, expressing space.

αυτων gen. "their [cloths]" - [WHICH / WHO DO NOT SOIL THE GARMENTS] OF THEM. The genitive is possessive. "Who haven't ruined themselves wallowing in the muck of the world's ways", Peterson.

μετ [μετα] "with [me]" - [THEY WILL WALK] WITH [ME]. Expressing accompaniment / association.

εν + dat. "dressed in [white]" - Here adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of the walk; "dressed in white clothing", Cassirer. White clothing simply images purity, and thus their right to "walk with" Christ; they are worthy to do so. What makes them "worthy" is not stated, but in the end whatever worth we may have in God's sight is a gift of grace through faith in that one and only worthy man, Christ himself. So, spiritual purity rather than moral purity, although those pure in Christ tend to strive toward moral purity. Ramsay, in *Letters to the Seven Churches*, 1912, noted that those who follow in the Emperor's victory parade wore a white toga. John may be drawing on this image. So probably, the faithful remnant of believers processing before the victorious Son of God.

οτι "for [they are worthy]" - BECAUSE [THEY ARE WORTHY]. Introducing a causal clause explaining why they are able to walk in white clothing; "because they deserve to do so", Barclay.

v5

iv] Promise, v5-6. Depending on how one reads this verse, there are two, or three promises; two seems more likely. The victorious ones, those who are ούτων, "like" *the faithful remnant in Sardis who have not soiled their cloths and who are therefore included in Christ's victory parade, the worthy ones, the ones* clothed in white robes, will (promise 1) never be blotted out of the book of life and will (promise 2) be acknowledged by Christ before the Father.

ο νικων [νικω] pres. part. "the one who is victorious" - THE ONE CONQUERING. The participle serves as a substantive.

ουτως adv. "like [them]" - LIKE / IN SIMILAR MANNER / THUS (ESV) [WILL BE CLOTHED IN WHITE GARMENTS]. This forward referencing demonstrative adverb serves as a comparative here, "like", but possibly a touch modal, "in like manner to."

ου μη + fut. "[I will] never [blot out]" - [I WILL] NOT NOT = NEVER [WIPE OUT, ERASE THE NAME OF HIM]. Here the future tense is used for a subjunctive of emphatic negation. The clause is technically classified as a litotes where a negated statement is used to express a positive. A person's "name" serves to represent their person, although here the imagery is of a believer's name inscribe in the book of the saved, never to be erased - written in indelible ink and so never disenfranchised. Note Caird's argument on "conditional predestination." The names have been in the book of life "since the foundation of the world", Rev.17:8, but it is only the "victorious" whose names are not erased. Although unacceptable to both sides of this debate, the truth lies in the tension between divine sovereignty and human freewill, ie., truth is lateral, not linear. Yes indeed, the Lord compiled the list before the creation of the world, and some years ago I asked the Lord to put my name on it, and he did! Work that out! And my name is guaranteed to stay on the list, unless of course, I want him to take it off, ie., if I decide to no longer persevere in faith - but to whom shall I go? "You have the words of eternal life", Jn.6:68.

εκ + gen. "from" - Expressing separation.

της Ζωης [η] gen. "[the book] of life" - The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "the book." The image of a "book of life" is drawn from the OT were a register of the faithful is referred to, cf., Exodus, 32:32-33, Dan.12:1. The idea is also found in the NT, eg., Heb.12:23. The idea is a judicial one - the image of Peter at the gate of heaven checking whether a person's name is written in the book.

ενωπιον + gen. "before [my Father]" - [AND I WILL CONFESS THE NAME OF HIM] BEFORE [THE FATHER OF ME AND] BEFORE [THE ANGELS OF HIM]. Spatial, metaphorical. The acknowledgment of the "victorious" before the Father "in the presence of the angels", Smalley, is both eschatological and forensic in nature. On earth, believers may face trouble upon trouble, but in heaven, the status of a believer is acknowledged before the celestial court of the Ancient of Days.

v6

ὁ εχων [εχω] pres. part. "whoever has [ears]" - THE ONE HAVING [EARS LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES]. See 2:7.

3:7-13

The letters to the seven churches

vi] Philadelphia

Argument

The letter to the church at Philadelphia, like the letter to Smyrna, adopts a positive tone. This is a church enduring patiently, keeping Christ's word and not denying him. Yet, at the same time, they are not a strong church, small in number and facing increasing difficulties from without. Yet, Christ promises to support them and so for their part they must keep on keeping on. In the present age they may have little strength, but in the age to come they will be like a mighty pillar in the heavenly temple.

Issues

i] Context: See 2:1-7.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8. Philadelphia, today known as Alashehir, is situated some thirty miles southeast of Sardis, in the Cogamis river valley, a river which leads to the Hermus river. The city sat on a natural defensive hill, linked to a main Roman road, and so had become a major trading centre with the East. The city was founded in 189BC, Greek in culture and language. Not only did the city gain wealth through trade, but the surrounding valley was rich in volcanic soil and was renowned for its vineyards. It is for this reason that the favoured pagan God in Philadelphia was Dionysus, the god of wine. Like Sardis, it was devastated by the earthquake of AD17. The Roman government waved tribute for five years to allow the city to redevelop. This prompted strong allegiance to Rome and an expansion of the emperor cult until AD92 when the emperor, Domitian, ordered the removal of half the grape vines in order to grow grain for the empire. This caused serious economic harm and an ongoing antagonism with Roman authority. By the fifth century AD it was known as "Little Athens" due to the many temples found in the city. There is no record of when the church was founded, but the city was most probably evangelized by members of Paul's missionary team. Ignatius records his own visit in AD110 and mentions that the church has a bishop with elders and deacons.

iii] Structure: *The letter to the church in Philadelphia:*

Introduction:

to whom, v7a;

"to the angel of the church in Philadelphia."

from whom, v7b.

"Him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David."
Analysis of the church:
strengths, v8-10:
"you have kept my word and have not denied my name."
weaknesses, ???.
Instruction:
"hold on to what you have", v11;
Promise
the one who endures is blessed, v12-13.

iv] Interpretation:

In the seven letters to the churches, 2:1-3:2, John reveals the *not yet* reality of the kingdom of God, a kingdom inaugurated, yet to be realized. He lets us see the Christian fellowship warts and all. As it was for the church in the first century, so it is for us. We stand at the crossroads of history, of God's *now / not yet* reign, compromised in the face of a hostile environment. We have survived to this moment in time between the cross and Christ's return, and if we are to share in God's promised reward we must repent, we must turn around to Christ and renew our faith in him, and then we must press forward in faith, we must endure, persevere, conquer.

Christ's words to the church serve as an encouragement in the face of coming tribulation. Like Smyrna, no particular failings are identified, no criticism made. Yet, although this is a small church facing tribulation, it is a church "with opportunities", Phillips.

The tribulation, "the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world." Although couched in the language of the coming Great Day of the Lord, a more immediate trouble facing the church is in mind. In the eye of the prophet, the end is always crashing into the present, such that a present tribulation is but a paradigm of the end. So, John sees trouble ahead, trouble which merges into the tribulations of the last day; See introductory notes, "Interpretation". These tribulations, like Smyrna, are generated by "the synagogue of Satan", 2:9. The reference is to the Jewish community in Philadelphia who are causing the trouble for the church. They are not in any way true Israelites, they are not the children of God, not God's holy people, but rather, they follow another Lord, Satan.

Although the church in Philadelphia faces difficult times, it will not be left to suffer alone, the Lord will keep them, he will preserve them. They have Christ's support because they are a church loyal to Christ, they have kept his command, enduring patiently in faith and love. Given the opposition they face from the synagogue of Satan, they are also obviously a

church which is loyal to Christ's missionary charge; they are an evangelistic church. So, this little church will, in the age to come, be an immovable pillar in the temple of the heavenly Jerusalem. In the meantime, they are to keep on keeping on.

Text - 3:7

Philadelphia - a church with opportunities: i] Introduction, v7: The letter is again addressed to the "angel of the church" which, as already noted, virtually means the church itself. John gives us another fulsome description of Christ. The divine attributes of holiness and truthfulness are applied to Christ, along with the statement that Christ holds "the key of David." The reference is to the key that opens the doors of the house of David, opens the gates to the messianic kingdom of God, the gates of heaven. So, this is the key that provides entry into the presence of God and thus access to eternal life. This key is held by the messiah, and thus is held by Jesus, the Davidic messiah. See Isa.22:22, "I will place the key of David's palace on his shoulder; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts, no one can open." Some have suggested that the key represents the authority to enforce the laws of the kingdom, but this is unlikely. As Isaiah in 26:2 states, the gates are opened "that the righteous nation that keeps faith may enter in", along with the "nations / Gentiles", 60:11. On earth, Israel served as God's doorkeeper, but they failed by making law, rather than faith, the requirement for entry. Thus, the church now serves as Christ's doorkeeper, holding "the keys of the kingdom of heaven", Matt.16:19.

τω αγγελω της εν ... εκκλησιας γραφον. Ταδε λεγει **"to the angel of the church in [Philadelphia] write: These are the words ..."** See 2:1.

ὁ αληθινος adj. **"[holy and] true"** - [THE HOLY], THE TRUE, [THE ONE HAVING THE KEY OF DAVID SAYS THESE THINGS]. The adjective serves as a substantive, "the true *one*", standing in apposition to "the holy *one*", the nominative subject of the verb "to say." The terms "him who is holy" and "him who is truth", are used both of God the Father, and in the NT of Jesus, ie., Jesus is "the embodiment of absolute sanctity and truth", Smalley.

ὁ εχων [εχω] pres. part. **"who holds"** - THE ONE HAVING. The participle serves as a substantive.

Δαυιδ gen. **"[the key] of David"** - The proper genitive is adjectival, possessive. See above.

ὁ ανοιγων [ανοιγω] **"what he opens"** - [AND] THE ONE OPENING, UNLOCKING [NO ONE WILL SHUT, CLOSE, AND *the one* SHUTTING NO ONE WILL OPEN]. The participle is usually taken as substantival, "he who opens", usually taken with the connective και, "and", as "who opens and no one will shut", ESV.

Cassirer takes **καὶ** as consecutive, "so that", and the participle as adverbial, temporal; "so that, when he opens none can close, when he closes none can open."

v8

ii] Analysis of the church - strengths, v8-10. Although the church at Philadelphia is small and facing aggressive opposition, it is made up of genuinely saved believers who rest firmly on Christ's word, and do so with fortitude, v8. Given the faithfulness of the congregation, their enemies, the assembly of Satan, will be brought low and ultimately forced to recognize the followers of Christ as God's beloved family, v9. The murderous plots against the apostle Paul give some idea of the hatred that can be generated within the Jewish community against the sect of *The Way*, and obviously the Philadelphian believers have been on the receiving end of this hatred. Yet, the truth will out, such that a day will come, and in a sense is already here (the constant flow of Jewish converts), when God's historic people will recognize Christ's messianic credentials. In v10 Christ promises to aid the Philadelphian believers in their time of tribulation, and this because they have "kept the word", they have believed the gospel. The promised aid is couched in the imagery of the eschatological tribulation that will engulf the whole world at the return of Christ. The Philadelphian believers, as with all believers throughout the ages, face tribulation, and just as Christ will shorten the tribulation in the last day, for the sake of the elect, so he stays the full rush of evil today, such that, although singed by fire, the church will survive.

τὰ ἔργα [ov] "[I know your] deeds" - [I KNOW] THE WORKS [OF YOU]. Accusative direct object of the verb "to know." The genitive "of you" may be taken as adjectival, possessive, or verbal, subjective; note how it has been brought forward for emphasis. It looks as if this statement stands in its own right, although most commentators (Smalley, Mounce, ...) argue that the **ὅτι** clause found later in the verse introduces a dependent statement of perception expressing what Christ knows, "I know your works that you have little strength,", with "behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut", serving as a parenthesis. Yet, given the clauses in v8-9 beginning with **ἰδοὺ**, "behold", it does seem more likely that "I know your deeds" stands on its own, and that **ὅτι** introduces a causal clause, "because"; "I am aware of the works you have accomplished. Look out then (**ἰδοὺ**); I have thrown open before you a door which no one has the power of closing. *And this I have done* because (**ὅτι**), although you have indeed little power, you have held fast to what I have commanded and have not repudiated my name", Cassirer.

ἠνεώγημεν [ανοίγω] perf. mid./pas. part. "[an] open [door]" - [BEHOLD, I HAVE GIVEN BEFORE YOU A DOOR] HAVING BEEN UNLOCKED, OPENED. The participle is adjectival, attributive, as NIV. Usually taken to refer to an open door

into the kingdom of God, but Caird suggests missionary opportunities, Kiddle opts for martyrdom, Barclay prayer, and Moffatt salvation.

κλεισαι [κλειω] aor. inf. "**[no one can] shut**" - [WHICH NO ONE IS ABLE] TO SHUT. Complementary infinitive completing the action of the verb "is able."

αυτην pro. "-" - it. Given the presence of the verb to-be ἦν, this pronoun, serving as the object of "able to shut", is redundant. The construction occurs a number of times in Revelation indicating that is probably Semitic.

ὅτι "I know that" - THAT. Here probably causal, "because"; see "I know your deeds" above.

δυναμιν [ις εως] "**[you have little] strength**" - Usually taken as a reference to little spiritual power and therefore Christ is identifying a weakness. Yet, it seems more likely that the size and / or social standing of the congregation is in mind; "I know you don't have much prestige", TH. Smalley notes that after the earthquake in 17AD the population of the city was greatly reduced; "the church lacked size and stature in the community", Osborne.

και "yet" - AND. Here usually taken as an adversative, as NIV; "and yet"

μου gen. pro. "**[you have kept] my [word]**" - [YOU HAVE KEPT THE WORD] OF ME. The genitive is adjectival, verbal, subjective, or possessive, or idiomatic / source. "Though they were a small church, they were faithful and persevered", Osborne. Presumably "word" = "the word of God", which in Revelation often means "the gospel". If "the gospel" is intended then to keep the gospel simply means to believe in it. So, "you have believed in the (my) gospel and you have acknowledged me before your neighbours."

το ονομα [α ατος] "**[not denied my] name**" - [AND NOT DENIED] THE NAME [OF ME]. "The name" of a person represents the person, so "you have not denied my name" = "you have not denied me." To not deny is to acknowledge; "whoever will acknowledge me before others, I will acknowledge before my Father in heaven", Matt.10:32. So, this is a church which seeks to communicate the gospel to its local community - "you have spread the good news far and wide."

v9

ιδου "-" - BEHOLD. See "I know your deeds."

διδω [διδωμι] pres. "**I will make [..... come and fall down]**" - I AM GIVING = I WILL MAKE [*the ones* FROM THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN, THE ONES SAYING THEMSELVES TO BE JEWS, AND ARE NOT, BUT LIE, BEHOLD, I WILL MAKE THEM]. Probably a futuristic present, "I will give", given **ποιησω**, "I will make", in the second clause. When used with an acc. + infinitive, here the verb to-be **ειναι**, "[I will give ... *the Jews*] to be", can mean "I will cause / make"; see BDF #392e. Yet, here "I will give" may just mean "I will hand over and I will make them come and fall down" Smalley argues that "handed over" means to become

subject to the church at Philadelphia. John's perspective is always eschatological, so in line with the Queen of Sheba coming to Solomon and bowing before him, or the prophetic image of the Gentile recognition of Israel, or the nations bowing before Christ, so we see Israel "given" to bowing in homage before the church. This eschatological last-days image (*not yet*) may have a present realization (*now*) in the conversion of some members of the assembly of Satan. It is interesting how many Jews, even today, become believers. I personally know of a number of clergy who have Jewish ancestry.

εκ + gen. "**those who are of [the synagogue]**" - Possibly source / origin, "the ones from", "those who belong to the synagogue of Satan", or standing in for a partitive genitive, "*some (τινας)* of the synagogue of Satan"; "some of you", TNT.

του σατανα [α ας] gen. "**of Satan**" - The proper genitive is adjectival, possessive; this synagogue belongs to Satan. Although the Jews were God's historic people, their rejection of the gospel places them outside God's family. They are no longer God's family, but the family of Satan. By claiming what they do not possess they make themselves out to be "liars".

των λεγοντων [λεγω] gen. pres. part. "**who claim**" - THE ONES SAYING. The participle serves as a substantive.

αλλα "**but [are liars]**" - BUT [LIE]. Adversative, as NIV.

ινα + fut. "-" - [I WILL MAKE THEM] THAT. This is a somewhat irregular construction, but in Revelation the future tense is used ten times with *hina* instead of the subjunctive. In the second clause controlled by **ινα**, John uses a subjunctive **γνωσιν**, "[and] they would know" The *hina* construction here is probably being used to introduce an object clause / dependent statement of indirect speech, expressing the content of what Jesus is going to make them do, ie., the content of his command, namely that they "fall down before your feet and learn that I have loved you", so McKay, Gk. Some commentators argue that the infinitive here is complementary, completing the sense of the verb "I will make", so Osborne, Mathewson, ..., and others that it is adverbial, final or consecutive, "in order that / so that", so Beale.

ενωπιον + gen. "**at [your feet]**" - [THEY WILL COME AND WORSHIP] BEFORE [THE FEET OF YOU]. Spatial. A gesture of submission in the face of defeat, a gesture of homage, even possibly a gesture of pleading, but not of obeisance / worship.

οτι "**[and acknowledge] that**" - [AND WOULD KNOW, UNDERSTAND, RECOGNIZE] THAT [I HAVE LOVED YOU]. Introducing an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what they will know. The sense is "I have loved you *over them*", so without the "over them" it is best translated "I love you."

v10

ὅτι "since" - BECAUSE. Here causal, as NIV.

της ὑπομονης [ος] gen. "[my command] to endure patiently" - [BECAUSE YOU KEPT THE WORD] OF PATIENCE, ENDURANCE [OF ME]. The genitive is usually taken here as adjectival, verbal, objective, "my word about patient endurance", ESV, but other possibilities present themselves. Often "word of" in Revelation = "word from", ie., adjectival, idiomatic / source, may well be how John thinks of the genitive (Semitic), "the word *which originates from / comes from*", or even verbal, subjective, "*is revealed by Christ*." Taking "word" to mean "command" is not uncommon in translations, eg., REB, and certainly λογος can mean "a teaching, command, instruction", but often in Revelation it seems to be shorthand for "the Word of God", 1:2, 9, 6:9, ..., specifically "the gospel." Certainly, the gospel stems from God's patience. The NIV takes the genitive as recitative, so also REB, but that is somewhat of a stretch. Note Phillips' verbal, subjective, "you have obeyed my call to patient obedience." Possibly attributive, "my patient / enduring word / gospel."

εκ + gen. "[keep you] from" - [I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU] FROM [THE HOUR OF TRIAL]. Expressing separation, "away from."

του πειρασμου [ος] gen. "[the hour] of trial" - [THE HOUR] OF TRIAL, TRIBULATION / TEMPTATION, TEST. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / temporal; "the hour when testing takes place", Mathewson. "Trial" seems likely, so suffering, distress, tribulation. Again, with the eye of the prophet, John is probably referring to a present day easing of the church's suffering, but doing so in the imagery of the eschatological tribulation in the last day, which world-wide tribulation Christ has promised to shorten for the sake of the elect.

της μελλουσης [μελλω] pres. part. "that is going" - THE ONE BEING ABOUT. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "trial, tribulation", as NIV.

ερχεσθαι [ερχομαι] pres. inf. "to come" - Complementary infinitive, completing the sense of the participle "being about."

επι + gen. "on" - UPON [THE WHOLE WORLD]. Spatial.

πειρασαι [πειραζω] aor. inf. "to test" - TO TEST, TRY. The infinitive is adverbial, final, "in order to test, try."

τους κατοικουντας [κατοικεω] pres. part. "the inhabitants" - THE ONES DWELLING [ON THE EARTH].

v11

iii] Instruction, v11: Troubles in the present must always be viewed in the context of the parousia, which, from a heavenly perspective, is already upon us; it is *now*. To this end, believers must persevere, *hang in there* and so receive the

victor's laurel wreath, "the crown of life", 2:10, cf., 1Cor.9:25 - vindication and reward.

ταχυ adv. "[I am coming] soon" - Temporal adverb.

ὄ pro. "what [you have]" - [HOLD] WHAT [YOU HAVE]. Introducing a relative clause, object of the imperative verb "to hold."

ἵνα + subj. "so that [no one will take your crown]" - THAT [NO ONE MAY TAKE THE CROWN OF YOU]. Probably introducing a final clause expressing purpose, "in order that", or consecutive expressing result, "and then no one will be able to take away your victor's crown", Barclay. Note how the REB virtually treats this *hina* construction as epexegetic, "hold fast to what you have and let no one rob you of your crown", so also NJB.

v12

iv] Promise, v12-13: The promise to those who endure, those who stay firm in their faith, despite the pressure from without to conform to the ethos of the age, is "a new security and a new name", Osborne. This amounts to security, stability, inclusion and acceptance in God's eternal family. The promise is for "end-time fellowship and identification with Christ", Beale.

ὁ νικων [**νικω**] pres. part. "the one who is victorious" - THE ONE CONQUERING, OVERCOMING [I WILL MAKE HIM]. The participle serves as a substantive, pendent nominative resumed by the accusative **αυτον**, "him". "Everyone who wins the victory", CEV, through perseverance.

στυλον [**ος**] "a pillar" - Accusative complement of the object "him" in a double accusative construction. The imagery is of an essential structural element in the temple which cannot be removed. The "victorious" are such an element in God's household and so will never be discarded.

εν + dat. "in [the temple]" - Local, expressing space.

μου gen. pro. "my [God]" - [OF THE GOD] OF ME. The genitive is adjectival, relational, or idiomatic / subordination, "the God over me." The genitive "of God" is possessive. Note how three times in this verse we have **του θεου μου**, "my God." The verse stresses our relationship with God, rather than his sovereignty over us, indicating that a relational classification for the genitive is more fitting.

ου μη + subj. "never" - NOT NOT = NEVER [MAY HE GO OUT AGAIN]. Subjunctive of emphatic negation. "I'll make each conquerer a pillar in the sanctuary of my God, a permanent position of honour", Peterson.

επι [**επι**] + acc. "[I will write] on [them]" - [AND I WILL WRITE THE NAME OF THE GOD OF ME AND THE NAME OF THE CITY OF THE GOD OF ME] UPON [HIM]. Spatial. The genitive "of God" is possessive, and **μου**, "of me", as above.

το ονομα [**α ατος**] "the name" - Accusative direct object of the verb "to write." Those who are victorious will have three names ascribed on them: the

name of God; the name of God's city (the new Jerusalem); and Christ's new name. A name is ascribed on something to indicate belonging, so the victorious are ascribed as belonging to God, belonging to / citizens of the city of God, and belonging to Christ.

της ... Ιερουσαλημ gen. "**the [new] Jerusalem**" - Genitive standing in apposition to "city". The new Jerusalem is a dominant theme in Revelation where the eschatological reality of a new and eternal community of God replaces the rubble of failed Israel.

ἡ καταβαινουσα [καταβαινω] pres. part. "**which is coming down**" - THE ONE COMING DOWN. The tense of a participle has little force, certainly in time terms, but also aspect, and so is controlled by the surrounding verbs. Caird makes much of the durative aspect of the present tense here, but given the surrounding verbs in the future tense, the sense is probably "which will come down out of heaven." Usually treated as adjectival, attributive, limiting "the new Jerusalem", as NIV, but "the new Jerusalem" is genitive, and the participle is nominative. Mathewson suggests it functions as a parenthesis, but we are best to follow Beale who notes that "the irregular lack of agreement is intended generally to attract attention to an OT allusion." John has already used this device a number of times. Here though the allusion is by no means obvious, but Beale thinks Isaiah 62:1-6 is the likely source. The image of the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven fulfills "the main biblical promise of life in the presence of God", Osborne, cf., 21:3.

εκ + gen. "**out of [heaven]**" - Expressing source / origin.

απο + gen. "**from [my God]**" - Expressing source / origin.

και "**and also I will write on them [my new name]**" - AND [THE NEW NAME OF ME]. Adjunctive. Suggestions abound, possibly "the Word", Swete, probably not "Lord". Given 19:12 and the reference to the hidden name of God's messiah, a new name known only to God.

v13

ὁ εχων [εχω] pres. part. "**whoever has [ears]**" - THE ONE HAVING [EARS LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES]. See 2:7.

3:14-22

The letters to the seven churches

vii] Laodicea

Argument

The final letter is addressed to the church in Laodicea. Here is a church in serious trouble, a lukewarm church, an insipid church, a church that makes Jesus feel sick. If any church needed to be covered with the white robe of God's grace it is Laodicea. They need to repent, they need to ask Christ back into their fellowship, for only then will they be victorious and share in the reign of Christ. As Beale puts it, "Christ condemns the church in Laodicea for its ineffective witness and deplorable spiritual condition, and exhorts its members to persevere by becoming faithful witnesses, renewing their fellowship with him so as to reign with him."

Issues

i] Context: See 2:1-7.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8. Laodicea lay on the same major Roman road to the Mediterranean which linked Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis and Philadelphia. The road served as a major trading route from the East and so towns along the way tended to be prosperous. The town of Laodicea was situated on a small plateau rising some two hundred feet above the Lycus valley. The city was founded by Antiochus II around 250BC and remained part of the Selucid empire until it came under Roman control in 133BC. During that time, it was Greek in culture and language. When other cities joined in revolt against Rome, Laodicea remained loyal and so was rewarded accordingly. It became a centre of Roman administration, banking and the manufacture of clothing. It even boasted a medical school and manufactured medicines for distribution throughout the empire; it was especially known for its eye remedy, *Phrygian powder*. The only major problem facing the city was occasional earthquakes and a lack of water. The earthquake in AD60 damaged or destroyed most buildings, along with the aqueduct from Denizli, six miles south. Numerous pagan cults flourished in Laodicea and it seems likely that the church was compromised by syncretism. It is assumed that the church was founded by Epaphras, around the time he founded the Colossian church, during Paul's stay in Ephesus, Acts 19.

iii] Structure: *The letter to the church in Laodicea*:

Introduction:

to whom, v14a;

"to the angel of the church in Laodicea."
from whom, v14b.

"the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation"

Analysis of the church:

strengths, ???

weaknesses, v15-18. "you are neither cold nor hot."

Instruction:

"be earnest and repent", v19-20;

Promise

the one who endures is blessed, v21-22.

iv] Interpretation:

In the seven letters to the churches, 2:1-3:2, John reveals the *not yet* reality of the kingdom of God, a kingdom inaugurated, yet to be realized. He lets us see the Christian fellowship warts and all. As it was for the church in the first century, so it is for us. We stand at the crossroads of history, of God's *now / not yet* reign, compromised in the face of a hostile environment. We have survived to this moment in time between the cross and Christ's return, and if we are to share in God's promised reward we must repent, we must turn around to Christ and renew our faith in him, and then we must press forward in faith, we must endure, persevere, conquer.

Laodicea was a city renowned for its financiers, clothing manufacturers and physicians, but Christ's assessment of the church in Laodicea is less than endearing; it is poor, naked and blind. What the church has is a high opinion of itself due to its wealth and status, but as far as Christ is concerned, it is a church which is neither cold nor hot, it is a lukewarm church, a complacent church, a tepid church. As Christ puts it in v16, "you make me sick!"

These are harsh words indeed, but all is not lost. Christ's rebuke has repentance as its intended purpose - "those whom I love I rebuke", v19. If the church does repent, if it stands at the door and knocks, then fellowship with Christ will be restored, v20. Christ will then supply the riches of eternity, the robe of the victorious, and the ointment to see again.

"If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him", v20. At this point in the text an individual response to Christ is usually assumed. It may well be that the church, as a whole, does not repent, but glory is not dependent on a communal repentance; eternal fellowship with Christ is for $\tau\iota\varsigma$, "anyone", who hears the clarion call of the gospel and opens their heart to the Lord. This is certainly a greatly loved

gospel text and its sentiment is true for a seeker, but given its context and the tendency for John to personalize the response required of a church, Christ is standing at the door of the church and is calling on the church to open its doors and allow him in so that he may restore his relationship with the congregation. So, the verse has communal intent - a complacent church must repent if it wishes to remain in fellowship with Christ.

Text - 3:14

Laodicea - a complacent church: i] Introduction, The destination of the letter is identified, as is its author. Christ again takes on divine titles, here particularly related to his part in revealing divine truth, a revelation that is "faithful and true." The title "ruler of God's creation" is somewhat fraught, but it probably refers to Christ as the foundational member of God's new community, "the beginning of God's *new* creation"; see below.

τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν ... ἐκκλησίας γραφόν. Ταδε λεγει **"to the angel of the church in [Philadelphia] write: ..."** See 2:1.

ὁ ἀμην **"the Amen"** - THE AMEN [SAYS THESE *things*]. Nominative subject of the verb "to say." Probably drawn from Isaiah 65:16, the MT having "amen" and LXX "truth". Jesus would often use the term "Amen" to specify the importance of what he was about to say. God is the Amen, the true witness, which title is applied here to Christ.

ὁ μαρτυς [υς υρος] **"[the faithful and true] witness"** - Nominative standing in apposition to "the Amen." Christ's testimony is faithful and true, he reveals the truth of the gospel, unlike the Laodiceans "whose witness was virtually non-existent", Osborne.

ἡ ἀρχὴ [ἡ] **"the ruler"** - RULER / THE BEGINNING, SOURCE, ORIGIN / CAUSE (cause unlikely). Nominative standing in apposition to "the Amen". "Ruler" is possibly intended, as NIV, cf., Col.1:18. If the allusion to Isaiah continues, here 65:17, "behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth", then "the beginning of God's creation", ESV, is intended. Osborne argues for source / origin, Christ was in the beginning with God, cf., Jn.1:2-3, also Smalley. Yes, but more specifically, Christ is "the beginning, not of the original creation, but of the newly created church, or the new age of the church", Beale; the firstborn of the new creation.

τῆς κτισεως [ις εως] gen. **"of God's [creation]"** - OF THE CREATION [OF GOD]. If we take ἀρχὴ to mean "ruler", then the genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / subordination, limiting "ruler", "ruler over God's creation", but if we take the meaning as "beginning" then the genitive may be classified as verbal, objective, the act of beginning God's creation, so Mathewson, although the function of the

genitive is more likely epexegetic, in that it specifies "the beginning" in mind, namely, God's new creation in Christ.

v15

ii] Analysis of the church - weaknesses, v15-18. Having accommodated itself to its Greco-Roman environment, the Christian fellowship in Laodicea is a successful church, wealthy and in need of nothing. Yet, Christ's assessment of the church is that it is "wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked"; it is a lukewarm church, a spiritually barren church. Here is a church that needs to cover itself with the grace of God in order to hide its shame, cover itself as a person would clothe a naked body.

ὅτι "-" - [I KNOW THE WORKS OF YOU] THAT. Here introducing an epexegetic clause specifying the works, their behaviour, in this case the nature of the works, neither hot nor cold. "I am aware of the things done by you, how you are neither cold nor hot", Cassirer.

οὔτε οὔτε "neither [cold] nor [hot]" - NEITHER [COLD YOU ARE] NOR [HOT]. A negated comparative construction. An attitude of either friendliness or hostility toward the risen Lord, ie., the imagery is used to describe the nature of the church's commitment to Christ; the Laodiceans are neither, they are just "lukewarm". Smalley notes Rudwick and Green's suggestion that the "hot" and "cold" is not a measure of spiritual commitment, but rather a comparison between the hot medicinal waters of the city of Hierapolis to the north and the cold pure waters of Colossae to the south. Laodicea receives the remains of the water flowing from Hierapolis, lukewarm and sour. So, the "congregation is being chastised for the barrenness of its works."

οφελον [οφειλω] aor. part. "**I wish [you were either]**" - WISHING [YOU WERE COLD OR HOT]. "Participle introducing a wish unlikely to be realized", Zerwick, cf., BDF #359(1), eg., 1Cor.4:8. "How I wish you were either one or the other", TEV.

v16

οὕτως "so" - THUS. Here inferential, drawing a logical conclusion from v15.

ὅτι "because" - BECAUSE [YOU ARE LUKEWARM AND NEITHER HOT NOR COLD]. Here causal; "because you are tepid", Barclay.

εμεσαι [εμεω] aor. inf. "**[I am about] to spit [you]**" - The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of the verb "I am about."

εκ + gen. "**out of**" - FROM [THE MOUTH OF ME]. Expressing separation, "away from." This is rather strong language, today expressed as "you make me feel sick."

v17

ὅτι "-" - BECAUSE. Here causal; "for you say, I am rich", ESV.

ὅτι "-" - [YOU SAY] THAT [I AM RICH AND HAVE BECOME WEALTHY AND HAVE NO NEED, (**καί**) AND DO NOT KNOW (v18) *therefore* I COUNSEL YOU TO BUY]. Here introducing an object clause / dependent statement of indirect speech expressing what the Laodiceans say. The sense of the Gk. sentence covering v17-18 rests somewhat on a **καί**, "and [do not know]." Is it serving as a connective, "and", or consecutive, "and so as a result", or adversative "but", as NIV, TEV, ..., "in fact though you do not realize ...", REB? Note the similarity of Hosea 12:9. The threefold statement of the wealth of the Laodicean church is used for rhetorical force.

οὐδεν adj. "**[you do] not [realize]**" - [YOU DO] NOT [KNOW]. Functioning adverbially here; "in no way."

ὅτι "**that**" - THAT [YOU ARE THE ONE WRETCHED AND PITIFUL AND POOR AND BLIND AND NAKED]. Here introducing an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what they do not "know / realize." Note the list of predicate adjectives linked by **καί** serving to describe the actual spiritual state of the Laodicean church. This construction provides rhetorical force; "you have no eyes to see that you are wretched, pitiable, poverty-stricken, blind and naked", Phillips.

v18

σοι dat. pro. "**[I counsel] you**" - Dative of direct object after the **σὺν** prefix verb "to counsel." We may assume an inferential **οὐν**, "I counsel you therefore, to buy", although Beale handles v18 as if it is the apodosis of the protasis in v17.

αγορασαι [**αγοραζω**] aor. inf. "**to buy**" - The infinitive introduces a dependent statement of indirect speech expressing Jesus' counsel.

παρ [**παρά**] + gen. "**from [me]**" - Spatial / source, "from".

πεπυρωμενον [**πυρωω**] perf. mid./pas. part. "**[gold] refined [in the fire]**" - [GOLD] HAVING BEEN BURNT [FROM FIRE]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, "burnt gold." The participle is modified by the prepositional phrase **εκ πυρος**, "by fire", the preposition **εκ** expressing means, "burnt by fire" = "refined" = "refined gold", or possibly "fire-tested gold", Berkeley. "A biblical idiom for purifying one's life by removing sin", Beale, cf., Job.23:10.

ινα + subj. "**so [you can become rich]**" - THAT [YOU MAY BE RICH]. As with the two *hina* clauses that follow, in may be final expressing purpose, but better hypothetical result, "so that", or probably even better, consecutive, "with the result that" Spiritual wealth is the intended meaning, "that you may become spiritually rich", TH; "so becoming spiritually rich."

και "**and [white cloths]**" - AND [*to buy from me* WHITE GARMENTS]. Coordinative. The victorious wear white garments, most likely as a symbol of purity, purchased from Christ (free of charge for the asking!) in order to cover the shame of sin, just as clothing covers the shame of nakedness. The symbol of white

clothing is used a number of times in Revelation, cf., 3:4-5, 4:4, 6:11, White garments are also used in a victory parade, but certainly here purity seems to be the point of the image.

ἵνα + subj. "**so that**" - THAT [YOU MAY BE CLOTHED AND THE SHAME OF THE NAKEDNESS OF YOU NOT BE REVEALED]. As above; "so that... / with the result that"; "so hiding the shame of your sin."

της γυμνοτητος [ης ητος] gen. "**[shameful] nakedness**" - [SHAME] OF NAKEDNESS. The genitive is adjectival, probably attributed, as NIV. Their shameful nakedness is most likely their accommodation to the Greco-World.

εγχρισαι [εγχριω] aor. inf. "**[and salve] to put on [your eyes]**" - [AND to buy from me A SALVE, OINTMENT] TO ANOINT = TO RUB ON, PUT ON [THE EYES OF YOU]. Here used to introduce a purpose clause, "in order to anoint [your eyes]."

ἵνα + sub. "**so [you can see]**" - THAT [YOU MAY SEE]. As above; "so that ... / with the result that"; "enabling you to see."

v19

iii] Instruction, v19-20. Before calling for repentance, Christ makes the point that the harsh words in v15-18 are not words of judgment for damnation, but words of chastisement for salvation. So, Christ calls on the Laodicean believers to repent; "shake off your complacency and repent", Phillips. Christ is like a friend seeking the renewal of a broken relationship; he stands outside the friend's home seeking to come in and share fellowship together. A repentant church is a church in fellowship with Christ.

ὅσους εαν + subj. "**those whom**" - The syntax is somewhat tricky. The quantitative relative pronoun ὅσους, "as many as", followed by εαν = αν, + subj., gives the indefinite sense "whoever, whomsoever", or simply "those whom." Given that ὅσους is accusative, the sentence must read "I rebuke and discipline those whom I love." The pronoun εγω, "I", is emphatic by position and use and is used to emphasize Christ's part in the loving and disciplining, but technically it applies to "I rebuke", rather than "I love." The clause is conditional in form, 3rd. class, "whoever, *as the case may be*, I rebuke and discipline = chastise, *then* (they also) I love." Sometimes εαν can give a temporal twist to a quantitative relative pronoun, "whenever" (= ὅταν), but unlikely here. "I reprove and discipline all those I love."

φιλω [φιλεω] pro. "**I love**" - The use of φιλεω, "sensual love / passion" rather than αγαπαω, "spiritual love / compassion", is probably influenced by the allusion to Proverbs 3:12. None-the-less, in Revelation, and also from time to time in the NT, no distinction is made between the two Gk. words, eg., Jesus' φιλεις for Lazarus.

οὐν "so" - THEREFORE. Inferential, drawing a logical conclusion. Given that chastisement is not a sign of divine punishment to damnation, but rather an evidence of divine love, the church should turn from its sin and seek God's mercy, i.e., "repent."

ζηλευε [ζηλευω] "be earnest" - BE ZEALOUS, EAGER, ENTHUSIASTIC. As is so often the case in Revelation, we must fill in the dots, i.e., John does not define the focus of the enthusiasm; the church fete? Unlikely! The best we can say is that the word is being used as the opposite of lukewarmness, but even when we come to lukewarmness, lukewarm about what? Commentators are not backward in making suggestions: "the Laodiceans are not where Christ wants them to be in terms of witnessing discipleship, they do not form a community of faith and apparently practise all the ritual expressions of that faith, evidently even the Lord's Supper they do so without Christ's approval and presence. That is why Christ likens himself to someone standing outside their door and knocking", Blount. This is a reasonable example of filling in the dots and is nicely covered by the words "apparently" and "evidently"! The reader will note my own paltry attempts to fill in the dots, often without my favourite words "possibly", or "probably"!! Note how Phillips links the action of being zealous with repentance, "Shake off your complacency and repent."

v20

See "Interpretation" above. It is unlikely that "we will share our meal together", Barclay, alludes to the Lord's Supper. It simply describes an act of fellowship, of friends joining around a table and sharing a meal together, such that Jesus is a guest, and not the host, so Aune.

επι + acc. "[I stand] at [the door and knock]" - [BEHOLD I HAVE STOOD] AT, BY, BESIDE [THE DOOR AND KNOCK]. John's favourite spatial preposition, usually with a genitive to express "on, upon", but here with the accusative to express "at, near"; "here I am, standing at the door knocking", Cassirer.

εαν τις + subj. "if anyone" - IF A CERTAIN, *as the case may be*, [HEARS THE VOICE OF ME AND OPENS THE DOOR, (και, variant) then I WILL COME IN TO HIM AND DINE WITH HIM AND HE WITH ME]. Introducing a 3rd. class conditional clause where the condition has the possibility of coming true. "Will come" προς, "to, toward", him = movement toward, and "dine" μετα, "with", him = association, accompaniment.

της φωνης [η] gen. "[hears my] voice" - [HEARS] THE VOICE [OF ME]. Genitive of direct object after the verb "to hear." The genitive personal pronoun μου, "my", is probably possessive, but possibly idiomatic / source, origin, "from me."

v21

iv] Promise, v21-22: As in the other letters, the one who conquers, the one persevering, receives an eternal reward. Here the reward is to sit with Jesus on his throne and share in the exercise of divine authority, ruling over all powers and authorities. The thrust of this promise is eschatological, but the *not yet* is also *now* so there is a sense where believers exercise this authority in the present age. We are probably looking at the church's authority to proclaim the gospel and offer absolution, the forgiveness of sins, to break the bonds of those enslaved in darkness, but this authority may well extend to truth in general. The church does possess the divine manual for human existence, and the consequences of failing to follow its instructions are easily observed. Although this promise seems far too worthy for a church like Laodicea, it does remind us of the power of God's grace. Their labour may have only covered the final hour of the day, but none-the-less, a full day's pay is theirs. It is also worth noting that the subject of reigning with Christ is prominent in chapter 4 to 22 and so this promise nicely prepares us for what follows.

ὁ νικῶν [νικᾶω] pres. part. "**to the one who is victorious**" - THE ONE CONQUERING, OVERCOMING [I WILL GIVE TO SIT WITH ME ON THE THRONE TO HIM]. The participle serves as a substantive, pendent nominative / nominative absolute resumed by the pronoun **αὐτῷ**, "him", genitive of indirect object after the verb "to give", "the one conquering, I will give to him" = "the one conquering, to him I will give ..." = "to the one conquering I will give"; "Everyone who wins the victory will sit with me on my throne", CEV. The construction is Semitic. The victory is won through perseverance.

καθισαί [καθίζω] aor, inf. "**the right to sit**" - TO SIT [WITH ME]. The infinitive following the verb "to give" produces the meaning "to grant" and so serves to introduce a dependent statement of indirect speech expressing what Christ grants, namely, that the one who conquers will sit with Christ on his throne beside the Father, cf., 2:7.

μετ [μετα] + gen. "**with [me]**" - Expressing association / accompaniment, "with, along with"; "taken my seat beside my Father", Phillips.

εν "**on [my throne]**" - ON [THE THRONE OF ME]. Local, expressing space, "on".

ὡς "**just as**" - LIKE [I ALSO OVERCAME AND SAT WITH THE FATHER OF ME ON THE THRONE OF HIM]. Here as a comparative. "Conquerors will sit alongside me at the head table, just as I, having conquered, took the place of honour at the side of my Father. That's my gift to the conquerors", Peterson.

v22

ὁ ἔχων [ἔχω] pres. part. "**whoever has [ears]**" - THE ONE HAVING [EARS LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES]. See 2:7.

4:1-11

The vision of God and the Lamb, 4:1-5:14

i] Adoration of the Creator

Synopsis

John is again transfixed by a vision, as if before a door opening into the throne room of God. He hears someone inviting him to enter and see "what must take place." He sees the divine throne and God upon it, and seated around the throne he sees twenty-four elders with the seven spirits before the throne, and supporting the throne he sees the four living creatures, the cherubim who never stop singing "holy, holy, holy." When the living creatures give glory to God, the elders join in and proclaim "you are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Teaching

The Kingdom of God is at hand: God's reign is absolute and its realization is now.

Issues:

i] Context: See 1:1-8. Glory belongs to those who endure. In the seven letters to the churches, John has revealed the struggling and compromised state of the Christian church. In the face of this problem Christ calls for repentance, reminding the faithful that glory awaits those who persevere in faith, those who overcome. In 4:1-5:14, Now, in *The vision of God and the Lamb*, John is drawn into a moment of heavenly acclamation, of what now is. We are taken from the rough-and-tumble of everyday life into the throne-room of the almighty God and we get to see His sovereignty and majesty as it is now. Then, in chapter 5, Christ takes the spotlight as he stands in the centre of the throne, and finally, in v13-14, the One who sits on the throne and the Lamb received the worship of the heavenly throng. Throughout these two chapters we witness a moment of heavenly celebration and acclamation as the reign of God in Christ is realized, a reign in which we share. In the following chapters we will witness the breaking of the seals (judgment) and the fashioning of the new Jerusalem. So, along with the heavenly host, we too can give praise to God that his kingdom has come.

An interesting observation is made by Mathewson of the syntax of chapters 4 and 5. In chapter 4, verbless clauses and participles predominate producing a static state, but in chapter 5 indicative verbs predominate producing a state of

activity that moves John's account along. So, chapter 4 is descriptive, providing the setting, and chapter 5 presents activity and process.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8

iii] Structure: *The Adoration of the Creator:*

The invitation, v1;

"come up here, and I will show you what must take place."

The throne of God, v2-3;

"he had the appearance of jasper and ruby."

The twenty-four elders, v4;

"dressed in white and had crowns of gold."

The Seven Spirits in the midst of glory, v5-6a

"the seven lamps are the seven spirits."

The worship of the four living beings, v6b-8;

"holy, holy, holy,"

The worship of the twenty-four elders, v9-11;

"you are worthy of Lord"

iv] Interpretation:

In Christ's letters to the seven churches, John gives us a detailed picture of the Christian church, *warts and all* - a struggling church, a compromised church. If the victory is to be won, the church needs to repent, to turn back in faith to Christ and then press forward in faith, persevere, conquer. Yet, this is no easy matter, particularly in a world where Satan is honoured rather than Christ. Doing business with the powers of darkness is the way we succeed in this world. So, on our behalf, Christ invites John to witness another reality. He takes John from the reality of an inaugurated kingdom, a kingdom *not yet*, to another reality, a realized kingdom, a kingdom *now*. In the eschatological kingdom realized, God's reign is absolute; the ranting and raving of the powers of darkness are but the death-rattles of a dying beast. With the eyes of the prophet, we see beyond what we experience to what IS.

John reveals this reality in a vision of heaven, a vision reliant on the OT, cf., Isa.6:1-4, Ezk.1. Christ invites John to look into God's throne room and view a wondrous event. Of course, visions are pictures of another reality, they touch reality through images that we can understand: an open door to see into heaven, a throne in heaven for God to sit on, jewels, rainbows lightning, rumblings ... surrounding the throne. All are images that give substance to a reality far beyond our comprehension. To increase the grandeur of the scene John draws on apocalyptic images, some of which he

has already exposed us to, eg., the seven lamps = the seven spirits of God, v5. As already argued, this image probably represents the Holy Spirit, seven being the perfect number (Note the link between the Spirit and the oil lamps of the tabernacle, Zech.4:2-3, 6, 12-14). John also introduces us to some more apocalyptic images: First, there are the twenty-four elders, v4. These probably represent the people of God, the faithful from the twelve tribes of Israel, along with the faithful from the twelve tribes of the new Israel // the twelve apostles, cf., 21:12, 14. So, they represent the saints of the Most High who reign with Christ. Second, there are the four living creatures, the cherubim, v6-8. Views vary, but they probably represent the four corners of the earth = the creation, the entire cosmos, cf., 1Ki.7:29, Isa.11:6-7.

So, as against our day-to-day experience of life, we are confronted with another reality. There is at this very moment ecstatic celebration, praise and adoration in the throne-room of the ancient of days. The reign of God in Christ has begun, the kingdom is come, the seals of judgment are even now being broken and there before us we see the splendour of the New Jerusalem. And we are there, reigning with Christ, celebrating with him, 4:1-5:14.

Interpreting apocalyptic imagery. Although the letters to the churches take the form of epistles, they are vague when it came to the details; John lets his readers fill in the dots. Now, confronted with John's apocalyptic visions, we move from the vague to the nebulous, which nebulous, in the hands of the commentator, becomes highly speculative. In giving shape to the visions, John draws on the apocalyptic imagery of Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and at times, the Law and the Prophets, as well as apocryphal works. The problem faced by the commentator is knowing how far to draw an interpretive value from the imagery.

It is possible to draw significance from every detail, and throughout history many commentators have done just that, but the variety of interpretations warn us that this approach to the book is flawed. None-the-less, as a modern artist is happy when someone draws personal significance from their artwork, so John may also be happy when someone, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, fills in the dots in a way applicable to their age and circumstance.

The other extreme is to take a broad-brush approach and interpret the whole rather than the details: in Revelation we confront the gospel - the kingdom of God is at hand, it is upon us, cursing and blessing is now. So, the Christian church, struggling and compromised as it is, needs to repent,

for the glory that is at hand only comes to those who persevere in faith, who conquer.

Yet, as we approach this book we can't help but fill in some of the dots, and maybe that's what we are meant to do - speculate to accumulate? Consider the apocalyptic image of the twenty-four elders. Are they just another wondrous aspect of God's royal throne room, or do they represent something in particular? The interpretive notes below suggest that they represent the 12 tribes of Israel + the 12 tribes of the new Israel = believers reigning with Christ, cf., Eph.2:6. When it comes to filling in the dots, the nebulous always leads to speculation, which speculation must find some support elsewhere in scripture.

Text - 4:1

The Adoration of the Creator, v1-11: i] The invitation, v1. John's second vision takes place at the gates of heaven. The gates are wide open and in typical manner for the Revelation, John is invited to come up to the open gates and view reality in all its wonder. This is the way it is, this is the *now* of God's kingdom. The invitation is most likely from Christ, the one with a voice like a trumpet.

μετα + acc. "**after [this I looked]**" - AFTER [THESE THINGS I SAW *a new vision*]. Temporal use of the preposition. This phrase signals a new vision and is used a number of times throughout the book for this very purpose, eg., 7:1. The "these things" refers to the previous vision and the instruction to write "what you have seen, what is, and what is to take place" to the seven churches. "At this point I had another vision", TEV.

ιδου "-" - BEHOLD, TAKE NOTE, PAY ATTENTION. Interjection used to emphasize the following words; "and Oh dear! It was out of this world."

ηνεωγμενη [ανοιγω] perf. mid./pas. part. "**[there before me was a door] standing open**" - [A DOOR] HAVING BEEN OPENED. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "door", the subject of a verbless clause; "a door which had been opened and now remained open."

εν + dat. "**in [heaven]**" - Local, expressing space. The word "heaven" is used in numerous ways throughout the scriptures, eg., the sky, the sphere of the sun, moon and stars, God's dwelling place. It all gets a bit complex when we end up with "the third heaven", 2Cor.12:2. Here presumably John is referring to the spiritual domain inhabited by God and the heavenly host, particularly of God's throne-room. The door was **εν**, "in", heaven, the preposition being local expressing space.

η πρωτη adj. "**[the voice I had] first [heard]**" - [AND THE VOICE] THE FIRST *one* [WHICH I HEARD]. The adjective serves as a substantive, standing in apposition to "the voice"; "and a voice (ie., the voice of the person who spoke to me in my

first vision) like", so Aune. Osborne argues that John is not referring to his first vision, but rather to this vision; "and the first voice I heard speaking with me like a trumpet said" Presumably John is inferring that the voice is that of Christ, although Aune argues that the voice here is that of Christ, but the voice addressing John in his first vision was that of an interpreting angel, contra Beasley-Murray,

λαλουσης [λαλεω] gen. pres. part. "**speaking**" - This participle has syntactical issues (if in concord with ἣν, "which", it should be accusative; "the first voice which which was speaking"), but is best treated as adjectival, attributive, limiting "trumpet"; "the first voice which I heard *was* like a trumpet which was speaking with me saying."

μετα + acc. "**to [me]**" - WITH [ME]. Expressing association / accompaniment.

ὡς "**like**" - Comparative.

σαλπιγγος [ξ γος] gen. "**a trumpet**" - The genitive is probably adjectival, idiomatic / source, "a voice / sound from a trumpet, although Mathewson suggests it may be a genitive of direct object after an assumed **ακουω**, "as if / like *hearing* a trumpet." "The trumpet-voice", Peterson.

λεγων [λεγω] pres. part. "**said**" - SAYING. Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying "*was ... speaking ... and said*", redundant. This masculine participle also has syntactical issues in that it should agree with **φωνη**, "voice", which is feminine. Turner argues that it is a Semitic indeclinable participle, although Beale thinks it relates to LXX usage, "an intentional stylistic Septuagintalism"; here the allusion is possibly from Dn.2:29. Of course, it may just be that John has in mind the person behind the voice, namely Christ, and so he simply uses the masculine with this in mind.

σοι dat. pro. "**[I will show] you**" - [COME UP HERE AND I WILL SHOW] YOU. Dative of indirect object.

γενεσθαι [γίνομαι] aor. inf. "**[what must] take place**" - [WHAT IS NECESSARY] TO HAPPEN (??). Probably the infinitive serves as the subject of the verb **δει**, "it is necessary", "to happen is necessary", in which case the pronoun **ἃ**, "what" is not the accusative subject of the infinitive, but its object, "to happen is necessary for what = these things." The verb "is necessary" carries the force of divine intention. The sense is simple enough: "Come up here and I will let you see the things that will happen after this", TH.

μετα + acc. "**after [this]**" - Temporal use of the preposition. The language of *seeing what is about to happen after this* is prophetic idiom for a revelation, an unveiling of a divine reality. The temporal "after" does not carry much force because from a prophetic perspective, the future merges with the present. John's vision is more about viewing reality than viewing the future. So, "I will show you

what will happen in the future" is a technically correct *not yet*, but prophetic imagery constantly draws the *then* into the *now* such that "I will show you what is" better reflects what John sees, namely, the realization of the kingdom of God. Beale titles this eschatological perspective as "already-and-not-yet."

v2

ii] The throne of God, v2-3. John's Spirit-inspired vision focuses on the throne of the Ancient of Days, and with Ezekiel chapter 1 in mind, we are given a glimpse of God's radiant presence. John makes no attempt to describe God in anthropomorphic terms.

εἶν + dat. "[I was] in [the Spirit]" - [IMMEDIATELY, AT ONCE, I WAS FOUND] IN [SPIRIT]. Local, expressing sphere; "in the sphere of the Spirit." Osborne defines a prophet's being "in the Spirit" as "a Holy Spirit-sent visionary experience in which God reveals his mysteries." Cf., 1:10, "I found myself in the Spirit."

εκεῖτο [κειμαι] imperf. "-" - [AND BEHOLD, A THRONE] WAS BEING SET [IN HEAVEN]. Possibly used for the perfect passive of τιθημι, ie., ετεθη, "be placed", which simply means that the throne was placed at that point in heaven and so "stood" there; "was standing in heaven." The NIV takes the verb here as a simple copula like γινομαι, so lit., "I was in the Spirit, and behold, there was a throne in heaven"; "there was a throne there."

καθήμενος [καθμαι] pres. mid. part. "someone" - [AND] one was SITTING. The participle serves as a substantive, subject of an assumed verb to-be. The posture of sitting indicates authority and rule.

επι + acc. "on [it]" - UPON [THE THRONE]. Spatial.

v3

ὁ καθήμενος [καθμαι] pres. mid. part. "the one who sat there" - [AND] THE ONE SITTING. The participle serves as a substantive.

ὄρασει [ις εως] dat. "[had] the appearance" - [WAS LIKE] IN SIGHT, APPEARANCE. Dative of reference / respect; "he who sat on the throne, with respect to his appearance, was like a jasper stone." Probably referring to the light that emanated from God's person rather than describing what he looked like, "His appearance blazed like diamond and topaz", Phillips.

λιθω [ος] dat. "[of jasper]" - TO A STONE [JASPER]. "Stone" serves as a dative complement of the adjective "like". "Jasper" stands in apposition to "stone", best translated as if an attributive adjective limiting "stone"; "a stone *of* jasper" = "jasper stone." Jasper is not a brilliant stone and so some commentators think John has in mind the flashing light of a diamond. Jasper comes in a number of colours, which of course may be the point.

σαρδιῶ [ον] dat. "ruby" - [AND] CARNELIAN. As for "jasper"; "a stone of jasper and carnelian. A semi-precious stone, red in colour. "Bright radiant colours emanated from the throne."

ἶρις [ις εως] "A rainbow" - [AND] A RAINBOW [*was* AROUND THE THRONE LIKE IN APPEARANCE TO *a stone*, EMERALD]. The dative ὄρασει, "in appearance", as above, and the dative σμαραγδινῶ, "emerald", as for "jasper" and "ruby". A rainbow is of many colours so the green of the emerald is probably not the focus, but its sparkling brilliance; "around the throne was a rainbow, gleaming like an emerald", Barclay. Cf., Ezk.1:28, 27:26.

v4

iii] The twenty-four elders, v4. As already noted, it seems likely that the enthroned twenty-four elders represent the saints of the Most High reigning with Christ, the twenty-four representing the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve tribes of the new Israel, the new Israel represented by the twelve apostles. If this is the case then we are witnessing the eternal reality of God's people, of what will be and now is. Of course, there are numerous other interpretations and Smalley, Aune and Beale have gone to great lengths to list them all. Those who suggest that they are angelic beings of some sort have given little weight to their garb - they wear white robes and wear crowns of gold so they are surely glorified believers; angels are never called "elders". See Beasley-Murray and Mounce for the argument that they are angels, and Osborne for the argument that they are celestial beings with a ruling function. The elders are probably not the orders of priesthood, 1Chron.24:4-5, nor significant saints of the Old and New Testament, but are more likely the foundation of the new Jerusalem / Israel, i.e., believers - they represent the saints of the Most High, cf., 21:12-14. It must though be noted that on a number of occasions in Revelation a distinction is made between the "elders" and "the saints" - the elders are seated around God's throne, and the saints stand before it. This staging arrangement can be found in any church and John simply reflects it in his description of heaven, but in the end, we all reign with Christ.

κυκλοθεν + gen. "surrounding [the throne]" - [AND] ALL AROUND [THE THRONE *there were* TWENTY-FOUR THRONES]. Spatial; "about, all around." For the assumed verb to-be see "Context" above.

καθήμενους [καθιμαι] pres. mid. part. "seated [on them *were*]" - [AND ON THE THRONES *were* TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS] SITTING. The preposition "on, upon [the thrones], επι, is spatial. The participle serves as the accusative complement of the direct object, "twenty-four elders", of the assumed verb to-be. The sense is simple enough: "*There were* twenty-four thrones with twenty four elders sitting on them", Berkeley.

περιβεβλημενους [περιβαλλω] perf. mid./pas. part. "they were dressed" - HAVING BEEN DRESSED. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "twenty-four elders"; "who were clad in white raiment and golden crowns", Moffatt.

εν + dat. "in [white]" - IN [WHITE GARMENTS, ROBES]. Here adverbial, modal, expressing the manner in which the elders were dressed. We have already met those dressed in ἱματιοις λευκοις, they are the victorious, those whose names are written in the book of life, cf., 3:5.

επι + acc. "[had crowns of gold] on [their head]" - [AND] ON [THE HEADS OF THEM they had GOLDEN CROWNS]. Spatial; "on, upon." Smalley suggests that the golden crowns symbolize "the royal nature of the vindicated faithful and this is an authoritative character which they share with their Lord and derive from him." "Twenty-four elders seated, white-robed and golden-crowned", Peterson.

v5

iv] The Seven Spirits in the midst of the glory, v5-6a. Again, John draws on Ezekiel for his description of the throne of God, Ezk.1:13, 22-26, cf., Ex.19:16, Dan.7:9f. The vision is glorious, wonderful, powerful, Again, we meet the seven spirits of God, although here represented by seven burning lamps / torches. Again, John uses the number seven to represent completeness / perfection, so this is probably another reference to the complete / perfect "spirit", i.e., the Holy Spirit, as in 1:4; "the Sevenfold Holy Spirit", Osborne. See also 5:6 where the Seven Spirits are represented by the seven eyes of the Lamb, an image drawn from Zechariah 3 and 4, cf., 2Chron.16:9. The imagery of the seven lamps is drawn from Zech.4:2-3, 10, the lamps = the Spirit of Yahweh. Of course, numerous other suggestions have been proposed, eg. they are the seven celestial agents of the Lamb who become the seven angels with trumpets in 8:2, so Giblin, *Catholic Quarterly*, 1998.

εκ + gen. "from [the throne]" - FROM [THE THRONE]. Expressing source / origin, "out of, from"; "from the central throne came flashes of lightning, noises and peals of thunder", Phillips.

εκπορευονται [εκπορευομαι] pres. "came" - CAME FORTH [LIGHTNING AND SOUNDS AND THUNDERS]. The present tense may be classified as a narrative present given that a durative aspect is not intended; it is what John saw.

ενωπιον + gen. "in front of [the throne]" - BEFORE [THE THRONE]. Spatial; "before, in front of."

πυρος [ρ ρος] gen. "[seven lamps were] blazing" - [SEVEN] FIRE = BURNING [LAMPS]. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "lamps".

ὅ pro. "these [are]" - WHICH [ARE]. Nominative subject of the verb to-be. Its antecedent is "seven lamps." The relative clause serves to exegete the "seven

lamps." "And there were burning before the throne seven flaming torches - they are the Seven Spirits of God", Cassirer.

του θεου [ος] gen. "[seven spirits] of God" - The genitive is adjectival, relational.

v6a

ὡς "there was what looked" - [AND BEFORE THE THRONE] AS [A SEA MADE OF GLASS]. Here comparative; "there was as it were a sea of glass", ESV.

κρυσταλλῷ [ος] dat. "[clear as] crystal" - [LIKE] CRYSTAL. Dative complement of the adjective "like". "In front of the throne was something that looked like a glass sea, clear as crystal", CEV.

v6b

v] The worship of the four living beings, v8b-9. Closely related to the throne there are four living creatures / cherubim, covered with eyes, praising God. The imagery is drawn from Ezekiel 1 (1Enoch 40:2), but the attempt to identify the creatures has produced numerous interpretations. The most likely interpretation is that they represent "the four quarters of the heavens, and therefore the four directions of the winds and the four seasons they represent the creation in general", Beale, so also Sweet, or even "the entirety of the cosmos", Blount, the entirety of creation in all its orders, in heaven and on earth. It is interesting how, after the praise of the cherubim, the elders give praise to God saying "you created all things," The imagery is possibly drawn from the ancient zodiac represented by the Ox, Lion, Scorpion (sometimes a man) and Aquarius (see Beasley-Murray), although Ezk.1:5-6, 10-11a is most likely the source, even though the order differs. In Ezekiel 1 the spinning wheels have eyes all round, and here it is the four creatures that have the all-seeing eyes, the point possibly being that God sees our works through every element of creation. Against this interpretation we have Smalley who simply calls them "angelic beings", so also Osborne who calls them "the highest order of celestial being, perhaps angels, and lead in worship and judgment." This approach is also taken by Aune, "conceptions of the angelic seraphim and cherubim, depicted as located both above (Isa.6:2) and beneath (Ezek.1:5-25) the throne of God"; Reddish, "the highest order of angels, those who stand closest to the throne of God"; and Koester, "heavenly intermediaries."

ἐν κυκλῷ + dat. + gen. "In the centre, around [the throne]" - [AND] IN [MIDDLE OF THE THRONE AND] AROUND [THE THRONE]. The actual position of the "living creatures", as defined by the prepositions, is unclear. Mounce suggests they mean that the living creatures are in the vicinity of the throne, cf., Ezk.1, but Beasley-Murray suggests they mean next to and surrounding it with their

presence. Maybe John is implying that the cherubim support the throne of God, see Hall, NTS, October 1990. Is this what Ezekiel's spinning wheels do?

γεμοντα [γεμω] pres. part. "**they were covered with**" - [FOUR LIVING BEINGS] BEING FULL OF. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting the "four living beings", "which were full of eyes in front and behind" = "covered with eyes back and front", Barclay.

οφθαλμων [ος] gen. "**eyes**" - EYES [IN FRONT AND BEHIND]. Genitive of direct object / of content, after the participle "being full of." The prepositions "in front" and "behind" make the point that the eyes cover the whole body, as they did for Ezekiel's wheels; "all four rims were full of eyes all around", Ezk.1:18.

v7

It seems best not to draw any particular significance from the individual cherubim, but note Hendriksen who argues that the lion represents strength, the ox service, the man intelligence and the eagle swiftness. Note that the four cherubim came to represent the four gospels, the idea possibly originating with Irenaeus. Interestingly, he sets the order as John, Luke, Matthew and Mark.

λεοντι [ων οντος] dat. "[**was like**] a lion" - [AND THE FIRST LIVING BEING *was* LIKE] A LION [AND THE SECOND LIVING BEING LIKE A CALF, OX]. As with "ox, calf" and "eagle", dative of direct object after the adjective "like".

εχων [εχω] pres. part. "**had [a face]**" - [AND THE THIRD LIVING BEING] HAVING [THE FACE]. This participle is usually taken as a finite verb, so NIV etc, although such a usage is much debated. If treated as a finite verb we are best to classify it as serving in a periphrastic construction which is missing the verb to-be. We could go the full hog and call it an anacoluthon ellipsis (broken syntax + missing words); "the third living being *like a being* having the face as a man" = "*like a cherubim which has*", ie., the participle is adjectival, attributive, but of course, it should be dative rather than nominative, in agreement with the assumed dative of direct object "a being." To add to the confusion εχων is nominative, but ζων, "living being" is neuter. Mathewson calls it "a construction according to sense"; a "living being" is really not neuter. Anyway, the sense is clear enough, "the third has a face like a man", Phillips.

ως "**like [a man]**" - AS, LIKE [*the face* OF A MAN]. Comparative. Probably not "had a man's face", Barclay, but as NIV, "like". The genitive "man" would be classified as adjectival, attributive, limiting an assumed "face"; "like a human face."

v8

Ezekiel describes God being carried on his chariot-throne by the winged cherubim, Ezk.10:16. So, the four legs of God's throne can fly and they see

everything. We probably shouldn't push the image of the "eyes all around", even suggesting that the cherubim represent the totality of God's creation may be going too far. None-the-less, Sweet thinks the eyes represent wakefulness while Hendrickson suggests intellectual penetration (feel free to join the speculation and fill in the dotted line!!). The cherubim join in endless praise to the omnipotent God, the exceedingly holy one, the eternal one - the praise of creation to the creator, so Swete.

καθ [κατα] + acc. "**each [of the four]**" - [AND THE FOUR LIVING BEINGS ONE] ACCORDING TO [ONE OF THEM]. Distributive use of the preposition such that **ἐν καθ** ἐν, "one according to one", takes the sense "each one", or just "each [of them]", cf., BDF #248.1. The genitive **αὐτων**, "of them", is partitive.

εχων [εχω] pres. part. "**have [six wings]**" - HAVING [SIX WINGS EACH]. The participle, as in v7, is best classified as a periphrastic construction which is missing the verb to-be, so "the four living beings, each one of them / each of them, has four wings apiece", cf., 1:16. The **ανα** here is distributive, "each, apiece"; somewhat redundant here. Like the seraphim in Isaiah 6:2 they each has six wings. Note that in Ezekiel 1, the winged creatures have four wings. "Each and every one of the four living creatures had six wings", Cassirer.

οφθαλμων [ος] gen. "[**covered with**] **eyes [all around, even under its wings]**" - [AROUND AND WITHIN THEY ARE FULL OF] EYES. As in v6, genitive of direct object / of content, after the verb "to be full of." The adverbs "around" and "within" are handled in various ways. "Within, inside", **εσωθεν**, is probably making the point expressed by the NIV, "even under its wings", ie., "underneath" rather than "within". The image is derived from Ezk.10:12, "full of eyes all around." The point is, the cherubim are all seeing.

ημερας [α] gen. "**day [and night]**" - [AND THEY DO NOT HAVE REST] DAY [AND NIGHT]. As with "night", the genitive is adverbial, temporal.

λεγοντες [λεγω] pres. part. "**saying**" - Attendant circumstance participle, "do not have and said", or adverbial modal, expressing the manner of their not having rest, "always singing"; Semitic construction.

ο παντοκρατωρ [ωρ ορος] "**[the Lord God] Almighty**" - [HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, LORD GOD] THE ALMIGHTY. Nominative standing in apposition to "God" which stands in apposition to "Lord". The following clause **ο**, "who [was]", also stands in apposition to Lord. The Sanctus, "holy, holy, holy", probably carries the sense "holy, exceedingly holy", cf., Isa.6:3.

ο ην imperf. "**who was**" - THE ONE *who* WAS, [THE ONE BEING, THE ONE COMING]. "The one *who* is, exists, the one being" can be expressed with an articular participle, but since there is no imperfect participle it is necessary to use the articular imperfect verb to-be to form the substantive "the one *who* was." The

future sense is carried by the articular participle ὁ ἐρχόμενος, "the one coming / the one *who is* coming." This designation of God reflects the language of Exodus 3:14. God is able to fulfill his eternal purposes because he himself is eternal. "The Was, The Is, The Coming", Peterson.

v9

vi] The worship of the twenty-four elders, v9-11. The twenty-four elders chime in with the cherubim and offer obeisance to him who sits on the throne, the one who lives forever, cf., Dan.4:34, 6:26, 12:7. In recognition of divine sovereignty they lay their crowns before the throne; "they acknowledge that their authority is delegated", Smalley. Their adoration is direct and to the point; they praise God for his creation. The cherubim, most likely representing the creation, praise God for his attributes, but the elders, most likely representing the saints, believers, praise God for the creation, a creation of which they are the crown jewels.

ὅταν + fut. "**whenever [the living creatures]**" - WHENEVER [THE LIVING BEINGS WILL GIVE GLORY AND HONOUR AND THANKS]. We would expect ὅταν + subj. to express an indefinite future, but sometimes, especially in Revelation, a future is used instead of a subjunctive. None-the-less, some commentators think the use of the future tense here is used to identify a particular point in the future, namely, the eschaton, so Smalley, or 5:13-14, so Aune and Beale. An indefinite "whenever" = "when" seems best since the realized eschatology of Revelation is not pushing the reader into the future, but revealing what is. God's celestial court is in a state of exaltation because the Great Day of the Lord has arrived, the seals are about to be broken (ie., judgment is at hand), and the glorious new Jerusalem is even now before us. "Every time the living creatures ascribe glory and honour to Him who sits on the throne", Cassirer.

τῷ καθημένῳ [καθήμεῖ] dat. pres. mid. part. "**to him who sits**" - TO THE ONE SITTING. The participle, as with "to the one living", serves as a substantive, dative of indirect object. Here John alludes to Daniel 4:34, 12:7.

ἐπὶ + dat. "**on [the throne]**" - UPON [THE THRONE]. When John uses his favourite preposition with a spatial sense, "upon, on", he usually follows it with a genitive. So, why the dative here?

εἰς + acc. "**for [ever and ever]**" - [THE ONE LIVING] INTO [THE AGES OF THE AGES]. Temporal use of the preposition. The phrase "into the ages" is idiomatic for "forever", and the additional genitive "of the ages" makes it emphatic, "for ever and ever", cf., 1:18. We could classify the genitive as partitive as "the ages" are just one part of all the ages, which sequence of ages God lives through.

v10

πεσουνται [πιπτω] fut. "[the twenty-four elders] fall down" - [THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS] WILL FALL. As with "will worship, do obeisance", and "will lay, put", much is sometimes made of the future here (see ὅταν + fut. above), but v10 serves as the apodosis (the *then* clause) of a temporal conditional clause, with v9 serving as the protasis; "when the living creatures give glory then will they fall down = then the twenty-four elders fall down and worship him and cast their crowns" "The twenty-four elders prostrate themselves before the throne", Phillips.

ενωπιον + gen. "**before**" - Spatial, "before, in front of."

του καθημενου [καθημαι] gen. pres. mid. part. "**him who sits [on the throne]**" - THE ONE SITTING. As with "the one living = him who lives", the participle serves as a substantive.

προσκυνησουσιν [προσκυνω] fut. "[and] worship" - [AND] WILL DO OBEISANCE TO [THE ONE LIVING INTO THE AGES OF THE AGES]. This verb often takes a dative of direct object, as here. The verb λατρευω is often translated as "worship", as is the verb προσκυνω. This can cause confusion given that λατρευω means "to serve", prompting the argument that "worship" is the act of serving God. The word "worship" is best used of doing obeisance to God, as here.

εις τους αιωνας των αιωνων "**for ever and ever**" - See v9.

λεγοντες [λεγω] pres. part. "[and] say" - [AND WILL THROW THE CROWNS OF THEM BEFORE THE THRONE] SAYING. Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the verb "to throw, put = lay"; "they lay and say", as NIV. It may be classified as adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of the laying - while laying they are saying "Singing", TEV.

v11

ἡμων gen. pro. "**our [Lord and God]**" - [YOU ARE WORTHY, THE LORD AND THE GOD] OF US. The genitive here may express subordination, "Lord and God over us", but possibly better relational, "our Lord and God."

λαβειν [λαμβανω] aor. inf. "**to receive**" - TO RECEIVE [THE GLORY AND THE HONOUR AND THE POWER]. The infinitive is epexegetic, specifying in what sense God is "worthy"; "you are worthy to have ascribed to you all glory, honour and power", Cassirer.

ὅτι "**for**" - BECAUSE. Serving to introducing a causal clause; "because you created all things and by your will they existed and were created."

συ pro. "**you [created all things]**" - Emphatic by position and use.

δια + acc. "**by [your will]**" - [AND] BECAUSE OF [THE WILL OF YOU THEY EXISTED AND WERE CREATED]. Causal; "because of your will they came to be and

were created", NAB; "it was because of your decision that they (all things) were created and exist."

5:1-10

The vision of God and the Lamb, 4:1-5:14

ii] Adoration of the Lamb

Synopsis

Preparations for the full realization of the kingdom of God continue. John sees in the right hand of the Ancient of Days a scroll sealed with seven seals, and hears an angel call for someone to break the seals and open the scroll. When it seems that there is no one to undertake the task, one of the elders declares that the Lion of Judah is well able. John then spots the Lamb, the slain one with seven horns and eyes, step forward and take the scroll. On seeing this, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders do obeisance before the Lamb and then join in a song of praise: worthy is the Lamb who has redeemed a people through his own sacrifice, a people of kings and priest set to reign with him.

Teaching

The Kingdom of God is at hand: God's reign in Christ is absolute and its realization is now.

Issues:

i] Context: See 4:1-11.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8

iii] Structure: *The Adoration of the Lamb*:

The Ancient of Days holds up the sealed scroll, v1;

Finding someone worthy to open the scroll, v2-5;

"do not weep! See, the Lion of Judah he is able."

The Lamb takes the scroll and prepares to open it, v6-7;

The praise of the heavenly host, v8-10;

Worthy is the slain Lamb,

"you ransomed people for God from every tribe

and they shall reign on the earth."

iv] Interpretation:

The realization of the kingdom is a good news / bad news story; it brings blessing and cursing. First comes the bad news, judgment, cf., Paul's gospel proclamation to the Athenians that God "has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed", Acts 17:31. John, in his vision, is witnessing the unfolding of that day - the kingdom has come.

The Ancient of Days holds a scroll in his hand; it is full to overflowing with text. We are not told what is written on the scroll, but from Ezekiel 2:9-10 we can guess - "words of lamentation and mourning and woe", cf., Zech.5:1-3. The scroll is sealed with seven seals, sealed for future judgment, Dan.12:4-9, cf., Deut.32:34-35. Yet, that future is now! The time has come to break the seals, but who is worthy of this task? The Lion of Judah, the messiah, he is both worthy and able, Hos.5:14-15. As it turns out, the Lion is the Lamb, a Lamb bearing the marks of its slaughter / sacrifice, a Lamb that stands in the place of utmost authority beside the throne of the Ancient of Days. This Lamb has horns which represent power, cf., 1Sam.2:1, again with the number seven representing perfection. The Lamb also has seven eyes which represent wisdom / knowledge, cf., Jer.23:24, Zech.4:10, eyes which are "the seven spirits of God"; see v6 below. As the Lamb takes the scroll in his hands, "the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders", representing "God's people and God's world", Wilcock, offer obeisance to him in the words of a new song which proclaims his worthiness. God is the source of new songs (Ps.96:1) and this song is the gospel: the kingdom is come; in the death and resurrection of Jesus, God has redeemed a people to himself from the nations of the world, a people who [will] reign with Christ for eternity.

The purpose of John's realized eschatology: The use of apocalyptic visions in the Revelation serves to draw the future into the present; the *not yet* becomes the *now*. Yet, what is the purpose of John's realized eschatology? It is usually argued that John is addressing a church facing serious persecution and that the visions of *what is and what will be* serve to alter the perspective of a suffering church. The powers of this age may rant and rave, but their time is up, glory will soon replace suffering and to this end the church must persevere. Yet, suffering is not dominant in the letters to the churches. Smyrna is afflicted, but this is primarily Jewish opposition, and Pergamum stands under the threat of martyrdom, but there is little else in the way of persecution. Yes, the church is a struggling church, but not really as a persecuted church.

John seems more focused on the problem of syncretism than persecution. The letters to the seven churches evidence a church stepping back from the cutting edge of the gospel and adjusting itself to the shibboleths of secular / pagan society - anything for a quiet life! The fire, the passion, that drove the founding of the churches is now but a memory. So, the Revelation is more like a wake-up call achieved by a confrontation with reality. Reality is not the shenanigans of a godless world to which we

must adjust for the sake of that nebulous mantra known as *gospel ministry*. This is not about imitating the Hare Krishna in setting aside orange robes for suits to better access devotees. Reality is John's vision of heaven - the Great Day of the Lord is upon us, the kingdom is come, the reign of God begun. Faced with this reality, the church must repent, refocus and press forward in faith, for what we see is not what IS. What we see is but a fading shadow, what IS amounts to God's reign in Christ, and it is good news and bad news. So, John's realized eschatology generates a sense of urgency and thus the need for immediate action - **μετανοεω**, "repent" (turn around in trust to Christ), cf., 2:5, 16, 21, 22, 3:3, 19.

Text - 5:1

The Adoration of the Lamb, v1-10: i] The Ancient of Days holds up the sealed scroll, v1. Within the awesome splendour of the heavenly court, the action now focuses on the Ancient of Days who is holding a securely sealed scroll or codex filled with text. This is not a static image, rather, the time has come when the scroll must be opened. Again, John's imagery alludes to the OT prophets, here Isa.6:1, 29:11, Ezk.2:9b-10, Dan.12. We can't help wanting to know what's in the scroll and commentators certainly have their theories, eg., Smalley, "God's salvific plan." Osborne actually lists six possibilities and ends up aligning with Smalley, "God's redemptive plan." Koester's suggestion certainly has merit; He argues that it contains the visions that are later revealed in the Revelation because in 10:1-11 the angel gives the open scroll to John who then reveals its contents in the prophecies that follow, ie., "words of lamentation and mourning and woe", Ezk.2:9-10.

και "Then" - AND. Transitional. With a step in the narrative, we would expect **δε**, but John rarely uses **δε**, instead relying on **και**.

επι + acc. "**in [the right hand]**" - [I SAW A SCROLL] IN/ON [THE RIGHT HAND OF THE ONE SITTING ON THE THRONE]. Spatial, and note again its second use in this verse with the gen., "on [the throne]. It is really not possible to identify a particular sense when followed by either the acc., or the gen., or the dat. The spatial sense can only be a guess. If we are looking at a scroll it is "in the right hand", but if a codex then we are looking at it laid flat "on the right hand."

του καθημενου [καθημαι] gen. pres. mid. part. "**of him who sat**" - OF THE ONE SITTING. The participle serves as a substantive, the genitive being possessive.

γεγραμμενον [γραφω] perf. mid. pas. part. "**with writing**" - HAVING BEEN WRITTEN [INSIDE AND ON BACK, HAVING BEEN SEALED UP *the book* BY SEVEN SEALS]. The participle, as with "having been sealed", is adjectival, attributive, limiting "scroll"; "a scroll which had text on both sides and sealed with seven seals."

σφραγισιν [ις εως] dat. "with [seven] seals" - The dative is instrumental, expressing means; "seal up *the book* with / by seven seals"

v2

ii] Finding someone worthy to open the scroll, v2-5. In apocalyptic literature, an angel usually conveys the revelation to the prophet. This is the angel's first appearance, although he (she??) is mentioned in 1:1; some commentators argue he related the first vision to John. He calls for someone worthy in heaven to open the scroll / codex, but no one in the universe is found who can open it and examine its contents. John bursts into tears, but one of the elders tells him that the victorious messiah is well able to open it.

και "and" - As in v1, standing in for δε, indicating a step in the narrative; "and then"

κηρυσσοντα [κηρυσσω] pres. part. "[a mighty angel] proclaiming" - [I SAW A STRONG, POWERFUL ANGEL] PROCLAIMING, PREACHING. Accusative complement of the direct object "angel" standing in a double accusative construction.

εν + dat. "in [a loud voice]" - Here the preposition is adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of the proclamation; "Then I saw a strong angel and heard him announcing for all to hear", Barclay. Probably "loud" carries weight; this is an important announcement.

τις "who" - Here as an interrogative; "'who is there', he exclaimed, 'worthy to open the scroll and break the seals?'" , Cassirer. Note how Cassirer maintains the order of the Greek text where the more important part of the action (ie., opening the scroll) precedes the less important action, although the action which is sequentially first. The NIV expresses the sequential action, to break and then open.

λυσαι [λυω] aor. inf. "to [break the seals]" - [WHO *is* WORTHY TO OPEN THE SCROLL / CODEX AND] TO LOOSEN, RELEASE = BREAK [THE SEALS OF IT]. If a verb to-be is assumed with the adj. αξιος, "worthy", it produces a verbal construct which is completed by the infinitives "to open" and "to release", ie., the infinitives are complementary. If we ignore the assumed verb to-be we would classify the infinitives as epexegetic, specifying αξιος, "worthy". We may have expected "who is able?", indicating physical strength, cf., v3, but we have "who *is* worthy" in the sense of moral authority. We may have a combination of both ideas, so "who is fit to open the book and break the seals?", Phillips. Cf., Dan.7:10. Note that both "scroll" and "seals" are articular serving to refer back to the "scroll" and "seals" of v1, ie., an anaphoric construction where the article points back to a previous noun. So we could say "this scroll" and "these seals." Note also the hysteron-proteron, last-first, the reversal of a logical order; a person would break

the seals before they opened the book. This Gk. feature is used to emphasize the first noted element, namely, opening the book - its all about the book!

v3

και **"but"** - The NIV opts for an adversative sense.

εν επι ὑποκατω ... **"in [heaven or] on [earth or] under [the earth]"**

- Spatial prepositions. We have here an example of the way the cosmos is viewed by Jews of the first century. There is Sheol / hades, the place of the dead under the earth, then the earth, and then the heavens above. The heavens can have a number of divisions, but basically there is the dome housing the heavenly bodies, sun, moon and stars, and above that the domain of the heavenly beings. By the first century the "waters under the earth" had become the waters around the earth, a domain of dark and evil powers. "There was no one - no one in Heaven, no one on earth, no one from the underworld - able to break open the scroll and read it", Peterson.

ανοιξει [ανοιγω] aor. inf. **"[could] open [the scroll]"** - [AND NO ONE WAS BEING ABLE] TO OPEN [THE SCROLL OR TO SEE IT = LOOK *into* IT]. The infinitive, as with βλεπειν, "to see", is complementary, completing the sense of the verb "was being able." Note that βλεπειν, "to see, look", is a durative present, so an ongoing study of the text may be in mind.

v4

εκλαιον [κλαιω] imperf. **"I wept [and wept]"** - [AND] I WEPT [MUCHLY]. The imperfect may carry an inceptive sense, "I began to weep ..." The modifying adverb πολυ, "much", is modal, expressing manner.

οτι **"because"** - Introducing a causal clause explaining why John was weeping.

ουδεις adj. **"no one [was found who was worthy]"** - [HE FOUND] NO ONE [WORTHY]. Here serving as a substantive, "no person", modified / limited by the adjective "worthy"; "he found no worthy person."

ανοιξει [ανοιγω] aor. inf. **"to open"** - TO OPEN [THE SCROLL NOR TO LOOK *into* IT]. The infinitive, as for "to look", is exegetical, specifying / explaining "no worthy person", but see λυσαι v2; "he found no worthy person to open or look *into* it." Note that "to open" is aorist, and "to look" is present. Presumably aspect is at work, with "open" being a perfective / completive action, and "look" an imperfective / ongoing action.

ουτε **"or [look inside]"** - Virtually an ουτε ουτε construction, a negated coordinate construction; "He found no worthy person, neither to open the scroll, nor to look *into* it."

v5

και "then" - AND. See v1.

εκ + gen. "[one] of [the elders]" - Partitive use of the preposition.

μοι dat. pro. "[said] to [me]" - [SAYS] TO [ME]. Dative of indirect object. The present tense λεγει, "says", serves as a narrative present, so "said", as NIV.

μη κλαιε [κλαιω] pres. "do not weep!" - DO NOT WEEP [BEHOLD, THE LION has CONQUERED]. Although it is no longer held as a syntactical rule, μη + pres. here may well express a command to cease an action already underway, "stop weeping", so Plummer, DDG.

ὁ "-" - THE ONE [FROM THE TRIBE OF JUDAH]. The article may be treated as a nominalizer turning the prepositional construction "from the tribe of Judah" into a substantive standing in apposition to "the Lion", or better as an adjectivizer, attributive, limiting "the Lion", "the Lion which is from the tribe of Judah." The preposition εκ serves here to express source / origin; "the Lion that comes from the tribe of Judah", Cassirer. "He has overcome / conquered" what? Osborne gives weight to the aorist ενικησεν, "conquered", reading it as punctiliar such that it refers "to his (Christ's) sacrificial death as the victory over Satan." It is probably more gnomic, a victory over the powers of evil, but given v9 and the reference to the Lamb's sacrifice, John may have in mind the victory of the cross. ~~Ιουδα~~ gen. "[the tribe] of Judah" - The genitive proper is epexegetic, specifying what tribe is in mind.

ἡ ριζα [α] "the root [of David]" - Nominative standing in apposition to "the Lion." The genitive proper "David" would express source / origin. Both "the Lion of Judah" and "the root of David" are messianic titles.

ανοιξει [ανοιγω] aor. inf. "he is able to open" - TO OPEN [THE SCROLL AND THE SEVEN SEALS OF IT]. Again, the infinitive is complementary with an assumed verb, here "he is able." Mathewson (so also Smalley) suggests it may be adverbial, expressing result; "the Lion from the tribe of Judah has won the right to open the scroll and its seven seals", REB.

v6

iii] The Lamb takes the scroll and prepares to open it, v6-7. On closer inspection, John sees that the Lion is a Lamb. Jesus has won the victory, not by the power of a Lion, but "by enduring hostility and dying (like a paschal lamb)", Osborne. Christ has endured the cross, defeated the powers of darkness and won the victory, so the coming Armageddon is but the last nail in Satan's coffin. This is particularly represented by the image of seven horns; Jesus is the warrior messiah who destroys his enemies. He also possesses the eyes of God, the spirits of the all-seeing God, the Holy Spirit through whom and in whom he ministers to

his church. So, the Lamb steps forward, receives the scroll, and prepares to open it.

και "then" - and. See v1.

αρνιον [ον] "[I saw] a lamb" - "Lamb" here is anarthrous, without an article. Following references will have the article indicating an anaphoric function, i.e., they will refer back to this Lamb. The Lamb is surely the paschal lamb, cf., Isa.53:7, "a lamb led to the slaughter", referring to the suffering servant, so Sweet. Other possibilities have been suggested: a conquering ram; the passover lamb, the atoning lamb, a vulnerable lamb. Aune suggests a suffering lamb, but also a leader / ruling lamb; "a sacrifice that not only redeems, but conquers." The word "Lamb" appears 28 times in Revelation, i.e., 4 times 7. These numerical *coincidences* can be misleading, but John may be telling us something. He does go to great pains to underline the number 7.

ὡς "[looking] as if" - [AND I SAW IN MIDDLE OF THE THRONE AND OF THE FOUR LIVING BEINGS AND IN MIDDLE OF THE ELDERS A LAMB HAVING STOOD] AS [HAVING BEEN SLAIN]. Here expressing manner, and with the concessive participle **εσφαγμενον**, "having been slain", gives the sense "I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain", ESV. The accusative participle **ἑστηκος**, "having stood", serves as the complement of the direct object "a lamb", standing in a double accusative construction; "I saw a lamb standing." "So I looked, and there, surrounded by Throne, Animals and Elders, was a Lamb, slaughtered but standing tall", Peterson. The spatial sense of the Lamb standing **εν μεσω**, "in the middle, midst", of the throne, cherubim and elders, is impractical, but makes the point that Jesus is central to the unfolding drama.

εχων [εχω] pres. part. "**[the Lamb] had [seven horns and seven eyes]**" - HAVING [SEVEN HORNS AND SEVEN EYES]. The participle may be treated as adjectival, attributive, limiting "the Lamb; "a Lamb standing which had seven horns", but note that the participle does not agree with "the Lamb" in person, "lamb" being neuter, the participle being masculine. See 1:16 for John's use of this participle. John is surely making a point - the Lamb is Jesus. John's image of the **κερατα**, "horns", is probably drawn from 1 Enoch 90:9, 37-38, an image which is used of the Messiah, a warrior who destroys his enemies. "Horns" in Daniel are used as a symbol of power and strength, cf., Dan.7:7, 20, 8:3, 5. The image of the seven **οφθαλμους**, "eyes", is probably used to describe the all-seeing nature of the Lamb / messiah, cf., 4:6 - Zech.4:10, "the eyes of the Lord that see everything on the earth." The Lamb possesses eyes representing "completeness of vision which leads to perfect knowledge", Mounce.

οἱ pro. "**which [are the seven spirits]**" - The antecedent of this nominative subject of the verb to-be is obviously "the seven eyes", although just because they

agree in person is not always a guarantee in the Revelation. It seems very likely that the "seven eyes which are the seven spirits" are the "seven lamps", 4:5, and the "seven spirits", 1:4, 3:1, ie., "the Sevenfold Holy Spirit", Osborne = the Holy Spirit, cf., Zech.4:2, 10, the lampstand with seven lamps identified as the eyes of God representing the spirit of God carrying out his purposes in the world, Zech.4:6. At one level the imagery tells us that God sees all things, "no one is exempt from his scrutiny", Koester. Beale goes further when he argues that "as a result of the death and resurrection, these spirits (= the eyes) also become Christ's agents throughout the world, who figuratively represent the Holy Spirit himself. The Spirit carries out the sovereign plan of the Lord."

του θεου [ος] gen. "**of God**" - The genitive may be adjectival, possessive or relational, or idiomatic / source, "the seven spirits from God."

απεσταλμενοι [αποστειλω] perf. mid./pas. part. "**sent out**" - HAVING BEEN SENT [INTO ALL THE EARTH]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "spirits". Again, we note how John construes person by sense, here the participle is masculine while modifying the neuter noun "spirits". The perfect tense well expresses the past act of the "Sevenfold Spirits" / the Holy Spirit having been sent out into the world and maintaining an ongoing presence in the world. Smalley's "now, as a result of the exaltation of the Lamb, the Spirit-Paraclete is sent out into the world, to be at work in and through the church in the present and final stages of human history" catches the sense of the image, but not its timing. John's eschatology is realized; the seven eyes of the Lamb = the seven spirits = the Holy Spirit, "has been sent out into all the earth", has been and is at work, but now that work is complete. John is witnessing the folding up of the Monopoly Board, not an ongoing game - It's "Game over boys!"

v7

ειληθεν [λαμβανω] perf. "**[he went and] took the scroll**" - [HE CAME AND] HAS TAKEN *the scroll*. The verb "to come" here is aorist, but then John uses a perfect for "he took." Beale suggests it is an aoristic use of the perfect tense, but Mathewson suggests that "the perfect tense functions to draw attention to this action as the highpoint of the vision." The Lamb is worthy to take the scroll and open it, and so sets out to do so. "The Lamb went and received the scroll", Barclay.

εκ + gen. "**from**" - Expressing separation, "away from the right hand"

του καθημενου [καθημαι] gen. pres. part. "**of him who sat**" - OF THE ONE SITTING [ON THE THRONE]. The participle serves as a substantive, the genitive being possessive. The spatial use of **επι** again; "on, upon [the throne]."

v8

iv] The praise of the heavenly host, v8-10. This scene, describing the worship of the Lamb, a scene further developed in v11-14, is, according to Smalley, "the Lamb's investiture, and the acceptance of his Lordship." It is shaped by three doxologies, the first being found in v9-10. The living creatures (the creation) and the elders (God's people) offer praise to the Lamb. Representing the worshipping community of believers on earth, the elders accentuate their worship with harps and golden thuribles (turibulum) / incense burners, with the clouds of incense representing the prayers of God's people. In a song of praise, they celebrate the realization of the kingdom of God - a new song to celebrate its coming. The song / hymn has a threefold focus: The worthiness of the Lamb - only he has the power and or moral authority to open the scroll and instigate the final judgment; the redemptive work of the Lamb - he redeemed a people for God by his sacrifice; and finally, in v10, the blessings upon God's people - we become kings and priests, set apart to reign with Christ.

ὅτε "when [he had taken it]" - [AND] WHEN [HE RECEIVED THE SCROLL, THE FOUR LIVING BEINGS AND THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS]. This temporal conjunction serves to introduce a temporal clause; "when he had taken the book", Phillips. As Smalley notes, the role of the elders here reflects that of the twenty-four orders of Levites "trained in singing to the Lord", 1Chron.25:1-31.

ἐνωπιον + gen. "[fell down] before [the Lamb]" - Spatial. The act of falling down expresses an act of obeisance, and thus of worship; "the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders dropped to their knees before the Lamb", Junkins.

ἔχοντες [εχω] pres. part. "[each one] had [a harp]" - [EACH PERSON / EACH of them] HAVING [A HARP]. The participle is masculine, so in concord with the masculine "twenty-four elders" and not the neuter "four living creatures." "Most probably the participle is another example of a participle serving as a finite verb, classified technically as a paraphrastic construction missing the verb to-be, probably a paraphrastic imperfect emphasizing durative aspect; "each of them held / had *with them* a harp and golden bowls."

γμουσας [γεμω] pres. part. + gen. "[golden bowls] full of [incense]" - [AND GOLDEN BOWLS] BEING FULL OF [INCENSE]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "bowls"; "golden bowls which are full of incense." The noun θυμιαματων, "incense", is a genitive of direct object / content, after the participle "being full of." A thurible may be full of the waxes, spices and herbs that produce the incense smoke when burnt, but "full of", "filled with", TEV, the white smoke itself is a somewhat strange image. John surely has in mind a fulsome cloud of incense (white smoke) coming from the thurible / golden bowl. TH goes with "the

bowl was filled with sweet-smelling herbs", but surely it is the fragrant smoke floating upward that John has in mind.

αἱ εἰσιν "which are [the prayers]" - This construction introduces as a parenthetical explanation; "full of incense (that is, full of the prayers of the saints), singing a new song", Moffatt. Note that the pronoun **αἱ** is feminine such that it is technically in concord with the feminine "bowls" and not the neuter "incense", but John surely has "incense" in mind. In the OT there is a liturgical link between the wafting cloud of incense in the temple and the prayers of the worshipers, cf., Ps.141:2. As already noted, it seems likely that the elders represent the community of believers, here, with their harps and the wafting incense from their golden thuribles, representing the worshiping people of God. The prayers of the people are not specified, given that all our prayers find their place before God's throne, but Blount may be right to note that in the present context they serve as "a challenge to God to begin the process of vindicating God's people."

των ἁγιων gen. adj. "of God's people" - OF THE HOLY, SAINTS. The genitive is usually classified as verbal, subjective; "the prayers offered up by God's people." "The holy ones" is a title often applied to believers and is even used of God's people in the OT, cf., Ps.34:9. Aune suggests that the title reflect a believer's relationship with God, not their sanctity. In ourselves, we are anything but holy, but in our relationship with Christ we are made (considered, counted as??) holy.

v9

λεγοντες [λεγω] "saying" - [THEY SANG A NEW SONG] SAYING. Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the verb "to sing", "they sang and said", redundant so left out, as TEV, or adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of their singing, as NIV. "They sang a new song: 'You are worthy'", TEV. See **λεγων** 1:17 for John's tendency to introduce what is seen or heard in a vision with a participle. For the realization of the kingdom of God there is a new song to celebrate its coming.

λαβειν [λαμβανω] aor. inf. "[you are worthy] to take [the scroll]" - [WORTHY ARE YOU] TO TAKE [THE SCROLL AND TO OPEN THE SEALS OF IT]. The infinitive, as with "to open", is exegetical, specifying / explaining in what way Christ is worthy.

οτι "because [you were slain]" - BECAUSE [YOU WERE SLAIN AND PURCHASED *the holy / saints* FOR GOD WITH THE BLOOD OF YOU]. Introducing a causal clause explaining why Jesus is worthy; "for you were slain and by your blood you bought for God people of every tribe and language, nation and race", REB. The verb **σφαζω**, "to slay", is only used of Jesus' death in the Revelation, obviously driven by the image of Jesus as a sacrifice lamb, cf., Isa.53:7. This with

the verb **αγοραζω**, "to buy, purchase", expresses the idea of emancipation from slavery by the payment of a price, here the sacrifice of the Lamb.

τω θεω [ος] dat. "**for God**" - Dative of interest, advantage.

εν + dat. "**with [your blood]**" - Instrumental dative, expressing means; "by means of your blood." The NIV "with your blood" is leaning toward a dative of material / price, a subset of the instrumental dative.

εκ "**persons from**" - FROM [EVERY TRIBE AND TONGUE AND PEOPLE AND NATION]. Here expressing source / origin, although Mathewson classifies the preposition here as partitive (ie., standing in the place of a partitive genitive). The fourfold listing of nations, peoples etc., makes the point that believers are drawn from all peoples and all nations, so Bauckham.

v10

βασιλειαν και ιερεις acc. "**to be a kingdom and priests**" - [YOU MADE THEM] A KINGDOM AND PRIESTS. Here serving as the complement of the object "them" in a double accusative, primary and secondary, construction; "you made them *into* a kingdom and priests." The NET Bible suggests a hendiadys for "kingdom and priests" = "a priestly kingdom"; "you have made them a royal house of priests", REB, Interesting, but probably not the intended sense. As a worshipping community, represented by the elders and their harps and incense, we are in a sense a corporate priesthood, able to approach the throne of God on behalf of others and ourselves. As well as being priests we are corporately a kingdom, ie., we are royalty. So, believers are royalty as well as priests; "royalty and priests for God", Berkeley, or simply "you have made them kings and priests in service to God."

τω θεω [ος] dat. "**to serve [our] God**" - TO THE GOD [OF US]. Dative of interest, advantage; "for our God", Moffatt. The genitive pronoun **ημων**, "our", is adjectival, relational, or subordination, "God over us." TH opts for idiomatic, "the God whom we worship."

βασιλευσουσιν [βαλιλευω] fut. "**they will reign**" - [AND] THEY WILL REIGN. Variant present tense exists. Since it is the more difficult reading it may well be original although most translations opt for the future tense. Of course, the present may well be a future present. Given John's realized eschatology, a present tense is by no means a problem - even now we reign with Christ!

επι + gen. "**on [the earth]**" - John's favourite spatial preposition, usually with the sense "upon / on [the earth]", but possibly here "over [the earth]", Plumber DDG.

5:11-14

The vision of God and the Lamb, 4:1-5:14

iii] Worthy is the Lamb that was slain

Synopsis

Preparations for the full realization of the kingdom of God continue. John now witnesses what is virtually the investiture and enthronement of the Lamb, Christ. The throne-room of the Ancient of Days explodes with the noise of singing angels proclaiming the honour now bestowed on Christ. This is followed up by the praise of the whole creation directed to both the Ancient of Days and the Lamb. The scene concludes with the worship of the four cherubim and the twenty-four elders.

Teaching

The Kingdom of God is at hand: God's reign in Christ is now absolute.

Issues:

i] Context: See 4:1-11.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8

iii] Structure: *The Adoration of the Ancient of Days and the Lamb*:

The outer heavenly circle celebrates Christ's enthronement, v11-12;
"worthy is the Lamb."

The cosmos gives praise to the Ancient of Days and the Lamb, v13;
The cherubim and the elders offer praise, v14.

iv] Interpretation:

In this passage, John describes the investiture and enthronement of the Lamb. John witnesses the whole angelic order giving praise to the Lamb who has received divine prerogative and now stands (with the Spirit) beside the throne of the Ancient of Days. Naturally, the investiture prompts questions as to Jesus' status before this event. From a doctrinal perspective it is generally accepted that Jesus has always been Lord, but what we have here is time interacting with apocalyptic visions that image the realization of the kingdom of God. So, Jesus receives divine prerogative for the realization of the kingdom, and this because he is the pure sacrificial Lamb who, in his death, saved a people for himself.

Christ's enthronement prompts the whole of the created order to respond in praise "to the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb (beside him)"; "the Lamb who was slain." Joining in heavenly praise are the four

cherubim, "living creatures", who represent the creation in its perfection (possibly even the creation restored, or just "God's world", Wilcock), and the twenty-four elders representing the fellowship of believers, the church ("the ruling church", Richardson, or more likely just "God's people", Wilcock).

Homiletics: *Praise to the Lamb*

The mystery of sin and chaos, of the ever-constant manipulation of life by the powers of darkness, fills us with fear. For the early Christians, the powers of darkness were real indeed. The book of Revelation was, according to tradition, penned by John the apostle during the reign of Domitian, AD 81-96. During his reign he strengthened emperor worship and instituted a general (although not overly vicious) persecution of "atheists". As far as the Roman authorities were concerned, Christians were atheists. John saw in these events the sign of things to come. The "beast" is about to be revealed; evil will have its way. What hope is there for the people of God in the face of the determined violence of the secular state?

The mystery of evil is something that bothers everyone. Somehow the cancer of sin seems out of place, an unacceptable intrusion to be denied, and yet which refuses to be denied. How can there be a loving God in the face of such corruption? How can he seemingly ignore the plight of his people?

We may believe that all is in the hands of a loving, sovereign God, and although evil seems to have triumphed, good will prevail. "My husband's death with cancer was God's way of bringing me back to Him." Was this lady suggesting that God gave her husband the cancer just to get her back to church? We may want to argue that evil goes hand-in-hand with free will. Maybe it does! The problem of evil for a believer is not an easy one to address. What does the existence of evil tell us about God, given that He is the supreme originator?

The book of Revelation tells us that rampant chaos may seem to be the norm, may seem to be ever the master of the situation, but this is not the case. The masters of darkness, evil and their domain of chaos, only give the illusion of mastery. Their reign is under attack. Christ has triumphed over them on the cross and has gathered, in his victory-parade, a people to reign with him in eternity. Even now his people are confronting the powers of darkness and shaking their hold on the world. The reign of the New Creation has begun.

Those of the light, in the realm of light, in the expanse of the Cosmos, see a new thing. There stands the Lamb by the Ancient of Days, his work complete, his rule begun. The darkness now begins to retreat before the one who has received power, wealth, wisdom and strength. The new age of enlightenment has dawned. Those of the light, in the realm of light, burst into praise before "him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb". All are singing his praise.

On the earth, in the shadows and the darkness of our existence, little seems to have changed. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Business criminals are honoured. Politicians become the new media personalities and evil abounds. Yet, all this is but a fading illusion. Let us therefore, lift our eyes heavenward and know that even now the seals are broken and darkness flees. "Amen".

Text - 5:11

Praise to God and the Lamb, v11-14: i] The outer heavenly circle celebrates the enthronement of Christ and the reception of his divine authority, v11-12. This hymn "further interprets the slain but risen Lamb's reception of the scroll / book (cf. v1-10) to mean that his death, and implicitly his resurrection, made him *worthy* to receive praise and glory", Beale.

και **"then"** - and. Transitional.

ειδον [ὄραω] aor. **"I looked"** - I SAW, PERCEIVED. "Then I I saw and heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders, the voice of countless angels and I heard them chant ..."

αγγελων [ος] gen. **"[the voice] of [many] angels"** - The genitive is adjectival, possessive / verbal, subjective, or idiomatic / source. The singular θωνην, "voice", is obviously serving as a distributive singular since John hears the "voices" of many angels.

αυτων gen. pro. **"numbering"** - [AND WAS THE NUMBER] OF THEM [MYRIADS OF MYRIADS AND THOUSANDS OF THOUSANDS]. The genitive is adjectival, possessive; "and their number was .."

μυριαδων [ας αδος] gen. **"[thousands] upon thousands"** - [MYRIAD, COUNTLESS THOUSANDS] OF COUNTLESS THOUSANDS. The genitive may be classified as adjectival, partitive, if the thousands are part of all the thousands, but the sense is probably as NIV. In Greek, the largest number possible. Here there are myriads of myriads. Best translated "millions". Millions of angels worshipping God and singing his praise, v12 and v13. Cf. Dan.7:10.

κυκλω + gen. **"they encircled"** - AROUND [THE THRONE]. Spatial.

των ζωνων gen. **"the living creatures"** - OF THE LIVING BEINGS. Ref. 4:6, ... drawn from Ezekiel 1. As already noted, these τεσσαρα ζωα "four living creatures" are possibly "celestial beings of some sort", Osborne, although they more likely represent God's creation. They seem to support the divine throne.

των πρεσβυτερων [ος] gen. **"the elders"** - [AND] OF THE ELDERS. Cf. 4:4, etc. "The twenty-four elders" sit upon twenty four thrones in concentric circles around the throne of God. As already noted, debate rages as to whether they are human, ie. representing the resurrected saints of Israel, old and new, or angelic beings.

v12

φωνη [η] dat. "**in a [loud] voice**" - [SAYING] WITH A [LOUD] VOICE. The dative functions adverbially here, possibly instrumental, means, accompaniment, or probably better, modal, expressing the manner of their "saying"; "with a loud voice."

λεγοντες [λεγω] pres. part. "**they sang / were saying**" - SAYING. We may have expected this participle to serve as the accusative complement of the direct object of **φωνην**, "voice", "and I looked and heard a voice saying", but the problem is that it's in the nominative case. So, best treated as a participle serving as a finite verb, classified as a periphrastic construction missing the verb to-be, as NIV. John commonly introduces speech with a participle; see **λεγων** 1:17. Mounce suggests a chanted response. "They / the angels exclaimed in a powerful voice"

αξιον adj. "**worthy**" - WORTHY [IS THE LAMB]. Predicate nominative. The sense is having right and authority before God. The Lamb is worthy to receive power etc.

το εσφαγμενον [σφαζω] perf. pas. part. "**who was slain**" - HAVING BEEN SLAIN. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "the lamb", as NIV.

λαβειν [λαμβανω] inf. "**to receive**" - The infinitive is exegetical explaining the adjective "worthy"; "he is worthy to receive"

ευλογιαν [α] "**[and] praise**" - [THE POWER AND WEALTH AND WISDOM AND STRENGTH AND HONOUR AND GLORY AND] PRAISE, BLESSING, THANKSGIVING... John, in typical style, lists 7 things the Lamb is worthy to receive. "The one gift that we who have nothing can give to him who possesses all", Barclay.

v13

ii] The whole cosmos praises God and the Lamb for their ability to reign, v13. This second part of the hymn further interprets "the slain but risen Lamb's reception of the scroll / book (v7) to mean that his death and resurrection made him worthy to receive praise and glory", Beale.

και "then" - Transitional.

εν ... επι ... ὑποκατω "**in [heaven and] on [earth and] under [the earth]**" - All three prepositions are spatial.

επι της θαλασσης "**on the sea**" - The preposition **επι** "on", followed by the genitive, would imply seafarers, but surely what lives in the sea is intended. Some texts have the preposition **εν**, "in", "in the sea". Moffatt has "sea-monsters".

εν + dat. "**[and all that is] in [them]**" - Local, expressing space. Serving as a catch-all; "everything they contain", Barclay.

λεγοντας [λεγω] pres. part. "**saying**" - [AND I HEARD] SAYING. Technically the participle serves as the complement of the direct object παν κτισμα, "every creature", standing in a double accusative construction; "I heard every creature saying" Participles are sometimes used to introduce a dependent statement of perception and, to some extent, it does serve this function here

τω καθημενω [καθημαι] dat. aor. part. "**to him who sits**" - TO THE ONE SITTING. The participle serves as a substantive, dative of indirect object. It is possible to translate this section of the verse "I heard all things / creatures singing to him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb: 'Praise and honour and glory and dominion.'"

επι + dat. "**on [the throne]**" - Spatial; "upon, on."

κρατος [ος] "**power**" - A different Greek word for "power" is used in v12. The words take the same meaning, although TEV suggests "strength" v12, and "might" v13. Michaelis suggests that when the word is used in doxologies, as here, it means "the superior power of God."

v14

iii] The Cherubim and the elders also offer praise, v14.

επεσαν [πιπτω] aor. "**fell down**" - [AND THE FOUR LIVING BEINGS WERE SAYING AMEN, AND THE ELDERS] FELL. Here in the sense of prostrated themselves. We might say "knelt down."

προσεκυνησαν [προσκυνω] aor. "**worshipped**" - [AND] DID OBEISANCE TO THE DIVINE. The sense is to do obeisance to rather than to offer service to.

6:1-8

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

1. The judgment of the seven seals, 6:1-8:5

i] The opening of the first four seals.

Synopsis

John now sees the Lamb open the first four seals, and as they are opened, the four horsemen of the apocalypse set forth in judgment upon the earth.

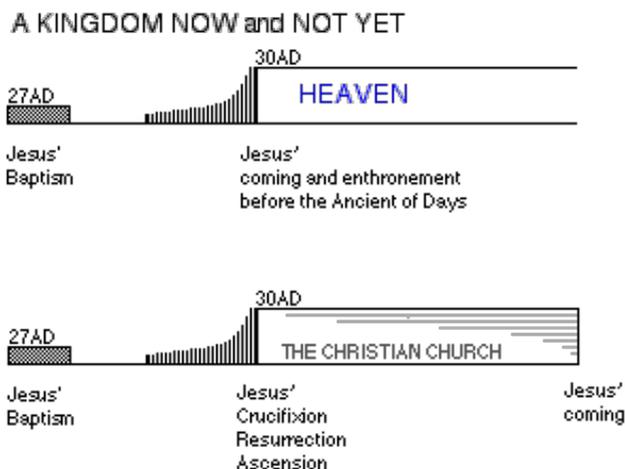
Teaching

Christ is Lord, the kingdom is come, judgment is underway. The powers of darkness (Satan and his minions) stand condemned, as do those who align with them.

Issues:

i] Context: See 1:1-8. In Chapter 4, John describes his vision of God the creator, and then in chapter 5 his vision of God the Son - the Lamb, the Redeemer. From the splendour of the heavenly throne, John confronts us with *The Messianic Judgments*, chapters 6-16 - visions of the agony of the universe in the face of judgment; "the divine plan for ending human history and beginning the eternal age", Osborne. This he does in the visions of the three sevens of judgment: the seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls / plagues. These visions outline the chaos of the last day, the Great Day of the Lord. Each series of judgments reveal the unfolding of the eschaton, the day of judgment. The seventh judgment leads into the next series of seven which rework the previous series from a different perspective, but at the same time intensifying it, eg., the seals bring judgment on a quarter of the earth, the trumpets a third of the earth, and the bowls the whole earth. "Hearers and readers watch three different versions of the end time unfold simultaneously at three different places in the narrative-set", Blount. So, in the three series of seven we witness the *now* of the kingdom of God. Jesus, the Lamb of God, takes his seat beside the Ancient of Days - Christ has come, judgment begun.

Inserted into John's realized eschatology, his heavenly view of the *now* reality of the kingdom of God, the day of judgment, is his inaugurated eschatology, his earthly view of the *not yet* reality of the kingdom of God. In the two sets of interludes, 7:1-17, and 10:1-11:14, John's perspective is from the church looking out into a world troubled by darkness, and pressed in by the coming day. John fully develops this perspective in *The Battle with the Beasts*, 11:19-15:4. Osborne calls these visions "illustrative vignettes" of the last days as experienced by the church, the days between Jesus' ascension and his coming. The *not yet* reality of the kingdom of God makes for troubled times, the Red Dragon and his beastly friends present as masters of our domain, but there is another reality, a kingdom realized, a kingdom *now* - Christ enthroned, and the setting right of all things. The image below illustrates the *now*, and the *not yet*



The Judgment of the Seven Seals, 6:1-8:5. The first series of judgments commence the unfolding of "God's righteous judgement on unfaithfulness of any kind in the world, together with the ideal establishment within it of his divine will", Smalley. The seven seals fall into two parts with one / two interludes, the first four seals are focused on the earth and the next three are cosmic. The last leads into the next series of seven, *The judgments of the seven trumpets*, which in a sense, "constitute the seventh seal", Murphy.

- i] The opening of the first four seals, 6:1-8
- ii] The opening of the fifth seal, 6:9-11

- iii] The opening of the sixth seal, 6:12-17
- iv] Interlude #1. The sealing of God's servants, 7:1-8
- v] Interlude # 2. The Lamb is the shepherd, 7:9-17
- vi] The opening of the seventh seal, 8:1-5

The books of Daniel and Zechariah serve to shape the imagery used in the judgments of the seven seals. Beasley-Murray notes that John follows the pattern of judgment that is found in Mark 13, although Osborne argues that literary dependence is unlikely:

The Seven Seals

1. War
2. International strife
3. Famine
4. Pestilence
5. Persecution
6. Cosmic strife

Mark 13

- War
- International strife
- Earthquakes
- Famine
- Persecution
- Cosmic strife

When it comes to interpreting the seals, attempts to align them to future events faced by the readers today have always been unsuccessful; any attempt to specify John's apocalyptic imagery produces widely divergent interpretations. Even trying to align the visions with historical events of John's own day have similarly proved unfruitful. The Revelation "is far from being a simple allegory which simply encodes events and generalizes about them", Murphy. What we have in the series of seven judgments is the unfolding of the eschaton; "there shall be a time of anguish such as has never occurred since nations first came into existence", Dan.12:1. For the church, facing the uncertainties of an inaugurated kingdom, the *not yet*, we are privileged to witness, through John, the enthronement of the risen Christ, the *now* of a realized kingdom, 4:1-5:14. With Christ on his throne, judgment ensues. As each seal is broken so the words of woe flow forth under the command of God - "Go!" Mounce argues that the scroll is not opened until the last seal is broken, but he is probably pushing the imagery too far.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8

iii] Structure: *The opening of the first four seals:*

The four horsemen of the apocalypse, v1-8:
 The first horseman - white, v1-2;
 "he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest."
 The second horseman - red, v3-4;
 he had the "power to take peace from the earth."
 The third horseman - black, v5-6;
 "two pounds of wheat for a day's wage."
 The fourth horseman - pale green, v7-8;
 "sword, famine and plague."

iv] Interpretation:

The one who is worthy breaks the first seal and John witnesses the unfolding purposes of God's judgment - Smalley adds "and love" to judgment, although with little textual support at this point in the drama!! Then from the throne of God comes the command to begin the day of judgment, and to this end the horsemen of the apocalypse go forth. John draws on the imagery of Zech.1:8-17, 6:1-8 (see also Jer.15:2, Ezk.5:12), but with his own take - note that Zechariah has chariots attached to the horses and the colour order is different. In Zechariah they go forth and discover a world at peace and rest, but it's what they bring with them that matters - "the opening of the seals takes peace away from the earth", Koester. In the Revelation, the horsemen bring with them a judgment, a judgment "which proceeds from the lust for conquest to civil war to famine to pestilence and death", Osborne. The horsemen proceed in sequence, but it is possible that they move together to the four corners of the earth, rather than proceed one after the other. Beale is one commentator who argues for a single event summarized in the actions of the fourth horseman. The significance of the colours is unclear; they probably reflect Zechariah's prophecy, but it is possible that John is also drawing on the colours of the imperial games. John does seem to intertwine Biblical imagery with the people, places and events of his own age. Whatever the source of the imagery, the four horsemen simply represent conquest, war, famine, and death

Divine judgment: There has always been some hesitancy with the imagery in the Revelation; how could God impose such ruthless punishment on his world? We note this with the textual variant for "come / go", cf., v1. We are always looking for a second party to take the blame for divine judgment - they brought it on ourselves, Satan is to blame, Those who have taught young children the wonderful story of Joshua leading the Israelites against the city of Jericho, always play up God's mighty hand in

bringing down the walls, but tend to play down his instruction that every inhabitant should be put to the sword. Yet, there are plenty of hints in the Old Testament that divine justice is not without mercy. Sodom and Gomorrah would be spared for a righteous man. The Babylonians were God's instrument of chastisement against Israel, but faced judgment themselves because they ruthlessly harassed God people, ie., they went too far.

The approach taken by most commentators to the horror of divine judgment (anger, wrath ??) enacted in the Revelation, is that God hands humanity over to its own devices: so Aune, Mounce, Osborne, Beasley-Murray, Sweet, Morris, ... So, the horsemen represent the human lust of violence for gain let loose, ie., God revokes his providential care over humanity (God is responsible for folding up the Monopoly board, but only when the arguments get out of hand after parental supervision is removed!).

It is probably true to say that human society is a miracle. It is a tall ask to throw together a gaggle of corrupted selfish humans with the expectation that they will live happily with each other. Even a married couple find it hard to live with each other after their Hollywood romance fades into reality. A dictator with a strong army can keep a semblance of peace. Western democracies have shown resilience, thanks to their grounding in the teachings of Jesus, but a close look at our political masters reminds us that it's all held together by God's providential care.

From the throne, John hears the call, "Come!" = "You're on your own boys!" *Cry 'Havoc', and let slip the dogs of war.*

Text - 6:1

The opening of the first four seals, v1-8: 1] The first horseman - white, v1-2. John first witnesses a white horseman released to ravage the earth; he carries a bow of war and wears an imperial crown. Cavalry in full regalia may look glorious, but they bring death and destruction - this cavalryman represents human lust for war let loose. The white horseman may be a version of the legendary Minos who rode on a white horse and carried a javelin, along with bow and arrows, but John's imagery is more Biblical than secular. Attempts at identifying the white horseman (as also with the other three) are fruitless: Hendriksen, Bachmann, argue for Christ; Sweet for the word of the gospel; Thomas for the Antichrist. Attempts at specifying exactly what the white horseman is up to is also fruitless: Beale argues that the white horseman's task is to deceive and oppress believers, but this seems unlikely. We are best not to overly specify. The white horseman is the first sign of the last judgment, of God handing humanity over to its lust for war.

και "-" - AND. Standing in for δε to introduce a step in the argument / narrative.

ότε "as [the Lamb opened]" - [I SAW] WHEN, WHILE [THE LAMB OPENED]. The temporal conjunction introduces a temporal clause; "Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals", ESV.

εκ + gen. "[the first] of [the seven seals]" - [ONE] OF [THE SEVEN SEALS AND I HEARD ONE] OF [THE FOUR LIVING BEINGS. The preposition, as for "one of the four living beings", is partitive, standing in for a partitive genitive.

ενος [είς ενος] gen. adj. "[then I heard] one" - Genitive of direct object after the verb "to hear"

λεγοντος [λεγω] "say" - SAYING. Technically the genitive complement of the genitive object "one" standing in a double genitive construction; "I heard one saying." Semitic idiom, cf., λεγων 1:17.

ώς "in [a voice] like [thunder]" - AS [A VOICE, SOUND OF THUNDER]. Here adverbial, modal, expressing manner; "in / with a voice of thunder." The genitive noun βροντης, "of thunder", is adjectival, attributive, "in a thunderous / loud voice."

ερχου [ερχομαι] pres. imp. "Come!" - COME, GO. A variant exists where it is John who is commanded to come rather than the horses, ie., "come and see", rather than "come" = "come out", Phillips, possibly "go forth." This, of course, may be the sense, but the copyist is most likely reacting to the idea of divine association with the four horsemen of the apocalypse, ie., the command comes from the throne of God. Sweet thinks the command here is for Jesus to come, but this is unlikely. A durative sense for the present imperative is not applicable as the action is obviously punctiliar. Mathewson suggests the present tense is used for a specific command.

v2

και "-" - AND. As in v1; "then I looked ..."

ὁ καθημενος [καθημαι] pres. mid. part. "its rider" - [AND BEHOLD, A WHITE HORSE AND] THE ONE SITTING [ON IT]. The participle serves as a substantive. The fact that the first horse is white has prompted some commentators to view the horseman in a positive light (white is good, black is evil thinking!!). Yet, "white" in colour can mean "pale", "ashen", the colour of death, the colour of a corpse.

εχων [εχω] pres. part. "held [a bow]" - HAVING [A BOW]. Again, we have a participle serving as a finite verb, technically a periphrastic construction where the verb to-be is assumed, possibly serving to emphasize durative aspect; "its rider had a bow" = "carried a bow", Phillips; cf., 1:16. In shaping the image of the first horseman, John may have had in mind Parthian cavalry. They could ride and fire arrows at the same time, and twice they defeated a Roman army.

αυτω dat. pro. "**he [was given a crown]**" - [A CROWN WAS GIVEN] TO HIM. Dative of indirect object.

νικων [νικαω] pres. part. "**[he rode out] as a conqueror**" - [HE CAME OUT, WENT OUT] CONQUERING. The participle is adverbial, modal, expressing manner, as NIV.

ινα + subj. "**bent on [conquest]**" - [AND] THAT [HE MAY CONQUER]. Here serving to introduce a final clause expressing purpose; "and this he does in order to conquer" = "he went on his way, a conqueror intent on conquering." "He had already won some victories and he went out to win more", CEV.

v3

ii] The second horseman - red, v3-4. Just as the first horseman represented human lust for war let loose, now the second horseman follows on with the consequences of conquest, namely civil war. Again, we are witnessing the product of sinful humanity out of control, a humanity devoid of God's providential care. Aune argues that John is describing the persecution of Christians, but general civil war seems more likely. Commentators tend to link the colour red with bloodshed and slaughter, but the white horseman was also into bloodshed and slaughter, so it is unclear whether the colours are significant. John was probably well aware of the civil wars that plagued Rome, particularly after the murder of Caesar, or between AD.68-69 when there were four different emperors. He also actually experienced the Pax Romana, AD.27-180, when the Roman Empire was at peace. Devoid of divine restraint, civil war is inevitable; peace is at an end - "I have taken away my peace from this people", Jer.16:5, cf., Zech.1-7-12.

οτε "**when**" - WHEN [HE OPENED THE SECOND SEAL]. Temporal conjunction introducing a temporal clause, although since it introduces the opening of each seal it may be intended as a structural indicator; "The Lamb broke the second seal and I heard the second creature say ...", REB.

του ... ζουου [ον] gen. "**[I heard] the [second] living creature**" - Genitive of direct object after the verb "to hear."

λεγοντος [λεγω] gen. pres. part. "**saying**" - As in v1.

v4

Numerous variants exist in this verse due to the awkward syntax; lit., "and there came out another horse, a red one, and it was granted to the one sitting upon it, to him it was granted to take (that he take) peace from the earth, that is, that they will slay one another, and so a great sword was given to him."

πυρρος adj. "**a fiery red one**" - [AND ANOTHER HORSE WENT OUT] a RED one. The adjective serves as a substantive, as NIV.

αυτω dat. pro. "its" - [IT WAS GIVEN TO THE ONE SITTING UPON IT, TO TAKE PEACE FROM THE EARTH *was given*] TO HIM. Resumptive use of the pronoun, the dative antecedent being "to the one sitting."

τω καθήμενω [καθημαι] dat. pres. mid. part. "rider" - TO THE ONE SITTING. The participle serves as a substantive, dative of indirect object.

λαβειν [λαμβανω] aor. inf. "to take [peace from the earth]" - The infinitive serves as the subject of the impersonal verb "it was given"; "to take peace from the earth *was given* to him." The preposition **εκ**, "from", expresses separation, "away from." "Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth", TEV.

και "and" - Variant where **και** is left out given that it interferes with the syntax if the following **ινα** introduces a purpose clause. Possibly epexegetic here, "that is", "ie.,"; "that is, that people should slay one another."

ινα + fut. "to [make people kill each other]" - THAT [THEY WILL SLAUGHTER ONE ANOTHER *was given to him*]. If we follow Mathewson, he suggests that *hina* forms a substantive standing in parallel to the infinitival construction "to take peace from the earth", which serves as the subject of the verb "was given." Beale, so also Smalley, takes it to introduce a final clause expressing purpose, "in order that / so that that [people should slay one another." A subjunctive verb is expected with *hina*, but in Semitic use a verb in the future tense is sometimes used. John is describing a holocaust.

και "-" - AND [A GREAT SWORD WAS GIVEN TO HIM]. Leaning toward a consecutive sense; "and so / and to that end he was given a great sword." The dative pronoun **αυτω**, "to him", is a dative of indirect object. The sword serves as a symbol of authority in the performance of his duty to remove peace from the earth. Possibly an allusion to the Roman decree of "the right of the sword" bestowed upon provincial governors.

v5

iii] The third horseman - black, v5-6. The first horseman represented human lust for war let loose, leading to the second horseman, civil war, and to the third horseman, the consequence of the first two, famine. This horseman carries scales, the symbols of commerce. As is typical of a famine, grain is traded at exorbitant prices. Rome efficiently maintained grain supplies throughout the empire, but there were still the inevitable crop failures, or storms at sea destroying the grain cargo from Egypt, and that's when shortages pushed up the price and prompted hoarding, further exacerbating the shortages. Like anyone in the empire, John would have witnessed famine. During these times, the rich were expected to source new supplies and sell at a discount to stabilize the price, and in return receive imperial honours for their efforts. This is not the way it will be in the last day, it will be *every man for himself*.

ὅτε "when" - WHEN [HE OPENED THE THIRD SEAL, I HEARD THE THIRD LIVING BEING]. As in v3.

λεγοντος [λεγω] gen. pres. part. "saying" - SAYING [COME]. The participle as in v1.

και ειδον και ιδου "I looked, and there before me was" - AND I LOOKED AND BEHOLD. A redundant statement, but repeatedly used by John to indicate a change in scene.

μελας adj. "black [horse]" - There is probably no major significance in the colour, black = darkness, Satan, ...!! "black as sackcloth", 6:12, may be implied, given that famine is associated with people wearing rags.

ὁ καθημενος [καθημαι] pres. mid. part. "its rider" - THE ONE SITTING [UPON IT]. The participle serves as a substantive.

εχων [εχω] pres. part. "was holding" - HAVING [A PAIR OF SCALES]. The participle as in v2; "its rider held a pair of scales in his hand."

εν + dat. "in [his hand]" - Local, expressing space.

v6

ὡς "what sounded like" - [AND I HEARD] AS, LIKE [A VOICE]. Used here as a comparative, but at the same time it leans toward a modal sense expressing manner, "I heard like in the manner of a voice." The purpose of this phraseology is to create mystery - it wasn't just like any voice; there was something strange about it. It tends to be somewhat unnecessary for the modern reader which is why Phillips cuts through it with "I heard a voice which seemed to come from the four living creatures."

των ... ζωνων [ον] gen. "[among] the [four] living creatures" - [IN THE MIDDLE] OF [FOUR] LIVING BEINGS]. The genitive is adjectival, partitive; "in the middle, midst of the four living creatures." The preposition εν is local, expressing space. Naturally, there is debate over whose voice it is - God, the Lamb, an angel,?? Given that the first, second and fourth living beings are identified as the source of the voice, does John have in mind the third living being? Whatever the conclusion, the famine comes with divine imprimatur. "From the four living creatures", Phillips, is certainly reasonable, but wouldn't John have used εκ, "from", instead of εν, "in"?

λεγουσαν [λεγω] pres. part. "saying" - The participle serves as the complement of the object "like a voice / something like a voice", as in v1; cf. λεγων, 1:17, for John's use of the participle "saying".

σιτου [ος] gen. "[two pounds] of wheat" - [A CHOENIX] OF WHEAT. The genitive, as for "of barley", is adjectival, idiomatic / of measure: "a choenix (a quart measure) full of wheat."

δηνάριου [ον] gen. "**for a day's wages**" - OF A DENARIUS [AND THREE CHOENIXES OF BARLEY] OF = FOR A DENARIUS. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / of price; "it will take a whole day's wage to pay for a quart (a little over a litre. Dry measure = 4 cups) of flour", Barclay. Here the end product is probably not in mind; "wheat" rather than "flour, given that most household grind their own grain (flour is easily adulterated). The measure is by volume; commercial transactions of grain can still be by volume today, although we usually buy flour by weight. Note that the horseman carries scales, but a **χοινίξ**, "choenix", is a measure - the scales are obviously symbolic of commerce. A choenix of wheat is enough to feed one person, three of barley is enough for a family. Aune has calculated the inflation rate for the wheat at times 5.

μη αδικησης [αδικεω] aor. subj. "**do not damage [the oil and the wine!]**" - [AND] DO NOT HARM [THE OIL AND THE WINE]. A subjunctive of prohibition which, with an aorist, is usually understood to forbid the initiation of an action. Mathewson notes that when weight is given to the aspect of the aorist the prohibition "forbids the action as a whole." This instruction has prompted numerous interpretations. The most likely interpretation is that proposed by Reddish who suggests that the words are ironic. He argues that the oil and wine represent luxuries used for the feasting of the rich. They can well afford the inflated grain prices and with their luxuries will survive (for a time!!) in their gated communities. "John envisions the final days as a time when the poor are starving while the rich are unaffected by the shortages", Reddish. Many of my friends in Comboyne (a hilltop village in Australia) are influenced by doomsday thinking and so live off the grid and grow their own foods. I enjoy reminding them that when society collapses and we are all starving, the starving mob will know where to come for a feed! And guess what! A fence is not going to keep them out.

v7

iv] The fourth horseman - pale green, v7-8: John now witnesses the sending out of the fourth horseman of the apocalypse. His name is Death, most likely with the sense Mr. Pestilence. He is followed by Hades, or simply Mr. Death. They work together to bring the curse of judgment upon humanity, although at this stage of the judgment it is limited to "a fourth of the earth." By the time we get to the judgment of the bowls it will cover the whole earth. John reminds us of the order of the judgments. First, human lust for war, conquest and violence is released. We understand this to mean that God withdraws his providential care over the administration of society, a care which throughout human history has placed some limits on our self-destructive nature, ie., up to this point in time good has generally prevailed over evil, although at great cost. Then follows famine and now pestilence and death. John probably alludes to Ezekiel 14:21 when he adds the

wild beasts that consume decaying flesh, animals such as vultures, hawks, eagles, hyenas, all the way through to maggots, so removing all trace.

ότε "when" - [AND] WHEN [HE OPENED THE FOURTH SEAL]. Temporal conjunction, as in v3.

του ... ζφου [ον] gen. "of the [fourth] living creature" - [I HEARD THE VOICE] OF THE [FOURTH] LIVING BEING. The genitive is best classified as adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic / source.

λεγοντος [λεγω] gen. pres. part. "saying" - SAYING [COME, GO]. The participle seems to function as an object complement, as v1, but here the object **φωνην**, "voice", is accusative, while the participle is genitive. As Plummer DDG notes, it may be genitive by attraction to "the four living creatures", or even a *constructio ad sensum* - the verb **ακουω**, "I heard", often takes a genitive, although not here. It could also be treated as adjectival, attributive, limiting the "four living creatures"; "who were saying ..." Again, John freely uses a participle to introduce speech in a vision irrespective of grammatical niceties; **λεγων** 1:17.

v8

και ειδον και ιδου "I looked and there before me was [a pale horse]" - AND I SAW AND BEHOLD [A PALE HORSE]. Introductory construction as in v5. The colour is somewhat unclear, but generally taken to be the the colour of a corpse, grey-yellow-green.

ο καθημενος [καθημαι] pres. mid. part. "its rider" - THE ONE SITTING [UPON IT]. The participle serves as a substantive. Note that John uses **επανω**, "upon", here, whereas in v2, 4, and 5, he uses his favourite spatial preposition **επι**, "upon, on", the horse. BAGD notes that **επανω**, when used as an adverb, takes the sense "over", but as a preposition it means "upon, on, on top of." There is probably no significance in the change of preposition here.

αυτω dat. pro. "[was named death]" - [NAME] TO HIM [DEATH]. The dative may be a dative of interest, "the name for him was death", or reference / respect, "the name, with respect to him, was death", but best treated as a dative of possession, "his name was death",

μετ [μετα] + gen. "[Hades was following] close behind" - [AND HADES WAS FOLLOWING] WITH [HIM]. Possibly expressing association / accompaniment, "with, in company with", "and with him as his follower came Hades", Barclay, but BAGD argues that when used with the verb "to follow" the sense is "after", "to follow after"; "and Hades followed him", Moffatt. Hades refers to the place of the dead, the grave, and **θανατος**, "death", also means "plague". Osborne suggests a double meaning, "death by plague." Hades, Mr. Death, follows the fourth horseman, Mr. Pestilence, see Beasley-Murray.

αυτοις dat. pro. "[they were given authority]" - [AND AUTHORITY WAS GIVEN] TO THEM. Dative of indirect object. Again, we see the hand of God behind the sending forth of Pestilence and Death in that "they were given authority" to the limit of 25%. If we understand God's hand in this judgment in the terms of the removal of his providential care then what we have is corrupted humanity free to fulfill its lust for war, violence and conquest, with the consequences of such being civil war, famine, pestilence and death.

επι + acc. "**over**" - Spatial, as NIV.

της γης [η] gen. "[a fourth] of the earth" - The genitive is adjectival, partitive. With the seals, the curse is limited to 25%. When we finally reach the judgment of the bowls the curse covers the whole of the earth.

αποκτειναι [αποκτεινω] aor. inf. "**to kill**" - Epexegetic infinitive specifying the "authority", namely, the authority to kill.

εν + dat. "**by [sword]**" - BY [SWORD AND] BY [FAMINE AND] BY [DEATH]. Instrumental, expressing the means by which the killing takes place; "by means of." The **εν θανατω**, "by death", obviously means something like "by disease."

υπο + gen. "**by [the wild beasts]**" - THROUGH [THE WILD BEASTS]. Here expressing agency.

της γης [η] gen. "**of the earth**" - The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / local; "the wild beasts that reside on the earth." The wild beasts in mind are those generally associated with consuming carrion (decaying flesh).

6:9-11

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

1. The judgment of the seven seals, 6:1-8:5

ii] The opening of the fifth seal.

Synopsis

John now sees the Lamb open the fifth seal which reveals the souls of Christ's martyrs. They call out "how long" until there is vindication? The answer is "a little longer", and in preparation they are given their white robes.

Teaching

Christ is Lord, the kingdom is come, the righteous are about to receive their crown, and yet there remains a moment of grace for the suffering church to make the gospel known.

Issues:

i] Context: See 6:1-8.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8

iii] Structure: *The opening of the fifth seal:*

The martyred saints, v9-11:

The vision of the martyred saints, v9;

"those who had been slain for the word of God."

They cry out, v10;

"how long."

The reward, v11;

"wait a little longer."

iv] Interpretation:

The one who is worthy breaks the fifth seal and so John again witnesses the unfolding purposes of God's judgment. The time has come to vindicate Christ's persecuted followers, to clothe them in their white robes in preparation for their crowns. In John's vision, Christ's persecuted flock is represented by the souls of the martyrs, those who have died for the gospel, "the word of God" made known ("for the witness they had borne"). For the first time John sees the altar in God's throne-room, and ὑποκατω, "under" (= "at the foot of", cf., Lev.4:7), the altar are the "souls" of the martyrs. They want to know how long they must wait for the promised Great Day of the Lord, the day of judgment, the day of blessing and cursing - the sorting out of all things. The divine response indicates that the Day is at hand for even

now the "souls" are receiving their white robes. Yet, for their brothers and sisters on earth who are suffering for their witness to the gospel, there remains a moment of divine grace for the salvation of the lost.

What should we make of the idea that God has in mind a full number of believers who must be martyred before the end?, v11: The NIV, as with many translations, assumes that the subject of the passive verb *πληρωθωσιν*, "should be complete", is "number"; "until *the number* of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete", ESV. This translation is prompted by the idea that God has a particular number of martyrs in mind which, when reached, will serve to trigger the day of judgment. Really!!! We do come up with some crazy ideas. Just imagine God counting the number down; "I just want to see another twenty believers ripped apart by lions before I close up the Monopoly Board." Yes, there is support for this idea, 1 Enoch .47:4 and 4 Ezra 4:35-37, that's if we want to rely on the Apocrypha. Rather than a fulfilled number, it is more likely that John has in mind finished works; "the works of the surviving colleagues of the slaughtered souls", Blount. And what works? Surely John is referring to witnessing the gospel, cf., the judgment of the trumpets - "The time will continue until the faithful have finished giving their witness (11:7). Only then will the last trumpet sound", Koester. So here we again see our merciful God delaying his hand of judgment for the salvation of souls. May I say that I am very appreciative that God stayed his hand up to this point in time! Cf., "until the full number", v11.

Who are the martyrs?: As already noted, apocalyptic literature presents divine truth in a form that demands the reader clothe the images with propositional truth derived from the rest of scripture, which information is then used to shape a local application, ie., John provides the dots for us to fill in, and of course, we all fill in the dots differently. This passage is a classic example of the problem we face when interpreting apocalyptic literature. The "souls", the martyrs of the church, are told to wait a little longer while their counterpart martyrs on earth "finish / complete", presumably complete their mission unto martyrdom; see "unto the full number" below. What we have here is an apocalyptic image, so the martyrs are not necessarily literal martyrs. For a church facing martyrdom, they can well be martyrs, but for the church at large they represent the suffering church, struggling in a world that disregards the gospel, and at times opposes it, cf., Lk.6:22, 21:17. The point is that the time for gospel ministry, with all its difficulties, is coming to an end; even now the heavenly assembly is putting on their dazzling robes.

Text - 6:9

The opening of the fifth seal, v9-11: i] The vision of the martyred saints, v9. On the opening of the fifth seal the scene moves to heaven. On earth peace and tranquillity is turning into a holocaust, but in heaven, John sees the saints, those who have long suffered for the gospel, he sees them at peace at the foot of the altar (at the foot of the cross, washed by Christ's sacrifice). They are putting on their white robes and are being assured that it's only "a little longer." John is asking us to consider where we want to place our allegiance; is it with the suffering saints now at peace, or a world facing turmoil? cf., Koester.

ὅτε **"when"** - WHEN [HE OPENED THE FIFTH SEAL]. This temporal conjunction is more structural than temporal. As a structural indicator serving to introduce the next seal, it may be ignored; "and what I saw next was this", Cassirer.

ὑπακατω + gen. **"under [the altar]"** - [I SAW] UNDERNEATH [THE ALTAR]. Spatial. Given Lev.4:7 the sense is probably "at the foot of the altar."

τας ψυχας [η] **"the souls"** - In the NT the "soul" represents the spiritual substance of a person, their spiritual being, their Godward being, while the body represents their physical being. The two together form a person, which is why the NT speaks of a bodily resurrection, although as Paul makes clear, the body is transformed when raised. John's apocalyptic imagery rules out questions as to the state of these "souls", since on the day of resurrection all believers, living and deceased, rise to receive their "white robe" and crown in the heavenly throng. Souls floating around in heaven awaiting the day of resurrection is more Platonic than Biblical. These "souls" represent all those "asleep" in Christ, all those washed in the blood of Christ upon the altar of his sacrifice, all those waiting for the day of resurrection. The point is they need only wait "a little longer." Note the link in the Revelation between "the souls", "the word (the gospel)", "the witness (of the word)" and persecution, cf., 12:10-11, 20:4-6. For John, the faithful are those who have maintained their witness for the gospel in a pagan / secular world and done so without accommodating / syncretising themselves to it, even though pressured to do so.

των εσφαγμενων [σφαζω] gen. perf. mid./pas. part. **"of those who had been slain"** - OF THE ONES HAVING BEEN SLAIN. The participle serves as a substantive, the genitive being adjectival, possessive. The letters to the churches do not indicate widespread persecution of the Christian church and so it seems unlikely that John is writing in the context of a pogrom. Still, believers have died, Stephen, and James, and others have followed. They well represent a church in conflict with a pagan / secular world, a suffering church, a suffering which is more about social ostracism than physical harm. None-the-less, the Roman historians, Tacitus and

Pliny, make it clear that the Roman authorities did tend to view Christianity as a harmful superstition and from time-to-time did act aggressively.

δία + acc. "**because of [the word]**" - Causal, "because of, on account of." "Word" is presumably the gospel, so "because of their association with / commitment to / belief in the gospel"

του θεου [ος] gen. "**of God**" - The genitive may simply be adjectival, possessive, since the gospel is God's own message for humanity, which sense presses toward verbal, subjective. As the message is from God the genitive could also be classified as descriptive, idiomatic / source.

και "**and**" - AND [BECAUSE OF THE WITNESS WHICH THEY HAVE]. More likely serving exegetically than as a connective / a coordinative conjunction, so Blount; "because of the word of God (the gospel), that is, because of their witness *to the gospel* which they had (which had been given to them / entrusted with)."

v10

ii] The martyr-church calls out for vindication, v10. The suffering church asks how long must it wait before the Lord vindicates his people, cf., Ps.79:10. The "souls" are not calling on God to judge and punish godless humanity, because the day of judgment is a given; what they want to know is how long they must wait for this day, the day of their vindication. The answer is "not long."

και "-" - AND. Serving to indicate a step in the narrative. Often **δε** serves this function, but **δε** is rarely used in the Revelation. We could translate it as "then", as in v11, but there are only so many times one can use "then" without becoming repetitious.

φωνη [η] dat. "**in a [loud] voice**" - [THEY CRIED OUT] IN, WITH A [LOUD] VOICE. The dative is adverbial, modal, expressing manner.

λεγοντες [λεγω] "-" - SAYING. Attendant circumstance participle, redundant, expressing action accompanying the verb "to cry out"; "they cried out ... and said." See **λεγων** 1:17 for the use of this participle to introduce speech in a vision.

εως ποτε "**How long**" - UNTIL WHEN. Temporal construction: temporal preposition **εως**, "until", + the temporal interrogative particle, **ποτε**, "when" = "until when?", "How much longer is it to be?", Cassirer. Serving as "an anguished plea for justice", Osborne.

ο αγιος και αληθινος adj. "**holy and true**" - [MASTER] THE HOLY ONE AND TRUE. "Pure and trustworthy." The adjectives serve as substantives, standing in apposition to the nominative "master" = "Sovereign Lord." The nominative "master" probably serves as a vocative, so Aune; "O Sovereign Lord", ESV. The title "master" is a strange one for the Lord, but carries the sense of absolute power and authority.

ου κρινεις [κρινω] pres. "**until you judge**" - DO YOU NOT JUDGE [AND AVENGE THE BLOOD OF US]? The presence of **ου** in a question indicates a positive outcome. The sense is possibly "vindicate", but "judge" in the sense of "decide the guilt of" is more likely, with "vengeance" taking the sense of "apply justice"; "are you not vindicating and extracting vengeance for our blood?" The present tense, being durative, gives the sense "how long are you going to refrain from judging and avenging?", Osborne. This is not "a call for judgment on the people of the earth", Koester, with all the moral issues such a call generates. Judgment is a given, the question is how long do we have to wait for it. The genitive pronoun **ημων**, "our [blood]", is possessive.

εκ + gen. "-" - FROM. Here the preposition is used to designate those who face the "vengeance", lit., "and avenge the blood of us on the ones dwelling upon the earth", cf. Zerwick #134, BAGD 238. "How long will it be before you judge and punish the people of this earth who killed us", CEV.

των κατοικουντων [καδοικεω] pres. part. "**the inhabitants**" - THE ONES DWELLING. The participle serves as a substantive.

επι + gen. "**of [the earth]**" - UPON [THE EARTH]. Spatial; "upon, on." The term "those who dwell on the earth" usually takes a negative sense, "the world in its hostility to God's messiah", Smalley.

v11

iii] The reward, v11: The "souls", the martyrs, represent the suffering church, the redeemed, those washed in the blood of the Lamb who have stayed true to their faith in the face of the trials and temptations of life (note their position at the foot the altar). They have asked how long they must wait for the Great Day of the Lord. The question is answered by observing the drama being played out in the throne-room of the Ancient of Days. Even now the "souls" are putting on their dazzling robes. Even so, it is not quite midnight, so there remains a moment of grace for the church's mission to testify to (communicate) the gospel for the salvation of lost humanity, and of course, suffer in the doing of it.

και "then" - AND. See **και** v11.

αυτοις dat. pro. "**each of them [was given a white robe]**" - [A WHITE ROBE WAS GIVEN] TO THEM [EACH ONE]. Dative of indirect object, with the adjective **εκαστω**, "each one", modifying the pronoun by giving it a distributive sense; "was given to each one of them" These faithful witnesses who have suffered for the gospel, these members of the redeemed community of believers, even now receive the reward of their white robes, cf., 7:9. "White" may better be rendered "dazzling", given that they have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, cf., 3:4-5.

αυτοις dat. pro. "**they [were told]**" - [AND IT WAS TOLD] TO THEM. Dative of indirect object.

ἰνα + fut. "**to [wait a little longer]**" - THAT [THEY WILL REST YET A LITTLE TIME]. Introducing a noun clause, subject of the verb "was told" / dependent statement of indirect speech / command, expressing what they were told, namely, to wait a little longer. Note again the use of a future tense with **ἰνα** when a subjunctive would be expected.

ἕως + subj. "**until [the full number]**" - [AND] UNTIL [THE / THEIR FELLOW SERVANTS OF THEM, AND THE BROTHERS OF THEM, THE ONES ABOUT TO BE KILLED, AS ALSO / INDEED THEY *are being killed*, SHOULD FINISH = COMPLETE *their work*]. Introducing an indefinite future temporal clause with respect to the main verb; "it was told that they rest ...until they complete *their work*." This reading follows the variant aorist active subjunctive **πληρωσωσιν**, "they finish, complete, fulfill", rather than the passive **πληρωθωσιν**. "But each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to rest for a short time, until those who were their fellow servants and their brethren - who were to be killed as they were - were finished", Koester, ie., "finished *their work of witnessing to the gospel*". Are they *finished* when godless society will no longer listen, or when God says "enough is enough"? On the assumed "*number [should be complete]*", see "Interpretation" above.

και **και** "-" - AND [UNTIL THE FELLOW SERVANTS OF THEM] AND [THE BROTHERS OF THEM]. We have two problematic uses of the conjunction **και**, "and". The two conjunctions may be correlative; "until both their fellow servants and their brothers is complete." Then again, the second may be epexegetic; "and until their fellow servants, that is, their brothers and sisters who are about to be killed / put to death, as indeed they *are being killed*, complete *their work*."

αυτων gen. pro. "**their [brothers and sisters]**" - [THE BROTHERS] OF THEM. The genitive is adjectival, relational.

οι μελλοντες [μελλω] pres. part. "**were [killed]**" - THE ONES BEING ABOUT [TO BE KILLED]. The participle may be taken as a substantive, standing in apposition to "brothers", or adjectival, attributive, limiting "brothers", "who were to be killed", ESV. The infinitive **αποκτενεσθαι**, "to be killed", is complementary, completing the participle "being about." John uses the imagery of martyrdom to depict the suffering church, a church struggling to communicate the gospel in the face of dark powers. Martyrdom was not common in John's day, as it is not common today, although it does occur. The common experience of the Christian community is resistance to the gospel. The powers of darkness use every trick to nullify its communication. We face societal pressure to limit proselytizing; we face pressure from within the church to replace the gospel with social activism;

we are constantly tempted to allocate our resources toward our own ends rather than gospel ministry.

ὥς "**just as [they *had been*]**" - AS [AND THEY *are*]. Here the comparative also expresses manner. The conjunction **καί**, and, could be adjunctive, "also", or emphatic, "indeed"; "as indeed they are *being killed*."

6:12-17

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

1. The judgment of the seven seals, 6:1-8:5

iii] The opening of the sixth seal.

Synopsis

John now sees the Lamb open the sixth seal and as it opens he witnesses cosmic disintegration which extends to the secular powers on earth, a destruction causing great tribulation.

Teaching

The kingdom is come, the Great Day of the Lord, the day of judgment, is upon us. It brings with it the dethroning of all powers and authorities, illustrated in cosmic dissolution, Mk.13:24-27, cf., Isa.34:4, Joel,2:30-31, Hag.2:6-7.

Issues:

i] Context: See 6:1-8.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8

iii] Structure: *The opening of the sixth seal:*

Cosmic signs, v12-14:

"the heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up."

Terror on earth, v15-17:

the great day of God's wrath has come, "who can stand?"

iv] Interpretation:

The Great Day of the Lord entails the unveiling of the face of God. It is good news for those who stand with Jesus, clothed in their white robes, but for the rest it is a day of divine "wrath". The tribulation of this terrible day is illustrated in cosmic dissolution, imaged on earth with the collapse of secular authority, anarchy. As it was once said of the reign of king Stephen in England, "God and his angels sleep."

Each seal reveals a different aspect of this terrible day, ie., they are not sequential. In the fifth seal we witnessed the persecution of Christ's followers, and now we witness anarchy. Of course, throughout history we have tasted the tribulations of the Great Day. The destruction of Jerusalem serves as the classic paradigm for that Day, and Jesus uses this very apocalyptic imagery to depict it, cf., Matt.24:29. The four horsemen of the apocalypse have often gone forth, and we are sure to see them again due to our love for war and conquest. Yet, John is witnessing realized eschatology;

the Great Day is upon us, "and who can withstand it?" John will answer this very question in Interlude #1 and 2.

The apocalyptic imagery of cosmic dissolution: The imagery gets quite a run in the New Testament and there are even allusions to it in the accounts of Christ's crucifixion. God's judgment is evidenced when the "earth quakes, ... the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining", Joel 2:10. In Isaiah 34:1-4 this judgment imagery is applied to Edom, v5, "my sword appears in heaven. See how it descends in judgment on Edom." The imagery is used to depict the dethroning of secular powers and authorities, with its consequential anarchy, ultimately extending to all spiritual powers and authorities, ie., Christ's victory on the cross over Satan and his minions. So, again we need to note the danger of treating apocalyptic imagery as if it is a factual description. This is not to say the world won't end "rolled up like a scroll" (folded up like a Monopoly board!), although given the way we are going, it will more likely be by the depletion of natural resources through overpopulation producing a dustbowl devoid of life - we die out with a whimper rather than a bang. However it may be, It is God's Great Day, a day of "wrath", and "who can withstand it?"

Text - 6:12

The opening of the sixth seal, v12-17: i] Cosmic signs, v12-14. The "Day of the Lord comes, cruel, with wrath and anger"; a day when stars "will not give their light, the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light", a Day when God "will punish the world for its evil" and "put an end to the pride of the arrogant", Isa.13:9-11.

ὅτε "-" -[AND I SAW] WHEN [HE OPENED THE SIXTH SEAL, AND A GREAT EARTHQUAKE OCCURRED]. This temporal conjunction is more structural than temporal. As a structural indicator serving to introduce the next seal, it may be ignored (as NIV has finally done with this seal); "when he opened the sixth seal ...", ESV = "and these are the things I witnessed as I watched the Lamb break the sixth seal", Cassirer.

ὡς "like [sackcloth]" - [AND THE SUN BECAME BLACK] AS [SACKCLOTH MADE OF HAIR AND THE WHOLE MOON BECAME] AS [BLOOD]. Here, as with "like [*the colour of blood*]", serving as a comparative, as NIV.

v13

του ουρανου [ος] gen. "[the stars] in the sky" - [AND THE STARS] OF THE HEAVEN [FELL TO THE EARTH]. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / local; "the

stars *which are situation in the sky*." "Heaven" obviously with the sense "sky", as NIV.

ὡς "as" - AS [A FIG TREE CASTS OFF THE UNRIPE FIGS OF IT]. Comparative, "like, as"; "just as / like a fig tree sheds its winter fruit." "Stars falling from the sky like figs shaken from a fig tree in a high wind", Peterson.

σειομενη [σειω] pres. mid./pas. part. "**when shaken**" - BEING SHAKEN. The participle is adverbial, best treated as temporal, as NIV.

ὑπο + gen. "**by [a strong wind]**" - This preposition is only rarely used to express means, as here. We would have expected an instrumental **εν**.

v14

ελισσομενον [ελισσω] pres. mid./pas. part. "**[like a scroll] being rolled up**" - [AND THE HEAVEN WAS SEPARATED AS A SCROLL] BEING ROLLED UP. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting scroll; "a scroll which is being rolled up."

εκ + gen. "**[was removed] from [its place]**" - [AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND ISLAND WERE MOVED] FROM [THE PLACES OF THEM]. Here expressing separation, "away from"; "There was no mountain, no island, that was not moved from its place", Cassirer.

v15

ii] Terror on earth, v15-17: The apocalyptic symbols of divine judgment, namely cosmic dissolution, are now actualized for humanity. The Great Day, the day of divine wrath, is "a just recompense for evil that has been perpetrated against God and God's people those who have resisted Christ's lordship and have persecuted those who witnessed to that lordship", Blount. This judgment falls on a typical list of both great and small, and like any people facing an invading army, they run for the hills and hide in caves, Jer.4:29. Would that rocks could cover the cave mouth, for this is a terrible day "and who can withstand it?", cf., Joel.2:11, Nah.1:6, Zeph.1:14-15, Mal.3:2.

της γης [η] gen. "**[the kings] of the earth**" - [AND THE KINGS] OF THE EARTH [AND THE PERSONS OF GREATNESS AND THE MILITARY COMMANDERS AND THE RICH AND THE STRONG AND EVERY SLAVE AND FREE HID THEMSELVES INTO THE CAVES]. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / subordination; "the kings *who rule over the earth*." No one can escape the terrible Day of the Lord.

των ορεων [ορος] gen. "**[among the rocks] of the mountains**" - [INTO THE ROCKS] OF THE HILLS, MOUNTAINS. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / local; "the rocks *which are found in the mountains*." "Rocks" may well mean something like "rocky crags, crevices." "Hid in mountain caves and rocky dens", Peterson.

v16

τοῖς ὄρεσιν [ὄρος] dat. "[they called] to the mountains" - [AND THEY SAY] TO THE MOUNTAINS [AND TO THE ROCKS]. Dative of indirect object of the narrative present verb "to say." So also the dative "to the rocks."

εφ [επι] + acc. "[fall] on [us]" - Spatial; "upon, on."

ἀπο + gen. "[hide us] from [the face]" - [AND HIDE US] FROM [FACE]. Expressing separation; "away from."

του καθήμενου [καθημαι] gen. pres. mid. part. "of him who sits [on the throne]" - OF THE ONE SITTING [ON THE THRONE]. The participle serves as a substantive, the genitive being adjectival, possessive.

του ἀρνίου [ον] gen. "[the wrath] of the Lamb." - The genitive may be viewed as adjectival, possessive, "the wrath / anger *which will characterize* the Lamb on the day of judgment", or verbal, subjective, "the wrath / anger *exhibited by* the Lamb."

v17

ὅτι "for" - BECAUSE [THE GREAT DAY OF THE WRATH OF THEM CAME]. Introducing a causal clause explaining why they call on the mountains and rocks to cover them; "because"

της ὀργης [η] gen. "[the great day] of [their] wrath" - [THE GREAT DAY] OF THE WRATH. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / temporal; "the great day *when* their wrath *comes*."

αυτων gen. pro. "their" - OF THEM. Adjectival, possessive, "their anger", i.e., the anger of God and the Lamb. May also be taken as verbal, subjective, i.e., God and the Lamb have holy anger against sin.

σταθῆναι [ἴστημι] aor. pas. ind. "who can [withstand] it?" - [WHO IS ABLE] TO STAND. The infinitive is complementary, completing the verb "is able."

7:1-8

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

1. The judgment of the seven seals, 6:1-8:5

iv] Interlude, 7:1-17

a) The sealing of God's servants

Synopsis

The day of judgment, the Great Day of the Lord, is fully underway with the opening of the sixth seal, but before it hits in full force John sees four angels prepare to seal "the servants of our God", to set them apart from the judgment now raining down upon the earth. The number of those sealed is "144,000 from all the tribes of Israel."

Teaching

The kingdom is come, the Great Day of the Lord, the day of judgment, is upon us, but through it all God's servants will be preserved.

Issues:

i] Context: See 6:1-8. We now come to the first of the interludes that sit within the seven judgments. This first interlude presents in two parts, *The sealing of God's servants*, 7:1-8, and *The Lamb is the shepherd*, 7:9-17. These "illustrative vignettes", Osborne, focus on the church as it struggles with the tribulations involved in the Great Day of the Lord; "they provide information about the situation regarding the saints", Osborne. The opening of the seals reveals God's judgment upon "those who have resisted Christ's lordship and have persecuted those who witnessed to that lordship", Blount, while the interlude focuses on believers caught up in that judgment. The faithful, those who have remained true to Christ in the face of the pressure to conform to the secular city, Babylon, are sealed for Christ. They will come through the terrible Day to join the "great multitude" before the throne of God. In the midst of judgment "we are shown the church, protected by God and the Lamb", Smalley.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8

iii] Structure: *The sealing of God's servants*:

The vision of the four angels, v1;

The word from the angel of the East, v2-3;

"wait until I have marked the foreheads of the servants of our God."

The number who were sealed, 144,000, v4-8.

iv] Interpretation:

John's vision of the Lamb, as he opens the sixth seal, reveals the horror of the Great Day of the Lord; it concludes with a question - "who can withstand it?" John's vision of the four angels reveals the answer: only the "servants of our God", those "sealed on their foreheads", the elect, those set apart and made secure for the Day of judgment. This "redemptive seal", Koester, marks the faithful as belonging to God, as having been purchased by the Lamb (14:1-4), and therefore protected from the divine wrath about to be poured out on the world. Presumably the seal / mark / tattoo bears the names of God and the Lamb (14:1, 22:4), and stands in contrast to the mark of the beast on the forehead of those who belong to the beast (13:16-18). Boring suggests the seal is applied at baptism, but it is more likely the mark of those who endure in faith, those who persevere.

Timing: The interlude presents us with a continuity problem, given that the act of sealing would need to take place before the opening of the sixth seal, in fact, before the opening of all the seals. Osborne calls it "a flashback to the period preceding the seals." As already noted, the opening of the seals is not sequential, rather each seal describes a different element of a single event, namely, the day of judgment - apocalyptic is anything but linear. So, the sealing of believers does not fit a linear time line. Judgment is not put on hold while the sealing takes place. In time terms, the sealing has already taken place; in fact, from God's perspective, believers were sealed before the creation of the world, cf., Eph.1:4 (Remember! God is greater than Dr. Who).

With the judgments of the seals, trumpets, and bowls, we stand with John in heaven watching the unfolding of the Great Day of the Lord. From the heavenly perspective that day is *now*. In the interludes, 7:1-17, 10:1-11:14, we find ourselves back with God's people on earth looking out into a world about to be overcome by the day of judgment. From our perspective that day is *not yet*. It is a minute to midnight, and even now we experience something of the tribulations, but be assured, although sined, our God is able to keep us safe and secure.

See "The continuity problem with respect to timing" in 10:1-11.

The number who were sealed, 144,000: It is interesting to observe the way the different sects have taken this number literally and drawn up their list of those included in the 144,000. One could argue that it is the number of believers, but given 7:9, the "great multitude that no one could count", it is more likely that the number is symbolic. The Jehovah's Witnesses argue that it represents a special group of believers, but again such a conclusion

ignores the nature of apocalyptic symbolism. Again, we have a reference to the twelve tribes of Israel, but missing Dan, replaced by Manasseh, which links to the twelve apostles, with Judas similarly being replaced. The 144,000 in 14:1-5 is made up of Jewish males who are virgins (that rules me out!). As for the number itself, it is made up of 12 times the superlative number 1,000, times 12. So, we are dealing with apocalyptic imagery which is not to be taken literally, imagery which represents the perfect new Israel.

The 144,000 are those who are sealed to withstand the terrible Day of the Lord, the Day of God's wrath; they represent today's end-time church. They will join with the "great multitude that no one could number", v9, that is even now gathered before the throne of the Ancient of Days, a people "from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues" - the multitude of sealed believers, past, present and future, now in heaven. See v4.

Text - 7:1

The sealing of God's servants, v1-8: i] The vision of the four angels, v1. "Winds, as the general agents of divine judgment, form a constant Old Testament image", Smalley, cf., Jer.23:19, Ezk.5:12. The angels, as instruments of the divine will, act to restrain this judgment.

μετα + acc. "**after [this]**" - Temporal use of the preposition, although like the use of **ότε**, "when", in Revelation it presents more in the terms of a change in scene rather than a sequential temporal event. The antecedent of **τουτο**, "this", is the opening of the sixth seal.

ἑστωτας [ιστημι] perf. part. "**standing**" - [I SAW FOUR ANGELS] HAVING TAKEN STAND. The participle is best classified as the complement of the accusative object, "four angels", of the verb "I saw", standing in a double accusative construction.

επι + acc. "**at**" - UPON, ON. Spatial use of the preposition.

της γης gen. "**of the earth**" - [THE FOUR CORNERS] OF THE EARTH. The genitive is adjectival, partitive or possessive. The ancients conceived of the earth as a square.

κρατουντας [κρατω] pres. part. "**holding back**" - HOLDING, GRASPING [THE FOUR WINDS OF THE EARTH]. The participle is best classified as attendant on "standing", "I saw four angels standing and holding back", but it could be viewed as adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of their standing, as NIV, even possibly adjectival, attributive, "who were holding back" The wind blows from heaven / the sky and in the vision the angels are deflecting it from the earth below. "Some writers said that winds from the diagonal points of the compass were the most destructive, bringing heat, drought, cold, snow, locusts and pestilence", Koester. Caird, so also Beale, identifies the four winds with the four horsemen,

cf., Zech.6:5. This is a reasonable assumption, but it may not be in John's mind. The image is of the angels holding back divine judgment for the sake of the elect. **ἵνα μη** + subj. "**to prevent [any wind from blowing]**" - THAT NOT = LEST [A WIND SHOULD BLOW ON / UPON THE EARTH]. Introducing a negated purpose clause, "in order that not" = "lest", or hypothetical result, "so that no wind might blow."

μητε μητε "**or [on the sea] or [on any tree]**" - NEITHER [ON / UPON THE SEA], NOR [ON / UPON (= AGAINST) ANY TREE]. A negated correlative construction, Semitic in form. The preposition **επι** is used a number of times in this verse. The last usage is followed by an accusative, probably indicating movement, so not "on / upon", "on the land or on the sea", **επι** + gen., but "against any tree", Barclay.

v2

ii] A word from the angel of the East, v2-3. We have again a typical apocalyptic vision introduced by **και ειδον**, "and I saw", followed by what is seen, in this case an angel rising from the east, who "called out with a loud voice", and instructs the four angels to seal "the servants of our God", to mark, to set them apart as belonging to God and therefore spared from the impending judgment.

αναβαινοντα [αναβαινω] pres. part. "**coming up**" - [AND I SAW ANOTHER ANGEL] COMING UP. The participle serves as the complement of the accusative object "angel", of the verb "I saw", standing in a double accusative construction.

απο + gen. "**from**" - Expressing source / origin.

ἡλιου [ος] gen. "**the east**" - [SUNRISE] OF SUN. The genitive is probably verbal, subjective, so Aune; "from the rising of the sun." John may be suggesting that divine blessing comes from the East, so Smalley, but disasters have also come from the East, 9:14, 16:12, so Aune. Mounce may be right by suggesting that it is nothing more than a picturesque detail.

εχοντα [εχω] pres. part. "**having**" - The participle is adverbial, best viewed as modal, expressing manner, as NIV; "rise up with the seal of the living God", Moffatt, but note how John often handles this participle in 1:16.

θεου [ος] gen. "**[the seal] of the [living] God**" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive. The seal belongs to God and under his authority the angels are to mark believers with it, such that they are protected from the tribulations about to befall the earth. Note Ezekiel 9 where the mark is applied to the remnant of Israel to protect them from the four judgments about to be inflicted by the Babylonians. Note also 14:1-4 where the seal amounts to an inscription of the name of the Lamb and the Father.

ζωντος [ζωω] gen. pres. part. "**living**" - The participle is adjectival, attributive, "the seal that belongs to the God who lives." A common characteristic ascribed to God in the OT.

φωνῆ [ἦ] dat. "in a [loud] voice" - [AND HE CALLED OUT] IN A LOUD VOICE. The dative is adverbial, expressing manner, as NIV. In apocalyptic literature an angel will usually address the prophet, but here he/she addresses other angels. "He shouted with a loud voice", Berkeley; "with" as in the manner of, but possibly "with" as in means, "by means of."

τοῖς ἀγγελοῖς [οἷς] dat. "to the [four] angels" - Dative of indirect object.

οἷς dat. pro. "who [had been given]" - TO WHOM [IT WAS GIVEN TO THEM]. Dative of indirect object of the verb "it was given", so also the resumptive pronoun αυτοῖς, "to them", serving as a roundabout way of emphasizing the antecedent, "the four angels"; "to whom, *that is to them, the four angels, authority / power* was given to harm the earth and the sea."

ἀδικῆσαι [ἀδικεῶ] aor. inf. "to harm" - TO HARM, DESPOIL (act in a harmful way) [THE LAND AND THE SEA]. The subject of the verb "was given" is assumed to be "the right / authority / power", in which case the infinitive is epexegetic, specifying "the right /", with the infinitival construction then serving as the subject; "the right to harm the land and the sea was given to them."

v3

λεγων [λεγω] pres. part. "-" - SAYING [DO NOT HARM THE EARTH]. Attendant circumstance participle, redundant, expressing action accompanying the verb "he called out"; "he called out and said ..." "Do not let the winds harm the earth," See λεγων 1:17 for John's use of this participle.

μη ἀδικησῆτε [ἀδικεῶ] aor. sub.. "do not harm" - Subjunctive of prohibition.

μητε μητε "or [on the sea] or [on the trees]" - NEITHER [THE SEA,] NOR [THE TREES]. A negated correlative construction.

αχρι + subj. "until [we put a seal]" - UNTIL [WE SEAL THE SLAVES OF THE GOD OF US]. Introducing an indefinite temporal clause referring to a future time in relation to the main verb. A more conventional form would be ἕως αν + subj. "Until we seal" reflects the Greek but the NIV has developed the sense with "put a seal", although the TEV expresses the sense better with "until we mark the servants of our God with a seal." Even so, most people would have little idea of a seal ring being used to put a wax seal on something, so the CEV is on the right track when it drops the word "seal" altogether, "wait until I have marked the foreheads of the servants of our God." The presence of a seal on something marks "authentication and ownership", Smalley. Note Isaiah 42:6-7 where sealing with the divine name identifies membership in God's covenant community, and authorizes the members to serve as a light to the Gentiles, ie., to witness, so Aune and Sweet.

ἐπι + gen. "**on [the foreheads]**" - UPON [THE FOREHEADS OF THEM]. Spatial use of the preposition.

ἡμῶν gen. pro. "**[the servants of] our [God]**" - [THE SLAVES OF THE GOD] OF US. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / subordination; "slaves / servants of the God over us." Those servants of God, the saints, those who have persevered (conquered) with their faith intact, are marked out as the true followers of Christ. John is probably using the word δούλους, "slaves, servants", for the saints because slaves in the ancient world were often branded or tattooed to identify possession. In similar fashion, believers are marked to identify that they are God's possession, God's special people, the apple of his eye, and thus are protected when he executes judgment, cf., 14:1, 22:3-4.

v4

iii] The number who were sealed - 144,000, v4-8. John now identifies those who are marked / sealed. It is traditionally held that this number represents the new Israel, those marked ἐκ, "come from" (partitive), the twelve tribes of Israel (note the one tribe missing, and that by the first century there are no longer twelve tribes, ie., John is using apocalyptic symbolism for the elect / the faithful remnant). As noted above, the number is also symbolic, 12 by 12 a perfect number, and 1,000, a number "beyond all reckoning", Boring. There is a difference between the 144,000 and the "great multitude that no one could count", v9. The 144,000 are on earth and the "great multitude" is in heaven. The 144,000 are protected from the judgment about to fall on the earth, although they will, and are, experiencing tribulation, whereas the "great multitude" is already in their gleaming robes as they stand before the throne of the Ancient of Days. The one ultimately represents the other, but in time-space terms they stand apart.

καὶ "-" - AND. Again, John uses καὶ instead of δε to indicate a step in the narrative.

τῶν εσφραγισμένων [σφραγιζῶ] gen. perf. mid./pas. part. "**of those who were sealed**" - [I HEARD THE NUMBER] OF THE ONES HAVING BEEN SEALED [*to be* A HUNDRED FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND]. The participle serves as a substantive, the genitive being adjectival, partitive.

ἐκ + gen. "**from [all the tribes]**" - FROM [EVERY TRIBE] - Here likely serving as a partitive genitive, so Aune; "drawn from."

υἱῶν [οῦ] gen. "-" - OF SONS. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / material, limiting "tribes"; "every tribe *consisting of / made up of* the sons of Israel." The genitive "Israel" is adjectival, relational.

v5

Note that the tribe of Dan is missing. John includes Joseph (Israel's son), and one of his grandsons, Manasseh (but not Ephraim), who serves to replace Dan. Dan is associated with idolatry, but he probably serves to align with Judas; see above.

εκ + gen. "**from**" - FROM. Here likely to serve in the place of a partitive genitive, so Aune; "drawn from."

Ιουδα gen. proper. "**of Judah**" - [THE TRIBE] OF JUDAH. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic, limiting "tribe"; "the tribe *which is descended from* Judah."

εσφραγισμενοι [**σφραγιζω**] perf. mid./pas. part. "**were sealed**" - [TWELVE THOUSAND] HAVING BEEN SEALED. Technically the participle serves in a periphrastic construction which is missing the verb to-be, although often classified as a participle serving as a finite verb (quite common in the Revelation); "twelve thousand were sealed (marked on the forehead) from the tribe of Judah", Phillips.

7:9-17

The messianic judgments, 6:1-16:21

1. The judgment of the seven seals, 6:1-8:5

iv] Interlude, 7:1-17

b) The Lamb is the shepherd

Synopsis

In this passage we read of John's vision of the "great multitude" in heaven. This assembly resides in peace and joy before the throne of God and is made up of all believers - the redeemed of the Lord who have retained their faith through difficult times, a people from every race and nation.

Teaching

The kingdom is come, and those who have persevered in faith have come through the day of judgment and now stand blessed before the throne of God.

Issues

i] Context: See 7:1-8.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8

iii] Structure: *The Lamb is the shepherd*:

The worship of the multitude, v9-10;

The celestial host join in worship, v11-12;

Who are these in white robes? v13-14:

"these are they who have come out of the great tribulation;

they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

The blessing of the multitude, v15-17:

δια τουτο "therefore"

"they are before the throne of God and serve him."

"he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence."

iv] Interpretation:

The first part of the Interlude in v1-8 describes the sealing of the 144,000. They are marked, presumably with the name of God and of the Lamb, to protect them from the judgment even now falling on the earth. The crucial question concerns the identity of this group. Possibilities include, a symbolic number of believers about to face the day of judgment, a literal number of Jewish believers, a spiritual number representing saved Jews (a spiritual Israel), all believers and thus, the same group as the "great

multitude" in v9, or the actual number of special believers (ref., Jehovah's Witnesses); see v1-8.

In the second part of the Interlude, we witness the "great multitude that no one could count" standing in the presence of the Ancient of Days. It is likely that they represent God's faithful remnant, risen from the dead ("they have come out of the great tribulation"), approved ("they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb") and blessed ("He will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes"). They are the heavenly representatives of the 144,000 on earth who are facing the great tribulation, but in another sense they represent all believers who have held firm to their faith in Christ through the tribulations of life.

John's imagery seems to be a re-enactment of the Feast of Tabernacles and is shaped by Zechariah 14:1-21. The "multitude" gathers to celebrate the victory of the Lamb, and to this end they are joined by the heavenly host, v11-12. In a typical apocalyptic discourse, the readers' questions are answered by a heavenly representative who explains the mystery of the vision. The "multitude" are those who were sealed and therefore have come through the Great Day of the Lord, the day of judgment. In life they faced tribulation, but dead or alive, they have come unscathed through judgment because they "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb", v13-14. They will now serve God, sheltered in his presence, shepherded by the Lamb, never again to face the privations of life, v15-16, but rather to drink from the "springs of living water", v17.

Homiletics: *Out of the heat*

The limitations of the present moment are hard for us to accept. None of us are in total control of the physical, psychological, or spiritual self, nor of the circumstances around us.

Our feelings so often dictate our actions. We feel our way through a situation and then seek to justify our actions. Yes, we are corrupted by sin.

Our spiritual life is similarly deprived and out of control. We desire to know God and to serve him, but so often he seems distant from us, beyond our reach, and as we try to live for him, we find ourselves compromised beyond recognition. Indeed, we "thirst" after his presence, we desire to be united to him, to be one with him, and yet our lives seem parched.

The circumstances of life are similarly out of control. In the face of the surge of life's daily grind, we cannot help but feel lost and alone, filled with fear. It is hard indeed to accept such limitations.

Yet, against the limitations of the present moment there stands the reality of the age to come. This reality is powerfully presented in the passage before us.

John's vision captures the gathering of God's people in the last day. This vision lifts our eyes from the horror of the opened seals - the mystery of chaos. The mystery of chaos is our present experience. The older we get the more we recognize the chaos around us. The queues get longer, the traffic jams heavier, the political game increasingly cynical. The crowd of people who stand before the throne of God came through this tribulation, through times of trouble and persecution. They are a saved people. In the presence of our Lord God, they stand enshrouded in his divine power. They now have no limitations. They will never again hunger and thirst for the presence of the Lord. Never again will the heat of desire or circumstance scorch them.

So then, as we face the mystery of chaos, remember that the darkness of tribulation will pass and a new day will come, yes is even here. In that day the Shepherd will lead us to springs of rejuvenating water and God will wipe away every tear from our eyes.

Text - 7:9

The Lamb is the shepherd, 9-17: "God and the Lamb are praised for making manifest the redemption of the multitude by protecting them through the purifying tribulation", Beale. Aune observes that the tense sequence of this section - aorist, to present and then to future - does not indicate a time sequence, but rather aspect, and thus the author's perspective:

i] The worship of the multitude, v9-10. The multitude of believers praise God and the Lamb for their salvation. As already noted, commentators divide on whether the visions are substantially different, ie. is the "144,000" the same group as "the great multitude"? They are different groups, one on earth the other in heaven, but ultimately the same group. The "multitude" is the great company of believers, the redeemed of the Lord, who have come through the tribulation of the ages. On earth, the gathering clouds of judgment overtake the present order of things, but God's people will be preserved, none will be lost. The perfect number of Israel will be preserved (144,000) and in the last day this remnant of Israel will consist of a staggering number of people from every nation under heaven who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb.

μετα ταυτα "after this" - AFTER THESE THINGS [I SAW AND BEHOLD *there was* A GREAT CROWD]. Temporal construction indicating a new vision, but not necessarily a sequential set of events.

ὃν αυτον pro. "that" - WHICH [TO NUMBER] THEM. This construction, a relative pronoun addressing a resumptive personal pronoun (redundant), is Semitic in form and so both are read together.

αριθμησαι [αριθμεω] aor. inf. "**[no one could] count**" - [NO ONE WAS BEING ABLE] TO NUMBER. The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of the verb "was being able"; the crowd was too large to count.

εκ "**from [every nation, tribe, people and language]**" - OUT OF, FROM [EVERY NATION AND TRIBES AND PEOPLES AND TONGUES]. Expressing source / origin, or serving as a partitive genitive. Note that εθνους "nation" is singular and is followed by three plurals. This is rather strange. John sometimes does something like this when he is alluding to the OT, possibly the patriarchal promise, cf. Bauckham.

ἑστωτες [ιστημι] perf. part. "**standing [before the throne]**" - STANDING [BEFORE THE THRONE AND BEFORE THE LAMB]. The participle serves as the complement of the object, "a great multitude ..", of the assumed verb "there was", standing in a double nominative construction. To "stand before" often means to "attend upon" as if a servant.

περιβεβλημενους [περιβαλλω] acc. perf. part. "**they were wearing [white robes]**" - HAVING BEEN CLOTHED WITH [WHITE ROBES AND PALM BRANCHES IN THE HANDS OF THEM]. With "standing", the participle serves as an object complement, but it is accusative rather than nominative. Usually treated as a solecism (a grammatical mistake), but Mathewson suggests it may be serving as the substantival direct object of ειδον, cf., Aune. John constantly tests our capacity to classify his participles, often serving as if they were a finite verb.

v10

κραζουσιν [κραζω] pres. "**they cried out**" - THEY CALL OUT. The historic / narrative present tense is durative, so possibly "they keep on crying out."

φωνη [η] dat. "**with a [loud] voice**" - The dative is adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of the crying out, as NIV.

λεγοντες [λεγω] pres. part. "-" - SAYING. Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the verb "they cried out", redundant, cf., λεγων, 1:17.

τω θεω [ος] dat. "**[Salvation belongs] to [our] God**" - Dative of interest, advantage / possession. There is no verb, but the phrase "salvation to the God of us" can be translated as a verbal phrase, "we are saved by our God." The genitive pronoun "our" may be treated as a genitive of subordination, "God over us." In the context, this salvation is our coming through tribulation, scarred but safe. God has brought us through life's trials to stand safely before him. As well as victory through tribulation, John may also have in mind "salvation from sin and death", Mounce, so also Caird. In John's schema, the Great Tribulation is Satan's last-ditched confrontation with God, the Lamb and the redeemed, which, in his realized eschatology, is even now being played out in his vision. Yet of course, the *now* is

also *not yet* such that in the last days between Christ's ascension and return, tribulation, in varying degrees, is the lot for believers. Irrespective of *now* or *not yet*, "victory (salvation) belongs to our God", Cassirer, ie., God possesses the power to deliver his people.

τω καθήμενω [καθημαι] dat. pres. part. "**who sits**" - THE ONE SITTING. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "God", as NIV, but possibly serving as a substantive, standing in apposition to "God"; "to our God, the one who sits upon the throne."

επι + dat. "**on [the throne]**" - ON, UPON [THE THRONE AND]. Spatial.

τω αρνιω [ον] dat. "**to the Lamb**" - The dative as for τω θεω; interest, advantage / possession.

v11

ii] The celestial host join in worship, v11-12.

οι αγγελιοι [ος] "**[all] the angels**" - Nominative subject of the verb "stood", the only pluperfect verb in the Revelation. The angelic host is prompted into praise again by the praise of "the great multitude". The image seems to be of the angels surrounding the throne, possibly above and behind.

κυκλω + gen. "**around [the throne]**" - [STOOD] AROUND [THE THRONE AND]. Spatial.

των πρεσβυτερων [ος] gen. "**the elders**" - "The twenty-four elders" sit upon twenty-four thrones in concentric circles around the throne of God. Debate rages as to whether they are human, ie. representing the resurrected saints of Israel, old and new, or angelic beings. Their function seems to be that of worship and administration. cf. 4:4, etc.

των τεσσαρων ζων gen. "**the four living creatures**" - These four "creatures" are "celestial beings of some sort", Osborne, possibly representing nature. They seem to support the divine throne, and move it as necessary (a kind of Tardis!!!). cf. 5:6, etc.

επεσαν [πιπτω] aor. "**they fell down**" - FELL [BEFORE THE THRONE]. They lay down and prostrated themselves face down before the throne.

επι + acc. "**on [their faces]**" - ON [THE FACES OF THEM]. Spatial; "upon, on."

ενωπιον + gen. "**before [the throne]**" - Spatial; "before, in front of."

προσεκνησαν [προσκυνω] aor. "**worshipped**" - [AND] THEY DID OBEISANCE.

τω θεω [ος] "**God**" - TO GOD. Dative of direct object after the προς prefix verb "did obeisance."

v12

λεγοντες [λεγω] pres. part. "**saying**" - Again John introduces speech with the participle "saying"; see λεγων, 1:17. Here it may be classified as attendant circumstance, expressing action accompanying the verb "did obeisance", "they worshiped and said", or adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of their worship, "they worshiped ..., saying .."

αμην "**amen**" - MAY IT BE SO. The angels confirm the worship of the multitude and then go on to give their own tribute to God; "Amen: Praise, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honour, might, and strength", Cassirer.

τω θεω [ος] dat. "**be to [our] God**" - Dative of interest, advantage / possession. There is again no verb in this sentence, but as a verbal phrase the verb to-be is added for meaning. The attributes are ascribed to God directly, "be to God" / "be ascribed to God", or better, "belong to God."

των αιωνων [ος] gen. "**[forever] and ever**" - INTO THE AGES [OF THE AGES]. The genitive is adjectival, partitive. The prepositional phrase εις, "into" is temporal, idiomatic.

v13

iii] Who are these in white robes? v13-14. A discussion now takes place between John and one of the elders that serves to explain the identity of the great multitude. The discussion establishes the link between the multitude of the faithful, v9-10, the martyrs, 6:9-11, and the 144,000 who were sealed, 7:1-8.

και "**then**" - AND. The conjunction "and" is used here for δε indicating a step in the narrative.

εκ + gen. "**[one] of [the elders]**" - This preposition usually expresses source / origin, "from", but here it serves as a partitive genitive; "one of the elders." The adjective εις, "one", is best understood as an indefinite pronoun similar to τις, "a certain one [of the elders]."

λεγων [λεγω] pres. part. "**asked**" - [ANSWERED] SAYING. Attendant circumstance participle, Semitic idiom: the aorist of the verb to "say / answer" + participle "saying" = spoke / asked / answered and said; cf., λεγων, 1:17.

μοι dat. pro. "**me**" - TO ME. Dative of indirect object.

οὔτοι τινες pro. "**these who [are they]**". The pronoun τινες is resumptive; "these [ie., the ones having been clothed with the white robes], who [are they]?" = "who are these dressed in white robes?"

οι περιβεβλημενοι [περιβαλλω] perf. part. "**in [white robes]**" - [THESE] THE ONES HAVING BEEN CLOTHED WITH [THE ROBES WHITE]. The participle serves as a substantive, standing in apposition to οὔτοι, "these".

ποθεν "where [have they come] from?" - FROM WHERE [DID THEY COME]. Interrogative.

v14

This roundabout question-answer form of communication is typical "for the interrogation of visitors in epic dialogue", Aune. The heavenly dignitary asks John's question for him, as well as answering it.

ειρηκα [αιρω] αυτω perf. "**I answered**" - I HAVE SAID. The perfect tense "I have said to him" is followed up with the aorist **ειπεν**, "he said to me." The change in tense is unexpected. Smalley deals with it by arguing that the perfect is used as an aorist. There is some evidence that the perfect tense was blending into the aorist at this point of time, but it does not affect the intended meaning.

αυτω dat. pro. "-" - TO HIM. Dative of indirect object.

κυριε μου "sir" - LORD OF ME. Vocative of address; a respectful address to an important person. The genitive pronoun **μου** "of me / my", may express subordination, "Lord over me." "Sir" is used given that an English reader may take "Lord" to mean the Lord Jesus.

συ οιδας [ουδα] "**you know**" - The personal pronoun **συ**, "you", is emphatic, "it is you who know", Morris. The purpose of the question in v13 is to show that John does not know the meaning of the vision and therefore needs divine interpretation. Therefore, the TEV carries the sense well with "I don't know, sir, You do,' I answered."

μοι dat. pro. "**[and he said]**" - [AND HE SAID] TO ME. Dative of indirect object.

οι ερχομενοι pres. part. "**they who have come**" - [THESE ARE] THE ONES COMING. The participle serves as a substantive. The tense of a participle does not always express aspect, but the durative nature of the present tense may be at work here, such that the "comers" have come, are coming and will come, are in the process of coming. Note that an aorist (punctiliar) is used in the question "where did they come from?", v13.

εκ + gen. "**out of**" - Expressing separation, "away from."

της θλιψεως της μεγαλης "the great tribulation" - Referring to the eschatological troubles of the last day. As noted above, commentators are divided on whether it refers to a final catastrophic point in history prior to the return of Christ, or the ongoing troubles of the last days - both is are equally likely.

επλυναν [επλυνω] aor. "**they have washed**" - [AND] THEY WASHED [THE ROBES OF THEM]. The tense is controlled by the main verb "are [the ones coming]", translated "have come." The main verb is translated as past tense since the verb is taken as one of past reference. This serves to counter the wrong impression that the ones who have come through the tribulation are limited to believers from the present and future. John is now told how it is that the redeemed

are victorious. They have personally identified with the sacrifice of Jesus and have been purified by it.

εν + dat. "**in [the blood]**" - IN, WITH, BY [THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB]. Here the preposition takes an instrumental sense; "through the blood of the Lamb", Barclay. The blood, meaning the sacrifice of Jesus, is the instrument by which the cleansing takes place. The blood of Christ makes the great multitude spiritually pure, ie. their robes are white/ brilliant.

v15

iv] The blessings of the victorious redeemed are now listed, v15-17. This poem / hymn depicts "the eternal blessings of God shared by the redeemed; the totality of the faithful from every age", Smalley. It falls into three parts represented by the three verses. First, the hymn describes the eternal relationship of the "multitude" with God; they are with God, they serve God and are protected by him, v15. Second, the hymn depicts the removal of all suffering; no external privation will ever affect the multitude of the faithful again, v16. Note that John's wording reflects Isaiah 49:10. Third, the hymn identifies the agent of all these blessings, namely the Lamb, the Shepherd of Israel; he is the one who guides his people to rich pastures and springs of fresh water, v17, cf., Ps.23.

δια τουτο "**therefore**" - BECAUSE OF THIS. Although **δια** + acc. is usually causal, this construction is inferential, drawing a logical conclusion; "therefore they stand before the throne of God." "That is why", Barclay.

ενωπιον + gen. "**before [the throne]**" - [THEY ARE] BEFORE [THE THRONE OF GOD]. Spatial. This first blessing describes ease of access to God.

λατρευουσιν [**λατρευω**] pres. "**serve**" - [AND] SERVE. Present tense being durative, possibly expresses continuous priestly service, "night and day." Mathewson suggests that it is future referencing. Thankfully the NIV properly translates the word as "serve", as do many other translations, eg. TEV, RSV, NEB ("minister"), but sadly the NRSV opts for "worship". The word "worship", meaning adoration, the doing of obeisance, should not be confused with a word meaning to serve, minister. We are privileged to serve the Lord eternally.

αυτω dat. pro. "**him**" - HIM [DAY AND NIGHT]. Dative of direct object after the verb "to serve." Note that "night" and "day" take a genitive of time.

εν + dat. "**in [his temple]**" - IN [THE TEMPLE, PALACE OF HIM]. Local, expressing space. There is no temple in the eternal kingdom, 21:22, but there is the realm of God's eternal habitation, call it a temple if you wish!

ο καθήμενος [**καθημαι**] pres. part. "**he who sits [on the throne]**" - [AND] THE ONE SITTING [UPON THE THRONE]. The participle serves as a substantive.

σκηνωσει [**σκηνω**] fut. "**will spread his tent [over them]**" - WILL TENT, TABERNACLE [OVER THEM]. Here we have God's first provision for his people; He

will cover, or even dwell over them, and therefore "will shelter them with his presence", possibly even "will live with them and protect them." Note John again uses his favourite preposition, **επι**, + gen., "the one sitting upon / on the throne", and + acc., "will tent over them."

v16

ου ουδε ουδε ουδε "never never ... not nor" - NOT ... NOR NEITHER NOR. A negated coordinate construction.

ετι ετι adv. "[never] again [will they hunger; never] again [will they thirst]" - [THEY WILL NOT HUNGER] ANY MORE [NOR THIRST] ANY MORE]. Temporal adverb serving to form a temporal clause; "no longer ..", Cassirer. God's second provision for his people is that they will never hunger or thirst again. This image reflects our daily struggle for survival, and harks back to Israel's wilderness journey. The promise is obviously eschatological - the eternal tokens of God's goodness.

ουδε μη πεση [πιπτω] aor. subj. "[the sun] will not beat [upon them]" - NEITHER NOT MAY FALL [ON THEM THE SUN NOR ANY SCORCHING HEAT]. Subjunctive of emphatic negation. God's third provision for his people. The image of the cooling of the desert-sun's scorching heat, is not overly powerful for someone who can afford an air conditioner. For us it is the end of traffic jams, queues, 9 to 5, aircraft holding patterns, crowds, real estate agents, lawyers, high- rise units,

v17

οτι "for" - BECAUSE. Here introducing a causal clause explaining why the multitude of the faithful are blessed.

το "-" - [THE LAMB] THE ONE [AT MIDDLE OF THE THRONE]. The article probably serves as a nominalizer, turning the prepositional construction "at middle of the throne" into a substantive which stands in apposition to "the Lamb", but it may also be taken as an adjectivizer turning the prepositional construction into an attributive relative clause limiting lamb; "because the lamb that is seated at the very centre of the throne will be their shepherd", Cassirer.

ανα "at [the centre of the throne]" - AT [MIDDLE OF THE THRONE]. This preposition with **μεσον**, "middle", is spatial and takes the sense of "at the middle", "in the midst", "among". The phrase in 5:6 uses the preposition **εν**, "in". The image of the Lamb in/at the middle of the throne is difficult to imagine. Possibly, the throne is at the middle/centre, surrounded by concentric circles of living creatures, elders, and the redeemed, with the Lamb either at/beside/on the throne.

ποιμανει [ποιμανω] fut. "**he will shepherd**" - WILL SHEPHERD, GUIDE AS A LEAD ANIMAL [THEM AND WILL LEAD THEM]. This is a common sight for an

agricultural people. "He will patiently care for His sheep, guarding them from any further torments such as plagued their earthly sojourn", Thomas.

επι + gen. "**to**" - The exact sense of John's favourite spatial preposition here is unclear. Usually when followed by a genitive the sense is "on, upon", but "into" seems more likely here.

ζωης [η] gen. "**[springs of] living [water]**" - [SPRINGS, FOUNTAINS, WELLS OF] LIVING [WATER]. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "water", although it could limit "springs", "living springs of water." "Living" can range in meaning from "fresh", as against stagnant, to "life-giving". If "life-giving" is implied, in the sense of the description given by Ezekiel of the stream that flows from the temple, then "enriching" is intended. If "fresh" is implied, in the sense of "pure fresh water", then "refreshing" is intended.

υδατων [ωρ υδος] "**of [living] water**" - The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / content; "springs *full of* living water."

εξαλειψει [εξαλειφω] fut. "**will wipe away**" - [AND GOD] WILL WIPE AWAY [EVERY TEAR]. In the sense of remove all that causes pain and sorrow, cf. Rev.21:3. "God, himself, will gently wipe away every tear from their eyes", Junkins.

εκ + gen. "**from [their eyes]**" - FROM [THE EYES OF THEM]. Expressing separation; "away from."

8:1-5

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

1. The judgment of the seven seals, 6:1-8:5

v] The opening of the seventh seal

Synopsis

When the Lamb opens the seventh seal, there is silence in heaven as John witnesses the preparations for the judgment of the seven trumpets. First he sees an angel with a golden censer from which the prayers of God's people waft upward before a golden altar which is situated before the throne of God. Then he sees the angel fill the censer with fire from the altar and cast it upon the earth with thunder, lightning and earthquake.

Teaching

The kingdom is at hand, the Great Day of the Lord, the day of judgment is upon us, and our God is about to answer the prayer, "Thy kingdom come."

Issues:

i] Context: See 6:1-8.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8

iii] Structure: *The opening of the seventh seal:*

The seventh seal is opened, v1:

"there was silence in heaven."

The seven angels receive their trumpets, v2;

The angel and his golden censer, v3-4:

"the smoke of the incense the prayers of all God's people."

The censer is cast upon the earth, v5:

"there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake."

iv] Interpretation:

The opening of the seventh seal reveals the next seven judgments. The judgments of the seven trumpets are not sequential, they do not follow the judgments of the seven seals in linear time, but rather give us another way to look at the Great Day of the Lord, the Day of God's Wrath. So, the seven trumpets are a replay of the day of judgment from another angle.

The opening of the six seals has confronted us with different aspects of the day of judgment, but on the opening of the seventh seal we are

transported back to a minute before midnight, to that moment of silence before the outpouring of judgment, that time when believers on earth are still praying "Thy kingdom come" / "Come Lord Jesus." But now, the prayers offered before the heavenly altar of God's divine grace are accepted. So, the time has come for fire to consume the earth with thunder, lightning and earthquake.

There was silence in heaven: Again, we have another example of apocalyptic symbolism which has prompted endless interpretations. Osborne presents an excellent summary of the many attempts to draw out John's intended meaning. He suggests, among other things, that heaven went quiet so that God could hear the prayers of his people (so God is hard of hearing?). I sympathize with those who despair of drawing any significance from this silence and simply argue that it is nothing more than a dramatic pause - fair enough! In the flow of the narrative, it certainly has a transitional function, a breathless anticipation of further revelations, so Bauckham, but I am inclined to the idea that what we have here is the still before the storm, the silence before creation, the hush before divine action, Ex.14:14, 1Sam.12:16, the quiet before the eschaton (2Esd.7:30).

Text - 8:1

The opening of the seventh seal, v1-5: i] The seventh seal is opened, v1. There is silence before God's last word, namely, the sounding of the seven trumpets = judgment.

καί "-" - AND. Transitional. Again, John has used **καί** instead of **δε** to indicate a step in the narrative.

ὅταν + ind. "**When**" - WHEN [HE OPENED THE SEVENTH SEAL]. Usually followed by a subjunctive to express an indefinite temporal clause, "whenever", but here obviously the intention is definite. Variant **ὅτε** + ind., "when", exists, but obviously an attempt to correct the grammar. "Finally, the Lamb opened the seventh seal."

εν + dat. "**in [heaven]**" - [THERE WAS SILENCE] IN [HEAVEN]. Local, expressing space.

ὥς "**for about [half an hour]**" - ABOUT [HALF AN HOUR]. Here used to express approximation. Note **ὥριον**, "hour", carries the prefix **ἡμι** = "half".

v2

ii] The seven angels receive their trumpets, v2. The number seven is significant in apocalyptic literature, and the use of trumpets to announce judgment has OT precedence, eg. the destruction of Jericho, Josh.6:1-27. The use of trumpets to herald the end is also found in the NT, Matt.24:31.

και ειδον "and I saw" - Indicating a step in the narrative; the next vision, "Next I saw"

τους ετα αγγελους "the seven angels" - [AND I SAW] THE SEVEN ANGELS [WHO STOOD BEFORE GOD]. Being anaphoric (with an article) seems to indicate a specific group of seven is in mind. Are they the seven angels of the churches? Maybe they are the seven agents of God's judgment, in which case they are archangels, standing before God in a place of special honour. Note that the verb εστηκασιν, "they have stood", is perfect, probably for durative effect, "they were standing." The verb "to stand" often takes a perfect.

ενωπιον + gen. "before [God]" - Spatial. Standing before God = "they were attending God."

αυτοις dat. pro. "[seven trumpets were given] to them. [AND THERE WAS GIVEN] TO THEM [SEVEN TRUMPETS]. Dative of indirect object.

v3

iii] The angel and his golden censer, v3-4. Another angel, not one of the seven, steps forward and offers up a smoking censor at the golden altar before the throne of God, with the cloud of white smoke issuing from the censor representing the prayers of the people. It is unclear what "altar" John has in mind; is it the brazen altar of burnt-offerings in the outer court of the Temple, or the golden altar of incense within the Tabernacle? The incense (probably the white smoke), is likely to represent the prayers of the people, but whatever the link between the incense and the prayers, the prayers are what matters, even though they are undefined. The prayers are possibly for vindication, cf., 8:3f, but John may just assume, given the context, that we would understand that they are "come Lord Jesus" / "thy kingdom come." These prayers amount to πολλα, "a vast quantity." They are "given" to the angel, probably in the sense of "entrusted" to him, with the intention that they should be offered (εδοθησαν, "were given") at the golden altar before the throne of God - "the throne" being the seat of divine authority. Of course, what we have here is apocalyptic imagery, so we are not being told that a believer's prayers to Jesus require an intermediary.

αγγελος [ος] "[another] angel" - [ANOTHER] ANGEL [CAME AND STOOD AT THE ALTAR]. Nominative subject of the verbs "to come" and "to stand." He is "another angel" in that he is not one of the seven. In that he conveys the prayers of God's people, he may be one of the angels of the seven churches, but John does not specify who he is. Note that the verb "to stand" is passive, probably best classified as medial-passive, given its function in the clause.

εχων [εχω] "who had [a golden censer]" - HAVING [A GOLDEN CENSER]. The participle is best taken as adjectival, attributive, limiting "angel", as NIV, but note 1:16.

αυτω dat. pro. "he [was given much incense]" - [AND THERE WAS GIVEN] TO HIM [MUCH INCENSE]. Dative of indirect object.

ινα + fut. "to [offer]" - THAT [HE WILL GIVE]. Introducing a final clause expressing purpose. We would expect ινα + subj., but again John uses the future indicative instead of a subjunctive.

ταις προσευχαις [η] dat. "with the prayers" - TO THE PRAYERS [OF ALL THE SAINTS AT THE GOLDEN ALTAR BEFORE THE THRONE]. The sense of the dative is unclear, and this because the imagery is unclear. The angel has a censor / thurible which has "much incense"; is that "much incense *in it*", in the sense of burning charcoal with waxes, spices and herbs smouldering on top, or "much incense *billowing from it*", in the sense of the clouds of incense / white smoke coming out of it? And somehow this is related to the prayers of των ἁγιων, "the holy / saints." Although unclear, it seems likely that the white smoke billowing from the censor represents the prayers of the people, so the angel is presenting the prayers of the saints to God. If this is the case then the dative is adverbial, association / accompaniment, as NIV, so Mathewson; "much incense, in accompaniment with the prayers of all the saints." Smalley suggests it is temporal ("offered simultaneously"), and Osborne that it is interest / advantage. It is likely that association here moves toward representation, so the sense is something like "An angel, entrusted with a golden censor, came and stood at the altar. He took the censor, with its billowing clouds of incense representing the prayers of the people, and offered it at the altar in front of the throne."

των ἁγιων gen. adj. "of [all] God's people" - OF [ALL] THE SAINTS. The adjective serves as a substantive, the genitive usually treated as verbal, subjective, "the prayers *offered up by* all the saints."

επι + acc. "on [the golden altar]" - This preposition is spatial, commonly used in the Revelation with the sense "on, upon", but it is not overly clear what the angel is doing with the censor. The angel has the censor, and incense "was given (entrusted??) to him" "that he may (will) give (offer??)" επι "the golden altar before the throne." Given v4, the spatial sense is probably "at"; "that he may offer at the golden altar."

v4

John adds some extra details to make sure that the vision is clear to the reader. The angel is standing at the altar in front of the throne, holding a censor, out of which billows clouds of incense, clouds that represents the prayers of God's people.

των θυμιατων [α ατος] gen. "[the smoke] of the incense" - [AND THE SMOKE] OF THE INCENSES [ASCENDED WITH THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS]. The

genitive is adjectival, limiting "smoke", possibly idiomatic / source, but more likely attributive, "incense smoke", or as we would say, just "incense".

ταις προσευχαις [η] dat. "**together with the prayers**" - The dative, as for v3. "Smoke billowed up from the incensed-laced prayers of the holy ones", Peterson.

των ἁγιων gen. adj. "**of God's people**" - OF THE SAINTS. As in v3.

εκ + gen. "**from [the angel's hand]**" - OUT OF [HAND OF THE ANGEL BEFORE GOD]. Expressing source / origin. Short talk; "the smoke of the incenses, with (representing) the prayers of the saints, ascended out of the *censer which was in the hand of the angel who stood at the altar* before the throne of God."

v5

iv] The censer is cast upon the earth, v5. If the prayers of the people are "come Lord Jesus" then God answers the prayers and commands the angel to initiate the Great Day of the Lord, the Day of God's Wrath, the day of judgment, so Beale, cf., Ezk.1:12-13, 10:2-7. This is visualized in the angel filling his censer with fire from the altar and casting it upon the earth. The usual symbols of divine judgment accompany the fire - thunder, lightning and earthquake. One wonders whether John links the **λιβανωτον**, "censer", with the golden **φιαλας**, "bowls", filled with the wrath of God, 15:7. If he wanted to make the link he would have used the same word, but of course, they are all linked in time terms in that John's visions are of the day of judgment, the day of God's wrath. The visions replay different aspects of the one event - "the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe." Osborne argues that 8:2f is all about the trumpet judgments with v1, the opening of the seven seals, revealing the judgments of the seven trumpets. This is surely right, but it's all one in the same, namely, the day of judgment, a day that is *now*, realized, although from where we stand we only feel its vibrations, it's inauguration, its *not yet*.

και "**then**" - AND. Used instead of **δε** to indicate a step in the narrative.

ειληφεν [λαμβανω] perf. "**[the angel] took [the censer]**" - Osborne suggests that the perfect is being used for an aorist, but Mathewson argues it is used to emphasize aspect, indicating "the state of the angel in preparation for pouring out the bowl judgments." In the latter part of the 1st. century, perfective aspect (punctiliar, completed action) was sometimes expressed by the perfect tense instead of an aorist.

εκ + gen. "**from**" - [AND FILLED IT] FROM [THE FIRE OF THE ALTAR]. Expressing source / origin.

του θυσιαστηριου [ον] gen. "**the altar**" - OF THE ALTAR. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / local; "the fire *which is located / burning on the altar*."

εις + acc. "[hurled *it*] on [the earth]" - [AND THREW] TO, INTO [THE EARTH, AND THERE WERE THUNDERS AND SOUNDS AND LIGHTNING AND AN EARTHQUAKE]. With regard σεισμος, "earthquake", it is missing in the nature theophany in 4:5, but present here and in 11:19 and 16:18. It may be missing in 4:5 because earthquakes are particularly related to divine judgment.

8:6-13

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

2. The judgment of the seven trumpets, 8:6-11:18

i] Sounding the first four trumpets

Synopsis

The day of judgment continues to unfold with the sounding of the trumpets. In the breaking of the seals judgment touched a quarter of the earth, now, with the sounding of the trumpets, judgment extends to a third of the earth. The first trumpet brings hail and fire; the second brings death to the oceans; the third death to the rivers; and the fourth cosmic destruction.

Teaching

Christ is Lord, the kingdom is at hand, the Great Day of the Lord, the day of judgment, is upon us. Even nature is consumed before our eyes, so repent and believe.

Issues:

i] Context: See 6:1-8. The judgment of the seven trumpets presents in similar fashion to the judgments of the seven seals, although it is interesting to note how the seven trumpets find more in common with the seven bowls. We have three groupings of judgments, an interlude and then a final judgment:

i] Sounding the first four trumpets, 8:6-13;

ii] Sounding the fifth trumpet, 9:1-12;

iii] Sounding the sixth trumpet, 9:13-21;

iv] Interlude:

a) The mighty angel and the little scroll, 10:1-11;

b) The two witnesses, 11:1-14;

v] Sounding the seventh trumpet, 11:15-19.

Each trumpet reveals an aspect of the final day of judgment upon those who are not marked with the divine seal (those without the inscription of the Lamb and God on their forehead?). The interlude gives an insight into the state of the church caught up in the day of judgment as believers wait for the invitation to ascend into heaven, 11:12. For the church, gospel mission continues and some repent. Then follows the final trumpet which serves to draw us back into God's throne room at a minute before midnight before propelling us into the judgment of the beasts, 12:1-14:20.

For the imagery used in this series of judgments, John draws on the plagues that beset Egypt at the beginning of the Exodus, Exodus 7-10. Michaels notes that the imagery also reflects the Exodus as a whole, eg., with the third trumpet the

waters don't turn to blood, but become bitter, so reversing the miracle at Marah, Ex.15:23.

As already noted, although the messianic judgments covering 6:1-16:21 address the same event, namely the Great Day of the Lord, the day of judgment, there is none-the-less an intensification of the judgment in each series of judgments. In the seals, a quarter of the world was affected, in the trumpets it is a third of the world, and in the bowls it is the whole world. Whereas the judgment of the seals tends to fall on humanity, the judgment of the trumpets is focused on nature: earth, sea, fresh water and the firmament. Of course, human sin is the cause.

The Three Woes: In between the first four trumpets and the fifth trumpet we have the vision of the three Woes, v13. This vision identifies the next three trumpet judgments as judgments of divine woe upon a humanity determined to follow the false gods of this age, a humanity determined to worship the powers of darkness rather than light. These judgments are particularly applicable to those church members who have adopted the shibboleths of the age (syncretism) rather than persevere in faith (conquer). The seventh trumpet / third woe, is somewhat unclear. The Woe is possibly the announcement of judgment itself, so Beasley- Murray, Osborne, ..., or the judgments of the beasts, 12:1-13:18 / 14:20, so Sweet, but probably not the judgment of the seven bowls, so Charles.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8

iii] Structure: *Sounding the first four trumpets:*

The seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets, v6:

The first trumpet sounds, v7;

The second trumpet sounds, v8-9;

The third trumpet sounds, v10-11;

The fourth trumpet sounds, v12;

The eagle of woe, v13.

iv] Interpretation:

As already noted, there is a great divergence of opinion as to John's purpose in the Revelation. For some commentators, it is all about encouraging believers in the face of tribulation, and yet, the letters to the seven churches do not reveal a church facing extermination. The problem is more likely syncretism, the attraction to, and adaptation of, the gods / shibboleths of this age. The judgment revealed in the Revelation is not so much for the children of Babel, the persecutors of the church, but for the members of the church who have aligned with Babel, Babylon, the secular city - judgment begins with the house of God. Believers must face the fact

that the gods of this age, and those who follow them, will face a day of reckoning, a day of judgment, and that day is upon us.

As with divine blessings, so also with cursings, the ultimate purpose is for us to recognize that the kingdom of God is at hand, and so repent and believe. John draws us into this reality, a Day which is both good news and bad, a day which is now (ie., John's eschatology is realized). For we earth-dwellers, caught in this moment of grace between Christ's ascension and return, the heavenly preparations for judgment are *not yet*, (the eschatology is inaugurated). Every day we sense God's blessings, but we also experience the signs of judgment, a world out of control imploding on itself. Law-and-order, failed states, environmental degradation and the like, all point to the inevitable. Yet, in the face of all this evidence, few repent and believe. And as to when God closes up the Monopoly Board, from our perspective, "no one knows", Matt.24:36, but from the heavenly perspective, it is already underway.

Text - 8:6

Sounding the first four trumpets, v6-13: i] The seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets, v6. The image of a trumpet sounding at the end of the age has strong OT precedence, cf., Joel 2:1, Zeph.1:16, 4Ezra 6:23, as well as the NT, Matt.24:31, 1Cor.15:52, 1Thes.4:16. The sounding of the trumpet is both good and bad news; good news for the faithful, those who have held firm to their faith, because it heralds the day of resurrection, but bad news for the unfaithful because it heralds the day of judgment.

καὶ "then" - AND. Transitional. Used instead of **δε** to indicate a step in the narrative.

οἱ ἔχοντες [εἶπω] pres. part. "**who had [seven trumpets]**" - [THE SEVEN ANGELS] HAVING [THE SEVEN TRUMPETS]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "angels", as NIV; "then the seven angels who were holding the seven trumpets."

αὐτοὺς pro. "-" - [PREPARED] THEM. Although not reflexive, the personal pronoun takes that sense here; "prepared themselves to sound *them* (*the trumpets*)."

ἵνα + subj. "**to [sound them]**" - THAT [THEY MAY TRUMPET *them*]. Introducing a final clause expressing purpose.

v7

ii] The first trumpet sounds, v7. The first judgment builds on the seventh Egyptian plague. Hail and fire, as symbols of judgment, have OT precedence, cf., Ex.9:13-26, Ps.105:32. The presence of blood is somewhat of a mystery; "Rome

wants blood: God will rain it down until its people drown in it", Blount possibly!!! Smalley suggest the "blood" serves to link the vision with the first plague upon Egypt where the river Nile turns to blood. The destruction wrought on the land is only a third, although this is an expansion on the quarter for the judgment of the seals. Still, the judgment is severe, touching as it does on central aspects of commerce - forests and pastures.

και "-" - AND. As in v6. "And the following things happened at once", TH.

μειγμενα [μιγνυμι] perf. mid./pas. part. "**mixed**" - [THE FIRST TRUMPETED AND THERE CAME HAIL AND FIRE] HAVING BEEN MINGLED, MIXED. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "hail and fire"; "which was mingled with blood." Is the fire lightning? "And it was hurled on the earth", Barclay.

εν + dat. "**with [blood]**" - The preposition here expresses accompaniment / association.

της γης [η ης] gen. "[**a third**] of the earth" - [AND IT WAS THROWN TO THE EARTH AND THE THIRD] OF THE EARTH [WAS BURNED UP]. The genitive is adjectival, partitive.

δενδρων [ον] gen. "[**a third**] of the trees [were burned up]" - [AND THE THIRD] OF THE TREES [WAS BURNT UP AND ALL THE GREEN GRASS WAS BURNT UP]." The genitive is adjectival, partitive.

v8

iii] The second trumpet sounds, v8-9. As with the blowing of the first trumpet, a series of divine passives dominate; they "credit the action to God", Blount. The instruments of blood, fire and "something like" a flying mountain, destroys a third of the oceans, sea creatures and ships. Note that in the judgment of the bowls, all the sea turns to blood and all the sea creatures are destroyed, 16:3. It does seem likely that John is alluding to the divine plague that fell on Egypt when Moses acted to turn the great river of Egypt into blood, Ex.7:17-21. As for the image of flying mountains, if the Revelation was written after the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD79 then we may well have an allusion to this catastrophic event. Pliny writes that the debris from the explosion filled the bay making it impossible to land boats.

και "-" - AND [THE SECOND ANGEL TRUMPETED]. As in v6.

ως "**something like [a huge mountain]**" - [AND] *something* LIKE [A GREAT MOUNTAIN WAS THROWN INTO THE SEA]. Here as a comparative, with the subject of the verb "was thrown" assumed, as NIV. "*Something* like an immense mountain", Phillips.

καιομενον [καιω] pres. mid./pas. part. "**all ablaze**" - BURNING [IN, WITH FIRE]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "mountain"; "a mountain which was burning." The dative πυρι, "in, with fire", is adverbial, either

expressing accompaniment / association, or manner; "what looked like a great mountain blazing with fire", Barclay.

της θαλασσης [α] gen. "[a third] of the sea [turned into blood]" - [AND THE THIRD] OF THE SEA [BECAME BLOOD]. The genitive is adjectival, partitive. As already noted, it can be argued that John is not speaking of the final judgment when he states that only a third of the sea becomes blood, but it seems more likely that the final judgment is in mind, a day which John dissects into many parts.

v9

των κτισματων [κτισμα ατος] gen. "[a third] of the [living] creatures" - [AND THE THIRD] OF THE CREATURES. As with πων πλοιων, "of the ships", the genitive is adjectival, partitive.

των gen. art. "[in the sea]" - THE [IN THE SEA]. The article serves as an adjectivizer turning the prepositional phrase "in the sea" into an attributive adjective; "which are in the sea." The preposition εν is local, expressing space.

τα εχοντα [εχω] pres. part. "living" - HAVING [LIFE / SOUL AND THE THIRD OF THE SHIPS WERE DESTROYED]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, further limiting "creatures"; "the creatures which are having life = living"

v10

iv] The third trumpet sounds, v10-11. Fresh water now gets the same treatment as salt water, this time by a flaming star. Again, in the parallel judgment of the bowls, all the rivers and springs are completely destroyed, whereas here only a third of the rivers are destroyed. The agent of destruction is a star / planet named after the bitter herb wormwood, and so a third of fresh water becomes bitter and undrinkable, cf., Jer.9:15, 23:15. The image of bitterness in the OT is linked to divine wrath and judgment, often associated with idolatry, Prov.5:3-4, Lam.3:15, 19, Amos 5:7, 6:12, Hos.10:4. As already noted, although the destruction covers only a third of the waters, it most likely represents the unfolding events of the day of judgment rather than some pre-judgment event.

και "-" - and. As in v 6.

καιομενος [καιω] pres. mid./pas. part. "blazing" - [THE THIRD ANGEL TRUMPETED, AND FELL OUT OF HEAVEN A GREAT STAR] BLAZING. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "star".

ως "like [a torch]" - AS [A TORCH]. Here serving as a comparative.

εκ + gen. "[fell] from [the sky]" - Here expressing source / origin; "and a blazing comet fell from the sky."

επι + acc. "on" - [AND IT FELL] ON. John's favourite spatial preposition; "upon, on."

των ποταμων [ος] gen. "[a third] of the rivers" - [THE THIRD] OF THE RIVERS. The genitive is adjectival, partitive.

των ὑδατων [ωρ ατος] gen. "[the springs] of water" - [AND ON THE FOUNTAINS] OF THE WATERS. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, "water springs", Berkeley, or more simply, "a third of the rivers and a third of the springs", Peterson.

v11

του αστερος [ηρ ρος] gen. "[the name] of the star" - [AND THE NAME] OF THE STAR. The genitive is adjectival, possessive. Often treated as a parenthesis; "(The name of the star is bitterness)", TEV.

ὁ Αψινθος [ος] "[is] Wormwood" - [IS CALLED] THE WORMWOOD. Properly feminine, not masculine. Nominative of name. Apsinth, extracted from the wormwood plant, produces a dark green bitter oil which was used to kill intestinal worms.

των ὑδατων [ος] gen. "[a third] of the waters" - [AND A THIRD] OF THE WATERS. The genitive is adjectival, partitive.

εις + acc. "[turned bitter]" - [BECAME] INTO [WORMWOOD]. Note variant ὡς, "like wormwood." Certainly, that is the sense, but probably εις αψινθον, "into wormwood", is used with the verb *εγενετο*, "became", as its predicate, "became bitter", Plummer, DDG.

των ανθρωπων [ος] gen. "[many] people" - [MANY] OF THE MEN [DIED]. The genitive is adjectival, partitive. "Many people died because the water had become so bitter", Phillips.

εκ + gen. "from [the waters]" - This preposition here leans toward a causal sense; "because of the waters."

ὅτι "that [had become bitter]" - Introducing a causal clause explaining why people died from / because of the waters, "because it had been made bitter", ESV.

v12

v] The fourth trumpet sounds, v12. Cosmic judgment follows affecting the light produced by the sun, moon and stars. Note the main verb *επληγη*, "to strike", is passive; a divine passive? The word expresses an application of force to stop the elements shining, either by dying as a source of light, or blocked out by something. In Wisdom literature darkness is viewed as a sign of divine judgment, usually because of idolatry, cf., Wis.15:1-16:29. Note also that the verb is singular when referring to three elements, the third being plural. Given that the elements are neuter, we might expect a singular verb.

του ηλιου [ος] gen. "[a third] of the sun" - [AND THE FOURTH ANGEL TRUMPETED, AND A THIRD] OF THE SUN [WAS STRUCK, AND A THIRD OF THE MOON

AND A THIRD OF THE STARS]. The genitive (as with "of the moon", "of the stars", **αυτων**, "of them", **αυτης**, "of it") is adjectival, partitive.

ἵνα + subj. "**so that [a third of them turned dark]**" - THAT [THE THIRD OF THEM MIGHT BE DARKENED, AND THE THIRD PART OF THE DAY MAY NOT APPEAR AND THE NIGHT LIKEWISE]. Introducing either a final clause expressing purpose, or a consecutive clause expressing result; result seems more likely, "with the result that", "a third part of them turned dark and a third part of the light failed to appear by day or by night", REV.

v13

vi] The eagle of woe, v13. We now come to a momentary interlude between the first four and the fifth trumpet. An eagle cries out "Woe! Woe! Woe!" to those who dwell on the earth; the woe of judgment. An eagle, a bird of power and speed, is used as a sign of swift approaching judgment in the OT, Jer.48:40, Hab.1:8. We are reminded of Jesus proclaiming "Woe" on the people of Israel for failing to respond to the signs of the gospel revealed in his miracles, Matt.11:20-21. The same Woe hangs over the church, as it does over the whole of humanity, for failing to repent in face of coming judgment. See "Context" above.

και ειδον "**As I watched**" - AND I SAW. This phrase often introduces a new vision. Certainly, we have a step in the narrative, or even better, a momentary interlude before the sounding of the next trumpet.

ἑνος "**an [eagle]**" - [AND I HEARD] ONE [EAGLE]. The noun **αετου**, "eagle, vulture", takes a genitive of direct object after the verb "to hear", with the genitive adjective "one" limiting it. "One" is usually translated as an indefinite article, as NIV, although more likely serving as an indefinite pronoun, "a certain eagle"; see Mathewson.

πετομενου [πετομαι] gen. pres. mid. part. "**that was flying**" - FLYING [IN MIDHEAVEN]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "eagle".

λεγοντος [λεγω] gen. pres. part. "**call out**" - SAYING. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "eagle"; "who cried in a loud voice", Berkeley. Note though that John often introduces speech with the participle saying, cf., **λεγων** 1:17.

φωνη [η] dat. "**in a [loud] voice**" - A dative is probably adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of the crying out, ie., a loud crying.

τους κατοικουντας [κατοικεω] pres. part. "**to the inhabitants [of the earth]**" - [WOE, WOE, WOE,] THE DWELLERS [UPON THE EARTH]. The participle serves as a substantive, accusative of person after **ουαι**, "woe" (often followed by a dative; "Woe to").

εκ + gen. "**because of**" - FROM. Here probably expressing cause / reason, as NIV, possible even temporal, "after", so Zerwick.

της σαλπιγγος [ξ γος] gen. "**the trumpet [blasts]**" - [THE REMAINING OF THE SOUNDS] OF THE TRUMPET [OF THE THREE ANGELS]. The NIV has taken the genitive as adjectival, attributive, limiting "the sounds"; "the remaining of the sounds of the trumpet" = "the rest of the blasts of the trumpet" = "the rest of the trumpet blasts."

των μελλοντων [μελλω] gen. pres. part. "**about to be [sounded]**" - BEING ABOUT [TO TRUMPET]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "trumpet". The infinitive σαλπίζειν, "to trumpet", is complementary, "about to blow", ESV.

των ... αγγελων [ος] gen. "**by the *other* three angels**" - OF THE [THREE] ANGELS. The genitive is adjectival, possessive.

9:1-12

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

2. The judgment of the seven trumpets, 8:6-11:18

ii] Sounding the fifth trumpet

Synopsis

The day of judgment continues to unfold with the sounding of the fifth trumpet and the outpouring of the first woe. John sees a star fall down to earth and into the Abyss. From the Abyss clouds of smoke belch upward, darkening the sky. Out of the smoke comes a swarm of locusts with the power of scorpions. Instead of decimating crops and grass, they attack humanity. These locusts are like cavalry in full regalia, vicious beyond measure. They are led by The Destroyer, and when faced with this horror, people would rather die than endure the pain, but death eludes them.

Teaching

The kingdom is at hand, the Great Day of the Lord, the day of judgment, is upon us. Those without faith, or who have not remained firm in their faith ("who do not have the seal of God"), will find themselves overwhelmed by the powers of darkness.

Issues:

i] Context: See 8:6-13.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *Sounding the fifth trumpet*:

The three woes, 8:13.

The first woe:

A star falls into the Abyss, v1;

A locust plague emerges from the smoke of the Abyss, v2-6;

The Satanic plague described, v7-10;

The demonic king of the swarm, v11;

Two more woes to go, v12.

iv] Interpretation:

The first four judgments of the trumpets were directed at nature, the next two at humanity, a humanity without "the seal of God on their foreheads." Many commentators see this judgment falling on "those who have rejected God and persecute his people", Osborne, but it is more likely focused on those church members who have set aside the apostolic gospel

for heresy ("tolerated that woman Jezebel"), or who have assimilated to the shibboleths of the secular city, Babylon. In 8:13 we are told that these judgments amount to "Woe! Woe! Woe!"; three woes. In the day of judgment, social gospels and secular powers and authorities, so benign, so wise and worthy, so deserving of our allegiance, will display their real nature. In the face of their fury, with everything lost, people will cry out for death - better they cry out in repentance!

The Star and the Destroyer: John's imagery in this passage has prompted diverse interpretations for the Star. Two possibilities present themselves:

Either a demonic being, or Satan himself: Stars often serve as a symbol for angels, so is this star a fallen angel? Some commentators take a general line and opt for a demon angel, so Boring, Beale (an evil angel sent by God), ..., others for Satan himself, so Sweet, Hendriksen ..., - cast to earth, bound in the bottomless pit and then released to do his worst, cf., Isa14:12, Lk.10:18, Rev.12:7-9. John could be describing Satan's ongoing work of harrowing humanity, but the final day of judgement is surely in mind, a day that John is progressively unfolding before our eyes.

An angel / messenger of divine judgement: Osborne, along with Morris, Smalley and others, notes that "fallen" can mean "descend" and so we are simply witnessing another aspect of the judgment undertaken by an angelic messenger of divine wrath. The messenger enacts judgment by releasing The Destroyer with his army from the bottomless pit.

The day of judgment is ushered in with a time of tribulation, a time when the Antichrist leads a final Satanic rebellion against the coming kingdom of God. John may well want us to identify "the angel of the Abyss" with Satan or Antichrist, "the son of destruction", but at least the Destroyer presents as "a satanic angel-figure who, as the ruling prince of the underworld, leads his army of demonic creatures in a judgmental attack on unrighteousness", Smalley.

The time will be shortened: We note again that judgment is not without grace. The harm caused by the locusts is limited; they can't harm the environment and they are only given five months to do their worst, cf., "one hour", 17:12; "short time", 20:3. John seems to be reflecting the idea that the tribulation of the Great Day of the Lord will be shortened for the sake of the elect. Believers will be brought safe through this terrible day, but it

will not be a picnic - safe but singed! We well remember Jesus' advice that "those in Judea must take to the hills."

The release of Satan / the powers of darkness in realized and inaugurated eschatology. As already noted, John's eschatology is primarily realized (the day of judgment is *now*) such that we witness Satan set loose from the abyss as an agent of the day of judgment. From the perspective of inaugurated eschatology (the day of judgment is *not yet*) there is a sense where in these "last days" Satan is already set loose. John's prophetic perspective (see introductory notes) presents us with an impossible conundrum with respect to time - assimilating the *now* with the *not yet* is impossible. So, when it comes to Satan's place in the affairs of this world we usually say that Satan is already set loose, and over the last 2,000 years has focused his attention on the Christian church, IPet.5:8. Yet, at the same time he is somehow restrained, waiting to break loose in that final day, the day of tribulation culminating in the battle of Armageddon.

Text - 9:1

Sounding the fifth trumpet - the first woe, 9:1-12: i] A star falls into the Abyss, v1. As noted above, different interpretations are offered for this star, but it seems more than likely that he is an angelic messenger enacting the judgment of the fifth trumpet, namely, the release of dark / evil / satanic powers from their confinement in the underworld. This image reflects a judgment that entails the staged withdrawal of God's providential care over creation. For the Jewish tradition that angels are stars, see Jud.5:20, Job.34:7.

"-" - AND. Transitional. This conjunction is used instead of δε to indicate a step in the narrative: "When the fifth angel blew his trumpet, I saw a star", CEV.

πεπτωκοτα [πιπτω] perf. part. "[a star] that had fallen]" - [THE FIFTH ANGEL HAD TRUMPETED, AND I SAW A STAR] HAVING FALLEN. The perfect tense expresses a past action with stative results. The NIV has taken the participle as adjectival, attributive, limiting "star", but it may also serve as the accusative complement of the object "star". ESV, Barclay, Moffatt, Phillips, Berkeley, opt for adjectival. Aune draws out the perfect, giving it temporal weight ("he saw a star after it had fallen", cf., Mathewson); "I saw a star that had come down on the earth from heaven", Berkeley. This approach ignores the fact that participles generally don't carry temporal weight. As Osborne notes, the context takes a past time sense and so John uses a perfect to fit the context. "I saw a star fall to earth from heaven."

εκ + gen. "from [the sky]" - OUT OF [HEAVEN TO THE EARTH]. Here expressing source / origin.

αυτω dat. pro. "**the star [was given the key]**" - [AND WAS GIVEN THE KEY] TO HIM (it). Dative of indirect object. This is not the key that unlocks the gate to death and Hades, a key held by Jesus, 1:18, but the key to the gate that confines the powers of evil. In the tribulation these evil satanic powers, led by The Destroyer, have all their restraints lifted, but only for a time before they are all locked away to face their end, 20:1-3.

του φρεατος [ρ τος] gen. "**to the shaft**" - OF THE SHAFT. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic, limiting "the key"; "the key *which opens the gate* of the shaft (entrance)."

της αβυσσου [ος] gen. "**of the Abyss**" - The genitive is adjectival, probably idiomatic / local, limiting "shaft", "the shaft *which is located in* the Abyss", although Mathewson suggests expegetic. John draws a distinction between the abyss, "the bottomless pit", NRSV, the dwelling place of evil spirits, and Hades, the place of the dead. John also distinguishes the lake of fire, the place of eternal punishment, 19:20, 20:10, from both the Abyss and Hades.

v2

ii] The locus plague emerging from the smoke of the Abyss, v2-6. Providing us with another aspect of the day of judgment, the Great Day of the Lord, John tells us that a star / angel, under divine authority, will release a Satanic hoard upon humanity as part of a progressively unfolding day of judgment. Such a divine act is somewhat troubling, but it has Biblical precedence, eg., the authority given to Satan to test Job, cf., Job.2:6. This is all part of the one eschatological event which, in the terms of realized eschatology, is underway.

της αβυσσου [ος] "**[he opened] the Abyss**" - [AND HE OPENED THE SHAFT] OF THE ABYSS. As in v1.

εκ + gen. "**[smoke rose] from [it]**" - [AND SMOKE ROSE] OUT OF [THE SHAFT]. Expressing source / origin. Throughout scripture the Abyss is described as the domain of water, the water in the sea and under the pillars of the earth; it is a deep place of darkness where evil powers dwell. It is interesting how John describes it as a place of smoke, cf., *1 Enoch* - heavy smoke conveys the idea of darkness in judgment, cf., Joel.2:10, 31, 3:15.. Blount suggests an allusion to the smoke issuing from Mount Sinai, but the link is not obvious, cf., Ex.19:18.

ως "**like**" - AS. Comparative, with a touch of manner; "smoke poured out of the entrance as it does from a giant blast furnace."

καμινου [ος] gen. "**[smoke] from a [gigantic] furnace**" - [SMOKE] OF A [GIANT] FURNACE. The genitive may be classified as adjectival, idiomatic / source, limiting "smoke", "smoke *which pours out of* a gigantic furnace", as NIV.

εκ + gen. "[darkened] by [the smoke]" - [AND THE SUN AND THE AIR WAS DARKENED] FROM [THE SMOKE OF THE SHAFT]. Expressing either cause, "because of the smoke", or means (a means consisting of a source), "by the smoke."

του φρεατος gen. "from the Abyss" - OF THE ABYSS. The genitive may be classified as adjectival, idiomatic / source, limiting "smoke", "the smoke which gushed from the Abyss", as NIV.

v3

εκ + gen. "out of [the smoke]" - [AND] OUT OF [THE SMOKE LOCUSTS CAME FORTH TO / INTO THE EARTH]. Expressing source / origin. These are not pesky grasshoppers, but an apocalyptic horde of locusts emerging from the smoke, prepared to devour everything in their path, cf., Exodus 10:5, 15, Joel 2:1, 15. Yet, rather than attacking vegetation, they are to attack humanity in like manner to the locusts of *Wisdom 16:9* - insects that cause wounds that do not heal.

αυταις dat. pro. "[were given power / authority]" - [AND AUTHORITY WAS GIVEN] TO THEM. Dative of indirect object.

ως "like" - AS, LIKE [THE SCORPIONS HAVE AUTHORITY / POWER]. Comparative, with a touch of manner; "they were given the power to sting like a scorpion. "And they were given the powers of scorpions", REB.

της γης [η] gen. "of the earth" - The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / local; "the scorpions which live on / found on the earth."

v4

αυταις dat. pro. "they [were told]" - [IT WAS TOLD] THEM. Dative of indirect object.

ινα + fut. "-" - THAT [THEY WILL NOT HARM THE GRASS OF THE EARTH NEITHER ANY GREENERY NOR ANY TREE]. Here introducing an object clause / dependent statement of indirect speech, expressing what they are told, namely, not to hurt Again, John uses the future tense with *hina* rather than a subjunctive.

μη ... ουδε ουδε "not [to harm]" - A negated coordinative construction, similar to ουτε ουτε

της γης [η] gen. "[the grass] of the earth" - The genitive is adjectival, probably again idiomatic / local, "the grass which grows on the earth"; "they had orders to do no harm to any grass, green thing, or tree upon the earth", Phillips.

ει μη "but only [those people]" - EXCEPT [THE MEN]. Here introducing an exceptive clause, expressing a contrast by designating an exception; "They were to punish only those people who did not have God's mark on their forehead", CEV.

του θεου [ος] gen. "[the seal] of God" - [WHOEVER (only such men who, i.e., here οιτινες is qualitative) DOES NOT HAVE THE SEAL] OF GOD [ON THE = THEIR FOREHEAD]. The genitive is adjectival, probably best viewed as possessive.

Instead of those with the mark of the beast, there are those with the seal of the Lamb and of God, the mark of the true believer, those who have persevered in faith, the victorious. They will be carried safely through the day of judgment, but only as through fire, i.e., singed around the edges!

v5

αυτοις dat. pro. "**they [were not allowed]**" - [AND IT WAS GIVEN] TO THEM. Dative of indirect object.

ινα + subj. / fut. "**[to kill]**" - THAT [THEY SHOULD NOT KILL THEM BUT] THAT [THEY WILL BE TORMENTED]. The first *hina* takes a subjunctive, the second an irregular future. Both serve to introduce an object / content clause, and given that the verb "to give" in the context means "to grant / allow", we may classify it as a dependent statement of indirect speech expressing what they may and may not do; "they were allowed to torment, but not to kill."

μηνας πεντε acc. "**for five months**" - FIVE MONTHS. The accusative is adverbial, temporal, expressing time.

ως "**[the agony they suffered] was like that of [the sting]**" - [AND THE TORMENT OF THEM] AS, LIKE [TORMENT OF A SCORPION]. Comparative, with a touch of manner; "the pain was like a scorpion sting."

σκορπιου [ος] gen. "**of a scorpion**" - The genitive is usually treated as verbal, subjective, "the sting *inflicted* by a scorpion."

οταν + subj. "**when [it strikes]**" - WHEN [IT STRIKES A MAN]. Serving to introduce an indefinite temporal clause, although translated as definite.

v6

εν + dat. "**during [those days]**" - IN [THOSE DAYS]. Temporal use of the preposition.

ου μη + fut. "**[but will] not [find it]**" - [MEN WILL SEEK THE DEATH AND] NOT NOT [WILL THEY FIND IT]. A subjunctive of emphatic negation, with the future tense used instead of a subjunctive; "people will seek death, but by no means will they find it." The conjunction **και**, "and", is obviously adversative, "but", as NIV, and the use of the article with the abstract noun "death" is stylistic.

αποθανειν [αποθνησκω] aor. inf. "**[they will long] to die**" - [AND THEY WILL DESIRE] TO DIE [AND DEATH FLEES FROM THEM]. The infinitive introduces an object clause / dependent statement of perception, expressing what they desire, namely, "that they might die." Again, the conjunction **και** is adversative, "but death will flee from them", ESV. "People are going to prefer death to torture, look for ways to kill themselves, but they won't find a way - death will have gone into hiding", Peterson, cf., Job.3:20-22, Jer.8:3.

v7

iii] The Satanic plague described, v7-10. The demonic torment of the first woe. Osborne calls it "one of the more bizarre descriptions of the book." John's graphic description of the locust plague develops Joel 1-2.

και "-" - AND. Here as in v1, used instead of δε, a step in the narrative / paragraph marker..

ακριδων [ις ιδος] gen. "The locusts [looked]" - [THE APPEARANCE, FORM] OF THE LOCUSTS. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, "the appearance which characterized them / which they possessed *was* like"; "In appearance the locusts looked like horses equipped for battle", NRSV.

ομοια adj. "like" - [were] LIKE. To express a comparison John tends to use ὡς, but here he has used the comparative adjective ὅμοιος, "like". This adjective takes a dative complement, here the dative ἵπποις, "horses".

ἠτοιμασμενοις [ετοιμαζω] dat. perf. mid./pas. part. "prepared" - HAVING BEEN PREPARED. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "horses". The perfect expresses a stative state.

εις + acc. "for [war]" - TO [WAR]. Here the preposition expresses end-view / purpose; "for war", as NIV.

ὡς ὅμοιοι "[they wore something] like [crowns] of [gold]" - [AND ON THE HEADS OF THEM *to be*] AS [CROWNS] LIKE [GOLD]. A rather awkward use of these two comparatives together, with ὡς also carrying a touch of manner and introduced by an assumed verb to-be; "on their heads *to be as it were* a crown like gold" = "on their heads they had what seemed to be crowns of gold", TEV. The adjective "like" takes a dative complement, here χρυσω, "gold". "They had gold crowns and human faces."

ὡς "[their faces] resembled [human faces]" - [AND THE FACES OF THEM] AS, LIKE [FACES OF MEN]. Comparative, with a touch of manner.

v8

ὡς "like [women's hair]" - AND THEY HAD HAIR] AS, LIKE [HAIR OF WOMEN AND TEETH WERE] AS, LIKE [*teeth* OF LIONS]. Comparative. The genitives γυναικων, "of women", and λεοντων, "of lions" is adjectival, possessive, as NIV. "They had long hair and sharp teeth."

v9

ὡς "[breastplates] like [breastplates of iron]" - [AND THEY HAD BREASTPLATES] AS, LIKE [IRON BREASTPLATES]. Comparative, so also ὡς φωνη, "like *the* sound"; "they had long hair, sharp teeth and iron breastplates."

ἀπματων ἰππων gen. "[many] horses and chariots" - [AND THE SOUND OF THE WINGS OF THEM *was* LIKE *the* SOUND] OF CHARIOTS OF HORSES. The two genitives are probably best classified as adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic, limiting "sound"; "the sound *which is produced by* chariots *which are drawn by* horses." Verbal, subjective, is another possible classification, or the first a genitive of source, "the sound *that is from* chariots", and the second subjective, "*drawn by* horses." Aune suggests a genitive of association, "many war-chariots with horses", Smalley, so ESV; "many chariots drawn by horses", Osborne. The image is clear enough; "the sound of their wings *was* like *the* sound of horse-drawn chariots charging into battle."

τρεχοντων [τρεχω] gen. pres. part. "rushing [into battle]" - RUNNING [INTO BATTLE]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "of horses of chariots." "The rattling noise of many horse-drawn chariots dashing into the battlefield", TH.

v10

εχουσιν [εχω] pres. "they had" - THEY HAVE. The NIV takes the present tense as a narrative present, but John's eschatology is realized; the locusts are heading our way now and "they have tails and stings like scorpions", ESV.

οἰαζ adj. + dat. "[stingers] like [scorpions]" - [TAILS] LIKE [SCORPIONS, AND (with) STINGERS]. This comparative adjective usually takes a dative complement, as here with "scorpions". "They have stingers in their tails like the stingers of a scorpion."

εν + dat. "in [their tails]" - [AND *they have* THE AUTHORITY / POWER OF THEM] IN [THE TAILS OF THEM]. Local, expressing space, or possibly instrumental, means, "and with their tails." The two genitives, αυτων ... αυτων, "the authority of them in the tails of them", are best viewed as adjectival possessive, although "authority of them" could be treated as verbal, subjective, "the power / authority *exercised by* them."

αδικησαι [αδικεω] aor. inf. "[they had power] to torment [people]" - TO TORTURE [MEN]. Technically the infinitive is exegetical specifying the authority / power possessed by the locusts, although it virtually serves as a complementary infinitive, completing the verbal sense of "*they have* power / authority" = "they are able." "They are not able to kill anyone, but they certainly are able to inflict pain for up to five months."

μηνας πεντε acc. "for five months" - FIVE MONTHS. Adverbial accusative of time. The reference to "five months" has prompted a range of comments. It seems likely that the figure is used to express divine restraint on the day of judgment, particularly as it relates to believers caught up in the holocaust. It may though be simply illustrating the power of the locusts' sting - this is not a momentary sting; it can last up to five months.

v11

iv] The demonic king of the swarm, v11. As already noted, the identity of this angel is disputed. Satan, the prince of the demons, seems the obvious suspect, although in Revelation, Satan is not called an angel. This has prompted some commentators to opt for a subordinate of Satan, some demon angel serving as king over the Abyss. On the Great Day of the Lord, the day of judgment, one of the agents of that judgment will be "The Destroyer", the king of the underworld. Just as the Babylonians served as an agent of divine judgment upon Judah, but then found themselves judged at the hand the Persians, so The Destroyer will inevitably face judgment himself.

βασιλεα [ους εως] acc. "[they had] as a king" - [THEY HAVE OVER THEM] A KING. "King", taken as a direct object, "they had a king over them, the angel of the Abyss", Moffatt, or as a predicate, "they have the angel of the Abyss set over them as king", Cassirer, as NIV.

επ [επι] + gen. "**over [them]**" - John's favourite spatial preposition, although obviously with the sense "over" rather than "on, upon."

τον αγγελον [ος] acc. "**the angel**" - Standing in apposition to "a king."

της αβυσσου [ος] "**of the Abyss**" - The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic, possibly local, "the angel *located in* the Abyss", or subordination, "the angel *set over* the Abyss."

αυτω dat. pro. "**whose [name]**" - [NAME] TO HIM. The dative may be treated as possessive, as NIV, or reference / respect, "*the name, with respect to him* in Hebrew / Aramaic *is* Abaddon", or even interest, advantage, "the name for him"

Εβραιστι dat. proper. "**in Hebrew [is Abaddon]**" - As for "in the Greek", the dative proper is adverbial, reference / respect; "whose name, with respect to the Hebrew tongue, is Abaddon." As with **Απολλυων**, the word means destruction and is sometimes used to refer to the place of the dead, Sheol.

v12

v] Two more woes to go, v12. Depending on the syntax, as noted below, it may be only one more woe to go, namely, the sounding of the sixth trumpet, but see 11:14.

ἡ μια adj. "**The first [woe is past]**" - [THE WOE] THE ONE [HAS PASSED]. Used for an ordinal number, "the first"; "the first woe has passed."

ιδου "-" - behold; "Look out, there are two more / there is one more to come."

δυο ουαι "**two other woes**" - [THERE COMES YET] TWO WOES / A SECOND WOE. Usually taken to mean "two more woes", although the verb **ερχεται**, "to come", is singular. Is John treating "two other woes" as neuter (a neuter plural

subject often takes a singular verb)? It is possible that John has in mind an ordinal number, giving the sense "a second woe", although the expected article is missing. The sixth trumpet introduces the second woe, and as already noted, a third woe is difficult to identify. Still, it is "Woe! Woe! Woe" in 8:13, with the second Woe concluding after the interlude, 11:14, and the third woe yet to come. See Mathewson for other options.

ετι adv. "yet" - [THERE COMES] YET [TWO WOES / A SECOND WOE]. Temporal adverb.

μετα + acc. "-" - AFTER [THESE THINGS]. Temporal use of the preposition. The phrase, "after these things" usually begins a sentence and so the NIV, as with many translations, links it with the following verse. Some translations leave it out altogether. It seems best to include the phrase with this verse; "the second Woe is yet to come after these things."

9:13-21

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

2. The judgment of the seven trumpets, 8:6-11:18

iii] Sounding the sixth trumpet

Synopsis

The day of judgment continues to unfold with the sounding of the sixth trumpet and the outpouring of the second woe. From the horns on the altar that stands before the throne of God, an order is given to the angel with the sixth trumpet that he should release the four angels bound for the terrible day of judgment. On their release, a demonic cavalry set out to destroy a third of humanity. Even in the face of such horror, those not killed by the demonic cavalry still do not repent of their sin.

Teaching

The kingdom of God is at hand, the Great Day of the Lord, the day of judgment, is upon us, and yet, we do not repent!

Issues:

i] Context: See 8:6-13.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *Sounding the sixth trumpet*:

The three woes, 8:13.

The second woe:

The sixth trumpet is sounded, v13;

The release of the four angels, v14-16;

Description of the demonic cavalry, v17-19;

The people's hardness of heart, v20-21:

And "still they did not repent."

iv] Interpretation:

The mighty Euphrates river runs from Northern Syria down to the Persian Gulf. The river serves as a natural demarcation line between ancient Israel to the West of the river and her enemies to the East. The four angels represent these traditional enemies who have at times plundered Israel, enemies like Syria (John is not alluding to four particular enemies). There is a sense where they are restrained, kept bound to the East of the river, but now, on the Great Day of the Lord, they are released in full force to cross the river in order to plunder and destroy. As with the locusts, John probably

wants us to view this plague of cavalry as a demonic hoard, so Koester. As is typical of the progressive unfolding of the day of judgment, the demonic locusts may torment, but the demonic cavalry kills a third of mankind "by the fire and smoke and sulphur coming out of their mouths."

John observes that in the face of this horror, those not killed by the demonic cavalry still do not repent, but rather keep on with their idolatry, murder, fornication and theft. John may well be referring to godless humanity, in particular, the persecutors of the church. As the vibrations of the Great Day reach the church today, we are aware, as John was aware in his day, of a growing resistance to the gospel within secular society. Yet, as Jesus noted of his generation, the people of Israel are like fickle children trying to settle on a game to play. Neither the bad news game of doom, nor the good news game of blessing, prompts repentance, cf., Matt:11:16-19. If we assume that John's prophecy is directed to the Christian fellowship, with particular reference to those members who have moved from the apostolic gospel toward heretical doctrines, secular mores, or societal shibboleths, then John may well have in mind hard-nosed church members.

It was quite startling to note, that during the 2017 plebiscite on gay marriage in Australia, a number of clergy argued against Jesus who taught that marriage is the union of a man and a woman under God. In Western societies today the pressure to identify with the shibboleths of the day is very strong, and once in the push, it is hard to escape. "The remaining men and women who weren't killed by these weapons went on their merry way - didn't change their way of life", Peterson, v20.

Text - 9:13

Sounding the sixth trumpet - the second woe, 9:13-21: i] The judgment of the sixth trumpet begins, so building on the previous judgments toward an ever-increasing catastrophe. In the Jerusalem temple there are two altars, one for sacrifice situated in the outer courtyard, and one for incense found in the tabernacle. John seems to combine both, placing the altar in front of the throne of God in the heavenly sanctuary. In Jewish tradition, altars have horns on each corner, but John may just be referring to the altar's four corners. Note that **τεσσαρων**, "four", is a variant reading, not read by the NIV, but included in the NIV11. It is unlikely that the horns speak, none-the-less, John's visions do stretch reality. The speaker may well be the angel who serves at the altar, 8:3, 14:13, but it is likely that voices from heaven, altar or otherwise, are intended to be divine in origin.

καὶ "-" - AND [THE SIXTH ANGEL TRUMPETED]. Transitional. Here used instead of **δε** to indicate a step in the argument.

εκ + gen. "**coming from**" - [AND I HEARD ONE VOICE] FROM. Expressing source / origin. The adjective **μιαν**, "one [voice]", serves as an article.

του θυσιαστηριου [ον] gen. "**of the [golden] altar**" - [THE FOUR HORNS / WINGS / FLANKS = CORNERS] OF THE ALTAR. The NIV has taken the genitive as adjectival, partitive, but possibly possessive, "the altar's four corners."

του χρυσου gen. adj. "**golden**" - OF GOLD. The articular adjective serves as a substantive, the genitive being adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic / material, "the altar *which is made of gold*."

του gen. art. "**that is [before God]**" - THE [BEFORE THE GOD]. The article serves as an adjectivizer turning the prepositional phrase "before God" into an attributive adjective limiting "the altar of gold"; "the altar ... which is before God." "God", **του θεου**, is genitive after the preposition **ενωπιον**, "before". "The golden altar which stands right opposite the throne of God."

v14

ii] The release of the four angels, v14-16. The sixth angel receives an order from the altar (a divine source!) to release the four angels of judgment presently under divine restraint. Set free to do their worst, they raise an army of the worst kind, cavalry, numbered in the millions. A first century reader would well remember Rome's defeat at the hands of the Parthians, let alone Israel's struggle with invading armies from the East.

λεγοντα [λεγω] pres. part. "**It said**" - SAYING. The participle technically serves as the complement of the direct object "voice" of the verb "I heard" standing in a double accusative construction. As already noted, the use of the participle "saying" evidences Semitic idiom and is commonly used by John to introduce direct, or indirect, speech: See **λεγων**, 1:17. It is not as redundant as the Synoptic complementary construction "he answered saying" = "he answered and said", but it moves in that direction. In the end, when it comes to the use of the participle before direct speech, it is more a matter of style than substance - note that it does not agree in person with "voice". The ESV stays with the Gk., "I heard a voice saying to the sixth angel ...", but some translations ignore it altogether, so Barclay, others rework it as a finite verb, as NIV, eg., "*The voice spoke to this angel and said*", CEV, "*And this is what the voice said to the sixth angel who stood there with his trumpet*", Cassirer. See **εχοντας**, v17.

τω ... αγγελω [ος] dat. "**to the [sixth] angel**" - Dative of indirect object.

ο εχων [εχω] pres. part. "**who had [the trumpet]**" - HAVING [THE TRUMPET]. The NIV treats the participle as adjectival, attributive, limiting "angel", although "angel" is dative and the participle "having" is nominative. We may classify this as a solecism, a grammatical mistake, although Mathewson suggests that the participle serves as a substantive in a parenthetical construction; "saying to the

sixth angel (the one who had the trumpet), 'release the four angels.'" John is very flexible in the way he uses participles, particularly "having", cf., 1:16.

τους δεδεμενους [δew] perf. mid./pas. part. "**who are bound**" - [RELEASE THE FOUR ANGELS] HAVING BEEN BOUND. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "angels". John specifies "the four angels" with an article, **τους**. It seems unlikely that he is relating them to the four angels who hold back the four winds; maybe his readers know of these four angels. Note that the passive is probably a divine passive; God does the restraining.

επι + dat. "**at [the great river Euphrates]**" - John's favourite spatial preposition, used to express "on / upon", but sometimes with the sense of "near / at" when followed by a genitive or a dative.

v15

οι ητοιμασμενοι [ετοιμαζw] perf. mid./pas. part. "**who had been kept ready**" - [AND THE FOUR ANGELS] HAVING BEEN BOUND [FOR THE HOUR, AND DAY AND MONTH AND YEAR WERE RELEASED]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "angels", as NIV.

εις + acc. "**for [this very hour]**" - TO [THE HOUR AND DAY AND MONTH AND YEAR]. Here expressing goal / end view, "destined for / with a view to"; "they were held in readiness for this very hour", Cassirer. All part of God's eternal plan!

ινα + subj. "**to [kill]**" - THAT [THEY MAY KILL]. Here introducing a final clause expressing purpose, "in order to kill." The verb **αποκτεινωσιν**, "they may kill", in form is either aorist or present, but probably a punctiliar aorist is intended.

των ανθρωπων [ος] gen. "**[a third] of mankind**" - [A THIRD *part*] OF MEN. The genitive is adjectival, partitive; "they were set loose to kill a third of the human race." John again reminds us of the unfolding horror of the Great Day of the Lord. In 6:8 a quarter of humanity died, here a third die.

v16

των στρατευματων [α ατος] gen. "**[the number] of [mounted] troops**" - [AND THE NUMBER] OF SOLDIERS [OF THE ARMY]. The genitive is probably not adverbial / measure, quantity, as suggested by Aune, possibly adjectival, verbal, objective, as suggested by Mathewson, "the soldiers are numbered", or even partitive / wholative. "The cavalry numbered twice ten thousand times ten thousand."

του ιππικου [ος] "**mounted**" - OF HORSEMEN [*was* TWICE TEN THOUSAND *times* TEN THOUSAND]. The NIV treats this genitive as adjectival, attributive, limiting "army"; "horsemen army" = "mounted troops" = "cavalry".

αυτων gen. pro. "**[I heard] their [number]**" - [I HEARD THE NUMBER] OF THEM. The genitive here is usually classified as verbal, objective, ie., they were

numbered, but it can also be treated as possessive, expressing a derivative characteristic. "I heard the count of the cavalry in my vision and it added up to two hundred million." Note the verb "I heard" can be followed by either an accusative, or a genitive; here it takes an accusative object.

v17

iii] The description of the demonic cavalry, v17-19. John's description of the cavalry emphasizes the horrible. Fire breathing monsters were not common in Jewish mythology, but there are some references, cf., Job 41 where Leviathan belches out torches and sparks. Such monsters were common in Graeco-Roman literature, eg., the Chimaera. Although John mentions the riders, his focus is on the horses, so much so that his description of the breastplates is probably for those worn by the horses. Note Deut.29:23, Isa.34:9-10, Ezk.38:22, for the combination of fire, brimstone, and at times, smoke. The damage caused by the cavalry is a step up from the locusts, and the judgment of the trumpets (a third of mankind dies) is a step up from the judgment of the seals (a quarter of mankind dies) - the day of judgment progressively escalates.

και ... ειδον "I saw" - AND [THUS] I SAW [THE HORSES IN THE VISION]. John uses this phrase to introduce a vision; "And this is what I saw"

τους καθήμενους [καθημαι] pres. mid. part. "**riders**" - [AND] THE ONES SITTING [UPON THEM]. The participle serves as a substantive.

εν + dat. "**in [my vision]**" - IN [THE VISION]. The preposition here is adverbial, modal, expressing manner.

οὕτως adv. "**looked like this**" - [I SAW] THUS. Here this demonstrative adverb references what follows, usually with a modal (manner) sense; "in my vision the horses and their riders looked this way (thus = like this)", Berkeley.

εχοντας [εχω] pres. part. "**[their breastplates] were [fiery red]**" - HAVING [BREASTPLATES FIERY (= red), AND HYACINTH (= blue), AND SULPHUR (= yellow)]. Technically the participle may be classified as the complement of the direct object "the horses ...", of the verb "I saw", standing in a double accusative construction. As a matter of form (a Semitism??) John seems to introduce his visions - what he hears, or what he sees - with a participle, as if introducing a dependent statement of perception; "I heard and it/he said ..", "I saw and it had etc., ..." "The riders were wearing breastplates of flame colour, blue and sulphur yellow", Barclay. John may be describing the breastplates worn by the horses, rather than the riders (commentators divide on the issue). The word **ύακινθινους**, "dark blue", was used of a number of flowers and precious stones, so it is unclear what colour John has in mind. Most translations opt for sapphire, a dark blue stone, given that red, blue and yellow aligns with what belches forth from the horses, namely, fire, smoke and brimstone (sulphur).

των ἵππων [ος] gen. "[the heads] of the horses" - The genitive is adjectival, partitive or possessive.

ὡς "resembled" - *were* AS, LIKE. Comparative.

λεοντων [ων οντος] gen. "[the heads] of lions" - The genitive is adjectival, partitive, or possessive.

εκ + gen. "out of [their mouth]" - [AND] FROM [THE MOUTHS OF THEM GOES OUT FIRE AND SMOKE AND SULPHUR]. Expressing source / origin. In typical form the verb εκπορευεται, "goes out", is singular with "fire", singular, even though more than fire comes out of the horse's mouths.

v18

των ανθρωπων [ος] gen. "[a third] of mankind" - [FROM =BY THESE THREE PLAGUES WERE KILLED THE THIRD] OF MEN. The genitive is adjectival, partitive; "the third part of men."

απο + gen. "by [the three plagues]" - Probably here expressing agency; used instead of ὑπο.

εκ + gen. "of [fire]" - FROM [THE FIRE AND THE SMOKE AND THE SULPHUR]. Instrumental use of the preposition serving to express means; "by fire, smoke and sulphur."

του εκπορευομενου [εκπορευομαι] gen. pres. mid. part. "that came out" - COMING OUT. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "fire, smoke and sulphur", "which came out of their mouths."

εκ + gen. "of [their mouths]" - FROM [THE MOUTH OF THEM]. Expressing source / origin. Somewhat redundant given the εκ prefix of the participle "coming out of", but reflecting common style.

v19

γαρ "-" - FOR. Introducing a causal clause explaining why the horses were able to kill a third of mankind; "because the power of"

των ιππων [ος] gen. "[the power] of the horses" - [THE AUTHORITY / POWER] OF THE HORSES. The genitive is usually taken as adjectival, verbal, subjective, "the power exercised by the horses ...", but possessive may well be in John's mind, "the power possessed by the horses; "for the horse's power lies in their mouth and in their tails", Berkeley.

εν + dat. "[was] in" - [IS] IN [THE MOUTHS OF THEM]. Local, expressing space. "The power of the horses resides in their mouths", Cassirer.

και "and [in their tails]" - AND [IN THE TAILS OF THEM]. Probably adjunctive; "and also." The power of these horses is not just in their mouths, but also in their tails, for their tails were like snakes

γαρ "for" - Introducing a causal clause explaining why the horses possess deadly power in their tails.

ὅμοιοι adj. + dat. "**were like**" - *are* LIKE [SERPENTS]. Comparative adjective with the dative complement **οφείσιν**, "serpent, snake."

ἔχουσαι [εχω] pres. part. "**having [heads]**" - The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "serpents". "They are like serpents with heads", Phillips.

εν + dat. "**with [which they inflict injury]**" - IN [THEM THEY DO HARM]. Instrumental use of the preposition expressing means; "by means of." The antecedent of **αυταις**, "them", is unclear, either the tails, or the heads, or both do harm; "Their tails were like poisonous snakes that bite and hurt", CEV.

v20

iv] The people's hardness of heart, v20-21. Paul's key argument to the Corinthian believers, those who were participating in pagan / cultic celebrations (building bridges to unbelievers???), was that although the idol was nothing more than gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood, there were demonic powers behind the so-called no-gods, cf., 1Cor.10:20. Lost humanity cannot help but worship the power of the secular city / Babylon, indulge in its "magic arts" and "sexual immorality." In the letters to the seven churches, John exposes the tendency of believers to drift from Zion toward Babylon and so, in Christ's name, he calls on them to repent, for it is only those who conquer, those who persevere in faith, who will gain entry to the eternal city. In the last day, stubborn resistance to repentance will be the norm, not just for the lost, but also for those who have drifted in their faith.

και "-" - AND. As in v13.

των ανθρωπων [ος] gen. "**[the rest] of mankind**" - [THE ONES REMAINING] OF THE MEN. The genitive is adjectival, partitive.

οι pro. "**who [were not killed]**" - The pronoun serves as the subject of the verb "to kill", but of course, given that the accents are a later addition to the text, it may have been an article giving the sense "the ones not killed by the blows ("this fearful destruction", Phillips)", so serving as a substantive standing in apposition to "the men."

εν + dat. "**by [these plagues]**" - IN [THESE WOUNDS, BLOWS, PLAGUES]. Instrumental use of the preposition expressing means, as NIV.

ουδε "**[did] not [repent]**" - Here used as an emphatic negation.

εκ + gen. "**from**" - OF [THE WORKS]. Expressing separation, "repent" in the sense of turning away from.

των χειρων [ρ ρος] gen. "**of [their] hands**" - OF THE HANDS [OF THEM]. The genitive is usually treated as verbal, subjective; "things which they had made with their own hands", Cassirer. Often taken as Semitic idiom referring to the creation

of idols, "the god's their hands had made", REB, cf. Psalm 135:15, Isa.2:8,17:8, Dn.5:4.

ἰνα + fut. "[they did not stop worshipping]" - THAT [THEY SHALL NOT WORSHIP DEMONS]. John again uses a future tense instead of the expected subjunctive with *hina*. Serving to introduce a consecutive clause expressing result; "the rest of mankind did not repent of the work of their hands and so as a result they did not stop worshipping". "They did not renounce so they did not stop", Smalley.

καὶ "and [idols]" - The conjunction here may be epexegetic; "they did not stop worshipping demons, that is, idols." The modifying adjectives, "golden, silver," identify the material used to construct the idol, "idols *which are made out of* gold", cf., Dan.5:4.

βλεπειν [βλεπω] pres. inf. "[idols that cannot see]" - [WHICH NEITHER ARE ABLE] TO SEE. As with "to hear", and "to walk", the infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of the verb "is able."

ουτε ... ουτε ουτε "or or .." - NEITHER [ARE ABLE TO SEE] NOR [TO HEAR] NOR [TO WALK]. Negated coordinate construction.

v21

εκ + gen. "[nor did they repent] of" - [AND THEY DID NOT REPENT] FROM. The preposition expresses separation; "away from." "There wasn't a sign of a change of heart. They plunged right on in their murderous, occult, promiscuous, and thieving ways", Peterson.

αυτων gen. pro. "their [murders]" - [THE MURDERS] OF THEM. The series of genitives in this verse are best taken as verbal, subjective, eg., "the murders *performed by* them" = "their murderous ways."

ουτε ... ουτε ουτε "-" - NEITHER [OF THE MAGIC ARTS / SORCERY OF THEM], NOR [THE FORNICATIONS / IMMORALITY OF THEM], NOR [THE THEFTS OF THEM]. Negated coordinate construction. Cf., 18:23, 22:15.

10:1-11

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

2. The judgment of the seven trumpets, 8:6-11:18

iv] Interlude

a) The mighty angel and his scroll

Synopsis

Within the vision of the second Woe, the judgment of the sixth trumpet, John sees a supplementary vision, this time with particular reference to the church as it is caught up in the unfolding day of judgment. A mighty angel descends from heaven with a little scroll in his hand. The angel announces that "there will be no more delay." He then tells John to take the scroll and eat it, warning him that although it is sweet to taste, it will give him terrible indigestion. The angel then commissions John for prophetic witness.

Teaching

Now is the time for the church to proclaim to the nations that the kingdom of God is at hand, the Great Day of the Lord, the day of judgment, is come.

Issues:

i] Context: See 8:6-13. As with the judgment of the seven seals, the judgment of the seven trumpets has an interlude, "a pause before the end", Blount, 10:1 to 11:14. These interludes shift the perspective of the reader from being a heavenly spectator of the Great Day of the Lord to a member of the Christian church struggling in the face of the coming Great Day, i.e., we move from a realized *now* to an inaugurated *not yet*. The interlude serves as a literary device used by John to unfold the role and destiny of the Christian community before the end-time, cf., Mounce. Although the interludes fall between the sixth and seventh judgment, in time terms they address a time prior to the unfolding day of judgment, i.e., before the first judgment. It is unlikely that John wants us to view the first six judgments as preliminary events prior to the day of judgment, i.e., the "wars and rumours of wars" that Jesus spoke of. The series of seven judgments are a dramatic representation of the unfolding day of judgment, whereas the interludes speak to a church awaiting the Great Day. The first interlude, 7:1-17 focused on the security of the saints in a world falling apart; this interlude looks at a world opposed to God and his people, and reveals the proper response of the Christian community. The interlude presents in two parts, 10:1-11 and 11:1-14, with only a superficial link, so Aune, although with a common theme, namely, prophecy / the proclamation of the gospel.

In 10:1-11 An angelic messenger from Christ proclaims to the church that "there will be no more delay." In the face of this reality the church must redouble its efforts to prophesy / proclaim the gospel to broken humanity, even though the inclination of humanity is to reject the gospel. In 11:1-14 we learn that the witnesses who prophesy will face persecution, even martyrdom, for their troubles. Yet, when their testimony is complete, even unto death, they will be glorified. This ends the second woe, "the third woe is coming soon."

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The mighty angel and his scroll:*

A Christ-like angel descends to earth with an open scroll in his hand,
v1-4;

The angel announces that the time is fulfilled, v5-7;

"There will be no more delay."

John, on behalf of the church, is commissioned to undertake prophetic witness, v8-11.

iv] Interpretation:

Through John's eyes we see a mighty angel coming down from heaven, an angel who bears all the characteristics of Christ - he is a messenger with divine authority, cf., Dan.12:5-7. He holds in his hand a scroll, a divine word, and when he speaks it is like the roar of a lion, a roar which echoes with divine mysteries that are beyond human knowing. Reaching his hand upward he proclaims that there should be no more delay", v6. This is the last moment before the day of judgment and the sounding of the trumpets - it is a minute to midnight. It is in this moment that the mystery of God's will, hidden from the prophets of old, should be fulfilled / revealed in the gospel to the "servants and prophets" of Christ, v7, and made known επι "many peoples, nations, languages and kings", v11. So, like Ezekiel of old, John takes the scroll and eats it (a "symbolic commission to prophesy", Aune), but unlike Ezekiel who found the scroll sweet, for John it is both sweet and bitter - a divine message of salvation that carries a dark warning and brings down trouble on those who proclaim / witness it, v9-10, cf., Ezk.3:1-3. This thought is further developed in chapter 11.

The Interlude: In 10:1-11:14, as in the judgment of the seals, 7:1-17, there is an interlude, a pause, in the unfolding day of judgment which serves to explain the delay faced by those who cry out "How long Lord?" Here we learn that prior to the day of judgment, repentance is possible, and to this end it is a time when the gospel must be communicated to all nations and peoples. This interlude changes the perspective of the reader from that of a

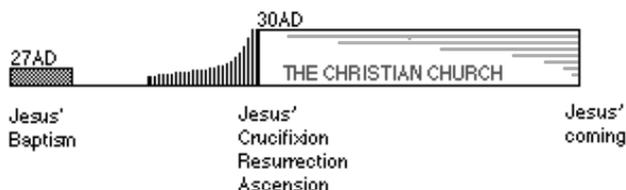
viewer of the Great Day of the Lord to that of a participant who is a member of a Christian fellowship. We are no longer in heaven looking down, but in church looking out, looking out into a world beginning to crumble as the day of judgment draws near. The interlude clarifies the role of the saints prior to and during the events of the seals, trumpets and bowls.

The dominant theme in this two-part interlude is prophetic witness, so Aune, Repentance is not possible in the day of judgment, but prophetic witness can cut through prior to the terrible day (to some degree, 11:13b). Bauckham argues that the focus is on martyrdom, but martyrdom is but a worst-case consequence of gospel witnessing. Chapter 11 will develop the subject of persecution in relation to prophecy / witness. In these last days leading up to the end, believers must "witness and suffer, leading to vindication and victory", Osborne. Believers are protected from the unfolding horror of divine judgment, but not from the rage of dark powers (Satan and his minions, the Beast / Antichrist) as they proclaim the gospel. Prophetic witness will prompt a response: some will believe, many will rage with hate, a hate that builds into the great tribulation (the final rage of the Beast / Antichrist).

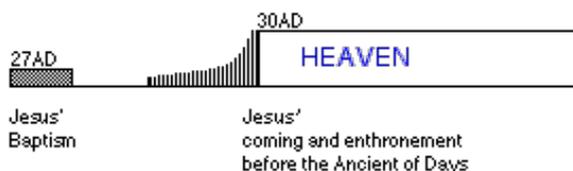
The continuity problem, with respect to timing, in the Revelation: In the judgments of the seals, trumpets and bowls, John's vision reveals the progressive unfolding of the Great Day of the Lord, the day of judgment. The perspective of these visions is from heaven, such that we stand with John and witness Christ, the victorious Lamb, enthroned and administering the unfolding catastrophe of divine judgment - the kingdom is *now*, eschatology is realized.

In the interludes, 7:1-17, 10:1-14, the kingdom is *not yet*, the eschatology is inaugurated. We are no longer looking at the unfolding judgments of the Great Day, but are transported to earth to witness that moment of grace before the end, that minute to midnight when repentance is still possible. It is that time when there are "wars and rumours of wars but the end is still to come", it is "the birth-pangs of the new age", a time of persecution, a time when "the gospel must be proclaimed to all nations", Mk.13:5-13. Our perspective is from the church looking out, and this through apocalyptic imagery. For John's generation, it is the moment before the day of judgment, a moment when repentance still applies, and so it is for our generation.

A KINGDOM NOW and NOT YET

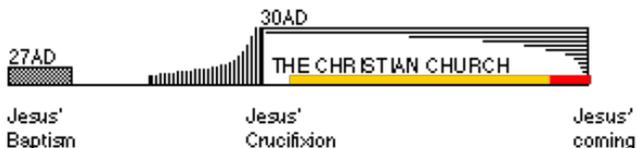


A KINGDOM NOW and NOT YET



In the first illustration above we see John's *not yet* vision of the kingdom, THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH struggling as the Great Day draws near, Rev.10:1-11:14. In the second illustration we see John's *now* vision of HEAVEN, the Kingdom realized. The crucified Lamb has risen as the conquering Lion and is even now taking his place beside the Ancient of Days. Heaven is in rapturous tumult as the Lion King institutes the long-promised Great Day of the Lord, the day of blessing and cursing. To this end, John witnesses the progressive unfolding of this awesome day, a terrible day for the unrepentant, but eternal skies for repentant believers. Jesus has ascended to glory, his coming is nigh; "Come, O Lord."

John's eschatology is primarily *realized*. This is particularly evident in the judgments of the seals, trumpets and bowls; the Great Day of the Lord is upon us, progressively unfolding at this very moment. Yet, in 10:1-11:14 the eschatology is inaugurated and we find ourselves caught up in the preliminary events leading up to the great tribulation and the day of judgment. As illustrated below, we live somewhere in the YELLOW zone awaiting the Great Day.



Homiletics: *Maranatha*

It's very easy to work ourselves into a cycle of guilt. We continually fail our Lord, are always less than faithful, and so when we start to think about the end of the world and the day of judgment we can end up overwhelmed by guilt. In that day Christ will reward the faithful. Yet, how uneasy we feel, for if the day of judgment was today, would he say "well done good and faithful servant"? How secure are we if we had to stand before the judge of the universe this very day?

We may not "practise magic arts" as such, we may not be into palmistry and the like, but it's very easy to be into power games. Magic is the art of manipulation - the manipulation of individuals and of circumstances. We don't need a voodoo doll to destroy our enemies, we just need to know how to play the "game". We might not have committed "sexual immorality", in a literal sense, but we have all flirted with someone's feelings. We may not be "murderers" as such, but we have all hated. All of us have despised, even a brother. We have justified it by working up a good long list of their "sins and offences", never hesitating for a moment to deny any evidence of the "log" in our own eye. None of us may be "idolaters" as such, but all of us hold tightly to our possessions. How do we answer our Lord in that last day when he asks us why we thought the things of this world were so important? When we see all that we kept to ourselves and the so little we gave to him, how then will we answer? "He who loves and practises falsehood", surely not us Lord? Lie, deceive, hide the real me.... never.

Yet, Jesus says to us "come", whoever is thirsty, whoever wishes. He invites us to wash our robes in his mercy and enter the gates of the Holy City. There is no hesitation in this offer, no qualification. "He is the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End"; He has the right to make the offer and the power to make it stick.

So yes, we come and in his goodness we hide. As for our goodness, change us Lord Jesus, renew us. Make us loyal and brave rather than cowardly, faithful rather than unfaithful, gentle and kind rather than nasty, loving rather than hateful, honourable in all our relationships, servants rather than manipulators, simple livers rather than complex wasters, honest and open rather than deceptive.

So now you can come Lord Jesus, we are waiting. "Yes, I am coming soon" is his reply.

Text - 10:1

Interlude: The mighty angel and his scroll, v1-11. i] A Christ-like angel descends to earth with an open scroll in his hand, v1-4. Drawing on the imagery of Daniel 12, with a possible allusion to the Colossus of Rhodes, John describes a

glorious angel bearing the divine marks of the Son of Man, the repository of wisdom untold (clouds often accompany a divine presence, Exod.13:21, Mk.9:7, etc., a rainbow for a crown, sun-like face and radiant feet are Christ-like, Rev.1:15, 16). He has in his hand the scroll that was sealed and is now open, a scroll listing the judgments of the seven seals. He speaks with the roar of a lion, and the Seven Thunders reverberate in response. John prepares to write down this divine revelation, probably from God himself, but a voice from heaven instructs him that it must remain secret. We are probably dealing with the full details of the unfolding Day of the Lord, the day of judgment, details that the church need not concern itself with, and this because God has everything in hand.

και ειδον [όραω] aor. "**then I saw**" - John uses this phrase to indicate a new vision. "**After that I saw** another mighty angel coming down", Cassirer.

καταβαινοντα [καταβαινω] pres. part. "**coming down**" - [ANOTHER STRONG ANGEL] COMING DOWN. The NIV treats this participle as the complement of the direct object, "angel", of the verb "I saw." John does often use a participle to introduce what he saw / heard, ie., a dependent statement of perception, so "I saw another mighty angel descend from heaven", Berkeley, so also Moffatt.

εκ + gen. "**from [heaven]**" - Expressing source / origin.

περιβεβλημενον [περιβαλλω] perf. mid./pas. part. "**He was robed in [a cloud]**" - HAVING PUT ON [A CLOUD]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "angel"; "I saw another mighty angel, who was wrapped in a cloud, descend from heaven."

επι + gen. "**[with a rainbow] above [his head]**" - [AND THE RAINBOW *was*] ON [THE HEAD OF HIM]. John's favourite spatial preposition, here with the sense "over / above his head", as NIV.

ώς "**[his face] like [the sun]**" - [AND THE FACE OF HIM *was*] AS [THE SUN]. Comparative; so also "feet as pillars of fire."

πυρος [π ρος] gen. "**fiery [pillars]**" - [AND THE FEET OF HIM AS PILLARS] OF FIRE. The genitive is probably adjectival, attributive, as NIV. Note that John has the angel's "feet" as fiery pillars. This is probably an example of synecdoche where a part represents the whole, so "his legs were like columns of fire", CEV.

v2

εχων [εχω] pres. part. "**he was holding**" - [AND] HAVING [IN THE HAND OF HIM]. Here again John is introducing a further development of his vision with a participle - an idiomatic / stylistic feature; "A rainbow (nominative) *was* on his head and he was holding (nominative)" Technically we would classify the participle as a periphrastic construction missing the verb to-be, although John often uses this participle as if it were a finite verb, cf., 1:16.

βιβλαριδιον [ον] "a little scroll" - A SCROLL, BOOK. A diminutive of **βιβλιδιον**. Koester argues that it is not a true diminutive because John interchanges the words **βιβλαριδιον** with **βιβλιον**. If this is the case then the angel is holding the scroll opened in 6:1ff, so Boring, Beasley-Murray, Sweet, Bauckham, Koester, contra Mounce, Charles, Kiddle, who argue for two different scrolls, large / small, or two separate scrolls covering Rev.6-11 and 12-22. Collins argues for one scroll covering Rev.12-22. So, the scroll written on both sides (5:1, the judgments of the seals) is probably the same scroll that John is told to eat so that he can prophesy, which prophecy is summarized in chapter 11 and then developed in the rest of revelation, so Bauckham, Osborne, Koester, .. As a matter of interest, Plummer DDG refers to the early Greek commentary by Oecumenius, 6th century, who makes a point of the diminutive form here - it's a very small scroll (actually a combination of the two diminutives **αρτιον** and **ιδιον**). The argument put by Oecumenius is that the "small / little" is referring to a list of really bad sinners - there are not many of them; an interesting idea, but unlikely. "He was holding in his hand an opened scroll."

ηνεωγμενον [ανοιγω] perf. mid./pas. part. "which lay open in his hand" - HAVING BEEN OPENED. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "scroll"; "an opened scroll."

εν + dat. "in [his hand]" - Local use of the preposition, expressing space.

επι + gen. "on [the sea]" - [AND HE PLACED THE RIGHT FOOT OF HIM] ON [THE SEA AND THE LEFT *foot*] ON [THE LAND]. John's favourite spatial preposition, "on, upon." The image expresses one of dominion.

v3

φωνη [η] dat. "[he gave] a [loud] shout" - [AND HE CALLED OUT] IN A [GREAT] VOICE. The dative is adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of his shout; "he called out with a loud voice", ESV.

ωσπερ "like [the roar of a lion]" - AS, JUST AS [ROARS A LION]. A change from John's favourite **ως**, and the only use of this comparative in Revelation. "A voice that sounded like a roaring lion", CEV.

οτε "when [he shouted]" - WHEN [HE CALLED OUT]. Introducing a temporal clause, as NIV.

αι ετα βρονται [η] "the seven thunders [spoke]" - THE SEVEN THUNDERS [SPOKE THE VOICES]. Nominative subject of the verb "to speak". The angel speaks with a mighty voice and he is answered by seven thunderous voices. The use of seven again indicates perfection / completeness, but who speaks? Possibly the voices come from angelic powers, so Beale, Koester, ..., but God / Christ seems more likely, so Aune, Smalley, Reddish, Osborne, ... God raws like a lion, Hos.11:10, Amos.3:8, and in Psalm 29 he thunders seven times. On Mount Sinai

thunder and lightning represented the divine presence, Exod.19:16, etc. But what is the content of the thunders? Commentators provide diverse interpretations, but in line with the fact that John is not allowed to write anything down probably indicates that we are not to know their meaning. Of the numerous interpretations, the one offered by Osborne is the most satisfactory, p397-8. The thunders are the full details of the unfolding day of judgment and since God is in control it is not necessary for the saints to know every detail. God is a sovereign Lord in control of the day of judgment, and since he loves his people, he will care for his people.

ἑαυτῶν ref. pro. "-" - OF THEM. Here the genitive is probably adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic / source, "from them", but possibly just possessive; "when he spoke the seven thunders lifted their voices", Phillips.

v4

ὅτε "when [the seven thunders spoke]" - AND [WHEN THE SEVEN THUNDERS SPOKE]. Serving to introduce a temporal clause.

γραφειν [**γραφο**] pres. inf. "[I was about] to write" - The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of the verb "to be about."

εκ + gen. "from [heaven]" - [AND I HEARD A VOICE] FROM [HEAVEN]. Expressing source / origin.

λεγουσαν [**λεγω**] pres. part. "say" - SAYING. Again, John introduces his vision with a participle, here what he hears; see **λεγων**, 1:17. Technically it may be classified as an object complement, serving as the complement of the direct object, "a voice", of the verb "I heard", standing in a double accusative construction.

μη ... γραφης [**γραφο**] aor. subj. "do not write [it] down" - [SEAL THE THINGS WHICH THE SEVEN THUNDERS SPOKE AND] NOT WRITE [THEM]. A subjunctive of prohibition; "do not write them down." As to why John should not write down the thunderous words, see "the seven thunders spoke", v3. "Seal with silence the Seven Thunders; do not write a word", Peterson.

v5

ii] The angel announces that the time is fulfilled, v5-7. The angel announces, on behalf of God and the Lamb, that there will be no more delay in the the final catastrophic judgment - it is one minute to midnight. John will go on to show that in this final moment before the end grace still abounds.

εστωα [**ιστημι**] perf. part. "[I had seen] standing" - [AND THE ANGEL I SAW WHOM] HAVING STOOD. The participle serves as an object complement, complement of the direct object, "whom", of the verb "I saw", standing in a double accusative construction.

ἐπι + gen. "**on [the sea]**" - ON [THE SEA AND] ON [THE EARTH]. Spatial use of the preposition, "on, upon." "Bestriding the sea and the land", Phillips.

εἰς + acc. "**to [heaven]**" - [LIFTED THE HAND OF HIM] TO [HEAVEN]. Spatial, here expressing movement toward. "Held his right hand up toward heaven", CEV.

v6

The oath sworn by the angel alludes to Daniel 12:7.

ἐν + dat. "**[he swore] by**" - [AND HE SWORE] IN. This variant preposition is not read by a number of commentators. Their argument is that it was added so that the dative "the one living" is not read as "he swore in him who lives", rather than "by him who lives", with the dative serving as an accusative of oaths, cf. Wallace p204.

τῷ ζῶντι [ζῶ] dat. pres. part. "**him who lives**" - THE ONE LIVING. The participle serves as a substantive. The designation given for God is extensive - he is the sovereign one, Lord of time and space. He created, and thus reigns over heaven, earth and sea. This is a three-level cosmology, the sea being the chaotic waters under the earth, Gen.1:2.

εἰς "**for ever and ever**" - INTO [THE AGES OF THE AGES]. Temporal use of the preposition. The phrase is idiomatic, meaning simply "forever".

ὅτι "**[there will be no more delay]**" - [WHO CREATED THE HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT] THAT [TIME WILL BE NO LONGER]. Here introducing an object clause, object of the verb "he swore" / dependent statement of indirect speech / oath content (the only example in Revelation). "Time will cease to exist" = "the period of waiting will be up", Mathewson. Time is part of the created order and this statement may express the end of time, as we know it, as we move into the timeless dimension of the new creation, so Cullman (see also Osborne) but it is more likely that "the angel is saying that time is up and that the events of the end are about to be set in motion", Smalley - there will be no more delay before the final judgment. Possibly, but unlikely, the angel is saying that the time for repentance has ended.

v7

ἀλλ [ἀλλὰ] "**but**" - At this point John uses an adversative to introduce a qualification. In Daniel 12:7 the final unfolding of the day of judgment occurs during "a time, a time, and half a time", after which all things are completed. John is identifying this with the sounding of the seventh trumpet. All "will be accomplished" then, just as Daniel had prophesied.

ἐν "**in [the days]**" - IN [THE DAYS]. Temporal use of the preposition, "during the days ..."

της φωνης [η] gen. "**when [the seventh angel]**" - OF THE VOICE [OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL WHEN HE IS ABOUT TO TRUMPET]. The awkward syntax here produces numerous translations. The idiomatic phrase "in the days" generally prompts a genitive "in the days of ..." - adjectival, idiomatic / temporal; "in the days during which / in which / when ..." = "In the days at / during the voice / sound / blast / peal of the seventh angel. The genitive του ... αγγελου, "the [seventh] angel", is probably adjectival, possessive, "the seventh angel's peal", but possibly verbal, subjective, "the peal *sounded by* the seventh angel." Of course, even for a first century reader a genitive is anything but clear so John qualifies the statement with a further indefinite temporal clause introduced by **ὅταν** + subj., "whenever he is about to trumpet", specifying that the moment of the trumpet blast is what he is referring to. Modern translations cut through all this by combining both clauses; "When the seventh angel blows his trumpet", TEV.

σαλπίζειν [σαλπίζω] pres. inf. "to sound his trumpet" - [HE IS ABOUT] TO TRUMPET. The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of the verb "to be about to."

και "-" - AND. Here more consecutive than coordinative; "and then"

ετέλεσθη [τελεω] aor. pas. "**[the mystery of God] will be accomplished**" - WOULD BE COMPLETED [THE MYSTERY OF GOD]. As Mathewson notes, the perfective aspect of the aorist has prompted its use here rather than a future tense, although the NIV has properly translated it as future for the English reader. Classifications such as futuristic aorist are unnecessary. John is simply making the point that God's plans (his mystery, του θεου is a possessive genitive) find complete fulfillment at the sounding of the final trumpet.

ὡς "just as" - AS [HE PROCLAIMED]. Comparative used to reference a concrete example, "in terms of *the mystery already* announced to his servants the prophets (eg., Daniel 12:7)."

τους ἑαυτου δουλους acc. "**to his servants**" - *the mystery to* HIS OWN SERVANTS. Most translations treat this accusative as an example of advancement where the expected dative indirect object "to his own servants" has taken the place of an assumed direct object, probably "the mystery", and in doing so has adopted the accusative case.

τους προφητας [ης ου] acc. "**the prophets**" - Accusative standing in apposition to "his own servants."

v8

iii] John is commissioned to undertake prophetic witness, v8-11. Like Ezekiel many years before, Ezk.3:1-3, John is instructed to eat the opened scroll, to digest its contents, and so internalize its truths. The scroll is both sweet and bitter; it is a word that can prompt repentance and thus salvation, but it is primarily a word of

judgment, and so can prompt persecution, even unto death, for those who communicate it. This act of prophetic commissioning / investiture is explained in the terms of prophesying / witnessing to "peoples and nations and languages and kings", v11. This commissioning, through John, extends to the church.

και "then" - AND. Here used instead of **δε** to indicate a step in the narrative.

ἦν pro. "**that [I heard]**" - [THE VOICE I HEARD] WHICH *was* [FROM HEAVEN]. Introducing a relative clause, object of the verb "I heard." Of course, the whole clause is elliptical, requiring the addition of a verb to-be, but this can be added in a number of places, eg., "the voice which I heard from heaven *was* again speaking", or "*there was* a voice which I heard from heaven again speaking." If, for example, we opt for the last option, the relative clause would serve as the complement of the direct object "voice", with "speaking and saying" serving as a second complement.

εκ + gen. "**from [heaven]**" - FROM [HEAVEN]. The preposition here expresses source / origin.

λαλουσαν [λαλεω] pres. part. "**spoke**" - SPEAKING. The participle serves as an object complement, complement of the object, "which was from heaven", of the verb "I heard", standing in a double accusative construction, but note **ἦν** above.

μετ [μετα] + gen. "**to [me]**" - WITH [ME AGAIN]. The preposition expresses association / accompaniment.

λεγουσαν [λεγω] pres. part. "-" - [AND] SAYING. Without **και** the participle could be classified as attendant circumstance, but with **και** it is coordinate with **λαλουσαν** and therefore serving as a coordinate object complement. Again, John introduces a vision with a participle; see **λεγων**, 1:17.

το ηνεωγμενον [ανοιγω] perf. mid./pas. part. "**that lies open**" - [GO TAKE THE SCROLL] HAVING BEEN OPENED. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "scroll", as NIV.

εν + dat. "**in [the hand]**" - Local, expressing space.

του αγγελου [ος] gen. "**of the angel**" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive.

του εστωτος [ιστημι] gen. perf. part. "**who is standing**" - THE ONE STANDING. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "angel", as NIV.

επι + gen. "**on [the sea]**" - UPON [THE SEA AND] UPON [THE LAND]. Spatial; "on, upon."

v9

The image of the scroll being sweet to taste, but turning sour in the stomach (indigestion??), is handled differently by the commentators. Osborne argues that for the church, the scroll "will be *bitter* because it involves much suffering, and yet *sweet* because the church will emerge triumphant." It may be sweet because

its message brings salvation, but bitter because its message prompts an aggressive reaction from those destined to destruction, ie., persecution of the faithful; so Caird, Mounce, Smalley, Koester, .. It is possible that the prophet is in mind, the sweet call, but bitterness in the delivery, rejection, cf., Ezekiel. Another possibility is the good news / bad news nature of the scroll's message - grace is sweet (the day of salvation is at hand), but Woe is bitter (the Day of the Lord, the day of judgment is at hand).

και "so" - AND. The NIV has opted for a consecutive sense; "and so."

λεγων [λεγω] pres. part. "asked" - [I WENT TO THE ANGEL] SAYING. Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the verb "to go"; "I went and said ..."; cf., λεγων, 1:17.

αυτω dat. pro. "him" - TO HIM. Dative of indirect object.

δουσαι [διδωμι] aor. inf. "to give" - Introducing an object clause / dependent statement of indirect speech expressing what John asked.

μοι dat. pro. "me" - TO ME [THE SCROLL, BOOK, AND HE SAYS] TO ME [TAKE AND EAT IT AND IT WILL MAKE BITTER OF YOU THE STOMACH]. Dative of indirect object. Note the unusual drawing forward of the genitive σου, "of you". We would expect την κοιλιαν σου, "the belly of you." Also note the intensification of the verb φαγω, "to eat", with the prefix κατα. Does it mean "to gorge"? Bitterness of the stomach is probably describing indigestion; "it will give you an upset stomach, but to the taste it is as sweet as honey."

αλλ [αλλα] "but [in your mouth]" - BUT [IN THE MOUTH OF YOU IT WILL BE SWEET]. Adversative, contrastive; "but".

ως "as [honey]" - AS [HONEY]. Comparative; "like honey."

v10

οτε "[but] when [I had eaten it]" - [AND I TOOK THE SCROLL OUT OF THE HAND OF THE ANGEL AND ATE IT AND IT WAS IN THE MOUTH OF ME AS SWEET HONEY AND] WHEN [I ATE IT THE STOMACH OF ME WAS MADE BITTER]. Serving to introduce a temporal clause. The preposition εκ, "out of", expresses separation, and εν, "in", expresses space / sphere. The genitives "angel" and "me" are possessive, and the comparative ως, "as", as above.

v11

John seems to imply that "having eaten I was then told that I must prophesy"? John's task is now to proclaim the message of the scroll, to proclaim the Great Day of the Lord, the day of judgment, the day of the coming kingdom, and to communicate that important message / gospel, to all humanity, to Christ's compromised followers, as well as those opposed to Christ.

και "then" - AND. Indicating a step in the narrative.

μοι dat. pro. "I" - [THEY SAY] TO ME. Dative of indirect object.

λεγουσιν [λεγω] pres. "was told" - THEY SAY. Historical / narrative present tense. The plural person "they" is unexpected. It may be the seven thunders who are speaking, or the "voice from heaven" (a divine voice) along with the angel. The NIV, as with most translations, has taken the plural as indefinite and so translated as a passive; "Then there was another thing I was told", Cassirer.

προφητευσαι [προφητεω] aor. inf. "you must prophesy" - [YOU] TO PROPHECY [AGAIN IS NECESSARY]. With the indefinite δει, "it is necessary", the infinitive usually serves as its subject, with the accusative σε, "you" serving as the subject of the infinitive. As Zerwick notes, it may actually be epexegetic here, specifying what is necessary, "it is necessary that you prophecy." "It is necessary" is often used in the scriptures to express divine necessity.

παλιν adv. "again" - Adverb of manner. Is this a recommissioning of John? That is certainly possible, but the sense may be that John is being called on to prophecy again like the Old Testament prophets prophesied, a prophecy επι, "against", those who resist God's Word, both in the church, and outside the church.

επι + dat. "about [many peoples]" - AGAINST [PEOPLES AND NATIONS AND TONGUES AND MANY KINGS]. John again uses his favourite preposition, but here followed by a dative. With a dative it may be spatial, but for a spatial sense, "on, upon", John usually follows up with a genitive. With a dative it may be temporal or causal, but that doesn't work here. On rare occasions it may express purpose / goal, so "with a view to the salvation / the judgment of many" Another possibility is opposition, so "against many", so Smalley, Mathewson, Osborne, Beale, Blount, Aune. Reference / respect is another possible meaning, "about / concerning / on the subject of many", so Zerwick, Koester, Bauckham, Mounce - although this usage is usually followed by an accusative. "Against" is the likely sense given that it is constantly used in the OT of those who prophecy "against" the people (God's stiff-necked people), or the nations, as they announce the coming of the Great Day of the Lord, cf., Jer.25:13, 32:30, Ezk.6:2, 25:2, etc. This is certainly what John is set to do, but "against" should not be understood as a negative denouncement of the people. The proclamation of the Great Day of the Lord, that the kingdom of God is at hand, is both good and bad news, and is directed, first and foremost, to those who claim standing before God, and thereafter to all peoples. The Great Day of divine judgment is at hand, but mercy still applies, so repent.

11:1-14

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

2. The judgment of the seven trumpets, 8:6-11:18

iv] Interlude

b) The two witnesses

Synopsis

We now come to the second part of the interlude. Warned that the Gentiles are set to move against the temple, John is told to measure the sanctuary. In the face of this threat, two witness are appointed to prophecy for a shortened time - half of the perfect number 7. Their witness will be powerful. Yet, the beast from the Abyss, the powers of darkness, are set against them, even unto death, and when brought low, Godless humanity gloats over them. Yet, with the shortening of time, "life from God entered them", and "they went up to heaven in a cloud." As for the Godless, their end is judgment.

Teaching

In the face of the coming kingdom of God, the Great Day of the Lord, the day of judgment, faithful believers are to witness to the coming day in the knowledge that witnessing brings suffering, but also inevitably, vindication and glorification.

Issues:

i] Context: See 10:1-11.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The two witnesses*:

John measures the temple sanctuary, v1-2;

The appointment of prophetic witnesses, v3-6;

The powers of darkness oppose the witnesses, v7-10;

The witnesses are glorified, v11-12;

Judgment ensues, v13-14.

iv] Interpretation:

In his vision, John is given a measuring rod in order to measure the temple's sanctuary, but he is not to go on to measure the outer court of the nations / Gentiles. This establishes the perspective of the vision; it concerns God's people in a world facing judgment. Godless humanity has its time, but it is not a full time (seven years), rather it is a shortened time (three and a half years - see below).

During this time, the church is to fulfill its mission of making the gospel known to lost humanity. John represents this with the two witnesses who prophesy. Note how they align with Jesus' sending out his disciples two by two - also note their dress, v3. It is also likely that John is alluding to the priest / king relationship of Zerubbabel and Joshua, much in the same way as believers are both kings and priests, Zech.3-4. The power of the gospel they proclaim is illustrated in the fire that "comes from their mouths and devours their enemies", v5. Jesus sent out his disciples "with authority over unclean spirits", with a gospel that condemns the world, but a gospel that also has "the power of God unto salvation", v6.

Using apocalyptic imagery, John describes the reaction of a Godless world to the gospel, v7-10. The witnesses are set upon by the beast from the Abyss. John is probably referring back to the locusts' plague that burst from the Abyss in chapter 9. The beast, the plague, may represent the Antichrist, but ultimately Satan is the one pulling the strings, and it is he who manipulates Godless humanity to set upon Christ's missioners, attacking, overpowering and killing. Rejection through indifference or opposition is the name of the game. It is probably unwise to view martyrdom as the norm - opposition is the norm, sometimes leading to persecution and this because of the torment of the gospel, v10. Nor should we conclude that there is a point where witnessing ceases before the day of judgment. Witnessing will cease on the day of judgment; up till then repentance is possible.

Again, we are reminded that the age of the church, the messianic age, the era between Christ's ascension and glorification, is limited for the sake of the elect - the halving of the perfect number 7, v11. John refers to this limitation in time terms, but in practical terms it involves a limitation on the powers of darkness (the binding of Satan??, 20:1-3). Believers will be set upon in a Godless world, the gospel resisted and scorned, but only for a time (the resistance is limited), and then, in the Great Day of the Lord, we will be caught up in the clouds with Christ, v12, with the Godless left to face judgment, v13.

So, in addressing a church compromised by its assimilation in both belief and practice to the surrounding secular culture (the heresy of syncretism), John, through his vision, reveals the kind of behaviour that is worthy of God's promised reward. The victorious, those who persevere in faith, do not adopt the shibboleths of Babel, but proclaim the gospel to Babel, and do so in the knowledge that although witnessing brings with it persecution, even unto death, it is but for a moment, and thereafter eternal glory.

The time and two times and half a time - half the perfect number of seven: In v2 John mentions the time signature "months forty and two." John will mention this unit of time a number of times, here as "42 months", or three and a half years. This time signature represents half the perfect number of seven and John seems to use it to emphasize that the attack of the powers of darkness on God's people will be limited - restrained??. John is again drawing on imagery from Daniel, and may also have in mind the desecration of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes which covered a period of close to three and a half years, 167-164BC. John will refer to this time signature in terms of "1,260 days", v3, 12:6, "three and a half days", v9, "times and half a time", 12:14, and "2,300 mornings and evenings" (this is actually a shorter period of time, the significance of which is somewhat of a mystery).

It seems likely that this time signature represents a shortening of the times of tribulation for the sake of the elect, cf., Matt.24:22. The period of time probably refers to the age between the cross and Christ's return (ie., the messianic age / the age of the Christian church); "three and a half years signify the time from Christ's ascension and Satan's expulsion from heaven to Christ's return to defeat evil at the end of the age", Koester. Although unlikely, the three and a half years may refer to the period of heightened tribulation before the day of judgment (the "short time" when Satan is set free from the Abyss, 20:3). Either way, the troubles of this age (a moment of divine grace when witnessing is still possible) has its limits, limits determined by a divine consideration for the plight of the church / believers / the Christian community in a godless world. So, John draws on Daniel's "a time and two times and half a time", the duration of the oppression of God's people (Dan.7:25, 9:24-27, 12:7), to define the limits of the age before the end.

This interpretation stands in stark contrast to the interpretation offered by dispensationalists - the cutting short of the time of tribulation / reign of antichrist to three and a half years. Although futuristic Millennialism is rejected by most recognized commentators, it has had a wide popular following from the late 1800's. In the USA William Miller (d. 1849) was a key proponent, and although his date for the return of Christ didn't eventuate (1843/4) his views led to variant proposals taken up by the Seventh-Day Adventists and the Jehovah's Witnesses, and later widely popularized by Dwight Moody during his evangelistic crusades (d. 1899), later Scofield (d. 1921), and in the 1970/80s by Hal Lindsey in his popular work *The Late Great Planet Earth*. See Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More - Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture*, HUP, 1994.

The continuity problem, with respect to timing, in the Revelation: See 10:1-11.

Text - 11:1

The Interlude Part II: The two witnesses, v1-14. i] John measures the temple sanctuary, v1-2. John's imagery becomes increasingly difficult to interpret in this passage. In his vision he sets out to measure the temple sanctuary. Most commentators take the temple and its sanctuary as a symbol for the Christian community, with the measuring serving to mark the limits of God's divine protection in the coming day of judgment. It seems best we understand this temple as a heavenly reality which is represented on earth by the Christian community, probably each individual Christian community / church rather than a "church universal." So, as each Christian fellowship gathers Sunday by Sunday, they are an earthly representation of a heavenly reality - even now we are gathered with Christ in the throne room of the Ancient of Days. Beyond the measured area is what John calls the "outer court", the place of the Gentiles / Nations. It is they who will set upon God's people, trampling them under foot. As the day of judgment draws near, the Christian community will face increasing opposition from the powers of darkness, but the Lamb will not abandon his people, rather, he will limit the trampling to "42 months", three and a half years - half the perfect number. Although often interpreted in time terms, the limiting of time probably reflects the limiting of trouble. In the great tribulation we may end up singed, but we will be safe.

μοι dat. pro. "**I [was given]**" - [A REED, CANE WAS GIVEN] TO ME. Dative of indirect object.

όμοις adj. "**like**" - Comparative.

παβδω [ος] dat. "**a measuring rod**" - A STICK, STAFF. Dative complement of "like".

λεγων [λεγω] pres. part. "**and was told**" - SAYING. Again, John introduces speech with the participle "saying", although here it is somewhat awkward; "a cane was given to me saying" - nominative complement, or attributive adjective, "which said." It is unlikely that John intends the reed to speak. The NIV, as with many translations, opts for a passive treatment of what is an active participle; "I was told." John may have in mind something like "A reed was given to me *and I heard a voice from heaven* (the Lamb / God??) saying 'go" , ie., an object complement, although the participle is in the nominative case. Aune suggests John probably intended "he gave me a reed saying", ie., an object complement, although the verb would have to be active, **εδωκεν**, and "reed" would have to be accusative, **καλαμον**. So, technically, we have here a solecism, a

grammatical mistake, although as far as John is concerned, the use of the participle is primarily stylistic; see *λεγων*, 1:17.

μετρησον [μετρω] aor. imp. "**[go and] measure**" - [RISE AND] MEASURE. Note that the verb "go" takes a present tense, while "measure" is aorist. The choice of tense reflects aspect, "going" being imperfective / a durative action, while "measuring" is a perfective action / complete, punctiliar. "Measuring will define the place where true worship takes place and show that it is protected", Koester.

τον ναον [ος] "**the temple**" - Accusative direct object of the verb "to measure." The allusion to Israel's temple probably serves as an image of the Christian community, so Mounce, Koester, ... It is unlikely that John is referring to the heavenly temple where believers will be eternally secure, but see Collins.

τους προσκυνουντας [προσκυνω] pres. part. "**with its worshipers**" - [THE TEMPLE OF GOD AND THE ALTAR AND] THE ONES WORSHIPPING. The participle serves as a substantive.

εν + dat. "-" - IN [IT]. The preposition is local, expressing space. The antecedent of *αυτω*, "it", would normally be taken to be the nearest suspect, namely "altar", so "measure the temple of God and the altar and those worshipping at it", but logically "temple" seems more likely, so "those worshipping in it." The ESV solves the problem nicely with "measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there."

v2

και "**but**" - AND. Best taken as an adversative here.

την "**[exclude the outer court]**" - [THE COURTYARD] THE [OUTSIDE OF THE TEMPLE, CAST OUTSIDE]. The article serves as a nominalizer turning the adverbial phrase "outside of the temple", into a substantive standing in apposition to "courtyard"; "but the courtyard, the one outside the temple, leave that out of the measurements, don't measure it."

του ναου [ος] "-" - OF THE TEMPLE. The genitive is adjectival, partitive. The imagery is of a temple representing the Christian community surrounded by a hostile world of unbelievers, so Reddish. The temple in Jerusalem was far more complex than John's heavenly image, having courts for women and Gentiles and then finally the pagan world beyond. We have already noted that John simplifies his temple imagery, eg., one altar in his temple when in the Jerusalem temple there were two. Although it is likely that the "outer court" represents the unbelieving world, other interpretations have been offered: Caird, Mounce, Osborne, argue that the outer court images the church in its vulnerable state, influenced and imposed upon by an unbelieving world. Kiddle in his Moffatt commentary argues that the outer court is the syncretized / heretical section of the church and as such accommodates those members who have not conquered / persevered.

μη ... μετρησης [μετρω] aor. subj. "**do not measure [it]**" - A subjunctive of prohibition.

ὅτι "**because**" - Introducing a causal clause explaining why John should not include the outer court in his measurements; "because".

τοις εθνεσιν [ος] dat. "**[it has been given] to the nations**" - [IT WAS GIVEN] TO THE NATIONS, PEOPLE, GENTILES. Dative of indirect object.

την πολιν την ἁγιαν [ος] "**[they will trample on] the holy city**" - [AND THEY WILL TRAMPLE, WALK ABOUT ON] THE CITY THE HOLY. Accusative direct object of the verb "to trample on." The holy city in mind is obviously Zion / Jerusalem, serving to represent the church, the fellowship of believers, although Giblin in *Revelation 11:1-13*, NTS.30, argues that the holy city is Babel, the secular world, presenting as a holy city, but corrupt through and through, and about to face judgment. The trampling of the holy city alludes to Daniel 8:10, 13, Zechariah 12:3, where the sanctuary / Jerusalem is trampled on by the nations for three and a half years, a prophecy taken up by Jesus, Lk.21:24. On one level, the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70AD fulfills this prophecy, so serving as a paradigm for the coming day of judgment when Satan and his minions attempt their final assault upon God's people - the great tribulation, Armageddon.

μηνας τεσσαρακοντα δυο "**for 42 months**" - MONTHS FORTY *and* TWO. Accusative of time, duration. See "Interpretation" above.

v3

ii] The appointment of prophetic witnesses, v7-10. Although John's apocalyptic imagery is somewhat complex, he does seem to be making a simple point. In this moment of grace before the coming of the terrible day of judgment, the Christian community ("two witnesses" - we go out two-by-two) is to witness to the gospel ("prophesy"), and to do so as a people with divine support, authority (v4), and protection (v5). The gospel we proclaim is as powerful as the words uttered by Elijah and Moses, it is "the power of God unto salvation."

τοις ... μαρτυσιν [υς υρος] dat. "**[I will appoint my two] witnesses**" - [AND I WILL GIVE *authority*] TO THE [TWO] WITNESSES [OF ME]. Dative of direct object where the verb "to give" takes the sense of "bestow authority on, assign authority to", as NIV, "appoint." The NIV takes the genitive pronoun μου as possessive, so "my two witnesses", although possibly idiomatic, "two witnesses *who will testify about* me." A classification of verbal, objective, is possible, so Mathewson; "witness about me." Presumably the voice from heaven is still speaking, namely, the Lamb / God. Most commentators argue that John uses the image of the two witnesses to represent Christ's disciples throughout time, those who serve as witnesses to the gospel, ie., "witnesses representing the Christian community", Koester. Witherington argues that the two witnesses represent the congregations

of Smyrna and Philadelphia, but surely the whole church is in mind. There has been a long history of identifying these two witnesses with particular people, eg., Enoch and Elijah (popular throughout the middle ages), Moses and Elijah, James and John, Peter and Paul. Osborne opts for historical figures, not of the past but of the future, who will appear in the days of tribulation prior to the end; "two major eschatological figures expected in the last days." Osborne may be right, but it is dangerous when we try to specify apocalyptic images; more often than not they are symbolic. Osborne notes that the Antichrist is often taken to be a person, so why not the witnesses? Of course, specifying the Antichrist as a person is just as unwise since it is more likely that he represents personified evil. *The Beast from the Bog* can be an individual, a society, a philosophy, *Fake News*, and all at once. "I will give my two witnesses the task of proclaiming my message", Barclay.

και "and" - A consecutive sense is possible here; "and so they will prophecy", so Aune.

ἡμερας χιλιας διακοσιας εξηκοντα "1,260 days" - [THEY WILL PROPHECY ONE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED SIXTY DAYS]. Accusative of time, duration. See above for the significance of this period of time.

περιβεβλημενοι [περιβαλλω] perf. mid./pas. part. "clothed in [sackcloth]" - HAVING BEEN CLOTHED IN [SACKCLOTH]. The participle is probably adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of their prophesying; "clothed in sackcloth, they will prophecy ..." Throughout the OT prophets would often wear sackcloth (usually made of dark goat hair), and it was also worn as a sight of impending disaster, cf., Jer.3:24. Possibly also an allusion to the clothing worn by Christ's disciples on mission.

v4

Most commentators / translators take the dominant present tense of v4-10 to indicate a change in agent from the voice from heaven, the Lamb / God, to the prophet John. The voice from heaven prophesied "I will appoint ... and they will prophesy", future tense, v3, but now in v4-10 the present tense is dominant, εἰσιν, "they are", indicating that John is explaining the nature and actions of the two witnesses. Yet, other than a change in tense, there is no indication that a change in agent has taken place which may indicate that John's choice of tense serves to emphasize aspect rather than time: "I will appoint", punctiliar action, whereas the state of being two olive trees is durative and so therefore a present tense. If this is the case then the voice from heaven is still speaking and εἰσιν is best treated as a future present. Note also how the phrase οὗτοι εἰσιν, "these are", serves as a formula explanation, cf., 7:14. So, it seems likely that the voice from heaven is still speaking and is now explaining the nature and actions of the two witnesses he is about to appoint. See Mathewson on how aspect applies to this passage.

οὔτοι "they" - these *ones*. This demonstrative pronoun is used as a substantive, subject of the verb to-be. Note the discord: the pronoun is masculine, whereas "olive trees" and "lampstands" are feminine. It is common in apocalyptic literature to view a symbolic image as masculine.

εἰσιν [εἰμι] pres. "**are** [**the two olive trees' and the two lampstands**]" - John seems to be alluding to Zechariah 4:2-3, "the sons of oil" who supply the fuel for the lampstand (a single stand with seven lamps) that "stands before the Lord of the earth", Zech.4:14. These two symbols apply to Joshua and Zerubbabel, priest and king / leader, in the post-exilic community in Jerusalem. So, the voice from heaven is saying that in the eyes of God the witnesses will be to him as priests and kings.

αἱ **ἑστώτες** [ἵστημι] perf. part. "**they stand**" - THE ONE HAVING TAKEN STAND, PUT. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "the two olive trees and the two lampstands"; "which / who stand before" Note that the participle is masculine, but that the adjectivizer **αἱ**, along with "olive trees" and "lampstands", is feminine. John is very flexible in the way he uses participle and here its person reflects those whom the images represent, ie., a constructio ad sensum, so Plummer DDG.

ἐνώπιον + gen. "**before**" - Spatial preposition; "before, in front of."

της γης [η] gen. "**of the earth**" - [THE LORD] OF THE EARTH. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / subordination; "over the earth."

v5

εἰ + ind. "**if**" - [AND] IF [ANYONE]. Introducing a 1st. class conditional clause where the condition is assumed to be true (here for argument's sake, so Smalley, but true / real is more likely); "if, *as is the case*, anyone wants to harm them, *then* fire pours from their mouth." "If anyone tries to hurt them, a blast of fire from their mouths will incinerate them - burn them to a crisp just like that", Peterson.

αδικησαι [αδικεω] aor. inf. "**[tries] to harm**" - [WILLS] TO HARM, INJURE [THEM]. The infinitive is usually classified as complementary, completing the sense of the verb "to will", but given that the verb **θελω**, "I will", is cognitive, the infinitive may be taken as introducing a dependent statement of perception expressing what is willed, namely, "that they harm them."

εκ + gen. "**[fire comes] from [their mouths]**" - [FIRE COMES FROM] FROM [THE MOUTH OF THEM AND DESTROYS THE ENEMIES OF THEM]. Expressing source / origin. Note the distributive singular **στοματος**, "mouth", translated in English as a plural, "mouths". Note also the stylistic repetition of the prefix **εκ** of the verb **εκπορευεται**, "comes from." For this image John is probably alluding to the Word of God proclaimed by the prophets, cf., Jer.5:14. The witnesses are set apart to proclaim the gospel, a message that is a "two-edged sword." A person can hear

the message and find blessing, or a person can react negatively to it, even ignore it, and find cursing. When it comes to the Word of God, we get back what we give.

και "-" - AND. Coordinate seems best, as NIV, but causal is possible, "because"

ει + subj. "**this is how [anyone who wants to harm them]**" - IF [ANYONE WILLS TO HARM, INJURE THEM]. Conditional clause as above. Note the irregular use of a subjunctive verb rather than an indicative - there is evidence for the occasional use of **ει** + subj.. The variant indicative **θελει** is an attempt to correct the problem. The presence of the indefinite pronoun **τις**, "a certain one = anyone", may have subconsciously prompted John to use a subjunctive this time. Maybe he intended **αν**, or **εαν**, for a 3rd. class conditional clause, although the condition here seems more real than the first. This has prompted some commentators to argue that John has used the subjunctive to indicate that the first conditional clause is for argument's sake, and only this one is intended to be real, see Smalley. This argument is evident in the translation offered by NIV11.

αποκτανθηναι [αποκτεινω] aor. pas. inf. "**[must] die**" - [IN THIS WAY IT IS NECESSARY HIM] TO BE KILLED. The infinitive serves as the subject of the impersonal verb **δει**, "it is necessary." The accusative subject of the infinitive is **αυτον**, "him". Divine necessity is probably implied.

v6

ουτοι "**they**" - THESE *ones*. This demonstrative pronoun is used as a substantive, subject of the verb "to have."

κλεισαι [κλειω] aor. inf. "**[have the power] to shut up [the heavens]**" - [HAVE THE POWER, AUTHORITY] TO SHUT UP [THE HEAVEN]. The infinitive here is exegetical, specifying the power / authority that the witnesses possess. Obviously an allusion to Elijah, cf., 1Kgs.17:1, 18:1. Their witnessing will evidence the power of Elijah. "They have the authority to shut up the sky so that there will be no more rain during the time they proclaim God's message", TEV.

ινα μη "**so that [it will not rain]**" - THAT NO [RAIN MAY FALL]. Introducing a final clause expressing negated purpose, "in order that no rain may fall", or a consecutive clause expressing result, "with the result that"

τας ημερας [α] acc. "**during the time**" - THE DAYS. Accusative of time, duration, as NIV; "during the days"

της προφητειας [α] gen. "**[they are] prophesying**" - OF THE PROPHECY [OF THEM]. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / temporal; "during the days when they are prophesying."

επι + gen. "-" - [AND THEY HAVE AUTHORITY, POWER] OVER [THE WATERS]. John uses his favourite preposition to express subordination. The allusion is to

Moses and the plagues he wrought on Egypt, not just water into blood, but "every kind of plague as often as they want", cf., Exodus 4-7. Such plagues express divine anger / wrath upon a people who resist God's will, but can serve to prompt repentance. The gospel proclaimed by the Christian community today is just such a message. Although we like to call it "good news", it is only good when people repent, for it is a message of blessing and cursing.

στρεφειν [στρεφω] pres. inf. "**to turn [the waters into blood]**" - TO TURN [THEM INTO BLOOD]. The infinitive is exegetical, specifying the authority / power.

παταξαι [πατασσω] aor. inf. "**to strike [the earth]**" - The infinitive is exegetical, as above.

εν + dat. "**with [every kind of plague]**" - WITH [EVERY PLAGUE, BLOW, WOUND]. Instrumental use of the preposition expressing means; "by means of ..."

ὅσاکις εαν + subj. "**as often as [they want]**" - Introducing an indefinite temporal clause; "whenever they like", REB.

v7

iii] The powers of darkness oppose the witnesses, v7-10: John's exposition of inaugurated eschatology continues as he exposes the trying times faced by the Christian community ("the two witnesses") seeking to fulfill Christ's command to communicate the gospel in the days before the end. Witnessing to the secular city / world / age (Babylon / Babel / Sodom / Egypt) will bring with it humiliation; few will repent, most will ignore the gospel and some will respond violently. The gospel may be "the power of God unto salvation", but it also stirs up strong feelings of anger in those who resent the exposure of their rebellion against God.

και "now"- AND. Used instead of **δε** to indicate a step in the narrative, although Smalley argues that it is adversative here, "but".

ὅταν subj. "**when [they have finished]**" - WHEN [THEY COMPLETE THE TESTIMONY OF THEM]. Introducing an indefinite temporal clause, "whenever", although translated as definite. The temporal sense is unclear. "Ended / finished" probably means "fulfilled", but when is the mission of the Christian community ("the two witnesses") fulfilled? This may be totally symbolic of a mission which is faithful even unto death, a mission which continually completes its task and is persecuted as a result. On the other hand, the day of judgment may be in mind such that the mission continues until the seals are broken, the trumpets sounded, ... and the Beast released. Paul's "man of lawlessness" is most likely the Beast / Antichrist, yet to be revealed and destroyed, but who "is already at work, cf. 2Thes.2.

το αναβαινον [αναβαινω] pres. part. "**[the beast] that comes up [from the Abyss]**" - The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "the beast." The preposition **εκ** is used to express source / origin, "from". John is alluding to

Daniel's Beast from the Bog, cf., Dan.7. The Beast is often identified with the Antichrist, often as a charismatic individual who leads the world into ruin. He is the personification of evil, the instrument of the Red Dragon, Satan, "already at work" but "doomed to destruction" in the day of judgment. John's use of the definite article **το** with **θηριον**, "beast", indicates a specific entity known to the readers. Certainly, Daniel's beast is a likely contender, but for John the beast is probably Rome, although some commentators have suggested Israel (unlikely if the Revelation is written post 70AD). I was leading a Bible Study on the Revelation and one member suggested that today's "beast" is America. His comment prompted a rather heated political debate. No one political entity represents the beast / secular city.

μετ [**μετα**] + gen. "[**will attack**]" - [WILL MAKE WAR] WITH [THEM]. Expressing association / accompaniment, with the sense of "engage in battle with", Mathewson; "the beast from the bog will make war on them." Smalley sees this as the "last epic struggle", but this implies a temporal sense for **τελεσωσιν**, "finished" - "fulfilled."

και "and" - Possibly here with a final sense, "in order to conquer them and kill them"; "that he might overcome them."

v8

της πολεως [ις εως] gen. "[**their body will lie in the public square**] of the [**great**] city" - [AND THE BODIES OF THEM *will lie* UPON THE BROAD way] OF THE [GREAT] CITY. The genitive is adjectival, probably best treated as idiomatic / local; "the street *located in* the great city." The noun **πλατειας**, "broad", can refer to a public square, or plaza, and this seems likely here, so Smalley, Aune, ... The noun "body" is distributive, "bodies". The "great city" is for John the secular city, the power structures of this age which war against the Christian community. The dumping of the bodies of the martyred witnesses in the public square symbolically describes the indignity faced by the Christian community as it witnesses / testifies to the gospel; "The deprivation of burial was totally undignified in the biblical world", Smalley. There may also be a victory motif in the imagery where a defeated enemy is put on public display, so Koester. Of course, the victory is limited; the streets of the New Jerusalem are paved with gold, not dead bodies.

πνευματικως adv. "**figuratively [called Sodom and Egypt]**" - [WHICH IS CALLED] SPIRITUALLY [SODOM AND EGYPT]. The adverb of manner, "spiritually", takes the sense here "as seen through spiritual eyes", Beale, although Aune suggests "prophetically". John often identifies the secular city / world as Babylon / Babel, in an underhand reference to Rome. Sodom, the evil city, and Egypt, the oppressor, well represent the secular city of John's age, just as much as they do of our age. John goes on to state that it is where Christ was crucified. This is a rather

strange comment, but Jerusalem is part of the Babylonian / Roman empire. Christ stands as the perfect example of a witness set upon by the dark powers at work in the secular city.

ὅπου **"where"** - Here the conjunction takes a local sense.

και **"also"** - AND [THE LORD OF THEM WAS CRUCIFIED]. The NIV takes the conjunction here as adjunctive; "also"

v9

ἡμερας τρεις και ἡμισυ acc. **"for three and a half days"** - DAYS THREE AND ONE HALF. Accusative of time / duration, as NIV. See "Interpretation" above.

εκ + gen. **"[some] from [every people]"** - [AND *some*] OF [THE PEOPLES AND TRIBES AND TONGUES AND NATION SEE THE BODY OF THEM *for* THREE DAYS AND ONE HALF]. The preposition here serves as a partitive genitive with "some" assumed. With the assumed nominalizer **τινες**, "some / certain", the prepositional phrase serves as the subject of the verb "to see." Note that the verb **βλεπουσιν**, "to see", as with "to permit", is present tense, when the previous verbs were future. Probably an issue of aspect; usually translated as future. Note again the distributive sense of the singular "body", translated "bodies".

τεθηναι [τιθημι] aor. pas. inf. **"[refuse them burial]"** - [THEY DO NOT PERMIT THE CORPSES OF THEM] TO BE PLACED, PUT [INTO A TOMB]. The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of the verb "to allow, permit." As noted above, to refuse a person burial is the height of indignity.

v10

οἱ κατοικουντες [κατοικεω] pres. part. **"the inhabitants [of the earth]"** - [AND] THE ONES DWELLING [UPON THE EARTH]. The participle serves as a substantive. This descriptor is used a number of times in the the Revelation, and also the LXX, to identify unbelievers standing under divine judgment because they persecute God's people, so probably not "the whole population of the earth were glad to see them dead", Barclay.

επι [επι] + dat. **"[gloat over [them]"** - [REJOICE] OVER [THEM]. John's favourite preposition, usually spatial with the genitive, "on, upon", here takes a dative to express cause / basis; "because of / on the basis of." The godless gloat because the witnesses are humiliated.

αλληλοις dat. **"[will celebrate by sending] each other [gifts]"** - [AND ARE BEING GLAD AND THEY WILL SEND GIFTS] TO ONE ANOTHER. Dative of indirect object. On the issue of aspect, as noted above, John uses a present tense for the act of being glad, a durative action, and then returns to the future tense for the giving of gifts, a future punctiliar action. So obviously, with respect to time, the action of celebrating, of being glad, is similarly future. The NIV's instrumental "by

sending" works nicely, but is not borne out by the text; "they make merry and (και) exchange presents", TEV.

ὅτι "because" - Introducing a causal clause explaining why the godless gloat, celebrate and exchange presents.

εβασανισαν [βασανιζω] aor. "tormented [them]" - [THESE TWO PROPHETS] TORTURED, TORTURED [THE ONES DWELLING ON THE EARTH]. The aorist here is interesting. Mathewson suggests that it is used "to summarize the activity of the two witnesses from verses 3-6". It is interesting how the gospel can prompt an overreaction, probably by stirring up unresolved guilt - "methinks thou protest too much!", or more properly, as Bill put it, "The lady doth protest too much, methinks." "For these two prophets pricked the conscience of all the people on earth, made it impossible for them to enjoy their sins", Peterson.

v11

iv] The witnesses are glorified, v11-12: John's vision describes the ultimate vindication of Christ's witnessing community. The persecution faced by the Christian community is not only limited, it is also reversed when the community is vindicated on the last day, the day of resurrection. The image of the godless "terror struck" and abandoned on the day of resurrection is particularly relevant to believers who have drifted in their allegiance to Christ to find solace in the secular city / Babylon. It is only those who conquer, who persevere, who will be glorified, who will rise to join Christ in the clouds at his "coming / appearing" in the heavenlies before the Ancient of Days, when he is crowned Lord of all.

κια "but" - Probably serving instead of δε to indicate a step in the narrative.

μετα + acc. "after [three and a half days]" - Temporal use of the preposition. There is a possible allusion to the resurrection of Jesus, cf., Mk.8:31. See above for "three and a half days."

ζωης [η] gen. "[the breath] of life" - [THE SPIRIT, BREATH] OF LIFE. The genitive is adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic, "the divine breath *which gives* life." There is a strong allusion to Ezekiel 37, although in the terms of the resurrection of Israel / the new Israel, rather than individual resurrection. If weight is given to Zechariah 4:6 then John intends the "divine spirit from God", the spirit of life, rather than God's life-giving breath, but possibly the Holy Spirit is in mind. The ultimate vindication of Christ's witnessing community is certainly in mind, so Beale, but in a more literal sense, the final day of resurrection could also be in mind, so Koester. Either way, ultimate vindication and life eternal is promised to the suffering Christian community.

εκ + gen. "from [God]" - Expressing source / origin.

εισηλθεν [εισερχομαι] aor. "entered [them]" - ENTERED INTO [IN THEM AND THEY STOOD UPON THE FEET OF THEM]. The aorist tense now dominates the rest

of the vision. The time signature is obviously future, but the aorist serves as the "main narrative tense", Mathewson. Note again the common practice of repeating the prepositional prefix of a verb, here **εν** for **εις**.

τους θεωρουντας [θεωρω] pres. part. "[**terror struck**] **those who saw [them]**" - [AND A GREAT FEAR FELL UPON] THE ONES SEEING [THEM]. The participle serves as a substantive. The resurrection of deceased believers is but one element of the *parousia* (the appearing / coming of Christ for his enthronement), which event fills rebellious humanity with terror.

v12

φωνης [η] gen. "**a [loud] voice**" - [AND THEY HEARD] A [GREAT] VOICE. Genitive of direct object after the verb "to hear." The voice from heaven, when unidentified, is usually God's voice, or the voice of the Lamb, Christ.

εκ + gen. "**from [heaven]**" - Expressing source / origin; "out of heaven."

λεγουσης [λεγω] gen. pres. part. "**saying**" - Technically serving as the genitive complement of the genitive object "voice." Again, John introduces what is said in a vision with a participle; See **λεγων**, 1:17.

αυτοις dat. pro. "**to them**" - Dative of indirect object.

εν + dat. "**in [a cloud]**" - [COME UP HERE, AND THEY WENT UP INTO HEAVEN] IN [THE CLOUD, AND THE ENEMIES OF THEM SAW THEM]. Local, expressing space. Presumably the invitation is for the resurrected two witnesses / the Christian community to enter the cloud surrounding the coming Son of Man / Christ, who, with his angels / messengers (believers??) enters the throne room of the Ancient of Days to take up his rightful place of eternal authority, cf., 1Thess.4:16-17. The specifics of the *parousia* are always unclear in apocalyptic imagery, and made more difficult by the *now / not yet* reality of the kingdom. The coming Son of Man in Daniel 7 is of a coming to heaven in a cloud, not a coming to earth, such that it is virtually an extension of Christ's ascension without the age of Christian witness, an age which in our experience has extended for 2,000 years. Rightly we can call this age a moment of divine grace, a twinkle in the eye of God; See *the continuity problem, with respect to timing, in the Revelation*: See 10:1-11. We do often forget that God created time and so is obviously not bound by it, Psalms.90:4, 2:Pet.3:8. Interestingly, John does not mention Christ's coming to earth, possibly in line with the fact that his coming is to heaven, but it is unwise to draw specifics from apocalyptic imagery. The point is simple enough, the Christian community will be vindicated in the last day as it shares glory with Christ. John will certainly attempt to draw out what this means in his final chapters. Even so, what it actually means is beyond us. I am always led back to the words of Jacob, a fellow African theological student, who said that "in the end there will be just you and Jesus." My Anglo mind finds this just too simple, but that's why I found the notion of grace

so hard to understand, it's just too simple. "And they went up to Heaven in a cloud in full view of their enemies", Phillips.

v13

v] Judgment ensues, v13-14. And so, with the resurrection of the righteous through faith and the enthronement of Christ, the day of judgment is inaugurated, dispelling once-and-for-all the glory of the secular city / Babylon.

εν + dat. "**At [that hour]**" - [AND] IN [THAT HOUR]. Temporal use of the preposition.

της πολεως [ις εως] gen. "**[a tenth] of the city**" - [A GREAT EARTHQUAKE OCCURRED AND THE TENTH] OF THE CITY [FELL]. The genitive is adjectival, partitive. In judgment terms it is usually a tenth survive, here nine tenths survive, cf., Amos 5:3. Partial judgment indicates that John has brought us again to the unfolding day of judgment. He relates the full fall of the cities of the nations in 16:18. John again uses an earthquake as a portent of judgment.

ανθρωπων [ος] gen. "**[seven thousand people were killed]**" - [AND THERE WERE KILLED IN THE EARTHQUAKE SEVEN THOUSAND NAMES] OF MEN. The genitive is adjectival, wholative. Note again the use of a person's name to represent the whole. Other than seven being a whole / complete number, there is probably no significance in 7,000 dying.

εν + dat. "**in [the earthquake]**" - Probably instrumental, expressing means; "by the earthquake."

τω θεω [ος] dat. "**[gave glory] to God**" - Dative of indirect object. Commentators divide on whether giving glory is an act of belief / conversion on the part of the "survivors" / godless (for "true repentance" sees Osborne, Koester, Blount,, contra Beale p607), or just a realization, driven by fear, that their trust in Babel has proved worthless - "Oops! God is real!" Those arguing for a "true repentance" must contend with the fact that this is the only instance in the Revelation where judgment prompts repentance. The whole point of the interlude is to drive home the fact that divine grace, operative through gospel communication, applies up to the day of judgment. The kindest conclusion is that "the survivors offered homage", Smalley - whatever that means! For Millennial commentators this "repentance" is aligned with the conversion of the Jews, or a major part of humanity post the rapture, etc., For a commentator who supports an end-time mass conversion of unbelievers see Bauckham.

του ουρανου [ος] gen. "**of heaven**" - The genitive is adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic; "the God *who dwells in* heaven."

v14

απηλθεν [απερχομαι] aor. "[the second woe] has passed" - The content of the second woe is unclear. Does it include chapters 10 and 11? The first woe relates to the events following the sounding of the fifth trumpet, and the second woe to the events following the sounding of the sixth trumpet, but probably only the plague, 9:13-21, and not the interlude, so Beale. John is telling us that we are back at the end of the judgment of the sixth trumpet and about to witness the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

ταχυ adv. "[the third woe is coming] soon" - Temporal adverb. The third woe is coming "quickly, soon." Theories abound as to what woe John is referring to, but it is most likely the sounding of the seventh trumpet announcing the finality of judgment in the destruction of the earth and the coming of the kingdom of God.

11:15-18

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

2. The judgment of the seven trumpets, 8:6-11:18

v] Sounding the seventh trumpet

Synopsis

The day of judgment continues to unfold with the sounding of the seventh and final trumpet. Unlike the opening of the seventh seal where there is silence in heaven, here John hears loud voices proclaiming the coming of the kingdom of God. The twenty-four elders join in, praising God for exercising his authority over all powers, both for blessing and cursing.

Teaching

The kingdom of God is at hand, the Great Day of the Lord, the day of judgment, is upon us, repent and believe!

Issues:

i] Context: See 8:6-13.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *Sounding the seventh trumpet*:

The three woes, 8:13.

The third woe:

The seventh trumpet is sounded, v15;

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our
Lord and of his Messiah and he will reign for ever and
ever."

The hymn of the twenty-four elders, v16-18;

iv] Interpretation:

The third Woe is not very woe-like, but it involves the setting right of all things; this can be good, or bad news, depending on where one stands. In the judgment of the seals this setting-right was done in silence, here it is done in a word of praise - the old has passed away, the new has come, the kingdom of God is now fully realized. What is *woe* to the unrighteous facing the ultimate destruction of the world, is eternal glory for the righteous by faith. So, John completes his second judgment cycle bringing us to the point where the aggressive secular city is judged and "your servants, the prophets and saints, those who revere your name" are rewarded.

Text - 11:15

Sounding the seventh trumpet - the third woe, v15-18: i] The judgment of the seventh trumpet culminates in the realization of the kingdom of God - God's kingship / reign over the world. The reign of the secular city is ended, replaced by the reign of the Lord God and the Lamb.

καὶ "-" - AND. Transitional. Here probably used instead of **δε** to indicate a step in the narrative.

λεγοντες [λεγω] pres. part. "[there were loud voices in heaven] which said" - [THE SEVENTH ANGEL TRUMPETED AND THERE WERE LOUD VOICES IN HEAVEN] SAYING. The NIV has taken the participle as adjectival, attributive, limiting "voices". This seems the best classification although the participle is masculine whereas the noun "voices" is feminine. This has prompted the variant feminine **legousai**, although it is more likely that the masculine is according to sense where the agents of the "loud voices" is in mind. Commentators divide on who they are, eg., the redeemed, so Beale. John typically introduces what is heard in his vision with the participle "saying"; see **λεγων**, 1:17. "And voices in heaven began to shout", Barclay.

του κοσμου [ος] gen. "[the kingdom] of the world" - [THE KINGDOM] OF THE WORLD [BECAME *the kingdom* OF THE LORD OF US AND THE ANOINTED ONE OF HIM]. If we take **βασιλεια** in the sense of "reign", in same way we take "the kingdom of God" to ultimately mean "the reign of God" (here "*the reign* of our Lord"), then we would classify the genitive as verbal, subjective. The noun **κοσμος**, "world", is probably being used negatively, a world in rebellion against God = the secular city, Babel / Babylon. The reign of the secular city is over, the powers of darkness overcome by the reign of our Lord God and his Messiah / Christ / the Anointed One = the Lamb.

εις + acc. "**for [ever and ever]**" - [AND HE WILL REIGN] INTO [THE AGES OF THE AGES]. Temporal use of the preposition. This idiomatic phrase expresses the sense "eternally". The genitive **των αιωνων**, "of the ages", would be classified as adjectival, partitive. For this temporal phrase see 1:18.

v16

ii] The hymn of the twenty-four elders, v16-18: The elders now get involved and proclaim the consequences of the Great Day of the Lord; The day of judgment has arrived, a day of cursing, a day of blessing. The aggressive secular city, Babylon, will now get to taste divine aggression in the judgment of the living and the dead. So, the time has come for the Christian community, Christ's witnessing saints, to taste eternal reward, and for those who ruin others to face ruin themselves.

οἱ καθήμενοι [καθημαι] pres. mid. part. "**who were seated**" - [AND THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS] THE ONES [BEFORE GOD] SITTING. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "the twenty-four elders", as NIV; "who sit on their thrones before God", REB.

ἐπι + gen. "**on [their thrones]**" - ON [THE THRONES OF THEM]. John's favourite spatial preposition, + gen. = "on, upon."

ἐνώπιον + gen. "**before [God]**" - Spatial preposition; "before" = "in the presence of."

τῷ τεῷ [ος] dat. "**[worshiped] God**" - Dative of direct object after the verb "to do obeisance to"; "prostrated themselves and, with bowed heads, worshiped God", Phillips.

v17

λεγοντες [λεγω] "**saying**" - Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the verb "worshiped"; "worshiped God and said". The participle can also be classified as adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of their worship, as NIV. Note John's use of the participle "saying", λεγων, 1:17.

σοι dat. pro. "**[we give thanks] to you**" - [WE THANK] YOU. Dative of direct object after the verb "to give thanks to."

κυριε voc. "**Lord**" - "Lord God Almighty" stands in apposition to the dative "you", but "Lord" takes a vocative of address, so it is not in concord. Both "God" and "Almighty" are nominative, used for the vocative.

ὁ ὢν [εἰμι] pres. part. "**the one being**" - THE ONE BEING [AND HE *who* WAS]. The participle serves as a substantive, standing in apposition to "Lord", nominative serving as a vocative; "you are and you were", CEV.

ὅτι "**because**" - BECAUSE [YOU HAVE TAKEN THE GREAT POWER OF YOU AND REIGNED]. Introducing a causal clause explaining why "we give thanks"; "because you applied your great power and have entered upon your eternal reign", i.e., God has set about to punish and save, as revealed to those who believe. The following verse packages this in a curse / blessing / curse package. Note that the aorist verb "you reigned" is often viewed as ingressive, "you have begun to reign." This seems unlikely. Mathewson gives weight to aspect and suggests it is timeless, "you reign."

v18

This Greek sentence is somewhat complex. After the opening statement "the nations raged, but *in the face of this anger* your wrath came", we are told it's "time". This is explained in three expegetical infinitival constructions, namely, it's time "for the dead to be judged", "to give the reward to your servants", and "to destroy those who destroy." Following the word "servants" we have three

appositional statements explaining what is meant by "servants": they are "the prophets", "the saints", and "the ones fearing your name", and one appositional quote from Psalm 113:21, "the small and the great", further explaining "the ones fearing your name."

ωργισθησαν [οργιζω] aor. pas. "[the nations] were angry" - It is unusual for a plural verb to be used in conjunction with a neuter plural noun, as here, although in the Revelation this rule often does not apply, particularly when the neuter refers to persons. "The angry nations now get a taste of your anger", Peterson.

και "and" - Quite possibly adversative here. The nations are enraged, focusing their rage on the Lord, and his anointed, "but" in the face of this rage the Lord acts with **οργη**, "wrath", ie., with a righteous reaction to defiant human sin.

κριθηναι [κρινω] aor. pas. inf. "[the time has come] for judging" - [YOUR WRATH CAME AND THE TIME OF THE DEAD] TO BE JUDGED. The infinitive is epexegetic, specifying the time in mind, namely, judgment time. Smalley sees a consecutive sense carried in this epexegetic passive infinitive; "this is the moment that (as a result of which) the dead should be judged."

των νεκρων gen. adj. "**the dead**" - OF THE DEAD. The adjective serves as a substantive, the genitive being adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic / temporal, "the time *when* the dead are judged." The "judgment of the dead" clearly refers to the final / last eschatological judgment, ie., the sounding of the seventh trumpet, as with the breaking of the seventh seal, takes us to the final moment in salvation history. What actually happens on the day of judgment is clouded by apocalyptic imagery, but there is some Biblical support for the view that all humanity is raised to be either blessed or cursed, cf., Dan.12:2, Rev.20:12-13. None-the-less, it seems likely that the judgment of the wicked will simply involve eternal annihilation, although eternal punishment is proposed by some commentators.

δουναι [διδωμι] aor. inf. "[and] for rewarding" - [AND] TO GIVE [THE REWARD]. The infinitive as for "to be judged." The positive side of the day of judgment entails blessing for the righteous by faith. The "reward" is depicted variously in the Revelation: entry into the new Jerusalem, eating from the tree of life, receiving a new name, etc.

τοις προφηταις [ης ου] dat. "[your] servants the prophets" - [TO THE SERVANTS OF YOU] THE PROPHETS [AND THE SAINTS, HOLY]. As for the substantive adjective **τοις αγιοις**, "the saints", dative in apposition to "servants", which serves as a dative of indirect object of the verb "to give." The NIV links "servants" with "prophets", but it may link with "prophets and saints"; "your servants, *namely* the prophets and saints", so Mounce. The reference is not to a

particular group in the Christian community, but to the Christian community as a whole, Christ's witnessing saints.

και "and" - The conjunction here may be epexegetic; "your servants, the prophets and saints, that is, those who revere your name", so Mathewson, Smalley, ... None-the-less the statement obviously stands in apposition to "servants".

τοις φοβουμενοις [φοβεω] dat. pres. mid./pas. part. "**your people who revere [you name]**" - THE ONES FEARING [THE NAME OF YOU]. The participle serves as a substantive, dative in apposition to "servants". Note that **φοβεω**, "fear", is not used in the same way that we use the word "fear". To "fear" God is to reverence him, give him due honour by submitting to his call for repentance and faith. Note again that "the name", as a part of a person, is used to represent the whole. When used of the divine, personal authority dominates.

τους μικρους acc. adj. "**both great [and small]**" - THE SMALL *ones* [AND THE GREAT *ones*]. The adjective serves as a substantive. Again, John ignores concord when quoting from scripture, cf., Ps.115:13 (MT); 113:21 (LXX), "he will bless those who fear the Lord, both small and great." The substantive construction, "the small and the great", stands in apposition to "the ones fearing your name" and as such should be dative and not accusative. The Christian community, the witnesses / prophets who serve the Lord and revere his name, is made up of both the insignificant and the mighty.

διαφθειραι [διαφθειρω] aor. inf. "**[and] for destroying**" - [AND] TO DESTROY. The infinitive as for "to be judged." The coming time / day is a time that involves judgement, both reward and destruction. Destruction is set for those who destroy the earth; those who ruin others will themselves be ruined.

τους διαφθειροντας [διαφθειρω] pres. part. "**those who destroy [the earth]**" - THE ONES DESTROYING [THE EARTH]. The participle serves as a substantive. The verb is inclusive, so "utterly / completely destroy." "To destroy the destroyers of the earth", Peterson.

11:19

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

3. The battle with the beasts, 11:19-15:4

i] God's people are secure

Synopsis

To introduce the next set of visions John presents us with a scene change. The doors of the temple open wide and we see, within the sanctuary of the temple, the ark of the covenant, and from outside we hear the sounds of judgment: lightning, rumbling thunder, earthquake and hail.

Teaching

The kingdom of God is at hand, the Great Day of the Lord, the day of judgment, is upon us, yet fear not, God's people are safe and secure.

Issues:

i] Context: See 6:1-8. The function of the last verse in chapter 11 is long disputed. Many commentators see it concluding the judgments of the seven trumpets, others as transitional. It is likely that this verse introduces The Battle of the Beasts, 11:19-15:4; a new set of visions dealing with the war between God, the Lamb and his associates (the Christian community), and the red dragon (Satan), the beast from the sea (corrupted political power = the Great City, Babylon, the secular city, antichrist) and his philosophical friend the beast from the land (perverted ideology = the false prophet), and their associates (those with the mark of the beast, those who worship the beast). This section, which opens in 11:19, *God's people are secure*, and closes in 15:1-4, *The saints are triumphant*, reveals that in this war God's people are secure and triumphant.

The war presents as a series of visions. They are often divided up into seven: "seven signs (portents)", Smalley, "eschatological events", Aune, "oracles", Kiddle. Smalley actually argues that these "seven signs" make up the third Woe. This is certainly possible, but it seems more likely that the sounding of the seventh trumpet is the third Woe.

ii] The woman and the dragon, 12:1-6

iii] War in heaven, 12:7-17

iv] The evil of political power, 13:1-10

v] The evil of false ideologies, 13:11-18

vi] The triumph of the redeemed and the Lamb, 14:1-5

vii] The church militant, 14:6-13

viii] Life and judgment, 14:14-20

ix] The saints are triumphant, 15:1-4

Some commentators see these visions in similar terms to the seven judgments, but they are more like the interludes which focus on the Christian community interacting with the world prior to the day of judgment: "the people of God in their conflict with the forces opposed to God", Bauckham; "an eschatological combat between the powers of God and of Satan", Smalley. As Osborne puts it, "this is the final of the three interludes, and like them, it details the church's involvement in these end-time events", contra Mounce, Beale, ... The focus is initially on the dragon, the beast and the false prophet (the second beast), who are in conflict with God's people, 12:1-13:18. The focus then moves to the saints / believers: their vindication, 14:1-5, their witness as the church militant, 14:6-13, their ultimate salvation, 14:14-20 (with loss for the godless, v17-20), and triumph, 15:1-4.

Smalley suggests the following structure for the *Seven Signs of the End*:

- i] The woman, 12:1-2;
- ii] the huge dragon, 12:3-6;
- iii] The war in heaven, 12:7-9;
 A song of praise in heaven, 12:10-12;
- iv] The war on earth, 12:13-18;
- v] The beast from the sea, 13:1-10;
- vi] The beast from the earth, 13:11-18;
 A vision of the redeemed, 14:1-5;
- vii] The angelic judgement, 14:6-20;
 Interlude - A new Exodus, 15:1-8.

Numerous structures for John's cosmic story have been proposed over the years and the above is just one of many, but, irrespective of the contextual arrangement of his visions, John's point is simple enough; The Christian community lives in a world dominated by the secular city, "the Great City", the whore of Babylon, and must struggle against the forces of evil driving the social, political and economic framework of a world falling apart. As we saw in the previous interlude, the Christian community progresses this struggle (a struggle not without casualties) as a prophetic people, witnessing the gospel. As we saw in the letters to the churches, there will be those members who will succumb to the glories of the secular city. Yet in the end, as revealed in the seven judgments, the powers of darkness will ultimately be brought low in the Great Day of the Lord. So, we are again reminded that the kingdom of God is at hand, repent, believe and persevere.

- ii] Background: See 1:1-8.
- iii] Structure: *God's people are secure*:
 A vision of heaven:
 The ark in the temple, v19a;

The sounds of judgment, v19b.

iv] Interpretation:

The opening verse of this section, as with the concluding verses, 15:1-4, reveals that in the war with the secular city, the Christian community remains secure and triumphant. God's covenant is still in the Ark secure in the temple (probably the Holy of Holies is in mind); the covenant, God's agreement with his people, remains in force. The Ark may have been lost at the time of the Babylonian attack upon Jerusalem, but the real thing remains in heaven, in God's sanctuary. God's agreement stands, his people are secure, blessing is assured. So, believers dwell secure as the war rages and the sounds of the day of judgment draws near.

The Ark of the Covenant: The Ark, a box built to specifications revealed by God, originally contained the staff of Aaron, a bowl of manna, and the two tablets documenting the covenant. On the return of the Ark, following its capture by the Philistines, only the two tablets remained in it. The Ark, along with the covenant tablets, was lost in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587BC. The box / Ark was an important element in the Holy of Holies, but it was the documentary contents which were of supreme importance. Covenant agreements are ratified with two copies, so the ark contained the people's copy and God's copy. Yet, although the two tablets were lost, there remains a spiritual equivalent preserved in heaven.

The foundational covenant / agreement was made between God and Abraham; it promised a people, land and blessing. The realization of the promises rested on faith, namely, the conviction that God would uphold his agreement. The covenant was ratified / renewed on a number of occasions through to its renewal at Mount Sinai with Moses and the children of Israel. On this occasion it was documented with the two copies, both of which were stored in the Ark. The preamble frames the agreement for God's elect community bound under his care; "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt; out of slavery" The decalogue details the covenantal obligations which carry with them blessings and cursings. The function of the decalogue is long disputed, but given Paul's exegesis of Jesus' teachings on the law, its prime function is to reinforce the basis of the covenant, namely the faith of Abraham, ie., the law serves to expose sin and thus drive the sinner to rest on God's grace / mercy through faith for incorporation into God's elect community / the faithful remnant. Only as a secondary function does the decalogue guide the life of the faithful. The final ratification / renewal of the covenant by Christ (the term "new" should not be taken to mean different) is made possible by his "completion / fulfillment" of the

law, both in his life and his teachings. Thus, by resting in faith on the faithfulness of Christ the Christian community is assured of the blessings of the covenant, despite the rage of the Great Harlot, Babylon.

Text - 11:19a

God's people are secure, v19: i] The ark in the temple, v19a. There was a tradition that the Ark was taken from the temple and hidden before the Babylonian invasion and that it would remain hidden "until God gathers his people together again", 2Macc.2:7. The presence of the Ark in the heavenly sanctuary may indicate that the time of restoration is now. Yet, it seems more likely that the heavenly Ark is a reminder of the faithfulness of God in fulfilling his covenant promises, so Mounce, A spiritual equivalent of the covenant (God's agreement with his people) exists in heaven such that the promises still apply for the salvation of the faithful, despite the rage of the Great City, Babylon.

καὶ "then" - AND. Transitional. Indicating a step in the narrative.

ὁ "[God's temple in heaven]" - [THE TEMPLE OF GOD] THE = WHICH IS [IN HEAVEN WAS OPENED]. The article serves as an adjectivizer turning the prepositional phrase "in heaven" into an attributive relative clause limiting "temple". "which is in heaven."

της διαθηκης [η] gen. "[the ark] of [his] covenant" - [AND THE ARK] OF THE COVENANT [OF HIM WAS SEEN IN THE TEMPLE OF HIM]. The genitive is adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic / content, limiting "ark"; "the ark *which contains* his covenant was seen within his temple." The NIV has *αυτου*, "his", modifying "the covenant" (the agreement between God and his people), although it could modify "the ark of the covenant" = "his ark of the covenant." Smalley argues for the NIV translation. Given that the Ark is only the box in which the covenant documents / tablets reside, then "his covenant with his people" is the more likely sense. So, the purpose of the vision is to establish that the divine promises detailed in the agreement between God and the children of Abraham (by faith!), confirmed and ratified / renewed by Christ, still stand, and as such, the eternal security of the Christian community is guaranteed.

v19b

ii] The sounds of judgment, v19b. There is no agreement on the significance of the storm theophany / cosmic portents. Koester suggests three possibilities: a sign of God's power (4:5), coming judgment (8:7), or divine wrath (6:12, 8:5). Osborne thinks they herald the presence of the divine, an allusion to God's presence on Mount Sinai. Beale links it with the fall of Jericho and of the entry of God's people into the promised land. Smalley argues, against Beale, that the portents are more about judgment than salvation. Aune regards the portents as a

theophany, heralding the presence of God, so also Reddish. Blount opts for a theophany which "climaxes the theme of judgment, and Mounce argues that the cosmic portents are symbolic of "divine anger." Judgment does seem to be the best interpretation of these cosmic portents. Judgment rages, but God's people are secure.

αστραπαι [η] [**and there came**] **flashes of lightning** - [AND THERE WERE] LIGHTNING, [AND VOICES, AND THUNDERS, AND EARTHQUAKE AND GREAT HAIL]. Nominative subject of the verb "there were." "I saw lightning and heard roars of thunder. The earth trembled and huge hailstones fell to the ground", CEV.

12:1-6

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

3. The battle with the beasts, 11:19-15:4

ii] The woman and the dragon

Synopsis

John now witnesses two great signs, or portents, in heaven. The first is a pregnant woman clothed in celestial raiment, and the second, an enormous red dragon causing celestial destruction and preparing to devour the child of the pregnant woman. On giving birth, the child is snatched up to the heavenly throne-room, while the woman flees into the wilderness under God's care for 1,260 days.

Teaching

The kingdom of God is victorious over the powers of darkness.

Issues:

i] Context: See 11:19. John's vision in chapter 12 presents in two parts, although both parts are closely related. Together they describe a war in heaven which spills over into the earth. In the first part, John describes the red dragon and his violent intentions, v1-6. The second part begins with a heavenly battle between the dragon and God's angelic forces, v7-9. This is followed up with a hymn of victory, v10-12, and then a description of how the war spills out onto the earth, v13-17.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The woman and the dragon*:

The sign of the pregnant woman, v1-2;

The sign of the red dragon, v3;

The dragon and his murderous quest, v4;

The woman and her child are delivered from the dragon, v5-6.

iv] Interpretation:

It goes without saying that the interpretations of this chapter are many and varied. None-the-less, John gives us a little help by telling us that the actors in the vision are signs, or portents, which he says are *εν τῷ ουρανῷ*, "in heaven", probably in the terms of Jesus' words *εκ του ουρανου*, "from heaven" - they are revealed from heaven. Wilcock calls them "symbolic figures with meanings beyond the superficial one"; "communication in symbolic form", Koester. Wilcock argues that only the pregnant woman and the dragon are "signs", but Smalley argues that just because the word is only

used here, and in 15:1, doesn't mean that the other actors / elements in the vision are not also signs; the child is obviously also a sign, ie., the child serves as a symbolic representation of reality.

John first points us to the heavenly portents / signs of a pregnant woman and a raging dragon. The general consensus is as follows:

- The dragon represents Satan (OT Leviathan / sea monster);
- The woman represents the remnant messianic community of Israel that bears the promised messianic seed, Christ (her crown indicates the twelve tribes of Israel);
- The birth of the child represents the ministry of the incarnate Christ;
- The child's being "snatched up to God" represents Christ's death, resurrection, ascension and enthronement - he will "rule all the nations with an iron sceptre" (ref., Psalm 2, a messianic Psalm describing the rule of the messiah over the nations).

So, in this symbolic confrontation between Christ and Satan, Christ is victorious. The woman, representing Israel, the people of God, finds herself in the wilderness. Presumably this represents God's people tested by their wilderness experience, but protected from the evil one (obviously alluding to the wilderness wanderings of Israel as she strives for the promised land). Again, we have the half of seven indicating that the wilderness experience will be shortened for the sake of the elect - "the three and a half years encompass the entire time between the Messiah's exaltation and final return", Koester.

This interpretation is somewhat specific, but probably comes close to John's intentions.

Text - 12:1

The woman and the dragon, v1-6: i] The sign of the pregnant woman, v1-2. The scene opens with the vision of a glorious woman experiencing the pain of childbirth. She represents the people of God at the moment of salvation history when messianic fulfillment is realized in the incarnate Christ.

καὶ "-" - AND. Here indicating a step in the narrative.

σημεῖον [ον] "a [great] sign" - An image which represents a significant reality. "A great and mysterious sight was revealed / appeared from / in heaven."

ἐν + dat. "in [heaven]" - [WAS SEEN] IN [HEAVEN]. Local, expressing space. Note above, ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, "from heaven". Some millennial commentators have argued that this sign in heaven will be observed in the last day, but it is more likely a sign revealed from heaven for us to consider now.

γυνη [η] "a woman" - The identification of this woman was quite fanciful in the middle ages. The most widely held view today is that she represents the children of God, Israel, and by extension (her offspring) the Christian community, the new Israel. Other possibilities include the Jewish community, so Thomas, the Christian church (the twelve stars represent the twelve apostles), and Mary.

περιβεβλημενη [περιβαλλω] perf. pas. part. "clothed [with the sun]" - HAVING BEEN CLOTHED [WITH THE SUN]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting woman, "who was clothed with the sun", but possibly possessive, "whose cloths were the sun", CEV. It commonly takes an adverbial accusative expressing accompaniment "clothed with the sun." "A woman who had the sun wrapped around her like a dress", see TH.

ὑποκατω + gen. "under [her feet]" - [AND THE MOON] UNDERNEATH [THE FEET OF HER]. Spatial; "under, underneath, beneath." It seems unlikely that the moon under her feet is a symbol of authority over the earth. This involves over-extending the imagery. "And the moon served as a footstool on which she rested her feet", TH.

αστερων [ηρ ρων] gen. "[a crown] of [twelve] stars" - [AND ON THE HEAD OF HER A CROWN] OF [TWELVE] STARS. The genitive is adjectival, expegetic, or idiomatic / product; "a crown *which is made up of* twelve stars." "And she had on her head a crown that had twelve stars on it", TH.

επι + gen. "on [her head]" - UPON [THE HEAD OF HER]. Spatial; "upon, on."

v2

εχουσα [εχω] pres. part. "she was pregnant" - [AND IN THE WOMB] HAVING = BEARING a child. The participle is virtually functioning as a finite verb, best classified as a periphrastic construction with an assumed verb to be; "she has a child in the womb" = she was pregnant." See **εχων**, "having", 1:16.

κραζει [κραζω] pres. "cried out" - [AND] CALLED OUT. Historic / narrative present, the first of many in this passage.

ωδινουσα [ωδινω] pres. part. "in pain" - SUFFERING BIRTH-PAINS. The participle, as with **βασσανιζομενη**, "being tormented, traumatized", is adverbial, probably causal, "she cried out because she was suffering birth-pains and trauma"; the NIV opts for manner.

τεκειν [τεκτω] aor. inf. "to give birth" - The infinitive is probably adverbial, final, expressing purpose, she went through pain and trauma "in order to give birth", or better, end-view, "with a view to ...", or simply reason, so Blount. The imagery is quite strong and may reflect the trauma associated with the end of the age cf., Isa.26:17, Jer.4:31, Mic.4:9-10, Jn.16:21-22, 1Thes.5:3. Like the birth of a child, the kingdom comes to fruition with pain and trouble.

v3

ii] The sign of the red dragon, v3. Satan now appears on the scene, a monstrous beast that is but a parody of glory.

δρακων [ων ονος] "[**an enormous red**] **dragon**" - [AND WAS SEEN ANOTHER SIGN IN THE HEAVEN, AND BEHOLD, *there was* A GREAT RED] DRAGON. Nominative subject of an assumed verb to-be. This monstrous creature is usually depicted as a serpent, a beast from the deep, a sea monster, Leviathan. He devours the vulnerable, Jer.51:34, but a monster easily defeated by God, Isa.27:1, Ezk.32:2. The dragon obviously represents Satan, an enemy whose defeat is inevitable, 20:7-10.

εχων [εχω] pres. part. "**with [seven heads]**" - HAVING [SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS]. The participle is adjectival, attributive. Representing a monster with numerous heads, here the perfect / complete number seven, serves to magnify the horror. Note John's flexible use of the participle "having", 1:16.

επι + acc. "**[seven crowns] on [its head]**" - [AND] UPON [THE HEAD OF IT SEVEN CROWNS]. John's favourite spatial preposition is usually followed by a genitive to express "on, upon", but here he opts for the accusative. Jewelled metallic wreaths or headbands (**διαδηματα**), symbolizing authority and rule, are in mind, and so John may intend "around" its head, rather than crowns "on" its head, as with the woman. The word **στεφανος**, "crown", usually refers to a laurel wreath worn as a token of victory, rather than rule. Smalley argues that Satan's royal power parodies the true sovereignty of the King of kings and his many diadems.

v4

iii] The dragon and its murderous quest, v4. In this scene we witness the dragon's hostility toward the woman, and particularly her child. The powers of darkness rant and rage in the face of the realization of the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ, even to the point of destroying God's anointed one (the child) and his people (the woman, v6).

Note that the three verbs in v4 take a different tense: "draws" takes a present tense, "cast" is aorist, and "stands" is perfect. In the NT "to stand" is often perfect given what is involved in the action of standing. The present tense may serve to indicate a new scene, which is often the function of a narrative present. The aorist for John seems to be his default tense, with time determined by context.

των αστερων [ηρ ρος] gen. "**[a third] of the stars**" - [AND THE TAIL OF HIM DRAWS THE THIRD] OF THE STARS. The genitive is adjectival, partitive. This image serves to illustrate the size of the monster; it is not being used to teach that Satan gets to destroy false teachers (stars) in the last day, etc., etc., ...

του ουρανου [ος] gen. "out of the sky" - OF HEAVEN. The genitive is adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic / source, "from heaven", as NIV, or local, "the stars which are located in heaven". "Its tail swept from its place a third of the stars in the sky", Barclay.

εις + acc. "to [the earth]" - [AND CAST THEM] TO [THE EARTH]. Spatial, movement toward; "to, toward."

της μελλουσης [μελλω] gren. pres. part. "[the woman] who was about" - [AND THE DRAGON WAS STANDING BEFORE THE WOMAN] BEING ABOUT. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "woman"; "the dragon then stationed himself in front of the woman who was about to give birth", Berkeley.

τεκειν [τικτω] aor. inf. "to give birth" - The infinitive is complementary, completing the action of the participle "being about."

ινα + subj. "so that" - THAT [WHEN SHE GIVES BIRTH TO THE CHILD OF HER IT MIGHT DEVOUR *him*]. Introducing a final clause expressing purpose. Again, John's imagery should not be taken too literally. The dragon's preparation to destroy the infant is probably not an image of the crucifixion, so Caird, or the many plots faced by Jesus during his ministry, so Osborne. The image serves to reveal the opposition of the powers of darkness to the messianic fulfillment of the covenant realized in Christ, but is not specifically illustrating the birth of Christ, or any particular moment in Christ's ministry, i.e., "the situation illustrates the antagonism which will surround Jesus throughout his earthy ministry", Smalley. The image "simply reflects a pattern of opposition", Koester. "The dragon took its place in front of the woman who was about to give birth to a child, so that as soon as she did he might devour it", Phillips.

οταν + subj. "the moment [he was born]" - Temporal conjunction, introducing an indefinite temporal clause, "when, whenever."

v5

iv] The woman and her child are delivered from the dragon, v5-6. In the final scene, both the child and the woman are protected from the rage of the red dragon. The powers of darkness raged against the incarnate Christ, but he won the victory and is now Lord, bringing low all powers ranged against him. So also for God's people, the powers of darkness may rant and rage as we journey to the promised land, but our ultimate security is assured under the providential care of God.

αρσεν adj. "a male child" - [AND SHE GAVE BIRTH TO A SON], A MALE. The adjective serves as a substantive standing in apposition to "son", as NIV. Interestingly, John again ignores concord with "male" neuter and "son" masculine. It is again likely that John uses this to indicate an allusion to a scriptural text, here probably Isaiah 66:7 where the LXX has αρσεν, so Beale. None-the-less, there is a variant masculine and Mathewson argues that the neuter is more likely the work

of a scribe wanting the text to conform to Isa.66:7. It seems likely that the birth image is alluding to messianic fulfillment in Christ, of "God with us", Isa.7:14, and of the messiah's rule over the nations, Ps.2:9. The incarnation is probably in John's mind, but in the terms of the embodiment of the divine in the Son of God, the messiah, in human flesh as Jesus Christ, rather than the actual birth of Jesus, ie. the birth of the messianic age in Christ rather than the birth of Jesus himself, contra Koester. If we opt for the birth of Jesus then the woman is surely Mary, but the woman as Mary doesn't fit with v6.

ποιμαίνειν [ποιμαίνω] pres. inf. "**who will rule [all the nations]**" - [WHO IS ABOUT] TO SHEPHERD [ALL THE NATIONS]. The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of the verb "to be about to." "Who will shepherd all the nations with an iron rod", Peterson.

εν + "with" - WITH [A ROD MADE OF IRON]. Here the preposition is adverbial, instrumental, expressing the means of ruling the nations, or modal, expressing the manner of the rule.

προς + acc. "**[was snatched up] to God**" - [AND THE CHILD OF HER WAS SNATCHED UP] TO [GOD] TO [THE THRONE OF HIM]. The preposition expresses movement toward. It seems unlikely that we have a direct allusion to the ascension, but the ascension is certainly part of the package resulting in Christ's victory and enthronement. Christ's life of obedience unto death, his resurrection and ascension are integral to his enthronement. The powers of darkness may seek to thwart the fulfillment of the covenant promises in the messianic age, but Christ is victor over the dark domain and now rules over all powers and authorities. "He was taken to God and placed on his throne", CEV.

v6

ἡτοιμασμενον [ἔτοιμαζω] perf. mid./pas. part. "**[to a place] prepared for her**" - [AND THE WOMAN FLED INTO THE WILDERNESS WHERE SHE HAS A PLACE THERE] HAVING BEEN PREPARED. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "a place", "a place ... which had been prepared *for her*." The redundant local adverb **εκει**, "there", is resumptive, possibly a Semitism, so Aune. John again ties the experience of God's people, in the days before the end, with the wilderness journey of the children of Israel. "The woman fled to the desert where there was a place prepared by God, waiting for her", Barclay. The image illustrates the providential care of God for his people in the days before the end, so reflecting the promise contained in the prayer "deliver us from evil" - safe and secure, although singed!

απο + gen. "**by [God]**" - FROM [GOD]. A rare instrumental use of the preposition, expressing agency. In Koine Gk. sometimes used instead of **ὑπο** with passive verbs.

ἵνα + subj. "-" - THAT. Introducing a final clause expressing purpose; "in order that"

τρέφωσιν [τρέφω] pl. pres. subj. "[where] she might be taken care of]" - THAT [THERE] THEY MIGHT NOURISH [HER]. The durative aspect of the present tense may indicate continual care, although Mathewson argues the present tense is used in the narrative to express action in progress. The plural number is most likely used to express an impersonal passive. The verb is used to express God's care and support for his people during the days before the end. "John is reassuring his audience that God has made ready, in himself and through Christ, a place of spiritual refuge and eventual conquest, which will enable the saints to resist the powers of evil ranged against them in many forms. For them, the 'desert' of their situation is not a realm of isolation but of protection and succour; it is also the setting in which the eschatological deliverance of the Church, in time and in eternity, will eventually be completed", Smalley.

ἡμερας χιλιας διακοσιας εξηκοντα acc. "for 1,260 days" - A THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED SIXTY DAYS. Accusative of time, duration; "for". Another designation of half of the perfect number seven, here three and a half years. As already noted, this time signature indicates a shortening, for the sake of the elect, of the days of tribulation leading up to the end. As such it serves to emphasize God's providential care toward the people of God during their wilderness journey.

12:7-17

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

3. The battle with the beasts, 11:19-15:4

iii] The war in heaven

Synopsis

We are presented with a new scene in John's vision; A war unfolds in heaven between the Dragon and his angels, and Michael and his angels. The Dragon's forces are defeated and cast out of heaven to earth, and so they set out to lead the whole world astray. John then hears a voice from heaven proclaiming the realization of the kingdom of God. The Lamb is victorious, so there is joy in the blessing of salvation, but for the devil and his friends, there is woe because their time is short. The scene returns to the Dragon's activities on earth and we witness him harrying the woman (remnant Israel that bears the promised messianic seed, Christ). His attack is ferocious, but she is covered by God's providential care - his attack is limited to "time, times and half a time" (half the perfect number 7), and even the creation comes to her assistance. The war goes on with her family, i.e., "those who obey God's commands and bear their witness to Jesus."

Teaching

The kingdom of God is victorious over the powers of darkness.

Issues:

i] Context: See 12:1-6.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The war in heaven*:

The war is described, v7-9;

A hymn celebrating the Lamb's victory, v10-12;

The Dragon renews his attack, v13;

God's care for the woman, v14-16;

The Dragon extends his attack, v17.

iv] Interpretation:

In the opening scene of this vision, v1-6, we witnessed a **πολεμος**, "combat, war" between the powers of darkness (the red dragon) and God's messianic intentions in Christ (the child), played out in the life of the people of God, i.e., the elect (the woman). In this combat Christ is victorious, and with his help, his people are delivered from evil.

The scene now changes from earth to heaven as we witness this **πολεμος**, "combat, war", from a heavenly / spiritual perspective (**ουρανος** can just mean "sky", but this combat is fought in the heavenlies, the spiritual domain - Mounce thinks heaven itself, God's domain, but a change in perspective seems more likely than a change in place), v7-9. Michael and his angels (angelic forces commissioned to support God's people) do battle with the dragon and his angels, defeating them and casting them from the spiritual realm to a world facing imminent destruction. The hymn in v10-12 reinforces the victory motif of this scene, and thus the victory both of the child (the incarnate Christ) and the woman and her offspring (the faithful / persevering Christian community) in their wilderness journey.

The Hymn of praise, v10-12, proclaims the realization of the kingdom of God in the victory over the powers of darkness. Christ's victory is paramount, this through the "blood of the Lamb" (Jesus' obedience to the cross), upon which faithfulness we are declared / made faithful. The victory is also realized by "the word of their testimony", which "word" produces the fruit of obedience. John is probably referring to the perseverance of faith (but see below). To this end, there is rejoicing in heaven, but on earth, the wilderness journey of God's people will face the fury of the one who knows "that his time is short."

The scene again changes and we are back on earth witnessing the red dragon in pursuit of the woman and her offspring, v13-17. The message is simple enough, the wilderness experience of God's people, as they look forward to the day when they will cross the river Jordan and enter the promised land, is one of toil and trouble. Yet, God's people are not on their own, they will be protected by his providential care ("taken care of out of the serpent's reach") and equipped for strife ("with the wings of a great eagle") - safe and secure, although singed. The dragon will rage, he will war against God's people who persevere in faith, but he will not succeed.

The War in Heaven: Given that we are dealing with apocalyptic imagery, it is likely that John's vision reveals two aspects of reality, earthly and heavenly. In earthly time / space terms, the powers of darkness seek to frustrate and destroy Christ's mission and that of his community of believers. This good-verseus-evil scenario has a supernatural, if not cosmic counterpart, played out in the heavenlies, maybe even in God's own heavenly domain if we accept Mounce's take on the vision; a "corresponding conflict in the heavenly dimension", Beale, so Caird, Koester, Bauckham ("the defeat of the dragon [12:7-9] is doubtless the same event as the victory of the Lamb [5:5-6] and both are to be located in the death and resurrection

of Jesus Christ"). So, verses 7-9 give us a glimpse of another reality which is totally beyond our understanding. What we can say is that these powers which war against God, are the very powers which are part of our own life experience, powers defeated by Christ, defeated by the Lamb who is the Lion. In John's realized eschatology, the dragon has lost the battle and now writhes with fury in the knowledge that "his time is short."

Not all commentators accept that John is aligning the combat between the dragon and Michael, and the combat between the dragon and the child. Osborne argues that v7-9 explains v4a. The war in heaven is a cosmic war in the primeval past in which Satan is defeated and so cast to earth, inevitably infecting the creation, particularly in the temptation of Adam and Eve. A primordial fall is certainly found in later Jewish tradition and may well be known by John, but it is not found in scripture, cf., 1 Enoch 6-11, 86. The tradition was certainly developed in the medieval church, particularly as it served to explain the existence of evil, cf., John Milton. Aune is cautious when he makes the point that John narrates the war in heaven and the expulsion of Satan as a purely eschatological event, without developing the Jewish tradition of the fall based on Isaiah 14:12-15, cf., p700.

Less likely is a Millennial / Dispensationalist interpretation, see Thomas. With this approach to the passage, the battle in heaven and the expulsion of Satan is still in the future. On that day of battle, Satan is cast to earth leading to the seven years of tribulation and the final three and a half years reign of the beast.

In the terms of linear time, it does seem that the dragon's attempt to snatch the son is "contemporaneous with the heavenly war that erupts between Michael and the dragon", Blount. The dragon's defeat in the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus is contemporaneous with his defeat by Michael, his casting out of heaven, and his entrapment in a time / space dimension facing annihilation. It is in this dimension that "the bestial forces of the dragon (described in Rev. 13) will persecute God's people because of their witness to the lordship of Christ", Blount. Yet, apocalyptic imagery, by its very nature, transcends time as we know it, which is why we end up with commentators arguing for either a primeval war, or a war focused on the cross, or an eschatological war. God and the supernatural domain, heaven, is not constrained by his creation of linear time. The beauty of apocalyptic imagery is that it enables us to escape our space-time constraints. The war in heaven and the defeat of Satan certainly intersects with linear time at the cross, but his being "cast down" to earth may well

cover the primeval all the way to an eschatological Armageddon, all of which is but a creative moment in the mind of God.

In Blount's argument, an argument substantially in agreement with Beale etc., he likes to classify the heavenly war, and its participants, as "mythical". The word, of course, is somewhat laden. Yarbro Collins in her work *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* argues that chapter 12 draws on the pattern of mythic combat / struggle between two divine beings, and their allies, for universal kingship, a myth that was widespread in the ancient Near East - Apollo-Python, Zeus-Typhon, One of those combatants was usually depicted as a beast, a monster, often a dragon, the master of disorder and chaos. John's depiction of this eternal battle between good and evil may be classified a myth, but is the myth real? I wonder how real God's interaction with our time / space continuum / history is in relation to his interaction with this so called mythical heavenly war? It well may be that the war in heaven is more real (whatever that means!!) than the war on earth. The creation is but the product of the creative energy of God; he said "let it be", and it was. One day he will cut off the energy and it won't be. Unlike the earth, the heavenlies, the spiritual / supernatural domain, is eternal, and so maybe the battle between good and evil is actually there, and that what happens on earth is nothing more than a sideshow. Yet, what is clear from scripture is that the victory over the cosmic powers of darkness is won by the incarnate Christ at the sideshow. How interesting! So much for myth!

Text - 12:7

The war in heaven, v7-17: i] The war / combat described, v7-9. On earth, Satan goes into combat against Christ, with Christ victorious in his death, resurrection and ascension. In heaven there is also a war in which Satan is defeated and "hurled to the earth" where he sets out to harry the woman.

και "then" - AND. Transitional. Used here instead of **δε** to express a step in the narrative.

εν + dat. "**in [heaven]**" - [THERE WAS A WAR] IN [HEAVEN]. The preposition here is local, expressing space.

του πολεμησαι [πολεμew] gen. aor. inf. "**[Michael and his angels] fought**" - [MICHAEL AND THE ANGELS OF HIM] *came* TO WAR. This construction, the genitive article **του** + inf., is a Semitism used to express purpose (note examples in Matt., Lk., Act.). It is most likely part of an elliptical clause missing the verb, probably **ηλθον**, "came", so Beale; "Michael and his angels *came in order to make war.*" See Mathewson for a full breakdown of all the grammatical possibilities.

μετα + gen. "**against [the dragon]**" - Here expressing accompaniment / association; "came to make war with the dragon."

πολεμησεν [πολεμεω] aor. "**fought back**" - [AND THE DRAGON AND THE ANGELS OF HIM] WAGED WAR. "And the dragon and his angels put up a fight", Barclay.

v8

και "**but**" - AND. Here adversative, as NIV.

αυτων gen. pro. "**[they lost] their [place]**" - [HE DID NOT HAVE POWER NOR WAS FOUND A PLACE] OF THEM. The genitive is adjectival, possessive. Satan once had a place in heaven and access to God, cf., Job, Zech.3:1-2.

ετι adv. "-" - STILL. This temporal adverb with a negative takes the sense "any longer, no longer;" "but he was not strong enough to win, and in the end no place was any longer left for them in heaven", Barclay.

εν + dat. "**in [heaven]**" - Local, expressing space.

v9

ὁ καλουμενος [καλεω] pres. mid./pas. part. "**that [ancient servant] called [the devil]**" - [AND WAS CAST *out* THE GREAT DRAGON, THE ANCIENT SERPENT], THE ONE BEING CALLED [THE DEVIL AND SATAN, THE ONE DECEIVING THE WHOLE WORLD]. As with ὁ πλανων, "the one deceiving", the participle serves as a substantive standing in apposition to "great dragon." Note the package of appositional descriptors of the dragon; an example of "overspecification", so Mathewson. The dragon is clearly identified with Satan, the serpent, obviously the serpent who tempted Eve. This serpent will be crushed underfoot by the offspring of Eve, namely Christ and his community of believers, Rom.16:20. But in the meantime he will exercise authority over the world through the political and social structures of the secular city administered by the Beast from the bog and his agents.

εις + acc. "**to [the earth]**" - [HE WAS CAST] INTO [THE EARTH]. Spatial; "toward, into, to."

μετ [μετα] + gen. "**[his angels] with [him]**" - [AND THE ANGELS] WITH [HIM WERE CAST]. Expressing association / accompaniment.

v10

ii] A hymn celebrating the Lamb's victory, v10-12. The one who accused God's people before the Lord, day and night, can accuse no longer, for the Lamb has triumphed over him and has cast from the heavens. There is great joy for the Christian community in the knowledge that Satan, the master of darkness, is

mortally wounded, but there is a downside, although the time is short, it is very easy to get caught up in his death-throws.

και "then" - AND. Transitional. As in v7; indicating a step in the narrative.

λεγουσαν pres. part. "**say**" - [I HEARD A LOUD VOICE IN HEAVEN] SAYING. Technically the participle serves as the accusative complement of the direct object "a loud voice" standing in a double accusative construction, but see **λεγων**, 1:17, for John's use of a participle to introduce a vision. Note that the verb **ακουω**, "I hear", will often take a genitive, but here "loud voice" is accusative.

αρτι "now" - Temporal adverb.

εγενετο [γινομαι] aor. "**have come**" - COME, OCCURRED [THE SALVATION AND THE POWER]. The aorist is perfective, a salvation that is both then and now, expressed by the NIV with an English perfect.

του θεου [ος] gen. "**[the kingdom] of [our] God**" - The genitive may be viewed as adjectival, possessive, but if the rule of God is in mind then it may be treated as verbal, subjective. The genitive pronoun **ημων**, "of us / our", may be possessive, or idiomatic / subordination, "the reign exercised by God over us."

οτι "because" - Introducing a causal clause explaining why the kingdom has come; "because the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down", Phillips.

των αδελφων [ος] gen. "**[the accuser] of our brothers and sisters**" - [THE ACCUSER] OF THE BROTHERS [OF US WAS CAST, THROWN *out*]. The genitive could be taken as adjectival, possessive, "our brother's accuser", but it is usually treated as verbal, objective, "Satan accused our people, in the presence of God, day and night", CEV.

ο κατηγορων [κατηγορω] pres. part. "**who accuses [them]**" - THE ONE ACCUSING, DENOUNCING, BRINGING A CHARGE AGAINST [THEM BEFORE GOD, DAY AND NIGHT]. The participle serves as a substantive standing in apposition to "the accuser." The present tense is serving to emphasize aspect rather than time. Satan was constantly bringing charges against God's people, nasty little accusative person that he is, but now he is "hurled down" and his accusations disappear into the void.

ενωπιον + gen. "**before [our God]**" - BEFORE [THE GOD OF US]. Spatial preposition; "in the presence of."

ημερας [α] gen. "**day [and night]**" - The genitive is temporal, of time.

v11

δια acc. "**by [the blood]**" - [AND THEY OVERCAME HIM] BECAUSE OF [THE BLOOD]. As with **δια τον λογον**, "because of the word", the preposition takes a causal sense; "because of, on account of." Although often translated as instrumental, expressing means, as NIV (usually **δια** + gen.), a causal sense is

indicating the basis upon which the victory is achieved, namely the sacrificial death of the Lamb; "our people defeated him because of the blood of the Lamb", CEV. "They have triumphed over him by virtue of the Lamb's spilled blood", Cassirer.

του αρνιου [ος] gen. "**of the Lamb**" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive, "the Lamb's blood", or idiomatic, "the blood which was shed by the Lamb", or verbal, subjective, "the sacrifice offered by the Lamb."

και και "**and [by]**" - AND [BECAUSE OF THE WORD OF THE TESTIMONY OF HIM] AND [THEY DID NOT]. It seems likely that these two conjunctions are exegetical rather than coordinative, or as Blount puts it, "it expands what has already been said." The triumph over the powers of darkness rests on the cross, which triumph is realized because of the word / gospel they witness / testify, and then only as long as a person cares more about witnessing than life itself.

της μαρτυριας [α] gen. "**[the word] of [their] testimony**" - [THE WORD] OF THE TESTIMONY [OF HIM]. The genitive is adjectival, probably exegetical / appositional, with the genitive specifying / clarifying / explaining the noun; "*The testimony* of the faithful to Jesus explains the nature of *the word* which they speak about him", Smalley. This testimony / witness is the gospel, in short, "the word of the cross", 1Cor.1:18.

αχρι + gen. "**so much as to shrink from [death]**" - [AND THEY DID NOT LOVE THE SOUL (life) OF THEM] UNTIL [DEATH]. Here the particular sense of the preposition expresses "time up to a certain point", cf., BDAG, 161.2; "they did not love life even in the face of death." In the Revelation, losing one's life is all about a perseverance in faith to gospel-truth rather than to the ideology of the secular city, Babylon. Here, the perseverance in faith of the Christian community relates to the task of witnessing the gospel, even unto death / martyrdom. Such sacrifice is not the experience of believers in Western societies, but John's words underline the importance of gospel communication and the sacrifice required (financial??) to make known the good news of God's grace in Christ.

v12

δια τουτο "**therefore**" - This causal construction, "because of this", is used with an inferential sense, "for this reason" = "therefore". Rudge, *Discourse Grammar*, argues that it is often used to introduce an important logical conclusion; here, a good news / bad news conclusion. The conclusion is that the Devil may be knocked down, but he's not out!

οι ... σκηνοουντες [σκηνωω] pres. mid./pas. part. "**you who dwell [in them]**" - [BE GLAD, HEAVENS AND] THE ONES [IN THEM] TABERNACLING. The participle serves as a substantive. The nominative here is being used for a vocative, so "Be glad, O heavens and the ones tabernacling in them."

ουαι "**but woe**" - WOE [THE EARTH AND THE SEA]. Interjection; expressing distress. "The devil will use beasts from the sea and land to promote false worship, and the whore to draw those on earth and in the sea into a web of violence, greed and idolatry", Koester.

ὅτι "**because**" - BECAUSE [THE DEVIL CAME DOWN TO YOU]. Introducing a causal clause expressing why the earth and sea is in distress.

ἔχων [ἐχῶ] pres. part. "**he is filled [with fury]**" - HAVING [GREAT FURY, WRATH]. The participle is adverbial, probably modal, expressing the manner of his coming down, "the devil has come down to you in great wrath", ESV, but note John's irregular use of the participle "having", 1:16.

εἰδώς [οἶδα] perf. part. "**because he knows**" - HAVING KNOWN. The participle is adverbial, best taken as causal, as NIV.

ὅτι "**that**" - THAT [HE HAS A SHORT TIME]. Here introducing a dependent statement of perception expressing what he knows. The shortened time is the three and a half years, a halving of the perfect number seven for the sake of the elect. As already noted, this is not a specific length of time, but serves as an apocalyptic image of a shortened time.

v13

iii] The Dragon renews his attack, v13. John picks up the narrative again. The monster (Satan), having failed to destroy the child ("the messiah who descends from the true Israel", Smalley) of the woman (remnant Israel that bears the promised messianic seed, Christ), now sets out to harry the woman instead. As noted in 12:1, the sign of the woman that appears "in heaven" is best understood as a sign "from heaven." Boring makes too much of the εἰν, "in", such that he differentiates between the woman in v1 and the woman here: He argues that the woman of v1 represents "God's procreative ability to bring a believing community to life", while here she represents the church; one mythical, the other historical. This seems unlikely; the woman serves as an apocalyptic sign; she is the messianic community of Israel which in her offspring becomes the Christian community.

καὶ "-" - AND. Transitional. As in v7; indicating a step in the narrative.

ὅτε "**when**" - WHEN [THE DRAGON SAW]. Temporal conjunction, serving to introduce a temporal clause.

ὅτι "**that**" - THAT [HE WAS THROWN TO THE EARTH]. Introducing a dependent statement of perception expressing what the dragon realized.

ἐδιώξεν [διώκω] aor. "**he pursued [the woman]**" - HE PURSUED, PERSECUTED [THE WOMAN WHO GAVE BIRTH TO]. The aorist is best classified as ingressive, indicating the point at which the action begins; "He went in pursuit of the woman who had given birth to the boy." The verb can mean "persecute" and that sense is surely present, but given v14, "pursued" is the dominant sense.

τον αρσενα adj. "**the male child**" - THE MAN. The adjective serves as a substantive. The article indicates that John is specifying the child referred to in v5, i.e., an article of previous reference; this feature is common in the Revelation. "Child" is assumed.

v14

iv] God's care for the woman, v14-16. Drawing on Exodus imagery, the woman (remnant Israel that bears the promised messianic seed, Christ) escapes the powers of darkness by fleeing into the wilderness, a place of safety and succour. There she and her offspring (the Christian community; see v17) will find God's protection during the shortened time (the three and a half years) before she enters the promised land (heaven!). Her flight is divinely supported; carried on the wings of an eagle. The serpent follows, pressing home his attack, but even the creation comes to her aid.

It seems unlikely that the wilderness is the Christian way of life isolated from the evils of Babylon, so Kiddle, but rather it is the wilderness journey of the Christian community as experienced today, a journey with all the temptations and failures that Israel experienced of old. The point is that the prayer, "deliver us from evil", is sure to be answered. The serpent may rage, but he cannot destroy us; we are safe and secure.

και "-" - and. As in v7.

τη γυναικι [η αικος] dat. "**the woman**" - [THE TWO WINGS OF A LARGE / OLD / GREAT EAGLE / VULTURE WERE GIVEN] TO THE WOMAN. Dative of indirect object.

εδοθησαν [διδωμι] aor. pas. "**was given [the two wings of a great eagle]**" - The verb is best classified as a divine / theological passive; God does the giving. The presence of an article with "wings" and "eagle" probably serves to indicate an OT allusion, cf., Exod.19:4, Deut.32:10-14, Isa.40:31. Israel's rescue by an eagle is a common image in Jewish thought, cf., 1 Enoch.96:2.

ινα + subj. "**so that [she might fly]**" - THAT [SHE MIGHT FLY INTO THE WILDERNESS] TO [THE PLACE OF HER]. Introducing a final clause expressing purpose, "in order that"

αυτης gen. pro. "**[to the place] prepared for her**" - [TO THE PLACE] OF HER. The genitive is possessive; "her" place is a place "prepared by God", v6.

οπου "**where [she would be taken care of]**" - WHERE [SHE IS NOURISHED THERE FOR A TIME, AND TIMES AND HALF A TIME]. Adverbial use of the conjunction, local, expressing space. Note the redundant **εκει**, "there", following. The woman is under divine care for the shortened time of tribulation, the three and a half years before the end. We take it that the shortened time is the period between the ascension and Christ's return, but of course, this is a much-debated issue.

απο + gen. "**out of [the serpent's] reach**" - FROM [THE FACE OF THE SERPENT]. The preposition here expresses separation, "away from." The face" is idiomatic for "the presence of"; "so that she might fly from the presence of the serpent."

v15

εκ + gen. "**from [his mouth]**" - [AND THE SERPENT THREW = SPEWED] FROM [THE MOUTH OF IT WATER AS A RIVER AFTER THE WOMAN]. Expressing source / origin. The imagery of the serpent here is in the terms of the great sea monster, Leviathan, and represents the continued persecution of the church. Beale notes that in the literature of Qumran, destructive flooding water is sometimes used to describe the deception and destruction of Satanic forces. For this reason, Beale argues that the image here represents Satan's use of deception and false teaching to undermine God's people, cf., 12:9, Ps.32:6-7. The glories of the secular city / Babel / Babylon always deceive to destroy. "The Leviathan hurled a flood of water after the woman in order to sweep her away."

ὡς "**like [a river]**" - Comparative.

ἵνα + subj. "**to [overtake the woman]**" - THAT [HE MIGHT MAKE HER]. Introducing a final clause expressing purpose.

ποταμοφορητον adj. "**sweep her away with a torrent**" - SWEPT AWAY IN A FLOOD. Hapax legomenon - once only use in the NT. The adjective serves as a substantive, complement of the direct object "her" of the verb "to make", standing in a double accusative construction.

v16

τη γυναικι [η αικος] dat. "**[the earth helped] the woman**" - [AND THE EARTH HELPED] THE WOMAN [AND THE EARTH OPENED THE MOUTH OF IT]. Dative of direct object after the verb "to help." "Revelation shows the creation serving the will of the Creator by helping the woman", Koester. No scriptural allusion is obvious in this image, although the idea of the earth swallowing up something is present, cf., Exod.15:12, Num.16:32, Ps.106:17.

κατεπιεν [καταπινω] aor. "**swallowing [the river]**" - [AND] SWALLOWED [THE RIVER WHICH THE DRAGON THREW = SPEWED OUT OF THE MOUTH OF IT]. The **κατα** prefix to the verb "to drink" probably serves to intensify the action, so "completely drank up the river."

v17

v] The dragon extends his attack, v17. Satan now focuses his attack upon Christ's brothers and sisters, the Christian community, those who rest in faith on the faithfulness of Christ, and live out that faith in brotherly and sisterly love.

επι + dat. "**at [the woman]**" - [AND THE DRAGON WAS ANGRY] AT [THE WOMAN]. John uses his favourite preposition here with the dative to express cause; "the dragon was angry on the basis of / because of the woman", but possibly with the sense of opposition, "against", so "was angry with the woman." Note the passive verb seems to function as a medial passive.

ποιησαι [ποιεω] aor. inf. "**to wage [war]**" - [AND WENT AWAY] TO MAKE [WAR]. Here the infinitive is adverbial, expressing purpose; "in order to make war."

μετα + gen. "**against**" - Here expressing accompaniment / association; "came to make war with", as in v7.

του σπερματος [α ατος] gen. "**[the rest] of [her] offspring**" - [THE REST, REMAINING] OF THE SEED [OF HER]. The genitive is adjectival, partitive. John has represented the apocalyptic image of the woman as a corporate figure, the Israel of God, the people of God in whom the covenant promises are realized with the birth of the descendant of David, the anointed one, the messiah / Christ (the male child). John now draws out the corporate nature of the woman in the image of her "offspring / descendants" = the messianic community, the new Israel, the Christian community, the church. John is obviously drawing a distinction between the woman and her offspring, but it is not a major one. Both represent the people of God, with the woman representing the remnant of Israel that bears the promised messianic seed, Christ, and the offspring representing the new Israel, the Christian community, the church. Even so, the distinction should not be emphasized; both are corporate figures representing God's people in conflict with the powers of darkness. Many commentators make much of the distinction between the woman and her offspring, eg., Beale and Sweet argue that the woman represents the church as an ideal heavenly reality, whereas the descendants represent the church as it exists on earth. Dispensational commentators offer different interpretations: that the woman is Israel and that her descendants are the believing remnant, or that the woman is remnant / believing Israel and her descendants are Gentile believers,

των τηρουτων [τηρω] gen. pres. part. "**those who keep [the commands of God]**" - THE ONES KEEPING [THE COMMANDS OF GOD]. The present tense is durative, expressing the ongoing nature of "keeping" and "having". As with **εχοντων**, "the ones having", the NIV takes this participle as a substantive standing in apposition to the genitive "the ones remaining", but it can also be treated as adjectival, attributive, "went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring that observe the commands of God and adhere to the testimony of Jesus", Berkeley. The genitive "of God", best viewed as adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic / source

"the commands *which are from God*." What commands? Aune inclines to the Decalogue, Osborne to "all the commandments in the Word"; See **Ἰησοῦ** below.

Ἰησοῦ [ος] gen. "[**hold fast their testimony**] **about Jesus**" - [AND HAVING THE TESTIMONY] OF JESUS. The genitive is usually read as verbal, objective, a testimony *about / concerning Jesus*; "bear testimony to Jesus", RSV, so Smalley, "those who maintain their witness to Jesus"; also Boring, "witnesses to the Lordship of Christ." Of course, we may be dealing with a subjective genitive, where the genitive substantive produces the action implied by the verbal noun, such that John is identifying a testimony revealed from Jesus, "the testimony that he bore", Mounce; "faithful to what Jesus did or taught", CEV - even simply "testimony *from* Jesus", i.e., idiomatic / source. Koester argues that both ideas are present (plenary verbal genitive) "as members of the community hold only the witness that comes from Jesus, they also bear witness to Jesus, and it is their public testimony that elicits opposition." Beale also argues that the genitive is intentionally ambiguous containing both ideas, "testimony from Jesus", and "testimony to Jesus." Yet, it seems likely that the participial construction "those who keep and hold" serves to identify the marks of "the ones remaining" / the Christian community. The author of the first epistle of John identifies the marks of those who submit to God as those who "believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another as he commanded us", 1Jn.3:23. In the passage before us, "God's commands" probably focus on the neighbourly commands of the Decalogue, summarized by Jesus as "love one another", a command which is realized as a fruit of faith, i.e., the command to love rests on the prior command to believe in Jesus. When it comes to "having the testimony of Jesus", John expresses himself better in 14:12, "the ones keeping the faith of Jesus" - **τηρουντες**, "keeping, holding, retaining" = "believing"; **την πιστιν Ἰησοῦ**, "the faith of Jesus", possible objective, "faith in Jesus", but more likely subjective, "faithfulness of Jesus." The **μαρτυριαν**, "testimony", of Jesus is his faithful life unto sacrificial death. The mark of a Christian is their **εχοντων**, "having, holding" = "believing", this "testimony", which faith bears the fruit of love (the fruit of God's neighbourly commands).

12:18-13:10

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

3. The battle with the beasts, 11:19-15:4

iv] The beast from the sea

Synopsis

In his vision, John reveals how the Dragon waged war against the woman's offspring, 12:17. The Dragon is standing by the sea at the moment when a blasphemous monster emerges from the deep, commissioned with the Dragon's power, rule and authority. The whole world is filled with awe and wonder, and inevitably ends up worshipping the Dragon. Although the beast's time is limited, it is well able to blaspheme everything God stands for, going out of its way to persecute the woman's offspring (God's people). For the vast majority of humanity, the attraction of the beast is irresistible, making it worthy of worship. The vision comes with a word to the offspring - in the business of living for the gospel, trouble is our bedfellow. The vision concludes by reminding God's people that the essential ingredient in times of trouble is the perseverance of faith.

Teaching

The kingdom of God is realized through tribulation.

Issues:

i] Context: See 11:19. Chapters 12:18-13:18 presents in two parts by describing how two beasts set out to wage war on the offspring of the woman, cf., 12:7-17. As such, the chapter explains what results from the pursuit of the woman (the people of God / the remnant messianic community of Israel that bears the promised messianic seed, Christ) by the red dragon (Satan) into the wilderness, and its/his making "war against the rest of her offspring" (the people of God / the Christian community), 12:17. The chapter describes two agents of the red dragon (Satan), the first, the beast from the sea, 12:18-13:10, and the second, the beast from the bog, 13:11-18. In making war on the "offspring", the beasts find that they are restrained by the hand of God - a restrained authority for 42 months, ie., half the perfect number 7 expressing a shortened time for the sake of the elect. Both beasts are counterfeit Christs, mere deceivers like their master the red dragon, and sadly, they do end up deceiving many. Both beasts, each being an antichrist type, represent the secular city, Babylon, the first in the glory of its political power, and the second in the glory of its shibboleths, ideals, and philosophies..

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The beast from the sea*:

The Dragon summons the beast from the sea, 12:18.

A description of the beast, v1-4:

Wondrous, v1;

Powerful, v2a;

Authoritative, v2b;

Healed, v3a;

Popular, v4.

The limit of the beast's power, v5-8:

Blasphemy and slander, v5-6;

Victory over the saints, v7;

A recipient of universal worship, 8.

A word to the wise, v9-10:

The Christian community will inevitably face persecution

Tribulation is where perseverance of faith comes to the fore.

iv] Interpretation:

The apocalyptic imagery employed by John here has prompted many wonderful interpretations. Again, we are best to restrain our love of mystery and magic and stay with a generalized interpretation. That's not to say that the Roman Emperor at the time doesn't fit the bill, it fits quite well, but then so do many other secular authorities, powers and philosophies - always have, and always will.

The sea is a place of darkness and chaos for a first century Jew. Out of this chaos, the Red Dragon (Satan) draws his first "beast" to set upon the woman's offspring (the Christian community). The beast bears Satan's character; his authority, rule and power over the world (*He's got the whole world in his hand!* Lk.4:6). John draws on the beasts of Daniel 7 to describe this beast. Like Daniel's beasts, John's beast is animal like, having ten horns, blasphemous, powerful. In Daniel, the beasts represent political powers, "kingdoms", and so it is very likely that John wants us to see this beast as representing the secular city, Babylon - "Satanically-manipulated political power", Richardson.

Some elements are difficult to understand. John's beast has a healed fatal wound, v3. The point is probably that it has been out of the sea / chaos numerous times, put down, but here it is again. And so it will be until the end. Secular powers and authorities come and go; their glory shines for a moment, glorified / worshiped, but then they fall. Of this cycle there is a limit, a shortened time, "forty-two months", three and a half years, half of the perfect number seven, v5. The beast may wage war against God's

people, persecute and slander the Christian community, but only for a shortened time. There is a limit to this moment of grace between Christ's ascension and coming / appearing, this moment when the Red Dragon can play out his death rattles, manipulating the authority of the State (a divine institution for good, Rom.13:1-7) for evil purposes, denying the place of the Creator in human life and turning political power against the church, v6-7.

For the Christian community, the reality of this shortened time is that we are safe, but singed. If we are in "the Lamb's book of life" then we are safe and secure in the saviour's arms, v8. We get in the book, of course, by persevering in faith, by resting on the Lamb who was slain for us. Yes, persecution may be our lot, even death, v10a, but by persevering in faith we are securely part of God's eternal community, v10b.

Who gives the beast his authority? Smalley runs the line of most commentators when he argues that the beast's "delegated and temporary authority is given by God."; "It was allowed (he was permitted) to fight against God's people and defeat them", TEV. As Boring puts it, "he (John) persists in his claim that this conquest was allowed (εδοθη, "given") by God." John is drawing heavily on Daniel 7 to describe the beast and his "waging war on the holy ones", Dan.7:8, 21. He even uses Daniel's passive verbs from chapter 7, of qualities (power, etc.) and directions "given" to the beasts, and of their being "allowed" to continue for a time. John, as with all Biblical authors, accepts the sovereignty of God as a given, but also happily accepts the independence of Satan and his minions, as well as humanity at large, under God.

The scriptures do not undertake a philosophical examination of the contrary nature of human free will and God's sovereign will; both are true and stand together in tension. Of course, given that linear thought is dominant, we tend to focus on one or the other - God is sovereign (Calvinist), or humanity is free (Arminian). Yet, truth is often lateral. This is evidenced in the experience of life. So, for example, in the political sphere "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" can end up as "I'm up, pull the ladder up", or, "never give a sucker an even break." On the other hand, equality, social responsibility, the *we are all in this together* line, "always give a mate a helping hand", can end up as a dictatorship of the proletariat. "Liberty, equality and fraternity" is the better principle, with liberty and equality standing together in an equally weighted tension, bound by fraternity, respect, love,

So, in the Revelation, it is unwise to describe the beast, emerging from the sea in the presence of the Red Dragon, as a divine agent. If it is the agent

of anyone, it is the agent of the Red Dragon. The beast, Babylon, the secular city, government,, rules by an ultimate authority under God, administering justice for the maintenance of civil society. Yet, the one who "gives" to the beast "to do war" on God's people, is surely the Red Dragon; Satan is the puppeteer behind corrupt governments, not God. It is because of the Red Dragon's attack on the offspring of the woman by his beasts, that his wings are clipped, his time is shortened, v5. So, translations like "it was allowed to make war", ESV, etc., are misleading. The NIV approach is much better, "he / it was given *power* to wage war ...", for the Gk., "to do war against God's people was given to it." Who does the giving? Who has the whole world in his hand? Well! Ultimately, but

Text - 12:18 / 13:1

The beast from the sea, 12:18-13:10: i] The Dragon summons the beast from the sea, 12:18 / 13:1. The Red Dragon moves from the desert to the seashore to instigate his attack on the offspring of the the woman, the Christian community.

και "-" - AND. Transitional. The conjunction is used here to indicate a step in the narrative.

επι + acc. "[the dragon stood] on" - [IT/HE STOOD] ON. When John uses this his favourite spatial preposition to express "on, upon" he usually follows up with a genitive, but for some reason he follows up with an accusative here. Standing "on, upon" has to be the intended sense. Given the variant first person **εσταθην**, "I stand", "then I stood on the sand of the sea-shore", Phillips, may be intended, but it is a likely early correction to the text.

της θαλασσης [α] gen. "[the shore] of the sea" - The genitive is adjectival, probably idiomatic / locative; "the sand / shore-line which is alongside the sea." "The dragon stood on the beach beside the sea", CEV.

v2

ii] A description of the beast from the sea, v1-4: John's description of the beast draws from Job 40-41, and particularly Daniel 7:2-7, 11. This sea monster, the leviathan from the abyss, looks similar to the beast from the abyss, 11:7. He represents corrupted secular power and authority shaped by the influence of the dragon / Satan. For John's day, the Roman Empire certainly aligns well with this vision, but, of course, evil empires come and go, and they all fit the image of the beast from the sea.

αναβαινον [αναβαινω] pres. part. "[I saw a beast] coming" - [AND I SAW A BEAST] COMING UP. The participle serves as the accusative complement of the direct object, "beast", of the verb "I saw", standing in a double accusative

construction. Here we have "a beast", anarthrous (without an article), which may serve to link it with "the beast" in 11:7.

εκ + gen. "**out of [the sea]**" - Expressing source / origin. John may be alluding to the fact that the Romans invaded Israel from the sea, but he is more than likely drawing on prophetic precedence, as above.

εξον [εχω] pres. part. "**it had [ten horns]**" - HAVING [TEN HORNS]. The participle serves as a further accusative complement of the direct object, "beast", "a beast coming up and having ..." It may also be treated as adjectival, attributive, limiting "beast", "which had ten horns and seven heads", but note John's flexible use of **εχων**, "having", 1:16. John describes the beast "having" horns, diadems and a blasphemous name.

επι + gen. "**on [its horns]**" - [AND] ON [THE HORNS OF IT TEN CROWNS / DIADEMS]. Spatial, "on, upon." The beast's horns and crowns denote his authority, an authority which Daniel tells us is secular (= "kings").

επι + acc. "**on [each head]**" - [AND] ON [THE HEADS OF IT]. John follows up his favourite spatial preposition with an accusative rather than a genitive for the sense "on, upon." Does he mean something like "around his head" instead of "on"? The image of blasphemy aligns with Daniel 7:8-28.

βλασφημιας [α] gen. "**a blasphemous name**" - [NAMES] OF BLASPHEMY / ABUSIVE SPEECH. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, as NIV. Probably in the terms of claiming deity. For John's time, the Roman emperors, and their officials, would have filled the bill nicely, eg., Vespasian liked the title "Lord and God." Note the variants **ονομα**, "name", and **ονομα τα**, "names". Both variants have equal textual support, but a single name seems likely, which, of course, may be the reason why **τα** was dropped.

v2

The animal traits of the beast reflect those of Daniel's four beasts, cf., Dan.7. Satan endows the beast with his authority and power, although it is a poor reflection of divine power, authority and kingship.

παρδαλει [ις εως] dat. "**[resembled] a leopard**" - [AND THE BEAST WHICH I SAW WAS LIKE] A LEOPARD. The adjective **ομοιον**, "like", takes a dative complement.

ως [feet] like" - [AND THE FEET OF IT] AS. Comparative use of the participle.

αρκου [ος] gen. "**those of a bear**" - *the feet* OF A BEAR [AND THE MOUTH OF IT AS *the* MOUTH OF A LION]. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, or partitive, limiting an assumed "feet."

αυτω dat. pro. "[the dragon gave] the beast [his power]" - [AND THE DRAGON GAVE THE POWER OF IT AND THE THRONE OF IT] TO IT [AND GREAT AUTHORITY]. Dative of indirect object.

v3

The beast from the sea bears the marks of the ongoing manifestations of corrupted secular power.

εκ + gen. "[one] of [the heads]" - [AND ONE] OF [THE HEADS OF IT]. The preposition stands in for a partitive genitive.

ως "[the beast] seemed [to have a fatal wound]" - AS [HAVING BEEN SLAIN INTO DEATH]. Comparative use of the particle. Rather than just one head being fatally wounded, John tells us in 13:14 that the beast itself had been mortally wounded. Numerous interpretations are offered for this apocalyptic image. The wound may have come about in the heavenly battle with Michael and his angels, but John does not align the beast with the Dragon and his angels. It may be an image of resurrection such that the beast is a pseudo-Christ; like the Lamb, it bears a mortal wound, cf., Blount. John may be describing the beast in the terms of a resurrected Nero, cf., Koester, Smalley. There is little doubt that the beast represents political power, and certainly for John, power lay in the hands of the Roman empire and its emperors, but a specific link with Rome is unlikely. This power has been around for a long time, and will continue until the end. Israel had long experienced the destructive power of the rise and fall of kingdoms and such will be the way of things until the *parousia* of Christ. Under the direction of the Red Dragon, Satan, this beast has had many destructive manifestations; mortally put down, but always coming back for another go. So, manifestations of the secular city, of Babylon, have appeared over the years. All, to some degree, corrupted by Satan; all to some degree unjust and violent, living by the sword and dying by the sword. And so it will be until the end.

του θανατου [ος] gen. "[the] fatal [wound had been healed]" - [AND THE WOUND] OF THE DEATH [OF IT WAS HEALED]. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, as NIV; "the wound which caused its death was healed."

οπισω + gen. "[was filled with wonder and] followed [the beast]" - [AND ALL THE EARTH MARVELLED, WONDERED] AFTER [THE BEAST]. The preposition is used to express the idea of following after someone as a disciple, although the Greek has "marvelled after the beast." We seem to have a conflation of two ideas which translators separate in different ways. The RSV treats "marvelled" adverbially and this seems the best approach; "the whole earth followed the beast with wonder", or NRSV, "in amazement the whole earth followed the beast." Note the passive verb εθαυμασθη is treated as a medial passive, so "marvelled". "The whole world was agog, gaping at the beast", Peterson.

v4

τῷ δρακοντι [ὠν ονοσ] dat. "[people worshiped] the dragon" - [AND THEY WORSHIPED] THE DRAGON. Dative of direct object after the verb "to do obeisance to." John's words here reflect Paul's warning to the Corinthians that their participation in idolatrous activities, festivals and feasts, was linking them with the demonic forces behind the idols, even though the idols are mere wood, or stone, etc. Satan is behind the beast, and it is the presence of Satanic power that makes the beast so attractive.

ὅτι "because" - Introducing a causal clause explaining why the people worshiped the dragon; "they worshiped the dragon for he had assigned authority to the beast", Barclay.

τῷ θηριῷ [ὄν] "to the beast" - [HE GAVE THE AUTHORITY] TO THE BEAST. Dative of indirect object.

λεγοντες [λεγω] pres. part. "and asked" - SAYING. Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the verb "worshiped", "worshiped and said", as NIV. It could also be classified as adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of the worship, "worshiped saying", ESV. See λεγων, 1:17 for John's flexible use of this participle when introducing speech in a vision.

τῷ θηριῷ [ὄν] "[who is like] the beast?" - The adjective ὅμοιος, "like", takes a dative complement. John is somewhat sarcastic when he draws on the OT phrase "O Lord, who is like you" to express the adoration of the godless toward the horrible attraction of the beast, cf., Ps.113:5.

πολεμησαι [πολεμew] aor. inf. "[who can] wage war" - [WHO IS ABLE] TO WAGE WAR. Complementary infinitive, completing the sense of the verb "to be able."

μετ [μετα] + gen. "against [it]" - WITH [IT]. The preposition expresses accompaniment / association - to wage war with an enemy. "'The beast', they said, 'is unique and irresistible'", Barclay.

v5

ii] The limit of the beast's power, v5-8. The secular city / Babylon / corrupted secular power, may well pontificate on all matters, exercise authority over every tribe and people, slander the Creator and persecute his children, but its time is short and power limited.

αυτω dat. pro. "the beast" - [AND WAS GIVEN] TO IT. Dative of indirect object. Who is the agent of the passive verb "was given"? Smalley, so also Koester, Osborne, thinks it is a divine passive such that the beast gains his authority initially from the Dragon, but ultimately from God, although limited in its scope

(ie., the point of the forty-two months). Surely this would only be the case if the Dragon was enacting God's will in either chastisement of judgment.

λαλουν [λαλεω] pres. part. "to utter [proud words]" - [A MOUTH] SAYING [GREAT things AND BLASPHEMIES]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "mouth". The beast is like Daniel's little horn "uttering bombast", Dan.7:8.

και "and [blasphemies]" - Possibly epexegetic here serving to specify the "proud words", "namely blasphemous words", or even ascensive, "even blasphemies."

ποιησαι [ποιεω] aor. inf. "to exercise [its authority]" - [AND WAS GIVEN TO IT AUTHORITY] TO DO. The infinitive is epexegetic specifying the "authority", namely, "to do *Satan's work* for forty-two months." The direct object of the infinitive is assumed. "And was granted permission to continue for forty-two months", REB.

μηνας τεσερακοντα δυο "for forty-two months" - Accusative of time, duration. Again John, drawing on Daniel's days of oppression, Dan.7:25, 12:7, the three and a half years, the half of the perfect number seven, indicates a shortening of time for the beast's (the Antichrist??) reign on earth.

v6

εις + acc. "to [blaspheme God]" - [AND IT OPENED THE MOUTH OF IT] TO [utter BLASPHEMIES TOWARD GOD]. Here the preposition is expressing purpose with an assumed verb of speech, "in order to utter blasphemies toward God." Again, the spatial preposition προς, "toward", is best translated "against". "It yelled blasphemies against God", Peterson.

βλασφημησαι [βλασφημειω] aor. inf. "to slander [his name]" - and TO BLASPHEME [THE NAME OF HIM AND THE TABERNACLE OF HIM]. Aune argues that the infinitive "is used epexegetically in order to specify precisely how the beast blasphemed God: 'that is, to blaspheme his name and dwelling.'" To slander "the name" is the same as slandering the person.

τους ... σκηνουντας [σκηνοω] pres. part. "those who live [in heaven]" - [AND] THE ONES DWELLING [IN HEAVEN]. The participle serves as a substantive. The conjunction και, "and", is usually viewed as an addition to aid the grammar. The absence of και indicates that the phrase, "those dwelling in heaven", stands in apposition to "his (God's) dwelling place", indicating that slandering the "place" is not so much the issue, rather, slandering those who dwell in it - "angelic beings and the redeemed", Koester, and of course, God himself.

v7

εδοθη [διδωμι] aor. pass. "**it was given power**" - [TO DO WAR WITH THE SAINTS AND TO CONQUER THEM] WAS GIVEN [TO IT, HIM]. This verb is usually treated as a divine / theological passive; "it was allowed to make war on the saints", ESV. The less definitive translation proposed by the NIV is to be preferred. See interpretation above. The second clause also uses εδοθη for the main verb; "authority over every tribe and people and language and nation was given it" - the "it", αυτω, serves as a dative of indirect object.

ποιησαι [ποιεω] aor. inf. "**to wage [war]**" - TO DO [WAR]. This infinitive, as with "to conquer", serves as a substantive, subject of the verb "was given."

αυτω dat. pro. "-" - to it, him. Dative of indirect object.

επι + acc. "**[it was given authority] over [every tribe]**" - [AND AUTHORITY] OVER [EVERY TRIBE AND PEOPLE AND TONGUE AND NATION WAS GIVEN TO IT]. Spatial preposition, here with the accusative, probably expressing "over", particularly with εξουσια, "authority; "authority over ..."

v8

iv] The beast is a recipient of universal worship, v8. The attraction of the beast is such that (other than those firmly persevering in faith and thus found enrolled in the book of life) all people will find themselves fawning at its feet. It is very easy to do obeisance to the secular city, to glory in it, centre our whole life on it, and by so doing replace God with Babylon. In the first century, John would have experienced first-hand the imperial cult and its worship of the Emperor.

οι κατοικουντες [κατοικεω] pres. part. "**[all] the inhabitants [of the earth will worship the beast]**" - [AND ALL] THE ONES DWELLING [UPON THE EARTH WILL WORSHIP IT, HIM]. The participle serves as a substantive, standing as the subject of the verb "will worship." It is possible to treat the adjective παντες, "all", as a substantive, "everyone", in which case the participle would be adjectival, attributive, limiting "everyone", "everyone who dwells on the earth." "The whole population of the world will worship it", Barclay.

ου gen. pro. "**all whose [names]**" - OF WHOM [THE NAME HAS NOT BE WRITTEN]. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, serving to introduce a relative clause limiting "the ones dwelling" / "everyone"; "whose names are not recorded in the Book of Life of the Lamb", Berkeley.

της ζωης [η] gen. "**[the Lamb's book] of life**" - [IN THE BOOK] OF LIFE. The genitive is adjectival, obviously descriptive, attributive, "life book", but probably more an idiomatic description of the "book, roll", a roll which is made up of those who will live in eternity / those who are alive to God / those who will be resurrected and favourably judged at the end of the age. The genitive "Lamb" is

also adjectival, probably best classified as possessive, the roll belongs to the Lamb, although it may also carry an idiomatic sense, "the roll *which* the Lamb *has produced*", etc.

του εσφαγμενου [σφαζω] gen. perf. mid./pas. part. "**the Lamb who was slain**" - The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "Lamb".

απο + gen. "**from**" - Temporal use of the preposition; "from that time when the world was created." Mathewson nicely summarizes the issue raised by this temporal clause, p.174/5. The phrase would normally modify its closest antecedent, namely "having been slain [from the foundation of the world]", as NIV. We are best to follow Koester, Swete, Smalley, Aune and Beale, (contra Osborne, Reddish) who argue that it modifies "has not been written", as in 17:8; "everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain", ESV

κοσμου [ος] gen. "**[the creation] of the world**" - [FOUNDATION] OF WORLD. The genitive is usually classified as verbal, objective, "founding / creation of the world." Koester argues that the existence of the roll before the creation of the world shows it to be a work of God's sovereign grace, rather than a reward for righteous living, but the roll may simply reflect divine foreknowledge. None-the-less, the apostle Paul would remind us that our inclusion in the book of life has nothing to do with righteous living, and has everything to do with grace through faith. Our deeds, good and bad, are recorded in the books of deeds, and in the day they are opened, the tears of shame will flow, but if our name is in the book of life, by grace through faith, that shame will turn to joy, cf., 20:12-15.

v9

v] A word to the wise, v9-10. In this life, those whose names are inscribed in the Lamb's book of life can expect two possible consequences of their living among the dead (those not inscribed in the book of life), namely, persecution (captivity) and sword (martyrdom). It is in these tribulations that the perseverance of faith is most effective. John draws his language from Jeremiah 15:2 and 43:11 (Note that Jeremiah is referring to the consequences of Israel's sins, not the consequences of living under the hand of the beast).

ει + ind. "**Whoever [has ears]**" - IF, *as is the case*, [ANYONE HAS AN EAR] *then* [LET HIM HEAR]. Introducing a 1st. class conditional clause where the condition is assumed to be true. "If a person can hear, then let them take note of this message."

v10

ει + ind. "if [anyone is to go into captivity]" - IF, *as is the case*, [A CERTAIN person is to go / is taken INTO CAPTIVITY] then [INTO CAPTIVITY HE GOES]. A 1st. class conditional clause, as above; so also "if anyone is to be killed"

εις + acc. "into [captivity]" - Mathewson suggests goal is intended here, "destined for"; "if anyone is destined for captivity, then into captivity they will go."

αποκτανθηναι [αποκταινω] aor. pas. inf. "is to be killed" - [IF, *as is the case*, ANYONE is] TO BE KILLED [*then he is* TO BE KILLED]. The infinitive serves as a substantive, direct object of an assumed verb to-be.

εν + dat. "with [the sword]" - Here the preposition is instrumental, expressing means; "by a sword."

αποκτανθηναι [αποκταινω] aor. inf. "with the sword they will be killed" - TO BE KILLED. The function of the two infinitives, "to be killed", is illusive and has prompted numerous textual variants, translations and interpretations. The context is persecution, John's point being *what will be will be*, rather than retribution *those who live by the sword die by the sword* (variants make this point, obviously reflecting Matt.26:52, a line supported by Mounce, Barclay, Boring..). Smalley argues that this second infinitive serves as an imperative, "you must be killed"; so Osborne, who puts weight on divine sovereignty, "if it is God's will that then by the sword they must be killed"; Zerwick opts for a future imperatival infinitive; Aune notes the variant δει, "it is necessary", and argues that the infinitive probably serves as the subject of this assumed impersonal verb. Given the verb ὑπαγει, "he goes", in the first line of the saying, something similar is surely intended in the second, eg., "*by the sword he is to be killed.*" If this is the case then this second infinitive is also serving as the object of an assumed verb to-be, so Charles: "if any *man is* to be slain with the sword, *he is* to be slain *with the sword.*" The Christian community will inevitably face persecution and this is where the endurance of faith will come to the fore.

ὥδε adv. "this calls for [patient endurance and faithfulness]" - HERE [IS THE ENDURANCE AND THE FAITH]. This adverb serves as a substantive, subject of the verb to-be, "in this case, moreover"; "herein is the endurance", Zerwick. So ὥδε introduces a clause which serves to round up / encapsulate the sense of the previous statement/s, much like a demonstrative pronoun; "this is where the gallantry and loyalty of God's dedicated people must be displayed", Barclay. Translators / interpreters tend to draw out an imperatival sense (we do love the law!!!), so Barclay's "must", as ESV, and the NIV, REB, "this calls for", rather than "is". An indicative is not an imperative so what we have is a statement of fact, not a command; "in this way the saints exercise their endurance and their

faith", Berkeley. The two nouns, "perseverance" and "faith", linked by **καί**, "and", probably serve as a hendiadys where the two nouns form a single idea, namely, "perseverance of faith", ie., the business of holding onto Jesus through thick and thin. It is in persecution where persevering in faith comes to the fore.

των ἁγίων [ος] gen. "**on the part of God's people**" - OF THE SAINTS. The NIV treats the genitive as adjectival, verbal, subjective, but possessive, may be better, "the endurance and faith which belongs to / is characteristic of the saints."

13:11-18

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

3. The battle with the beasts, 11:19-15:4

v] The beast from the land

Synopsis

In his vision, John sees a second beast, this time emerging from the land. It may look like a lamb, but when it opens its mouth, out pours the vile of a dragon. Like the first beast, it has massive authority, able to perform great signs of power, all of which are exercised to support and energize the first beast. Those who refuse to worship the first beast are either killed, or excluded because they are not marked on their foreheads with its mark, either its name, or its number, 666. Without the mark, it's not possible to buy or sell.

Teaching

The kingdom of darkness reigns on earth. Let the Christian community know it for what it is.

Issues:

i] Context: See 12:18-13:10.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The beast from the land:*

The second beast described, v11:

the horns of a lamb, but spoke like a dragon.

The works of the beast, v12-13:

powerful signs and wonders.

The achievements of the beast, v14-15:

the worship of deceived humanity.

The division of humanity by the mark of the beast, v16-17:

A word to the wise, v18:

mark the number 666.

iv] Interpretation:

The beast from the sea and the beast from the land come together to give us the antichrist with the mark 666, cf., 15:2; let's call him the beast from the bog, the BEAST = 666, ultimately Babylon, the secular city. The first beast, 12:18-13:10, most likely representing political power, is supported by the second beast. John describes this beast as Satan in a christ-like garb - it looks like a lamb, but speaks like a dragon. Although we are

dealing with apocalyptic imagery it does seem that John is describing a false prophet (16:13, 19:20) articulating "satanically-manipulated ideologies", Richardson, false ideologies which enliven and empower the first beast, the spawn of Satan, the Red Dragon. The secular city, Babylon, is energized by political power (the first beast), and false ideology (the second beast), and together they are God-like; who else can reign down fire from heaven (v13), or make an idol speak (v15)? In unison, their corrupted power is turned onto the offspring of the woman (the Christian community) in the form of violent persecution, v15, or more likely, economic persecution, v17 - without the mark of the beast, 666, a person is unable to trade.

We are only just beginning to see this scenario played out in Western societies with the teachings of Christ slowly replaced by a Marxian secular humanism, eg., when it comes to training, or being employed in the area of social work, conservative believers are now being vetted on their attitudes toward today's progressive ethics.

The sign of the beast - 666: In "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy", Douglas Adams poses a riddle, namely, the meaning of life, and he asks us to see if we agree with his reckoning, a reckoning which turns out to be 42 - although even that was wrong when you added it up! John concludes the vision of the second beast with an apocalyptic riddle, by which he asks the reader whether they agree with his reckoning that the beast aligns the number of a man, namely, 666. John encourages those with **νοῦν**, "understanding" to apply "wisdom" in order to **ψηφισατω**, "calculate, reckon, figure out" (cf., Lk.14:28), and conclude that the beast is identified by the human number 666 - "the number of a man, is the number of it, namely, 666."

Although "we must remain uncertain regarding the actual meaning of 666" (Osborne), there are four main approaches to the interpretation of this number.

Gematria: At the top of the list is the suggestion that John is resorting to the ancient Hebrew art of *Gematria*, the linking of names with numbers where the first nine letters of the alphabet align with the numbers 1 to 9, the next nine 10 to 90, and so on. In this methodology Jesus ends up with the number 888, a supreme number over the perfect number 777. When Nero Caesar is translated from Greek to Hebrew, his number works out to be 666. Interestingly, when it is translated from Latin to Hebrew it works out to be 616, and there is a variant reading for that number. At least this indicates a knowledge of *Gematria* in the early church. Most commentators think that John has

a Nero type (a representative antichrist) in mind, rather than Nero himself. This interpretation is accepted by a wide range of commentators, eg., Sweet, Bauckham, Aune, Osborne, Yarbro Collins, Koester, Reddish... It should be noted that none of the Church Fathers linked Nero with the number of the beast 666, so it was obviously 42 to them. Mounce actually thinks that John intended "only his intimate associates to be able to decipher the number." If this is the case, he was very successful. On the basis of Gematria, numerous historical figures have been identified as the antichrist over the years, eg., the Kaiser, Hitler, Bauckham is probably on the mark when he argues that John has indeed used *Gematria*, but only to identify that the word BEAST equals 666 (when translated from Greek to Hebrew); he/it is the BEAST and he/it is 666.

Apocalyptic Symbolism: The perfect number 7 with the superlative number 3, gives us 777, a number for God, a number for perfection. The human number is 666, created on the sixth day, the day before the seventh day, the day God finished his work of creation, which ultimately leads to the eighth day when God and the Lamb are all in all. The beast whose number is 666, is an entity striving to be at least 777, or better 888 (Christ's number), but is never able to make it. John uses quite a few numbers in his Revelation and they all serve a symbolic purpose, and so it is most likely that 666 serves this end rather than providing us with an esoteric mathematical puzzle. The number 666 "stands for those human and secular forces, including the *Romes* of any period, which are oppressive and unjust, and seek to dethrone the Creator and enthrone the creature", Smalley, "the beast is the supreme representative of unregenerate humanity, separated from God and unable to achieve divine likeness. The triple six emphasizes that the beast and his followers fall short of God's creative purposes for humanity", Beale, so also Blount, Richardson, Wilcock, Strelan, (contra, A Collins, *Numerical Symbolism*, who argues that 6 is not an incomplete number, but conveys wholeness). So, the number 666 serves to remind us that the beast from the bog (the antichrist) is a human construct "who falls as far short of being the true deliverer of mankind as the Christ of God exceeds all the hopes of man for a redeemer", Beasley-Murray.

BEAST is 666, the significance of which is not the number, but its human nature, something which the person with insight can easily reckon. The secular city / Babylon is an insidious mix of political power and ideology (the beast from sea + the beast from the land). It

may look like a God-like construct, but it is a flawed human construct (infected by the Red Dragon), constantly emerging from the bog of history in the guise of a savior, but little more than a tyrant, an antichrist. All too often it is personalized in a megalomaniac like Nero, Napoleon, Hitler, Mao, It is **αριθμος ανθρωπου**, "'the number of humanity', the sum of human depravity", Beale.

Pythagorean: This is a great approach for those who love number-crunching, but it is very unlikely to be employed by a prophet writing to people whose maths is limited to addition and subtraction. See Bauckham for an explanation of the method and how it is used to calculate that Nero is the beast with the number 666.

Chronology: Some commentators, usually dispensational, have identified 666 as a period of time during which the beast / antichrist will reign, usually as an organizational entity, eg., Islam, the Papacy,

The intention of the Greek tense: In v1-8 the aorist tense dominates the narrative, but in v11-18 the present tense dominates. Why has John changed to a narrative / historical present? Osborne suggests that John wants to lock this vision into the present time-frame, but, as Mathewson argues, "the imperfective aspect describes and foregrounds the action as of particular significance for the readers", p.178 (Smalley argues that John's use of the present tense "switches the audience into action, and speeds up the immediacy and pace of the dramatic narrative"). We could argue that the first beast (political power, the secular state as an entity) is dangerous enough, but it is the second beast (corrupted pseudo-religious motivators, societal shibboleths, grounding political and societal philosophy) that is far more dangerous. For the sake of apocalyptic imagery, they are separate entities, but in the end they become a single corporate entity. In John's experience, the beasts are the Roman state, but the real danger was not so much persecution by the Roman state, but the subtle danger of secularization as the Christian community sought to maintain its place in society at large by adopting the values and ideals of their pagan community (eating meat offered to idols, etc.). The second beast is extremely dangerous because "it speaks like a dragon." So together the beasts, at the direction of the Red Dragon, present as Babylon the secular city, the Antichrist. Note that some commentators argue that the Antichrist is an actual person serving as a functionary of Babylon; see Osborne.

v] Homiletics:

"And so they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name", Rev.13:17.



In 2020 there was an interesting example of a restriction of trade on a believer which played out in the courts between a great rugby union player, Israel Folau, and Rugby Australia. Folau is a lay preacher and has a following on social media where he presents his take on the gospel. Early in 2019 he presented a list of sinners who, unless they repent, will go to Hell. Included in the

list were homosexuals. Of course, we are all listed sinners, a prompt which should remind us that it is but by the grace of God in Christ that we are saved. At this point Folau came head on with the issue of inclusion and the contractual demands of Rugby Australia. Rugby Australia responded by cancelling his contract, but ultimately had to settle due to their action.

It is certainly true that Folau needed to be a bit more sensitive in preaching the gospel; we are best to follow the example of Christ rather than John the Baptist - note how Jesus handles the woman taken in adultery, cf., Jn.8. When it comes to preaching the gospel, Jesus is gentle with sinners, but harsh on the self-righteous. And yes, Folau should have distinguished between homosexuals and homosexual sex - the act is sinful, not the state. Heterosexuals who busy themselves pulling the specks out of the eyes of homosexuals should always remember the logs floating in their own eyes: lust, premarital sex, affairs, divorce and remarriage, cf., Matt.5:27-30. None-the-less, Folau proudly bears the mark of Christ, not the mark of the Beast, and so he experienced the economic consequences of wearing the wrong mark in Babylon.

Text - 13:11

The beast from the land, 13:11-18: i] John describes the beast from the land as a being which presents as an innocent lamb, but is really a fork-tongued beast. Like Daniel 7:3, the first beast arose from the sea, and like Daniel 7:17, this beast arises from the land. John's apocalyptic imagery for the first beast probably serves to represent political power, the secular state. In John's experience, Rome was the Babylon / the secular city of his day. John uses similar apocalyptic imagery for the second beast to represent the cult / ideology of the state. In partnership, the

two beasts represent the antichrist, the beast from the bog, cf., 15:2. Of course, numerous interpretations are offered for the second beast, eg., it represents leaders of the imperial cult (Koester), provincial councils (Blount), the secular priesthood of Rome (Beasley-Murray, Barclay, Yarbrow Collins), believers who have adopted pagan worship, Yet, a more symbolic approach to the vision is safer. Michaels suggests a church and state arrangement, "the beast from the sea is a secular political power, while the beast from the earth is a religious institution fostering worship of the first beast." Yet, even that is probably too specific; the second beast is likely to represent the plethora of quasi-religious institutions that make up the secular state, from the media, its educational bodies, all the way through to societal shibboleths.

καί "then" - AND. Transitional. Here serving instead of **δε** to indicate a step in the narrative.

ἀναβαίνων [**ἀναβαίνω**] pres. part. "**coming**" - RISING UP. The participle serves as the complement of the direct object "beast", standing in a double accusative construction.

ἐκ + gen. "**out of**" - from [the earth]. Expressing source / origin.

εἶχεν [**εἶχω**] "**it had**" - IT WAS HAVING. The use of an imperfect here is unexpected. Mathewson makes the point that the imperfect tense is used to isolate the description of the beast from the narrative present tense description of the action. He makes this argument against Osborne's suggestion that the imperfect is used to emphasize durative aspect, namely, "the ongoing nature of the beast."

ὄμοια adj. "**like**" - [HORNS] LIKE. Comparative adjective. The description is rather illusive. John could be focusing on the horns such that he wants us to see the animal as dangerous. Given that a lamb would inevitably have two horns (even the Passover Lamb is sometimes described as having two horns), then John may be making the point that this beast is a sheep in wolf's clothing; on the outside as gentle as a lamb, but on the inside full of lies. "It looked like a lamb, but sounded like a dragon."

ἀρνίω [**ὄν**] dat. "**a lamb**" - Dative complement of "like".

ὡς "**like [a dragon]**" - Comparative.

v12

ii] The works of the beast, v12-13. Through blasphemous lies, the godless trinity of the Red Dragon and the two beasts exercise Satanic authority for the worship of the creature rather than the creator. To confirm its authority, it performs signs that were performed by the great-ones of the past.

του ... θηρίου [**ὄν**] gen. "**of the [first] beast**" - [IT EXERCISES ALL THE AUTHORITY] OF THE [FIRST] BEAST. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, "all the authority which is possessed by / is characteristic of the first beast", but possibly

verbal, subjective, "all the authority exercised by the first beast." This authority is presumably delegated by the Red Dragon, an authority equal to that of the first beast, and exercised on its behalf. Consequently, the first beast is worshiped. Together they constitute a kind of godless trinity. "It worked for the beast whose fatal wound had been healed. And it used all its authority to force the earth and its people to worship that beast", CEV.

ενωπιον + gen. "**on [its] behalf**" - BEFORE IT. Here with the particular representative sense "by the authority of, on behalf of", BAGD 5c.

τους ... κατοικουντας [κατοικεω] pres. part. "**[and its] inhabitants**" - [AND IT MAKES THE EARTH AND] THE ONES DWELLING [IN IT]. The participle serves as a substantive. The inclusive idea of "the earth and its inhabitants" caught up in doing obeisance to the beast, means "the totality of the human race, in opposition to God", Smalley. Those persevering in faith are obviously not included.

ινα + fut. "**[worship the first beast]**" - THAT [THEY WILL WORSHIP THE FIRST BEAST]. Introducing an object clause / dependent statement of cause, expressing what the beast **ποιει**, "makes, causes", the people to do, namely "to worship" = "worship the first beast."

του θανατου [ος] gen. "**fatal [wound]**" - [WHOSE WOUND] OF DEATH [OF HIM WAS HEALED]. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, as NIV. Note the redundant **αυτου**, "of him." As already noted, the healed fatal wound probably indicates that the beast has been in and out of trouble many times - put down, but up again. A more specific interpretation is unlikely, but some commentators do align it with Nero who, after his reported death, was believed by some to have survived his suicide. For the Nero legend see Koester p570.

v13

ινα + subj. "**[it performed great signs]**" - [AND IT DOES GREAT SIGNS] THAT [AND IT SHOULD CAUSE FIRE OUT OF HEAVEN]. Here the *hina* clause is expegetic, specifying the "great signs" in mind, namely, fire coming down out of heaven, so Osborne, Beale, Beale notes that the infinitive could be functioning like **ωστε**, expressing result, "so that", but Mathewson argues that such is illogical. The NIV takes the conjunction **και** as ascensive, "even", and the preposition **εκ**, "from" as expressing source / origin. The beast's authority is confirmed by signs that were performed by the great-ones of the past, and with these it deceives humanity. Abraham, David, Solomon, and Elijah are recorded calling fire down from heaven.

καταβαινειν [καταβαινω] pres. inf. "**to come down**" - TO COME DOWN [TO EARTH BEFORE MANKIND]. The infinitive introduces an object clause / dependent statement of cause, expressing what the beast **ποιη**, "does" = makes the fire do; "he causes fire to come down", Mathewson. And this **ενωπιον**, "before / in full

view of / in front of", the people. Note that the accusative subject of the infinitive is **πυρ**, "fire" - being neuter the accusative form is the same as the nominative.

v14

iii] The achievements of the beast, v14-15. On behalf of the beast from the sea, and with the authority and power of the Red Dragon, the beast from the land leads humanity astray and into idolatry. It seduces by signs, enlivening the image of the beast from the land, empowering its dictates and persecuting those who will not give allegiance to it. Such is the power of the secular city. Beale notes that the seducing power of the beast is not just confined to the secular world, but also operates within the Christian community. The unholy trinity (the Red Dragon, the beast from the sea, and the beast from the land) is embodied in secular authority set against God. It promotes "injustice and error, falsehood and compromise, inside the Church as well as throughout the society which surrounds it", Smalley.

δία + acc. "**because of [the signs]**" - [AND IT DECEIVES THE ONES DWELLING ON THE EARTH] BECAUSE OF [THE SIGNS]. The preposition is causal, "because of", but some interpreters argue that it is instrumental, expressing means, given that the accusative at this point in time is blending into the genitive, so Mounce; "by means of the wonders", Berkeley.

αυτω dat. pro. "**it [was given]**" - [WHICH WAS = WERE GIVEN] TO IT. Dative of indirect object. Again, the passive **εδοθη**, "was given", is viewed as a divine passive, "God does the giving", but surely it is the Red Dragon who does the giving.

ποιησαι [ποιεω] aor, inf. "**was allowed to perform**" - TO DO = PERFORM. The function of the infinitive is unclear. Many translations assume a main verb, so making the infinitive complementary; "it *is allowed* to work in the presence of the beast", ESV, as NIV. It may be exegetical, specifying the sign, namely a sign that is performed before the beast. Mathewson suggests that it is adverbial, final, expressing purpose; the sign was given "in order to perform before the beast." It is possibly related to the participle **λεγων**, "saying", so introducing a dependent statement of indirect speech; "it deceives those dwelling on the earth because of the signs which were given to it, saying to those who dwell on the earth, make an image to the beast who has the wound from a sword but lives, *and perform* before it / the beast."

ενωπιον + gen. "**on behalf of [the first beast]**" - BEFORE [THE BEAST]. Spatial, "before, in the presence of", although the NIV assumes representation here, "on behalf of."

λεγων [λεγω] pres. part. "**it ordered**" - SAYING. Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the verb "to deceive", "and it deceives and says", or adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of the deception, "it

deceives, saying ..." Note again John's practice of introducing a visionary statement with the participle "saying; see *λεγων*, 1:17.

τοις κατοικουσιν [κατοικεω] dat. pres. part. "**them**" - THE ONES DWELLING [UPON THE EARTH]. The participle serves as a substantive, dative of indirect object.

ποισαι aor. inf. "**to set up**" - TO DO = MAKE [AN IMAGE]. The infinitive introduces an object clause / dependent statement of indirect speech expressing what the beast instructed the people on earth to do, namely, to set up an idol.

τω θηριω [ον] dat. "**in honour of the beast**" - TO THE BEAST. The NIV takes the dative as a dative of interest, advantage; "for the beast."

της μαχαιρης [α] gen. "**[who was wounded] by the sword**" - [WHO HAS THE WOUND] OF THE SWORD [AND LIVES]. The NIV opts for an ablative genitive, instrumental, expressing means, "by means of the sword", but possibly adjectival, attributive, "sword wound", even idiomatic, "the wound *which was delivered by the sword.*" The presence of the article is probably anaphoric, referring back to 6:4, namely, the large sword wielded by the red horseman, the sword of war. Conflict is something the beast knows well, constantly put down by violence, but back again for another dose. Such is Babylon, the secular city - empires come and go in violence.

v15

αυτω dat. pro. "**the second beast [was given power]**" - [AND TO GIVE BREATH / SPIRIT TO THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST WAS GIVEN] TO IT. Dative of indirect object. Note again the passive *εδοθη*, "it was given [to him]." Again, John is reflecting the passive language found in Daniel. Such heightens the mystery of the vision, but doesn't give us the authority to claim that God is the agent of the giving.

δουναι [ιδωμι] aor. inf. "**to give [breath]**" - The infinitive serves as the subject of the passive verb "was given" "The notion of breathing life into the icon of the beast is a satanic parody of the gift of God's Spirit to believers", Smalley. John is reflecting the pagan belief of the time that idols could perform signs - sweat, move, speak. A hoax was the likely cause, but sorcery would not be far away. None-the-less, John is using apocalyptic imagery to reveal something of the nature of Babylon itself, not idols as such. The unholy trinity manifests itself in the secular city, Babylon (the beast from the sea), a god-like entity demanding allegiance, cf., Dan.3:4-6.

τη εικονι [ων ονος] dat. "**to the image**" - Dative of indirect object.

του θηριου [ον] "**of the first beast**" - OF THE BEAST. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, serving to identify a characteristic quality (the beast is characterized by its image), or idiomatic; "the image *which represents* the beast."

ἵνα + subj. "**so that [the image could speak]**" - THAT [EVEN THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST MIGHT SPEAK AND MIGHT CAUSE]. Introducing a final clause expressing purpose; "in order that", as NIV.

ἵνα + subj. "-" - THAT [AS MANY AS WOULD NOT WORSHIP THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST MIGHT BE KILLED]. Variant reading, but if original it serves to introduce an object clause / dependent statement of cause expressing what the image is enabled to do, namely, "that those who would not worship the image of the beast might be slain." It is interesting to note that refusal to worship imperial statues was regarded as a criminal offense and this was used to identify Christians during times of persecution.

ὅσοι εἰς + subj. "**all who**" - AS MANY AS. The pronoun ὅσοι with εἰς serves to introduce an indefinite relative clause standing as the subject of the verb "might be killed"; "whoever"

τῇ εἰκόνι [ὠν οὐός] dat. "**[refuse to worship] the image**" - [WOULD NOT WORSHIP] THE IMAGE. Dative of direct object after the πρὸς prefix verb "to fall down before / do obeisance / worship."

v16

iv] The division of humanity with the mark of the beast, v16-17. The beast from the bog (the Antichrist, Babylon, the secular city) demands allegiance from its followers and stamps them accordingly with the mark of a fallen world. The ones who persevere in faith, those marked with the seal of God and the Lamb, those who resist the branding of the Antichrist / Babylon, are deprived of full participation ("could not buy or sell") because they refuse to belong to the beast.

καὶ "[it] **also [forced]**" - AND [IT DOES = CAUSES]. Adjunctive; "also".

παντὰς adj. "**all people**" - ALL [THE SMALL AND THE GREAT]. The adjective serves as a substantive, with "the small and the great" standing in apposition, specifying the "all".

καὶ καὶ .. "-" - AND [THE RICH] AND [THE POOR] AND [THE FREE] AND [THE SLAVES]. Correlative construction; "both and" John lists the various stratum of society and makes the point that no one is free from the beast's influence.

ἵνα + subj. "**to receive**" - THAT [THEY MAY GIVE TO THEM]. Here introducing an object clause / dependent statement of cause expressing what the beast ποιεῖ, "does = causes", namely, that all humanity be marked; "it forced all people to have a mark on the right hand or the forehead", Peterson.

αὐτοῖς dat. pro. "-" - TO THEM. Dative of indirect object.

ἐπὶ + gen. "**[a mark] on [their right hands]**" - [A MARK] ON [THE RIGHT HAND OF THEM OR] ON [THE FOREHEAD OF THEM]. John's favourite spatial preposition,

"on, upon." The apocalyptic image of a mark, a tattoo, to indicate ownership, is probably drawn from the practice of tattooing, or branding, slaves. Doing so on the forehead was a mark of disgrace, indicating a previous indiscretion, eg., an attempted escape.

v17

καὶ "-" - AND. Coordinative, linking the two *hina* clauses; the beast causes that people are to be marked (v16) and that they are not able to buy or sell unless they have the mark.

ἵνα + subj. "**so that**" - THAT [NO ONE SHOULD BE ABLE TO BUY OR TO SELL]. As in v16, introducing a second dependent statement, although often translated as a purpose clause. "And *there was another thing it ποιει* (*"causes"*), that no one should be allowed to buy or to sell except those bearing the mark of the beast", Cassirer.

ἀγορασαὶ [ἀγοριζῶ] aor. inf. "[could not] buy [or sell]" - As with "to sell", complementary infinitive completing the sense of the negated verb "to be able." It is unclear whether John is alluding to a boycott on trade with Christians. Trade guilds often had a religious element to them and there may be examples where traders refused to sell to the Christian community. Yet, we are best to view John's description as "an imaginary situation", Smalley - all part of John's apocalyptic imagery. In the days between Christ's ascension and his return, the secular world will harass the Christian community.

εἰ μὴ "**unless**" - EXCEPT. Introducing an exceptive clause expressing a contrast by designating an exception.

ὁ ἔχων [ἔχω] pres. part. "**they had [the mark]**" - THE ONE HAVING [THE MARK]. The participle serves as a substantive.

τὸ ὄνομα [α ἄτος] acc. "**which is the name**" - THE NAME. Here an accusative of apposition, serving to explain "the mark, stamp, tattoo", as NIV. The tattoo on those who worship the beast consists of the name of the beast, ἡ, "or", the number of the name of the beast. Of course, the number 666 is the name "Beast".

τοῦ θηρίου [ος] gen. "**of the beast**" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive.

τοῦ ὀνοματοῦ [α ἄτος] gen. "**[the number] of [his] name**" - [OR THE NUMBER] OF THE NAME [OF HIM]. The genitive is adjectival, possibly expegetic, explaining "the number" by specifying it, "the number, that is / namely, its name", although idiomatic may be closer to John's intentions, "the number *which represents* its name." The name is the name of the first beast, with the second beast, the beast from the land, serving as a subordinate enforcer, compelling everyone to be branded with the first beast's mark.

v18

v] A word to the wise, v18. As with the conclusion of the vision of the first beast, "whoever has ears, let them hear", v9, John again concludes with a call for wise discernment - obviously directed to the Christian community. Given the powerful ministry of the second beast on behalf of the first beast, seducing humanity to worship the first beast and identifying its servants with a tattoo, leading to the harassment and murder of those who are not tattooed with the beast's name or number, then let the Christian community come together and figure out the beast's mark, the number / name that identifies the beast and those who worship him. John tells us that the beast's actual number is 666, as calculated by using *Gematria*. Yet, how does the Christian community identify the beast and his followers. John gives us a clue to help us "calculate" / figure-out the meaning of the "number" / identifier, namely, it is a human one; it represents humanity in its fallen / corrupted state - corrupt human society. The beast, the Antichrist, is easily recognized; he is all around us, in every work-place, university, TV show, newspaper, political party, he is the corrupt secular city; see below.

ὧδε adv. "**this [calls for wisdom]**" - HERE [IS WISDOM]. This adverb serves as the subject of the verb to-be **εστιν**, referencing either back or forward - Osborne thinks it is backward referencing, while Mathewson thinks it is forward referencing. Wisdom is evident in the person who has **νουν**, "understanding"; they will take the trouble to calculate the number of the beast, know him for who he is and so keep an eye on him, cf., Dan.12:10.

ὁ εἰς [εχω] pres. part. "**[let] the person who has [insight]**" - THE ONE HAVING [MIND = UNDERSTANDING]. The participle serves as a substantive.

ψηφισατω [ψηφισω] aor. imp. "**let calculate**" - LET HIM CALCULATE [THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST]. Literally the verb means to count up, or calculate something. This sense is supported by those who think that John wants his readers to use *Gematria* to align the historical person who is the antichrist with the number 666. Yet it is probably used here with the sense "to come to understand the meaning of something by figuring it out"* "You need to get together and figure out the meaning behind the beast's identifier. And I'll give you a hint, it's a human one." The **αριθμος**, "number", can just be a number, or the sum of something. As such, the beast's number 666 serves here as an identifier of the beast, in much the same way as we identify a product with a bar-code, or a generic symbol, or some other product identifier. It is interesting to note that on an early Bank Card there was a line of three lower case "b"s, "bbb", easily read as "666". It could be argued that credit cards have become a kind of antichrist!

του θηριου [ον] gen. "**of the beast**" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive.

γὰρ "for" - Here introducing an explanatory clause, rather than causal; "this is a human one / *an identifier which* is a human one."

ἀνθρώπου [ος] gen. "of a man" - [IT IS] OF A MAN. The genitive may be possessive, but it seems more likely to be attributive, limiting "number", so "a human number." For those commentators who hold that the beast / antichrist is a person and can be identified by using Gematria to decode the number 666, then the genitive is possessive, "of a man" as NIV; see Osborne, Aune, Blount, "a wise person is able to calculate the number of the beast because it equals the number of a person's name." Those giving weight to apocalyptic imagery take ἀνθρώπου in a generic sense, "human", and the genitive as attributive, "a human number / identifier"; "a number of (fallen) humanity", Beale. Smalley takes an interesting line, arguing that "the number is humanly calculable", cf., 21:17.

ἑξακασιοὶ ἑξήκοντα ἕξ "666" - [AND THE NUMBER OF IT *is*] SIX HUNDRED *and* SIXTY-SIX. Those supporting the view that the number represents a person make much of the masculine person of the number, but it is likely to have been attracted to the masculine noun ἀριθμός, "number", so Aune. At this point Gematria applies because as Bauckham argues, θηριον, "beast", when translated into Hebrew, *trywn*, has the numerical value of 666. The beast's number is indeed 666 = "BEAST". But more importantly, it is a "human" number in that it represents humanity in its fallen / corrupted state, and such is easily recognizable, easily ἀριθμον, "reckoned" by a person with insight. The beast is corrupted human society, the secular city. As noted above, the number for the emperor Nero also works out at 666 using the same methodology, although it is unclear whether John intends this link. Nero certainly was a BEAST, and many have followed him and will follow him. The Beast is Babylon, the secular city, godless human society.

14:1-5

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

3. The battle with the beasts, 11:19-15:4

v] The triumph of the redeemed and the Lamb

Synopsis

In a new vision of heaven, John sees the Lamb standing on Mount Zion with 144,000 of the redeemed. They are marked on their foreheads with the name of the Father and the Lamb. This great crowd is made up of redeemed believers, blameless ones purchased by the Lamb, believers who have not defiled themselves. A heavenly orchestra strikes up and the redeemed believers begin singing a new song before the throne of God, a song that no one else can sing.

Teaching

In the kingdom of God, the redeemed stand secure in Christ.

Issues:

i] Context: See 11:19. So far, in the cycle of visions titled The Battle with the Beasts, 11:19-15:4, we have been given a glimpse into the end-time tribulations facing the Christian community. The visions begin in the temple, but quickly move to the sounds of judgment outside, finally culminating in the gathering of the redeemed beside the glassy sea, 15:1-4. In the first part of the vision, we witnessed the war between the evil trinity (the Red Dragon and his two beasts), and the woman and her offspring. This is a struggle between "the political, religious, and economic forces that would pressure the followers of Jesus into compromising or abandoning their faith in order to obtain a more secure place in their social worlds", Koester. Now, in chapter 14, this war between the powers of darkness and God's people shifts from struggle to victory, from earth to heaven. John shows his readers that in the end, the redeemed will be victorious and the powerful forces of evil will be destroyed. Those who worship the beast will have to drink the wine of divine wrath. The chapter falls naturally into three parts:

The triumph of the redeemed and the Lamb, v1-5;

The message of the three angels, v6-13;

The gospel news, v6-7;

Judgment, v8-13.

The coming of the Son of Man, v14-20.

Osborne's method of dividing this major section entails taking note of the phrase **καὶ εἶδον**, "and I saw": 12:1-18 (part 1 and so without a marker), 13:1-10, 13:11-18, 14:1-5, 14:6-13, 14:14-20. Whether this is a valid frame or not remains

unclear, but his suggestion that the section, as a whole, falls into two main parts, seems likely:

- a) The war of the false trinity against God and his people, chapters 12-13;
- b) The action of God and his people in response, chapter 14.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The triumph of the redeemed and the Lamb:*

The vision, v1:

The 144,000 standing on Mount Zion with the Lamb.

The confirmation, v2-3:

"No one could learn the song except the 144,000."

Who are the redeemed?, v4-5:

Devotees of the Lamb

iv] Interpretation:

John's perspective changes again. In the previous chapters the perspective of John's vision was from within the church / Christian community; John looked out into a world falling apart; he witnessed the reign of the beast on earth over those marked with its name / number (BEAST = 666). John now receives a new vision. This time he is back in heaven viewing the Christian community from a heavenly perspective. He sees, raised up in the presence of God, a heavenly / spiritual Mount Zion (cf., Heb.12:22-24), and upon the mountain he sees the Lamb standing with those who have persevered in faith through the reign of the beast. They too are marked, not with the beast's mark, but with the Lamb's mark; on their forehead they are inscribed with both the name of the Lamb and the Father (cf., Ezk.9:4). Of course, as with the mark of the beast, the apocalyptic image of a mark on believers is not an actual mark, but just as those who worship the beast / the secular city are easily recognized, so are those who worship Jesus. The redeemed persevere in faith rather than accommodate themselves to the secular city, the whore of Babylon. John describes the redeemed as pure "virgins", undefiled, "blameless". This description draws on the image the Old Testament prophets often used of Israel - an adulterous people, always chasing after other gods. The redeemed are "virgins" in that they do not worship the beast. They have chosen to wear the mark of God rather than the mark of the beast and so they stand "blameless" before God, "purchased" by the Lamb - *by grace we are saved, through faith*. "They follow the Lamb" and thus they are a holy people - and we are invited to join with them.

The 144,000. See 7:1-8, "Interpretation - The 144,000". The number of the redeemed is represented by a complete number, 144,000 (cf., 7:4 / 9, 14:1). The point being made is that the beast has not taken any of the redeemed from the Lamb; "they are a countless multitude cleansed by the Lamb - the Christian community", Koester, so also Beale, Smalley, Again, the number serves as an apocalyptic image, not a literal number of the redeemed (this is the same group as "the great multitude", 7:17, although it is an earthy representation of the heavenly reality). If we are determined to stay with a literal number, like the Jehovah's Witnesses, we would have to accept that they are also literally virgins and Jews - that rules me out! Some commentators argue that it is a select group of believers, usually identified as martyrs, so Yarbrow Collins, Caird. Aune argues that they are the final surviving members of the Christian community at the time of Christ's return, protected through the tribulation with the mark of God. We are best to follow Koester and friends and take the 144,000 as an apocalyptic image of the Christian community. We do need to note that "144,000" lacks an article and so we can't argue that it is anaphoric, referencing back to say 7:4 / 9, "the great multitude that no one could count." Of course, the article is not a requirement for backward referencing.

Text - 14:1

The triumph of the redeemed and the Lamb, v1-5: i] The vision, v1: Despite the violent attack of the unholy trinity against God's people, the kingdom of the Lamb and his Father God (Zion) stands safe and secure and complete (144,000 = "the whole body of the faithful redeemed", Smalley).

και "then" - AND. Transitional. John uses the conjunction **και** in the place of **δε** to indicate a step in the narrative. The addition of **ειδον και ιδου**, "[and] I saw and behold", reinforces the move to a new vision.

ἑστως [**ἰστημι**] perf. part. "**standing [on Mount]**" - [AND BEHOLD THE LAMB] was STANDING [UPON THE MOUNT]. The participle is probably part of an incomplete periphrastic construction missing the verb to-be; "and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb", ESV. Note that John's favourite spatial preposition takes an accusative here. Usually, with the sense "on, upon", it takes a genitive. Does he mean something like "above"?

Ζιων "**Zion**" - Here standing in apposition to "the Mount; "the Mount, namely Zion." The Red Dragon stands beside the sea; the Lamb stands on the rock, the mountain. In the prophets, Zion is "the place of God's dwelling and people, the city which he will establish and govern at the end-time", Smalley. Zion equates with the heaven Jerusalem, presumably in heaven, although Beasley-Murray

argues that at this point it is in the state of coming down from heaven, cf., Rev.21:2.

μετ [μετα] + gen. "**with [him]**" - [AND] WITH [HIM ONE HUNDRED, FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND]. Expressing accompaniment / association.

εχουσαι [εχω] pres. part. "**who had**" - HAVING [THE NAME OF HIM AND THE NAME OF THE FATHER OF HIM]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "Lamb", as NIV.

γεγραμμενον [γραφω] perf. mid./pas. part. "**written**" - HAVING BEEN WRITTEN [ON THE FOREHEAD OF THEM]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting the noun "name which was written"; "who had the name and that of his Father inscribed upon their foreheads", Cassirer. The redeemed bear the mark of divine ownership and protection.

v2

ii] The confirmation, v2-3. Now gathered before the Ancient of Days, a heavenly orchestra strikes up and the congregation of the redeemed join together in a hymn of victory / conquest, a hymn that can only be sung by the faithful, those who have persevered in faith.

εκ + gen. "**from [heaven]**" - [AND I HEARD A VOICE, SOUND] FROM [HEAVEN]. Expressing source / origin; "from, out of ..."

ως adv. "**like**" - AS. Comparative, introducing an adverbial comparative clause.

υδατων [ωρ ατος] gen. "**[the roar] of [rushing] waters**" - [A SOUND, VOICE] OF WATERS [MANY]. The genitive, as with "[sound] of thunder [great]", is best treated as adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic, limiting "sound", "*the sound which rushing water makes* and the sound *which* loud thunder *makes*", or source, "the sound *which is from* rushing water", or verbal, subjective, "the sound *produced by* rushing water." The heavenly orchestral sound has divine overtones because the voice of the Son of Man sounded like "the roar of many waters" and the voice of the elders was thunderous. "A sound like that made by a great quantity of water rushing forth, a sound like that given out by a violent clap of thunder", Cassirer.

η φωνη "**the sound**" - [AND] THE SOUND [WHICH I HEARD *was*]. Nominative subject of an assumed verb to-be. The article is anaphoric, referring back to the beginning of the verse, i.e., the same sound is in mind.

κιθαρωδων [ος] gen. "**[like] that of harpists**" - [AS, LIKE] *an orchestra* OF HARPISTS. The genitive is best treated as adjectival, exegetical, limiting by specifying an assumed noun such as "orchestra"; "an orchestra which consists of / consisting of / made up of harpists." If we assume an ellipsis, other possibilities present themselves, eg., "the sound I heard was like *the music* of harpers playing

their harps", Barclay - the genitive being verbal, subjective, "the music produced by ...", or idiomatic / source, "the music from ...",

κίθαρίζοντων [καθαρίζω] gen. pres. part. "**playing**" - PLAYING HARPS. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "harpists", genitive in agreement; "harpists who are playing harps."

εν + dat. "-" - WITH [THE HARPS OF THEM]. The preposition here is instrumental, expressing means; "by playing their harps."

v3

ὡς "[a new song]" - [AND THEY SING] AS [A NEW SONG]. Variant reading, see Metzger. Here this comparative particle introduces an object clause / dependent statement of perception, expressing what John heard, namely, "and they sang what seemed to be a new song", cf., Zerwick. The singers are not stated, although they are surely the 144,000, so Mounce, although Koester suggests angels, and Aune the harpists; cf., 5:8-10, 15:2-4 for a combined choir. The song is a "new song", a term used in the Psalms of a song praising God, often praising him for his salvation - victory over the powers of darkness, see Psalms 33, 40, 98, 149 ...

ἐνώπιον + gen. "**before [the throne]**" - BEFORE [THE THRONE AND] BEFORE [THE FOUR LIVING BEINGS AND THE ELDERS]. Spatial; "before, in front of."

μάθειν [μανθάνω] aor. inf. "[no one could] **learn [the song]**" - [AND NO ONE WAS ABLE] TO LEARN [THE SONG]. Complementary infinitive completing the sense of the negated verb "was able." Only the redeemed can understand the song, and so sing it. The verb μανθάνω, "to learn", here means more than just learn the words, but also understand what the words mean. Only the redeemed are able to do that.

εἰ μὴ "**except**" - EXCEPT [THE ONE HUNDRED FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND]. Introducing an exceptive clause expressing a contrast by designating an exception.

οἱ ἠγορασμένοι [αγοράζω] perf. mid./pas. part. "**who had been redeemed**" - THE ONES HAVING BEEN PURCHASED. The participle may be treated adjectival, attributive, limiting the 144,000, "who had been ransomed from the world", Barclay, but it can also be taken as a substantive forming a noun clause standing in apposition to the 144,000, "those who have been ransomed" Note the participle is masculine, but the 144,000 is feminine, i.e., the gender is according to sense.

ἀπο + gen. "**from [the earth]**" - Expressing source / origin. "The saints are those who have been rescued by the Lamb from the world of unbelief and error, and from the tyranny of compromising behaviour", Smalley, cf., Mounce.

v4

iii] Who are the redeemed? v4-5. In v4, three descriptions of the 144,000 are introduced by οὗτοι, "these [are]" Together the faithful make up the pure bride of Christ, the followers of Christ, and the redeemed, God's first-fruits. In v5 we are told that they stand blameless before the Lord. By announcing who they are, John encourages us to make sure we are one of the 144,000 - we are to mark these qualities in our own life.

οἱ pro. "**those who [did not defile themselves]**" - [THESE ARE] *those* WHO [WERE NOT DEFILED]. The pronoun serves as a nominalizer turning the prepositional construction "with women were not defiled" into a substantive, object of the verb to-be. Originally this pronoun may have been the article οἱ wrongly pointed later, "the ones with women not defiled."

μετα + gen. "**with [women]**" - Expressing accompaniment / association; "in company with" The image of an immoral relationship outside of marriage, commonly associated with prostitution, is metaphorically used by the Old Testament prophets to describe unfaithful dealings with God, usually in the terms of going after other gods, cf., Jer.3:1-10, Ezk.23:1-21, Hos.1-2. It seems very likely that John has this type of defilement in mind, rather than proposing the impossible notion that the 144,000 are morally pure, having never visited prostitutes, or had sexual relations outside of marriage. We do well to remember Jesus' words that even the adulterous thought condemns us, cf., Matt.5:27-28.

γὰρ "**for [they remained virgins]**" - FOR [THEY ARE VIRGINS, CELIBATES]. Possibly causal, introducing a clause explaining why they did not defile themselves, so Barclay, as NIV, although more logically explanatory, so Mathewson; "they have not defiled themselves, that is, they have kept themselves chaste", they are male virgins ("maidens", Koester). Again, this apocalyptic imagery continues to draw on the OT imagery of faithfulness to God in the terms of sexual purity, here extended to "male virgins." John is making the point that the 144,000 are those who have continued in faith and not given themselves to the glories of the secular city. Babylon.

οἱ ακολουθουντες [ακολουθεω] pres. part. "**they follow [the Lamb]**" - [THESE *are*] THE ONES WHO FOLLOW [THE LAMB]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting the substantive pronoun "οὗτοι", "these *ones*"; "it is these who follow the Lamb", ESV. " The verb "to follow" takes a dative of direct object and for this reason τῷ ἀρνίῳ, "the Lamb", is dative.

ὅπου ἄν + subj. "**wherever he [goes]**" - This construction is adverbial, serving to introduce an indefinite local clause; "wherever the Lamb went they followed", Peterson.

απο + gen. "[they were purchased] from [among mankind]" - [THEY WERE PURCHASED] FROM [MEN]. Expressing separation, "away from", or source / origin, "from, out of." The intended sense is surely that they were "purchased from", in the sense of redeemed "from", bondage.

απαρχη [η] "*offered as firstfruits*" - Standing in apposition to οὔτοι, "these", so further explaining the nature of the redeemed - they are the first-fruits for God and the Lamb, that part of humanity which belongs to God. From God's perspective, "the most precious people on earth", CEV, but Aune's "devoted servants" is somewhat nomist. The 144,000 are more rightly described as "God's consecrated people", so Smalley.

τω θεω και τω αρνιω dat. "**to God and the Lamb**" - Dative of interest, advantage; "first-fruits for God and the Lamb", ESV.

v5

εν + dat. "[no lie was found] in [their mouths]" - [AND] IN [THE MOUTH OF THEM WAS NOT FOUND A LIE]. The preposition is local, expressing space, metaphorical. The singular "mouth" is distributive so translated in English as "mouths". This rather strong moral statement (one which no believer could say of themselves!) is drawn from the OT, cf., Ps.32:2, Isa.53:9, Zeph.3:13. It stands as a statement of fact; the 144,000 are "blameless" before God. Just as only the first-fruits can be brought to God's sanctuary, so too only those who are blameless can present themselves before God. Of course, this has always been the problem faced by God's people, a problem reinforced by the Sinai covenant. The promised covenant blessing of belonging to God was constantly thwarted by sin and it was only in Christ, the one blameless man, that the covenant promises were finally realized, realized in those who "followed the Lamb" in faith. Only in the one blameless man, by grace through faith, can we stand "blameless". None-the-less, John's point may not be as *Pauline* as this. He does seem to relate false prophecy with falsehood and that could be the link he wants to make here with this OT allusion. The redeemed have not taken up the lie of the false prophets, the ideals, shibboleths, philosophies of the secular city, Babylon, but rather have remained true to the eternal city. "The saints are called to maintain with enduring integrity the sharp distinction which exists between truth and error, and between the service of God and the worship of idols", Smalley, cf., Jer.13:25.

αμωμοι adj. "**blameless**" - [THEY ARE] BLAMELESS, SPOTLESS, UNBLEMISHED, WITHOUT BLEMISH. Standing as the predicate of the verb to-be. A word associated with the OT sacrificial system.

14:6-13

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

3. The battle with the beasts, 11:19-15:4

vii] The church militant

Synopsis

John, in a vision, has just witnessed the gathering of the 144,000 redeemed believers on the heavenly Mount Zion. He now sees another heavenly vision (**καὶ εἶδον**, "and I saw"). Three angels, one after another, address the issue of the coming Great Day of the Lord. The first proclaims the gospel to all people on earth; the second announces the fall of Babylon the Great, and the third announces judgment upon those who are marked with the name / number of the beast. John deduces from this vision that the Christian community must face the coming day with perseverance of faith, a conclusion which is reinforced by a voice from heaven proclaiming a divine blessing upon the faithful who endure; "blessed are the dead who die in the Lord for they rest from their labours."

Teaching

In the kingdom of God, the redeemed stand eternally secure in Christ.

Issues:

i] Context: See 14:1-5.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The church militant*:

The message of the three angels, v6-11.

The first angel proclaims the gospel, v6-7;

"fear God and give him glory, because the hour of judgment has come."

The second angel announces the demise of the secular city, v8;

"fallen is Babylon the Great."

The third angel pronounces judgment, v9-11;

A call for the endurance of faith, v12-13.

iv] Interpretation:

This vision, introduced by the phrase **καὶ εἶδον**, "and I saw." John sees three angels; they are, in a sense, representative angels in much the same way as the angels of the churches represent the church, the Christian community, cf., chapters 2-3. In time terms, they are operating in the last days, the days between Christ's ascension and his return.

The first angel proclaims the gospel. This angel represents the mission of the church to make known to lost humanity the important news from God - "the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe." The message announces that "the hour of his judgment has come." Although we often describe the gospel as "good news", it is bad news for those who ignore it. The dawning of the kingdom of God / the reign of God is a day of blessing and cursing. A gospel presentation can focus on both aspects, or just one. Paul in his Areopagus sermon, a sermon to Gentiles, ends up his message by announcing that God "has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead", Acts 17:31. This is not a *good news* message! As for a proper response to the message, "repent and believe", John frames the response in the terms of fearing God and giving him glory / worshipping him. There is a tendency to explain this response in the terms of obedience, but "fear" (respect) and "worship" lean toward repentance and faith more than works. So, it is not "the basic gospel of obedience to God", Richardson.

The second angel proclaims the fall of Babylon the Great. The second and third angels seem to exegete the nature of the coming day of judgment, and in a sense, this is something that the Christian community is bound to do in these last days. It is not enough to walk around with a sandwich board announcing that "The End is Nigh"; we have to explain what that "end" means. The second angel states that the day of judgment entails the end of the secular city, Babylon. All the claims of the secular city to the status of divinity will be shown as worthless; its philosophies as vanity, its shibboleths corrupt, for it has taken the divine construct of society as extended family and turned it into a self-deluded human construct.

The third angel explains that the day of judgment entails the destruction of the adherents of the secular city, those marked with the name / number of the beast. They will have to drink the cup of God's wrath, the cup of his righteous fury. The horror of this judgment is described in the terms of an eternal tormenting fire. This image illustrates the horror of judgment, so giving weight to what is lost, rather than promoting the idea of the ongoing punishment of the wicked in an eternal hell-fire along the line of Dante's *Inferno*. It is unwise to draw a literal interpretation from apocalyptic imagery. There are, indeed, numerous allusions in scripture to the ongoing punishment of the wicked in Gehenna / Hell. The name Gehenna refers to the valley of Hinnom beside Jerusalem which served as a rubbish tip where everything was dumped and burnt, including dead bodies, with the stench and smoke constantly rising over the city. This image, used for the place of

the dead, an image of fire, smoke and darkness, powerfully describes the reality of judgment in the terms of banishment from the presence and blessings of God which are found in Christ, cf., Matt.7:23, 25:41, 2Thess.1:9.

The sense of the concluding verses is somewhat unclear. Some commentators see verse twelve as a call for endurance by the third angel, but it seems more likely that we have a word of exhortation from John, a kind of ethical comment. From time-to-time John makes such comments, cf., 12:17, 13:10b, 13:18. John's comment is probably not the "literary focus" of this vision, so Beale, but it certainly "contextualizes" it, so Osborne. The Christian community, represented by the three angels, has the task of communicating the gospel "to every nation, tribe, language and people." This task will require "patient endurance", the endurance of faith. Many of those who persevere will face *interesting times* - persecution, even martyrdom. Given this reality, a voice from heaven adds a word of encouragement, v13. As Martin Luther puts it:

Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also:
The body they may kill,
God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is for ever.

Text - 14:6

The church militant, v6-13: i] The message of the three angels, v6-11; a) The first angel proclaims the gospel, v6-7. "Another angel", through the Christian community, sets out to communicate to lost humanity an important message from God. The message is an everlasting **εὐαγγέλιον**, "gospel". This is no news report that fades into oblivion in a matter of days; this is a message that applies to all humanity from the time of Christ's ascension to his return. The message proclaims that the day of judgment is at hand, and so now is the time to repent and believe.

καὶ εἶδον [ὅραω] aor. "**then I saw**" - AND I SAW. Indicating a step in the narrative.

μετομενον [μετομαι] pres. mid. part. "**flying**" - [ANOTHER ANGEL] FLYING. The participle serves as the complement of the object "angel" standing in a double accusative construction. "Another angel" may seem unexpected, but the sense is likely to be "another angel in a series of angels who carry out the judgments of God in the book", Osborne.

εν + **"in [midair]"** - IN [MIDHEAVEN]. Local, expressing space. "Midheaven" just means in the sky when the sun is directly overhead, or simply "flying directly overhead", ESV.

εχοντα [εχω] pres. part. **"and he had"** - HAVING. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "angel", but note John's use of this participle in 1:16; "who had a gospel to proclaim", Cassirer.

ευαγγελιον [ον] **"the [eternal] gospel"** - AN [ETERNAL, EVERLASTING] MESSAGE, NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENT. The NIV has opted for "the gospel" message announced by Christ and given to his disciples to communicate to all humanity. Yet, this is the one occasion in the NT where the word does not carry an article. So, is this message the gospel as we know it, or another important message? The presence of "eternal / everlasting" surely implies that this is the message that "the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe", contra Smalley who suggests "that the prophet-seer is alluding to a different message, unique in form." John's unique description of the gospel as "eternal / everlasting" probably serves to emphasize the value of the message. The gospel is no political communique that gathers dust in a day or two; this is a divine message with eternal significance.

ευαγγελισαι [ευαγγελιζω] aor. inf. **"to proclaim"** - TO COMMUNICATE IMPORTANT NEWS. The infinitive is probably adverbial, final, expressing purpose; "in order to proclaim." The angel / Christian community has the **ευαγγελιον**, "important news / gospel", for the purpose of making it known / evangelizing.

επι + acc. **"to"** - John's favourite spatial preposition, used here like **προς**, "to, toward", or like a dative. Then follows **επι** + gen. for "on, upon [the earth]", followed again by + acc. "to [every nation ...]. When followed by an accusative, **επι** can express reference / respect; John saw an angel who had an eternal gospel to proclaim with respect to / concerning "the judgment that will fall on the nations", cf., Koester, re. Giesen. It is more likely that **επι** is spatial here, but the sense of Giesen's comment is sound enough - the announcement / gospel does indeed concern coming judgment. "To announce to the people, to every race, tribe, people and nation on earth", CEV.

τους καθημενους [καθημαι] pres. mid. part. **"those who live [on the earth]"** - THE ONES SITTING [UPON THE EARTH, AND TO EVERY NATION AND TRIBE AND TONGUE AND PEOPLE]. The participle serves as a substantive. "Sitting" is used to express the idea of being settled on the earth, so a resident of the earth. Given the change from **κατοικουντες**, "those who live [on the earth]", 11:10, the reference could be to all people rather than those "who choose Satan over God", Osborne.

v7

λεγων [λεγω] pres. part. **"He said"** - SAYING. Again, we have John introducing what is said in a vision with a participle. We may properly have

expected an accusative, but see **λεγων**, 1:17. In the Gk. sentence covering v6 and 7, the sense is that John saw an angel who had (**εχοντα**) a message and proclaimed it (**λεγων**), ie., both participles are adjectival, although **εχοντα** is accusative and **λεγων** is nominative. Technically we could classify it as standing in a periphrastic construction which is missing the verb to-be, and as such translated as a finite verb; "'Reverence God', he shouted out for all to hear", Barclay.

εν + dat. "**in [a loud voice]**" - Here adverbial, probably modal, expressing the manner of the angel's speech, or instrumental, expressing means.

αυτω dat. pro. "**[fear God and give] him [glory]**" - [FEAR GOD AND GIVE GLORY] TO HIM. Dative of indirect object. "Fear" is not a useful translation of **φοβω**, "to fear", when used in relation to God. In the scriptures the "fear of God" is used in the sense of "respect / reverence" toward God. We show our respect toward God by giving weight to his words and by seeking to apply them in our lives; "you must show respect for God", TH. As for "give him glory", the REB attempts to break open the sense with "pay him homage". TH heads in the same direction with "O God, you are very great." Cassirer strikes the right note with "stand in awe of God and give due honour to him", Cassirer. No greater honour can be offered to God than to believe in Jesus. Note that Beale argues that this announcement has coercive force such that all creatures will ultimately give God due recognition, cf., Phil.2:10-11 (Yet, the force of **πασσα**, "every", is a matter of debate. It is likely that the "every" is "everyone who believes" rather than "every living creature."). Those who "fear God and give him the glory" are the faithful, the ones who persevere in faith, who conquer, not those marked with the name / number of the beast.

οτι "**because**" - Introducing a causal clause explaining why people should fear God. Given that the day of judgment is at hand, it is high time to repent and believe.

της κρισεως [ις εως] "**of [his] judgment**" - [THE HOUR] OF THE JUDGMENT [OF HIM HAS COME]. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / temporal, limiting "hour"; "the hour *when he will judge mankind* has come." The genitive personal pronoun **αυτου** is best viewed as verbal, subjective, a judgment enacted by God. Note the aorist **ηλθεν**, "has come"; it is punctiliar, so "has arrived", "is upon us." John's eschatology leans toward realized rather than inaugurated; "the kingdom of God is at hand."

τω ποιησαντι [ποιεω] aor. part. "**[worship] him**" - [WORSHIP] THE ONE HAVING MADE [THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND SEA]. The participle serves as a substantive, dative of direct object after the verb "to worship." "Worship the maker of heaven and earth ..", Berkeley.

ὑδατων [ων ατος] gen. "[the springs] of water" - [AND THE FOUNTAINS] OF WATERS. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / material, limiting "fountains"; "springs which are made up of / consisting of water."

v8

b) The second angel announces the demise of the secular city, v8. "Fallen, fallen, is Babylon, and all the images of her gods lie shattered on the ground", Isa.21:9. The second angel explains something of the judgment announced by the first angel. Babylon, the pinnacle of secular ingenuity, is doomed because of her adultery = idolatry; the hand has writ and Jezebel is fallen, cf., Jer.51:7.

λεγων [λεγω] pres. part. "[followed and] said" - [AND ANOTHER ANGEL, A SECOND one, FOLLOWED] SAYING. Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the verb "to follow", but note λεγων, 1:17.

επεσεν [πιπτω] aor. "Fallen is [Babylon the Great]" - [BABYLON THE GREAT] IS FALLEN, [IS FALLEN]. The aorist is future referencing.

εκ + gen. "-" - [WHO] FROM]. Expressing source / origin.

του θυμου [ος] gen. "[the] maddening [wine]" - [THE WINE] OF ANGER, RAGE, FURY = PASSION. The NIV takes the genitive as adjectival, attributive, limiting "wine." This seems the best way to handle the genitive here; "intoxicating wine."

τηςπορνειας [α] gen. "of [her] adulteries" - OF THE SEXUAL IMMORALITY, FORNICATION, DEBAUCHERY [OF HER, HAS MADE DRINK ALL THE NATIONS]. The genitive is again adjectival, but here exegetical, or more specifically appositional, defining rather than specifying the "maddening wine"; "that is / namely": "her unfaithfulness / whoring / vice / profligacy / "her addiction to illicit carnal intercourse", Junkins. It is again likely that John is using this imagery of Babylon / the Jezebel Babel / the secular city, to illustrate not so much its indulgence in alcohol-fuelled lust, but rather its worship of the creature rather than the creator. Like an adulterous Jezebel, glorious Babylon the Great seduces humanity to worship its idols / adopt its vain philosophies.

v9

c) The third angel pronounces judgment on humanity, v9-11. In 13:15-17 John describes what befalls those who do not worship the beast, now he describes what befalls those who do worship the beast, and the consequences are far worse. This exegesis of the coming judgment, announced by the angel through the Christian community, applies to the world at large (including those members of the Christian community who are flirting with Jezebel). John paints a vivid picture of judgment, a picture of horror, pure torment, something to be avoided at all cost.

See "they will be tormented", v10, for the idea of the eternal punishment of the wicked.

αυτοις dat. pro. "[**followed**] **them**" - [AND ANOTHER ANGEL, A THIRD *one*, FOLLOWED AFTER] THEM. Dative of direct object after the verb "to follow." "A third angel followed the first, saying in a loud voice", TEV.

λεγων [**λεγω**] pres. part. "**and said**" - Attendant circumstance participle, as NIV; see v8.

εν + dat. "**in [a loud voice]**" - Adverbial use of the preposition, modal, expressing manner; "with a loud voice."

ει + ind. "**if**" - IF [ANYONE WORSHIPS THE BEAST AND THE IMAGE OF IT AND RECEIVES A MARK ON THE FOREHEAD OF HIM OR ON THE HAND OF HIM, *then* EVEN HE WILL DRINK]. Introducing a 1st class conditional clause where the condition is assumed to be true; "if, as is the case, then". The apodosis, the *then* clause, is v10.

v10

In this verse we have the apodosis of the conditional clause; "if(v9) *then* he also will drink"

και "[**they**] **too**" - AND [HE WILL DRINK]. The NIV takes the conjunction here as adjunctive, "he also will drink", ESV, but it could also be ascensive, "*then even* he will drink."

εκ + gen. "- - FROM [THE WINE]. Expressing source / origin. Possibly a partitive use of the preposition; "*some* of the wine", so Smalley. Note the repeated use of this OT descriptor of a cup / draught of wine for God's righteous anger: 14:19; 15:7; 16:1, 19; 19:15.

του θυμου [ος] "**of [God's] fury**" - OF THE ANGER [OF GOD]. The genitive is epexegetic, specifying the wine; "the wine, namely / which is God's wrath." The NIV takes the genitive "of God" as possessive, but possibly verbal, subjective, "the wrath *poured out* by God." "The white heat of God's anger", Sweet.

του κεκρασμενου [κερραυμι] gen. perf. mid./pas. part. "**which has been poured [full strength]**" - BEING MINGLED [UNDILUTED]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "wine", limited itself by the attributive adjective **ακρατου**, "undiluted". The sense of "being mingled / mixed undiluted / without mixture" is somewhat awkward. The "mingling" covered the whole process of mixing wine with water / dilution, adding herbs, and pouring it out. So, the NIV, as with ESV, Cassirer, etc., take John to mean that the wine "mixed" was **εν**, "in [the cup]" = "poured into the cup", and that it was not diluted, or mixed with additives, i.e., it is pure, "undiluted", Cassirer.

της οργης [η] gen. "**of [his] wrath**" - OF THE WRATH [OF HIM]. The genitive is adjectival, epexegetic, specifying "the cup", "the cup, namely / which consists

of / represents his wrath", but possibly idiomatic / content, "the cup *full of* wrath", Mathewson. Again, **αυτου**, "of him", may be possessive, "his wrath", or subjective, "the wrath *poured out by* him." "His anger", Barclay, but possibly better "his *righteous* anger." The notion of an "angry" God is an awkward one to handle, given that "God is love."

βασανιζησεται [**βασανιζω**] fut. pas. "**they will be tormented**" - [AND] HE WILL BE TORMENTED. As already indicated, the idea of the ongoing punishment of the wicked has long been debated. Here we have another hint of ongoing punishment with the word "tormented / tortured"; see also 19:20, 20:10, 21:8 - note the following verse. Beale, Osborne, ... argue for ongoing torment, psychological rather than physical, so Beale. Yet, it seems more likely that the image illustrates the horror of what is lost when a person puts their trust in the secular city rather than the eternal city. Both Caird and Smalley argue that the fire consumes those who worship the beast. It's worth noting how John counterposes the situation facing the redeemed with the situation facing those who worship the beast. The redeemed worship the Lamb day and night, they find eternal rest in him, while those who worship the beast find eternal torment, night and day they find no rest. Rather than promote the idea of the eternal punishment of the wicked, this comparison serves to heighten the horror of failing to enter the eternal city.

εν + dat. "**with [burning sulphur]**" - IN [FIRE AND SULPHUR]. The preposition here is probably instrumental, as NIV. "And suffer torment from fire and brimstone", Peterson. Fire and sulphur are used in the OT to describe divine punishment, cf., Gen.19:24, Ezk.38:22. See Rev.19:20, 20:10, and 21:8 for the lake of fire and sulphur prepared for Satan and his associates.

ενωπιον + gen. "**in the presence of**" - BEFORE [HOLY ANGELS AND BEFORE THE LAMB]. Spatial, as NIV. "While the holy angels and the Lamb look on", CEV. The image of judgment enacted before the Lamb and his "holy angels" is a rather unique picture, one not found in the OT or apocryphal writings. In the previous vision, the Lamb was gathered with the redeemed on Mount Zion, before the throne of God. It is possible that "holy angels" = "holy messengers" = the redeemed. The image of the Son of Man coming to the throne of the Ancient of Days in the clouds and with his angels / messengers is most likely a coming of Christ with the dead in Christ / raised believers / the redeemed. In the last day there will be two gatherings, one in the lake of fire, and one on Mount Zion. It is impossible to be precise with apocalyptic imagery, but the idea is that both groups see each other.

v11

βασανεσιμου [**ος**] gen. "**[the smoke] of [their] torment**" - [AND THE SMOKE] OF THE TORMENT, TORTURE [OF THEM]. The genitive may be treated as adjectival,

descriptive, idiomatic / source, limiting "smoke", "the smoke *which emanates from their torture*", or verbal, subjective, "*produced by their torture*"; "the smoke coming from the fire tormenting such men", Cassirer. Smoke rises from a city judged by God (Isa.34:10), and so it will be for Babylon. "The image of their painful suffering goes up forever and ever", Koester. Again, we have the image of eternal torment, an image which may be treated as either metaphorical or literal.

αυτων gen. pro. "**their**" - The genitive may be taken as either adjectival, possessive, or verbal, objective, with the genitive pronoun receiving the action of the verbal noun "torment".

εις αιωνας αιωνων "**forever and ever**" - [GOES UP] INTO AGES OF AGES. Idiomatic phrase meaning "forever".

οι προσκυνουντες [προσκυνω] pres. part. "**those who worship the beast**" - [AND] THE ONES WORSHIPPING, DOING OBEISANCE TO [THE BEAST AND THE IMAGE OF IT]. The participle serves as a substantive, introducing a noun clause which serves as the subject of the negated verb "they do not have [rest day and night]." This clause consists of the rest of the verse.

και ει + ind. "-" - AND IF [ANYONE RECEIVES THE MARK OF THE NAME OF IT, AND (**και** = "then") THEY DO NOT HAVE REST DAY AND NIGHT]. Introducing a 1st. class conditional clause where the condition is assumed to be true; "if, as is the case, then" Again, John introduces the apodosis, the *then* clause, with **και**. The awkward arrangement of the Greek text serves to emphasize the problem that causes the loss of rest, namely, the worship of the beast, so Mathewson. The redeemed find rest in Christ, but those caught up in judgment upon Babylon / the secular city, find no rest.

του ονοματος [α ατος] gen. "**[the mark] of [its] name**" - [THE MARK] OF THE NAME [OF IT]. The genitive is adjectival, epexegetic / of definition, "the mark *which consists of* its name"; "the mark bearing its name", Cassirer.

v12

ii] A call for the endurance of faith, v12-13. Although there is some debate over this verse, it seems likely that it is "a comment by the Seer appended to the angel's proclamation of divine wrath", Mounce. Given what's coming and is already here, how should the faithful approach the tribulation of these end-times? Endurance is the answer, progressed through faith. "If such be the fate of the adherents of the beast, Christ's people must at all costs continue to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus", Beasley-Murray. This observation is confirmed in the following verse.

ωδε adv. "**This [calls for patient endurance]**" - HERE, HEREIN [IS THE ENDURANCE, STEADFASTNESS]. The adverb serves as a substantive, subject of the

verb to-be, but at the same time, as a demonstrative, either backward referencing or forward referencing. Aune thinks it is backward referencing; this indicates that the perseverance of God's people involves keeping the commands of God and maintaining faithfulness to Jesus." Yet, it is more likely forward referencing to "the ones keeping the commands of God and the faith of Jesus", so Mathewson. "This is where the power of endurance in those consecrated to God is to be found - in those who keep God's commandments and hold fast to the faith in Jesus", Cassirer.

των ἁγίων [ος] gen. "**on the part of the people of God**" - OF THE SAINTS. The genitive is usually treated as verbal, subjective, as NIV.

οἱ τηροῦντες [τηρεω] nom. pres. part. "**who keep [his commands]**" - THE ONES KEEPING, RETAINING, HOLDING FAST TO [THE COMMANDS OF GOD AND THE FAITH OF JESUS]. The participle serves as a substantive introducing a participial construction which stands in apposition to ὧδε, "here", which is technically the nominative subject of the verb to-be **εστιν**.

του θεου [ος] "**his [commands]**" - [THE COMMANDS] OF GOD. The genitive is probably adjectival, idiomatic / source, "the commands *from* God."

Ιησου [ους ου] gen. "**[remain faithful to] Jesus**" - [AND THE FAITH] OF JESUS. The genitive is adjectival, usually taken as verbal, objective, either "faith in Jesus", ESV, or "faith" in the terms of "faithfulness", "faithfulness toward Jesus", as NIV. It is possible that the genitive is subjective, "faith bestowed by Jesus", or "the tradition / doctrine from Jesus" (Beale thinks the genitive is plenary, both subjective and objective). The genitive could even be possessive, "the faithfulness of Jesus" = Christ's own faithful obedience on the cross. There is a slight zeugma in the construction in that "keeping" works well with "commands", but not so well with "faith". Note how the NIV has reworked the clause with two different verbs, "keep" and "remain". It seems likely that John is making the point that endurance in the time of tribulation involves an attention to God's commands (guarding against idolatry and the sensual attraction of Babylon - blasphemy, sorcery, theft, murder) and an ongoing dependence / faith in Jesus (better than "remaining faithful to Jesus", Koester).

v13

εκ + "**from [heaven]**" - [AND I HEARD A VOICE] FROM [HEAVEN]. Expressing source / origin, "out of, from."

λεγουσης [λεγω] gen. pres. part. "**say**" - SAYING [WRITE]. The participle serves as the genitive complement of the noun "voice" standing in a double genitive construction. The noun **φωνης**, "voice", is the genitive direct object of the verb "I heard." See **λεγων**, 1:17, for John's use of a participle to introduce speech in a vision.

οἱ αποθνησκοντες [αποθνησκω] pres. part. "[blessed are the dead] who die" - [BLESSSED THE DEAD] THE ONES DYING. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "dead", as NIV.

εν + dat. "in [the Lord]" - Local use of the preposition expressing incorporative union. An idiomatic phrase expressing the intimate association a believer has with Christ by grace through faith; "a blessing rests on those who die united to the Lord", Cassirer.

απ αρτι "from now on" - FROM NOW. This temporal construction is somewhat illusive. The word order would imply that "from now" applies to those who die in the Lord, but surely the redeemed who existed before this moment are also blessed. The temporal phrase could apply to what follows; "from now on they may rest from their labours", but this is a stretch and not regularly followed by translators. Aune plays with the Gk. and suggests *απαρτι* was originally intended: "truly says the Spirit", but what about the emphatic *ναι*, "yes"? Smalley is surely on the right track when he suggests that the phrase is not temporal, but is used to express John's realized eschatology; "now, in these last days, those who die united to the Lord are blessed."

ινα + subj. "[they will rest from their labour]" - [YES SAYS THE SPIRIT] THAT [THEY WILL REST FROM THE LABOURS OF THEM]. It seems likely that *hina* here introduces an object clause / dependent statement of indirect speech expressing what the Spirit affirms to be true as regard the blessed state of those who die in a relationship with Christ, namely, "that they rest from their labours." The "blessed rest from their hard, hard work", Peterson.

γαρ "for" - FOR [THE WORKS OF THEM]. Introducing a causal clause explaining why they rest from their labours, "because"; "for the record of their deeds goes with them", REB. Of course, we may well wonder what *εργα*, "deeds" (*κοποι*, "labours", 2:2, 19, etc.), John has in mind. Given our inclination toward nomism (sanctification by obedience) there is a tendency to see such "deeds" in the terms of an obedience of good works, but it is more likely an obedience of faith, our perseverance of faith in the face of syncretic temptation. "Both terms refer to the active expression of faith in the Messiah, despite oppressive injustice, which will in the end be rewarded by sharing the life of Christ in eternity", Smalley. John is reminding his readers of a simple truth; God will favourably remember what they have done, and of course, there is only one deed which brings such favour, a personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as savior and Lord, or simply, faith in Jesus. No other work of ours is worthy of divine favour.

ακολουθει [ακολουθεω] pres. sing. "will follow" - [THE WORKS OF THEM] FOLLOW. As is usually the case in Gk., a neuter plural noun can serve as the subject of a singular verb.

μετ [μετα] + gen. "-" - WITH [THEM]. Expressing association, "in company with"; "their works follow in company with them", or as we would express it, "their deeds follow after them".

14:14-20

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

3. The battle with the beasts, 11:19-15:4

viii] Life and judgment

Synopsis

John has another vision. He sees one like "a son of man" seated on a cloud with a sickle in his hand. An angel comes out of the temple and announces that the day of reaping has come "for the harvest of the earth is ripe." So, the earth is harvested. Then another angel appears from the temple, also with a sickle, and he is commanded by a third angel to harvest the "grapes from earth's vines." The grapes are gathered and pressed in "the great winepress of God's wrath" outside the city, and "blood flowed" "as high as a horse's bridle."

Teaching

The kingdom of God is at hand, the day of judgment is come.

Issues:

i] Context: See 14:1-5.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *Life and judgment*:

A vision of one like the son of man, v14;

The son of man reaps his harvest, v15-16;

The angels harvest the grapes of wrath, v17-20.

iv] Interpretation:

The perspective of this vision is still probably heavenly, ie., from heaven, rather than from within the church looking out. So, in all probability, the action takes place outside the heavenly temple as three angels carry out God's instructions for the day of judgment, cf., v17. On the cloud before the temple is one "like a son of man." John has left us with little doubt that this term refers to Jesus, and here he is the enthroned Lord, wearing his kingly crown. As the enthroned Lord, his task is now to reap. John leaves us guessing at this point, but the image of harvesting is probably the final harvest of the redeemed who through the resurrection will join Jesus in the clouds and thence to the eternal city. At the same time there is another harvest, a harvest of ripe grapes cast into "the great winepress of God's wrath." Obviously, they are the ones who carry the mark of the beast,

for this takes place "outside the city." From the perspective of realized eschatology, John presents us with another image of the day of judgment.

John's apocalyptic imagery always leaves us guessing, and this passage is no different. He seems to be expanding on Joel 3:13, "Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full and the vats overflow - so great is their wickedness." We have two harvests, the first harvest (probably of grain) by one like the son of man, and another angelic harvest of grapes. These two harvests together may represent the harvest of the wicked to judgment. Certainly, many commentators take this view, so Aune, Beale, Hendriksen, Morris, ... Yet, it seems more likely that the two harvests represent two separate harvests, the harvest of the righteous and the harvest of the wicked, so Bauckham, Sweet, Osborne, Blount, Koester, Smalley (although in the terms of "salvation through judgment", i.e., the image is of a single judgment with two results - both the "son of man" and the "angel" carry the sickle of judgment),, cf., Matt.13:24-30, Mk.13:26-27. And when it comes to the harvest of the righteous, John is probably speaking of the final eschatological harvest in the last day, but there are those who argue that it is the evangelistic harvest over the time of human history, so Richardson, cf., Jn.4:34-38.

Text - 14:14

Life and judgment, v14-20: i] A vision of one like the son of man, v14: In a new vision John sees "one like a son of man." John is most likely describing Daniel's glorified Son of Man, the one who comes to reign beside the Ancient of Days, the one who enacts God's day of reckoning. Here then is the glorified Christ ready to gather the redeemed into the eternal city.

και ειδον "I looked" - AND I SAW [AND BEHOLD]. Indicating a step in the narrative.

νεφελη [η] "a [white] cloud" - Smalley describes this as "a mode of transport between heaven and earth." Indeed, that's how John describes it, but I have never thought of it in such literal terms; maybe it's a kind of Dr. Who police box, or a Star Gate!

καθιμενον [καθιμαι] pres. mid. part. "seated" - [AND UPON THE CLOUD I saw] one SITTING. The participle serves as a substantive, object of the assumed verb "I saw."

επι + gen. "on [the cloud]" - John's favourite spatial preposition. John is surely alluding to Daniel 7:13, the coming Son of Man, although he comes, rather than sits, and does so "with" the clouds (LXX, "on"). In Daniel, the coming is to the Ancient of Days and ultimately the Son of Man harvests the elect / redeemed to come with him to the eternal city.

ανθρωπου [ος] gen. "**[like a son] of man**" - The genitive is adjectival, relational. Even in the gospel, Jesus' favourite title "son of man" is ambiguous. In Aramaic it just means a man, a human being. John makes it more ambiguous with the comparative **ὅμοιν**, "like, similar to." Boring thinks that John wants us to see this "son of man" as a heavenly figure who administers judgment on God's behalf, but John is surely alluding to the messianic Son of Man, here as the risen Christ. The word "like" simply increases the mystery of the apocalyptic image by using Daniel's descriptive "like". See Aune for the view that this "son of man" is an angelic being, given that the angel that addresses him is "another angel." Yes, John is playing with our minds, but in the end, the one who comes with/on the clouds is Christ, cf., 1:7. Note that **ὅμοις** normally takes a dative, although **υἱον**, "son", is accusative (a solecism).

ἐξων [εχω] pres. part. "**with [a crown of gold]**" - HAVING [ON THE HEAD OF HIM A GOLDEN CROWN]. Again, we have a participle which virtually functions as a finite verb, "He had ..." Technically we may classify it as a periphrastic construction with an assumed verb to-be; cf., 1:16. John often uses **εχω** this way. "Upon his head he had a golden crown", Cassirer.

εν + dat. "**in [his hand]**" - [AND] IN [THE HAND OF HIM *he had* A SHARP SICKLE]. Local, expressing space.

v15

ii] The Son of Man reaps his harvest, v15-16. The final day has arrived and so John sees an angel deliver a divine message from the throne room to the Son of Man, a message instructing him to enact the day of harvest; "reap, for the time has come." Presumably John is imaging the harvest of the living and dead in Christ, the day of resurrection, of the day when believers join with Christ in the clouds to be transported to the eternal city, and there to gather with Christ before the Ancient of Days. John uses various apocalyptic images to describe this event, although, in the end, it is a day beyond description. As already noted, many commentators argue that the harvest of grain and the harvest of grapes are one in the same harvest, a harvest for the judgment of the wicked. This is unlikely, but there is, in a sense, one harvest, one judgment, although with two outcomes: blessing and cursing - approved for salvation and condemned to destruction. The Son of Man uses the sickle for the reaping of the righteous / faithful for blessing, the angel in v17 uses the sickle for the reaping of the wicked / unfaithful for cursing.

εκ + gen. "**[came out] of [the temple]**" - [AND ANOTHER ANGEL CAME OUT] FROM [THE TEMPLE]. Here expressing source / origin. Typical use of an unnecessary preposition following a verb controlled by a similar prefix, here **εξηλθεν**, "to come out of." The angel comes out of the Temple, presumably the

heavenly reality, not the earthly copy, cf., v17. In John's heavenly design, this temple houses God's throne-room, so ultimately the message comes from the throne of God.

κραζων [κραζω] pres. part. "**called**" - CRYING. Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the verb "came out"; "another angel came out of the temple and called out in a loud voice" It could also be treated as adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of the angel's coming out of the temple, "calling with a loud voice", ESV, so Mathewson. Seeing that the angel is giving orders to the "son of man", Aune suggests that he is superior to this "man" on the cloud, but he is probably just passing on a message from the Father to the Son, so Koester.

εν "**in [a loud voice]**" - Adverbial use of the preposition, modal, expressing manner, or instrumental, expressing means; "called out with a loud voice."

καθημενω [καωημαι] pres. mid. part. "**to him who was sitting [on the cloud]**" - TO THE ONE [SITTING UPON THE CLOUD]. The participle serves as a substantive, dative of indirect object.

πεμπων [πεμπω] aor. imp. "**take [your sickle]**" - SENT [THE SICKLE OF YOU AND REAP]. Here probably with the sense of to cause someone to carry something to some destination*; "bring your sickle and come reap", Junkins. Most translators follow the sense of Joel 3:13, "put in your sickle for the harvest is ripe"; "set with your sickle and reap", Barclay. The sickle, unlike a sword, can be used to promote a positive, as well as a negative image. As noted above, commentators divide on whether it is being used by the Son of Man for a positive or negative end - a harvest to blessing, or cursing.

ὅτι "**because**" - Introducing a causal clause explaining why the "son of man" must take his sickle and begin to reap, "because" the time for harvest has come.

θερισαι [θεριζω] aor. inf. "**[the time] to reap [has come]**" - [THE HOUR] TO REAP [COME]. The infinitive is exegetical, specifying the hour in mind, namely, the time for reaping. Beale suggests that the angel has had to pass this instruction to the Son of Man because his knowledge of the hour of judgment is unknown to him. This was certainly the case for the earth-bound Jesus, but surely not the glorified Christ, cf., Matt.13:32. The word ὥρα, "hour", is used of a point in time, not a period of time, and with the aorist / punctiliar ηλθεν, "has come", we see again another example of John's realized eschatology.

ὅτι "**for**" - BECAUSE. Introducing a second causal clause explaining why the time for reaping has come.

της γης [η] gen. "**[the harvest] of the earth**" - [THE HARVEST] OF THE EARTH [WAS DRIED UP = FULLY RIPE, READY]. As is often the case with a genitive, it is unclear what sense the author wants to convey. Mathewson thinks it is verbal,

objective, but the Aramaic mind does tend toward an adjectival sense, so here it is more likely possessive, "the earth's crop", Cassirer.

v16

ὁ καθήμενος [καθημαι] pres. mid. part. "[so] **he who was seated**" - [AND] THE ONE SITTING. The participle serves as a substantive.

επι + gen. "**on [the cloud]**" - UPON, ON [THE CLOUD]. Spatial.

εβαλεν [βαλλω] aor. "**swung [his sickle]**" - CAST [THE SICKLE OF HIM UPON THE EARTH AND THE EARTH WAS REAPED]. "To swing / use a sickle" is a particular idiomatic sense for this verb. Often used of harvesting in general, cf., Mk.4:29.

v17

iii] The angels harvest the grapes of wrath, v17-20. Having spoken of the harvest of the redeemed for blessing, John now speaks of the harvest of the wicked for cursing. Although Smalley argues that this final judgment "includes the possibility of redemption", it seems likely that John is describing the eschatological day of judgment when all is lost for those who have not persevered in faith. This terrible day culminates in the treading of the winepress, an image used by John to illustrate "the climactic moment of judgment", Boring. This terrible day will be further explored in the judgment of the seven bowls, chapters 15-16.

του gen. art. "**[the temple in heaven]**" - [AND ANOTHER ANGEL CAME OUT FROM THE TEMPLE] THE [IN HEAVEN]. The article serves as an adjectivizer turning the prepositional phrase "in heaven" into an attributive modifier limiting "temple"; "the temple which is in heaven."

εχων [εχω] pres. part. "**and he [too] had [a sharp sickle]**" - [HE] HAVING [ALSO A SHARP SICKLE]. John is probably again defying grammatical conventions and just using the participle εχων as a finite verb, much in the same way he used it in v14. Such a usage would technically be classified as a periphrastic construction with an assumed verb to-be. None-the-less, here it can also be classified as attendant circumstance, expressing action accompanying the verb εξηλθεν, "to come out", "he came out and held ...", or adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of his coming out, "came out holding ..."

v18

και "still" - AND. Indicating a step in the narrative; "then"

εχων [εχω] pres. part. "**who had [charge of the fire]**" - [AND ANOTHER ANGEL came out FROM THE ALTAR] the one HAVING [AUTHORITY OVER THE FIRE]. John is probably following his usual pattern with this participle, as in v17, cf., 1:16; "Then there came another angel from the altar / temple. He had authority

over fire and he called out in a loud voice" None-the-less, if the variant article **ὁ** is accepted then the participle would be adjectival, attributive, limiting "angel", as NIV. The next angel also comes from the heavenly temple, although here specifically the altar set before God's throne (in John's heavenly temple there is only one altar, unlike the physical representation on earth. Of course, the physical representation, destroyed in 70AD, is superseded by the Christian community). This angel is in charge of the fire. This is probably an allusion to the belief at the time that angels were in charge of the elements, fire being associated with judgment.

επι + gen. "-" - OVER [THE FIRE]. John's favourite spatial preposition contextually takes the sense "over" rather than "on, upon."

φωνη [η] dat. "**in a [loud] voice**" - The dative is adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of his "shout".

τω εχοντι [εχω] "**to him who had [the sharp sickle**" - TO THE ONE HAVING [THE SHARP SICKLE]. The participle serves as a substantive, dative of indirect object.

λεγων "-" - SAYING [THROW = SWING THE SHARP SICKLE OF YOU]. John again uses the participle "saying" to introduce speech in a vision, cf., **λεγων**, 1:17. Here best classified as attendant circumstance, redundant, as NIV. Swinging the sickle to cut down the bunches of grapes images judgment.

της αμπελου [ος] gen. "**[the clusters of grapes] from [the earth's] vine**" - [AND GATHER THE CLUSTERS, BUNCHES OF GRAPES] OF THE VINE, VINEYARD [OF THE EARTH]. The genitive is best treated as adjectival, idiomatic / producer, "the bunches of grapes *which are produced by* the vine", or / source, "*from* the vine", as NIV. The genitive "of the earth" is adjectival, most likely intended as possessive, although Mathewson suggests it is epexegetic. "Put in your sharp sickle and gather in the clusters of the vine of the earth", Cassirer.

ὅτι "because" - BECAUSE [THE GRAPES OF IT HAVE RIPENED]. Introducing a causal clause explaining why the angel should begin the harvest of grapes; "for the clusters are ripe", Barclay. The grapes are "ripe", meaning that the time for harvest / the day of judgment is at hand.

v19

της γης [η] gen. "**[gathered] its [grapes]**" - [AND THE ANGEL THREW = SWUNG THE SICKLE OF HIM TO, INTO THE EARTH AND GATHERED THE VINE = VINTAGE] OF THE EARTH. The genitive is probably adjectival, idiomatic / producer; "the vintage *which was produced by* the earth." "The angel swung the sickle and harvested the earth's vintage", Peterson.

τον μεγαν adj. "**[the] great [winepress]**" - [THE WINEPRESS] THE GREAT. This articular adjective serves as a noun standing in apposition to the noun

"winepress", although "winepress" is feminine and "great" is masculine; "into the winepress of God's wrath, one of great size." Presumably the person of "great" has been attracted to **του Θεου**, "of God." Smalley suggests that although accusative and not genitive, it was intended to modify "wrath"; "the winepress of the great wrath of God."

του θυμου [ος] gen. "**of [God's] wrath**" - [AND THREW *it* INTO THE WINEPRESS] OF THE WRATH [OF GOD THE GREAT]. The genitive is adjectival, epexegetic, specifying the winepress in mind, "the winepress that represent / amounts to / namely / that is"; "put into a winepress of giant size, that of God's anger", Cassirer, but possibly idiomatic / content, "the winepress *which is full of* the wrath of God." The genitive "of God" is adjectival, probably verbal, subjective, "the wrath *enacted by* God", possessive, the possession of a derivative characteristic, "God's wrath", or idiomatic / source, "the wrath *from* God." God's passionate anger parallels Babylon's passionate immorality.

v20

εξωθεν + gen. "**outside [the city]**" - [THE WINEPRESS] OUTSIDE [THE CITY WAS TRODDEN]. Local, expressing space; "outside". Alluding to Joel 3:13. It seems likely that "the city" is representative of the Christian community and so "outside" expresses that the punishment of the wicked is apart from the community. Boring notes that Jesus was crucified outside the city wall, a sacrifice that brought victory over sin and death. Both ideas may be present in John's apocalyptic image of eschatological judgement, although dispensational commentators would not agree. They see this as a reference to an actual military engagement that takes place outside the present city of Jerusalem; see Thomas. Given 14:8, the implication is that it is "Christ who actually crushes the harvest with the passionate fury of God's wrath", Boring.

εκ + gen. "**[out] of [the press]**" - [AND BLOOD CAME OUT] FROM [THE WINEPRESS]. Expressing source / origin, or separation, "away from." A great flow of blood serves in the OT to image divine judgment, cf., Isa.34:3, Ezk. 32:5-6, ...

αρχι + gen. "**as high as [the horses' bridles]**" - UP TO [THE BRIDLES OF THE HORSES]. Spatial use of the preposition, rather than temporal. The size of the flow of blood serves to "emphasize the scale of the slaughter", Koester. Cf., 1 Enoch 100.3. "A slaughter of exceptional proportions", Aune.

απο + gen. "**for [a distance]**" - FROM [STADIA ONE THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED]. When used before a number, this preposition expresses distance from, so Zerwick; "1,600 stadia (180 miles / 300 kilometres) away." There is probably no significance in the number, although it has been noted that it is the square of ten by the square of four = the four corners of the earth.

15:1-4

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

3. The battle with the beasts, 11:19-15:4

ix] The saints are triumphant

Synopsis

John sees another vision of the last day; it is a two-part vision - a bad-news and good-news vision. In the first vision, John sees seven angels preparing to pour out the seven last plagues of judgement. Then, in the second vision, he sees those who are victorious, those who have persevered in faith. These victorious ones are standing on a floor that looks like a glowing glassy sea and they are singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

Teaching

The kingdom of God is at hand; a day of cursing, a day of blessing.

Issues:

i] Context: See 11:19. The opening verse points forward to the Exodus-like plagues of judgment about to fall on the earth, 15:5-16:21, and the inevitable destruction of the secular city, the harlot Babylon, 17:1-18:24. The next three verses point back to chapters 11:19-14:20, resolving the war between the beast and the children of the woman (the secular city and the Christian community) through the victory of the children / the redeemed and their presentation before the Ancient of Days.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The saints are triumphant*:

A two-part vision:

The angels gather, v1;

The angels prepare the judgment of the seven bowls.

The victorious gather on the glassy sea, v2-4;

The victorious sing a song of praise to God.

iv] Interpretation:

John's visions reveal two perspectives, one heavenly and one earthly. In the earthly visions we are in the church looking out on a world corrupted by the powers of darkness, a world where the secular city, Babylon, manipulated by the beast (corrupt political power, ideology, shibboleths, ...) and his mentor, the red dragon (Satan), wage war against the Christian community. In time terms, this war rages between Christ's ascension and his

return. In the heavenly visions we are transported to the precincts of the heavenly temple and the throne of God. In time terms it is one minute to midnight on the day of judgment.

The passage before us presents a heavenly perspective. There are two visions (σημειον, "signs, portents"), both are introduced by και ειδον, "And I saw." The first vision introduces us to the seven "last" plagues about to be poured out on an unsuspecting world, 15:5-16:21. In the second vision John sees the church militant / victorious, the redeemed who have persevered in faith to the end. They are gathered in the temple, standing επι, "on, upon", a floor ὡς, "that looks like", a glassy sea; it is the floor of heaven that spreads out before the throne of the Ancient of Days, cf., 4:6. They are holding harps and singing praise to God. John calls this hymn "the song of Moses and the Lamb", a hymn which celebrates victory over, and deliverance from, the powers of darkness in the exodus, Ex.15:1-18, and on the cross.

Is there still time to repent on the day of judgment?: Koester makes the point that the plagues of judgment "press the beast's allies to repent." Yet, is Koester right? John goes to great lengths to describe the horror of the day of judgment, but in time terms it is short lived, and this for the sake of the elect, cf., Mk13:20. In the final day there is no time to repent, so now is the time to repent. Of course, the problem we face is that Biblical eschatology is both realized and inaugurated, it is *now* and *not yet*.

In John's realized heavenly perspective, we see the victorious Lamb entering his heavenly estate with angelic acclamation. On the cross he has put down the red dragon and his mate (Jn.12:31) and now ascends on high with the redeemed and in their company enters the eternal city. On this terrible day of judgment there is no time for the allies of the beast to repent.

In John's inaugurated earthly perspective, we are given a glimpse of a moment of grace tucked in before the day of judgment, a moment between Christ's ascension and his coming to the Ancient of Days. Although mortally wounded, the red dragon pursues the woman's offspring and so tribulations ensue for the Christian community. As well as persecution by the beast, the Christian community must face the many harbingers of the day of judgment that spills into the present, the "wars and rumours of wars." In this moment, repentance is still possible, but don't delay, for on the day of judgment it will be too late to repent.

Text - 15:1

The saints are triumphant, v1-4: i] The angels gather to prepare for the last judgment, v1. This momentary vision prepares for the coming judgment of the seven bowls and the consequent destruction of Babylon.

και ειδον "I saw" - AND I SAW. Indicating a step in the narrative.
μεγα και θαυμαστον acc. "[another] great and marvellous [sign]" - [ANOTHER SIGN IN HEAVEN], A GREAT AND MARVELLOUS, WONDERFUL, AMAZING one. Standing in apposition to "sign, portent."

αγγελους [ος] acc. "[seven] angels" - Standing in apposition to "sign".
εχοντας [εχω] pres. part. "with [the seven last plagues]" - HAVING [SEVEN PLAGUES]. Technically, the participle here is adjectival, attributive, limiting "angels"; "who had seven plagues." As already noted, when John uses this word as a participle he often ignores syntax and uses it as a finite verb; cf., 1:16. "I saw another sign in heaven, seven angels. They had seven plagues / they carried with them seven plagues, the last plagues of all."

τας εσχατας adj. "last" - THE LAST ones. The adjective serves as a substantive standing in apposition to "seven plagues"; "seven plagues, the last of all." Not used in temporal terms, rather "they are John's last look at the end", Boring.

οτι "because" - Introducing a causal clause explaining why the plagues are the last ones.

εν + dat. "with [them]" - IN [THEM]. Probably instrumental, expressing means; "by means of them"

του θεου [ος] gen. "God's [wrath]" - [WAS COMPLETED THE WRATH] OF GOD. The genitive "of God" is adjectival, verbal, subjective, "the wrath enacted by God", or possessive, "God's wrath", or idiomatic / source, "the wrath from God." The aorist "was completed" is often treated as future referencing, "will be completed." Over 80% of aorists are past referencing, but some are present and future. Even so, the time signature of the aorist tense is not dominant, aspect dominates - perfective. "They are the final expression of God's anger", TEV.

v2

ii] The victorious gather on the glassy sea, v2-4. In a second momentary vision, John sees the redeemed standing on the glowing floor of heaven, a glowing glass floor that stretches out before the throne of God. They are the victorious ones, those who have persevered in faith, those who have remained true to the Lamb through the tribulations and temptations thrown at them by the beast, the one whose name carries the number 666 = BEAST. The redeemed join together in an antiphonal hymn which celebrates the victory first won by God's servant Moses in the exodus and then finally won by the Lamb on the cross at calvary, a victory which inaugurated / realized the kingdom of God.

και ειδον "and I saw" - Serving to indicate a step in the narrative; the next vision.

ὡς "what looked like" - AS [A SEA MADE OF GLASS]. The comparative here introduces an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing that John saw; "I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass and also, those who had conquered the beast", ESV. John follows Daniel by using "like / as" to increase the sense of mystery

μειγμενην [μινυμι] perf. mid./pas. part. "**glowing [with fire]**" - HAVING BEEN MINGLED [IN/WITH FIRE]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "sea"; "a glassy sea which glowed with fire." "Mixed with fire", Moffatt; "shot through with fire", Phillips.

πυρι [υρ υρος] dat. "**with fire**" - The dative expresses association / accompaniment, "suffused all through with a glow of fire", Cassirer, although Smalley thinks it is instrumental, expressing means, "mingled by fire."

επι "[standing] beside [the sea]" - ON [THE SEA MADE OF GLASS]. John's favourite spatial preposition usually expresses "on, upon." It can mean "beside, near, at, ..." and is usually translated this way, but the sea is **ὡς**, "as, like", a glassy sea, so probably John is telling us that the redeemed are standing on a highly polished glowing surface - something like a disco dance floor!! This is a beautiful and peaceful "sea", not the ever-restless raging sea from which the beast emerged; it is "the floor of heaven", Smalley. Contra Boring who thinks this symbol is a negative one, particularly with the presence of fire; "for John, [fire] is the stick that God uses to whip the sea into a judgmental froth" - "the sea is a symbol of instability and chaos." See "sea of glass", 4:6, for the other use of this image.

τους νικωντας [νικω] acc. pres. part. "**those who had been victorious**" - [AND *I saw as*] THE ONES CONQUERING, [OF THE BEAST AND OF THE IMAGE OF IT AND OF THE NUMBER OF THE NAME OF IT, HAVING TAKEN *their* STAND ON THE GLASSY SEA]. The participle serves as a substantive, part of a second object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what John saw. The participle **εστωτας**, "standing", serves as the accusative complement of "the ones conquering"; "and *I saw* the ones conquering standing"

εκ + gen. "over [the beast]" - OF THE BEAST. The genitive here is used to express separation, "away from the beast", they have kept themselves from the beast; "came off victorious from the beast", Phillips; they were victorious "by separating themselves from", Beale. They weren't the ones "who had defeated the beast", CEV, rather they were the victorious ones, conquering ones, the ones who had persevered in faith and not succumbed to the beast; they kept themselves apart from the beast, its temptations and pressures to conform. If John means that the redeemed are victorious "over" the beast then they are the ones "who defeat the dragon by their association with the blood of the Lamb and by their own revolutionary testimony about the lordship of that Lamb", Boring.

καὶ "and" - Smalley takes this conjunction as epexegetic; "those who were victorious over the beast, that is, over the image and the number which is its name", ie., the idolatrous image of the beast and its number, 666; cf., 13:15, 17-18, Daniel 3. For John, the beast / secular city was displayed in statues of the Emperor and in temples dedicated to the worship of the Emperor.

του ονοματος [α ατος] gen. "[the number] of [its] name" - [THE NUMBER] OF THE NAME [OF IT]. The genitive is adjectival, possibly epexegetic, explaining "the number" by specifying it, "the number, that is / namely, its name", although idiomatic may be closer to John's intentions, "the number *which represents* its name." The beast has its name, and a number which represents its name - beast = 666.

εχοντας [εχω] pres. part. "they [held harps]" - HAVING [HARPS]. The participle is adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of their standing; standing holding harps. On many occasions in the Revelation, the participle "standing" functions like a finite verb and so is treated that way by the NIV; cf., 1:16.

του θεου [ος] gen. "given them by God" - Variant "Lord God", probably an interpolation. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / source, "harps from God", as NIV. Although "harps" is not a verbal noun, it could be taken to contain a verbal idea, so Beale, Smalley, ..., "harps for *playing to* God", ie., objective.

v3

The hymn clearly alludes to the thematic content of Moses' song in Exodus 15, although there is no formal relationship between that hymn and John's hymn here.

του θεου [ος] gen. "of God's [servant]" - [AND THEY SING THE SONG OF MOSES, THE SERVANT] OF GOD. The genitive is adjectival, relational / possessive, with the whole genitive phrase "servant of God" standing in apposition to "Moses". The genitive "Moses" is usually taken as verbal, subjective, "the song *sung by* Moses" / "the song *that* Moses sang."

Μωυσεως [ης εως] gen. "Moses [and of the Lamb]" - OF MOSES [... AND THE SONG OF THE LAMB]. The genitives "of Moses" and "of the Lamb" are problematic. At first glance we could classify them as verbal, objective, a song "about Moses and about the Lamb", but then the song is not actually about Moses or the Lamb. The genitives could be subjective, a "song sung by Moses and the Lamb", so Beale, but does the Lamb sing songs? Mathewson suggests that the genitives are verbal, the first subjective, "the song that Moses sang", and the second objective, "the song about the Lamb." The chances are that the sense behind these genitives is extensive, thinking which, in the Semitic mind, is often encapsulated in an adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic genitive. When we look at the following hymn, we note that it is an antiphonal response to the victory God has

won in the exodus / salvation facilitated first by Moses and particularly by the Lamb on the cross of Calvary. As such, the sense of the genitives can be expressed in the following terms: "they sang the song *which celebrates the victory won by Moses and the victory won by the Lamb.*" The verb "they sang" is a historical / narrative present, probably indicating a slight scene change.

λεγοντες [λεγω] "-" - SAYING. Redundant attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the verb "they sang". For John's use of this participle to introduce speech see λεγων, 1:17.

ὁ θεος [ος] "[Lord] God [Almighty]" - [GREAT AND MARVELLOUS / AMAZING / WONDERFUL THE WORKS / DEEDS OF YOU, LORD] GOD [ALMIGHTY]. Nominative of address. As with "almighty", "God" stands in apposition to "Lord".

των εθνων [ος] gen. "[king] of the nations" - [RIGHTEOUS / JUST AND TRUE THE WAYS OF YOU, KING] OF THE NATIONS. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / subordination; "king *over* the nations."

v4

τίς "who" - Interrogative pronoun, nominative subject of the verb "to fear." "This rhetorical question assumes that all will fear and glorify God", Koester - inevitably so!

ου μη + subj. "[will] not [fear you]" - [MAY] NOT NOT = NEVER EVER [FEAR you, LORD AND WILL GLORIFY THE NAME OF YOU]. The double negative + subj. forms a subjective of emphatic negation. Interestingly, in the parallel statement "and glorify your name", the verb δοξασει, "will glorify", takes a future indicative rather than an expected subjunctive. Again, we see another example of the future tense replacing a subjunctive in the Revelation.

ὅτι "for [you alone are holy]" - BECAUSE [ONLY you are HOLY], BECAUSE [ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU], BECAUSE [THE RIGHTEOUS ACTS OF YOU WERE MANIFESTED]. Here introducing three causal clauses explaining the ground / reason why God is feared and his name (ie., his person) is glorified, so Boring, Koester, Osborne, ... Beale and Smalley suggest that the second is consecutive, expressing result; "you alone are holy with the result that all the nations will come" "Who is there who will not revere you, O Lord, or will not glorify your name? *All will inevitably revere you and glorify your name because* you, and you alone, are holy; because all nations will inevitably come and worship you; and because the justice of your decrees are plain for all to see."

ενωπιον + gen. "[worship] before [you]" - Spatial, "before, in the presence of"; "all nations will come and worship you", ESV.

15:5-8

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

4. The judgment of the seven bowls, 15:5-16:21

i] The angels prepare for judgment

Synopsis

In John's next vision he is again in heaven, looking at the temple. Out from the temple come seven angels dressed in pure bright linen and wearing golden sashes. He then sees one of the living creatures come out of the temple and give the angels seven bowls full of the wrath of God. At this point a dense smoke fills the temple, a smoke that lingers "until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished."

Teaching

The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe.

Issues:

i] Context: See 6:1-8. The battle between the red dragon (Satan) and the offspring of the woman (the Christian community), 11:19-15:4, was resolved in the Great Day of the Lord, the day of judgment, with the harvest of the righteous (the victorious, the redeemed, those who have persevered in faith) for blessing, 15:1-4, and the harvest of the wicked (those who worship the beast) for cursing. Now again, John brings us square on with his realized eschatology - it is the Great Day of the Lord, the day of judgment, the day when the kingdom comes. This is certainly not the first time John has brought us to this terrible day; we faced it in the judgment of the seven seals, 6:1-8:5, and the judgment of the seven trumpets, 8:6-11:18, and so now again in the judgment of the seven bowls, 15:5-16:21.

First, the angels prepare for the final outpouring of divine wrath on the beast and its allies, 15:5-8. The first four judgments of the bowls parallel the first four judgments of the trumpets, but unlike these judgments, the judgments of the bowls are not partial, but complete - "every living thing in the sea died", 16:3. The beast is brought down in the fifth judgment, 16:10-11, and in typical fashion, the allies of the beast refuse to repent - in the day of judgment there is no repentance. This leads to the sixth judgment and the final act of defiance by the beast and its allies at Armageddon, 16:12-16. As in the judgments of the seals and trumpets, the seventh judgment presents as a theophany, *παρουσία*, "a coming", although in this case a very noisy one heralding that the *εσχατος*, "end", has arrived, 15:17-21. John reinforces the sense of "end" by not including any interludes explaining how the Christian community is to interact with these judgments; it is the end of all things, and so no interaction is necessary.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The angels prepared for judgment:*

The seven angels stand ready for the great and terrible day, v5-6;

The seven angels receive their divine commission, v7-8.

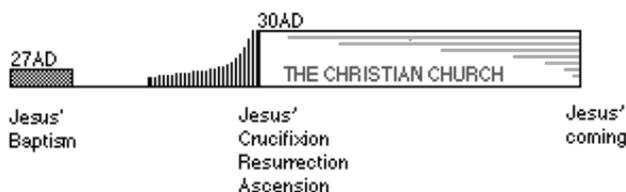
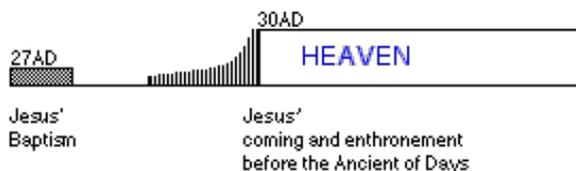
iv] Interpretation:

Again, John sees the heavenly temple / sanctuary open before him. He notes that it is the heavenly counterpart to the tabernacle that Moses constructed in the wilderness - the tabernacle of witness / testimony. In much the same way as a cloud once settled on the tabernacle and the glory of the Lord filled it on the occasion of its completion by Moses (Ex.40:35), so too the heavenly temple fills with smoke and no one can enter it until the judgment is complete. This final judgment is administered again by seven angels, and as we will see, the plagues again parallel those that fell on Egypt during the time of the Exodus.

The three judgments of the seven plagues: An interesting feature revealed in the three sets of plagues is that they increase in severity from the destruction of a quarter of the earth, to a third of the earth, and finally in the seven bowls, the whole of the earth. In the first two sets of judgments, the seals and trumpets, there is an interlude which examines how the Christian community should respond in the face of the unfolding day of judgment. With the judgments of the seven bowls there is no interlude because it is *the eschaton*, the end.

What we have here is another example of the intermingling of realized and inaugurated eschatology. All three sets of judgments describe the Great Day of the Lord; they present as realized eschatology - the kingdom is come. Yet, from the perspective of inaugurated eschatology, the *not yet*, there is a sense where the judgments of the seals and trumpets bleed into the present moment of grace between Christ's ascension and return / coming. As such, they serve as a warning. In this present moment we can feel that terrible day in the wind, see little touches of it all around us, little anti-Christ's coming and going. Jesus proclaimed the victory won on the cross: "now is the hour of judgment; now shall the prince of this world be driven out", and to the thief on the cross he promised, "this evening you will be with me in paradise." Yet at the same time, in this moment of grace, we can only taste that *now* because for us it is *not yet*. The two illustrations below try to make sense of a timeframe that is beyond our senses!

A KINGDOM NOW and NOT YET



Text - 15:5

The angels prepare for judgment, v5-8: i) In another heavenly vision, John witnesses seven angels coming out of the heavenly sanctuary, ready and prepared to pour out God's wrath on the world. On that day there will be no time to repent, so, in an act of divine mercy, the reader is warned of the coming day, for God desires repentance rather than obliteration.

καὶ "[after this I looked]" - AND [AFTER THESE *things* I SAW]. Serving to indicate a step in the narrative where **δε** would be expected, here reinforced by **εἶδον**, "I saw", and further reinforced by the temporal prepositional phrase "after these things."

εν + dat. "**I saw in [heaven]**" - [AND THE TEMPLE WAS OPENED, OF THE TABERNACLE OF THE TESTIMONY,] IN [HEAVEN]. Local, expressing space.

της σκηνης [η] gen. "**that is, the tabernacle**" - OF THE TABERNACLE, TENT = THE TENT OF MEETING. The function of the genitive here is unclear. The NIV has taken the genitive as adjectival, expegetic / appositional, "the temple, namely", so Koster, Beale, Smalley. With this approach to the genitive, **ναος** means "temple" and refers to the heavenly sanctuary which John also identifies as "the tent of witness", ie., "the tent of meeting", or simply, "the tabernacle" constructed during Israel's wilderness wanderings. Both the tabernacle and the temple serve as earthly representations of the heavenly sanctuary. The genitive could also be adjectival, idiomatic / local; "I saw the temple in heaven open, with the covenant

tent in it", TEV. This image seems unlikely. A third approach involves reading ὁ ναός, "the temple", as "the sanctuary", and the genitive as adjectival, possessive; "the sanctuary of (which belongs to) the tabernacle (the tent which served as the model for the temple)", so Barclay, Phillips, REB. This third option would then serve to describe the sanctuary / holy of holies in the temple / tabernacle, a space separated from the altar by a heavy curtain. The holy of holies / sanctuary housed the ark of the covenant, the box containing the two copies of the covenant, which box was believed to be God's earthly throne. Does John have this arrangement in mind for his heavenly temple / tabernacle? If so, the curtain is open and the angels are coming out from the holy of holies where the throne of God is located. Koester argues that John views the heavenly sanctuary as "a single unit, rather than a structure in two parts; it is where God is enthroned." And as for the earthly representation of this heavenly reality, it is now "the Christian community; a worshipping community depicted as a temple under siege", 11:1-2.

του μαρτυρίου [ος] gen. "of the covenant law" - OF THE TESTIMONY, WITNESS. The genitive is adjectival, and may be simply classified as attributive, limiting "tabernacle / tent"; "the testimony tent." The tent of testimony (identified sometimes as "the tent of meeting", "the witness tent") housed the covenant tablets, the documents which witnessed to the agreement God has made with his people, so in its fullest sense the genitive is idiomatic / local, "the tent / tabernacle which housed the covenant documents in the Ark." Of course, in the heavenly reality there is no copy of the covenant; God preserves his promises in his own person. And in any case, it is likely that one of the two copies of the covenant in the Ark was God's copy of the agreement. Even in ancient times both parties to an agreement were provided with a copy of the agreement. So, the Israelis not only lost their copy to the Babylonians, but they lost God's copy as well. Luckily, clay tablets are not what seals God's promises!

v6

εκ + gen. "out of [the temple]" - [AND SEVEN ANGELS CAME OUT] FROM [THE TEMPLE]. Expressing separation; "away from." Typical redundant use of the preposition after the εκ prefix verb "to come out."

εχοντες [εχω] pres. part. "with [seven plagues]" - HAVING [THE SEVEN PLAGUES]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting angels; "the seven angels, who had the seven plagues, came out of the temple." The variant article οἱ was probably added to reinforce the adjectival function of the participle, but of course, John's use of the anarthrous participle εχων often drifts toward that of a finite verb (a periphrastic construction with an assumed verb to be), cf., 1:16; "I saw and the temple opened and seven angels came out from the temple. They

had (they carried with them) seven plagues and they were clothed in clean bright linen."

ενδεδυμενοι [ενδυω] perf. mid./pas. part. "**They were dressed in**" - [AND] HAVING BEEN PUT ON, DRESSED IN, CLOTHED IN [CLEAN BRIGHT LINEN AND HAVING BEEN WRAPPED AROUND THE BREASTS GOLDEN SASHES]. As with **περιεζωσμενοι**, "having been wrapped", the participle may be attendant on "having", assuming that "having" is verbal and not adjectival, otherwise it is adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of their "coming out." Dressed in "linen" means "a linen garment". Israel's priests wore linen robes, so probably John intends "a linen robe." The description of the linen probably means something like a bright white colour, the colour of purity, as worn by the Son of Man; "wearing a white shiny robe", TH. The golden sash also aligns with the Son of Man, symbolizing their royal and priestly function, so Smalley. "They were robed in linen, clean and shining", Barclay.

περι + acc. "**around [their chests]**" - [WRAPPED AROUND] AROUND [THE BREASTS]. Spatial, "around". Again, a typical redundant use of the preposition after the **περι** prefix verb "to wrap around." "They wore belts made of pure gold", CEV; "they were wearing golden sashes around the waists", Koester; "they wore golden vests", Peterson.

v7

ii] The seven angels receive their divine commission, v7-8. John continues to set the scene for the terrible judgments about to come. By divine authority, the angels receive the bowls full of *the wine* of God's wrath. As they prepare to enact divine judgment, God's presence, imaged in smoke, fills the sanctuary.

και "**then**" - Indicating a minor step in the narrative.

εκ + gen. "**[one] of [the four living creatures]**" - Here the preposition stands in the place of a partitive genitive. The bowls come from a being close to the throne of God indicating a "divine commissioning of the avenging agents of God", Smalley.

τοις ... αγγελις [ος] dat. "**[gave] to the [seven] angels**" - [GAVE] TO THE [SEVEN] ANGELS [SEVEN GOLDEN BOWLS]. Dative of indirect object. Note that being the first mention of these golden bowls there is no article in the Gk. (anarthrous).

γεμουσας [γεμω] pres. part. "**filled with**" - BEING FULL. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "bowls"; "bowls which are full of the wrath of God."

του θυμου [ος] gen. "**the wrath**" - THE WRATH, ANGER. Genitive complement of the participle "being full of." Probably short for **του οινου του θυμου του θεου**, "[full of] the wine of the wrath of God", 14:10, where the

genitive "wrath" is adjectival, epexegetic, specifying "the wine"; "the wine which is / which represents the wrath of God." "Babylon the whore made the world drunk on the wine of her immorality until God gave her the wine of wrath and the ungodly were trampled in the winepress (Rev.14:8, 10, 19-20)", Koester.

του θεου [ος] gen. "of God" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive, expressing a derivative characteristic of God, "God's wrath", although John may have in mind the action associated with God's anger, so verbal, subjective, so Mathewson. Possibly idiomatic / source; "filled with *what came from* the wrath of God", Cassirer.

του ζωντος [ζαω] gen. pres. part. "who lives" - THE ONE LIVING. John may intend this participle as a substantive standing in apposition to "God"; "the wrath of God, the one who lives forever"; "God, of him who lives forever and ever", Cassirer. Usually treated as adjectival, attributive, as NIV, ESV, Barclay, Moffatt, Berkeley,

του αιωνων [ων ονος] gen. "[for ever and] ever" - [INTO THE AGES] OF THE AGES. Technically the genitive may be classified as adjectival, partitive, or possessive, although the phrase as a whole is idiomatic for "forever."

v8

καπνου [ος] gen. "[was filled] with smoke" - [AND THE TEMPLE WAS MADE FULL] OF SMOKE. Genitive of direct object of the verb "to make full of." Smoke (the cloud of Yahweh's presence) often attends a theophany in the OT, cf., Ex.19:16-18, 1Kgs.8:9-11

εκ + gen. "from [the glory of God]" - FROM [THE GLORY OF GOD AND] FROM [THE POWER OF HIM]. Here expressing source / origin; "from".

εισελθειν [εισερχομαι] aor. inf. "[no one could] enter [the temple]" - [AND NO ONE WAS BEING ABLE] TO ENTER INTO [INTO THE TEMPLE]. The infinitive is complementary, completing the verb "to be able." Note the repetition of the prepositional prefix εις, "into"; common form.

αχρι + subj. "until were completed" - UNTIL [MAY BE COMPLETED THE SEVEN PLAGUES]. Serving to introduce an indefinite temporal clause. John doesn't tell us why entry into the heavenly sanctuary / temple is not allowed as long as the smoke theophany continues, cf., Ex.40:35, 1Kg.8:11. John is probably trying to convey the mystery and majesty of what is going on; "God is so energized and agitated that this cloud will prevent anyone from entering the temple", Boring, so Caird, Beasley-Murray, cf., Sweet who sees it as a restriction on approaching God at a time of judgment. Reddish, Bruce and Mounce, suggest that a closed sanctuary indicates that the time for answered prayers was over; this is a moment of wrathful judgment apart from grace. Smalley lists the options, while reinforcing the view that grace still applies; God always remains "a saving God." Yet, surely the

purpose of John's vision is to prompt an acceptance of God's saving grace while there is still time to do so.

των ... αγγελων [ος] "**of the [seven] angels**" - The genitive is usually taken as verbal, subjective; "the seven plagues *poured out by* the seven angels."

16:1-9

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

4. The judgment of the seven bowls, 15:5-16:21

iii] The outpouring of the first four bowls

Synopsis

The judgment of the bowls begins with a command from the temple instructing the first angel to pour out his bowl of divine wrath. This entails a judgment on the land of a disease infecting all those who carry the mark of the beast. The second angel pours out his bowl on the sea, turning the sea into blood and killing every living thing in it. The third angel pours out his bowl on the rivers and springs and they too turn into blood. The fourth angel pours out his bowl on the sun which then explodes in fire, searing with intense heat.

Teaching

The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe.

Issues:

i] Context: See 15:5-8.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The outpouring of the first four bowls:*

The judgment of the seven bowls:

The angels receive their orders, v1;

The first judgment - the earth, v2;

The second judgment - the sea, v3;

The third judgment - the rivers and springs, v4;

A hymn of divine justice, v5-7;

The fourth judgment - the sun, v8-9.

iv] Interpretation:

The interrelation between the judgment of the seven bowls and that of the seals and trumpets is certainly not clear in time terms. Most commentators agree that they speak of a single event, the day of judgment, the Great Day of the Lord, although the seals and trumpets carry a sense of warning about them, a touch of the *not yet*, of inaugurated eschatology, whereas the bowls emphasize the *now* of realized eschatology - the judgement is complete, not partial, and covers the whole of creation; See *The Three Judgments of the Seven Plagues*, 15:5-8. Although the judgment is horrific, it is appropriate, an "appropriate response to the evil that results

from the rejection of God's rule and the persecution of those who witness to that rule", Boring. So, John now takes us to *the eschaton*, "the end."

The first judgment falls on the earth and takes out all those who carry the mark of the beast. They are the ones who worship the beast, who have given themselves to the ideology of the secular city, and by implication, the red dragon / Satan; they are the unbelieving ones.

The second and third judgments fall on the sea and "waters". The judgment is complete, and in a hymn sung by the third angel, we are told that the judgments are just; "just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was. "It is what they deserve", "for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets" - persecution instigated by the associates of the beast, the secular city / Babylon.

The fourth judgment energizes the power of the sun. In this judgment the sun bursts into a blazing heat which scorches the children of the beast, but there is no repentance as the terrible day engulfs them. There is no repentance on the Day of the Lord, but even if there was, the citizens of Babylon would choose to curse God rather than glorify him.

The danger of a literal reading of the apocalyptic metaphor of shedding and drinking blood. Given that the judgment is complete, some commentators (eg., Blount) note that those with the mark of God and the Lamb, the redeemed, those who persevere in faith / those who conquer, must necessarily be caught up in the horrors of this judgment along with those who have the mark of the beast. This entails a literal reading of an apocalyptic image. John is describing the last day, the day of judgment, the Great Day of the Lord, a day that must be faced by those who have rejected Christ. He crafts numerous images of this day, illustrating over and over again its horror, even describing it as an unfolding horror, but in essence, it is just the end, the day when God says "Game over boys and girls!", a day cut short for the sake of the elect. So, those who are forced to drink the putrefied blood of death are those with the mark of the beast, unbelievers, not believers, not the 144,000, 7:3. Yes, the realized nature of eschatology means that believers taste something of the coming judgment in the present moment, even possibly with greater force as the day draws near, but we will not drink the putrefied blood of death.

Aune suggests that the drinking of blood represents physical suffering and economic disaster. It is certainly true that we taste these elements of the day of judgment in part today, harbingers of the terrible day to come, but we can't neatly package apocalyptic metaphors of the day of judgment. Drinking the putrefied blood of death is but one way John chooses to

describe the horror of the coming day. And what is that horror? Is it being forced to drink the undrinkable, or is it to shrivel under a scorching sun (the 4th judgment), or? The horror of the day of judgment lies in what is lost. In Christ, through faith, humanity becomes as God, higher than the angels, and yet the majority of those created in the image of God choose to align with a BEAST with an expiry date. Now that's a horror!

Text - 16:1

The outpouring of the first four bowls, v1-9: i] The angels receive their orders, v1. They are to leave the heavenly sanctuary / temple and pour out a pestilence of divine wrath on the creation.

και "then" - AND. Here serving to indicate a step in the narrative.

φωνης [η] gen. "[I heard] a [loud] voice" - Genitive of direct object after the verb "to hear." The unidentified voice is likely to be that of God, cf., 16:17.

εκ "from [the temple]" - expressing source / origin.

λεγουσης [λεγω] gen. pres. part. "saying" - The participle may be classified as the complement of the object of the verb "I heard", "a voice saying", as NIV, or adjectival, attributive, "a loud voice which said ..."; "I heard a mighty voice from heaven say to the seven angels", Berkeley, cf., λεγων, 1:17.

τοις ... αγγελοις [ος] dat. "to the [seven] angels" - Dative of indirect object.

και "-" - [GO] AND [POUR OUT THE SEVEN BOWLS]. Coordinate use of the conjunction. Smalley argues it is consecutive here, expressing result, and Aune that it is final, expressing purpose. Mathewson argues that it "simply indicates continuity." Note that both verbs, "go" and "pour out" are present tense. Osborne makes much of their imperfective / durative aspect (an ongoing judgment), while Smalley classifies them as conative / tendential (the action is contemplated / attempted), although if the beginning of the process is in mind we would classify them as ingressive. Imperatives resist such classifications; "the present tense simply looks at the action as a process", Mathewson.

του θυμου [ος] gen. "[God's] wrath" - OF THE WRATH [OF GOD]. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / content; "the seven bowls *full of* the wrath of God." Possibly "wine" is assumed, in which case "of wrath" is epexegetic / appositional, "full of wine, *which is / namely* the wrath of God." The verb "to pour out" is used in the LXX of pouring out a libation of wine, Isa.57:6. The genitive of God may be taken as adjectival, possessive, expressing a derivative characteristic, "God's holy anger", or verbal, subjective, the holy anger God enacts against sin. "Wrath" = holy anger, "Divine anger shows outrage at the presence of evil", Koester, although Smalley argues that it is "God's salvific wrath" (there is no evidence that salvation is the purpose of this divine action).

εις + acc. "**on [the earth]**" - TO, INTO [THE EARTH]. Spatial, expressing motion toward.

v2

ii] The first judgment, v2. Like the judgment of the trumpets, the first judgment falls on the earth, but unlike the trumpets, the judgment is universal.

εγενητο [γίνομαι] aor. "**broke out**" - [AND WENT OUT THE FIRST *angel* AND HE Poured out the bowl of him into the earth, and a bad sore and evil] BECAME. Aune notes the repeated use of the verb "became" (what came about / happened), cf., v2, 4, 10, "And what happened was", Cassirer.

επι + acc. "**on [the people]**" - ON [THE MEN]. John's favourite spatial preposition, when followed by a genitive, usually expresses "on, upon", so does he mean something like "over" here? "Then a loathsome and malignant virus attacked those" Sweet argues that the sores parallel the plague of boils inflicted on the Egyptians, Ex.9:11, particularly the magicians. He sees a similar physical punishment falling on the cult leaders of Babylon (Rome etc.), but John is using apocalyptic imagery and so specific applications are unwise.

τους εχοντας [εχω] "**who had**" - THE ONES HAVING [THE MARK OF THE BEAST AND THE ONES WORSHIPPING THE IMAGE OF IT]. As with "the ones worshipping / doing obeisance", the participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "men", as NIV.

του θηριου [ον] gen. "**[the mark] of the beast**" - The genitive is adjectival, probably possessive, expressing a derivative characteristic, or descriptive, idiomatic, "the mark *which is bestowed by* the beast", etc.....

τη εικονι [ων ονος] dat. "**[worshiped its] image**" - THE IMAGE [OF IT]. Dative of direct object after the participle "worshipping". "All who had taken the mark of the beast and worshiped its image", Peterson.

v3

iii] The second judgment, v3. Like the second judgment of the trumpets, this judgment alludes to the first plague upon Egypt where the river Nile turned to blood, Ex.7:17-21, but unlike the trumpets, its effect is not partial, but complete - "every living thing in the sea died."

ως "**[blood] like**" - [AND THE SECOND *angel* Poured out the bowl of him into the sea, and it became] AS, LIKE [BLOOD]. Comparative.

νεκρου adj. "**that of a dead person**" - OF A DEAD *person*. The adjective serves as a substantive, with the genitive probably adjectival, of source; "as if from a dead *person*", i.e., the blood is putrefied. "Like the blood of a corpse", Barclay.

ζωης [η] gen. "**[every] living [thing]**" - [AND EVERY SOUL] OF LIFE [DIED]. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "soul / self"; "every living creature."

τα art. "-" - the *things* [IN THE SEA]. The article serves as a nominalizer turning the prepositional phrase "in the sea" into a substantive standing in apposition to "living creature", "every living creature died, namely, the *creatures living* in the sea."

v4

iv] The third judgment, v4. As with the second judgment, this judgment alludes to the Egyptian plague where the river Nile turned to blood. In turning to blood, the Nile turned bitter, with famine and economic disaster following on. These consequences are assumed in the Revelation.

των ὑδατων [ωρ ατος] gen. "[springs] of water" - [AND THE THIRD *angel* Poured out the bowl of him into the rivers and the fountains] of the waters [AND IT BECAME BLOOD]. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, "water springs", Cassirer, or just "springs"; "the third angel poured his bowl on rivers and springs", Peterson. Note that *εγενετο*, "it became", is singular, presumably to harmonize "rivers and springs", the point being that not only did the sea turn to blood, but all the fresh water in the world turned to blood as well.

v5

v] Hymn of divine justice, v5-7. This vindication doxology addresses the danger of God "losing the war of public relations. What kind of crime can possibly be worthy of such total destruction? Can a God who exacts such extreme judgment be just?", Blount. Alluding to the hymn of Moses and the Lamb, 15:2-4, we are reminded that "the divine punishments meted out by God are both just and appropriate", Aune.

του αγγελου [ος] gen. "**the angel**" - [AND I HEARD] THE ANGEL. Genitive of direct object after the verb "to hear."

των ὑδατων [ων ατος] gen. "**in charge of the waters**" - OF THE WATERS. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / subordination, limiting "angel", as NIV, Cassirer; "who presided over the waters", Barclay; "who has power over the waters", CEV. Is this the same angel who poured his bowl out into / on the waters? Koester argues that he is a different angel, one of the angels in charge of the elements of wind, fire, water, etc., in line with Jewish tradition of the time.

λεγοντος [λεγω] gen. pres. part. "**say**" - SAYING. Technically the participle is the complement of the object "angel", of the verb "I heard", standing in a double genitive construction, "I heard the angel who is in charge of the waters exclaiming", Cassirer. As a matter of form John introduces speech in a vision with the participle "saying"; cf., *λεγων*, 1:17.

ὁ ὢν [εἴμι] pres. part. "**you who are**" - [YOU ARE RIGHTEOUS] THE ONE BEING. The participle serves as a substantive, nominative standing in apposition to the subject "you".

ὁ art. "**who [were]**" - [AND] THE ONE [WAS, THE HOLY ONE]. The article serves as a nominalizer turning the imperfect verb to-be ἦν into a substantive, "the one who was." Again, nominative standing in apposition to the subject "you", so also ὁ ὅσιος, "the holy one." God says of himself that he IS = "I am", and so it is said of him that he is the "one being" = "the who is." John doesn't leave it at that, for God is the God of the past, "the one who was", and also the future, "the one coming", 4:8. Above all, God is "the Holy One", a holiness evident in his just judgments.

ὅτι "-" - BECAUSE [THESE THINGS YOU JUDGED]. Introducing a causal clause explaining why it can be said of God that he is "righteous, the Holy One, the one who is and who was"; it is because God has given "these judgments." Judgments with respect to what? The following ὅτι clause, v6, explains. The judgment on those with the mark of the beast, a judgment which entails being made to drink bitter putrefied blood, is the consequence of having shed the blood of God's saints and prophets. If this is what John intends then the antecedent of ταῦτα, "these things", is the second and third judgments, the judgments involving blood, or better, just the third, given that we don't drink seawater. Note that Smalley argues for all 7 judgments, Aune for the first three. God is a righteous God because he applies justice in his judgments - "God's judgment is not arbitrary but is given to those who deserve it", Koester.

v6

ὅτι "**for**" - THAT. We are best to follow Osborne who argues that the ὅτι clause here "expands the judgment of v5b and identifies explicitly what *these things* were that caused God's mighty hand to fall upon the nations. This is not a separate reason, but clarifies the more ambiguous reason of verse 5b", ie., it is expegetic; "That is, they have shed the blood of the saints and prophets and you have given them" Contra Smalley who argues that it begins "a new, if related sentence."

ἀγίων [ος] gen. "**[they have shed the blood] of your holy people**" - [THEY SHED BLOOD] OF HOLY [AND PROPHETS]. The genitive is adjectival, possessive. The word "holy" is used of the saints / believers. To shed / pour out blood literally means to commit murder.

καὶ "**and**" - Following Semitic form the conjunction serves to introduce a main clause following a subordinate clause, cf., Zerwick.

αὐτοῖς dat. pro. "**[you have given] them**" - [YOU HAVE GIVEN BLOOD TO DRINK] TO THEM [THEY ARE WORTHY = DESERVING *of it*]. Dative of indirect object. The antecedent is usually the closest referent, but "holy and prophets" is

clearly not the antecedent, rather, those given blood to drink, so Aune, those with the mark of the beast. They murdered the redeemed and as a consequence are forced to drink the putrefied blood of death. Note that the sense of "they are worthy" is "they got what they deserved", NET.

πιειν [πινω] aor. inf. "[**blood**] **to drink**" - The infinitive is adverbial, expressing purpose; "in order to drink."

v7

του θυσιωστηριου [ον] gen. "[**I heard**] **the altar**" - Variants exist, probably seeking to articulate the assumed ellipsis, "I heard *a voice* (**φωνην**) saying", and "I heard [*someone*] *from* (**εκ**) the altar saying", source / origin, or partitive. As it stands "altar" is a genitive of direct object after the verb "to hear", but as indicated by the variants, John probably has in mind something other than the altar speaking. Osborne thinks the *someone* is an angel, Beale an angel or Christ, Smalley (so also Koester) opts for one of the martyrs under the altar, 6:9-10; "The martyrs demanded that God bring judgment against those who shed their blood", Koester.

λεγοντος [λεγω] gen. pres. part. "**respond**" - SAYING. The participle serves as the genitive complement of the direct object "the altar", of the verb "I heard", standing in a double genitive construction, although in the Revelation this participle often serves as a finite verb, cf., **λεγων**, 1:17; "I heard the altar utter these words."

ὁ παντοκρατωρ [ωρ ορος] "**Almighty**" - [YES LORD, THE GOD,] THE ALMIGHTY. As with **ὁ θεος**, "God", this noun stands in apposition to "Lord".

σου gen. pro. "[**true and just are**] **your [judgments]**" - [TRUE AND JUST *are* THE JUDGMENTS] OF YOU. The genitive is adjectival, probably possessive, they are His judgments, but the verbal sense of the noun "judgments" suggests that it is verbal, subjective, "the judgments you enact / sentences you impose"; "true and just ("honest and fair", CEV) thy sentences of doom", Moffatt.

v8

vi] The fourth judgment, v8-9. The fourth judgment involves fire, the scorching heat of the sun withering all life. Fire is a standard image of judgment, a judgment which aligns with the plague of fire that fell on Egypt, Ex.9:23. Note how Koester gets tangled in the issue of time by stating that the "traditional penalty for blasphemy was death. It is significant that those who curse God are not killed at this point. There is restraint in divine justice." It is true, that with our God, justice and mercy go hand in hand, yet on the day of judgment, justice, not mercy, applies to those who have refused to accept his offer of forgiveness. John's apocalyptic metaphor for the day of judgment stretches over the judgment of the seals, trumpets and bowls as a blow-by-blow countdown of events of the final day

of judgment. From the perspective of realized eschatology it is an inevitable moment in time where the outcome is already determined by a person's standing with God prior to the terrible day. Only from the perspective of inaugurated eschatology, where the nature of that terrible day bleeds into the present and interacts with the Christian Community, is there "restraint in divine justice" for those who repent.

ἐπι + acc. "[poured out his bowl] on [the sun]" - [AND THE FOURTH *angel* POURED OUT THE BOWL OF HIM] ONTO [THE SUN]. The first three bowls were poured **εἰς** + acc, "into", now we have a change in preposition, but there seems no particular reason behind the change.

αὐτῷ dat. pro. "**the sun [was allowed]**" - [AND TO SCORCH MEN IN FIRE WAS GIVEN] TO IT / HIM. Dative of indirect object of the passive verb "to give." The antecedent is probably "the sun". Note that the passive "it was given [to it (the sun) / him (the angel)]" is taken to be a divine passive, although John's use of the passive reflects the use of the passive in Daniel, cf., Mounce on this issue.

καυματισαι [καυματιζῶ] aor. inf. "**to scorch**" - TO SCORCH [MEN]. The infinitive serves as a substantive, subject of the verb "to give" = to allow. The infinitive is modified by the adverbial phrase "in/by fire", and its object is "men"; "to scorch humanity with fire ("its fiery blaze", Phillips) was given to it."

ἐν + dat. "**with [fire]**" - IN [FIRE]. Instrumental, expressing means; "by fire."

v9

καὶ "-" - AND. Possibly an adverbial use of the conjunction, concessive; "although they were burnt up by the raging heat of the sun, they blasphemed God and refused to repent and give him glory", cf., Boring.

καυμα [α ατος] acc. "**[they were seared] by the [intense] heat**" - [AND THE MEN WERE SEARED GREAT] HEAT. The accusative, "great heat", can be classified as a cognate accusative of content, the sense of which is derived from the verb it completes, or more simply as an adverbial accusative of manner; "they were scorched by/with a great scorching" = "they were severely burned", REB.

του θεου [ος] gen. "**[the name] of God**" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive. The "name" represents the person, and when used of God, his authority is in mind; "they cursed the Lord God."

του εχοντος [εχω] gen. pres. part. "**who had [control]**" - THE ONE HAVING [AUTHORITY OVER THESE PLAGUES]. The participle serves as a substantive introducing a noun clause standing in apposition to "God"; "God, the one who has ultimate authority over these plagues."

ἐπι + acc. "**over [these plagues]**" - John's favourite spatial preposition, here + acc. to express "over".

δοῦναι [διδωμι] aor. inf. "-" - [AND DID NOT REPENT] TO GIVE [GLORY]. The infinitive is adverbial, possibly consecutive, expressing result, "they did not repent and as a result did *not* give glory to him", so Zerwick, Mathewson, ... but it could be final, expressing purpose, "they did not repent in order that / so that they *might* give glory to him", so Osborne. The two elements are coordinate, as expressed in the NIV with "and"; they involve the same thing. As Job said, "I glorified God and did not blaspheme". Those marked with the beast refused to change their ways and continued to worship the beast; they blaspheme God rather than glorify him.

αυτω dat. pro. "[glorify] **him**" - TO HIM. Dative of indirect object.

16:10-16

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

4. The judgment of the seven bowls, 15:5-16:21

iii] The outpouring of the fifth and sixth bowls

Synopsis

John continues with his vision of the judgment of the seven bowls. In the fifth judgment he sees the bowl of God's wrath poured out on the throne of the beast. Darkness covers the earth and the people of the earth (presumably those who carry the mark of the beast) are covered with painful sores. Even so, they refuse to repent. The sixth judgment follows with the Euphrates river drying up, so giving free access into Palestine for the kings of the East. John then sees three evil spirits setting out to gather the kings of the earth for the final battle against God and the Lamb at Armageddon. In the face of this terrible day, Jesus encourages the redeemed with the announcement of his coming and their need to stay awake.

Teaching

The kingdom of God is at hand; those who persevere in faith will be blessed.

Issues:

i] Context: See 15:5-8.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The outpouring of the fifth and sixth bowls:*

The judgment of the seven bowls:

The outpouring of the fifth bowl, v10-11;

Darkness;

The outpouring of the sixth bowl, v12;

The Euphrates river dries up.

The three evil spirits call for war, v13-16;

A word from Christ, v15;

The kings gather at Armageddon, v16.

iv] Interpretation:

The unfolding judgment of the bowls has devastated the associates of the beast, but now the beast itself starts to feel the full force of the judgment, but even so, its associates refuse to repent. As Blount puts it, the divine agent "goes exclusively after the cause of the oppression, blasphemy and idolatry, the throne of the beast from the sea." The "throne" is representative of the beast and its powerful reign on earth, as against the heavenly throne

and the powerful reign of God. "The beast's rule is targeted and about to be put to an end", Blount. With the angelic assault upon the beast / Babylon / the secular city, its citizens are thrust into anguish and gloom, cf., the fifth trumpet, 9:1-6, Ex.10:22-23.

The next judgment is interesting in that it alludes to an invasion of Palestine from the kings of the East, with an implied assault on Jerusalem itself. Palestine was usually invaded from the South or North, along the fertile crescent, with the desert to the east serving as a buffer, but here John describes the barrier as the river Euphrates, a barrier now removed for the secular powers in the East to move against God's people. The implication is that God is removing the final barrier, so making the task of the enemy of God's people easier. It's as if God removes the final restraints on the children of darkness, giving them over to their self-destructive ways. Of course, John is developing apocalyptic imagery here, ie., the Euphrates river and the kings of the East are symbolic. As the judgment progresses, the associates of the beast don't just refuse to repent, but they are allowed to join together with the forces of darkness to rage against the Lamb and his associates.

The idea that God's enemies grow more frantic as the day draws near is developed in an interlude covering v13-16. John develops the image of three evil spirits from Satan, the beast and the false prophet. John describes them as "demonic spirits" who are able to "perform signs" and bring together the nations in a final assault on God in the battle at Armageddon. These "demonic spirits" are best understood as secular / religious ideas, philosophies, supported by signs and wonders, which unify humanity against God and the Lamb, the redeemed and the gospel. We witnessed samples of this horror as Communism took hold in China and Russia.

The Christian community, confronted by this final amalgamation of evil, is given a word of encouragement, v15. It is obviously intended from Christ, although this is unstated. In the day of darkness, know that Christ is coming unannounced and that those who persevere in faith will stand blessed before him.

The Battle of Armageddon: This battle is the culmination of the words of the Psalmist, "The kings of the earth stand ready, and princes conspire together against the Lord and his anointed king." Armageddon represents the final throw of the dice by Satan and his allies. In the terms of realized eschatology, it has already taken place on the cross with Satan's seeming victory over the messiah turned on its head; Christ has won the victory and now rules in power and glory. In the terms of inaugurated eschatology, Armageddon, Satan's *final solution*, still lies in the future, while at the same

time bleeding into the present (ie., "while the consummation of the warfare is likely to take place in history, the conflict between good and evil, justice and injustice, is meantime always to be found in progress", Smalley). The Battle of Armageddon is a symbolic metaphor representing the final rebellion of the powers of darkness against God. Armageddon "is basically a mythical formulation which represents the apocalyptic and universal mountain where hostile forces, assembled by the agents of Satan, will come together to wage war at the end against God and his people", Smalley, so also Hendriksen, Aune, ... See Osborne, and also Mounce, for the many alternative interpretations offered for the battle of Armageddon.

The subject makes for a great sermon, but sadly it can often end up with armies of planes, tanks and guns attacking Jerusalem and the Jewish State of Israel. In this scenario, the Jews then become the *goodies* and the Arabs the *badies*, when Middle Eastern politics is far more complex with good and evil on both sides (and the Palestinians like pawns in the middle!). Armageddon has nothing to do with the secular state of Israel; it is a metaphorical depiction of the battle of good against evil, rather than the State of modern Israel battling with invaders from the East. Most scholars see no evidence that the modern state of Israel has anything to do with Biblical prophecy; it is a secular entity like any other State and should be judged accordingly.

v] Homiletics:

As the day of judgment draws near, we taste something of its gloom settling over the secular city, with society determined to crush the environment with overpopulation, the wasteful use of limited resources, and pollution. And even though these are signs of our end, few repent and believe.

I am reminded of my skin doctor who commented about skin cancer being a parasitoid that kills its host. To his mind, it seemed strange that a parasitoid would evolve to kill its host, and by so doing, kill itself. I suggested that it tells us something about the nature and extent of sin. I also observed that the human race, now affected by sin, was like a parasitoid killing its host, namely the world - overpopulation, environmental degradation, etc. Our exchange was but a moment of philosophical speculation engaged in while he was slicing a skin cancer out of my leg. I guess I could have gone on about God having acted to excise sin from the human race, but I was somewhat traumatized by the size of the hole he had created.

Text - 16:10

The outpouring of the fifth and sixth bowls, v10-16: i] The outpouring of the fifth bowl - darkness, v10-11. In the fifth judgment the angel goes after the cause of all the problems, Babylon itself. For John, in his day, all the images of Rome would fill his mind; for us, it all depends on our political perspective! The judgment results in an ongoing gloom. A literal darkness is unlikely (contra Mounce); John is using another metaphor for the Great Day of the Lord.

επι + acc. "**[poured out his bowl] on**" - [AND THE FIFTH *angel* Poured out THE BOWL OF HIM] ON. John clearly uses the spatial preposition **επι** + gen. to mean "on, upon", but when he uses it + acc. a sense like "over" may be in his mind. Either way, the difference is unimportant.

του θηριου [ος] gen. "**[the throne] of the beast**" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive.

και "and" - A consecutive sense is possible here; "so that, with the result that"

ασκοτωμενη [σκοτω] perf. mid./pas. part. "**was plunged into darkness**" - [THE KINGDOM OF IT BECAME] DARKENED. Most translations, inc. NIV, treat the participle with **εγενετο**, "became", as a periphrastic construction, although we would expect an imperf. verb to-be for a periphrastic pluperfect; "his kingdom became darkened." Although somewhat awkward, the participle does stand in agreement with "the kingdom", so it may be better classified as a predicate adjective, "was darkened"; see Wallace who argues that perfect passive participles in the Revelation better fit this classification, #90, p649. Given John's constant verbal use of participles one suspects a periphrastic classification is better, but it is unwise to argue against the master! Mathewson classifies it as a predicate adjective, and Osborne as an attributive adjective (although I suspect that's a typo). Beale doesn't go there, as usual - say no more! However we classify the construction, John does seem to be emphasizing durative aspect; "the beast's kingdom was shrouded in darkness", Cassirer.

εκ + gen. "**in [agony]**" - [AND THEY WERE BITING THE TONGUES OF THEM] FROM = BECAUSE OF [THE PAIN]. Here the preposition, expressing source / origin, "from the source of the pain", takes on an adverbial function, causal, "they were biting because of the pain", but possibly modal, expressing manner, as NIV, "its people began biting their tongues in pain", CEV.

v11

του ουρανου [ος] gen. "**[the God] of heaven**" - [AND THEY BLASPHEMED THE GOD] OF HEAVEN. The genitive is adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic, probably best local, "the God *who dwells in* heaven", but Mathewson also suggests subordination, "the God *who rules over* heaven."

εκ + gen. "**because of [their pains]**" - FROM [THE PAINS OF THEM AND] FROM [THE SORES OF THEM]. The preposition seems to express a causal sense here, "because", as in v10.

και "**but**" - and. Here adversative, as NIV.

εκ + gen. "**[they refused to repent] of [what they had done]**" - [AND THEY DID NOT REPENT] FROM [THE WORKS OF THEM]. Again, John uses the construction **μετενοησαν εκ**, "repent from", the preposition expressing separation, "away from", and the verb **μετανοεω** meaning "to change one's mind or direction, to turn around", the **εκ** (sometimes **απο** elsewhere in the NT), "from", indicating "with respect to what", here "their deeds" = their failure to acknowledge the lordship of God, so Boring, although Smalley includes their "idolatry, murder, magic arts, immorality and theft", cf. 2:20-22.

v12

ii] The outpouring of the sixth bowl - the Euphrates river dries up, v12. This judgment aligns with the sixth judgment of the trumpets. In the sixth judgment of the trumpets, a deadly cavalry is set loose from the Euphrates river, now the river drives up giving complete access to an invading army of kings from the Orient - the dogs of war are let loose.

τον Ευφρατην [ης ου] "**the Euphrates**" - [AND THE SIXTH *angel* Poured OUT THE BOWL OF HIM ON (**επι**, poss. "over") THE GREAT RIVER] THE EUPHRATES. Standing in apposition to "the great river."

ινα + subj. "**to [prepare the way]**" - [AND THE WATER OF IT WAS DRIED UP] THAT [THE WAY MIGHT BE PREPARED]. Introducing a final clause expressing purpose, "in order that"; "so that the way might be free for the coming kings from the East", Cassirer.

των βασιλεων [εως εως] gen. "**for the kings**" - [THE WAY] OF THE KINGS. The genitive is obviously adjectival, possibly possessive, "the highway of (belonging to) the kings", Berkeley, or better idiomatic, eg., "the way that the kings travel", Mathewson; "the Euphrates river was dried up in order to prepare / make ready a roadway *which would allow* the kings from the East *to invade*." The genitive may be adverbial, consecutive, expressing result, although again elliptical, "resulting in *the invasion of* the kings from the East." The vast majority of translations simply state "for the kings from the East."

των gen. art. "-" - THE. The article serves as an adjectivizer turning the prepositional phrase "from the east" into an attributive adjective limiting "the king"; "the kings which come from the rising of the sun / east."

απο + gen. "**from [the East]**" - FROM [SUNRISE OF SUN = EAST]. Expressing source / origin. Aune classifies the genitive "of sun" as verbal, subjective. The Euphrates was a natural border for the Roman Empire, separating the Empire from

the Parthians, a feared opponent. The Parthians tended to fight on horseback and the Roman military always had problems getting the better of their heavy cavalry. John may be drawing on this national fear to shape this and the following verses. He may even be alluding to the myth that a resurrected Nero (*Nero redivivus*) would lead an army from the East against Rome, see Beasley-Murray. Daniel refers to an invasion from the East, Dan.11:44, and so John may be drawing on this idea. John is probably identifying the source of the invasion (ie., the Orient) rather than the direction of the invasion. When it comes to direction, it is always North, or South, along the fertile crescent. Sweet thinks John may be alluding to the invasion of Babylon by Cyrus the Persian who diverted the Euphrates river, exposing the city to attack. "From the Orient."

v13

iii] The three evil spirits call for war, v13-16. Alluding to the plague of frogs in Egypt at the time of the Exodus, John describes the activity of a trinity of evil powers interacting with the "kings" to bring them together for a final assault on the kingdom of God. These dark powers emerge from the red dragon, the beast and the false prophet (probably the beast from the land). John's apocalyptic imagery is again metaphorical, painting another picture of "the Great Day of God Almighty", the day of judgment.

καὶ εἶδον **"then I saw"** - AND I SAW. The direct object is "three unclean spirits" modified by the comparative "as frogs." Indicating a step in the narrative, serving to introduce what presents like an interlude. It's relation to the sixth judgment is not overly clear. Smalley argues that the passage expands the content of the sixth judgment, with the three evil spirits released on the pouring out of the sixth bowl.

ὡς **"[impure spirits] that looked like [frogs]"** - [AND I SAW *come* FROM THE MOUTH OF THE DRAGON AND FROM THE MOUTH OF THE BEAST AND FROM THE MOUTH OF THE FALSE PROPHET, THREE UNCLEAN SPIRITS] LIKE [FROGS]. Comparative.

ἐκ + gen. **"they came out of"** - FROM. Expressing source / origin. The preposition is used to introduce three prepositional phrases indicating the three places where the three unclean spirits come from.

τοῦ δράκοντος [ὠν οντος] gen. **"[the mouth] of the dragon"** - As with "the beast" and "the false prophet", the genitive is adjectival, possessive.

τοῦ ψευδοπροφήτου [ης ου] gen. **"the false prophet"** - This is the first mention of "the false prophet" in Revelation ("the minister for propaganda", Bruce) - he is probably the beast from the earth referred to in 13:11, cf., 19:20, 20:10 (the ideology of the secular city), so Smalley, Osborne, Beale. The other two players are the red dragon (the seven-headed monster, Satan), and the beast

from the sea (the political power of the secular city), 13:1-8. The beast from the land / the false prophet leads the people to worship the beast from the sea, 13:12. Both believers and unbelievers are subject to the deception of the antichrist, 13:11-17. There have been numerous attempts at aligning the false prophet with some particular person. Indeed, there will always be false prophets, but this "beast" markets his wares throughout the whole of corrupt human society - education, the media, the sciences, The false prophet is the sum of everything and everyone that promotes an ideology which stands in contradiction to the revealed will of God.

v14

"They are diabolical spirits performing wonders and they set out to muster all the kings of the world for battle on the great day of God, the Almighty", Phillips.

γαρ "-" - FOR. More reason than cause; "an explicit interpretation of the unclean spirits and frogs", Beale.

δαίμονιων [ον] gen. "**demonic [spirits]**" - [THEY ARE SPIRITS] OF DEMONS. The NIV takes the genitive as adjectival, attributive, limiting "spirits", but it could also be exegetical, "spirits who are demons", Osborne.

ποιουντα [ποιεω] pres. part. "**that perform signs**" - The NIV has taken the participle as adjectival, attributive, limiting "spirits"; "who have the power to work miracles." These "signs" are miraculous deeds that purport to demonstrate divine power", Koester.

ὃ pro. "-" - WHICH [GO FORTH TO]. The pronoun serves to introduce a relative clause. Most translations assume that the antecedent is "spirits", but it may be "signs"; it is the miraculous signs which go forth and lead the kings astray, prompting them to take on the Lord. Maybe in the sense of a **ηχος**, "a report" - the signs and wonders performed by the dark powers "went out" to the kings, i.e., they heard about the wondrous signs and acted accordingly. See Mathewson, Aune. Note in typical form the neuter plural **ὃ** takes a singular verb, here **εκπορευεται**, "go forth / go out."

οικουμενης [η] gen. "**[the kings] of the [whole] world**" - The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / subordination; "the kings *who rule over* the whole world."

συναγαγειν [συναγω] aor. inf. "**to gather [them]**" - TO GATHER, BRING TOGETHER [THEM]. The infinitive is adverbial, final, expressing purpose; "in order to rally them."

εις + acc. "**for [the battle]**" - TO [THE WAR]. Here adverbial, expressing end view / goal / purpose. The article **τον** with "war, battle" may specify "the battle", i.e., the battle referred to in the prophets where the nations join in a final confrontation with God and his people, Ezk.38:1-6, etc.

της ἡμέρας [α] gen. "**on the [great] day**" - OF THE [GREAT] DAY. The NIV has opted for an adjectival genitive, idiomatic / temporal; "*which will take place on the great day of God Almighty.*"

του θεου [ος] gen. "**of God**" - OF THE GOD. The genitive is adjectival, possessive.

του παντοκρατορος [ωρ ορος] gen. "**almighty**" - Standing in apposition to "God".

v15

a) A word from Christ, v15. This rather abrupt intrusion serves as a parenthetical word of exhortation from the exalted Christ warning "the faithful of the need for spiritual vigilance as they await his final appearing", Smalley, so also Sweet.

ὡς "[**I come**] like [**a thief**]" - [BEHOLD, I AM COMING] AS, LIKE [A THIEF]. Comparative; "Remember what Christ said; When I come I will surprise you like a thief", CEV. This image of Christ's coming is usually understood as illustrating an unexpected coming, although Koester argues for "the suddenness of his coming", so also Blount. A home break-in and robbery is unexpected rather than sudden, so best be prepared, so Osborne, Smalley,, cf., Matt.24:33, 1Thess.5:2-4, 1Pet.3:10.

ὁ γρηγορων [γρηγορῶ] pres. part. "**the one who stays awake**" - [BLESSED *is* THE ONE WATCHING, BEING ALERT, STAYING AWAKE [AND KEEPING *on* THE GARMENTS OF HIM]. The participle, as with **τηρων**, "keeping", serves as a substantive. "To *watch* and *keep one's garments* is to refuse to concede to the idolatrous demands of beast-worship (3:4-5) in the face of the pressure of the final attack", Beale.

ἵνα μη + subj. "**so as to not [go naked]**" - THAT NOT / LEST [HE MAY WALK NAKED]. The NIV has taken the construction as final, expressing negated purpose, but possibly consecutive, expressing result, "with the result that", even epexegetic, specifying the blessing, namely, not found naked and exposed.

βλεπωσιν [βλεπω] pres. subj. "**be shamefully exposed**" - [AND] THEY MAY SEE [THE SHAME OF HIM]. Whereas "he may walk" is singular, this verb is plural. The NIV has taken the plural, without an identified subject, for a passive; see Mathewson. "That he may not go about naked and be seen exposed", ESV. In Australia we have a colloquial phrase for being caught-out; "A blessing rests on the person who is alert and ready for action and not caught with their pants down" = shamed - exposed as associates of the beast rather than the Lamb. In Australia, this phrase is not used in polite company (eg., from a pulpit!) given its attendant connotations.

v16

b) The kings gather at Armageddon, v16. See above.

και "then" - AND. Possibly indicating a step in the narrative, a function elsewhere in the NT performed by **δε**. Yet, it seems likely that this verse is part of the sixth judgment so the **και** is best viewed as resumptive, following on from Christ's parenthetical word of encouragement. "So they mustered the kings to the place called in Hebrew Armageddon", Barclay.

συνηγαγεν [συναγω] aor. "**they gathered [the kings] together**" - HE = THEY GATHERED [THEM]. Typical form, a singular verb following a neuter plural. The implied subject "they" is either the evil spirits or the signs; see v14. The antecedent of **αυτους**, "them", is obviously "the kings", as NIV.

τον καλουμενον pres. mid./pas. part. "**called [Armageddon]**" - [INTO THE PLACE] BEING CALLED [IN HEBREW HARMAGEDON]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "place"; "the place that is called in Hebrew Armageddon", ESV. We may have expected a translation of "Harmagedon", but in typical apocalyptic style John leaves us guessing. In Hebrew the word means "the mount of Megiddo", although there is no "mount of Megiddo." There is a city called Megiddo located in the valley of Jezreel, and over the years it has witnessed numerous confrontations between Israel and her enemies, but it is no mountain. Osborne thinks it means "mount of assembly", cf., Isa.14:13. Beckwith argues that John is alluding to Ezekiel 38:8-21, and that he adds "Megiddo" as a reminder of the many times Israel defeated her enemies there. Koester suggests that "Megiddo" links with Zechariah 12:11 on the basis of spelling, indicating that the name "anticipates God's final victory over hostile nations." So, we may well have the linking of two prophetic prophecies in one apocalyptic metaphor.

16:17-21

The Messianic Judgments, 6:1-16:21

4. The judgment of the seven bowls, 15:5-16:21

iv] The outpouring of the seventh bowl

Synopsis

John now describes the seventh angel pouring out his bowl, this time the bowl is poured out **επι**, "into / onto / above", the air. As the angel pours out his bowl, a voice from the throne - presumably the voice of God - proclaims "It is done!" This is followed by a theophany, a coming of the Lord, represented in thunder and lightning, with the earth ravaged by earthquakes, splitting "the great city" / Babylon into three parts. Mountains disappear and humanity is devastated by a plague of hail.

Teaching

The kingdom of God is at hand; the day of judgment is upon us; "It is done."

Issues:

i] Context: See 15:5-8.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The outpouring of the seventh bowl:*

The judgment of the seven bowls:

The seventh bowl - the final judgment:

A word from the throne of God, v17;

A cosmic theophany, v18;

Judgment on the secular city, v19-20.

Judgment on the associates of the beast, v21.

iv] Interpretation:

"The battle of Armageddon (v16) leads to the ultimate destruction of the corrupt world system", Smalley, so also Beale. As with the judgments of the seals and trumpets, this seventh judgment presents as a theophany, a coming of the Lord, although with the bowls it is anything but the "still small voice" version, cf., 1Kg.19:11-12. Osborne argues that it is not a plague, but the preparation for one, but it is best to view the seventh plague of the seals, trumpets and bowls as the final plague - the final judgment, the end of all things.

The final plague begins with a word from God on the matter; "the end has come", Phillips. Then, the cosmic rumblings in heaven, referred to in

11:19, pour out upon the earth. This leads to the shaking of the earth, a final shaking unto death of Babylon, the secular city - the end of corrupt political power (the beast from the sea) and its false ideologies (the beast from the land), Hag.2:6-7. John then alludes to the hail that fell on the Egyptians at the time of the Exodus, although this final plague is far worse. In response to all this, the children of the beast curse God rather than seek his mercy. The divine judgment on humanity, although a horror, rests on the impenitence of a humanity in rebellion against God.

Of course, judgment is not the end of everything. It is interesting how this final judgment is imaged in the pouring out of destructive hail; hail is not the last of the plagues that fell on Egypt. Bauckham suggests that the seventh plague in the Revelation links the hail that fell on Egypt (Ex.9) with the thunder and lightning theophany at Sinai (Ex.19), as well as with the destructive hail that fell on the Amorites (Josh.10:11). Together these events prepare for the deliverance of God's people and thus their participation in the kingdom of God, both in the time of the Exodus, and for us today.

Text - 16:17

The outpouring of the seventh bowl, v17-21: i] This time, the judgmental plague is poured out into the air, the fourth element of Greek science - earth, water, fire and air. Of course, John may not be thinking scientifically, but rather speaking of that element of creation which exists between earth and heaven. The judgment falls not on creation as such, but "the rebellious kingdom presided over by the satanic dragon and his beast(s)", Smalley.

επι + acc. "**into [the air]**" - [AND THE SEVENTH *angel* Poured out the bowl OF HIM] INTO, OVER [THE AIR]. John's favourite spatial preposition, here with the accusative rather than the genitive, usually with the sense "on, upon."

εκ + gen. "**[a loud voice] from [the throne]**" - [AND A GREAT VOICE CAME] OUT OF, FROM [THE TEMPLE]. Expressing source / origin. Note, in typical Greek form John is repeating the prepositional prefix of the verb **εξερχεν**, "to come out."

λεγουσα [**λεγω**] pres. part. "**saying**" - Technically the participle may be classified as adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of the voice that came from the throne, as NIV, or even adjectival, limiting "voice", "there sounded forth out of the sanctuary a powerful voice, coming from the throne, which exclaimed", Cassirer, even attendant circumstance, redundant, "there came a shout out of the sanctuary from the throne: 'It is done!'", Barclay. John's idiomatic use of this participle to introduce speech often defies a set classification; see **λεγων**, 1:17.

γεγονεν [**γινωμαι**] perf. "**it is done**" - IT HAS BECOME. The perfect is used to express the final and complete consummation of judgment, but not the consummation of all things in the realization of the new creation - at that point the

plural is used, "All is done", Rev.21:6. "It is done" surely aligns with Jesus' words "it is finished", both semantically and theologically. In the terms of realized eschatology, the cross of Christ draws the day of judgment into the *now* with the defeat of Satan, a judgment which John sees being played out in the judgments of the seals, trumpets and bowls, and yet a judgment which for us is still *not yet*. Koester does not see a connection between "it is done" and "it is finished", but Smalley, Osborne, Beale, argue for the link.

v18

ii] A cosmic theophany, v18. "The singularity and intensity of this occurrence is underlined by claiming that it is unique in the history of the world", Aune.

ὄϊος pro. "[no earthquake] like it [has ever occurred]" - [AND LIGHTNINGS AND SOUNDS AND THUNDER CAME ABOUT / OCCURRED AND A GREAT EARTHQUAKE CAME ABOUT / OCCURRED] SUCH AS [DID NOT OCCUR]. Correlative pronoun; "such as."

αφ οὗ "since" - SINCE [MAN WAS ON THE EARTH]. This construction, αφο + gen. relative pronoun, is temporal, "from which *time*" = "since (the time) when", Zerwick; "so violent that nothing like it had ever happened in human history", REB. John is alluding to Daniel 12:1.

τηλικουτος adj. "so tremendous" - SO GREAT [AN EARTHQUAKE, SO GREAT]. Comparative adjective used as a demonstrative pronoun expressing "a degree which is comparable to some other expression of degree"*, the degree here being ὄϊος, "a great earthquake such as there had never been." The degree is further emphasized by the redundant adverbial phrase οὕτω μέγας, "so great."

v19

iii] Judgment on the secular city, v19-20. Judgment finally falls on Babylon itself - the beast from the bog/sea and its philosophical friend, the beast from the land. John stays with his apocalyptic images, but Rome would not be far from his mind, nor the many associate provincial cities that promulgate Rome's corrupt ideology and persecute those who don't fit the mould of a loyal citizen. The judgement that falls on the secular city is so brutal that even nature retreats from it, or as John describes it, the islands and mountains run away and hide.

εις + acc. "[the great city split] into [three parts]" - [AND THE GREAT CITY BECAME] INTO [THREE PARTS]. The verb γινομαι, "to become", and also the verb to-be εμι, will usually take a subject nominative and a predicate nominative, but due to Semitic linguistic influence the predicate object is sometimes replaced by a prepositional phrase introduced by εις + acc., as here; "the great city became three parts."

των εθνων [ος] gen. "[the cities] of the nations [collapsed]" - [AND THE CITIES] OF THE NATIONS [FELL]. The genitive is adjectival, probably possessive, "the cities *belonging to other* nations", but Cassirer opts for a more attributive idiomatic approach, "the cities *inhabited by* the nations of the world collapsed in ruin."

ενωπιον + gen. "-" - [AND BABYLON THE GREAT WAS REMEMBERED] BEFORE [GOD]. Local, expressing space, metaphorical. "God had in mind the great Babylon", Berkeley = "God remembered Babylon."

δυνα [διδωμι] aor. inf. "**and gave**" - TO GIVE. The infinitive is adverbial, probably consecutive; "God remembered Babylon, and as a result made her drink the cup of his raging anger."

αυτη dat. pro. "**her**" - TO HER. Dative of indirect object.

του οινου [ος] gen. "[the cup] filled with the wine" - [THE CUP] OF WINE. The NIV takes the genitive as adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic / content, limiting "cup".

του θυμου [ος] gen. "**of the fury**" - OF THE ANGER [OF THE WRATH]. Osborne suggests that the genitive is adjectival, expegetic, specifying "the wine"; "God gave her the cup of wine, namely, his furious wrath." He takes the genitive της οργης, "the wrath" = "furious", as adjectival, attributive, limiting του θυμου, "the anger" = "wrath".

αυτου gen. pro. "[of] his [wrath]" - OF HIM. The genitive is usually taken as verbal, subjective; "the wrath *expressed by* him", but it can be viewed as possessive, expressing a derivative characteristic possessed by God.

v20

"Every island vanished and not a mountain was to be seen", REB.

ουχ εϋρεθησαν [εϋρισκω] aor. pas. "[the mountains] could not be found" - [AND EVERY ISLAND FLED AND MOUNTAINS] WERE NOT FOUND. In Aramaic idiom the sense is "were no more", Zerwick. On the day of judgment "islands and nations" will be brought low (cf., Zeph.2:11), and "high places" (the scene for pagan rites) levelled.

v21

iv] Judgment on the associates of the beast, v21: At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, following a theophany of thunder and lightning, there was hail. So, along with the pouring out of the seventh bowl, we again have hail, but this time μεγαλη σφοδρα, "extremely severe." "Just as the Egyptian Pharaoh refused to repent in the face of God's cosmic onslaught of hail unlike anything the Egyptians had ever before witnessed (Ex.9:13-26), so those who have

accommodated themselves to the lordship of the beast from the sea refuse to repent. Indeed, they curse God instead", Blount.

εκ + gen. "**from [the sky]**" - FROM [HEAVEN]. Source / origin.

ὡς "**[each weighing about a hundred pounds]**" - [AND A GREAT HAILSTONE = HAIL (singular; as a collective noun)], AS [WEIGHING A TALENT, COMES DOWN FROM HEAVEN]. The comparative particle may be used here to express approximation, "hail = hailstones of about a hundredweight", or possibly serving for the Hebrew predicate accusative, expressing a characteristic quality of the hail, namely its weight, "hail weighing a hundredweight (50kg; "of enormous weight", Zerwick) fell down from heaven upon the people."

επι + gen. "**[fell] on [people]**" - ON, UPON [MEN]. Local, expressing space.

εκ + gen. "**on account of**" - [AND THE MEN CURSED GOD] FROM [THE PLAGUE]. Here expressing cause, "because of the plague", as NIV.

της πληγης [η] gen. "**of hail**" - The genitive is adjectival, possibly attributive, limiting "plague", "hail plague", or better expegetetic, "because of the plague, *namely* the hail."

ὅτι "**because [the plague was so terrible]**" - THAT [THE PLAGUE OF IT IS VERY MUCH GREAT]. Introducing a causal clause explaining why the people cursed God, as NIV. "They cursed God for the hail, the epic disaster of hail", Peterson.

αυτης gen. pro. "-" - OF IT. The adjectival genitive is best viewed as verbal, subjective, "the plague *caused by* the hail", although usually not translated.

17:1-6a

The Reign of Christ, 17:1-22:5

1. The ruin of the harlot, Babylon, 17:1-19:10

i] The great harlot, Babylon

Synopsis

In a new vision, John is shown the punishment about to fall on both the Great Prostitute and the authorities who align with her adulteries. In the vision he sees a woman, dressed in magnificent clothes and adorned with jewellery, sitting on a beast with seven heads. In her hand she holds a bowl filled with her adulteries, and on her forehead she is marked with her name, "Babylon the Great."

Teaching

The kingdom of God is at hand; the idolatry of the secular city stands exposed.

Issues:

i] Context: See 1:1-8. In the battle with the beasts, 11:19-15:4, we have witnessed the struggle of the Christian community (the offspring of the woman) against the red dragon (Satan) and his associates, the beast from the sea (corrupted political power = Babylon, the secular city - antichrist), and its philosophical friend the beast from the land (corrupted ideology = the false prophet - antichrist), along with their associates (those with the mark of the beast who worship the beast). In the judgment of the seven bowls, 15:5-16:21, as with the judgment of the seven seals, 6:1-8:5, and the judgment of the seven trumpets, 8:6-11:18, we have witnessed the horror of the day of judgment, the Great Day of the Lord. John now focuses on a number of particular issues related to the Great Day of the Lord, 17:1-22:5. The fact that it is "one of the seven angels" who reveals the visions to John indicates that these visions are tied to the judgment of the seven bowls, i.e., to the day of judgment. Note that the same is so for the vision of the New Jerusalem, 21:9-22:5. Richardson suggests that John seeks now to answer three main questions: What does Babylon the Great represent? What finally happens to the unrepentant? What follows after the battle of Armageddon / the seventh plague?

These issues are resolved in two visionary blocks dealing with the two cities, Babylon, 17:1-19:10, and the city of God, 21:9-22:5. Bauckham proposes this structure, arguing that it is evidenced by linguistic parallels: 17:1-3 parallels 21:9-10, and 19:9-10 parallels 22:6-9. These linguistic markers define the two sections as 17:1-19:10, and 21:9-22:9, and are evident when the book is read aloud. Between these two blocks is a *digressio* / interlude, 19:11-21:8, dealing, in more detail, with the fall of Babylon and the transition to the New Jerusalem.

1. The ruin of the harlot Babylon, 17:1-19:10;
Interlude The demise of the Beast, 19:11-21:8;
2. The dawning of the City of God, 21:9-22:5.

John's visions focus in on two cities, the harlot of Babylon, 17:1-19:10, and the bride of the Lamb, 21:9-22:5. "Together these two sections form the climax towards which the whole book has aimed: the destruction of Babylon and her replacement by the New Jerusalem", Bauckham. The intervening transitional section, *The Interlude*, 19:11-21:8, "describes the events which intervene between the fall of Babylon and the descent of the New Jerusalem", Bauckham. Yarbro Collins argues that this section can be divided into 7 visions introduced by **καὶ εἶδον**, but the problem is there are more than seven visions - she leaves out 20:12, 21:2. Anyway, this transitional section is indeed made up of a series of visions introduced by **καὶ εἶδον**, "Then I saw"

In the first section, *The ruin of the harlot Babylon*, 17:1-19:10, John goes into a more detailed account of the day of judgment than was revealed in the judgment of the seals, trumpets and bowls, with respect to the Great Babylon. Why was the great prostitute astride the red beast (the Great Babylon, the secular city) judged, 17:1-18, and what are the consequences, 18:1-24? The great harlot is a blasphemous idolater, seductive and immoral, drunk with the blood of the saints and happy to entice the nations to join her evil, but all of it (other than those believers who heed the call to escape the city) is destined for self-destruction. The section concludes with the Hallelujah hymn of praise from the "multitude in heaven" and "the twenty-four elders."

Chapter 17 presents in two parts:

A vision, v1-6a;

The vision explained, v6b-18.

Chapter 18 presents in four parts:

The fall of Babylon is announced, v1-3;

Believers are told to escape, v4-8;

Three laments over the fall of Babylon, v9-19;

Remember and rejoice over her destruction, v20-24.

Chapter 19:1-10 - Vindication.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The great harlot, Babylon*:

The vision of the harlot, v1-18:

Introduction, v1-2;

she is astride the waters

The vision described, v3-6a;

she is astride the beast

The vision explained, v6b-18;

iv] Interpretation:

John's focus is again on the secular city, Babylon the Great, here described as a harlot who sits beside "many waters." We are told that she is in an adulterous relationship with the kings of the earth - the authority structures of the earth give homage to the ideology and power of the secular city. The water image is somewhat unclear. The preposition **ἐπι** + gen. usually means "on, upon" in the Revelation, so the dominion of the harlot is probably in mind. It is worth noting that "ancient art pictured the goddess of Rome sitting beside the Tiber River with an empire encompassing the Mediterranean Sea", Koester. For John, there was no better picture of the secular city than Rome.

In a second vision, commencing at verse 3, John gets to see another aspect of the harlot. Here she sits astride a scarlet beast with seven heads (Satan + the beasts). Interestingly, she is in the wilderness, the place where the woman and her offspring (the Christian community) found a place of safety from the red dragon (Satan). So, in a sense, she is like the Christian community, but a secular version; she is corrupted human society. Her corruption ("the filth of her adulteries") is understandable, given that her foundation is a seven headed, ten horned, monster. Obviously Satan is an integral element in this image of the secular city - it is a "composite truth", Wilcock. She may look the part, robed in royal purple (the colour of civic authority in Rome), dripping with jewels, but if you look at what she has in her bowl you will know that she is not what she seems.

The who and what of the Harlot is to be found in the name marked on her forehead, v5. A person's name tells us something about them, but her name, BABYLON THE GREAT, is somewhat of a mystery - a person can be easily fooled by such a wonderful title. Divine revelation is required to reveal a mystery and so John will go on to explain what it means, but even so, he gives us a clue: she is the whore of all whores, the earth's abomination; she is the secular city, the archetype of all evil.

In a third vision, v6a, John notes one of the main aspects of this evil woman; she is constantly carried away ("drunk") in her pursuit of those who witness to Jesus.

v] Homiletics:

Those of us who live in liberal Western democracies are fortunate to benefit from the work of the brothers and sisters who strove to ground Western civilization on the teachings of Christ. More than half the population of the World lives under the hand of totalitarian authority, or

worse, the anarchy of a failed State. Sadly, as we watch the West abandon Christ's teachings, the civilizing foundation of our society, we get a glimpse of the rise of the Whore of Babylon, and so we begin to wonder "How long, O Lord?"

Text - 17:1

The great harlot, Babylon, v1-6a: i] She sits astride the waters, v1-2. In the first two verses John alludes to the dominion of the "great prostitute"; see Interpretation above. When it comes to describing her in v3, she is presented as a courtesan, rather than a slave, or destitute girl, locked in a foul brothel; she is a woman of means who has chosen to be a companion for hire. City states were often given feminine titles and some even referred to as prostitutes, eg., Tyre and Sidon with their soft allegiances, cf., Isa.23:16-17, Nah.3:4. The prophets often denounced Israel's flirtation with other Gods by using the image of adultery, Hos.4:11-12. Of course, not far from John's thinking is Rome itself, exemplifying the great prostitute. So, John is pointing us to the secular city, Babylon; he wants us to beware of the beast.

και aor. "-" - AND [CAME]. Indicating a step in the narrative, serving instead of **δε**; "Then one of the seven angels", ESV.

εκ + gen. "[one] of [the seven angels having the seven bowls]" - The preposition serves in the place of a partitive genitive.

των εχοντων [εχω] gen. pres. part. "**who had [the seven bowls]**" - HAVING. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "angels".

μετ [μετα] + gen. "**[said] to [me]**" - [AND SPOKE] WITH [ME]. Expressing association.

λεγων [λεγω] pres. part. "-" - SAYING. Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the action of the verb "to speak"; redundant, but see **λεγων** in 1:17 for John's use of this participle to introduce direct speech.

σοι dat. pro. "**[I will show] you**" - [COME, I WILL SHOW THE JUDGMENT OF THE PROSTITUTE] TO YOU. Dative of indirect object.

της πορνης [η] gen. "**of the [great] prostitute**" - [THE JUDGMENT] OF THE PROSTITUTE [THE GREAT]. The genitive is usually classified as adjectival, verbal, objective, although the Semitic mind may conceive it as descriptive, idiomatic, "the judgment *which will soon fall on* the great harlot." The sense is the same.

της καθημενης [καθημαι] gen. pres. mid. part. "**who sits**" - THE ONE SITTING. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "harlot".

επι + gen. "**by [many waters]**" - ON [WATERS MANY]. With the genitive, John's favourite spatial preposition means "on, upon", and that is the likely sense here, so expressing dominion; see above.

v2

Organized human society has entered into a liaison with an evil "that has all the trappings of a drunken orgy", Boring.

μεθ [μετα] + gen. "**with [her]**" - WITH [WHOM]. Expressing accompaniment / association. The relative pronoun "whom" refers back to the prostitute.

της γης [η] gen. "**[kings] of the earth**" - [THE KINGS] OF THE EARTH [COMMITTED SEXUAL IMMORALITY]. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / subordination; "the kings *who rule over* the earth." If we take the "The Great Prostitute" to represent the secular city (ie., corrupted secular society, both in power [the beast from the sea] and ideology [the beast from the land]) then "the kings of the earth" represent those authorities who have yielded their allegiance to its power and ideology, although Smalley suggests that the allegiance is "to Satan and his followers" - probably the same thing!

οἱ κατοικουντες [κατοικεω] pres. part. "**the inhabitants of [the earth]**" - [AND] THE ONES DWELLING ON [THE EARTH]. The participle serves as a substantive; "people the world over", Smalley.

εκ + gen. "**with [the wine]**" - [BECAME INTOXICATED] FROM [THE WINE]. Expressing a means consisting of a source, so instrumental; "intoxicated by the wine of her fornication."

της πορνειας [α] gen. "**of [her] adulteries**" - OF THE FORNICATION, ADULTERIES, SEXUAL IMMORALITY [OF HER]. The genitive is adjectival, probably epexegetic, "*which is her adultery*", Smalley.

v3

ii] The vision described - she sits astride the beast, v3-6a. John's description of the woman astride the beast reflects Daniel 7; "the heads and the horns represent the fullness of power held by evil kingdoms who persecute God's people", Beale. The red colour of the beast aligns it/him with the red dragon, Satan. So, here we see the secular city / Babylon, in all its glory and evil, intoxicated with the persecution of God's people.

εν + dat. "**in [the Spirit]**" - [AND HE CARRIED ME AWAY INTO THE WILDERNESS] IN [THE SPIRIT]. Probably adverbial, modal, expressing manner; "he carried me away spiritually into *the* wilderness", ie., "the angel spirits John away", Blount - John is undergoing a spiritual experience entailing divine revelation. Some translations take πνευμα, as the "Spirit", the Holy Spirit, so NIV ("spirit", NRSV, ...). Osborne opts for "Spirit" and argues that "carried away εν πνευματι" is instrumental, means, "by the Spirit", whereas εν πνευματι in 1:10 and 4:2 expresses result. Beale argues that εν here expresses both means and sphere.

και ειδον "**There I saw**" - AND I SAW. A key phrase indicating a new vision.

καθήμενην [καθημαι] pres. mid. part. "[a woman] sitting" - [A WOMAN] SITTING [ON/UPON A SCARLET BEAST]. Although anarthrous (without an article), the participle is probably adjectival, attributive, limiting "woman"; "a woman who is astride a scarlet beast." Mathewson suggests it aligns with "the woman ἦν περιβελημενην in purple", "was dressed", i.e., a periphrastic construction, but we would have to assume the verb to-be. John does sometimes use a participle as if a finite verb (i.e., a periphrastic construction with an assumed verb to-be); "and I saw a woman seated on a scarlet beast."

επι + acc. "**on [a scarlet beast]**" - OVER [A SCARLET BEAST]. John's favourite spatial preposition, but here again we would expect a genitive to follow when the sense is "on, upon." Is the woman straddling the beast?

γεμιοντα [γεμω] pres. part. "**that was covered with [blasphemous names]**" - BEING FULL OF [NAMES OF BLASPHEMY]. Variants give us either γεμιον ονοματα, or γεμιοντα ονοματα, or γεμιον τα ονοματα, prompting issues of concord. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "beast". The verb "full of" usually takes a genitive direct object, but here "names" is accusative. The verb with its τα ending is plural when taken as neuter in agreement with "beast" (although "beast" is singular). As it stands, it is masculine, and as noted by Mathewson, John does often treat a neuter like "beast" as a person, here obviously Satan, i.e., *constructio ad sensum*, a construction according to sense.

βλασφημιας [α] gen. "**blasphemous**" - The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "names", although Smalley classifies it as a genitive of definition.

εχων [εχω] pres. part. "**had [seven heads]**" - HAVING [SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS]. Here again we have a classic example of John's flexible use of participles, especially "having", cf., 1:16. John is clearly referring to the "beast", but the participle is nominative masculine, not accusative neuter, as "beast". He probably intends it as a finite verb (so classified as a periphrastic construction with an assumed verb to-be), "It had seven heads and ten horns", the masculine person again indicating that the beast is not really an "it", but a "he", namely Satan, so "He had seven heads" See Beale who suggests that Daniel 7:7 may have contributed to the irregular θηριον εχων construction.

v4

"John is consistent in his presentation of the woman / city as a destructive, gluttonous force", Boring - she presents with "incredible luxury and ... moral corruption", Osborne.

ἦν περιβαβλημενη [περιβαλλω] perf. mid./pas. part. "**[the woman] was dressed in**" - [THE WOMAN] WAS HAVING BEEN CLOTHED AROUND [PURPLE (high status) AND SCARLET (luxury) AND *was* HAVING BEEN GILDED WITH GOLD AND PRECIOUS STONES AND PEARLS]. As with "having been gilded" = "adorned,

decked out", Zerwick, the participle with the imperf. verb to-be forms a periphrastic pluperfect construction; "As for the woman, she was clothed in purple and scarlet. She was adorned with gold", Cassirer. Although note Wallace who suggests it takes on the role of a predicate adjective. Note the verb χρυσοω, "to guild, adorn / cover with gold", here pleonastically adds (εν) χρυσιω, "with gold", an instrumental dative. "And she wore jewellery made of gold, precious stones, and pearls", CEV.

εχουσαν [εχω] pres. part. "**She held [a golden cup]**" - HAVING [A GOLDEN CUP IN THE HAND OF HER]. The ESV treats the participle as adverbial, modal, expressing manner, but given John's handling of this participle it is more likely serving as a finite verb, as NIV; see εχων above.

γεμον [γεμω] pres. part. "**filled with**" - BEING FILLED WITH. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "cup". "In her hand she held a golden cup which was full of the offences and impurities of her fornication."

βδελυγματων [α ατος] gen. "**abominable things**" - ABOMINATIONS, DETESTABLE THINGS. Genitive of direct object after the verb "to be full of."

και "and" - AND [THE IMPURITIES, OBSCENITIES]. Osborne suggests that the conjunction here is exegetical, "namely, the impurities of her immorality." Such would explain the accusative, rather than an expected genitive after the verb "to be full of", although both Smalley and Aune suggest that it is a Semitic construction, cf., Aune 909.

της πορνειας [α] gen. "**of [her] adulteries**" - OF THE FORNICATION [OF HER]. Source seems to be the idea conveyed by this genitive, so it may be classified as adjectival, idiomatic, "the filth *which flows from* her adulteries." From a Biblical perspective the adulteries allude to the idolatry of the woman / city, Deut.7:25, 29:16, 1King.11:5, Jer.13:27. The revelation tends to link adultery with idolatry, cf., 2:14, 20.

v5

It is possible that the name / title is a secret and so John deciphers it to mean "Babylon the Great", but it is more likely that the mysterious / cryptic name tattooed on the woman's head is actually "BABYLON THE GREAT", so Koester. In chapters 17-18 John will reveal the mystery of this title. Babylon destroyed the temple in 587BC. By acting beyond God's will she damned herself in the process. Rome, "the Great City", destroyed the restored temple in 70AD, and has similarly damned herself in the process. Both Babylon and Rome well depict corrupt political power determined to oppose God and the people of God. Note how Peter conflates the two, 1Pet.5:13. John is not trying to tell us that Babylon is Rome (or Jerusalem, the Roman church, the American government,, as some have argued), just that Babylon is a type for Rome, as it is for many other political

entities - she is the secular city, the harlot, an abomination, cf., Dan.4:30. The woman robed with the sun gives birth to Jesus and those who follow him / the offspring (ch.12), but the harlot of Babylon, on the other hand, gives birth to the children of idolatry.

γεγραμμενον [γραφο] perf. mid./pas. part. "[the name] written" - [AND ON THE FOREHEAD OF HER *was* A NAME] HAVING BEEN WRITTEN. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "name", as NIV, or even predicative, "and on her forehead was written a name", ESV, so Moffatt, Berkeley, ...; The title on her forehead was a mystery"

μυστηριον "a mystery" - It may stand in apposition to "name", but it is unclear whether "mystery" stands by itself, and is then further explained by the appositional phrase "Babylon the Great", which is again further explained by the appositional phrase "the mother of ...", or stands with "Babylon the Great" to give "Mystery Babylon the Great." It seems likely that John is saying that the title of the woman inscribed on her forehead is a mystery, it is "secret and mystical, rather than literal (and) needs to be explained", Smalley. So, we may be better off taking the participle as adjectival, attributive, limiting "name"; "she had a cryptic title inscribed on her head", Cassirer. John explains that the title indicates that she is "Babylon the Great", ie., the secular city; she "represents satanic institutions throughout history which have espoused corrupt religious, moral and economic values", Smalley.

των πορνων [η] gen. "[the mother] of prostitutes" - The genitive is adjectival, relational, although "mother of", as with "son of" is an idiomatic phrase. "Son of" = *characterized by*; Jesus is the son of righteousness = he is characterized by righteousness. Babylon is characterized by prostitution, which in the Revelation means that she whores with other gods, she is idolatrous, and worse than that she spawns other entities into idolatry. This description of "Babylon the Great" may not be part of the title on the woman's forehead, but rather John's shorthand description of her. "The cryptic name on her forehead was BABYLON THE GREAT, the whore of all whores, the earth's abomination."

και "and" - Again, the conjunction is possibly exegetical; "*She is* the mother of prostitutes, namely, the abominations of the earth." The "abominations" are, of course, idolatry, cf., Jer.13:27, 32:35, 44:22.

της γης gen. "[the abominations] of the earth" - The genitive is adjectival, possibly idiomatic / local, "which are located on" = "of all abominations on the earth", Moffatt; "every obscenity on the earth", REB; "every filthy thing on earth", CEV. Osborne suggests possessive; "the abominations *that belong to* the earthly scene."

v6a

και ειδον [όραω] "I saw" - AND I SAW. Usually indicating a step in the narrative; a new vision indicating something else John notices about the woman.

μεθουσαν [μεθωω] pres. part. "was drunk" - [THE WOMAN] BEING DRUNK. The participle serves as the complement of the object "woman"; "I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints", ESV.

εκ + gen. "with [the blood]" - FROM [THE BLOOD OF THE SAINTS AND] FROM. Expressing a means consisting of a source, so instrumental; "intoxicated by the blood of", and thus, drunk as a result of her evil; "intoxicated by the wine of her murdered opponents." The genitives "of the saints", and "of the witnesses / martyrs", is possessive; it is their blood that is spilt.

και "-" - AND [FROM THE BLOOD OF THE WITNESSES]. Smalley suggests that the conjunction here is expegetic, "intoxicated by the blood of the saints, namely the blood of the witnesses." The "saints" are the "witnesses", reminding us of what believers do. For Osborne, this is no mere title, such that during the tribulation the saints are not hiding in caves and remote places, but "engage in fearless witness throughout this period", although why does Jesus tell his disciples to flee to the mountains in the face of the abomination of desolation, Mk.13:14? Anyway, there is no doubt that the prime function of a disciple is to bear testimony to Jesus, such that "saints" are "witnesses", and that this function will cause a negative reaction in the secular city, so we are well advised to be "prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect", 1Pet.3:15.

Ιησου [ος] "to Jesus" - OF JESUS. The NIV has taken the genitive as adjectival, verbal, objective - giving testimony to Jesus - but it could be classified possessive, "the blood of Jesus' witnesses", or even descriptive, idiomatic, "the witnesses *who testify about* Jesus." Osborne argues that the objective sense is uppermost, "for it stresses the martyrdom of the saint as an outgrowth of their witness."

17:6b-18

The Reign of Christ, 17:1-22:5

1. The ruin of the harlot, Babylon, 17:1-19:10

ii] The beast, the harlot and the ten kings

Synopsis

John is left confused by the visions and so an angel, one of the seven, sets out to explain its mystery. The red beast represents the one who was, "is not" at the moment, but "will come", and when he does, those whose names have not been written in the book of life will marvel. His seven heads, like seven mountains with the woman astride them, represent seven kings - five fallen, one is, and one to come - the one to come will only be around for a little while. The ten horns represent ten kings who are yet to reign, but when they do they will wage war on the Lamb, but he will defeat them. Finally, "the waters" represent the peoples of the nations, and "the woman" represents "the great city." Tying this altogether, the angel explains that the day is coming when the red beast will set about to destroy the woman, "the great city", and "burn her with fire."

Teaching

The kingdom of God is at hand; the secular city is set to self-destruct.

Issues:

i] Context: See 17:1-6a.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The beast, the harlot and the ten kings*:

The vision of the harlot, v1-18:

Introduction, v1-2;

she is astride the waters.

The vision described, v3-6a;

she is astride the beast.

The vision explained, v6b-18:

Introduction, v6b-7;

The woman astride beast, v8-14:

The beast, v8-9a;

The seven heads, v9b-11;

The ten horns, v12-14;

The woman astride the waters, v15-18.

iv] Interpretation:

As one would expect, this passage has the capacity to stimulate our imagination, but like the parables of Jesus, the more we stray into allegory the more we leave truth behind. The format of the passage is typical of apocalyptic; John is mystified by the vision and so an angel explains its meaning - although after "the mystery" is explained, it remains a mystery!

As evident in the synopsis, each element of the vision is explained by the angel. First, there is the red beast. Like God, who was, is, and will be, the red beast is a god-like being, one who was, is, and will be in the last day, although not evident to the senses now. Even so, those who worship him (those marked with 666 = BEAST) marvel at his power. He is described as "an eighth king" due to his close association with the seven kings (the secular city, v9-11). Unlike Christ who will come from above, he will come from beneath, and will be rendered powerless in a final confrontation with Christ. All the clues are there to indicate that the red beast represents Satan, the anti-god, the motivating power of the secular city, while at the same time integral to the image as a whole. For example, for John in his day, Rome and its vassal states would be the whore herself, the whore astride the waters, astride the red beast, astride the seven hills. The whole is Babylon, the secular city, founded on the powers of darkness.

The woman, representing Babylon, the secular city (the beast from the sea, political power + the beast from the land, political ideology - the servants of Satanic power) sits astride seven hills = seven kings, v9-11. This image probably represents the pervasive authority and power of the secular city. "Kings" point in that direction, as do *ορη*, "mountains", the high places ruled by the gods (Israel met God on Mount Sinai). Manifestations of corrupt secular society come and go ("five have fallen"), and we presently experience that corruption now ("one is" - for John it was Rome), but the end is near and the final manifestation of the evil city will be but for a short time, cf., Mk.13:20.

Next we have the ten horns, v12-14. Again, we are told that they are "kings" (secular authority) and that they are "not yet", so presumably they are an extension of the last head / king, the one "not yet come." We usually identify this last manifestation of Babylon / the secular city with the antichrist. The Revelation implies that in these last days that "cut short" "for the sake of the elect", we reach a climax of evil. The fact that the one is now ten, indicates a multiplication of evil power, rule and authority.

Finally, the last element requiring explanation is "the water", v15-18. The image of the woman astride the waters represents her authority and rule over "peoples and multitudes and nations and languages." The seemingly

close bond between the woman / harlot ("the great city", the secular city) and the red beast (Satan) is nothing but a sham. The red beast hates the harlot and will ultimately bring her to ruin. Osborne suggests that the instrument Satan uses to bring down "the great city" is the very people who worship it, so the image depicts civil war, and this brought about by divine authority.

Deciphering John's apocalyptic imagery: John's eschatology is primarily realized; he repeatedly takes us to the day of judgment, the Great Day of the Lord, the *parousia*. Sometimes the aspect changes, although the view is usually from heaven, certainly the descriptions are varied (seals, trumpets, bowls, ..), but in the end, it is the same event - the day of judgment. Yet as well as the *now* of God's reign in Christ, John reveals the tribulations of the *not yet*. In these visions his perspective changes; it's as if he is in the church looking out on a world falling apart. The difficulties faced by the believers at the time of writing has probably contributed to John's perspective - the day draws near as the tribulations compound.

The players in this drama are depicted in many and varied ways, so much so it is sometimes difficult to define who or what they represent. Yet, the actual players are not hard to identify. There is God (the Father) and Jesus (the Lamb) and the children of God, believers, the Christian community (the woman and her offspring). On the opposing side we have Satan (the red dragon, probably the scarlet beast, ...) and his minions (the beast from the sea [corrupt political power], the beast from the land [corrupt ideology]. Then there is the whore (Babylon, the woman astride the waters / hills,, the antichrist), and associates (those with the mark of the beast, those who worship the beast). It is the many and varied descriptions of the minions of Satan that tend to confuse, although in the end they all represent one entity, namely, corrupt human society; "satanic institutions throughout history which have espoused corrupt religious, moral and economic values", Smalley. John had the perfect example in the Roman Empire: its emperor, governance, ideology, religion,, standing against, and at time oppressing, the Christian community.

In simple terms, the minions of Satan entail all that makes up the secular city. This entity is like a beast from the bog, put down, wounded, but back again in a different form, sometimes gentle, sometimes harsh, but always leaning toward the darkness, rather than the light. The message of the Revelation is that the days are numbered for the Whore of Babylon, so let the reader persevere in faith.

Text - 17:6b

The beast, the harlot and the ten kings, v6b-18: i] Introduction, v6b-7. John is awestruck with wonder, and so the mystery of the vision is revealed to him, cf., Dan.7. The vision is in two parts, the woman astride the waters, and the woman astride the beast. The second part of the vision is covered first, with the focus on the beast and its heads and horns.

και "-" - AND. Transitional. Probably indicating a step in the narrative; used instead of **δε**; "Astonished, I rubbed my eyes, and shook my head in wonder", cf., Peterson.

Εδωιν [**ὄραω**] aor. part. "**when I saw**" - HAVING SEEN [I MARVELLED, WONDERED A GREAT MARVEL, WONDER]. The participle is best viewed as adverbial, temporal; "I was struck with great amazement when I saw this", Cassirer.

v7

μοι dat. pro. "**to me**" - [AND THE ANGEL SAID] TO ME. Dative of indirect object.

δια τι "**why**" - BECAUSE OF WHAT = WHY [DID YOU MARVEL]? Interrogative construction. The purpose of the question is not to seek an answer, but to pave the way for an explanation of the "mystery".

σοι dat. pro. "**[I will explain] to you**" - [I WILL TELL THE MYSTERY] TO YOU. Dative of indirect object; "I will explain to you the secret meaning", Barclay. An explanation of a vision provided to the prophet by an angel is a common feature of apocalyptic literature, cf., Zech.1:7-6:15. Here the angel provides "the hidden meaning", Koester, "secret meaning", Smalley.

της γυναικος [**η κος**] gen. "**of the woman**" - As with **του θηριου**, "of the beast", the genitive is adjectival, epexegetic, limiting "mystery" by specifying it.

του βασταζοντος [**βασταζω**] gen. pres. part. "**[she] rides**" - CARRYING [HER]. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "beast"; "I will tell you the mystic meaning of the woman, and of the beast with the seven heads and the ten horns, that carries her", Berkeley.

του εχοντος [**εχω**] gen. pres. part. "**which has**" - HAVING [THE SEVEN HEADS AND THE TEN HORNS]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "beast".

v8

ii] The woman astride the beast, v8-14: a) The beast, v8. It is not possible to be 100% sure, but the **θηριον κοκκινον**, "scarlet beast", is the same character as the **δρακων μεγας πυρρος**, "enormous red dragon", here in a slightly different form. So, John probably wants us to see the beast as Satan, the demonic power of evil, although his focus will be on the heads and horns, namely, the manifestations of Satanic power and how these interrelate with the whore of Babylon. The beast

possesses godlike / Christlike characteristics, although they are a parody of the divine - he "is not", and his ascending / coming is to destruction, cf., ch. 9, Dan.7:3-26. There is no glorious *parousia* for the beast (the minions and manifestations of Satan - the antichrist is the encapsulation of them all), although his ascension to power in the last day will be admired by his adherents - whatever that's worth!

αναβαινειν [αναβαινω] pres. inf. "**will come up**" - [THE BEAST WHICH YOU SAW WAS, AND IS NOT, AND IS ABOUT] TO COME UP. The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of the verb "is about" - together they virtually serve as a finite verb in the future tense. Koester sees a possible allusion to funeral epigrams, but it more likely reflects the divine who was, is, and will be - ascending / coming to glory. Koester also sees something of the Nero myth in the language - he was, is not now, but is coming back, cf., 13:3. It is unclear how much we should push John's imagery, but it is true that Satan and his minions / manifestations (the whore of Babylon, the secular city, ... antichrist) is here one minute, and gone the next, but like Arnie, "I'll be back!" - back for destruction!!

εκ + gen. "**out of [the Abyss]**" - FROM [THE ABYSS]. Expressing source / origin; "from the bottomless pit", ESV.

υπαγει [υπαγω] pres. "**go [to its destruction]**" - [AND] GOES [INTO DESTRUCTION]. Variant **υπαγειν**, inf. exists. This aligns with the infinitive "to come up", even possibly to express purpose, but these are good reasons to change it from an indicative.

οι λατοικουντες [κατοικειω] pres. part. "**the inhabitants [of the earth]**" - THE ONES DWELLING [UPON THE EARTH WILL MARVEL, WONDER (admiration rather than astonishment)]. For John, the ones dwelling on the earth are those who carry the mark of the beast - the adherents of the beast apart from the adherents of Christ.

ων gen. pro. "**whose [names]**" - [THE NAME] OF WHOM [HAS NOT BEEN WRITTEN]. The genitive relative pronoun is possessive.

της γης [η] "**[the book] of life**" - [UPON THE BOOK] OF LIFE. The genitive is adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic; "the book *which lists all those who are gifted eternal life by the Lamb*"; "the book of life of the Lamb", 13:8.

απο + gen. "**from [the creation of the world]**" - FROM [FOUNDATION OF WORLD]. Temporal use of the preposition.

βλεποντων [βλεπω] gen. pres. part. "**when they see [the beast]**" - SEEING [THE BEAST]. Attendant circumstance participle, or adverbial, causal, although better temporal, as NIV. A nominative case would be expected, rather than a genitive. Smalley argues that it may be attracted to the genitive **ων**, but it is more likely a genitive absolute, so also Aune. Mathewson argues the opposite case.

ὅτι "because" - THAT [IT WAS, AND IS NOT, AND WILL BE PRESENT]. Introducing a causal clause explaining why the people will be amazed (with admiration) at what they see, namely What do they actually see? Osborne suggests a counterfeit resurrection of the antichrist - "the ascension of the antichrist to power", cf., 13:3, 12, 14.

v9a

ὥδε adv. "This calls for" - HERE *requires* [THE MIND]. This local adverb can be inferential, "thus", but it seems to serve as a backward referencing substantive, something like "this *beast*." The verb must be assumed, so "is" = requires; "this beast requires a mind which has wisdom", ie., the beast referred to in v8 is very dangerous and in handling him/it a believer needs to be very thoughtful / take extra care - "Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith", 1Pet.5:8-9a.

ὁ ἔχων pres. part. "with [wisdom]" - HAVING [WISDOM]. The participle is adjectival, attributive; "which has wisdom."

v9b

b) The seven heads, v9b-11. So, we have seven hills = seven kings, five in the past, one now, and one coming, with the beast itself an eighth king. John is probably saying nothing more than that corrupted secular authority will come and go, with its last manifestation before the *parousia* the worst of the lot, although only for "a little while" - an antichrist, Satan in secular garb. Of course, Rome would have shaped John's perception, as does society for us today; he could well have imagined a resurrected Nero (*Nero redivivus*) as the antichrist, the eighth king, but John doesn't say this, so it is a stretch to argue that his point is that "Roman tyranny was a temporary phenomenon about to be completed (in the seventh short-lived ruler) and would lead to the eschaton", Osborne; see also Bauckham. John's apocalyptic imagery applies to all ages and so lining up the seven kings with Roman rulers (Sweet,), or empires (Hendriksen,), is a waste of time. We are dealing with apocalyptic symbolism, so Sweet, Caird, Beasley-Murray, Mounce, Aune, Cf., Daniel 7:17, 23.

ἑπτα ὄρη "seven hills" - [THE SEVEN HEADS ARE] SEVEN MOUNTAINS. Quite a few commentators link the seven hills with the seven hills of Rome and some go on to link the seven kings with seven Roman emperors, Augustus, 30BC-AD14, through to Domitian, AD81-96. "Mountains" in Jewish literature often symbolizes kingdoms / political entities, and seven is used as a complete number, so we are again looking at a symbolic image representing the secular city - corrupt human society, political and cultural (see interpretation above).

όπου "[on which the woman sits]" - WHERE [THE WOMAN SITS ON THEM]. The clause is somewhat awkward. The local conjunction "where" is referring to the "seven hills", so indicating where the woman sits, namely, **επ**, "on / upon", the "seven hills" = **αυτων**, "them"; "the seven heads are seven mountains, on them (namely **όπου**, "where" = the seven hills) the woman is seated."

v10

και "[they are] also" - ALSO [THEY ARE SEVEN KINGS]. Adjunctive.

όταν + subj. "when [he does come]" - [THE FIVE FELL, THE ONE IS, THE OTHER DID NOT YET COME AND] WHEN [HE COMES]. Introducing an indefinite temporal clause.

μειναι [**μεινω**] aor. inf. "[he must] remain" - TO REMAIN [IS NECESSARY]. The infinitive serves as the subject of the impersonal verb "to remain, abide, continue."

ολιγον adj. "for only a little while" - LITTLE. The adjective "little" may function adverbially of space, or, as here, of time / temporal; "a short time." Again, John reminds us that the final manifestation of the secular city, the closest thing to Satan himself (the antichrist), will be but for a short time "for the sake of the elect", Matt.24:22.

v11

The imagery becomes even more complicated with the beast, who was and is not, referred to as an eighth king with, or after, the seventh king, the one "not yet come" who will remain "a little while." John seems to imply that the 8th. is an extension of the 7th. such that they are one entity, the last and most corrupt / satanic manifestation of the secular city (the antichrist). The number eight may allude to the eighth day, ie., the first day of the week, the day of Jesus' resurrection - so possibly a symbol of the beast's miraculous resurrection / *parousia* which will "deceive the nations into worshipping him as god", Osborne; see Beale.

και "- " - [AND THE BEAST WHICH WAS AND IS NOT], BOTH [HE IS THE EIGHTH] AND [FROM THE SEVENTH IS, AND TO/INTO DESTRUCTION GOES]. Here serving to form a correlative construction, "both and" The preposition **εκ**, "from", may be partitive, so "one of the eight *kings*", but source / origin seems best.

αυτος pro. "- " - HE [IS THE EIGHTH]. Emphatic use of the pronoun given the presence of **εστιν**, "he/she/it is". Again, we see a masculine personal pronoun not in concord with its antecedent, namely "beast", which is neuter. Obviously a *constructio ad sensum*, according to sense, ie., the beast is Satan, a "he".

v12

c) The ten horns, v12-14. The implication is that the ten horns are on the seventh head. They too are symbols of authority and power, as is the seventh head and its 8th extension. Together they make up the final manifestation of corrupt human society, the antichrist, set to wage war against the Lamb, a war the Lamb has already won. Some commentators have attempted to identify the ten horns with 10 separate states, or ten vassal kings under Rome (Aune), Roman governors (Moffatt), political entities who will bring about the destruction of the Roman Empire (Swete), etc...., but we are best to interpret the image as symbolic. Sure, John would have seen something of the "ten horns" in the Roman Empire, but then so do we as we witness the Christian church under the thumb of godless secular governments. Note how John develops his imagery from Daniel 7:7-24. In Daniel the horns signify kings ruling in succession, "but in Revelation the kings act as a coalition", Koester - an amalgam of evil violently opposed to the Lamb.

βασιλειαν [εως εως] "[have not yet received] a kingdom" - [AND THE TEN HORNS WHICH YOU SAW ARE TEN KINGS]. Direct object of the verb "to receive." Aune suggests that the phrase "receive a kingdom" means "become a king"; "they have not yet assumed their royal rule", Cassirer.

οἱτινες rel. pro. "**who**" - WHO [DID NOT RECEIVE A KINGDOM]. Originally qualitative, "who of such a sort that", but by the koine period just "who".

αλλα "**but**" - Adversative.

ως "[will receive authority] as [kings]" - [RECEIVE AUTHORITY] AS [KINGS]. This comparative particle is functioning adverbially here, expressing manner; "the ten horns will receive (the present tense is futuristic) authority *for* one hour, in like manner to the way a king *receives authority*." Note again the limitation set on the "horns"; it is only for "one hour" = "a moment."

μιαν ὥραν "for one hour" - ONE HOUR. The accusative is adverbial, temporal, so "for one hour", as NIV.

μετα + gen. "**along with [the beast]"** - WITH [THE BEAST]. Expressing accompaniment / association. In the same way the seventh head is an extension of the beast (ie., the eighth head), so also the ten horns are an extension of the beast; "they (the horns) not only reign with Satan, but also submit to his rule", Smalley.

v13

οὔτοι pro. "**they [have one purpose]"** - THESE [HAVE ONE INTENT, PURPOSE]. Demonstrative pronoun referring to the ten kings. These kings have one purpose; "they are of one accord in yielding their authority to the beast", Osborne. The kings are in unanimous harmony, not only with themselves, but with

the seventh head, and the one they serve, the scarlet beast. This coalition amounts to the antichrist. Their purpose is outlined in v14, namely, to make war on the Lamb, and obviously that includes his "faithful followers."

αυτων gen. pro. "**their [power]**" - [THEY GIVE THE POWER AND THE AUTHORITY] OF THEM. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, expressing a derivative characteristic, as NIV, although Mathewson suggests it is verbal, subjective, expressing the exercise of power and authority by the kings. Osborne suggests that "power and authority" is a hendiadys; "their powerful authority."

τω θηριω [ov] dat. "**to the beast**" - Dative of indirect object.

v14

The Christian community is included in this battle with the powers of darkness, although it is unclear whether it is active or passive; see Aune who argues that in the Revelation it is both. The Lamb will fight for us and overcome the red dragon and his cohort, but we will play a part in that battle. And who are those who participate with the Lamb in this cosmic war? They are the invited ones, those who have heard the call of the gospel and accepted it; they are those who are members of God's elect people, his set-apart people; they are the ones who persevere in faith. John's eschatology at this point is inaugurated, the final battle is *not yet*, but even now we "wrestle against ... the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly places", Eph.6:12. This battle is most evident in evangelism - the communication of the gospel. It is no easy task, but when we see a person come to Christ, released from the bondage of the red dragon, it is then we witness the triumph of the Lamb.

ουτοι pro. "**they**" - THESE. Demonstrative pronoun, referring back to the ten kings.

μετα + gen. "**[will wage war] against [the Lamb]**" - [WILL MAKE WAR] WITH [THE LAMB AND THE LAMB WILL CONQUER THEM]. One engages in battle "with" an enemy, such that the preposition expresses accompaniment / association, but expressed in English as "against", or "make war on the Lamb", ESV.

οτι "**because**" - Introducing a causal clause explaining why the Lamb will conquer the kings.

κυριων [ος] gen. "**[he is Lord] of lords**" - [HE IS LORD] OF LORDS [AND KING OF KINGS]. As with "of kings", the genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / subordination; "Lord *over* lords, and king *over* kings."

οι "**[and with him]**" - THE ONES [WITH HIM]. The article serves as a nominalizer, turning the prepositional phrase "with him" into a substantive, "those with him", ESV.

κλητοι adj. "**will be called]**" - *are* CALLED, INVITED [AND CHOSEN, ELECTED AND FAITHFUL, TRUSTWORTHY]. Predicate adjective. These three key words are

variously interpreted depending on a person's theological perspective. Those who lean toward a Calvinist position take "called" and "chosen" as elements of divine predestination whereby a person is incorporated into Christ's community by an act of God's sovereign will. Those less inclined to a hard-line Reformed position view "called" in the terms of "invited", and "chosen" in the sense of incorporated into God's elect people by grace through faith in Christ / faithfulness of Christ. "Faithful" may similarly be understood in a number of ways, but in the Revelation John constantly calls for the perseverance of faith, of conquering in the face of difficult times, of remaining true to Christ, of persevering in faith; "sharing the Lamb's battle and victory are those who are called and chosen and loyal", Barclay.

v15

iii] The woman astride the waters, v15-18. We are now given the interpretation for "the waters" (note some commentators think such an obvious interpretation is a gloss - an insertion into the text). We have learnt that the woman, the whore, is the whore of Babylon, and with her associate beasts etc., she represents the secular city, and now we learn that "the waters" represent the inhabitants of the city, the inhabitants of the world. John has already used this title for humanity, usually unbelieving humanity, but sometimes the people of God, cf., 7:9. It's not overly clear whether John has in mind unbelieving humanity here, or whether he is including those "in the world but not of the world", i.e., believers - so "the peoples under Babylon's control", Koester, "subjects of the Babylonian king", Beale, cf., Daniel. So, the secular world, under the authority of the whore, represents "the waters". In one sense the Christian community is not under that authority, but in another sense, is (unhappily) under that authority. Boring thinks that John has in mind unbelievers because the whore (for Boring that = Rome) not only rules over the people, but has "engineered an idolatrous relationship with them *and* has employed them in its war against the Lamb."

καὶ "then" - AND. Again, this conjunction is used to indicate a step in the narrative.

μοι dat. pro. "[the angel said] to me" - [THE ANGEL SAYS (historic present)] TO ME. Dative of indirect object.

οὗ adv. "where [the prostitute sits]" - [THE WATERS WHICH YOU SAW] WHERE [THE PROSTITUTE SITS, ARE PEOPLES AND CROWDS AND NATIONS AND TONGUES]. This genitive possessive pronoun is used as a local adverb; "who" = "where". Note the unusual placement of the verb to-be εἰσιν, "are", between the pairs "peoples and crowds" and "nations and tongues". Plummer DDG suggests it is for euphonic reasons, i.e., pleasing to the ear when read aloud.

v16

"John's most vivid symbol of the self-destructive power of evil", Caird, cf., 6:1-8 - "everyone's sword will be against his brother", Ezk.38:21. John seems to draw on Ezekiel 23:25-29, a passage which addresses the destruction of apostate Jerusalem, a destruction realized in the invasion of the Babylonians. Note how the imagery of the ruin of the secular city is like that of Jezebel whose dead body was eaten by dogs.

οὗτοι pro. "**they**" - [AND THE TEN HORNS WHICH YOU SAW AND THE BEAST], THESE. This demonstrative personal pronoun is resumptive, referring to "the beast and the ten horns." Again, John defies concord with a masculine personal pronoun whose antecedent is neuter. Corrupt political power is at present in the hands of humans, certainly at John's point of time, males (this may not be the case if robotic artificial intelligence gets loose!!!).

ηρημωμενην [ηρημω] perf. mid./pas. part. "[**they will bring her**] to ruin" - [THEY WILL HATE THE PROSTITUTE AND THEY WILL MAKE HER] HAVING BEEN MADE DESOLATE. The participle serves as the complement, along with "naked", of the object "her" in a double accusative construction; "they will make her desolate and naked." Corrupt political power is self-destructive, turning in on itself to become desolate, naked and devoured by fire. Satan (the powers of darkness) destroys the very thing he creates.

εν + dat. "[**burn her**] with [**fire**]" - [AND NAKED AND THEY WILL EAT THE FLESH OF HER AND WILL CONSUME HER] IN [FIRE]. Instrumental use of the preposition, "burn her up by fire"; "they will devour her flesh and burn her up", REB.

v17

The self-destructive forces unleashed within the powers of darkness are all "under the sovereign control of God", Osborne.

γαρ "**for**" - Introducing a causal clause explaining why the "beast" and "horns" turn on the "prostitute", namely, "because God has prompted them to fulfill what was in origin his judgmental purpose", Smalley.

ποιησαι [ποιεω] aor. inf. "**to accomplish**" - [GOD GAVE] TO DO [THE PURPOSE OF HIM INTO THE HEARTS OF THEM, AND TO DO ONE MIND, AND TO GIVE THE KINGDOM OF THEM TO THE BEAST]. The infinitive, as with the following infinitives, **ποιησαι**, "to do", and **δουναι**, "to give", serves as a substantive, object of the verb "to give." They may be classified as introducing dependent statements of cause expressing what God "gave" / caused to happen. The presence of **και** before the second and third infinitival construction coordinates all three, although Smalley is surely right when he suggests that the second and third further specify

the first - "the first clause is general, whereas the second and third are more specific", Smalley. God fulfills his sovereign will by giving (putting) the will to do (fulfill / carry out) the divine intent / purpose in their hearts (Semitic idiom), ie., to do (make) *of* one mind, and to give (surrender), ie., surrender political authority. The **αυτων**, "them", is obviously the horns / kings.

τω θηριω [ων] dat. "**to the beast**" - Dative of indirect object.

αχρι + fut. "**until**" - Introducing a temporal clause expressing time up to a point. We would have expected **αχρι** + a subjunctive, and in some manuscripts the verb "to fulfill" is subjunctive, but John often uses a future tense in the place of a subjunctive.

του θεου [ος] gen. "**God's [words]**" - [THE WORDS] OF GOD [WILL BE FULFILLED, COMPLETED]. The genitive may be expressing possession, or action (verbal, subjective; "the words *proclaimed by* God"), or source / origin, "from God."

v18

As if in an allegory, John continues to identify the players in his vision. The woman, the whore, Babylon, represents "the great city", the secular city, 17:5. It is very unlikely that she is actually Rome, so Boring, Aune, ..., nor even Jerusalem, so Barker, but certainly for John Rome ("the greatest of cities and the master of the world", Koester) is like the woman.

η εχουσα [εχω] pres. part. "**[the great city] that rules**" - [AND THE WOMAN WHOM YOU SAW IS THE GREAT CITY] THE ONE HAVING [A KINGDOM]. The participle may be viewed as a substantive standing in apposition to "great city", or adjectival, attributive, as NIV. "The woman in your vision represents a great State, the State that tyrannizes the rulers of the earth."

επι + gen. "**over**" - For the sense "over" we would expect + acc., but John continues to stretch us with his favourite spatial preposition.

της γης [η] gen. "**[the kings] of the earth**" - The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / subordination; "the kings *who rule over* the earth."

18:1-8

The Reign of Christ, 17:1-22:5

1. The ruin of the harlot, Babylon, 17:1-19:10

iii] The judgment of Babylon

Synopsis

In a new vision, an angel comes down from heaven and announces the fall of Babylon the Great - "she has become a dwelling for demons and a haunt for every impure spirit." John then hears a voice from heaven calling out to the people of God telling them to "come out" of Babylon so as to escape the horror about to fall on the city. She thinks that peace and luxury are her possession, but her portion is "death, mourning and famine."

Teaching

The kingdom of God is at hand; the secular city is set to self-destruct, so now is the time to escape.

Issues:

i] Context: See 17:1-6a.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The judgment of Babylon:*

The fall of Babylon is announced, v1-3;

A heavenly announcement to the citizens, v4-8:

Believers are told to escape while there is still time, v4;

The ground for judgment, v5;

"her sins are piled up to heaven."

A divine pronouncement of judgment, v6-8;

an eye for an eye.

iv] Interpretation:

In this new vision, John sees an angel with **εξουσιαν μεγαλην**, "great authority", an authority presumably in accord with the importance of his announcement. The angel's announcement that Babylon the Great is **επεσεν**, "fallen" provides the reason for her fall, namely, her excessive wealth - "the maddening wine of her adulteries", v3.

John then hears a voice from heaven, v4. John seems to use this terminology for a word from the Lord himself. This word begins with an instruction to the people of God; "come out of her, my people." It is interesting how the paradigm of "the abomination of desolation", as it was

played out in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, realized Jesus' instruction to "flee", Matt.24:16. According to tradition, the Christian community left Jerusalem and settled in Pella prior to the city's destruction. From the perspective of realized eschatology (the *now* of judgment), there is a strong belief that believers will be aware of the final tribulation and be able to extract themselves from the worst of its troubles prior to the final judgment. Of course, we are well aware of those, over the years, who have misread the signs and this because "you know neither the day nor the hour", Matt.25:13. From the perspective of inaugurated eschatology (the *not yet* of judgment), commentators are inclined to interpret the instruction to "come out" in ethical terms, ie., have nothing to do with Babylon's sins.

The voice from heaven that calls for the judgment of Babylon (the secular city), establishes the basis for that call ("her sins are piled up to heaven"), and then explains something of the coming judgment - for her it is **διπλοῦν**, "doubled". "Doubled" may not mean double the trouble, but simply an equality of trouble - the trouble she causes = the trouble that comes upon her, ie., an eye for an eye, *lex talionis*, "the law of retribution." This way of understanding what John means is supported by v7a - "give her as much torment and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself." The actual sin of Babylon is probably to be found in v7b. Richardson calls it "overweening pride the assumption that she will never be judged." For thinking that she survives independent of "the Lord God who judges", she will face inevitable "death, mourning and famine", v8.

Many commentators take Babylon to mean Rome in this passage, cf., Boring, Osborne, ... There is no question that Babylon serves as a paradigm for Rome, but also for every other godless secular city, state, society, even Jerusalem in 70AD. Callahan, in *Apocalypse as Critique of Political Economy*, HBT, 1999, makes the point that chapter 18 serves as "a critique in apocalyptic idiom of the political economy of Rome", but not just Rome!

Note the OT allusions in this passage, drawing on the words of the prophets with respect to God's judgment on historic Babylon, Isaiah 13, 14, 47, Jeremiah 50, 51, and Habakkuk 2. Also, Ezekiel 27 and 28 focused on Tyre, another example of a city state draped in the harlot's finery, the secular city, "humanist society", Wilcock.

Text - 18:1

The judgment of Babylon, v1-8: i] The fall of Babylon is announced, v1-3. In John's next vision he sees "another" angel announce the "fall" of Babylon, now a haunt for demons. The angelic speech has timing difficulties, with a mingling of the past, present and future. Ressiguie untangles the time issue by suggesting that

v1-3 is spoken immediately after the fall of Babylon, v4-8 before the fall of Babylon, and v9-20 after the fall of Babylon. Mathewson suggests that v2-3 is a summary of the fall of Babylon (past time), v4-8 is hortatory (present time), and v9-20 describes the effects of the fall (future time). So, the aorist **επεσεν**, "it is fallen", which primarily expresses perfective aspect (punctiliar action), is probably past referencing (note Smalley who argues that it is future referencing). Of course, when dealing with divine beings who function outside the normal constraints of time (like Dr. Who!), past, present and future are one in the same.

μετα + acc. "**After [this]**" - AFTER [THIS I SAW ANOTHER ANGEL]. Temporal use of the preposition. With **ειδον**, "I saw", it serves to introduce a step in the narrative. Presumably the angel is not one of those who poured out the seven plagues; he is "another" angel. He radiates the divine light, although that doesn't mean he is Christ, contra Beale.

καταβαινοντα [**καταβαινω**] pres. part. "**coming down**" - The participle serves as the complement of the direct object "angel" in a double accusative construction.

εκ + gen. "**from [heaven]**" - Expressing source / origin.

εχοντα [**εχω**] pres. part. "**he had**" - HAVING. This accusative participle stands in concord / agreement with "angel" and so may be treated as adjectival, attributive; "another angel who had great authority." The NIV has opted to treat it as a finite verb; cf., 1:16.

εκ + gen. "**[illuminated] by [his splendour]**" - [AND THE EARTH WAS ILLUMINATED] FROM [THE GLORY OF HIM]. Here expressing means, "by"; a means consisting of a source.

v2

εν + dat. "**with [a mighty voice]**" - [AND HE CALLED OUT] IN [A STRONG VOICE]. Instrumental, expressing means, as NIV.

λεγων [**λεγω**] pres. part. "-" - SAYING. Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the verb "to call out"; redundant.

επεσεν [**πιπτω**] aor. "**Fallen**" - [BABYLON THE GREAT] FELL, FELL. Cf., Isaiah 21:9. As Koester notes, traits of Babylon can be seen in imperial Rome, but so also every other godless city state, "but even the most powerful city is doomed to fall." See above.

δαιμονιων [**ον**] gen. "**[a dwelling] for [demons]**" - [AND BECOME A HABITATION] OF [DEMONS]. The genitive is probably best viewed as adjectival, idiomatic / local; "a house ("resort", Phillips; "haunt", Barclay) *where* demons *dwell*." Again, John draws on the prophets' description of ruined Babylon, cf., Isaiah 13:21-22. This is what will happen to the faithless secular society.

παντος πνευματος ακαθαρτου gen. "[a haunt] of every impure spirit" - [A PRISON] OF EVERY UNCLEAN SPIRIT [AND A PRISON OF EVERY UNCLEAN BIRD, AND A PRISON OF EVERY UNCLEAN BEAST]. This genitive construction, as with the series that follows, may again be treated as adjectival, idiomatic / local, "a prison (space = ruined place, although Osborne prefers "prison house") *where* every impure spirit *lives*, and", although Mathewson suggests that they are verbal, objective, as NIV. The word "prison" basically means "enclosed space", so a space inhabited by impure spirits, unclean birds and detestable beasts; a devastated desolate place (at the time it was believed that evil spirits inhabited such places). "The haunt of every unclean spirit, the haunt of every unclean and loathsome bird", Barclay - note that Barclay omits "a prison of every unclean beast", words not found in some manuscripts, but a threefold repetition would be expected.

μειστημενου [μισεω] gen. perf. mid./pas. part. "detestable [animal]" - [A PRISON OF EVERY UNCLEAN AND] HAVING BECOME HATED [BEAST]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "beast", as NIV.

v3

ὅτι "for" - BECAUSE. Introducing a causal clause explaining why Babylon has become a haunt for evil spirits.

εκ + gen. "-" - [ALL THE NATIONS HAVE DRUNK] FROM [THE WINE]. Here expressing source / origin, "from"; "all the nations have drunk from the heady wine of her fornication", Cassirer.

του θυμου [ος] gen. "[the] maddening [wine of her adulteries]" - OF THE ANGER / INTENSE DESIRE [OF THE SEXUAL IMMORALITY / FORNICATION OF HER]. As with "of the sexual immorality / fornication", the genitive is adjectival, epexegetic, specifying "the wine", so Smalley, but note how the NIV (as Cassirer above) has taken it as attributive, with the second as epexegetic. Aune translates the three genitives together as "the wine that is her immoral passion", ie., the first, "of the intense desire / passion", is epexegetic, with the second, "of the fornication / immorality", attributive, limiting the first, with the third, "of her", probably possessive (Mathewson opts for verbal, subjective). It is always difficult unravelling a series of genitives, but as Mathewson notes, together they serve to give prominence to the reason for Babylon's fall, and this is where their importance lies. Here the point is that Babylon has infected others with her evil. The secular city chases after the gods of humanism, drawing others into her quest, while casting aside the one God who creates and sustains the universe.

της γης [η] gen. "[the kings] of the earth" - [AND THE KINGS] OF THE EARTH. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / subordination; "the kings *who rule over* the earth."

μετα + gen. "**with [her]**" - [COMMITTED ADULTERY] WITH [HER]. Expressing accompaniment / association. As already noted in the Revelation, the image of fornication is more a symbol of religious apostasy than "unrestrained debauchery", Smith, or for-profit commercialism, so Beale. None-the-less, unrestrained sex and greed are commonly evident in a society which has chosen to ignore the revealed will of God.

της γης [η] gen. "**[the merchants] of the earth**" - The genitive is adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic; "the merchants *who trade around* the globe."

εκ + gen. "**from**" - [BECOME RICH] FROM [THE POWER]. Expressing source / origin, but possibly a means consisting of a source, so instrumental, "by", or possibly even cause, "because of."

του στερηνους [ος] gen. "**[her] excessive [luxuries]**" - OF SENSUALITY [OF HER]. The sense here is that Babylon grew rich from **της δυναμεως**, "the power (Heb. "wealth / resources")" generated by lucrative trade. Again, the genitive **αυτης**, "her", is probably possessive, but the genitive **του στερηνους** is unclear. Meanings such as "luxury, insolence, sensuality, arrogance, self-indulgence," are offered. The NIV, also Aune, opts for "excessive luxury", i.e., the genitive is adjectival, attributed. Yet, it is probably adjectival, attributive, limiting the power exercised by the merchants in their trading, a trade which has made them rich and left others poor; "the merchants grew rich from the corrupt power of her." "The entrepreneurs enriched themselves by the wonton misuse of her (Babylon, the secular city) power and authority."

v4

ii] A heavenly announcement to the citizens, v4-8. a) Escape while there is still time. The divine announcement begins with an instruction to come out from the whore of Babylon, the secular city. Two reasons are provided in support of the call, namely, the danger of syncretism and the inevitability of judgment. As already discussed in the Interpretation, the application of this instruction is somewhat fraught. It comes with a long history of God's dealings with Israel - "go out from Babylon", Isa.48:20, "flee from Babylon", Jer.50:8, cf., Jer.51:6, 45. Commentators reject a literal interpretation, although when the secular city implodes, an escape to the mountains may not be an unwise choice, cf., Mk.13. Smalley thinks that the call to "come out" "provides a warning for wavering believers, that they should not participate in systemic and idolatrous compromise. The call can also act as an encouragement to the saints who have avoided such behaviour, that they continue in their faith and faithfulness", so also Beale. So, the usual approach to "come out" is ethical; "Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of it, purify yourselves", Isa.52:11.

και "**then**" - AND. Indicating a step in the narrative; used instead of **δε**.

λεγουσαν [λεγω] pres. part. "say" - [I HEARD ANOTHER VOICE FROM HEAVEN] SAYING. The participle may be classified as attendant circumstance; adverbial, modal; or as an object complement. John will often use the participle "saying" to introduce speech; see λεγων, 1:17.

εξ [εκ] + gen. "[come out] of [her]" - [COME OUT OF] FROM [HER, MY PEOPLE]. Expressing separation, "away from." A typical stylistic use of the preposition following a verb with the same prepositional prefix; εξελθατε εξ. "Come out from her, O my people", Phillips.

ινα μη + subj. "so that [you will] not [share]" - THAT NOT = LEST [YOU MAY PARTICIPATE IN THE SINS OF HER]. Introducing a negated purpose clause; "so as not to be led to make common cause with her in her sins", Cassirer.

ινα μη + subj. "so that [you will] not [receive]" - [AND] THAT NOT = LEST [YOU MAY RECEIVE]. Again, introducing a negated purpose clause.

εκ + gen. "any of [her plagues]" - FROM = some OF [THE PLAGUES OF HER]. The preposition is usually taken here to serve as a partitive genitive, although it is unusual for a prepositional construction like "from her plagues" to be placed before the hina clause. Smalley, Osborne, Aune, Mathewson, ... argue that it is probably down to John trying to create a chiasmic structure:

so that you do not share
in her sins
and from her plagues
that you may not endure

So, the intended purpose of God's instruction that the people separate from Babylon is that they will not find themselves sucked into her sins, "partake in her sins", and second, so that they will escape the coming judgment, "in order that you may not receive her plagues", cf., Jer.51:45b.

v5

b) The ground for judgment, v5. Babylon's exceeding transgressions. "When God remembers injustice, he acts in judgment", Koester, cf., Jer.14:10.

οτι "for" - BECAUSE. Introducing a causal clause explaining why believers should "come out of" Babylon; "come out in order that ... you may not participate in her sins, because her sins are piled as high as heaven."

αυτης gen. pro. "her [sins]" - [THE SINS] OF HER [WERE STUCK TOGETHER]. The genitive is possessive, emphatic by position, ie., placed before the noun "sins".

αχρι + gen. "up to [heaven]" - Spatial use of the preposition; "up to, as far as." The rhetorical hyperbole expresses the exceeding nature of Babylon's transgressions; they pile up to the gates of heaven

αυτης gen. pro. "**her [crimes]**" - [AND GOD REMEMBERED THE UNRIGHTEOUSNESS] OF HER. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, indicating the sin / unrighteousness which she personally must answer for, although it may also be classified as verbal, subjective, where the focus is on her doing sin / unrighteousness.

v6

c) A divine pronouncement of judgment, v6-8. The angel continues his address and now calls for divine judgment on Babylon / the secular city. The problem we face in these verses is the use of the second person; "you give back / render to her even as she rendered." The most likely sense is that we have here a divine instruction to God's avenging angels, so Smalley, cf., Rev.16. There are, of course, other possibilities: Blount argues that John is reflecting on Jeremiah 51:9 - God has remembered Babylon's transgressions, "and now, so will the rest of creation", cf., 16:19; Thomas argues that it is a word to the ten kings who will destroy Babylon, cf., 17:16; Beale thinks it is a call on God to act in judgment; Koester argues that the "you" are the readers, believers, who bring down Babylon "by pronouncing divine judgment" on her; Aune argues that it is a general call on believers to become divine agents of the righteous judgment of the wicked.

I am old enough to remember the church acting as *the women's police* in society, and now I watch as we ourselves are condemned by that same society for our failure to protect children under our care, or even in more practical terms, to preserve for posterity church buildings given into our charge by the local community - these days we sell up our branch churches and grab the money! The least impressive of the list of possibilities above is the idea that the established church should busy itself with *speck removal*.

αυτη dat. pro. "**[give back] to her**" - [GIVE, GIVE BACK, PAY, RENDER AS ALSO SHE RENDERED] TO HER. Dative of indirect object.

ως "**as [she has given]**" - The comparative here is probably used to introduce a concrete example, technically a Heb. predicate accusative; "render to her what she rendered to others", Moffatt; "in her own coin", REB.

και "- " - and. The first **και** is probably adjunctive, "also". This one may be ascensive, "even double", but it may well be epexegetic, introducing an explanation of "to give back", "that is"

κατα + acc. "**[pay her back double] for [what she has done]**" - [DOUBLE THE DOUBLE = REPAY EQUAL] ACCORDING TO [THE WORKS OF HER]. Expressing a standard; "in accordance with, corresponding to." See Interpretation above for "double" taking the sense "equivalent, duplicate, repeat", so reinforcing the Biblical idea of an eye for an eye; "repay Babylon the equivalent of what she has done", Smalley.

εν + dat. "-" - [MIX A DOUBLE = EQUAL *draught*] IN [THE CUP WHICH SHE MIXED]. Local, expressing space; metaphorical. Note that the dative relative pronoun **ὧ**, "which", has attracted to its dative antecedent, "cup".

αυτη dat. "-" - TO HER. Dative of interest, disadvantage; "in the cup she mixed, mix an equal portion for her." On the basis of *lex talionis*, the law of retribution, since Babylon has piled up her sin to the gates of heaven, God will pay her back in kind.

v7

ὅσα τοσουτον "[give her] as much [.....] as [..... she gave herself]" - TO THE DEGREE THAT [SHE GLORIFIED HERSELF AND LIVED IN LUXURY] TO THE SAME DEGREE [GIVE TORMENT AND GRIEF TO HER]. Correlative construction of degree, cf., BAGD 586 / BDAG 729.3 Note that the personal pronoun **αυτην**, "her", serves as a reflective, "herself", while the dative personal pronoun **αυτη**, "to her", serves as a dative of direct object for the verb "to give." The implication of Babylon's luxurious living is that "she has brought grief to others" and as a consequence "she receives the same measure of pain and grief", Koester. "To the extent that she has taken pride in herself, that she has played the wonton, she is to have torment and wretchedness inflicted upon her", Cassirer.

ὅτι "-" - BECAUSE. Introducing a causal clause explaining why "you" should "give her torment and grief", namely, "because" "she has glorified herself rather than God", Osborne. Those with such hubris in the face of God will come to naught, Dan.5:20, Lk.14:11.

εν + dat. "**in [her heart]**" - IN [THE HEART OF HER SHE SAYS]. Local, expressing space; metaphorical.

ὅτι "-" - THAT. Introducing a dependent statement of indirect speech expressing what she says in her heart.

ου μη + subj. "**[I will] never [mourn]**" - [I SIT A QUEEN AND A WIDOW I AM NOT, AND GRIEF] NOT NOT = NEVER [MAY = WILL I SEE]. Subjunctive of emphatic negation. John seems to allude to Isaiah 47:8 where the harlot city suffers what she thinks she cannot suffer. "I am a queen on a throne! I am no widow forlorn! Sorrow will never touch me", Barclay.

v8

δια τουτο "**therefore**" - BECAUSE OF THIS. This causal construction is inferential, as NIV; "therefore on a single day her plagues will be upon her", Berkeley. Given the presumptuous claims made by the hoar of Babylon / the secular city, v7, therefore what she claims will never happen, happens.

εν + dat. "**in [one day]**" - IN [ONE DAY WILL COME THE PLAGUES]. Temporal use of the preposition. Describing destruction that is swift and sudden.

αυτης gen. pro. "**her**" - OF HER. The genitive is adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic; "therefore the plagues *which she has brought on herself* will come in a single day."

εν + dat. "**[she will be consumed] by [fire]**" - [DEATH AND GRIEF AND FAMINE, AND] IN [FIRE SHE WILL BE BURNED UP]. The preposition is instrumental, expressing means, "by / with fire", as NIV. The description well describes what happens to a city set upon by an enemy. In a prolonged siege, famine, plague, disease, death and mourning are all part of the package, and then in the final assault, the city is burned to the ground. All this will occur in a single day.

ὅτι "**for**" - BECAUSE. Introducing a causal clause explaining why in one day Babylon will be destroyed, namely, "because" the Lord God is mighty.

ισχυρος κυριος ὁ θεος "**mighty is the Lord God**" - MIGHTY IS LORD THE GOD. If we take the order as in the Gk., as NIV, then "mighty" is the nominative subject of an assumed verb to be, "Lord" is the predicate nominative, and "God" stands in apposition to "Lord". Other arrangements are possible; "the Lord God who has condemned her is mighty indeed", Cassirer.

ὁ κρινας [κρινω] aor. part. "**who judges [her]**" - THE ONE HAVING JUDGED [HER]. As in the NIV, the participle is best treated as adjectival, attributive, limiting "God".

18:9-19

The Reign of Christ, 17:1-22:5

1. The ruin of the harlot, Babylon, 17:1-19:10

iv] The three woes - a lament for Babylon

Synopsis

John's vision continues with the voice from heaven describing the world's response to the fall of Babylon. The kings of the earth, the merchants and every sea captain will cry out in mourning.

Teaching

Those dependent on the material wealth of the secular city can only but mourn.

Issues:

i] Context: See 17:1-6a.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The three laments for the fall of Babylon the Great:*

The lament of the kings of the earth, v9-10;

The lament of the merchants, v11-17a;

The lament of all the sea captains, v17b-19.

iv] Interpretation:

The *ἄλλην φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ*, "other voice from heaven", now describes the sorrow expressed by those who have long enjoyed the fruits of their partnership with Babylon the Great, or as John would describe it, their adulterous liaison with the whore of Babylon. As already noted, "the voice" may be "the voice of another angel from heaven", rather than "another voice from heaven", but however we read John's intended sense, the words are best taken as a divine announcement from the throne of God, possibly from Christ himself, if we follow Blount.

The past / present aorist (cf., 18:1) of the announcement now moves to the future tense as "the voice" describes the response of Babylon's partners to her fall; "they will weep." John's language reflects Ezekiel 27-28. Ezekiel's words were directed to Tyre, a wealthy city state on the Mediterranean coast of Palestine. Like Babylon, Sodom, etc., she possessed the harlot's finery, and was well able to seduce the nations.

First we have the "kings of the earth" who mourn the loss of Babylon's power and thus their opportunity to enjoy its fruits. Then we have the

"merchants of the earth" who similarly mourn the fall of Babylon and the loss of her wealth. Who now is going to buy all their goods? Finally, we have "every sea captain" who, like the others, mourns the fall of Babylon. They are left with no one to pay for transportation and so they have no way to get rich.

Exposed is Babylon, the secular city. She is nothing but a political force, bloated by wealth and luxury, co-opting others to share her fat of plenty, accumulated by exploiting human misery, eg., slavery, v13b - in Babylon, the rich get richer and the poor get nothing. Here is materialism in all its darkness, seducing humanity with the vanity of things. "This point ... seems well understood by Muslims in their suspicion of the West, but frequently lost on Christians in spite of the warnings in Mark 4:18-19, etc.", Richardson.

Text - 18:9

The three woes - a lament for Babylon, v9-19: i] The lament of the kings of the earth, v9-10. "Kings" is used in a general sense for the ruling class - the class of leaders who consort with the secular city in self-serving commercial ties and in advantageous political associations. Of course, these advantages are ephemeral in the face of divine judgment. In a more literal sense, Rome allowed the leaders of vassal states to call themselves kings, and so John may be drawing on Roman polity, but he is more likely drawing on prophetic imagery, cf., Isa.23, Ezk.26-27.

και "when" - AND. Transitional. Introducing a step in the narrative.

της γης [η] "[the kings] of the earth" - [THE KINGS] OF THE EARTH [WILL WEEP AND WAIL OVER HER]. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / subordination; "the kings *who rule over* the earth." Babylon's allies bewail her fall, Jer.51:8.

οι πορνευσαντες [προνευω] aor. part. "who committed adultery" - THE ONES [WITH HER HAVING COMMITTED ADULTERY AND HAVING LIVED IN SENSUALITY]. As with "having lived in sensuality", the participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "kings"; "the kings who were lewd and wanton with her", Berkeley.

μετ [μετα] + gen. "with [her]" - Expressing accompaniment / association, as NIV.

οταν + subj. "[see]" - WHEN [THEY SEE]. Introducing an indefinite temporal clause, "whenever", translated definitely; "as they watch the smoke of her burning", Moffatt.

της πυρωσεως [ις εως] gen. "of [her] burning" - [THE SMOKE] OF THE BURNING [OF HER]. The genitive is adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic / source, "the smoke *that comes from* her burning."

v10

δια + acc. "-" - [HAVING STOOD FROM FAR OFF] BECAUSE OF. Causal use of the preposition; "because of, on account of."

του βασανισμού [ος] gen. "[**terrified at her**] torment" - [THE FEAR] OF THE TORMENT, TORTURE [OF HER]. Smalley, Beale, Osborne, Mathewson, ... classify the genitive as adjectival, verbal, objective; "for horror at her torment", Cassirer. Osborne takes the gen. pro. "her" as a genitive of accompaniment, so "they were afraid of being tormented with her." Subjective is also possible, "the fear *produced by* her torture; "her sufferings will frighten them", CEV. Another possibility is exegetical - the kings will be filled with fear, namely, of getting caught up in the sufferings about to be inflicted upon Babylon, sufferings they certainly will not want to share, which is why they will stand far off.

ἑστηκοτες [ἴστημι] perf. part. "**they will stand**" - HAVING STOOD. The function of this participle in the sentence is somewhat awkward such that most translations use it in a new sentence, often as a finite verb, as NIV. It may be adverbial, temporal, modifying the main verbs "weep" and "wail", v9 (although Beale simply classifies it as a temporal modifier of "weep" and "wail". Osborne, on the other hand, classifies it as attendant on the temporal clause, ie., "they weep at the torment, but stand far off" - they feel sorry, but are not going to get involved); "the kings of the earth who committed fornication with her and lived in luxury, shall weep and wail over her, when they see the smoke of her burning, while standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying ..." Given that the participle stands in agreement with **οἱ βασιλεις**, "the kings", v9, it may be viewed as adjectival, attributive, limiting "kings" by description; "the kings of the earth who committed adultery who stand far off in fear of her (Babylon's) torture and who say" Those authorities who have gained from Babylon's power will stand off at a distance and mourn at her fall.

απο μακροθεν "**far off**" - FROM FROM AFAR, FAR OFF. The redundant use of the preposition "from" with the adverb "from afar" is stylistic.

λεγοντες [λεγ] pres. part. "**and cry**" - SAYING. We could classify this participle as adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of the weeping and wailing, or adjectival, attributive, further limiting / modifying "kings", as for "having stood" above, but note how John tends to introduce speech in a vision with the participle "saying", cf., **λεγων**, 1:17.

ὅτι "-" - [Woe, Woe, THE GREAT CITY, BABYLON THE STRONG CITY] BECAUSE. Introducing a causal clause explaining why it is "Woe" to Babylon; "for your doom" The word "Woe" is often followed by a dative, but here by a

nominative serving as a vocative. "Oh no, Babylon, you great city, you powerful city, for in just one hour your judgment came", Koester.

μικρὸν ὥρον dat. "**in one hour**" - [THE JUDGMENT OF YOU CAME] IN ONE HOUR. The dative is adverbial, of time, here probably with the sense, "instantly, in a moment, in one second", given that an hour was the shortest period of time known to the ancients, so Beale. "In a moment your doom has come upon you", REB.

v11

ii] The lament of the merchants, v11-17a. John alludes to Ezekiel 27:12-24 and the destruction of trade with the fall of Tyre. John may also know something of Rome's trading power, a trade which was massive even by today's standards. Only in recent times have archaeologists uncovered Rome's port facilities, all of which fell into disuse with the collapse of the empire. Those dependent on the secular city will be left stranded when it falls. As to the list of products, Mounce suggests John divides them into six lots, although Beckwith argues for seven lots by including "ripe fruit", v14, but Smalley works up seven lots without the awkward inclusion of "ripe fruit."

της γης gen. "**[the merchants] of the earth**" - [THE MERCHANTS] OF THE EARTH [CRY AND GRIEVE OVER HER]. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, "the world's merchants", Barclay, or idiomatic / local, "every merchant on earth", CEV, or just "The traders will cry and carry on because the bottom dropped out of business, no more market for their goods", Peterson.

ὅτι "**because**" - BECAUSE [THE CARGO OF THEM NO ONE BUYS ANY MORE]. Introducing a causal clause explaining why the merchants "wail and lament", namely, because of the loss of trade with the fall of Babylon.

v12

With the fall of Babylon, there was no one to buy **τον γαμον**, "the cargo, merchandise", which belonged to the merchants. This verse serves as an appositional which lists the cargo.

ομων [ος] "**cargoes**" - Standing in apposition to **τον γαμον**, "the cargo of them no one buys anymore, a cargo of gold,"

χρυσου [ος] gen. "**of gold**" - OF GOLD, [AND OF SILVER, AND OF PRECIOUS STONE, AND OF PEARLS, AND OF FINE LINEN, AND OF PURPLE, AND OF SILK, AND OF SCARLET, AND ALL CITRON WOOD, AND ALL IVORY VESSEL]. As with "silver", "precious stone", "pearls", the genitive is adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic; "a cargo *which consists of* gold, ..."

εκ + gen. "**[articles of every kind] made of [ivory]**" - [AND EVERY CITRON WOOD AND EVERY IVORY VESSEL AND EVERY VESSEL] OF [RARE WOOD, BRONZE, AND IRON, AND MARBLE]. The preposition expresses source / origin here;

"made from" The "rare wood" may be ebony, the most expensive timber available. The word "rare, precious" is a superlative adjective which probably gives the sense "very"; "very fine wood."

v13

θυμιαματα [α ατος] neut. acc. "[*cargoes of cinnamon, and spice, and*] of incense, [*myrrh and frankincense*]" - [AND CINNAMON AND SPICE AND] INCENSE, [AND MYRRH AND FRANKINCENSE AND WINE AND OIL AND FINE FLOUR AND WHEAT AND CATTLE AND SHEEP, AND OF HORSES AND OF CHARIOTS AND OF BODIES / SLAVES]. We would have expected the series of adjectival genitives to continue, as in v12, but the list of spices and foods is accusative (direct object of the negated verb "to buy"; indicating what they are no longer able to buy) before returning to the genitive "of horses and of chariots, and of bodies / slaves" (adjectival genitive, "cargoes *which consist of*", cf., v12). Rather than trying to classify the elements, we are best to follow Osborne who argues that it is "purely stylistic", an approach which is followed by the NIV in repeating the noun **γαμιον**, "cargo", from v12, and translating the cargo as genitives. Smalley suggests that the **και** after "incense" is epexegetic, so "incense, namely / that is, myrrh and frankincense", as NIV.

ανθρωπων [ος] gen. " **human [beings sold as slaves]**" - [AND SOULS] OF MEN. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "souls"; "human souls", ESV. The **και** after "slaves" is probably epexegetic, "slaves, that is, human souls", ESV; "slaves - human cargo", Cassirer.

v14

John seems to return to the idea conveyed in v11, of the day when the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over the fall of Babylon and the consequent loss of their trade. The NIV establishes this link by providing "*They will say*." Verses 12-13 is nothing more than a list of the goods that can no longer be traded when the buyer is no more. "The merchants allied with the systemic evil of Babylon lament her vanished luxuries, and their corresponding economic loss", Smalley.

της επιθυμιας [α] gen. "[**the fruit you longed for**]" - [AND THE FRUIT] OF THE DESIRE [OF THE SOUL OF YOU]. We have here a string of three genitives, all of which function adjectivally, and together limit "fruit". There is "the desire" which is characteristic of (possessive) "the soul" which "you" possess (again possessive) = "your soul's desire." The genitive "of your soul's desire" is adjectival, attributive, limiting "fruit", "the fruit *which is* your soul's desire." The simple fact is that this fruit "has departed from you", Cassirer. "The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you", NRSV, ESV.

απο + gen. "**from [you]**" - [DEPARTED] FROM [YOU AND ALL THE LUXURIOUS THINGS AND THE SPLENDID THINGS HAVE DEPARTED] FROM [YOU]. Expressing separation; "away from you."

ου μη + fut. "**never [to be recovered]**" - [AND NO LONGER] NO NO = NEVER [WILL THEY FIND THEM]. Subjunctive of emphatic negation, although with the future indicative rather than a subjunctive.

v15

In v15-17a John repeats the thoughts of v9-10. The traders who had become rich from the excesses of Babylon now mourn for her fall, not so much out of sympathy for her ruin, but for the loss of their own trade / livelihood and ultimately, their own ruin.

τουτων gen. pro. "**[the merchants] who sold these things**" - [THE MERCHANTS] OF THESE *things*. The genitive is adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic, "the merchants *who dealt in* these things", Barclay, as NIV. Aune suggests verbal, objective, "the traders *in these* commodities", so also Mathewson, although **εμποροι**, "merchants", is not really a verbal noun.

οι πλουτησαντες [πλουτεω] aor. part. "**and gained their wealth**" - THE ONES HAVING BECOME RICH. The participle serves as a substantive standing in apposition to "merchants"; "those who gained wealth from her."

απ [απο] + gen. "**from [her]**" - Expressing source / origin.

απο μακροθεν "**far off**" - [WILL STAND] FROM FROM AFAR. Again stylistic, but a redundant use of the preposition **απο**.

δια + acc. "-" - BECAUSE OF. Causal use of the preposition; "because of, on account of."

του βασανισμού [ος] gen. "**[terrified at her] torment**" - [THE FEAR] OF THE TORTURE, TORTURE [OF HER]. See v10.

κλαιοντες [κλαιω] pres. part. "**They will weep [and mourn]**" - WEeping AND MOURNING. As with "mourning", the participle is adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of their standing far off; "they stood at a distance crying and mourning", CEV.

v16

λεγοντες [λεγω] pres. part. "**and cry out**" - SAYING. The NIV treats the participle as attendant circumstance expressing action accompanying "weeping and mourning", although virtually redundant and may be ignored, but at the same time it could be classified as adverbial, modal, expressing manner; "weeping and mourning aloud", ESV. None-the-less, note **λεγων**, 1:17.

ἡ πολις [ις εως] "**to you, great city**" - THE CITY [THE GREAT]. We may have expected a dative, as NIV, but the nominative probably serves as a vocative / nominative of address; "Alas! Alas! You great city."

ἡ περιβεβλημενη [περιβαλλω] perf. mid. part. "**dressed in**" - HAVING PUT ON [FINE LINEN AND PURPLE AND SCARLET]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "Great City", "which was clothed in fine linen, purple and scarlet." The three adjectives serve as substantives, accusative objects of the participle, unless we assume the noun "clothing"; that was dressed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet *clothing*."

κεχρυσωμενη [χρυσω] perf. mid. part. "**glittering**" - [AND] HAVING BEEN GILDED. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "Great City", "which was gilded."

εν + dat. "**with [gold]**" - IN [GOLD, AND PRECIOUS STONE AND PEARL]. This variant preposition is probably instrumental, expressing means, "by / with." Even without the preposition, the datives would similarly indicate means. "Bedecked with gold and jewels and pearls", Phillips.

v17a

ὅτι "-" - BECAUSE. Introducing a causal clause explaining why the "Alas" for the Great City; "for in a moment"

μια ὥρα "**in one hour**" - IN ONE HOUR [SO GREAT RICHES WAS MADE DESOLATE]. Adverbial use of the dative, temporal, as NIV. As noted in v10, a period of one hour was the shortest period of measured time, so the sense may be "in an instant"; "Such wealth laid waste in a moment", REB. In 17:16 the agent of destruction is fire.

v17b

iii] The lament of all the sea captains, v17b-19. The third group, standing off at a distance and weeping over the city, are maritime agents and sailors, those who transport the goods for the merchants. They too mourn over the destruction of the secular city, but also for their own loss; they had "become rich through her wealth", and now they are damned along with her. For this section John draws on Ezekiel 27:1-2, 28-34, a prophecy concerning the trading city of Tyre. Again, John is likely to have Rome in mind for his own day.

ὁ ... πλεων [πλεω] pres. part. "[**all**] **who [travel by] ship**" - [AND ALL NAVIGATOR (CAPTAIN, SHIPMASTER), AND ALL] THE ONE SAILING [TO A PLACE]. The participle serves as a substantive. John's favourite spatial preposition **επι**, here + acc., probably takes the sense "to, toward"; "everyone who sails toward a place." Probably John is referring to the merchants who travel with their goods, so

something more specific than just "passengers", as TEV, rather, "all those merchants who travel by sea."

όσοι pro. "**all [who earn a living from the sea]**" - [AND SAILORS, AND] AS MANY AS [WORK THE SEA]. Nominative subject of the verb "to work." The antecedent of "as many as" is probably "sailors". Not technically standing in apposition, but the clause serves that purpose; "sailors, those who make a living by the sea", Cassirer. Probably more specifically "sailors, the crew *of the trading vessels* who make their living by the sea."

απο μακροθεν "**far off**" - [WILL STAND] FROM FROM AFAR. Again, a stylistic, but redundant use of the preposition **απο**. "Stood a long way off and cried as they saw the city burn"

v18

βλεποντες [βλεπω] pres. part. "**when they see [the smoke]**" - [AND THEY WERE CRYING], SEEING [THE SMOKE]. The participle is adverbial, either temporal or causal, so Beale, but probably best treated temporally, as NIV. "They stood off at a distance and cried their lament when they saw the smoke from her burning. 'Oh, what a city! There was never a city like her!'", Peterson.

της πυρωσεως [ις εως] gen. "**of [her] burning**" - OF THE BURNING [OF HER]. The genitive is probably best viewed as adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic / source, limiting "smoke", "the smoke *from / which bellowed up at* her burning." "The smoke from the flames that consumed her", TEV.

λεγοντες [λεγω] "**they will exclaim**" - [THEY WERE CRYING OUT] SAYING. Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the verb "to cry out", "they cried out and said", although virtually redundant. It may also be viewed as adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of their crying out, so Mathewson. As a matter of form John uses the participle "saying" prior to speech in a vision, see **λεγων**, 1:17. Note that the verb **εκραζον**, "they were crying out", is imperfect, a shift from the fut./pres. of the previous verses. The NIV opts to maintain the future tense. Maybe it is used to emphasize the durative aspect of their "crying out", even iterative (repeated action)"; "they cried out (they will cry out repeatedly ??) amidst their weeping and mourning, 'Alas, Alas, for the great city'", Cassirer - see Mathewson.

τις ομοια pro. + adj. "**was there ever [a city] like.....?**" - WHAT *is* LIKE [THE GREAT CITY]? = nothing. This construction forms a rhetorical question expecting a negative answer; it has Semitic precedence, eg., Deut.33:29.

τη πολει [ις εως] dat. "**this [great] city**" - THE [GREAT] CITY. Dative complement of the adjective "like".

v19

επι + acc. "**on [their heads]**" - [AND THEY THREW DUST] ON, UPON [THE HEADS OF THEM]. John's favourite spatial preposition, here with the accusative, but still meaning "on, upon", as with the gen.

κλαιοντες [**κλαιω**] pres. part. "**with weeping [and mourning cry out]**" - [AND WERE CRYING OUT] WEEPING [AND MOURNING]. The participle, as with "mourning", is adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of their crying out. See v18 on the imperfect **εκραζον**, "they were crying out."

λεγοντες [**λεγω**] pres. part. "-" - SAYING. Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the verb "to cry out"; redundant. Typical use of this participle prior to speech, cf., **λεγων**, 1:17.

εν + dat. "**where**" - [WOE WOE THE GREAT CITY] IN [WHICH BECAME RICH]. The preposition may be instrumental, expressing the means, "by which" the sea-captains became rich, "through which", Berkeley (the antecedent of **ἧ**, "which", is "city", so "by / through which *city*"), but possibly local, "in which *city*" = "where", as NIV, NEB, ESV, Moffatt, Phillips, "Alas, alas for the great city by whose lavish way of living riches were provided for all who had ships on the sea", Cassirer.

οἱ εχοντες [**εχω**] pres. part. "**[all] who had**" - [ALL] THE ONES HAVING [SHIPS IN THE SEA]. If we take the adjective **παντες**, "all, every", as a substantive, "everyone", then the participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "everyone".

εκ + gen. "**through [her wealth]**" - FROM [THE ABUNDANCE OF HER]. Here instrumental, expressing means, a means consisting of a source, as NIV.

οτι μια ωρα "**in one hour**" - BECAUSE IN ONE HOUR [SHE WAS MADE DESOLATE]. See v17a.

18:20-24

The Reign of Christ, 17:1-22:5

1. The ruin of the harlot, Babylon, 17:1-19:10

v] Babylon remembered

Synopsis

The voice from heaven (v4) continues to speak, calling on the people of God to rejoice at the destruction of Babylon. John then sees a "mighty angel" pick up a massive boulder and throw it into the sea. The angel then announces that this act illustrates the destruction that will fall on Babylon. The destruction will be complete: no more musicians, craftsmen, millers, no more light, no more celebrations, no more commerce, nothing but the stains of her evil.

Teaching

Rejoice! The kingdom of God is at hand; Babylon is no more.

Issues:

i] Context: See 17:1-6a.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *Babylon remembered*:

A heavenly instruction, v20;

"Rejoice, ... for God has judged her."

The destruction of Babylon, v21-24;

The vision of the boulder, v21;

The consequences, v22-23a;

All that she is, is no more.

The cause, v23b-24;

"so came upon you the blood of all the righteous",

cf., Jer.51:49, Matt.23:35.

iv] Interpretation:

There is some debate as to who utters the words in v20 and whether they are part of the preceding passage, or a step in the narrative. The RSV, NAB, NIV, CEV translate the passage as if it is a word from the sea captains. The NIV11 separates v19 from v20, as does REB, Cassirer. The TEV seems to present the verse as if it's a word from John and the NJB tries to play it both ways. It does seem likely that the words are uttered by the voice from heaven (v4, but possibly the angel found in v1). So, the voice serves to move the reader away from the lament for Babylon, so Smalley, Beale, Koester,

Yarbro Collins. Rather than a lament, we have a call to God's people, both in heaven and earth, to rejoice at the destruction of the secular city. In the voice from heaven, God calls on his people to rejoice, rather than lament the fall of the secular city (corrupt human civilization bent on suppressing the divine will and those who dare submit to it; "the godless world order", Richardson).

In the following verses, John draws on Jeremiah's prophecy against Babylon, cf., Jeremiah chapters 50 to 51. In John's vision he sees an angel throw a large boulder into the sea in much the same way Jeremiah's servant threw a scroll, tied to a rock, into the Euphrates river. The action of the angel, as with Jeremiah's servant, symbolizes the destruction of historic Babylon.

The angel goes on to describe what is destroyed. Instead of depicting the evils of the harlot Babylon, her adulterous liaisons with the Satanic no-gods of this age (secular ideologies - materialism, socialism, ...) and her cajoling of the rest of humanity into her adultery, we are presented with the outward beauty of her vesture; culture, design, light, celebration,, the horn of plenty. The glory of the secular city is superficial, and this is particularly evident in the "great ones of the earth" who reside within the city, v23. These "great ones" are the "merchants", the money makers, not the philosophers, educators, health professionals and the like. And beneath the superficial veneer of prosperity there is the blood-stains of the saints and witnesses to Jesus, and so "as the lamps of the city go out, a fearful stillness descends; no more sounds of leisure or industry or human relationships. The stone sinks beneath the surface, and civilization is as though it had never been", Wilcock.

So, the judgment of Babylon brings about "an absence of all that makes life worthwhile", and this because of "the arrogance of the merchants, the deception of sorcery and the slaughter of God's people and others. Everyone who reads and hears this today must ask the all-important question: Whose side am I on?", Osborne. "Babylon's influence on the earth is destructive, and its future is that it will be destroyed. But God is the Creator, whose purposes culminate in a new creation and a New Jerusalem", Koester.

Text - 18:20

Babylon remembered, v20-24: i] A heavenly instruction, v20. As indicated above, this instruction is presumably a further divine word from "another voice from heaven", v4, a word to the Christian community. "Those who participated in the sins of Babylon mourn her passing, those who were faithful to God rejoice that the name of God has triumphed and his people have been vindicated", Osborne.

εὐφραίνου [εὐφραίνω] pres. imp. "**rejoice**" - The singular verb is used with the first nominative in the list, "heaven", singular, irrespective of the others in the list, "saints, apostle and prophets", plural.

ἐπ [ἐπι] + dat. "**over [her]**" - Here John's favourite spatial preposition is probably indicating basis / cause; "because of *what has befallen* her." "Be glad heaven, because of her destruction", TEV.

οὐρανε [ος] voc. "**you heavens**" - HEAVEN [AND THE SAINTS, AND THE APOSTLES, AND THE PROPHETS]. Vocative / nominative of address, "O heaven." The following nominatives serve as vocatives and accordingly take an article.

ὅτι "**for**" - BECAUSE. Introducing a causal clause explaining why heaven and earth should rejoice.

ὑμῶν gen. pro. "**[the judgment she imposed] on you**" - [GOD MADE JUDGMENT THE JUDGMENT] OF YOU [FROM HER]. The genitive "of you" is best viewed as adjectival, possessive, "your judgment"; "God judged your judgment from (ἐκ = source / origin) her." John's *short-talk* in this clause is somewhat problematic and gets reworked in numerous ways by translators. The NIV opts for the idea that Babylon is getting back what she deserves and this is the likely sense, i.e., the principle of *lex talionis* evident throughout the Revelation, cf., 18:6, 19:2, 20:12-13. The judgment God makes against Babylon is *equal to / comparable to / because of* (Mathewson) the judgment she inflicted on God's people. God justly turns the charge brought against God's people by the accuser Babylon back onto the accuser herself; "God has exacted from Babylon the sentence she passed on the saints", Smalley, so also Sweet, Caird, Mounce. "[God] has imposed on her the sentence she passed on you", REB. Beale notes some of the many possible translations offered: "God has judged her and vindicated you", Lohmeyer; "God has given judgment for / in favour of you (ὑμῶν, genitive of advantage) against (ἐκ, = opposition) her", cf., RSV, Zerwick; "in the judgment against her he has vindicated your cause", NEB; "God pronounced on her the judgment she passed on you (ὑμῶν, objective genitive)", cf., BAGD; "God executed severe judgment for you against her"; "God judged the judgment on you (which came) from her", Stuart, *Apocalypse II*. Oh dear! Anyway, we get the point; "God pronounced judgement on her on your behalf", NET.

v21

ii] The destruction of Babylon, v21-24. a) The vision of the boulder, v21. Now, in more detail, John describes the destruction of Babylon, first with the vision of an angel casting a boulder into the sea. This image serves to illustrate the coming day of judgment - she will be thrown down and not be found any longer, cf., Jer.51:63. Beale, so also Sweet, suggest that John's use of a "millstone" to describe the rock alludes to Matthew 18:6. Certainly "millstone" indicates that

John's **λιθος**, "rock", is bigger than Jeremiah's small rock, so therefore the translation "boulder", but is John suggesting that "those (members of the church) who are guilty of such deception should take warning lest they suffer Babylon's fate"? Indeed, we should take the warning, but is John making this point?

και "then" - AND. Used here to indicate a step in the narrative, as **δε**; "then"

εις adj. "**a [mighty angel]**" - ONE [STRONG ANGEL LIFTED A STONE]. Here used in the place of a personal pronoun such as **τις**, "a certain angel", or heading toward an indefinite sense, as NIV.

ως "**the size of [a large millstone]**" - LIKE [A GREAT MILLSTONE AND THREW *it* INTO THE SEA]. Comparative; "picked up a stone like a great millstone."

λεγων [**λεγω**] pres. part. "**and said**" - SAYING. The NIV takes the participle as attendant on the verbs "lifted" and "threw", but it could be taken as adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of the angel's lifting and throwing, "saying", although in Revelation the use of this participle is primarily stylistic, cf., **λεγων**, 1:17.

ορμηματι [**α ατος**] dat. "**with [such] violence**" - [THUS] IN VIOLENCE [WILL BABYLON, THE GREAT CITY, BE THROWN, PUT *down*]. Hapax legomenon - once only use in the NT. The dative is adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of her being put down; "with a violent onslaught" will she be thrown down, Zerwick.

ουτως adv. "**such**" - Modal adverb, expressing manner; "in this way will Babylon the great city be thrown down with a violent onslaught."

η μεγαλη πολις [**ις εως**] "**the great city**" - Standing in apposition to "Babylon".

ου μη **ετι** + subj. "**never [to be found] again**" - [AND] NOT NOT = NEVER [WOULD IT BE FOUND] AGAIN. This construction, the subjunctive of emphatic negation + the temporal adverb "again", takes the temporal sense "never anymore; "nevermore", Zerwick.

v22

b) The consequences of judgment, v22-23a. The sounds of affluence are ended: The musicians are silenced, cf., Ezk.26:13 with respect to Tyre. Craftsmen involved in the fine arts, pottery, woodworking, sculptors, stonemasons, glassmakers, weavers,, all gone; the mill for flour, silenced; the light from lamps, darkened; the sound of celebration, no more.

κιθαρωδων [**ος**] gen. "**[the music] of harpists**" - [AND SOUND] OF HARPISTS [AND MUSICIANS, AND FLUTISTS, AND OF TRUMPETERS]. The genitive, as with the other musicians, limiting the head noun "sound", is usually classified as adjectival, verbal, subjective, "the sound *produced by* harpists", possibly idiomatic / source,

"from harpists", so Mathewson. "Silent the music of harpists and singers - You'll never hear flutes and trumpets again", Peterson.

ου μη ... ἔτι "[will] never [be heard in you] again" - See v21 above. The preposition εν, "in [you]", is local, expressing space.

τεχνης [η] gen. "[worker] of [any] trade" - [AND EVERY CRAFTSMEN, ARTISAN] OF [ANY] CRAFT, SKILL, ART [NEVER WOULD BE FOUND IN YOU AGAIN]. Mathewson suggests that the genitive is adjectival, verbal, but it could be classified as descriptive, idiomatic; "craftsmen *who are skilled in* every fine art."

μυλου [ος] gen. "[the sound] of a millstone" - [AND SOUND] OF A MILL [NEVER WOULD BE HEARD IN YOU AGAIN]. The genitive is again usually taken as adjectival, verbal, subjective, "the sound *produced by* a mill." "Never again will the sound of the mill-stone's grinding be heard in you!", Phillips.

v23a

λυχνου [ος] "[the light] of a lamp" - [AND LIGHT] OF A LAMP [WOULD NEVER SHINE IN YOU AGAIN]. The genitive, as for "of bridegroom and bride", may be classified as adjectival, subjective, or descriptive, idiomatic; see "of harpists", and "of a millstone", v22 above. See v21 for "will never shine in you again" and "will never be heard in you again." "Lamplight was a typical sign of life in a home, so extinguishing it is a metaphor for destruction (Job.18:6, 21:17", Koester. "The light from lamps, never again; never again laughter of bride and groom", Peterson.

v23b

c) The cause, v23b-24. In these final verses John provides reasons for the judgment of Babylon.

The first reason has to do with "the merchants" and their **μεγιστῶνες**, "greatness". It seems likely that John is being facetious, given that the trading class was anything but noble, even if wealthy; they were usually vulgar and corrupt. Babylon / the secular city glorifies wealth and profit over integrity; the wealthy are "the great ones" and yet they are the exploiters, anything but noble. It's hard not to observe how in Western society the business elite are fawned over by the media and politicians. They, with their obscene pay packets in the multi-millions, are "the great ones." For this we stand condemned, as does Babylon the Great.

The second cause relates to **φάρμακεια**, "sorcery, magic." Again, we should not take the word in a literal sense. "Babylon applied a kind of economic sorcery to delude the nations into believing that social security resided with it alone, cf., Isa.47:9", Boring. The power and glory of the secular city dupes the world into believing that economic and social advancement lies with atheistic humanism. In John's time, Rome well

illustrates Babylon, deluding the world (as if by a magic spell) with the belief that submission to the gods of Rome and the imperial cult guarantees economic success.

The third reason relates to the shedding of blood. The secular city has the blood of humanity on its hands, and in particular, God's own witnesses. Again, for John, Babylon's evil was well illustrated in Rome, both its persecution of Christianity, and its slaughter of all and every opponent to its imperial expansion. In our age, the blood shed by secular societies over the last century is a horror beyond imagination, a horror that God does not ignore.

ὅτι "-" - BECAUSE [THE MERCHANTS OF YOU WERE THE GREAT ONES OF THE EARTH], BECAUSE [IN/BY THE SORCERY OF YOU WERE DECEIVED ALL THE NATIONS]. Introducing two causal clauses explaining why silence and darkness has overtaken Babylon; "because", see above.

της γης [η] gen. "**the world's [important people]**" - [THE GREAT ONES] OF THE EARTH. The genitive is best viewed as adjectival, possessive, as NIV, or idiomatic / local, "were the great ones *who (corruptly) traded throughout* the earth." "Her traders robbed the whole earth blind", Peterson, they were "the tycoons of the world", NET; See above.

εν + dat. "**by [your magic spells]**" - IN/BY [THE SORCERY OF YOU]. Instrumental, expressing means, as NIV. The genitive personal pronoun **σου**, "you", is adjectival, verbal, subjective, "the magic *performed by* you", but possessive is also an appropriate classification, expressing a derivative characteristic, as NIV.

v24

As Hendriksen points out, Babylon is typical of all secular oppressive societies from John's time up to the present, violently oppressive of humanity in general, and the church in particular.

και "-" - AND [IN HER BLOOD OF PROPHETS AND SAINTS]. Smalley suggest that **και** here serves for **ὅτι** so introducing a third conditional clause explaining why silence and darkness has overcome Babylon, namely, because of her slaughter of innocents, particularly God's witnesses; "Babylon was punished because the blood of prophets and God's people was found in the city", TEV.

εν + dat. "**in [her]**" - [WAS FOUND] IN [HER]. Local, expressing space.

προφητων [ης ου] gen. "**[the blood] of prophets**" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive; "the blood of the prophets", REB. The phrase "blood of prophets and saints", cf., 16:6, is not identifying separate groups who have had their blood spilt, but "the body of the church within which are found Christian prophets", Smalley. Persecution primarily falls on Christ's witnesses, both apostles and prophets,

v18:20, and for this reason they are singled out from the saints / believers as a whole.

των εσφαγμενων [σφαζω] per. mid./pas. part. "[all] who have been slaughtered" - [ALL] THE ONES HAVING BEEN SLAIN. If we take the adjective παντων, "all", as a substantive, "everyone", then the participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "everyone"; "everyone who has been killed on earth." Osborne suggests the sense is "believer and unbeliever alike."

επι + gen. "on [the earth]" - John's favourite spatial preposition, "on, upon."

19:1-10

The Reign of Christ, 17:1-22:5

1. The ruin of the harlot, Babylon, 17:1-19:10

vi] The marriage of the Lamb

Synopsis

John's vision of a boulder thrown into the sea, an image of the complete destruction about to fall upon Babylon the Great, prompts a heavenly outpouring of praise to God for the demise of Babylon and the coming day of the wedding of the Lamb. The hallelujah chorus comes first from "a great multitude in heaven", followed up by the "twenty-four elders and the four living creatures." After they sing, "a voice ... from the throne" (Christ??) calls for further praise to God, and "what sounds like a great multitude" responds. Then "an angel" (λεγει, "he says", = "the mighty angel", 18:21, "another voice", 18:4, or "another angel", 18:1, "..... says" ??) commands John to write down the vision, at which point John prostrates himself before the angel, but is told to "worship God" rather than "a fellow servant."

Teaching

The realization of the Kingdom of God is a day of praise for the completion of judgment and the coming of the wedding of the Lamb.

Issues:

i] Context: See 17:1-6a.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The Marriage of the Lamb*:

The hallelujah chorus, v1-8:

A great multitude, v1-3;

"just are his judgments."

The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures, v4;

"Amen, Hallelujah."

An instruction from the throne, v5;

"Praise our God."

The saints respond in a shout like rushing water and peals of thunder, v6-8;

"Let us rejoice and be glad

For the wedding of the Lamb has come."

The instruction to write down the vision, v9-10.

iv] Interpretation:

Again, inaugurated eschatology becomes realized in this description of heavenly rejoicing. John's vision has revealed what will befall Babylon, the secular city, on the day of judgment - its destruction will be complete, 18:20-24. As if that day has already occurred, the heavens burst open in praise, praise for the just judgment of God and praise for the beginning of the wedding-feast of the Lamb - the *not yet is now*.

The heavenly hallelujah chorus begins with the "great multitude" (triumphant saints, 7:9, but possibly just heavenly beings, so Aune), a heavenly multitude who praise God for answering the call for justice, cf., 6:10. God has enacted just-judgment against the secular city, Satan's evil empire, and it is right to rejoice. From the heavenly temple / throne-room the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures join in the celebration.

Next, a voice from the throne itself (obviously a voice with divine authority, possibly Christ himself, so Beale) calls on all God's servants to give praise to God. Osborne suggests that it is a call to the saints on earth, but the *now* of realized eschatology is dominant at this point. This call for praise is to the "servants", the redeemed, the ones who have come unscathed through the day of judgment, the ones coming with Christ to the Ancient of Days / standing with Christ before the Ancient of Days and preparing to share in the wedding-feast of the Lamb. We are, of course, that people, here, but at the same time there, so the call to praise God is rightly to us as well as to those who have already reached that far shore. In response, there is the sound like peals of thunder shouting. This is the sound of the redeemed, victorious believers, those who have persevered in faith. Together they join in celebration for their part in the marriage-feast of the Lamb.

John describes the redeemed as the bride of Christ, those who have made themselves ready by putting on "fine linen." Interestingly, John actually defines what the "fine linen" is, namely "the righteousness of the saints" (Aune argues that this is most likely an addition to the text). The genitive "of the saints" is usually taken as verbal, subjective, "the righteous acts *performed by* the saints / God's people" (salvation by works??), but it may well be objective, "the righteous acts *performed for* the saints", ie., Christ's righteous work on the cross undertaken for those who put their faith in him. Note that the linen "was given her to wear", cf., v8 below.

Finally, John is instructed to write the vision down. We are unsure who gives the instruction, but clearly it comes with divine authority. John describes how he is overcome by the whole occasion and responds by bowing before the divine messenger. The messenger tells John to keep his

obedience for God, not a "fellow servant" who stands with all those who give testimony to Jesus.

Text - 19:1

The Marriage of the Lamb, v1-10: i] a) A great multitude / the heavenly multitude praises God, v1-3. Unlike the kings, merchants and sea captains who mourn the fall of Babylon, the heavenly multitude, the elders and the living creatures praise God for its fall.

μετα ταυτα ηκουσα "**after this I heard**" - AFTER THESE THINGS I HEARD. As with "after this I saw", the temporal prepositional phrase "after this I heard", used only here in the Revelation, serves to introduce a new vision / step in the narrative. It seems likely that the heavenly multitude are angelic beings, so Sweet, Aune,, but some commentators argue that it is the heavenly assembly of saints, so Beale,

ως "**what sounded like**" - AS [A LOUD VOICE OF A GREAT CROWD IN HEAVEN]. The comparative here serves to introduce an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what John heard, namely, "a sound like massed choirs in heaven", Peterson.

οχλου [ος] gen. "**of a [great] crowd**" - The genitive is adjectival, possibly descriptive, idiomatic / source, "*from* the crowd, or possessive, "a loud voice *belonging to* a great crowd in heaven."

λεγοντων [λεγω] gen. "**shouting**" - SAYING. Again, John introduces speech in a vision with the participle "saying", cf., **λεγων**, 1:17. Technically the participle agrees with "great crowd", so adjectival, attributive, "a great crowd which was shouting", although if it were accusative it would have properly served as the accusative complement of the object clause introduced by **ως**, standing in a double accusative construction.

του θεου [ος] gen. "**[salvation and glory and power] belong to [our] God**" - [ALLELUIA (= Heb. "praise Yahweh"), THE SALVATION (redemptive power), AND THE GLORY (majesty), AND THE POWER (victory) *are*] OF THE GOD [OF US]. We would have expected a dative as in 1:6, 5:13, etc.; "to God" = "may be ascribed to God" - a variant exists, "to the Lord our God." Here the genitive is possessive, "*are* of God" = "belongs to God." "To our God belongs the glorious power to save", CEV.

ημων gen. pro. "**our**" - OF US. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / subordination; "God over us."

v2

οτι "**for**" - BECAUSE [TRUE AND JUST *are* THE JUDGMENTS OF HIM] BECAUSE [HE JUDGED THE GREAT PROSTITUTE]. Introducing two causal clauses explaining

why glory and power are ascribed to God, namely, because a) God's judgments are true and just ("God's justice is "true" because it is based on his own covenant faithfulness and "just" because it is based on his holy character", Osborne), and because b) God has avenged the blood of his servants by condemning the great prostitute, Babylon the Great.

αυτου gen. "[**just are**] **his [judgments]**" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive, of a derivative characteristic, or verbal, subjective, "the judgments pronounced by him"; "His judgments accord with truth and justice", Cassirer.

εν + dat. "**by [her adulteries]**" - [WHO WAS CORRUPTING THE EARTH] IN [THE SEXUAL IMMORALITY OF HER]. Instrumental use of the preposition, expressing means, "by means of"; "who corrupted the earth with her lewdness", Berkeley. For **αυτης**, "of her", see above. The relative clause introduced by **ἥτις**, "who", establishes the legal basis of God's condemnation of the great prostitute, Babylon / the secular city, namely, she corrupted the earth and persecuted God's people.

εκ + gen. "**[has avenged] on [her]**" - [AND HE AVENGED THE BLOOD OF THE SERVANTS OF HIM] FROM [HAND OF HER]. Instrumental use of the preposition expressing means, a means consisting of a source, so Smalley, Beale, Aune, Osborne, Mathewson, but note BDAG, 301.2, followed by the NIV, REB, ESV,; "he has avenged the blood of his servants shed by her hand."

των δουλων [ος] gen. "**[the blood] of his servants**" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive.

v3

δευτερον adv. "**[and] again**" - [AND] SECOND. Temporal use of the adverb, "a second time"; "Once more they cried out", ESV.

ειρηκαν [λεγω] perf. "**they shouted**" - THEY SAID, [ALLELUIA]. The use of the perfect is unexpected, possibly serving to give prominence to the shout by the heavenly multitude, although in the late Koine period the perfect tense was moving toward the aorist, ie., stative rather than imperfective.

και "-" - AND. Mathewson suggests it is emphatic here, "indeed", although Smalley suggests it is epexegetic, it "sets out further the basis for the heavenly rejoicing in progress."

αυτης gen. pro. "**[the smoke] from [her]**" - The genitive is probably adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic / source, as NIV.

τους αιωνας των αιωνων "**for ever and ever**" - [ASCENDS INTO] THE AGES OF THE AGES. Idiomatic for "forever", see 1:18.; "the smoke from her burning will rise for ever", REB. Expressing "the totality and the finality of the city's destruction", Smalley.

v4

b) The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures praise God, v4. The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures are the "celestial worship leaders" in the Revelation, so Osborne. They give solemn affirmation to the hymn sung by the great multitude.

τω θεω [ος] dat. "[**fell down and worshiped**] **God**" - [AND TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS AND THE LIVING BEINGS FELL AND DID OBEISANCE TO] GOD. Dative of direct object after the verb "to do obeisance to."

τω καθημενω [καθημαι] dat. pres. mid. part. "**who was seated**" - THE ONE SITTING. The participle may be taken as a substantive standing in apposition to "God", or adjectival, attributive, as NIV.

επι + dat. "**on [the throne]**" - John's favourite spatial preposition is followed by a dative here, rather than the usual genitive, but obviously still taking the sense "on, upon."

λεγοντες [λεγω] pres. part. "**And they cried**" - SAYING [AMEN, ALLELUIA]. The participle may be classified as attendant circumstance, expressing action accompanying "fell *down* and did obeisance", "and said", or adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of their falling down and worshipping", "saying", ESV. Note John's flexibility with participles, and this one in particular, **λεγων**, 1:17.

v5

ii] An instruction from the throne of God, v5. This verse could be viewed as a third source of praise to God, so Osborne, but it is more in the terms of a call to praise than praise in its own right. This is indicated by John's use of the imperative **αινειτε**, "give praise [to God]", rather than **αλληλουια**, "Hallelujah!" The call goes out to all God's servants, that is, all those who reverence him.

και "then" - AND. Here indicating a step in the narrative, as NIV.

απο + gen. "**from [the throne]**" - [A VOICE] FROM [THE THRONE]. Expressing source / origin. A voice from the throne, or the temple, is usually viewed as the voice of God, although here the voice states "praise the God of us." Some suggest the voice on this occasion is that of Christ, but other possibilities have been offered, eg., one of the four living creatures.

λεγουσα [λεγω] "**saying**" - See **λεγοντες**, v4.

τω θεω [ος] dat. "**[praise our] God**" - [PRAISE] THE GOD [OF US]. We may have expected an accusative direct object of the imperative verb **αινειτε**, "praise", but the dative of direct object reflects Semitic idiom, "give praise to God", virtually meaning "Hallelujah!"

και "-" - AND. Smalley suggests that the variant **και** here is expegetic, specifying the servants, "even those who fear him."

οἱ φοβούμενοι [φοβεω] pres. mid. part. "you who fear [him]" - THE ONES FEARING [HIM]. If we recognize the variant **καί**, "and", we are best to classify the participle as a substantive standing in apposition to "servants", but it can also be treated as adjectival, attributive; "Praise our God, all his servants *and all people*, both great and small, who have reverence for him", TEV. The series of nominatives in the second half of the verse function as vocatives, ie., nominatives of address.

οἱ μικροὶ καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι "both great and small" - THE GREAT AND THE SMALL. Both articular adjectives serve as substantives, together standing in apposition to the participle "the ones fearing."

v6

iii] The saints respond with a shout, v6-8. Aune notes that this hymn of praise fully complies with OT form: a) It opens with a call to praise God by the redeemed (+ angels etc., ???), "Hallelujah"; b) **ὅτι**, the first reason is provided for the call to praise, namely, "the Lord our God, the Almighty reigns", c) **ὅτι**, a second reason is provided for the call to praise, namely, "the wedding of the Lamb has come" / the kingdom has come, and the redeemed have prepared themselves (often viewed in terms of obedience, but far better seen in the terms of persevering in faith) by putting on the fine linen "given" to the "bride" "to wear" (presumably the righteousness / faithfulness of Christ ???)

καί "then" - AND. Here used to indicate a step in the narrative, as **δε**.

ὡς "[I heard what sounded] like" - [I HEARD *what seemed / something*] LIKE, AS [A SOUND OF A GREAT CROWD AND] LIKE, AS [A SOUND OF MANY WATERS AND] LIKE, AS [A SOUND OF MIGHTY THUNDER]. Comparative. Note the assumed object of "I heard"; "then I heard *what sounded like* the sound of a vast crowd", Barclay.

οχλου [ος] gen. "a [great] multitude" - OF A [GREAT] CROWD - The genitive "crowd" limits the noun "sound", so adjectival and usually classified as verbal, subjective, "like *the sound made / produced by a great crowd*"; "I heard what sounded like a crowd", TEV. The same sense applies to the genitives "of many waters" and "of mighty thunder." The crowd is presumably made up of the redeemed, but may well include the angels as well; it is a heavenly choir. "And then I heard the sound like the voices of a vast crowd, the roar of a great waterfall and the rolling of heavy thunder", Phillips.

λεγοντων [λεγω] gen. pres. part. "shouting" - SAYING. Again, John introduces speech in a vision with the participle "saying", and does so with little regard for syntax. We probably should approach it with the same flexibility, cf., **λεγων**, 1:17. Possible classifications: a) given that the participle agrees with the three genitives "of a great crowd", "of many waters" and "of mighty thunder", it could be treated as an attributive adjective, "who were saying" (durative

present); b) Ignoring the genitive case it could be treated as attendant circumstance, expressing action accompanying the verb "I heard", "and they were saying", or c) as the complement of the assumed object of "I heard", "I heard *something* saying / shouting / crying out", although the participle is plural and the assumed object of "I heard" would be singular. We are best to translate it according to sense; "And this is what they cried out", Cassirer, also Barclay,

ὅτι "for" - [ALLELUIA], BECAUSE [THE LORD THE GOD OF US, THE ALMIGHTY, REIGNS]. Introducing a causal clause explaining why the great multitude gives a universal call to praise God, "Alleluia", namely, because God has begun his reign / the kingdom has come (taking the aorist **εβασιλευσεν**, "to reign", as ingressive, so Smalley, Aune,, although Mathewson suggests a timeless temporal sense, "the Lord reigns").

ἡμῶν gen. pro. **"our"** - The NIV takes the genitive as adjectival, possessive, but possibly idiomatic / subordination; "Lord God over us."

ὁ παντοκράτωρ [ὡρ ὀρος] "Almighty" - Nominative, standing in apposition to "God", which itself stands in apposition to "Lord". "The Lord our God, sovereign over all, has entered on his reign", REB.

v7

χαίρωμεν [χαίρω] pres. subj. **"Let us rejoice"** - LET US REJOICE [AND EXALT AND GIVE THE GLORY TO HIM]. As with the verbs "exalt" and "give", John employs a hortatory subjunctive for the call of the heavenly choir to give glory to God; "let us rejoice and be glad, let us praise his greatness", TEV. Note that for the verb "to give", as in "give the glory to him", the aorist tense is used where the present tense would be expected, as with "to rejoice" and "to exalt." All uses of the subjunctive "to give" in the NT take an aorist so it seems likely that usage had dictated the tense.

αὐτῷ dat. pro. **"[give] him [glory]"** - TO HIM. Dative of indirect object.

ὅτι "for" - BECAUSE. Introducing a second causal clause explaining why the great multitude gives a universal call to praise God, namely, "because" "the wedding of the Lamb has come", **καὶ**, "and", "the bride has prepared herself", **καὶ**, "and", "God has given her clothes to wear."

του αρνιου [ος] gen. **"[the wedding] of the Lamb"** - The genitive is adjectival, possessive; "the Lamb's wedding day", Cassirer. The image is primarily used of the eschatological day of salvation, Isa.25:6, Matt.8:11-22, Lk.13:28-29.

ἦλθεν [ερχομαι] aor. **"has come"** - CAME. This aorist is usually translated as if it were a perfect tense, as NIV. The action is obviously punctiliar, and in time

terms it has only just taken place. Such action is rightly expressed by an aorist; see Mathewson p260.

ἠτοιμασεν [ἑτοιμαζω] aor. "[his bride] has made [herself] ready" - [AND THE WIFE OF HIM] HAS PREPARED [HERSELF]. The sense of the verb "to make ready" is variously applied by commentators. Shaping faithfulness through obedience is a popular approach, but it seems better to understand "to make ready" as possessing faithfulness in Christ, by grace through faith apart from works of the Law, ie., by faith in the faithfulness of Christ. As a bride prepares herself for her wedding day by adorning herself with fine clothing, so the redeemed prepare themselves for the eschatological day of salvation by adorning themselves with the fine linen provided to them by God, namely, **τα κικαλωματα των ἁγιων**, "the righteousness of the saints", v8b, ie., verbal, objective, "the righteous (the faithfulness of Christ) given to / which is bestowed on the saints." See v8b below.

v8

ἵνα + subj. "[was given to her] to wear" - [FINE LINEN, BRIGHT CLEAN] THAT SHE SHOULD WEAR = TO WEAR [WAS GIVEN TO HER]. This *hina* construction serves as if an infinitive, forming a noun clause subject of the impersonal verb "was given." The subject of **ἵνα** + subj. is "fine linen, bright *and* clean", and as with an infinitive it is accusative. The personal pronoun **αυτη**, "to her", serves as a dative of direct object.

γαρ "-" - FOR. Here more reason than cause; introducing an explanation. In fact, the clause virtually serves as an explanatory note.

εστιν [ειμι] pres. "**stand for**" - [THE FINE LINEN] IS. Here epexegetic with the sense "signifies, stands for" = "*which* stands for", so defining "the fine linen" which was **εδοθη**, "given" (theological passive; given by God), to her (the holy / saints, the bride of the bridegroom = the redeemed).

των ἁγιων gen. "[the righteous acts] of God's holy people" - [THE RIGHTEOUSNESS] OF THE HOLY = SAINTS. Of twenty NT translations consulted, all took the genitive as verbal, subjective, so "the righteousness *performed* by the holy / saints" = "the good things God's people have done", CEV, so NIV - "the righteous deeds of the saints", ESV; "the good deeds of God's people", TEV; "the righteous living of the saints", Phillips; "the merits of the saints are her linen", Knox (a shocker!). As noted in **ἠτοιμασεν** above, given the context it is more likely that the genitive is objective, "the righteousness (ie., the faithfulness of Christ) *given to / which is bestowed on* the holy / saints." The bride is given (by God) the linen gown to wear enabling her to attend the wedding of the Lamb, for which she rejoices and gives God the glory. The gown is a righteousness, not earned / done, but given / bestowed, namely, the righteousness of Christ (his faithful obedience to the Father on the cross performed on our behalf, which

obedience / faithfulness is ours in Christ, as a gift of grace through faith). In the Revelation, the redeemed are those who conquer / persevere in faith (by grace), not those who persevere in obedience.

What do the commentators say? Koester notes both the subjective and objective approach and suggests it is more likely subjective - "the just deeds done by the believer constitute the garment"; "The bride has made herself ready for the marriage by dressing herself with righteous deeds", deeds that are "to be the bride's way of life", Strelan; Osborne suggests that the genitive may be plenary, both subjective and objective; Beale also sees the genitive as plenary: subjective - the good works which serve as the evidence of a believer's right standing in the sight of God; objective - the righteous act of God toward believers in the terms of vindication; "From one point of view she has made the dress herself; she has worked out her own salvation (v7, Phil.2:12). From another, it was given unto her, for God had been at work in her (v8, Phil.2:11", Wilcock; Beasley-Murray balances the subjective and objective, "the bride made herself ready through repentance and faith and continuance in righteous deed which are the fruit of faith (cf., the emphasis on 'works' in the seven letters). Yet it was granted her to be clothed with fine linen. Holiness is the gift of God. It is the holy life of the Redeemer in the redeemed. This duality characterizes the Christian life through all its stages"; Smalley sees it as subjective, but takes "righteousness" = "righteous behaviour" to mean "holding faithfully to the testimony concerning Jesus", cf., v10 (righteousness as obedience to the one law, faith in Christ); Boring makes the point that the "faithful witness" does not save, and is "enabled and empowered by God" - "it is her witnessing that prepares her for the marriage of the Lamb"; Mounce sees "righteousness" in the terms of the faithful witness of the justified, so also Hughes who stresses the fact that the "righteous deeds" are the product of a believer's justified status - ie., a "trust and obey" partnership; Aune solves the problem by suggesting that v9b is an "explanatory gloss."

v9

iv] The instruction to write down the vision, v9-10. Unlike the Old Testament prophets who are told to "go and say", John is told to go and "write", ie., the revelation lies in the text. The revelation revealed in the vision is that those who are **καλεω**, "called = invited", to the wedding-feast of the Lamb are blessed; "those who belong to God are blessed", Koester.

και "then" - AND. Used to indicate a step in the narrative.

μοι dat. pro. "to me" - [HE SAYS] TO ME [WRITE]. John does not identify the person who now speaks to him and so theories abound. The one speaking may be

the voice from the throne, v5, or "another angel", 18:1, or "another voice", 18:4, or even the revealing angel of 1:1, etc. Given v10, he is likely to be an angelic being.

οἱ κεκλημενοι [καλω] perf. mid./pas. part. "**those who are invited**" - THE ONES HAVING BEEN CALLED [TO THE DINNER OF THE WEDDING OF THE LAMB *are* BLESSED]. The participle serves as a substantive, nominative subject of an assumed verb to-be. The verb is best taken to mean "invited" rather than "called". John does also use the stronger εκλεκτος, "chosen", 17:14, chosen for special service to God, but of course, the chosen ones are those who believe and conquer, those who persevere in faith.

του γαμου [ος] "[**the wedding [supper]**" - The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "dinner, supper", as NIV, while the genitive "of the Lamb" is adjectival, possessive.

μοι dat. pro. "-" - [AND HE SAID] TO ME. Dative of indirect object.

αὐτοι pro. "**these [are]**" - Presumably the antecedent of "these [words]" is "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

του θεου [ος] gen. "[**the true words**] of God" - [THE WORDS TRUE] OF GOD. The genitive is probably adjectival, idiomatic / source; "these are the true words from God"; the words come from God and are therefore reliable and true.

v10

και "**at this**" - AND. Used to indicate a step in the narrative; "then I fell down at his feet to worship him", ESV.

εμπροσθεν gen. "**at [his feet]**" - [I FELL] BEFORE [THE FEET OF HIM]. Spatial preposition, "before".

προσκυνησαι [προσκυνεω] aor. inf. "**to worship**" - The infinitive here is adverbial, final, expressing purpose; "in order to worship him." The two words "fall down" and "worship" are often used together in the Revelation such that they are virtually synonymous. Usually "fall down" και, "and", "worship", so the infinitive here could be exegetical, "fell down before his feet, that is, do obeisance to him."

αυτω dat. pro. "**him**" - Dative of direct object after the προς prefix verb "to worship."

μοι dat. pro. "**[he said] to me**" - [AND HE SAYS] TO ME. Dative of indirect object. Mathewson suggests that the reason for the choice of the narrative present "he says" is to foreground the words of the angel over the faulty action of John (his attempt to worship the voice).

ὄρα μη "**don't do that**" - SEE NOT. The construction ὄραω + a prohibition = "see *that you do not do*"; "You must not do that", ESV.

σου gen. pro. "**with you**" - [I AM A FELLOW SERVANT] OF YOU. The genitive is adjectival, possibly possessive / relational, "a fellow servant *of yours*" = "I am your fellow servant." Translations often take the genitive here to express association, given the **συν** prefix of "fellow servant", so NIV, ESV, "Like you and your fellow believers, I also serve God", TH. See Wallace, 129.

των αδελφων [ος] gen. "**[with your] brothers and sisters**" - [AND] OF THE BROTHERS [OF YOU]. Again, the NIV takes the genitive here to express association, "with", as for **σου** above, although adjectival, possessive / relational is possible; "I am a fellow servant of yours, and of your brothers", Berkeley.

των εχοντων [εχω] gen. pres. part. "**who hold to [the testimony]**" - OF THE ONES HAVING [THE TESTIMONY]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "brothers"; "I am a servant just like you and everyone else who tells about Jesus", CEV.

Ιησου [ος] "**of Jesus**" - The genitive is usually treated as adjectival, verbal, objective, "the testimony about Jesus", as CEV above; "witness to Jesus", Phillips. Of course, subjective is also possible, so Smalley, Beasley-Murray; "testimony born by Jesus", Moffatt; "the testimony / witness which Jesus gives." "For we both possess the declaration of the truth which Jesus brought to us", Barclay.

τω θεω [ος] "**[worship] God**" - Dative of direct object after the **προς** prefix verb "to worship"; "It is God alone whom you must worship", Barclay.

γαρ "for" - Introducing a causal clause explaining why believers and angels are fellow servants who together hold the testimony of Jesus and therefore worship God and not each other; "because the testimony of (by / which is from) Jesus **εστιν** (is = amounts to) the Spirit of prophecy.

της προφητειας [α] gen. "**[the Spirit] of prophecy**" - Taking **το πνευμα** to be "the Holy Spirit", the genitive is likely to be adjectival, attributed (verbal, objective); both angels and believers hold / possess "Spirit inspired prophecy" ("the Spirit of God that inspires prophecy", cf., Aune), ie., "testimony from / which is guided by Jesus." As such, both angels and believers are fellow servants / brothers, and thus their worship can only be God-centred. Note that **πνευμα** is sometimes taken here as "spirit" = "soul", a person's soul / spirit. Usually viewed as distributive and the genitive "prophecy" as attributive, giving "prophetic soul[s]", with the overall sense being that "the message attested by Jesus is the essence of prophetic proclamation", Mounce.

19:11-16

The Reign of Christ, 17:1-22:5

The demise of the Beast, 19:11-21:8

i] The coming king and his armies

Synopsis

In this the first of John's series of "and I saw" visions, he sees the heavens opened and a rider on a white horse, a rider called "Faithful and True." His eyes are like flames of fire, from his mouth comes a sharp sword, and his robes are stained with blood and bear the words "King of kings, and Lord of lords." Accompanying him is "the armies of heaven", a cavalry dressed in pure white linen.

Teaching

The Kingdom of God is at hand; the victory is won, the day of Christ's appearing is upon us.

Issues:

i] Context: See 17:1-6a. The Interlude, *The demise of the Beast*, 19:11-21:8. The harlot Babylon, the Great City, the secular city, lies in ruin, and preparation for the wedding feast of the Lamb is now in full swing, 17:1-19:10. But before John details the realization of the Divine City, 21:9-22:5, he again backtracks in an interlude to look in more detail at some of the aspects involved in the ruin of the harlot Babylon, the secular city. First we meet the agent of destruction in the **παρουσια**, "appearing", of Christ, the one riding a white horse, 19:11-21:8. With the sword from Christ's mouth the beast and the false prophet, along with their allies, litter the battlefield as meat for vultures, 19:11-21. John then reveals how Satan has fared prior to Christ's final appearing, how he is bound in the abyss to await his ultimate destruction in the lake of fire, 20:1-3. Then we see how the Christian community reigns in the here and now, 20:4-10. John then describes the raising of the dead for the day of judgment, 20:11-15, and the final preparations for the realization of the Divine City in the new heavens and new earth, 21:1-8.

It is vitally important to see the "and I saw" visions as aspects of the fall of Babylon, of the lead up to and destruction of the evil city, and its ultimate replacement with the city of God. A sequential reading of 19:11-21:8 has led to Millennial schemes which do not properly reflect the teachings of Scripture; see "Interpretation" 20:1-3.

This section divides into two main parts with the sub parts introduced by **και ειδον**, "And I saw":

The coming conqueror, 19:11-21:

And I saw
 The victorious king and his armies, v11-16;
 The feast of the carrion, v17-18;
 The Beast destroyed, v19-21.
 The reign of the saints, 20:1-21:8:
 And I saw
 Satan bound, v1-3;
 The saints given authority to judge, v4-10;
 The throne of judgment, v11-15;
 A new heaven and a new earth, 21:1-8.

This section in the Revelation is notoriously difficult to interpret, but its intent is obvious: the text reveals "God's ultimate vindication of those who maintain their witness despite the draconian consequences. The seer's aim is to offer a presentation of the future that decreases present fear of the evil behind Babylon / Rome and therefore reinvestigates the ethic of resistant witness", Blount.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The coming King and his armies:*

A description of the rider on the white horse, v11-13;
 The exercise of his authority, v14-16.

iv] Interpretation:

In the first of this series of **καὶ εἶδον**, "and I saw", visions, John again transports us to the Great Day of the Lord and the appearing of the rider on a white horse with "the armies of heaven." Presumably John wants us to see in this vision the one who has brought down Babylon, the secular city; he is Jesus, the righteous warrior, the one who is "faithful and true", the one whose name is the Word of God, the **λογος**, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He wears kingly crowns, ruling the nations and bringing them low with an authoritative word (the sharp sword from his mouth). His glorious robes are stained with blood, presumably the blood of his sacrifice, his atoning death.

Accompanying the righteous king is a heavenly army. Debate rages as to the makeup of Christ's cavalry. If the rider on the white horse is riding to earth to enact judgment, then his army is likely to be angels, possibly "angels and the victorious saints", Osborne, but if he is a conquering hero who has just appeared in heaven, cf., v11, then it is likely that this victorious army is made up of the redeemed, those who have persevered in faith, namely, resurrected believers; See below. John's first "and I saw" vision displays the victorious Christ, crucified, risen, ascended, Lord and King,

and with him we stand in glory. In this vale of tears, it may not seem that way, but that's only because we focus on the shadows rather than the radiance of eternity - in Christ we are the victors.

The problem of timing and place in John's "and I saw" visions: Bauckham describes the visions in 19:11-21:8 as an interlude. It's as if John is tying up a few loose ends. We have witnessed the judgment of the great prostitute and so now the marriage feast of the Lamb is underway, 19:1-10. Just before John shows us the bride, the wife of the Lamb, in the new Jerusalem (21:9-22:5), there are a few extra details he would like to explain relating to the fall of Babylon. These details are often dealt with as if temporally sequential, and as if moving from heaven to events on earth and then back to heaven. This has prompted time orientated interpretations which have caused no end of problems.

So, in time terms we could say that John in 19:11-21:8 explains the transitional events between the fall of the secular city and the coming of the city of God, but John is really not into sequential time. John's approach is to reveal some of the many aspects of the day of judgment, the coming day of the Lord, which inevitably lead to the realization of the kingdom of God. Usually, his visions present as realized eschatology, the *now*, ie., John witnesses the Great Day unfolding before his eyes. For the reader of the Revelation, the Day is *not yet*, but its reality reminds us that Babylon / the secular city, the beast / antichrist, Satan and his minions, the kings / principalities and powers, are all doomed. They may rage against the Lord, but will be brought low by the sword from his mouth, in fact, in eternal terms they have already been brought down, cf., v14, 21. There are times today, even before the unfolding of the Great Day, where eternal verities touch us, such that in the midst of darkness good transcends evil.

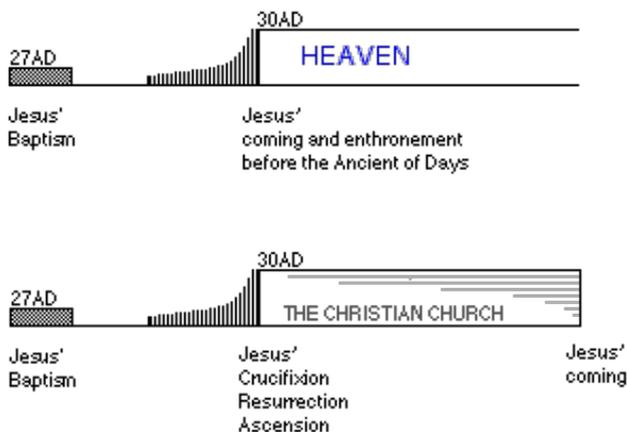
With regard place, it can be argued that the scenes of the "and I saw" visions move from heaven to earth and then back to heaven. The horseman and his army come to earth and defeat "the beast and all the kings of the earth", Satan is confined, bursts out with Gog and Magog for a final assault on "the camp of God's people", but is consumed in fire. The final judgment follows with new heavens and a new earth. Yet, in v11 John doesn't see the horseman setting out for earth, but rather he sees "heaven opened and a white horse was there and its rider and the army in heaven ηκολουθει, "accompanying" him." So, it seems likely that John is starting where it all finishes - the victory won. The prophetic perspective entails a coming in the clouds to heaven, a coming to the Ancient of Days to exercise universal lordship, Dan.7:13-14, ie., the action is viewed from heaven, not earth. From

this perspective the army is not made up of avenging angels, but οἱ αγγελιοι, "messengers", a righteous cavalry of the redeemed who have already seen Christ's victory won on the cross, seen the beast defeated, Satan cast into the lake of fire, judgment enacted.

The blending of inaugurated and realized eschatology in apocalyptic imagery defies the frame of space and time. In heaven, the warrior and his righteous cavalry prepare to join in the marriage feast of the Lamb, while the carrion on earth consume the corpses of the "kings, generals and the mighty", 19:17-18. In heaven the Son of Man is enthroned, aPs.2, Ez.7:12, Dan.2:37, Phil.2:10, and on earth the Beast and the kings, Satan and Gog and Magog are dethroned ("Gog from the land of Magog", Ezk.). Christ wins the victory on the cross, the judgment is now, and his righteous army meets him in the air and comes "on the clouds of heaven with power and glory" to the Ancient of Days to be with him forever, 1Thes.4:17. During this moment, the whole history of the Christian church plays itself out, struggling against the devouring lion, against principalities and powers in heavenly places, against the Beast / antichrist and his associates, and Satan himself - often defeated, but ultimately victorious.

It may help to repeat the illustration which attempts to expose the *now* and *not yet* of eschatology, a kingdom realized but also inaugurated.

A KINGDOM NOW and NOT YET



Text - 19:11

The coming King and his armies, v11-16: i] A description of the rider on a white horse, v11-13. The opening of the doors of heaven allows John to see what's going on in God's throne room, cf., 4:1. He sees a rider on a white horse, and John leaves us in no doubt that the rider is the glorified Christ. Commentators describe the scene as a rider coming out of heaven with his support cavalry to do battle with the powers of darkness, cf., Koester - "Messiah ushering in a final conflict against the Antichrist, in the role of a military leader at the head of heavenly armies", Smalley. As indicated above, the image is more likely that of a victorious warrior assembled with his saints, a victory won on the cross. In v11 we have the first two elements to the description of the rider at his **παρουσια**, "appearing". First, he is "faithful and true", probably in the sense that he is reliable, faithful ("true" is being used in this sense). Second, he is just, both in his judgments and when he makes war.

και ειδον "I saw" - AND I SAW. Serving to indicate a step in the narrative / a new vision.

ηνεωγμενον [ανοιγω] perf. mid./pas. part. "[heaven] standing open" - [HEAVEN] BEING OPENED. The participle serves as the complement of the direct object "heaven" in a double accusative construction. Osborne argues that the use of the perfect tense is intensive; "the heavens stand open."

ο καθημενος [καθημαι] pres. mid. part. "**whose rider**" - [AND BEHOLD A WHITE HORSE AND] THE ONE SITTING [UPON IT]. The participle serves as a substantive.

καλουμενος [καλεω] pres. mid./pas. part. "**is called [Faithful and True]**" - BEING CALLED [FAITHFUL AND TRUE]. This variant participle (probably original, so Metzger, p685) is adjectival, attributive, limiting "the one sitting."

εν + dat. "**with [justice]**" - [AND] IN [RIGHTEOUSNESS HE JUDGES AND MAKES WAR]. The preposition is adverbial, expressing manner, the righteous manner with which the rider judges and makes war.

v12

John further describes the rider; fiery eyes, crowns on his head, and a secret name.

ως [his eyes are] like - [AND THE EYES OF HIM] AS, LIKE. Comparative.

πυρος [π ρος] gen. "**blazing [fire]**" - [A FLAME] OF FIRE. The genitive is adjectival, attributed, as NIV; "flaming fire", Barclay - "blazing eyes" = the Son of Man, Dan.10:6.

επι + acc. "**on [his head]**" - [AND] ON [THE HEAD OF HIM MANY CROWNS, DIADEMS]. John's favourite spatial preposition, here + acc., but still with the sense

"on, upon." The image describes kingship. "Christ, whose royal authority is granted by God, is depicted as the legitimate ruler of earth's kings", Koester.

εχων [εχω] pres. part. "**He has**" - Technically the participle could be adjectival. It can't modify "diadems", plural, because it is singular, so it would have to modify "the one sitting", v11. We could also view it as a periphrastic construction with an assumed verb to-be, and certainly the NIV handles it as if it were a finite verb. As already noted, John is very casual when it comes to his use of this participle; cf., **εχων** 1:16.

γεγραμμενον [γραφο] perf. mid./pas. part. "[**a name**] **written [on him]**" - [A NAME] HAVING BEEN WRITTEN. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "name"; "he bears a written name", Moffatt. Smalley suggests the name is written on the crowns, but "crowns" is plural, so possibly the name is inscribed on his robe, given that **ιματιον**, v13, is singular.

ει μη "[**that no one knows**] **but [himself]**" - [WHICH NO ONE KNOWS] EXCEPT [HIMSELF]. Introducing a contrast by designating an exception. It seems likely that John's language at this point is exaggerated, such that the rider's name is a secret, a mystery, although a mystery now revealed to the redeemed, cf., Lk.2:22. The world does not know Christ, but we do. To the world he is a good man, to believers he is the risen Lord, cf. 1Jn.3:1. Koester thinks the name is revealed in v11; the "rider is called Faithful and True." Smalley suggests the unknown name is YHWH. Osborne suggests that the hidden name "is a title reserved for eternity, the name that will reveal the true nature of the Godhead in a way beyond our finite ability to grasp."

v13

John continues his description of the horseman, noting that his robe is "dipped in blood" and that he goes by the name "Word of God."

περιβεβλημενος [περιβαλλω] perf. mid./pas. part. "**he is dressed in**" - [AND] HAVING BEEN CLOTHED, PUT ON. It seems likely that John is using this participle in much the same way as he used the participle **εχων**, v12, ie., as a finite verb - technically a periphrastic construction with an assumed verb to be. As with the participle **γεγραμμενον**, "having been written", John uses an intensive perfect to underline the rider's description; "The rider wore a robe that was covered in blood", CEV.

βεβαμμενον [βαπτω] perf. mid./pas. part. "[**a robe**] **dipped in [blood]**" - [A GARMENT] HAVING BEEN DIPPED IN [BLOOD]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting garment. The perfect tense, as above. The verb "to dip in", usually dip in a liquid, takes a dative of direct object / location, as here, but sometimes + **εις**, "into", as "into a bowl." If the sense of "dipped" is immersed, then Christ's robe is "covered in blood", CEV, "soaked with blood", Barclay,

Cassirer. The question raised by "the blood" is whose blood? Given that the horseman is usually viewed as the warrior king, then the blood may be that of the victims of the warrior king and his army, so Blount, Beale, Of course, there is a continuity problem if we take the view that the horseman is about to set out to earth, but is already covered in blood; and we should also note that his cavalry is not covered in blood. Some commentators argue that the blood is that of the saints, so Caird. It seems best to see the blood as a symbol of Christ's victorious sacrifice, his blood shed for the redeemed, so Boring, Harrington, Preston and Hanson, ... John sees Christ, the victorious king, seated upon his charger in the throne room of God, and with him is assembled his redeemed army, redeemed by the blood of the cross. Faced with this reality, the secular city and its associate players, the beast, etc., crumble into nothingness.

ὁ λογος [ος] "[his name is] the Word" - [AND THE NAME OF HIM HAS BEEN NAMED, CALLED] THE WORD [OF GOD]. "The word" can be viewed as standing in apposition to "the name", "the name of him, the word of God, has been named", although the unnecessary passive verb confuses somewhat, but has OT precedence, cf., Gen.3:20, LXX. The passive verb κειληται, "has been named", may well be functioning as if it were the verb to-be εστιν, given that both "the name" and "the word" are nominative, "the name of him is the word of God." The "name" identifies a person, and this person may be identified as "the word of God", the λογος. Not the *logos* of John's gospel, the Word incarnate, but rather the word of witness / gospel which proceeds from his mouth like a sword. "The word is the cutting testimony of God's and Jesus' lordship, which Jesus himself conveyed and his witnesses now proclaim", Blount. "The name by which he is called is The Word of God", ESV.

του θεου [ος] gen. "of God" - The genitive may be classified as adjectival, idiomatic / source, "from God" / verbal, subjective, "delivered by God, or verbal, objective, "about God", even plenary, ie., both, so Beale.

v14

ii] The exercise of Christ's authority, v14-16. Accompanying the Son of Man in the heavenly throne room is the army of the redeemed, those wearing robes of pure white linen. John then sees the Son of Man, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, exercise authority over the nations with his authoritative word. The consequence of this exercise of authority is outlined in the next "and I saw" vision, "The defeat of the beasts", v17-21. For those who see the army descending to earth to enact judgment, there is no battle, only its consequences. The demise of the beast and his associates is achieved by a Word from God - a "sharp sword" from the mouth of the Son of Man strikes down the nations / the secular city. Such has always

been the case and is so now, and will always be - "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation."

τα στρατευματα [α ατος] "the armies" - THE DETACHMENT OF SOLDIERS. The plural may not mean "armies", but is used to reflect the plural number of soldiers in the detachment, none-the-less it is usually translated "armies". As noted above, the makeup of the army is one of debate, but the description of their robes, "fine white linen", surely implies they are the redeemed, those who have persevered in faith / conquered.

τα "-" - THE. The variant article serves as an adjectivizer turning the prepositional phrase "in heaven" into an attributive adjective; "which are in heaven." The preposition **εν**, "in", is local, expressing space. This is a heavenly army, an army located in heaven. As already indicated, there is debate as to the makeup of the army. Is it an angelic army, or an army of saints, or both? If heading off to battle, avenging angels seems likely. If coming to / assembled in heaven then the army is the saints, the 144,000, the great multitude, 17:14.

αυτω dat. pro. "[followed] him" - [WERE ACCOMPANYING] HIM [ON WHITE HORSES]. Dative of direct object after the verb "to follow after." The verb **ακολουθηω** takes the sense "to follow / accompany" - note, as usual, singular following a neuter plural. As the army is usually viewed as on its way to earth, the verb is usually translated as "follow", as in "to follow into battle." As already noted, the rider and his army may have just arrived in heaven for the wedding feast of the Lamb and have no intention of leaving! The army has accompanied the rider to heaven, the appropriate destination of the Son of Man, cf., Dan.7:13.

ενδεδυμενοι [ενδυω] perf. mid. part. "**dressed in [fine linen, white and clean]**" - HAVING PUT ON [FINE LINEN, WHITE, PURE]. Again, John uses an intensive perfect participle to further his description of the heavenly rider and his "army/ies", and does so with little concern for its syntactical function - he may just think of it serving as a finite verb. Technically, we could classify it as attendant circumstance expressing action accompanying the verb "to accompany", "they accompanied / assembled with / followed him on white horses and were arrayed in robes of pure white linen." This is less than satisfactory so note how the NIV has it attendant on the assumed verb "riding"; "*riding* on white horses and arrayed" - this makes more sense. We could classify it as adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of the army's accompanying / following, although not really! "A heavenly army was assembled with him, *mounted* on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and pure."

v15

At this point John draws on the language of Isaiah 11:4.

εκ + gen. "**out of [his mouth is a sharp sword]**" - [A SHARP SWORD COMES OUT] FROM [THE MOUTH OF HIM]. Expressing source / origin; a redundant, but stylistic use of the preposition. Mathewson notes that the fronting of the prepositional phrase in the Greek, "from the mouth of him", serves to draw attention to the rider's mouth as the source of judgment. It is the Word of God that will strike down the secular city.

ἵνα + subj. "-" - THAT. Possibly introducing a final clause expressing purpose; "in order that with / by it (the sword from his mouth = the Word) he may strike down the nations", but a purpose clause doesn't work with the second clause "he will shepherd them with / by a rod made of iron." For this reason, many translators turn the second clause into a new sentence, although the reader is then inclined to treat the clause as if it were a positive statement. It seems best to take the **ἵνα** + subj. as expegetic, ie., it introduces an explanation of the action of divine judgment, of the sharp sword coming out of the rider's mouth: the judgment involves striking down the nations, and exercising rule over them with an iron rod. In the second clause John uses the future tense of **ποιμαίνω**, "to shepherd", when we would expect a subjunctive, but John happily uses either a subjunctive, or a future tense with **ἵνα**.

εν + dat. "**with [which]**" - IN [IT HE MAY STRIKE THE NATIONS, AND HE WILL SHEPHERD THEM] IN [A ROD MADE OF IRON]. Instrumental use of the preposition, expressing means, "by / with which he may strike down by / with a rod made of iron." The striking, as with the ruling, is unlikely to be rehabilitative; it does not serve to prompt repentance. The verse as a whole describes judgment; the rider is not "a forceful shepherd whose chief concern is the re-forming of the flock", Blount, but rather the verse describes "the total conquest and destruction the returning (appearing!!) Christ will achieve over the nations", Osborne.

τα εθνη [ος] "**the nations**" - The term is used of the citizens who ascribe to the dictates of Babylon, the secular city, those who oppose God. Beale suggests that this includes apostate believers.

ποιμαίνει [ποιμαίνω] fut. "**he will rule [them]**" - The verb means "to shepherd", which sense can extend to "rule", as NIV. "Rule / exercise authority over" is likely to express the business of judgment performed by the sword from the mouth of the rider = the proclamation of his Word. A shepherd would often carry a heavy stick to hit unruly sheep, but the rider uses a rod of iron; "it denotes the act of 'shattering', or ruling with stern judgment", Smalley.

του οινου [ος] gen. "**[the winepress]**" - [AND HE TRAMPLES THE WINEPRESS] OF THE WINE. The genitive is obviously adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic, although it is unclear how it limits "the winepress / press." Possibly content, "*full of wine*" ("the winepress *containing* the wine", Cassirer), or

producer, "*which produces* the wine" ("he will trample out the wine in the wine press", TEV),, possibly even attributed "winepress wine" = "the pressed wine", but most translation just go with "winepress" by itself, as NIV. Note the string of four genitives that follow, all testing the task of classification. Mathewson suggests that they serve to give prominence to God's wrath.

του θυμου [ος] gen. "**of the fury**" - OF THE ANGER. The genitive is adjectival, probably exegetical, specifying "the pressed wine", "which is the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty", ESV.

της οργης [η] gen. "**of the wrath**" - OF THE ANGER, FURY, WRATH. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "fury"; "the furious anger of God"; "the furious wrath of God", Phillips.

του θεου [ος] gen. "**of God**" - The genitive may be classified as adjectival, idiomatic / source, "from", or verbal, subjective, "exhibited by."

του παντοκρατορος [ωρ ορος] gen. "**Almighty**" - THE ALMIGHTY. Genitive in apposition to "God".

v16

και "-" - [AND HE HAS A NAME HAVING BEEN WRITTEN ON THE GARMENT, ROBE], AND [ON THE THIGH OF HIM]. The conjunction here is likely to be exegetical, specifying the actual place on the robe where the name is written, "on his robe, that is / namely, on/at his thigh", so Smalley, Osborne, Beale, Mounce, ...; on that part of the body where a sword would normally hang; "on that part of the robe that covered his thigh was written", CEV.

γεγραμμενον [γραφω] perf. mid./pas. part. "**[he has a name] written**" - [A NAME] HAVING BEEN WRITTEN. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting name; "a name which was inscribed" = "a written name." Again, John chooses an intensive perfect to highlight the description of the rider.

Βασιλευς [εως εως] "**King**" - Standing in apposition to "name", although taking a nominative of name, rather than agreeing with the accusative of "name".

βασιλεων [εως εως] gen. "**of kings**" - The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / subordination; "King *over* kings." So also "Lord of lords." The antichrist is ruler over his associate kings, but Christ is the ruler over all authorities. Note that this title is used in the intertestamentary period as a title for Yhwh, reminding us that "the Warrior Messiah is God himself!", Osborne.

19:17-21

The Reign of Christ, 17:1-22:5

The demise of the Beast, 19:11-21:8

ii] The defeat of the beasts

Synopsis

In two further "and I saw" visions, v17-18, 19-21, John describes the feast of the carrion and the judgment of the beasts and their associates. In the first vision, v17-18, an angel, standing on the sun, invites the scavenger birds to a feast of carrion, the corpses of the beasts' army. In the next vision, v19-21, John sees the beast and the prophet-beast captured and thrown into the lake of fire. As for all those with the mark of the beast, they are slain by the sword from the mouth of the rider and left as carrion for scavenger birds.

Teaching

The Kingdom of God is at hand; the day of judgment is a day of destruction for the godless.

Issues:

i] Context: See 19:11-16.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The defeat of the beasts:*

The feast of the carrion, v17-18;

The Beasts and their allies are destroyed, v19-21.

iv] Interpretation:

In the second of the **καὶ εἶδον**, "and I saw", visions, v17-18, John describes an invitation to a messianic banquet which is the exact opposite to the invitation given to the redeemed, those who join in the messianic banquet of the Lamb, 19:9. This invitation is given to scavenger birds to feed on the carrion of all those who have taken the path to oblivion by following the Beast and the Prophet; all those rich and poor who worship the secular city, Babylon.

In the third **καὶ εἶδον**, "and I saw", vision, v19-21, John describes the destruction of the Beast and the Prophet, and their allies. In 16:16 John referred to the kings and their armies gathering at Armageddon for a final showdown with Christ as part of the judgment of the sixth bowl. Now again, he takes us back to this event, the Great Day of the Lord, the day of judgment. Two main players lead the pack, namely the Beast and the false

prophet. John exposed the Beast for us in 13:1-10. In simple terms he is the antichrist, "satanically-manipulated political power", Richardson. Then there is the false prophet, the other face of the antichrist, the beast from the land. John gives us a detailed description of him in 13:11-18. He is the ideological side of the antichrist, the philosophical beast, or as Richardson puts it, "Satanically-manipulated ideologies." The two together, entailing the antichrist, Babylon / the secular city, have gathered with their devotees to war against Christ and his army of followers, the redeemed. This they have always done, and now in this final show of defiance they are brought down by the same instrument that always lays them low, namely "the sword coming out of the mouth of the rider", the word of God, the gospel. This time there are no more opportunities for the beasts to stagger out of the bog, wounded and ready to cause more trouble; this time the game is up; the consuming fire of judgment sees to that. Such is the ultimate end of darkness. Of course, they don't go down alone. All those with the mark of the beast, those who worship the beast, those devotees of Babylon / the secular city, they too face the horror of judgment, and a rather horrible image John uses to describe it. Osborne suggests a sermon title for these verses could be "Will You Be the Eater or the Eaten?" - I don't want to be either!

Text - 19:17

The defeat of the beasts, v17-21: i] The feast of the carrion, v17-18. With rather gory images John describes the end of Babylon's reign. "The triumph of God's kingdom over the enemies of justice and love is celebrated by a joyful feast for the faithful (in heaven / the wedding supper of the Lamb), and ("but" is obviously a typo) by a nightmarish supper for the waiting [scavenger] birds [of prey on earth]", Smalley, cf., Beasley-Murray p282. The message for the reader is - make sure you attend the right feast! Don't be caught out with the mark of the Beast; persevere in faith / conquer.

καὶ εἶδον "I saw" - AND I SAW. Serving to indicate a step in the narrative / a new vision.

ἑστῶτα [ἰστημι] perf. part. "[an angel] standing" - The participle serves as the complement of the direct object "angel", standing in a double accusative construction.

ἐν + dat. "**in [the sun]**" - Here local, expressing space, "in/on the sun." The angel stands on the sun and invites all the scavenging birds to a feast of carrion, cf., Ezk.39:17-20 where the invitation is for a feast of slain animals, here reversed.

ἐν + dat. "**in a loud voice**" - [AND HE CRIED OUT] IN [A LOUD VOICE]. Adverbial use of the preposition, modal, expressing manner; "with a loud voice."

λεγων [λεγω] pres. part. "-" - SAYING. Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the verb "to cry out"; "he cried out and said ..." - another example of John's stylistic use of this participle; cf., λεγων, 1:17.

τοις ορνεοις [ον] dat. "**to [all] the birds**" - Dative of indirect object.

τοις πετομενοις [πετομαι] dat. pres. mid. part. "**flying**" - FLYING [IN MIDHEAVEN]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "birds"; "all the birds that fly overhead", ESV.

του θεου [ος] gen. "**[supper] of God**" - [COME GATHER TO THE GREAT SUPPER] OF GOD. The genitive is adjectival, possibly possessive, "God's supper", but descriptive, idiomatic may be better, "the supper / dinner / feast (judgmental banquet) *which God has arranged*"; "gather yourselves together for the great feast that God is giving", Cassirer.

v18

ινα + subj. "**so that [you may eat]**" - Here introducing a final clause expressing purpose, "in order that"

βασιλεων [εως εως] gen. "**[the flesh] of kings**" - [FLESH] OF KINGS [AND FLESH OF CAPTAINS AND FLESH OF STRONG MEN AND FLESH OF HORSES AND OF THE ONES SITTING ON THEM AND FLESH OF ALL]. The genitive, as with the list that follows, is adjectival, possessive. The participle καθημενων, "of the ones sitting", serves as a substantive; επι, "upon [them]", is spatial = "their riders."

τε και ... και και ... "**and and**" - BOTH [FREE MEN] AND [SLAVES] AND [SMALL] AND [GREAT]. Coordinate construction, with the linking particle τε used only here in Revelation; "the free and the slaves, the small and the great", REB = worldly humanity as a whole, those with the mark of the beast, both the apostate and unbelievers.

v19

ii] The beasts and their allies are destroyed, v19-21. The beast + the prophet (the beast from the land) [+ the kings + their armies] = Babylon = antichrist (all puppets of Satan / the Red Dragon), had deluded the subjects of the city with signs and wonders (the corrupted political, philosophical and technological glories of the secular city), but now in a final confrontation at Armageddon (16:14) face the consequences in fire and the sword from the rider's mouth (the gospel, the announcement that "the kingdom of God is at hand"). "Now is the time for judgement on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out", Jn.12:31. This confrontation climaxes the ongoing confrontations experienced by the Christian community as it battles with the powers of darkness. John's description of the nations, warring with the Lord's anointed and his subjects (see

also Gog from Magog, ch. 20) reflects the prophetic image of the nations, warring against Israel, Ezk.38-39, Joel 3, Zech.12-14.

και ειδον "I saw" - AND I SAW. Serving to indicate a step in the narrative / a new vision.

της γης [η] gen. "[the kings] of the earth" - [THE BEAST AND THE KINGS] OF THE EARTH [AND THE ARMIES OF THEM]. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, "the world's kings", Barclay, or descriptive, idiomatic / subordination; "the kings *who rule over* the earth."

συνηγμενα [συναγω] perf. mid./pas. part "**gathered together**" - HAVING BEEN GATHERED. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "kings and the armies of them", "which were gathered / "being mustered."

ποιησαι [ποιεω] aor. inf. "**to wage [war]**" - TO DO [WAR]. The infinitive is adverbial, final, expressing purpose; "in order to make war."

μετα + gen. "**against**" - The preposition expresses association / accompaniment, as in "engage with / war with" an enemy, but expressed in English as "against" an enemy.

του καθημενου [καθημαι] gen. pres. mid. part. "**the rider**" - THE ONE SITTING [ON THE HORSE AND AGAINST THE ARMY OF HIM]. The participle serves as a substantive; "assembling themselves together against the rider and his army", Cassirer. Here we see the secular city fail the first rule of war: *know your enemy*.

v20

Both the beast / antichrist ("the incarnation of secular powers in their unjust and idolatrous opposition, at any period of history, to God and his people", Smalley) and the prophet / beast from the land / antichrist ("the alter ego of the beast", Smalley), are **επιασθη**, "seized by force", and cast into the lake of fire (as was Korah, Num.16:33, ie., not a place for holding the dead, Hades, Gehenna, or John's abyss, but a place of destruction, cf., Dan7:11). As to who does the seizing, obviously the rider on the white horse / Christ, so Aune, rather than the rider's army, so Osborne, although John's apocalyptic imagery restrains our imagination by providing no battle. The battle was actually won on the cross and the rider and his heavenly army are part of the heavenly victory parade rather than an army heading off to earth; see 19:11-16. The reader who continues to persevere in faith as they struggle under the power of the secular city / Babylon / the beast / can take to heart in the fact that the corrupt systems of this age are destined to destruction, and that even now the faithful share in the eternal prize. So, brothers and sisters, persevere!

μετ [μετα] + gen. "**with [it]**" - [THE BEAST WAS CAPTURED AND] WITH [IT]. Expressing association / accompaniment, as NIV. "The beast was taken into

custody, and along with it the false prophet, the one who performed many signs in its presence."

ὁ ποιησας [ποιεω] aor. part. "**who performed [the signs]**" - [THE FALSE PROPHET] THE ONE HAVING DONE [THE SIGNS]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "false prophet", as NIV.

ενωπιον + gen. "**on [its] behalf**" - BEFORE [HIM]. "Who in its presence had done the signs", ESV.

εν + dat. "**with [these signs]**" - IN [WHICH]. Instrumental use of the preposition, expressing means, along with the resumptive relative pronoun ὅς, "which", ie., "in which *signs* ..."; "by which he had deceived those who had received the mark", ESV.

τους λαβοντας [λαβανω] aor. part. "**those who had received [the mark]**" - [HE DECEIVED] THE ONES HAVING RECEIVED [THE MARK]. The participle serves as a substantive, as NIV.

του θηριου [ον] gen. "**of the beast**" - OF THE WILD ANIMAL. The genitive is adjectival, limiting the noun "mark", but can be nuanced in a number of ways, eg., possessive, "the mark that belongs to the beast", subjective / idiomatic, "the mark *which is bestowed by the beast*", or idiomatic / source, "*which is from the beast.*"

τους προσκυνουντας [προσκυνεω] pres. part. "**worshiped**" - [AND] THE ONES DOING OBEISANCE TO [THE IMAGE OF IT]. The participle serves as a substantive. The verb "to do obeisance to / worship" takes a dative, here the dative "image."

ζωντες [ζαω] pres. part. "**[the two of them were thrown] alive**" - [THE TWO WERE THROWN] LIVING.

του πυρος [ρ ρος] gen. "**[the] fiery [lake]**" - [INTO THE LAKE] OF FIRE. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "lake", as NIV, but possibly idiomatic / content, "the lake *filled with burning fire.*"

της καιομενης [καιω] pres. mid. part. "**of burning [sulphur]**" - THE ONE BURNING [WITH SULPHUR]. As noted by Mathewson, the participle is feminine in agreement with "lake" and genitive in agreement with "fire", and so it "may modify the entire construction 'lake of fire'". So, we could classify it as adjectival, epexegetic, limiting by further defining the "lake of fire", "that is / namely, *the lake of burning sulphur*", or better just attributive, "the lake of fire that burns with sulphur", ESV.

εν + dat. "-" - IN [SULPHUR]. Instrumental, expressing means; "with sulphur."

v21

The associates and followers of the antichrist are destroyed by the Word of God.

εν + dat. "**with [the sword]**" - [THE REST WERE KILLED] IN [THE SWORD]. Here the preposition is instrumental, expressing means; "killed by / with the sword."

τη εξελθουση [εξερχομαι] dat. mid. aor. part. "**coming out of**" - [OF THE ONE SITTING ON THE HORSE,] THE ONE (ie., the sword) COMING OUT FROM [FROM THE MOUTH OF HIM]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "sword"; "that came from the mouth of him", ESV. The redundant, but stylistic repetition of the prefix **εξ** with the preposition **εκ**, "from", source / origin.

του καθημενου [καθημαι] gen. pres. mid. part. "**the rider [on the horse]**" - OF THE ONE SITTING. The participle serves as a substantive, the genitive being possessive; "the sword belonging to the rider on the horse."

εκ + gen. "**on [their flesh]**" - [AND ALL THE BIRDS WERE FULLY FED] FROM [THE FLESH OF THEM]. Expressing source / origin. "Having one's body be food for birds was considered a horrific judgment", Koester, cf., Jer.7:33, 16:4, 19:7, 34:20. "And all the birds devoured their flesh and had their fill", Cassirer.

20:1-3

The Reign of Christ, 17:1-22:5

The demise of the Beast, 19:11-21:8

iii] The millennial bondage of Satan

Synopsis

In this, the next "and I saw" vision, John sees an angel coming out of heaven holding the key to the Abyss, along with a heavy chain. The angel seizes the dragon, Satan, binds him, casts him into the Abyss and seals it for a thousand years. In the Abyss, Satan is unable to deceive the nations, but is again released to cause trouble for a short time.

Teaching

The Kingdom of God is at hand; Satan is *done and dusted*, his power broken.

Issues:

i] Context: See 19:11-16. The millennial bondage of Satan, v1-3 and the millennial reign of the saints, v4-10, although separate visions, stand together, both in time and space - Satan is bound so the saints can rule.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The millennial bondage of Satan:*

The vision of an angel, v1

The incarceration of Satan, v2-3.

iv] Interpretation:

In this the fourth of the **καὶ εἶδον**, "and I saw", visions, John describes the binding and final release of Satan. Major problems of interpretation flow from this chapter when we take John's apocalyptic images literally and/or assume a sequential flow of events running from 19:11 to 21:8. As to the "and I saw" visions, they are not sequential, but rather serve to reveal a number of different aspects of the fall of the harlot Babylon, and the marriage feast of the Lamb, 17:1-19:10.

Most commentators tend toward an amillennial approach to this passage (see below) where the millennial binding of Satan represents the period between the ascension and the parousia / glorification of Christ, namely, the church age, the messianic age. In this period of time, represented by the apocalyptic symbol of 1,000, Satan's power is restrained.

Only in the final tribulation, prior to Christ's second coming, will his power be restored, but only for "a short time."

A very impressive argument is mounted by Koester. He posits that the binding of Satan is nothing more than "a story of the progressive demise of evil." This is certainly typical of John's multi-faceted account of the day of judgment. The demise of Satan entails more than just his being put down: He is no longer able to denounce God's people before God because his judgment involves him being cast from heaven, 12:7-12; He is no longer able to deceive God's people because his judgment involves his incarceration, 20:1-3. Consequently, the vision "affirms that God will prevail, giving Christians incentives to resist both the overt and the more subtle pressures to relinquish their commitments." Goldsworthy posits a similar argument, namely that "the millennium is the day of the Lord, the day on which Satan is bound." "The thousand years is, as to quantity, an unknown but perfect period of time. As to quality, it is the exaltation of Christ in his glorious rule." "The binding of Satan does not imply that there is no evil, no conflict. Rather, it is an affirmation that the kingdom of God has come in Jesus Christ and now permeates the world through the church as it preaches the gospel and lives by it."

The thousand years binding of Satan and reign of the saints: It seems likely that this period of time is an apocalyptic symbol for the reign of God in Christ throughout the church era; see note v2. Christ is victorious on the cross, risen as "the first-fruits of those who have died", ascended, glorified, having appeared (**παρουσία**) in heaven (robes stained in blood) with his white-robed saints before the Ancient of Days - Satan is bound, *done-and-dusted*. Within this reality, the Christian community, alive in Christ, strives to reign with Christ (the millennia) against the corrupting influences of the secular city (Babylon, the beasts, antichrist,), manipulated by the red dragon / Satan. As the Christian community witnesses to the gospel, they find that the *strong man* is unable to resist the power of God unto salvation. In the final days, "a short time", the struggle will intensify into an all-out war between good and evil (the battle of Armageddon), but the warrior king has already won the battle, Satan bound and the victory ours in Christ. So, take heart!

The inaugurated and realized eschatology of John's apocalyptic imagery as it relates to chapter 20: In John's Inaugurated eschatology, the kingdom of God is *not yet*. Its present reality is found in the Christian church / messianic era (the millennia / the reign of God in Christ today). This eschatological perspective is particularly evident in chapter 20 with the

binding / restraint of Satan, rule of Christ through the Christian community, release of Satan (Armageddon) and the Great Assize. From this perspective, the heavenly reality lies in the future - the day of Jesus' coming.



In our experience we live in the age of the Christian church, the messianic age, the millennia, the *not yet* of the inaugurated kingdom of God, awaiting the Great Day of the Lord, the day of Jesus' coming. Yet, as illustrated in the diagram above, in another sense we are already in heaven reigning with Christ, already in the *now* of the realized kingdom of God, Heaven. Satan is defeated on the cross, judgment enacted such that "God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus", Eph.2:6. John's eschatology is primarily realized, the kingdom of God is *now*. Christ has taken his seat at the right hand of the Ancient of Days and so the day of judgment is upon us. This is particularly evident in the first and second "and I saw" visions with the defeat of Satan (the rider's blood-stained robes) / fall of Babylon / beast etc., evidenced by the littered corpses on the battlefield, and also the appearing of Christ (*παρουσια*) in heaven with his saints.

The resurrection of the dead best illustrates this time-warped reality: "the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first", but as Jesus said to the thief on this cross, "this evening you will be with me in paradise." All very Dr. Who!

There are three main Millennial interpretations for chapter 20:

Premillennial: In this version of events, Christ returns to earth, defeats the beast and the prophet (antichrist), the kings and their armies, and then binds Satan in the Abyss. Believers are then raised from the dead and with Christ, rule for 1,000 years. On his release, Satan leads a rebellion against Christ and the saints, but is overthrown and ends up in the fiery pit. Then follows the general resurrection of the dead to face the final judgment, with the unrighteous sent to the

fiery pit and the righteous gathered to a new heaven and new earth, cf., Mounce.

Postmillennial: The Christian community, aided by the Spirit of Christ, slowly overcomes the beast and the prophet, and their associates, casting them into the fiery pit. Then follows 1,000 years during which the influence of Satan is severely restricted. After this period, Satan, in partnership with the antichrist and his associates, orchestrates a major rebellion against God. Christ returns and puts down the rebellion, and throws Satan into the fiery pit. Then follows the general resurrection of the dead to face the final judgment, with the unrighteous sent to the fiery pit and the righteous gathered to a new heaven and new earth, cf., Osborne.

Amillennial: Most commentators argue that the millennial captivity of Satan, v1-3, and the millennial reign of the saints, v4-10, represent the present state of the Christian community in the messianic age, ie., the era between Christ's resurrection and return, see Hugh, Boring, Beale, Beasley-Murray ("the thousand years began with the appearing of the kingdom of the Messiah in history"), Wilcock (the thousand years "began with Christ's first coming, are thus still in progress, and are equivalent to the 'three and a half years'"), Caird ("the messianic age"). Satan has his hands tied; he can influence through deceit, but that's it. He may present as "an angel of light", but he is nothing more than a liar; "there is no truth in him." The secular city follows his lead, and sadly, so do apostate believers, but he can be resisted. Yet, there is a day coming when he will be set free from his bonds. That will be a terrible time of tribulation, but it will only be "for a short time."

Text - 20:1

The millennial bondage of Satan, v1-3: i] An angel appears on the scene with a key to the dwelling place of demonic beings below the earth, cf., 9:1. He has a "large chain"; as is required for a serious offender.

και ειδον "I saw" - AND I SAW. Serving to indicate a step in the narrative / a new vision.

καταβαινοντα [**καταβαινω**] pres. part. "[an angel] coming down" - The participle may be classified as the accusative complement of the object "angel" standing in a double accusative construction, or simply adjectival, attributive, limiting "angel", "an angel which is coming down and having" So also "having / holding".

εκ + gen. "out of" - FROM. Expressing source / origin.

εχοντα [εχω] pres. part. "having" - The participle as for "coming down"; he was holding both a key and a great chain.

της αβυσσου [ος] gen. "[the key] to the Abyss" - [THE KEY] OF THE BOTTOMLESS / DEEP PIT. The genitive is adjectival, possibly possessive, or better descriptive, idiomatic, "the key which locks / unlocks the gate to the Abyss", as NIV. "The key which gives access to the Abyss", Cassirer.

επι + acc. "holding in [his hand]" - [AND A GREAT CHAIN] UPON [THE HAND OF HIM]. John's favourite spatial preposition, here with the accusative; probably as NIV. "And a huge chain", CEV.

v2

ii] The incarceration of Satan, v2-3. As explained above, the millennial incarceration of Satan images the kingdom of God, both inaugurated and realized, as regard Satan. From the perspective of realized eschatology, Christ was victorious over Satan on the cross, such that in eternal terms he is bound and his "deceiving" days are over. It is of great comfort to those of us who live in the realm of inaugurated eschatology, the *not yet*, having been deceived on numerous occasions, to know that the Great Deceiver's days of deceiving were numbered long ago. As to his power, when it comes to the gospel, Christ's cross has rendered him like a jailor without a jail.

ὁ οφις [ις εως] "that [ancient] serpent" - [AND HE SEIZED THE DRAGON] THE [ANCIENT] SERPENT [WHO IS DEVIL, AND SATAN]. Nominative standing in apposition to "the dragon", although note that "dragon" is accusative. John may view "the ancient serpent" as a title.

χιλια ετη "a thousand years" - [AND HE BOUND HIM] A THOUSAND YEARS. This important term is anarthrous here (without an article). In the following references throughout the chapter, John provides a definite article serving to reference back to the "thousand years" in this verse. Yet, we face a problem with v4 and the thousand-year reign of Christ" because there the "thousand years" is anarthrous when we would expect the article, "the same thousand years." The context certainly implies that they are the same "thousand years", the same perfect period of time. A similar problem appears in v6, although textual variants exist with and without the article. "The thousand-year period is a symbolic time that is lengthy though still transient", Blount. In the amillennial scheme, the thousand years represents "the messianic age", so Caird, the age between the ascension and parousia / glorification of Christ, the reign of God in Christ today, the inaugurated kingdom of God. The reign of the saints with Christ is, of course, eternal, but it seems likely that the millennia refers to this age, contra Smalley "a symbol for the timeless reign of God in Christ, in heaven and on earth." Possibly

conceived from Genesis 2:2 and Psalm 90:4, and obliquely referred to in 2 Enoch 32 / 33, namely of 7 periods of time, the seventh period being the messianic age involving the binding of Satan and the reign of the saints, with the eighth period being eternal time.

v3

επᾶνω gen. "[sealed it] over [him]" - [AND *the angel* THREW HIM INTO THE ABYSS AND SHUT *the door* AND SEALED *it*] OVER [HIM]. This preposition expresses the sense "over, above, upon, on." The angel hurled Satan into the Abyss and "locked him in and sealed the opening over him", Barclay. The idea of a locked door represents "the sovereignty and judgement of Christ over the realm of Satan", Smalley. Smalley states that the realm is "death and Hades", although it's probably wider than that, given his earthly authority ("he has the whole world in his hand"???). Satan's incarceration is not in Hades, the place of the dead, but the Abyss, the home of dark powers.

ἵνα μη + subj. "**to keep him from [deceiving the nations]**" - THAT NOT / LEST [HE DECEIVE THE NATIONS ANY MORE]. Introducing a negated purpose clause, "in order that not ..."; "so that he could not deceive the nations any more", TEV. As indicated above, if we follow Koester then Satan cannot deceive the nations anymore because his days of deceit are over; he is incarcerated, ready for the lake of fire. If we take the view that his confinement represents the messianic age / the age of the church, then his wings are trimmed, eg., "he cannot prevent someone being drawn to Christ. Nor can he delude and attack the covenant community after the resurrection of Jesus, as he did before it (which is the force of **ἔτε**, "any longer")", Smalley, so also Hughes,

ἄχρι + subj. "**until [the thousand years were ended]**" - UNTIL [THE THOUSAND YEARS WERE COMPLETED]. Introducing a temporal clause, indefinite time; "extent of time up to a point", BDAG. "After the thousand years were past", Phillips.

μετά + acc. "**after [that]**" - AFTER [THESE THINGS]. Temporal use of the preposition, "after".

λυθῆναι [λυω] aor. pas. inf. "**[he must be] set free**" - [HIM] TO BE RELEASED [FOR A SHORT TIME IS NECESSARY]. The infinitive serves as the subject of the impersonal verb "is necessary." The accusative subject of the infinitive is **αυτον**, "him". The temporal phrase **μικρον χρονον**, "little / short time", is an accusative of time, so "for a short time"; "after that he is destined to be let loose for a short while", Cassirer. The release of Satan after his millennial imprisonment is usually understood to represent the final tribulation of the Christian Community, a horrible time of persecution when evil is let loose ("a great resurgence of evil at the end of time", Wilcock, cf. 2Thes.2), a time that will be shortened for the sake

of the elect, cf., Mk.13:20. If we follow Koester, what we have is an apocalyptic image proving to us that Satan, his minions and followers (those with the mark of the beast) rightly face the demands of eternal punishment, for even after judgment was enacted against them, they were up to their old tricks again. The lake of fire is rightly their end. This approach requires us to see the Great Day of the Lord / judgment in the terms of a process, rather than a single act. This certainly fits with John's approach to the Great Day, eg., the judgment of the seals, trumpets and bowls. Blount draws two points from the release of Satan: First, evil resurrects; it always comes back. Second, resurrected evil will try to deceive. Two good sermon points!

20:4-10

The Reign of Christ, 17:1-22:5

The demise of the Beast, 19:11-21:8

iv] The millennial reign of the saints

Synopsis

In this, the next "and I saw" vision, John sees the saints enthroned in heaven. These are the believers who had suffered because of their testimony to Christ, and had not worshiped the beast. As priests of God, they are given authority to reign for a thousand years. After the thousand years, Satan is released from the Abyss and again deceives the nations. In cahoots with Gog from Magog, Satan sets upon God's people in the city of God. Having proved his irredeemable character, Satan and his minions are cast in the lake of fire, tormented day and night.

Teaching

The Kingdom of God is at hand; Believers reign with Christ.

Issues:

i] Context: See 19:11-16. The millennial bondage of Satan, v1-3 and the millennial reign of the saints, v4-10, although separate visions, stand together, both in time and space - Satan is bound so the saints can rule.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The millennial reign of the saints*:

The saints are set to reign, v4-6;

The release of Satan from the Abyss to again make war on the saints, v7-9;

Satan is cast into the lake of fire, v10.

iv] Interpretation:

The interpretation of this fifth **καὶ εἶδον**, "and I saw" vision is fraught, but its message is clear and to the point. Christ has triumphed over the powers of darkness. These powers may seem to reign now, but God in Christ reigns. Those who persevere in faith, those who remain true to the gospel and refuse to worship the glory of the secular city, even now reign with Christ, and will reign with him in eternity. Of course, the details are far less easy to handle. Most serious commentators adopt an amillennial approach to the passage, although with their own particular bent; see 20:1-3, *The three main Millennial interpretations of chapter 20*. See also Interpretation 20:1-3.

In the passage before us, John describes the reign of the saints during the incarceration of Satan (ie., the present church era, the messianic era), prior to his final release and punishment. Some identify two groups of saints, "the souls" / martyrs, and a second group, those who have not worshiped the beast, but one group is likely, namely, believers (καὶ is probably epexegetic; "that is, those who had not worshiped the beast ..."). The fact that they have come to life to reign with Christ may imply that they are believers who have died, risen, and now reign with Christ in spirit, although this defies the notion of the resurrection of the dead in the day of judgment. For this reason, it is probably a symbol for those who have found new life in Christ and together reign with Christ through the Christian community / church, cf., 1Cor.6:1-6 - "they lived (in Christ) and they reigned with Christ." Believers are alive in Christ, alive in the one "raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died" = "the first resurrection", cf., 1Cor.15:20-24. In the age of the church, unbelievers remain "dead", as far as God is concerned, and "do not come to life" until the end of the church age, namely, the general resurrection of the dead in the day of judgment, v5. Those who share in "the first resurrection" (ie., believers, those who have found new life in Christ, the one who is the first fruits of the dead) are blessed because, in Christ, they will not have to face judgment ("the second death"), and share together in the reign of Christ in this the messianic age ("thousand years"), v6.

Finally, the binding / restricting of Satan, v1-3, and the reign of the Christian community in the World, v4-6, collide at the end of the messianic age ("thousand years"). Satan's release "for a short time" leads to the battle of Armageddon, when the beast, the prophet, and the gathered kings / Gog from Maygog and his massive army, set upon the city of God for "the great day of God the Almighty", v7-9a, cf., Ezk.38-39. Of course, the battle is over before it starts, with Satan and his minions put down forever, v9b-10. Given these facts, let us persevere in faith, for "if we endure, we will also reign with him", 2Tim.2:12

Text - 20:4

The millennial reign of the saints, v4-10: i] The saints are set to reign, v4-6. John's apocalyptic image of the heavenly reign of the saints ("the souls" who had not worshiped the beast nor received his mark) serves to illustrate Christ's earthly reign through the church today. This reign John depicts as a "thousand years", a millennia (the reign of God in Christ today / the inaugurated kingdom of God). This millennial reign of Christ (the church / messianic era) climaxes in Armageddon. During this millennia / reign of God in Christ, believers are blessed

because, not only do they possess eternal life (free of judgment / "the second death", and alive in Christ / "the first resurrection"), but they also share in the eternal priestly authority of Christ here on earth, i.e., they are able to offer forgiveness of sins through witnessing the gospel. Of course, the present reign of the saints in the millennia is but a foretaste of our eternal reign with Christ.

και ειδον "I saw" - AND I SAW. Serving to indicate a step in the narrative / a new vision.

επ [επι] + acc. "[thrones] on [which were seated]" - [THRONES AND THEY SAT] ON [THEM]. John's favourite spatial preposition, here + acc. but still with the sense "on, upon." Who is seated on the throne? It is likely that the image refers to all believers, those who have persevered in faith and suffered in their witness to the gospel, so Smalley, Beale, - presumably they are living witnesses. Some commentators see them as resurrected martyrs, so Mounce, Aune, There is the faint possibility that John is referring to the elders seated in the heavenly sanctuary, cf., 4:4, 11:16.

αυτοις dat. pro. "those who [had been given authority to judge]" - [AND JUDGMENT WAS GIVEN] TO THEM. Best taken as a dative of direct object, giving the sense that the saints are given authority to participate with Christ in God's reign / rule / judgements, so Aune, Mounce, Osborne, and most translations, as NIV; "to them the right of judgment had been given", Barclay. It is possible that we have here a dative of interest, advantage, "for them", such that God judges in favour of the saints, and because of this they will not be subject to the "second death", v6, so Beale, Koester, Smalley,; "judgment was given in their favour", CEB.

των πεπελεκισμενων [πελεκιζω] gen. perf. mid./pas. part. "[the souls] of those who had been beheaded" - [AND I saw THE SOULS] of the ones having been beheaded. The participle serves as a substantive, the genitive being adjectival, possessive.

δια + acc. "because of [their testimony]" - BECAUSE OF [THE TESTIMONY]. Causal; "because of, on account of."

Ιησου [ος] gen. "about Jesus" - OF JESUS. The genitive is adjectival, usually classified as verbal, objective; "because they had told about Jesus", CEV, "because they had declared their faith in Jesus", Barclay, or possibly subjective, "testimony borne by Jesus", Cassirer, either way, serving to limit "testimony".

του θεου [ος] gen. "[the word] of God" - [AND BECAUSE OF THE WORD] OF GOD. The genitive is probably adjectival, idiomatic / source; "from God."

και "[they did not worship the beast]" - AND [WHO DID NOT WORSHIP THE BEAST NOR THE IMAGE OF IT AND DID NOT RECEIVE THE MARK ON THE FOREHEAD AND ON THE HAND]. It seems best to take the conjunction here as epexegetic; "that

is, those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their forehead or their hands, live and reign with Christ for a thousand years." John is further defining those given authority to rule with Christ, namely the witnesses ("the souls"). So, John identifies only one group of believers who are ruling with Christ, so Mounce, Aune, Reddish, ... Some commentators do argue that John is now identifying a second group of believers, those not martyred and so not sharing in the first resurrection to rule with Christ, but sharing in the second resurrection and so included in the reign of the saints later; see Osborne.

εζησαν [ζωω] aor. "**they came to life [and reigned]**" - [AND] LIVE [AND REIGN]. The aorist is usually treated as ingressive / inceptive, as NIV; "they came to life again", Cassirer. The aorist is probably just expressing a state, so also "reign", i.e., their state of being alive and of reigning, see Mathewson. The faithful witnesses, those without the mark of the beast, are alive in Christ, saved, and as such, reign with Christ. So it's not "they came alive (resurrected) and reigned", but "they are alive (in the state of living) and reign." As for *when* "the souls" reign, they are reigning now with Christ through the Christian community.

μετα + gen. "**with [Christ]**" - Expressing association / accompaniment.

χιλια ητη "**a thousand years**" - Accusative of time, duration; "for a thousand years", ESV. "When used for time, 1,000 years suggests vastness", Koester.

v5

This rather difficult verse seems to serve as an exegetical note (Smalley, "two parentheses" - the first is bracketed in the NIV). Having spoken about the state of "the souls" being alive and reigning (i.e., the present participation of believers in the reign of God in Christ [the millennia]), John makes the point that "the rest" (unbelievers) will not "come to life" until after the millennia, i.e., at the general resurrection of the just and unjust at the parousia of Christ. John then makes the point that the state of the "the souls" (believers) living and reigning through Christ may rightly be called "the first resurrection", i.e., they are alive in Christ, the one who is the first fruit of the dead.

των νεκρων [ος] gen. "**[the rest] of the dead**" - The genitive is adjectival, partitive. Who are the "rest of the dead"? "The rest of the dead / the remaining dead" are probably unbelievers, those with the mark of the beast, so Osborne, Koester, Possibly all humanity, believers and unbelievers, so Smalley.

αχρι + subj. "**until [the thousand years were ended]**" - [DID NOT COME TO LIFE] UNTIL [SHOULD BE COMPLETED THE THOUSAND YEARS]. Introducing an indefinite temporal clause expressing time up to a point; "until"; "until the thousand years were over", TEV.

αυτη pro. "**this [is the first resurrection]**" - Nominative subject of an assumed verb to-be, best taken as backward referencing, possibly to "the rest of

the dead" who came alive (the closest referent), although usually taken as referencing "the souls" who came alive, v4. Possibly forward referencing the blessed, those who are raised to reign with Christ (although unlikely). The reference "the first resurrection" is likely serving as an apocalyptic image of the state of a believer in the here and now - such are alive in Christ who is "the first fruits of those who have died", 1Cor.15:20. Other views of "the first resurrection" abound and Koester nicely summarizes them into three main arguments:

- Resurrection of the faithful to endless life. This is the resurrection of believers in the last day at the return of Christ, as referenced throughout the NT, 1Cor.15:12, etc. It is the "first" resurrection because believers rise first. See Koester, Aune, Mounce, Reddish,
- Intermediate state between physical death and final resurrection. This is a spiritual resurrection of believers who, in spirit, unite with Christ prior to the final resurrection on the day Christ's return, as such John calls it "the first resurrection." This aligns with those who see "the souls" as alive in Spirit reigning with Christ during the millennia. See Beale, Smalley, ...
- Earthly life beginning with baptism. This is the idea that a person who believes in Jesus is united to Christ in his resurrection and thus alive and reigning with Christ in his glorification. Augustine was probably the first to run this line; see Hughes.

v6

A person sharing in "the first resurrection" (the state of being alive in Christ who is the first fruits of the dead) is "blessed and holy" because they will not have to face "the second death" (the judgment of eternal damnation for those whose names are not found in the book of life on the great day of judgment), and because they are both "priests of God and of Christ" (ministers) and they reign with Christ during the millennia (the reign of God in Christ today / the kingdom of God as inaugurated in the present age), but also for eternity.

ὁ εχων [εχω] pres. part. "**those who**" - [BLESSED AND HOLY *is*] THE ONE HAVING. The participle serves as a substantive. Believers are blessed in the sight of God because they are holy / set apart for God.

μερος εν + dat. "**share in [the first resurrection]**" - The noun "part", μερος + dat, or + εν, gives the sense "have a share in something." See above.

επι + gen. "**[the second death has no power] over [them]**" - ON, UPON [THESE ONES THE SECOND DEATH DOES NOT HAVE AUTHORITY]. John's favourite spatial preposition. Most commentators hold that the "second death is the punishment of the wicked after their resurrection at the end of the age", Koester. "The second death cannot touch such men", Phillips.

αλλ [αλλα] "**but [they will be priests]**" - Here used to provide an accessory idea, BDF.448.6; Believers will not face oblivion, and not only that, but .. / and furthermore, will reign. "You shall be called priests of the Lord ministers of the holy one", Isa.61:6, so "priests" in the sense of those who are servants "of God και (and) of Christ." The και "suggests the unity of nature between God and Jesus", Smalley.

του θεου [ος] "**of God**" - OF GOD [AND OF CHRIST]. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, or subjective / idiomatic, "priests *who serve* God and Christ."

μετ [μετα] + gen. "**[will reign] with [him]**" - [AND WILL REIGN] WITH [HIM THE THOUSAND YEARS]. Expressing association / accompaniment. As well as being priests, believers in Christ are also kings in that they eternally reign with Christ. This reign, as exercised in the world today through the Christian community, John calls the millennia. As already indicated, there is a range of views for the "when" of the millennia, eg., the eschatological future (eg., Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation*); a literal reign of Christ on earth after this present age, (Osborne); the present church / messianic era, (amillennial); an eternal reign, now and forever ("the saints participating in the sovereign and salvific activity of God in Christ eternally, whether in this life or in the next", Smalley).

v7

ii] The release of Satan from the Abyss to again make war on the saints, v7-9. The passive "will be released" implies that God is responsible for Satan's release (see possible reasons below). Satan is immediately up to his old tricks again, this time with Gog from Magog and his army (another image of the Beast, Prophet beast, and kings + army), who sets upon the saints / the city of God, but is destroyed with fire before he even gets going. Although most serious commentators do not agree with Osborne's postmillennial stance, he is right in pointing out that the amillennial stance is somewhat vulnerable when it comes to Satan's deception of the nations. Satan only gets to deceive the nations after the millennia, not during it. Those of an amillennial ilk have to argue that Satan's deception is restrained during the millennia, which is why society at large is more stable than unstable.

όταν + subj. "**when [the thousand years are over]**" - WHEN [THE THOUSAND YEARS SHOULD BE COMPLETED]. Introducing an indefinite temporal clause, translated as definite.

εκ + gen. "**from [his prison]**" - [SATAN WILL BE RELEASED] FROM [THE PRISON OF HIM]. Expressing separation, "away from." John doesn't reveal the motive for Satan's release. The most convincing suggestion is that Satan receives divine grace / clemency as a final opportunity for him to act graciously. Possibly

it's all about giving him enough rope to hang himself by, or may be "to make plain that neither the designs of Satan nor the waywardness of the human heart will be altered by the mere passing of time", Mounce.

v8

πλανησαι [πλαναω] aor. inf. "**to deceive**" - [AND HE WILL GO OUT] TO DECEIVE. The infinitive here is adverbial, final, expressing purpose, "he will come out in order to deceive the nations."

τα εθνη [ος] "**the nations**" - Serving as the accusative direct object of the infinitive "to deceive." Who are these nations? It seems likely that the nations, as with "the people of the earth", is an apocalyptic symbol for those opposed to Christ and his saints. As Koester notes, they can be deceived, swayed by evil, but can also be redeemed through the witness of the gospel, so also Beale, Mounce, Smalley, Reddish. So, the nations constitute the organized subjects of Babylon, the secular city. Other interpretations abound, eg.:

- Dispensational commentators argue that the nations are made up of those born during the millennia who have not converted to the Christian faith and who now join together to take on the city of God; see Thomas. Another version has the nations here as those unbelievers who perished in the war prior to the millennia, finally resurrected from Hades at the end of the millennia to join in battle against the saints.

- Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation*, argues that the nations represent the underworld where spirits and demons reside.

- Although the battle described in 19:11-21 is probably the same battle as described here (note the article with **πολεμον**, "war"; it's "the same war" John has been describing since 12:17), both Beasley-Murray and Osborne argue that it is a different battle and that the nations here are those that did not join with the Beast in chapter 19.

τα "-" - THE [IN THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE EARTH]. The article serves as an adjectivizer turning the prepositional phrase "in the four corners of the earth" into an attributive adjective; "the nations that are at the four corners of the earth", ESV. The preposition **εν** is local, expressing space, and the genitive "of the earth" is adjectival, wholative. "The nations scattered over the whole world", TEV.

και " - " - AND. Quite possibly expegetic here; "that is, Gog and Magog", TEV. Possibly ascensive, "even Gog and Magog", Peterson.

Γωγ και Μαγωγ "**Gog and Magog**" - It is interesting how John has appropriated Ezekiel's image of "Gog from the land of Magog", an evil individual who leads the invasion against God's people, Ezk.38. Does John actually now see two individuals, turning Magog from a mythical land into a mythical person? This seems unlikely, so John's **και**, "Gog and Magog", may well stand for "from the

land of." As indicated above, the introductory **και** may be epexegetic, such that Gog from the land of Magog is representative of the deceived nations, as a king is representative of the nation (ie., they are "symbols of all the nations gathered together in opposition to Christ and his followers", Osborne), or better ascensive, "even Gog", presumably serving as another image of the antichrist; like the Beast he leads Satan's forces against the city of God.

συναγαγειν [συναγω] "**to gather [them]**" - TO GATHER, BRING TOGETHER [THEM]. The infinitive is adverbial, final, expressing purpose; Satan deceives the nations in order to gather the nations for battle.

εις + acc. "**for [battle]**" - TO [WAR]. Here the preposition expresses purpose / end view; "with a view to war."

ὡς "like [the sand]" - [WHOSE NUMBER *is*] AS [THE SAND]. Comparative, as NIV.

της θαλασσης [α] gen. "**on the seashore**" - OF THE SEA. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, or descriptive, idiomatic, eg., "the sand *which is beside* the sea." "He will gather a huge army, millions strong."

v9

της γης [η] gen. "**[the breadth] of the earth**" - [AND THEY WENT UP OVER THE BREADTH] OF THE EARTH. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, "the flat lands *that belong to* the earth", or idiomatic / local, "the flat lands *located on* the earth." Note the allusion to Habakkuk 1:6, "I am raising up the Chaldeans, that savage and impetuous nation, who march far and wide over the earth to seize and occupy what is not theirs", REB. Given that Jerusalem is in the highlands, armies "come up" against the city.

των ἁγιων adj. "**[the camp] of God's people**" - [THE BARRACKS, ENCAMPMENT] OF THE SAINTS. The genitive is adjectival, possessive.

και "-" - AND. Mathewson suggests that the conjunction here is epexegetic; "the camp of God's saints, namely, the beloved city."

την ηγαπημενην [αγαπαω] perf. mid./pas. part "**[the city] he loves**" - [THE CITY] THE ONE HAVING BEEN LOVED. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "city", "the beloved city"; "the city that he loves", TEV. Zion is in mind, not particularly Jerusalem, but the assemblies of God's people throughout the world; "wherever and whenever God's people are gathered together 'there is the people of God'", Smalley / Caird.

και "but" - AND. This conjunction is usually treated here as if adversative, as NIV.

εκ + gen. "**[fire came down] from [heaven]**" - [FIRE CAME DOWN] FROM [HEAVEN AND CONSUMED THEM]. Here expressing source / origin. "They will no

sooner get there than fire will pour out of heaven and burn them up", Peterson. "Fire is always the principal agent of divine wrath", Koester.

v10

iii] Satan is cast into the lake of fire, v10. Satan ends up in the lake of fire with the beast and the false prophet, along with all those with the mark of the beast, cf., v15. Separation from the divine, the very source of life itself, is the end for all those who ignore the gift of life eternal in Christ Jesus.

ὁ πλανων [πλαναω] pres. part. "**who had deceived [them]**" - [THE DEVIL] THE ONE HAVING DECEIVED [THEM]. The participle may be taken as a substantive standing in apposition to "the devil", or adjectival, attributive, limiting "the devil"; "the devil who had deceived them."

του πυρος και θειου gen. "**[the lake] of burning sulphur**" - [THE LAKE] OF FIRE AND SULPHUR, BRIMSTONE. Treated as a hendiadys (a single idea expressed by two substantives) by the NIV; "sulphurous fire", Barclay. Of course, the image is not to be taken literally, rather it is a symbol of judgment; so Smalley etc. This also applies to the idea of eternal torment, even though it's a popular idea with a long history. Judgment entails eternal alienation from the love of God; see "day and night" below.

όπου "**where [the beast and the false prophet had been thrown]**" - WHERE [AND THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET]. Local adverb, "where", introducing an adverbial clause modifying the verb "was thrown"; "was thrown where the beast and the false prophet *are*." We may have expected the preposition **μετα**, "with", given that in time terms they all go in together (the Revelation provides multiple descriptions of the day of judgment); "was thrown into with" Barclay treats the adverbial clause as if adjectival, attributive, limiting "sulphurous fire", "into which the beast and the false prophet *had already been thrown*."

και "-" - AND. Here conjunctive; "where also the beast and the false prophet *are*", Berkeley, "likewise are", Cassirer.

ημερας και νυκτος [ξ τος] gen. "**[they will be tormented] day and night**" - Genitive of time. The sense being "without interruption", "ceaselessly", Smalley. "If it is God's presence that brings vitality, peace, security, hope and indeed 'life' to the human spirit, then to be separated from that presence forever must be equivalent to a kind of eternal agony", Blount.

εις τους αιωνας των αιωνων "**for ever and ever**" - INTO THE AGES OF THE AGES. Idiomatic expression; see 1:18.

20:11-15

The Reign of Christ, 17:1-22:5

The demise of the Beast, 19:11-21:8

v] The final judgment

Synopsis

In this, the next "and I saw" vision, John sees God enthroned in heaven. Before the throne stand "the great and small" of humanity raised from "death and Hades." The books are opened so that each can be "judged according to what they have done." Those whose names are not written in "the book of life" face "the second death", cast into the "lake of fire" with "death and Hades."

Teaching

The Kingdom of God is at hand; the day of judgment is upon us, and those whose names are not written in the book of life will face annihilation.

Issues:

- i] Context: See 19:11-16.
- ii] Background: See 1:1-8.
- iii] Structure: *The final judgment*:
 - The destruction of the universe, v11;
 - The day of judgment, v12-15;
 - The judgment of the righteous, v12;
 - The judgment of the rest, v13-15.

iv] Interpretation:

The series of **καὶ εἶδον**, "and I saw" apocalyptic visions covering 19:11-21:8 now reach a climax. The messianic era of the inaugurated kingdom of God, the reign of God in Christ in this present age (the thousand years - an age where Satan is bound so enabling the free and effective proclamation of the gospel) has ended - the enemies of God and his people destroyed. In the passage before us we have an "and I saw" vision of the throne of God, and we witness the universe destroyed in a "cosmic conflagration", Beale, v11. A second "and I saw" vision follows, describing the settling of accounts, v12-15. This is followed by the final "and I saw" vision, the new heavens and new earth, 21:1-8. Beale suggests that these are simultaneous events; the new age begins with the passing away of the old.

The scene for the settling of accounts is the throne room of God. Gathered before the "great white throne" is the whole of resurrected

humanity, the "great and small" and there opened before them are account books recording "what they had done." These will serve as evidence for the prosecution and thus the basis for judgment. Along with the account books there is "another book", "the book of life." This book records the names of those who will be saved from "the second death" / judgment, 20:14-15; it is they who will share in the new heavens and new earth, 21:1-8.

It should not be assumed that the names are inscribed in the book as a predetermined act on the part of God. As Smalley puts it, "human choice, for or against the gift of God's love and life, is a consistent reality", cf., 20:15, 22:14-15. Osborne argues that the judgment is universal; "beginning with the saints and finishing with the sinners." All are judged according to what they have done, but the difference for those whose names are inscribed in the book of life is that they will be forgiven and rewarded. When it comes to the sinners, those whose names are not inscribed in the book of life, the lake of fire, with eternal torment (20:10), is their end. As already indicated, apocalyptic imagery should not be treated literally, i.e., the imagery is "a pictorial representation of a transcendent reality", Glasson; it is an image of the *Last Judgment*. The horror John describes entails eternal separation from the source of life.

To emphasize the finality of this sinful age, John not only has those "not found written in the book of life" in "the lake of fire", but also the place of the dead, "Hades", and "death" itself.

Text - 20:11

The destruction of the universe, v11: Drawing on Daniel 7:9, John describes God's throne as dazzling white ("righteousness", Blount, "holiness and vindication", Beale) and large ("the size befits the stature of God as the Almighty", Blount). Before the divine presence "earth and the heavens" flee. This escape probably images the annihilation of the heavens and the earth. Escape is obviously fruitless, but it may image the self-destructive element in the passing away of all things.

και ειδον "Then I saw" - AND I SAW. Serving to indicate a step in the narrative / a new vision.

τον καθημενον [καθιμαι] "him who was seated [on it]" - [A GREAT WHITE THRONE AND] THE ONE SITTING [ON IT]. The participle serves as a substantive, the second accusative object of the verb "I saw." "Then I saw God sitting on a large white throne", TH.

απο + gen. "from [his presence]" - FROM [WHOSE PRESENCE FLED THE EARTH AND THE HEAVEN]. Expressing separation; "away from." "Heaven and earth fled from his presence and were seen no more", TEV.

αυτοις dat. pro. "**for them**" - [AND A PLACE WAS NOT FOUND] TO THEM. Dative of interest, advantage; "for them", as NIV.

v12

The day of judgment, v12-15: i] The judgment of the righteous, v12. If we follow Osborne then the scene is of the general resurrection of the just and unjust (believers and unbelievers), both living and dead, standing before the throne of God for the enacting of judgment on the basis of the deeds recorded in the open books; so also Smalley, Beale, Along with the open books is another open book, the book of life, with the names of those who will not have to face the consequence of their deeds. It is they who will share in the new heavens and new earth, 21:1-8. Bauckham argues that this scene is not of the final eschatological judgment, but is a timeless image of salvation / damnation.

και ειδον "**And I saw**" - AND I SAW. Serving to indicate a step in the narrative / a new vision.

τους μεγαλους και τους μικρους "**[the dead], great and small**" - These adjectives serve as substantives, standing in apposition to the accusative object "the dead." The construction is a merism serving to encompass all humanity.

εστωτας [ιστημι] perf. part. "**standing**" - The NIV, as with most translations, treats the participle as the complement of the object "the dead" of the verb "to see", standing in a double accusative construction.

ενωπιον + gen. "**before [the throne]**" - Local preposition, expressing space, "before"; "standing in front of the throne", Barclay.

της ζωης [η] "**the book of life**" - [AND BOOKS WERE OPENED, AND ANOTHER BOOK WAS OPENED, WHICH IS THE *book*] OF LIFE. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting an assumed "book"; see 3:5. Note the use of the passive verb for "opened". Is John implying that God does the opening, ie., a theological passive? "And the books dealing with them were opened. And another book was opened, the book of life", Cassirer. "The [divine] register of the living", Barclay = the register of those gifted with life through faith in Jesus Christ.

κατα + acc. "**according to**" - [AND THE DEAD WERE JUDGED FROM/BY THE THINGS HAVING BEEN WRITTEN IN THE BOOKS] ACCORDING TO. Expressing a standard, "in accordance with, corresponding to."

τα εργα [ον] "**what [they had] done**" - THE WORKS [OF THEM]. What deeds are assessed? The works may simply be the totality of a person's behaviour, deeds good and bad, which when weighed, condemns. The book of life identifies those with a free Get Out Of Jail card. So we may have here a *judged by works but saved by grace* model, so Osborne, Blount, Smalley may be right when he states that the deeds relate to "spiritual loyalty, either to God or to the Satan", although he then includes the evidence of such, ie., "personal and corporate behaviour." It is

very hard to break away from the *faith + works* model!!! So, the deeds may indeed be loyalty based; is the individual loyal to the Lamb, or to the Beast? Is their faith in Christ, or the secular city? The book of life records the names of those who have faith in Christ.

εκ + gen. "**as**" - FROM. Here the preposition probably expresses cause, "because of", or more likely means, "by means of / on the ground of" - a means consisting of a source; "the dead were judged by what they had done, as recorded in these books.", REV.

των γεγραμμενων [γεγραφω] gen. perf. mid./pas. part. "**recorded**" - THE THINGS HAVING BEEN WRITTEN. The participle serves as a substantive.

εν "**in [the books]**" - Local, expressing space.

v13

ii] The judgment of the rest, v13-15. John now presents a resurrection scene which seems to be out of sequence, having just described the "great and the small" awaiting judgment before the throne of God. Charles thinks that the verse is out of order but John is just expanding his vision; raised and then judged "according to what they had done", as v12. The three realms, sea, death and Hades, have a negative connotation, particularly as realms for the powers of darkness, but John is just describing them here as the holding places of the dead, those who, in the last day, rise to face judgment. Given that this age has ended, "death and Hades" will not be needed any more, v14. And just in case the reader missed the point, John reminds us that if we are in the book, we are not in the lake, v15.

τους "**that [were in it]**" - [AND THE SEA GAVE THE DEAD] THE [IN IT]. The article serves as an adjectivizer turning the prepositional phrase "in it" into an attributive adjective limiting "dead"; "the dead which were in the sea", as NIV.

τους "**that [were in them]**" - [AND DEATH AND HADES GAVE THE DEAD] THE [IN THEM]. The article serves as an adjectivizer, as above. "Death and the world of the dead also gave up the dead [that] they held", TEV.

και "- " - AND. Smalley thinks the conjunction carries temporal force here; "And then each one of them was judged"

εκαστος adj. "**each person [was judged]**" - EACH [WAS JUDGED]. The adjective serves as a substantive, "each one", subject of the verb "was judged." Note that the adjective is singular, but the verb is plural, such that "each" is distributive.

κατα + acc. "**according to [what they had done]**" - ACCORDING TO [THE WORKS OF THEM]. Expressing a standard, "in accordance with, corresponding to." "And each person was judged by the record of what they had done", Barclay. For **τα εργα**, "the works", see above.

v14

του πυρος [ρ ρος] gen. "[death and Hades were thrown into the lake] of fire" - [AND DEATH AND HADES WERE THROWN INTO THE LAKE] OF FIRE. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, "the burning lake", the lake of burning sulphur; but see 19:20. Mounce, also Smalley, thinks that "death and Hades" represents the spiritual forces of evil; they are now cast with Satan into the burning lake and destroyed. Sweet argues that "death and Hades" at this point represents the unrepentant dead, raised from their temporary imprisonment in Hades, and now cast into an eternal imprisonment in the burning lake. Koester may be closer to the mark when he states that the image simply illustrates that "the role of Death and Hades is ended", cf., 1Cor.15:26.

οὗτος pro. "[the second death]" - THIS [THE LAKE OF FIRE IS THE SECOND DEATH]. The demonstrative pronoun is forward referencing to "the lake of fire", the predicate nominative of the verb to-be, with the nominative "lake [of fire]" standing in apposition to οὗτος, "this"; "this, namely the lake of fire, is the second death." The second death, "the punishment of the wicked after their resurrection at the end of the age", Koester, is represented by the ever-burning fires of Gehenna, the rubbish tip outside Jerusalem. Physical death ends our life in this age, the second death ends our life in the age to come, it ends our relationship with God. As already indicated, there is debate over whether this involves annihilation or eternal punishment. Annihilation best represents "the second death" in that it entails the spiritual death of the unrepentant, but of course remains an issue of debate.

v15

ει + ind. "-" - IF, *as is the case*, [A CERTAIN person, HAVING BEEN WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE, WAS NOT FOUND] then [HE WAS THROWN INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE]. Introducing a 1st class conditional clause where the condition is assumed to be true.

γεγραμμενος [γραφω] perf. mid./pas. part. "[not found] written" - [A CERTAIN person] HAVING BEEN WRITTEN. The participle serves as the nominative complement of the subject (τις, "certain") of the negated verb "was found", standing in a double nominative construction. As Mathewson point out, had the verb been passive it would be a double accusative construction, "I found someone written." "Whoever was not found enrolled in the book of life was flung into the lake of fire", Moffatt.

21:1-8

The Reign of Christ, 17:1-22:5

The demise of the Beast, 19:11-21:8

vi] New heavens and a new earth

Synopsis

In this, the last "and I saw" vision, John sees the new heavens and the new earth, the first heaven and earth having passed away. He sees the Holy City coming down out of heaven and a voice proclaiming that God now dwells among his people, dispelling death and despair. John hears God proclaim that he is making all things new, and then receives a direct order to write down his vision. God then gives this promise: to the thirsty he will give the water of life; to the victorious, those who persevere in faith, he will give the rights of a child of God; but to the cowardly, the unbelieving, the only gift is the lake of fire.

Teaching

The Kingdom of God is at hand; Eden restored - the rights of a child of God to the water of life are ours through faith in Christ.

Issues

i] Context: See 19:11-16. The passage before us is somewhat transitional, functioning in much the same way as 19:1-10. It serves as a bridge between our earthly experience and the heavenly reality. As such, it concludes the events of the judgment and proclaims the coming of the new heaven and new earth.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The new heavens and new earth*:

John's vision of the Holy City, v1-2;

A voice from heaven explains the significance of the vision, v3-4;

God speaks and confirms the new order of things, v5-6;

A challenge to the Holy City - be brave, not cowardly, v7-8.

iv] Interpretation:

The series of **καὶ εἶδον**, "and I saw", apocalyptic visions covering 19:11-21:8, now reaches its climax as John reveals his vision of the new heavens and the new earth. Drawing on Isaiah 65:17-25, John employs vivid imagery to describe the glory of the age to come when the kingdom of God is realized in power, when darkness is overwhelmed and victory secured. In this passage, John sees the core reality of the age to come, namely that God is with his people, caring for them and comforting them.

The passage quickly introduces us to the major themes articulated in 21:5-22:5 - *Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb*:

- "The first heaven and first earth has passed away" - the age of sin is no more, v1;
- "The new Jerusalem prepared beautifully dressed" - the city of God is now prepared for its guests, v2;
- "God's dwelling place is now among the people", v3.
- "There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain" - given that the old has gone and the new has come, troubles will be no more.

These themes are reinforced by a promise of divine blessing, v5-6, a call for courage, v7, and a warning to the cowardly.

It's interesting how John's imagery reflects the restoration of Eden, of "God's dwelling place ... now among the people." The restoration of all things, the "making everything new", reverses the fall with the removal of death and pain in the gift of "the water of life." The ultimate desire of lost humanity, repeated time and again in the scriptures, is fulfilled with the announcement "I will be their God and they will be my children." Thus, the curse from the fall is finally lifted in the removal of what was tainted by sin (including "no longer any sea" - the place of the foreboding powers of darkness), and the replacement with what is "new" and untainted. The inhabitants of this new Eden come out of heaven from God "beautifully dressed for her husband (God/Jesus)." This image of the "Holy City" serves as a symbol of the Christian community, the church; they are the inhabitants of the new Eden, they are the "victorious" ones, those who have persevered in faith. As Eden was closed to humanity after the fall, so the "new heavens and new earth" is closed to "the unbelieving", v8a.

John's apocalyptic imagery is of heaven on earth - the dead rise and are judged in God's throne room, while those found in the book of life descend from God to inhabit a restored Eden. We will only have a problem with this imagery if we try to apply it literally. John's point is simple enough, in Christ paradise is regained.

Homiletics: *No more mourning or crying*

In Australia, the classic response to the difficulties of life is "don't worry, she'll be right mate." The fact is, it may not get right and in any case, it is my worrying about it that is the main problem. If only I could stop worrying and start living - accept the trouble and get on with life. In truth, most of us are debilitated by the emotional stress caused by our problems, rather than by the problems themselves.

How then do we handle the "death, or mourning, or crying, or pain," of this old order of things? What means do we have to wipe every tear from our eyes? There are some obvious practical steps that can aid us in rightly addressing the pressures of life.

We first identify the problem, assessing the cause and our emotional reaction to it. When faced with a problem, it is essential to be able to articulate how we feel about the situation we now face: "I feel afraid; I feel guilty...." and so on. We then match those feelings with the problem itself. Often, our feelings are a reaction to subconscious thoughts which may not be at all relevant to the situation we face. So, we ask, is this reaction of mine rational or irrational? Irrational mood-swings are just that, the mood of the moment, and they have no right to dictate life-choices.

Having identified the problem (the cause) and analysed our feelings, we then consider our response. A practical response-plan is best carried out in the preparation of a plan of action.

A good way to prepare a plan of action is by documenting our efforts in a Problem Book. At the top of the page of a plain exercise book, we set out the problem (problem #?), then we express how we feel about it and finally we list the possible solutions. These solutions inevitably become our plan of action. When we are worried by one of our problems, we simply turn to it in our Problem Book and see if anything has changed. If not, and there is nothing new to add, then we place the book back in a draw, lock it if possible, and leave it at that - out of sight, out of mind!

This approach can lift much of the burden of life's pressures, particularly as we are freed from the neurotic need to constantly mull over them. Yet, it is the vision of the eternal that truly wipes every tear from our eyes. Honestly facing the pressures of life is the essential first step toward dealing with them, but it is viewing them in the light of eternity that gives them their true place in the scheme of things. The troubles of this age seem beyond solution, but Christ has broken the seals and confounded the darkness with light. "The old order of things" is passing away, "now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them" and "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, or mourning, or crying, or pain." In part, this is our experience at the moment, but the age is dawning when we will experience the tender and comforting hand of our God in all its fullness. Then indeed will every tear be wiped from our eyes.

It is the vision of the Holy City in the age to come that aids us in drying our eyes today. So, on the cover of your Problem Book paste an image of the Holy City. When reminded of the City, you may not need to open up your Problem Book.

Text - 21:1

New heavens and a new earth: i] John's final vision - the Holy City, v1-2. John sees the "Holy City, the new Jerusalem." This city is "prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband." The image, of course, is that of the bride of Christ, the people of God, the assembled brotherhood of Christ. The image of the assembly of believers "coming down", represents a restored humanity in a new Eden.

και ειδον "Then I saw" - AND I SAW. Serving to indicate a step in the narrative / a new vision.

ουρανον καινον και γην "a new heaven and a new earth" - The accusative direct object of the verb "I saw." The idea of a new earth is certainly an interesting one. In Biblical terms it concerns the redemption of creation - a transformation from corruption to perfection, the reestablishment of Eden. As such, it is a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy, Isaiah.65:17. Yet, the question remains, to what extent is this image literal or figurative? The idea of a new heaven is even more difficult to comprehend. A literal restoration of the heavenly dwelling of God seems a little far-fetched. Again, the idea derives from the Old Testament. The renewal of the heavenly dome about the earth is what concerned the prophets, and all that John does is repeat the image. It is best to understand the "new heavens and new earth" in a figurative sense. Today, chaos reigns in both domains, but through Christ there is a new creation, the replacement of the old with something new and eternal. John witnesses the final culmination of this restoration when all things are "new".

γαρ "for" - FOR [THE FIRST HEAVEN AND THE FIRST EARTH PASSED AWAY]. Introducing a causal clause explaining why John is able to see the new heaven and new earth, namely "because" **απηθαν**, "they have passed away."

η θαλασσα ουκ εστιν επι "There was no longer any sea" - [AND] THE SEA IS NO LONGER. In the Old Testament, the sea is a place of surging evil, the abode of the dark Leviathan; it was a place always seething, erratic, destructive, unable to be tamed. But now, following the judgment (Ch.17-20), this reedy wilderness is no more; Satan's stronghold is broken and his power destroyed. So, again we need to understand this image in a figurative sense, so "Satan's abode was no more."

v2

και "[I saw]" - AND. Here as a connective; "And I saw."

Ιερουσαλημ καινην "[the Holy City], the new Jerusalem" - Standing in apposition to "the Holy City", so the city of God, namely the new Jerusalem = the redeemed, the new creation, the people of God, the heavenly assembly.

καταβαινουσαν [καταβαινω] part. "**coming down**" - DESCENDING. The participle may be viewed as adjectival, attributive, limiting "Holy City", "the Holy City which was coming down", although usually treated as the complement of the direct object "the holy city", standing in a double accusative construction, as NIV. The redeemed people assemble in (descend into) God's new domain. A Western imagination doesn't quite get the descending imagery, but it illustrates the fulfillment of prophetic expectations through a divine intervention, here the establishment of the new Jerusalem, an eternal home of the saints, gifted from heaven to earth. So, leaving the literal image aside, the words describe the glorification of the people of God in the eternal domain.

εκ + gen. "**out of [heaven]**" - Expressing source / origin.

απο + gen. "**from [God]**" - Expressing separation, "away from", or source / origin, "from".

ητοιμασμενην [ετοιμαζω] pas. part. "**prepared**" - HAVING BEEN PREPARED, MADE READY. The participle as "coming down."

ως [a bride]" - Comparative; "made all ready like a bride adorned for her husband", Cassirer.

κεκοσμημενην [κοσμεω] pas. part. "**beautifully dressed**" - HAVING BEEN ADORNED. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "bride", "a bride who is beautifully dressed." The city / the people of God is as a woman adorned (appropriately/beautifully dressed) to meet her husband.

τω ανδρι [ηρ δρος "for [her] husband" - FOR THE HUSBAND [OF HER]. The NIV has translated it as a dative of interest, advantage, she is adorned for the advantage of her husband. She is adorned ready to join with the man she is about to marry, i.e., the people of God, renewed in Christ, stand prepared to meet their God.

v3

ii) A voice from the throne explains the significance of the vision, v3-4. John hears a loud voice, a voice of authority, declaring a mighty truth. The Shekinah glory of the Lord (his radiant presence, his person in all its fullness) now resides / dwells / tabernacles, with his people. The promise to Israel is now a reality: "they will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God." As our intimate friend, God in Christ will console us in our troubles; he will wipe away every tear. The context implies that the troubles for which God will console us are the troubles of this age, an age now passing away. Christ has opened the seals and dealt with the pains of this age - sin and its consequences.

λεγουσης [λεγω] gen. pres. part. "**saying**" - [AND I HEARD A LOUD VOICE FROM THE THRONE] saying. John again uses a participle to introduce the words of a vision. Numerous classifications are possible: object complement; adjectival,

attributive; attendant circumstance, cf., **λεγων**, 1:17. Note the genitives following **ηκουσα**, "I heard", a verb which often takes a genitive of direct object.

του θεου [ος] gen. "**God's**" - [THE DWELLING PLACE] OF GOD. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, but possibly verbal, subjective.

η σκινη [η] "**dwelling place**" - THE DWELLING, TABERNACLE, SHELTER. The final words of Ezekiel's vision are "The name of the city shall be 'the Lord is there.'" Israel's great hope is that the Lord will tabernacle with his people, make his abode with them, cf., Lev.26:11, Isa.7:14. This then is the ultimate blessing and is realized in the final gathering together of God's people.

μετα + gen. "**is now among**" - *is* WITH. Expressing association / accompaniment; "in company with."

λαοι [ος] pl. "**people**" - MEN = PEOPLES. Predicate nominative. The source texts are either singular or plural and as the plural is the more difficult reading it is probably original. The sense is "the peoples of the world", "all races", etc.

μετ [μετα] + gen. "**[he will dwell] with [them]**" - [AND HE WILL TABERNACLE] WITH [THEM AND THEY WILL BE HIS PEOPLE]. Expressing association / accompaniment. The sense is will remain / abide with, underlining God's presence with his people - the blessing of relationship, fellowship, oneness, love....

αυτων θεος "**and be their God**" - [AND HE HIMSELF GOD WITH THEM WILL BE] GOD OF THEM. A textual variant which "seems to function in apposition to **αυτος θεος μετ αυτων** (he himself God with them)", Mathewson = "he himself will be God with them, namely, their God." The sense may be "[with them] as their God."

v4

εκ + gen. "**from [their eyes]**" - [AND HE WILL WIPE AWAY EVERY TEAR] FROM [THE EYES OF THEM]. Expressing separation; "away from."

ουκ ... ετι "**[there will be] no more**" - [AND DEATH WILL BE] NO LONGER. When **ετι**, "still, yet", follows a negative it takes the sense "any longer"; "death will not be any longer" = "death will cease to exist", Barclay.

ο θανατος "**death**" - Nominative subject of the verb to-be. Physical death is intended. "Death will no longer exist."

ουτε ... ουτε ουτε "**or ... or ... or ..**" - NEITHER [GRIEF] NOR [CRYING] NOR [PAIN NO LONGER WILL BE] A negated correlative construction.

πενθος [ος] "**mourning**" - GRIEF. Along with "crying" and "pain", nominative subject of the verb to-be. The mourning associated with bereavement, cf., Isa.25:8, 35:10, 51:11.

κραυγη [η] "**crying**" - Although "weeping" seems to be the sense here, the word normally means "noisy outcry", or "shout".

πονός [ος] "**pain**" - PAIN, ANGUISH.

ὅτι "**for**" - BECAUSE [THE FIRST THINGS PASSED AWAY]. Introducing a causal clause explaining why there will be no more grief, crying and pain; "because" Many early manuscripts do not have this conjunction and so it is quite possible that the phrase "the old order" is not causal. "The old order of things" may have passed away, but this is not the reason why there is "no more death"

v5

iii] God himself speaks and confirms the new order of things with its eternal blessings - "I am making everything new", v5-6. The process of renewal begins and darkness in chaos recedes. God's proclamation to the suffering community of Christ is that all things are being renewed right now, cf., 2Cor.4:16-18. The age of renewal has begun and will extend into eternity. Stunned by this revelation, John is prompted to "write this down" the vision, v5. The one who is the beginning of all things and the end of all things makes a promise to his suffering people: life-giving water is theirs at journey's end.

ὁ καθημενος [καθημαι] pres. part. "**he who was seated [on the throne]**" - [AND] THE ONE SITTING [ON THE THRONE SAID BEHOLD]. The participle serves as a substantive.

ποιω [ποιεω] pres. "**I am making**" - I MAKE. The present tense is interesting. There is a futuristic element in the words, but the "realized" nature of Christ's work also makes the future a durative present. Note also that this is the first time God actually speaks in the prophecy.

καινα adj. "**[everything] new**" - [ALL THINGS] NEW. Accusative complement of the direct object "everything". In Isaiah 43:19 God says he is "doing a new thing", a new Israel free from Babylon and blessed. For John, the new thing is everything. "The deliverance from Babylon is complete", Koester.

γραφον [γραφω] aor. imp. "**write this down**" - [AND HE SAYS] WRITE. Note "he says" is present tense whereas the verse begins with the aorist ειπεν, "he said", but it is probably just stylistic - may be classified as a narrative present. Write what? The command to write appears a number of times in the Revelation, but this time it is from God himself. We probably have a repeated command to write down the revelation as a whole rather than this particular vision or even just the words "that these words are trustworthy and true."

ὅτι "**for**" - BECAUSE. Usually treated as if introducing a causal clause explaining why John should write down the revelation, "write because these words" It may serve to introduce a dependent statement expressing the content of what John is to write, namely, that the words "I am making everything new" are trustworthy and true, but as noted above, this seems unlikely. So, usually taken to mean "write the book", not just v5.

πιστοι adj. "**trustworthy**" - [THESE WORDS ARE] FAITHFUL [AND TRUE]. Predicate adjective. The one who declares the words is to be relied on; he is faithful. Aune classifies "trustworthy and true" as a hendiadys, a single idea captured by two words, eg., "these words are true." Of course, the point is made forcefully by using two words of similar meaning, so "these words are true, they can be trusted"; "are trustworthy and in accordance with the truth", Cassirer.

v6

μοι dat. pro. "**[he said] to me**" - Dative of indirect object.

γεγοναν [**γίνομαι**] 3rd pers. pl. perf. "**it is done**" - THEY HAVE BECOME, DONE, COME TO PASS. The verb is irregular and so has prompted variants. The perfect may serve to "highlight the state of completion of God's plan for salvation", Mathewson. What is the referent of this impersonal verb, is it "the things that shall come to pass", or "the words concerning the things to come"? "In the new creation all is done [**γεγοναν**] when God makes all things new", Koester. Note that Sweet suggests that John is alluding to the cry of Jesus from the cross, cf., Jn.19:30.

το Αλφα και το Ω "**the Alpha and the Omega**" - [I am] THE ALPHA AND OMEGA [THE BEGINNING AND THE END]." Predicate nominative with the verb to-be assumed. God has made sweeping claims and now certifies his right to make it, so Blount. The point being made is that God is the beginning and end of history and that he rules the events in between. "The God who transcends time guides the entire course of history because he stands as sovereign over its beginning and end", Beale; cf., 1:8. Note that it is only in later centuries that omega, **Ω**, is spelled out as **Ωμεγα**.

τω διψωντι dat. part. "**to him who thirsts / to the thirsty**" - TO THE ONE THIRSTING. The participle serves as a substantive, dative of indirect object. This promise is for believers going through the trials of life.

εγω pro. "**I [will give]**" - I [TO THE ONE THIRSTING WILL GIVE OF THE FOUNTAIN FROM THE WATER OF LIFE]. Nominative subject, emphatic by use and position.

δωρεαν adv. "**without cost**" - FREELY. Modal adverb, expressing manner. Emphatic by position (ie., placed at the end of the Gk. sentence).

εκ + gen. "**from [the spring]**" - OUT OF, FROM [SPRING WATER, WELL]. This preposition certainly expresses source / origin, but also serves as an intensified partitive, even though the prepositional phrase serves to modify the assumed object of "I will give"; "I will give *something*" ("some water", Aune) from the spring ..."

της ζωης [η] gen. "of the water of life" - OF LIFE. The genitive is adjectival, attributive; "living water" = life-giving water = an "eschatological relationship with God", Blount; "water which gives (eternal) life", Smalley. cf., Isa.55:1.

v7

iv] God challenges those who will inhabit the Holy City to be brave and not cowardly, v7-8. The believer who perseveres in faith is assured victory, but for those without faith, eternal death awaits them. A list of eight sins serves to illustrate those lost to paradise. Sadly, we will toy with many of these evils during our Christian walk and so we are reminded that our standing before God is wholly of grace. Note that inclusive language is required in translation even though the Greek uses masculine singular forms. "I will be their God and they will be my people."

ὁ νικων [νικαω] part. "he who overcomes" - THE ONE CONQUERING, OVERCOMING. The participle serves as a substantive, nominative subject of the verb "will inherit." Believers conquer when they remain true to their faith through the tests and trials of life.

κληρονομησει [κληρονομεω] fut. "will inherit" - "Will have this heritage" may be better because the context implies a gift freely given at the end of a troubled journey, not an inheritance after death. "Will receive."

ταυτα "all this" - these things. Accusative direct object of the verb "will inherit." All that I have promised", namely "the blessings of the new creation / eschatological salvation all received as an act of divine grace, and not as a right", Smalley.

αυτω dat. pro. "their [God]" - [AND I WILL BE GOD] TO HIM [AND HE WILL BE A SON TO ME]. As also μοι, dative of indirect object / possession, as NIV. "I will be God to each of them, and they will be my children", Osborne. This encapsulates the Abrahamic covenant, Gen.17:7.

v8

This is the third such list of sins and is more extensive than the others; See 9:20-21, 22:15. The first item, "cowardice" is an interesting descriptive to head the list, given that none of us are wholly courageous or consistent in our Christian witness. For myself, out of the eight descriptives, I am OK on practising magic arts (although I have tried a few card tricks in the past!), but in varying degrees, I am compromised on all the other descriptives. So, what are we to do with this list? Are we to move the bar down so that we can jump over them (ie., define the sins in terms of ongoing defiant acts of rebellion that are well beyond the normal failings of the Christian walk), or leave the bar where it is - beyond our ability to jump over it (ie., define the sins as constants in our Christian walk, sins that serve

to remind us to rely on God's grace in Christ)? Is John following Paul and reminding us that "the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith", Gal.3:24? Is John making the point that we are saved by grace through faith, apart from works of the law? This seems somewhat sophisticated for John, so he is probably doing nothing more than providing us with "a specific list (of sins) that draw together the sins (listed) in the book. Its purpose is to sum up the depravity of the unbelievers, and each term reflects sins mentioned elsewhere in the book", Osborne. The ultimate purpose of the list is to identify "the kinds of people who will never enter the eschatological city in the future in order to encourage appropriate behaviour by people in the present", Blount. John is not providing a list of sins which when broken confine the offender to the lake of fire, but is describing the characteristics of idolatrous unbelief, and by doing so, reminds the Christian community of the dire consequences that follow for those who team up with the secular city / Babylon, cf., Smalley p544.

δε **"but"** - BUT/AND. Transitional, best treated here as an adversative; "But as far as the cowardly ...", NRSV.

τοις ... δειλοις dat. adj. **"the cowardly"** - TO THE AFRAID, COWARDLY [AND]. The dative is adverbial, reference / respect; "with respect to / regarding the cowardly their lot *will be* in the lake" Possibly a dative of interest, "for the cowardly their part *will be* in the lake of burning fire." "Given John's dramatic call for courageous testimony to the lordship of God and the Lamb, despite the drastic consequences that such witnessing will bring, it is understandable that he headlines the list of vices with cowardice", Blount.

απιστοις dat. adj. **"unbelieving"** - to *the* FAITHLESS. Those who have given up their faith and no longer trust in Jesus.

εβδελυγμενοις [βδελυσσομαι] dat. pas. perf. part. **"vile"** - [AND] TO *the ones* HAVING BECOME VILE. The participle serves as a substantive, "those who are abominable". The word means polluted by pagan worship, or even worship of the beast, along with all the evil practices that are associated with pagan worship.

φαρμακοις [ος] **"those who practise magic arts"** - [AND TO MURDERERS AND TO FORNICATORS AND] TO SORCERERS [AND TO IDOLATERS AND ALL THE FALSE ONES]. Again, dative of reference / respect.

το μερος αυτων **"their place"** - THE LOT OF THEM. Nominative subject of an assumed verb to-be; "Their destiny *will be* in the fiery lake."

εν **"will be in / they will be consigned to"** - IN. Local, expressing space / sphere.

τη καιομενη [καιω] dat. pres. pas. part. **"[the] fiery| lake]"** - [THE LAKE] THE ONE BURNING. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "lake", "the lake which burns" = "the fiery lake", as NIV.

πυρι [πυρ πυρος] dat. "of burning [sulphur]" - WITH FIRE [AND SULPHUR].
As with sulphur, the dative is adverbial, expressing manner; "the lake burns with fire and sulphur." The Canon of Apollonius applies with both nouns establishing interdependence; "a lake which is aflame with sulphurous fire", Cassirer.

ο θανατος ο δευτερος "the second death" - [WHICH IS] THE SECOND DEATH.
Predicate nominative. Eternal spiritual death as opposed to physical death; "a perfected and eternal punishment", Beale. Are the two actually separate? What of eternal damnation?

21:9-21

The reign of Christ, 17:1-22:5

2. The dawning of the City of God, 21:9-22:5

i] The new Jerusalem

Synopsis

In John's vision of the Holy City, he symbolically describes the "new Jerusalem", "the bride, the wife of the Lamb." In symbolic language, John pictures the assembled people of God, gathered in the heavenlies, and by so doing he reminds his readers of the inevitable glorification of those who stand with Christ.

Teaching

The Kingdom of God is at hand; The city of God replaces the secular city.

Issues

i] Context: See 17:1-6a. In 17:1-21:8 John is invited to see the ruin of the harlot Babylon and the demise of the Beast, visions reminding the Christian community that although evil is apparently victorious with the powers of darkness (often seen in the secular state) triumphant, their end is already enacted. God has cast down the powers of darkness and brought low their authority - no power prevails against God's might. Now, in this third section dealing with the reign of Christ, John is invited to see "the bride, the wife of the Lamb", the glorified Christian community. He sees the materials from which it is constructed, along with its mind-blowing beauty. The constant repetition of the number twelve serves as a reminder that this apocalyptic image of a glorious city represents the people of God (ie., 12 tribes of Israel, 12 apostles). Going on to paint the conditions found in the city, 21:22-22:5, John describes paradise in relational terms, of the marriage between the Redeemer and the redeemed - of light that needs no sun or moon, v23-24, of protection that needs no closed gates, v25-26, of a purity where nothing is unclean or shameful, v27, of health where life abounds, 22:1-2. In summary, in this city there is no curse, God in Christ is present with his people, v3-5.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *The new Jerusalem*:

John receives a guided tour, v9-10;

"Come I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

The city described, v11-21:

Beauty, v11;

Gates and foundations, v12-14;
Measurements, v15-17;
Construction materials, v18-21.

iv] Interpretation:

In this vision, John describes a spiritual state (not literal) which fires the whole book. The present state of sin has moved on to judgment and now we finally come to blessing - the kingdom of God is established in power. It is the blessing for which we yearn and it is this blessing which fires our determination to stand against the powers of darkness, a darkness entrenched in our surrounding secular world. It may seem that all power and glory rests with the "whore of Babylon" (the secular city, well illustrated in John's time by the Roman Empire), but its apparent glory and power is short-lived, for in the age to come all glory and power will rest with the "Bride of Christ", (The new Jerusalem, the city of God, the heavenly assembly, the holy city, ie. the church universal, all believers). Black's New Testament commentary puts it this way, "Here is the real source of John's prophetic certainty, for only in comparison with the 'New Jerusalem' can the queenly splendours of Babylon be recognized as the seductive gauds of an old and raddled whore."

It is difficult to draw definite conclusions from the pictures painted by John. There are those who would take the description of the Holy City literally, but this is not John's intention. John tells us that the city is 1,500 miles long, wide and high (in multiples of 12). The Holy of holies is also a cube, the presence of God in the city itself. The foundations are precious jewels of 12 kinds, bearing the names of the 12 tribes of Israel. Just as the prophets like Ezekiel did not want us to take their description of the new temple in a literal way, even less so does John want us to take his vision literally. So, it is a metaphorical image, but then how do we rightly understand the metaphors?

We are best to generalize the pictures rather than become too specific in our interpretation. For example, in v19-20 we are given the description of the foundations of the walls of the city, foundations which are covered in precious stones. The stones are listed for us - twelve types. Now what do we make of this? If it is a metaphor, what is it a description of? We know that there is some link in the list of stones with the signs of the Zodiac. They are given in the reverse order as the sun passes by the star signs. What do we make of this? We could say something like: the city of God reverses all known human reasoning. We also know that the stones are very similar to the ones on the High Priest's breastplate, Exodus 27:17-20. So, we could

reason that here is the fulfillment of the high-priestly dress which would indicate something like: priestly access to God is open to all who are part of the new heavenly / spiritual community. We are best to generalize our conclusions.

Text - 21:9

The new Jerusalem, v9-21: i] John is given a guided tour of the Holy City, v9-10. John is introducing us to a new vision shown him by an angel. He is carried away to a high mountain in the spirit (by the Holy Spirit????) and there, descending from heaven, is the city of God, the new Jerusalem, "the bride, the wife of the Lamb." John will go on to describe the beautiful bride in contrast to the raddled whore. Morris notes the similarity between this description of the new Jerusalem and that of Babylon, 17:1-6a, the point being that we have to choose which city we intend to live in.

εκ + gen. "[one] of [the seven angels]" - [ONE] FROM [THE SEVEN ANGELS CAME]. The preposition here serves as a partitive genitive. Referring to one of the angels in the vision of the judgment of the seven bowls. We don't know if this is the same angel as 17:1, but it probably doesn't matter.

των εχοντων [εχω] gen. pres. part. "**who had**" - THE ONE HAVING [THE SEVEN BOWLS]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "angels", and serving to form a relative clause as NIV.

των γεμοντων [γεμω] gen. pres. part. "**full**" - BEING FULL. The participle is adjectival, limiting "bowels"; "bowels which were full of the seven last plagues."

των ... πληγων [η] gen. "**of the [seven last] plagues**" - The genitive is adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic / content, although Mathewson classifies it as a genitive complement of the participle "being full."

λεγων [λεγω] pres. part. "**came and said [to me]**" - [AND SPOKE WITH ME] SAYING. Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the verb "spoke", redundant; "spoke and said" See **λεγων**, 1:17.

σοι dat. pro. "**[I will show] you**" - [I WILL SHOW] TO YOU. Dative of indirect object.

του αρνιου [ον] gen. "**[the bride, the wife] of the lamb**" - The genitive is adjectival, relational. In Western thinking a bride can't be a wife since she is the wife to be, but in Eastern thinking the betrothed, the wife to be, is all but married. The image of God's people as a wife to the Lord has both Old and New Testament precedents.

v10

The city represents the people of God in all their splendour, assembled before the throne. It is the glorious realization of the kingdom of God - a people of God

under the rule of God. The city is "come down out of heaven from God." John's apocalyptic imagery has the Christian community coming out of heaven to the new earth below - Babylon is replaced by the city of God in an uncorrupted Eden. This "coming down" is probably not a literal reality, but rather expresses a theological reality - the new Zion is a creation of God, and as such proceeds from God.

απηνεγκεν [αποφερω] aor. "**he carried [me] away**" - We might say: "I was possessed and saw as in a vision."

εν + dat. "**in [the Spirit]**" - Expressing space / sphere, "in", but more likely adverbial, expressing manner, or possibly means, "by". Osborne opts for "the Spirit" who instigates a "visionary state"; a state of "prophetic inspiration", Blount. Smalley opts for "spirit", expressing "an ecstatic state." "The spirit", as REB, seems best; "He took me away in a trance to a high mountain", Barclay.

επι acc. "**to [a great mountain]**" - ONTO [A MOUNTAIN GREAT AND HIGH]. Here expressing motion "down upon." Note the parallel with Ezekiel 40:2. The bride-city is built (believers gather) on a high hill, typically the place where God meets his people.

την ἁγιαν adj. "**[the] holy [city]**" - [AND SHOWED ME THE] HOLY [CITY]. Modifying "city", the accusative direct object of the verb "to show." The sense being, pertaining to, belonging to God.

Ιερουσαλημ "**Jerusalem**" - Standing in apposition to "the holy city." The holy city, Jerusalem = "God's true people", Beale.

καταβαινουσαν [καταβαινω] part. "**coming down**" - DESCENDING. The participle is probably adjectival, attributive, limiting by description "Holy City / Jerusalem", so forming a relative clause; "*which was* coming down out of heaven from God." This is the first in a series of adjectival participles running through to v14, although see note v12. Possibly adverbial, temporal; "he showed me the holy city of Jerusalem as she was coming down out of heaven from God", Cassirer, Knox. "This city descends, and thus takes the characterization, from God", Blount, cf., v2.

εκ + gen. "**out of [heaven]**" - OUT OF [HEAVEN FROM GOD]. Expressing source/origin; "from." So also **απο**, "from God." The sense is that this city proceeds from God's domain, therefore it is of God's design.

v11

ii] The city described, v11-21; a) The beauty of the city, v11. John goes on to describe the city, the assembled people of God, the body of Christ. Using beautiful picture language, he first tells us that the city radiates brilliantly, for it radiates the glory of God.

εχουσαν [εχω] pres. part. "**it shone**" - HAVING. The participle may be taken as adjectival, attributive, limiting by describing "Holy City / Jerusalem", v10; "which was coming down from heaven and shining with the glory of God." Possibly adverbial, modal, modifying "coming down", "displaying the glory of God"; "with the sheen of God's splendour", Barclay, Moffatt. Note John's flexible use of the participle "having", reflected in the translation offered by the NIV, cf., 1:16.

του θεου [ος] gen. "**[the glory] of God**" - The genitive is adjectival, probably possessive / verbal, subjective, but possibly epexegetic (a genitive of definition - limiting by specifying the type of glory in mind)

ὁ φωστηρ [ηρ ηρος] "**brilliance**" - THE RADIANCE, A LIGHT-GIVING BODY [OF IT *was*]. Nominative subject of an assumed verb to-be. "Glory" is again intended, imaging the radiance of the Lord's Shekinah glory; "shining with his brilliant presence".

τιμιωτατω [τιμιος] dat. surp. adj. "**very precious [jewel]**" - [LIKE] A PRECIOUS [STONE, AS A JASPER STONE]. The superlative is used to convey an elative sense, "very very precious", "rare", and is dative after the adjective **ὄμοις**, "like", dative of the thing compared - same construction after the comparative **ὡς**. Note, jasper represents the divine visage (4:3) so the city reflects divine glory.

κρυσταλλιζοντι [κρυσταλιζω] dat. pres. part. "**clear as crystal**" - BEING CLEAR AS CRYSTAL. Hapax legomenon, once only use in the NT - its meaning is unclear. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "jasper"; "like jasper which is crystal clear", "like crystal clear jasper".

v12

b) Gates and foundations, v12-14. Its walls are high and its gates protected by angels - ie., it is impregnable and thus can no longer be violated by the powers of darkness. The names of the twelve tribes of Israel are on its gates, for it is the fulfillment of Israel's hope - the city is the final realization of the kingdom of God, the heavenly Jerusalem. The foundation of the city is the apostles - the city rests on the Word of God mediated by Christ and preserved for the church by the apostles.

εχουσα [εχω] pres. part. "**It had**" - HAVING. This participle probably continues to limit by description the "Holy City / Jerusalem", although there is a shift from the accusative to the nominative such that "Holy City / Jerusalem" has become the subject. This shift is a consequence of the focus being now completely on "Jerusalem", although as noted of "having" in v11, John's use of this participle is very flexible, cf., 1:16. Note that the feminine person has been retained, although there is a shift when the wall around Jerusalem becomes the focus. Porter suggests that this series of participles in v11-14 serve as finite verbs. They are

certainly often translated this way, so NIV etc; "It had a wall great in extent and it had twelve gates", Cassirer.

τειχος μεγα και υψηλον "**a great high wall**" - A WALL GREAT AND HIGH [HAVING TWELVE GATES]. Accusative direct object of the participle "having". The sense is probably "a very high wall", ie., it is secure. The high wall, as with the twelve angels and the tower-gates, images God's protection of his people, or as Zechariah put it, "there is no wall, for the Lord is a wall of protection for his people." Note how the imagery reflects both Zechariah and Ezekiel's description of the new Jerusalem.

αγγελους δωδεκα "**with twelve angels**" - [AND AT THE GATES] TWELVE ANGELS. Accusative direct object of the participle "having". A possible allusion to Isa.62:6, "watchmen / guards", Mounce. "These angels are comparable to the angels of the churches and the twenty-four elders, who represent the true people of God, the true Israel", Beale.

επι + dat. "**at**" - AT [THE GATES TWELVE ANGELS]. John's favourite spatial preposition, here + dat.; the sense is probably "at".

τοις πυλωνας [ων ωνος] dat. "**the gates**" - THE GATES, TOWERS, PORCHES. The word is used for a tower entrance, not just gates, "gate-towers".

επιγεγραμμενα [επιγραφω] neut. perf. pas. part. "**on the gates were written [the names]**" - [AND NAMES] HAVING BEEN WRITTEN UPON *them*. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting by description "names"; "he showed me the Holy City / Jerusalem which had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels and names which had been written on [them] which is (collective = "are") the names of the twelve tribes", cf. Ezk.48:31-34.

των ... φυλων [η] gen. "**of the [twelve] tribes**" - [WHICH IS THE NAMES] OF THE [TWELVE] TRIBES. The genitive is adjectival, possessive.

υιων Ισραηλ gen. "**of Israel**" - OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL. The genitive is adjectival, epexegetic, limiting "the twelve tribes" by specifying them.

v13

απο + gen. "**on [the east]**" - FROM [EAST THREE GATES AND] FROM [NORTH THREE GATES AND] FROM [SOUTH THREE GATES AND] FROM [WEST THREE GATES]. Expressing separation; "away from." In a similar pattern to Ezekiel's city there are four groups of three gates facing the four points of the compass. The order of the compass points is not significant as they are different in different cultures. The twelve serves to remind us that all the tribes are covered, covering all the corners of the world; - possibly making the point that the city is complete, even that it is open to all.

v14

της πολεως [ις εως] gen. "[the wall] of the city" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive, expressing a derivative characteristic.

εχων [εχω] pres. part. "had" - HAVING. The string of the participles, "having", continue; we would have expected εχει, "has". Note the lack of concord with a shift to masculine person when "wall" is neuter and "city" is feminine. Most translations treat it as a finite verb; see "having" above.

θεμελιους [ος] "foundations" - [TWELVE] FOUNDATIONS. Probably "foundation stones" are intended, great stones upon which the wall is built, although like the temple, these great stones are visible. When we speak of a foundation we are speaking of something that is buried under the ground, but that is not the picture here. So, the wall of protection rests, no longer on Israel's patriarchs, but upon the apostles. Is this about building on the apostolic tradition of Christ's words? "The integration of the apostles together with the tribes of Israel confirms that ... the multiracial Christian church will be the redeemed group who, together with Christ, will fulfill Ezekiel's prophecy of the future temple and city", Beale.

επ [επι] + gen. "on [them]" - [AND] ON [THEM TWELVE NAMES OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES OF THE LAMB]. John's favourite spatial preposition; "on, upon." The Greek is not explicit, but the intention probably is that each stone carries the name of one of the apostles of the Lamb. Note that the following genitives are best treated as possessive.

v15

c) The measurement of the city, expressing the permanence and perfection of God with his people, v15-17. John sees an angel setting out to measure the city. This measuring is to define its grandeur and strength and thus, the security of the city for all who reside within, cf. Zech.2:1-13. Its size is 12 by the cube of 10, a perfect number. This indicates that it is the sanctuary of God as well as the habitation of all Israel. Its walls are thick and thus, impregnable.

ὁ λαλων pres. part. "the angel who talked [with me]" - [AND] THE ONE SPEAKING [WITH ME HAD A GOLDEN MEASURING ROD]. The participle serves as a substantive. "Angel" is intended.

ἵνα + subj. "to [measure the city, its gates and its walls]" - THAT [HE MIGHT MEASURE THE CITY AND THE GATES OF IT]. Here introducing a final clause expressing purpose; "in order to obtain the dimensions of the city from the outside", cf., Ezk.40:3-5. "The measuring reveals the perfection of the city", Koester.

αυτης gen. pro. "its [walls]" - [AND THE WALLS] OF IT. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, or partitive.

v16

τω καλαμω [ος] dat. "[he measured the city] with the rod" - [AND THE CITY LIES SQUARE AND THE LENGTH OF IT AND THE LENGTH OF IT AS MUCH AS THE BREADTH, AND HE MEASURED THE CITY] WITH THE ROD. The dative is instrumental, expressing means; "by means of."

επι + gen. "and found it to be" - John's favourite preposition seems to function here adverbially, replacing the adverbial accusative of measure; "for the extent of 12,000 stadia."

σταδιων δωδεκα χιλιαδων "12,000 stadia" - STADIA TWELVE THOUSAND. Literally 1,500 miles, but it is a figurative number, using the base 12 by the cube of 10, the perfect number, representing God's people, and extended indefinitely. The sense "infinitely large" is intended.

το μηκος και το πλατος και το υψος αυτης "as wide and high [as it is] long" - THE LENGTH AND THE BREADTH AND THE HEIGHT OF IT [IS EQUAL]. Nominative subject of the verb to-be. In simple terms the city is "a cube" (some have suggested a pyramid), as was the holy of holies in the temple, which of course implies, since there is no temple in the city, that the city is the temple.

ισα adj. "as it [is]" - [IS] EQUAL. Predicate adjective.

v17

The NIV11 improves their original tedious translation of this verse, "The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits thick."

τεσσαρακοντα τεσσαρων πηχων "144 cubits" - [AND HE MEASURED THE WALL OF IT] A HUNDRED FORTY-FOUR CUBITS. A symbolic number again expressing the idea that the 144,000, the faithful remnant of God's people, are securely contained within the city.

"*thick*" - John doesn't actually tell us whether the measurement is for the height, or the thickness of the wall. If height, it is only about 66 metres, which is a low wall for a tall city.

ανθρωπου [ος] gen.. "by man's [measurement]" - [MEASUREMENT] OF A MAN. The genitive is adjectival, possibly possessive, the 144 cubits is a measurement that belongs to humankind / human race, or better, attributive, limiting "measurement"; "a human measurement", Mathewson. The accusative μετρον, "measure", is adverbial, reference / respect; "with respect to the measure."

ο "which [the angel was using]" - WHICH [IS OF AN ANGEL]. The neuter pronoun here with the verb to-be is likely to be epexegetic, "that is". The genitive αγγελου, "of an angel", is possibly adjectival, possessive, so "that is, an angel's

measurement", but again more likely attributive, "an angelic measurement." The RSV opts for possessive, "by a man's measure, that is an angel's." Probably the sense is that it's a human measurement standard which the angel was using to measure the city (for John's sake??), or he may be saying that angelic measurements are the same as human ones. There is the possibility that John is saying that the city is 144 cubits by human measurement, but that the angels have their own measurements such that what John sees in the vision is not necessarily the final reality, which reality is infinite.

v18

d) John describes the material used in the construction of the city, v18-21. The walls are made of Jasper, a God-like jewel. They are covered by many precious stones, displaying the presence of God within the walls. The city glows, its gates are of pearl and its streets of gold. The splendour of the city is glorious indeed.

του τειχους [ος] gen. "**the wall**" - [THE FOUNDATION = BUILDING MATERIAL] OF THE WALL [OF IT *was* JASPER AND THE CITY PURE GOLD]. The genitive is adjectival, probably best classified as idiomatic; "the building material *used in the construction of* its walls." Again, this is the divine jewel, giving a red glow. So, like the city, the wall glows with divine radiance and thus divine protection.

αυτης gen. pro. "-" OF IT. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, or partitive.

ύαλω καθαρω dat. "[as] **pure as glass**" - [LIKE] GLASS PURE. Dative of the thing compared after the adjective **όμοιον**, "like". Clean or pure, but possibly in this context, clear, ie., it refracts the red glow. It is also possible that the clarity of reflection is intended. The gold is so pure, so highly refined, that it is mirror-like.

v19-20

As already noted, numerous interpretations have been drawn from the 12 precious stones. In general terms, the jewels image of the brilliance of the night sky touching the earth, adorning the city in a rainbow of colours.

οί θεμελιοι [ος] "**the foundations**" - Nominative subject of the verbal participle "having been adorned." Probably the intention is "the foundation stones", Cassirer. As already noted, such stones are the large dressed stones sitting at ground level.

του τειχους [ος ους] gen. "**of the [city] wall**" - OF THE WALL [OF THE CITY]. The genitive is adjectival, partitive, as is "of the city."

κεκοσμημενοι [κοσμεω] perf. pas. part. "**were decorated**" - HAVING BEEN ADORNED. Again, we have a participle which virtually functions as a finite verb; we could classify it a paraphrastic construction with assumed verb to-be **εισιν**.

Mathewson suggests the classification of a predicate adjective with an assumed verb to-be.

παντι dat. "**with every**" - The dative is adverbial, probably manner, or accompaniment; "with all kinds of / with every different kind of jewel."

τιμιω adj. "**precious [stone]**" - "Beautiful" and "expensive" are other possibilities.

ὁ πρωτος adj. "**The [first] foundation [was jasper]**" - THE FOUNDATION [FIRST *was* JASPER,]. Nominative subject of an assumed verb to-be. The NIV implies that the foundation stone is made of jasper. The Greek can certainly be read this way, but the intention may be "the first foundation stone *was adorned with jasper*", and so on

v21

πυλωνες [ων ωνος] "[**the twelve**] **gates were**" - [AND THE TWELVE] ENTRANCES, ENTRANCE WAYS, GATE-WAYS [*were* TWELVE PEARLS]. Nominative subject of an assumed verb to-be. An entrance tower may be intended.

ἕς ἑκαστος "**each**" - EACH ONE [RESPECTIVELY OF THE GATES WAS FROM ONE PEARL]. Nominative subject of the verb to-be, with **αυα** giving a distributive sense; "each one of the gates was of one pearl apiece", Zerwick.

των πυλωνων [ων ωνος] gen. "**gates**" - OF THE GATES. The genitive is adjectival, partitive.

εξ + gen. "**was made of**" - OUT OF, FROM. The preposition may simply be taken to express source / origin, but it could also be classified as serving here as a genitive of material; "made *out of, consists of*." "Each gate was made from a single pearl", Barclay.

ἡ πλατεια [α] sing. "**great street**" - [AND] THE STREET. The NIV has opted for the "main street", but it could mean "town square", or be taken collectively as "streets." If the main thoroughfare through the city is intended, namely the ceremonial way, it is possible that John is imaging the milky way, the brilliant heavenly highway that links heaven with earth, and upon which the redeemed will travel. Whatever, John's language is symbolic and serves to illustrate the divine presence in the new dwelling-place of the redeemed.

της πολεως [ις εως] gen. "**of the city**" - The genitive is adjectival, partitive.

χρυσιον καθαρον "**pure gold**" - *was* GOLDEN, GOLD PURE. The adjective "pure" limits "gold". Beale suggests that the words are synonymous, taking "gold" to mean "golden / bright". So, "resplendent", a divine characteristic.

ὡς "**as [transparent glass]**" - AS, LIKE [TRANSPARENT CRYSTAL]. Comparative.

21:22-22:5

The Reign of Christ, 17:1-22:5

2. The dawning of the City of God, 21:9-22:5

ii] Paradise regained

Synopsis

John continues his description of the City of God as the assembled people of God. There is no temple in the city, but since the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb reside in the city, the city is itself the temple. The city provides its own light, a splendour that radiates; its gates are always wide open, although nothing impure enters; within the city flows the river of life for the tree of life. The city is made up of all those whose names are in the book, a people no longer cursed, a people who will "reign for ever and ever."

Teaching

The Kingdom of God is at hand; the Lord is with his people and with him they reign for eternity.

Issues:

i] Context: See 21:9-21.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *Paradise regained*:

Life in the city, 21:22-27:

The city is God's temple, v22;

The city is its own light, v23-24;

A city with gates that never close, v25-26;

A city free from sin, v27.

Eden reclaimed, 22:1-5 (cf., Gen2:10, Ezk.47:1-12:):

The river of life, v1-2a;

The tree of life, v2b-3a;

We again walk with the Lord, v3b-4;

The blessing of our eternal reign with the Lord, v5.

iv] Interpretation:

John's description of the City of God, the community of the redeemed, continues with an important observation. The temple is usually depicted residing in Zion, but in the heavenly city there is no temple because the Lord is not segregated from his people; The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are an integral part of the city such that the city itself is the temple of God.

The city of God / the people of God, are a people within whom divinity resides, 21:22.

John's image of a city which radiates its own light probably draws on the idea of light serving to illustrate the radiation of divine truth, a light that enlightens, prompting a faith that generates moral goodness, v23. Israel's task of being a light to the nations is realized in the city of God. As the Queen of Sheba was drawn to the splendour of Solomon's kingdom, so this city brings adoration from afar, v24. Of course, the image doesn't make literal sense, unless we imagine the lost looking on from the lake of fire, but it does serve to fulfill Israel's call to be a light to the nations, a call that reminds the Christian community today of its responsibility to shine the truth of the gospel into a broken world. As for the radiant ones themselves, those in the Lamb's book of life, v27, their light always shines, v25.

In describing the city, John draws on Eden typology, focusing on Ezekiel's imagery of the river that flows from the temple, a river that brings forth the tree of life, an orchard that gives life to a parched world, 22:1-2. Here we have the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, of "healing" / forgiveness = salvation ("putting right what was wrong", Richardson) for the world, Gen.12:3. So, the curse of sin in Eden is reversed, v3a - that time when humanity walked with God in the garden is restored; "the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him" and see him face to face, v3b-4. So it is that Eden lost is now Eden regained, and this with the restoration of the divine/human compact - an eternal relationship with our Creator God in Christ Jesus, the Lamb.

John summarizes his vision in v5. The divine light, his eternal truth, transforms us, and in and through Christ we will reign for eternity.

Text - 21:22

Paradise regained, 21:22-22:5: i] Life in the city, 21:22-27: a) The city is God's temple, v22. Given the strong Jewish tradition for the restoration of the temple, it is interesting how John reveals that there is no temple in the city of God. Assumptions that he is anti-temple, or that his community was anti-temple, are misplaced. He has simply found the realization of the temple's restoration in the existence of God's redeemed people who are the holy city, a people who are the dwelling place of the divine - the holy city, in its completeness, is the sanctuary of God, so Hughes. "The presence of God in all his power constitutes the city-temple of the new creation in union with Christ", and this "the final dwelling place of God's presence with his Church", Smalley.

γὰρ "because [the Lord]" - [AND A TEMPLE I DID NOT SEE IN IT] BECAUSE [THE LORD GOD THE ALMIGHTY IS TEMPLE OF IT, AND THE LAMB]. Here introducing

a causal clause explaining why John didn't see a temple in the city, namely, because the presence of God in the city is the temple itself.

ὁ θεός [ος] "**God**" - As with "the Almighty", this noun stands in apposition to the subject "Lord". The subject also includes το αρνιον, "the Lamb"; "The Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb."

εστιν "**are [its temple]**" - IS [TEMPLE OF IT]. As is typical in Gk., the singular verb to-be is used to agree with the singular person of the first member of the combined subject; see Mathewson. "The Lord God is its temple, and so is the Lamb", Cassirer.

v23

b) The city is its own light, v23-24. John draws on Isaiah 60:19 for the imagery, a prophecy fulfilled in the divine presence (the Shekinah glory) realized in Christ / Lamb. God's presence with his people radiates the heavenly temple-city, v23. Still drawing on chapter 60 of Isaiah, John goes on to note how the "nations", "kings", are drawn to the light, just as the Queen of Sheba was drawn to the wonder of Solomon's kingdom, and how they come bearing gifts, cf., Isa.60:3, 5. As noted above, a literal fulfillment of this prophecy is not possible given that the establishment of the eternal city follows /aligns with the dissolution of the powers and authorities of this present age. Of course, John's imagery is not supposed to be taken literally; it is an apocalyptic image illustrating the glory of the city of God in the future shaped by using Old Testament imagery from the past. None-the-less, there is an application for the present. The image reminds the Christian community of its task of being a "light unto the Gentiles", the task of shining the light of the gospel into God's broken world.

του ηλιου [ος] gen. "**[the city does not need] the sun**" - [THE CITY HAS NO NEED] OF THE SUN [NOR OF THE MOON]. As with "of the moon", genitive complement of the noun χρειαν, "need, use", which takes a genitive indicating the need to be supplied, BDAG,1088.1.

ινα + subj. "**to [shine]**" - THAT [THEY MAY SHINE]. Introducing a final clause expressing purpose, "in order that"

αυτη dat. pro. "**on it**" - The dative is locative, of place / space.

γαρ "**for [the glory]**" - BECAUSE [THE GLORY]. Introducing a causal clause explaining why the city does not need the sun and the moon; "for the splendor of God illuminates it", Barclay.

του θεου [ος] gen. "**of God**" - OF GOD [ILLUMINED IT]. The genitive may be treated as adjectival, possessive, "God's glory", or descriptive, idiomatic / source, "the glory which radiates from God", or verbal, subjective.

αυτης gen. pro. "**[the Lamb is] its [lamp]**" - [THE LAMP] OF IT [is THE LAMB]. The genitive is adjectival, possessive; "its radiance is the Lamb", Phillips.

v24

διὰ + gen. "**by [its light]**" - [AND THE NATIONS WILL WALK] BY [THE LIGHT OF IT]. It seems likely that an instrumental sense applies here, expressing means; "by means of its light the nations will walk", probably in the sense of "walk" to the city, if we give weight to Isaiah 60:3. Mathewson opts for the spatial sense of "through" in spatial terms; "the nations will walk through its light", so possibly just "walk in its light." Koester treats the verb "to walk" in the sense of behaviour and so we end up with "the nations will come to learn God's ways." He thinks John has dispensed with the idea that the nations will be annihilated at the end of the age, but this seems unlikely.

της γης [η] gen. "**[the kings] of the earth**" - The genitive is adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic / subordination, "the kings *who rule over* the earth."

φερουσιν [φερω] pres. "**will bring**" - BRING. Given "will walk", the present tense here is future referencing. John is focused on the durative aspect; the kings will keep bringing their splendour.

την δοξαν [α] "**[their] splendour**" - THE GLORY [OF THEM INTO IT]. Accusative direct object of the verb "to bring." Isaiah has the nations bringing their "wealth" to Zion, and this is surely what John has in mind. Smalley argues that John is leaning toward a spiritual sense, but it is more likely that the "glory" of the kings is everything they possess as kings, and it is this they present in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy.

v25

c) A city with gates that never close, v25-26. John continues to draw on Isaiah chapter 60, here verse 11, noting that the gates of the city are always open, and this because the divine light of the city never dims / there is no night, and therefore no need to close the gates, v25. Mounce makes the point that in the eternal city, security measures like closed gates are unnecessary. John goes on to repeat the attractive force of the city's radiant light, v26. Boring brings out two points from John's imagery of the city of God and its open gates, namely, its radical openness, and its eternal accessibility, but John is probably only reinforcing the fact of the city's ever-present radiance - it's always daytime; there is no need to close the gates.

ἡμερας [α] gen. "**on [no] day**" - [AND THE GATES OF IT NO NO WOULD BE SHUT] OF DAY. The genitive is adverbial, temporal, of the duration of time, "during the day"; "the gates will never be shut by day", Peterson.

ου μη + subj. "**no [day will its gates] ever [be shut]**" - A subjunctive of emphatic negation; "its gates will never ever be shut." In Isaiah the gates are open

day and night. For John this fact is realized in the continuation of daylight, such that the gates stay wide open.

γαρ "for" - BECAUSE [NIGHT WILL NOT BE THERE]. Introducing a causal clause explaining why the gates are never shut, namely, because there is no night. In ancient times, the city gates are closed at night. "*The gates will never be shut by night because* there will be no night there."

v26

των εθνων [ος] gen. "[**the glory and the honour**] of the nations" - [AND THEY WILL BRING THE GLORY AND THE HONOUR] OF THE NATIONS [INTO IT]. The genitive may be treated as adjectival, possessive, identifying items of dependent status possessed by the nations, "and the nations will come bringing their treasure and their wealth", NJB, or possibly descriptive, idiomatic / source, "from the nations" - the kings bring "splendour and honour" / wealth and treasure from the nations; "the splendour and honour arises from the people", Smalley. As noted above, it is unclear whether John is spiritualizing Isaiah's imagery, or just giving it an apocalyptic twist. As a gesture of adoration in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, the nations will offer everything to the city of God (although they will have to do it from the lake of fire!!!).

οισουσιν [φερω] fut. "**will be brought**" - THEY WILL BRING. The verb **οισω** is the irregular future of **φερω**, "to bring"; the compound direct object being "glory and honour."

v27

d) A city free from sin, v27. The city of God is made up of those found in the Lamb's book of life. The rest, "those who are shameful or deceitful", "will never enter it." These are the ones marked with the sign of the beast, those dedicated to the secular city, which for John's day amounted to "those who accommodate themselves to the lordship of Rome and therefore participate in cultic, social, political and economic activities celebrating that lordship (cf., abominations, 17:4-5), or who lie to (deceive) others and themselves about the truth of such behaviour (eg., Jezebel and Balaam, 2:14, 20-23)", Blount. It is easy to see how such applies to us today, given that most democratic, theocratic, or socialist states have abandoned the notion of Christian civilization.

ου μη + subj. "**nothing [impure will enter]**" - [AND ANYTHING PROFANE AND THE ONE DOING ABOMINATION AND FALSEHOOD, EXCEPT THE ONES HAVING BEEN WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE OF THE LAMB] NO NO = NEVER [MAY ENTER INTO IT]. Subjunctive of emphatic negation.

παν adj. "-" - ANYTHING [PROFANE]. The adjective serves as a substantive limited by the attributive adjective "profane", introducing the combined

nominative subject of the negated verb "will enter." "Nothing unclean shall ever come into it", Cassirer, cf., Isa.35:8, 52:1 - the city is closed to the unclean.

ὁ ποιῶν [ποιεῶ] pres. part. "**anyone who does**" - THE ONE DOING [ABOMINATION AND FALSEHOOD]. The participle serves as a substantive, part of the combined nominative subject of the verb "will enter." "Nor anyone who does shameful things or tells lies", TEV.

εἰ μὴ "**but only**" - EXCEPT. Introducing an exceptive clause expressing a contrast by designating an exception.

οἱ γεγραμμένοι [γραφῶ] perf. mid./pas. part. "**those whose names are written**" - THE ONES HAVING BEEN WRITTEN. The participle serves as a substantive, part of the combined nominative subject of the negated verb "will enter." For "the Lamb's book of life" see 13:8. "Those recorded / inscribed in the Lamb's book of life."

22:1

ii] Eden reclaimed, 22:1-5: a) The river of life, v1-2a. John now explains the fulfillment of Ezekiel 47:1-12 in the New Jerusalem / city of God, of a life-giving river that flows from the throne of God and the Lamb down the main street of the city. Ezekiel, of course, draws this image from the river flowing out of Eden, cf., Gen.2:10. In Ezekiel's prophecy, the river flows from the temple, but in John's vision there is no temple. Ezekiel doesn't call his river a life-giving river, but it inevitably brings forth life wherever it flows. For John, this brings us full circle to the tree of life, v2b. This life-giving water, water of eternal life, now flows into the city from the throne, not just of God, but "of the Lamb" as well. So, for the city of God / the Christian community, eschatological sustenance is provided by the reign of God in Christ.

μοι dat. pro. "[**the angel showed**] me" - [AND HE SHOWED A RIVER OF WATER OF LIFE BRIGHT AS CRYSTAL COMING OUT FROM THE THRONE OF GOD AND THE LAMB] TO ME. Dative of indirect object.

ὕδατος ζωῆς gen. "[**the river**] of the water of life" - The genitive nouns are adjectival, "of water" being expegetic, limiting by specifying the river in mind; "he showed me a river, that of the water of life", Cassirer. The genitive noun "of life" is probably attributive, limiting by describing the water in mind; it is life-giving water; "its waters gave life", CEV.

ὡς "**as [clear] as [crystal]**" - [BRIGHT] LIKE [CRYSTAL]. Comparative; "sparkling like crystal", Barclay, Phillips.

εκπορευομενον [εκπορευομαι] pres. mid. part. "**flowing from**" - coming out [from]. The participle is best classified as adjectival, attributive, limiting "river"; "a river which comes out of the throne of God." The preposition εκ, "from",

expressing source / origin, serves as a stylistic repetition of the prefix of the verb "coming out of."

του θεου [ος] gen. "[the throne] of God" - [THE THRONE] OF GOD [AND OF LAMB]. The genitive is adjectival, possessive.

v2a

εν + dat. "down" - IN. local, expressing space. The prepositional phrase "in the middle of the street of it (the city)" is taken by the NIV to modify the flow of the river, v1, ie., the river of life flows down the middle of (= through) the city's main street, so Osborne. On the other hand, the prepositional phrase may identify where the tree of life stands; "In the middle of the street of the city and on either bank of the river grew the tree of life", Phillips. Mathewson argues for the second option given that the allusion is consistent with Gen.2:9 where the tree of life is in the midst (LXX εν μεσση) of the Garden.

της πλατειας [α] gen. "[the middle] of the great street" - [MIDDLE] OF STREET, SQUARE. The genitive is adjectival, partitive.

αυτης gen. pro. "of the city" - OF IT. The genitive is adjectival, possessive.

v2b

b) The tree of life, v2b-3a. John first mentions the tree of life in Christ's word to the church in Ephesus, 2:7. Christ promises that those who conquer (persevere in faith) will be given the right to eat from the tree of life in the restored Eden, in paradise. The city of God, the new Jerusalem, is that paradise, a place where crops abound for nourishment. Ezekiel in 47:12 tells us that the fruit of the trees growing beside the river that flows from the temple is always in season. John develops the same image. The leaves for healing are "for the nations." Paradise is not exclusive; it is open to all who accept the sovereign reign / lordship of God and the Lamb. The "healing" in mind is explained in the clause "no longer will there be anything accursed", ESV. The healing has eradicated all "cursed things", BDAG, 517.

εντευθεν και εκειθεν adv. "on each side" - [AND] FROM HERE AND FROM THERE. The meaning of this idiomatic adverbial construction is "on each side", BDAG, 339.1.

του ποταμου [ος] gen. "of the river" - The genitive is adjectival, partitive.

ζωης [η] gen. "[tree] of life" - The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting tree, "the life-giving tree", possibly idiomatic / producer, "the tree which gives life", Wallace. In alluding to Genesis 2 there is one "tree of life", but John envisages a forest in line with Ezekiel 47:7; "trees of life", Cassirer.

ποιουν [ποιεω] pres. part. "bearing [twelve crops of fruit]" - MAKING = PRODUCING [TWELVE FRUITS]. The participle is best treated as adjectival, attributive, limiting "life-giving tree"; "a tree of life, which yields twelve crops of

fruit", REB. Note how the NIV assumes the verb "stood" and so treats the participle as adverbial, expressing manner.

αποδιδουν [αποδιδωμι] "yielding [its fruit]" - GIVING BACK = YIELDING [THE FRUIT OF IT]. The participle is probably adverbial, expressing manner, modifying the participle "bearing"; "bringing forth fruit every month of the year", Cassirer.

κατα + acc. "**[every month]**" - ACCORDING TO [EACH MONTH]. Distributive use of the preposition.

του ξυλου [ος] gen. "**[the leaves] of the tree**" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive, or descriptive, idiomatic; "the leaves *which grow on* the tree."

εις + acc. "**are for [healing]**" - TO [HEALING]. Here the preposition expresses purpose / end-view.

των εθνων [ος] gen. "**of the nations**" - The genitive is usually taken as verbal, objective, "for the nations"; "the leaves served to heal the nations", Moffatt. Note that some commentators (eg., Caird) see universalism here. The reality is that those within the nations who do not repent will be destroyed in the lake of fire, cf., ch. 19.

v3a

καταθεμα [α ατος] "**[any] curse**" - [AND EVERY] CURSE [NOT STILL WILL BE = NO LONGER WILL BE]. Nominative subject of the verb to-be. This clause explains "healing of the nations", so Beale. The word means "that which is accursed", cf., BDAG, 517. John is making the point "that nothing accursed is in the city", Koester, cf., 21:27. So, "the healing of the nations" is realized in the full gamut of a renewed and purified humanity resident in paradise - the new Eden. Other meanings are possible: Smalley opts for "the curse of destruction will cease to exist"; cursed in the sense of being placed under a ban and thus ultimately destroyed; So also Beale, "Jerusalem will never again be threatened from the curse of destruction for sin", cf. Zech.14:11 (possibly also Isa.34:1-2, the curse of a ban leading to judgment); So also Osborne, who from Zech.14:11 emphasizes "perpetual peace and safety."

v3b

c) The children of God again walk with the Lord, v3b-4. The redeemed exercise a priestly service in the end-time city of God such that the new Eden realizes the original intention of God's creation. In this "walk" with God, as in Adam and Eve's walk with God, the redeemed will "see his face." No one has ever seen the face of God and lived, but the redeemed in the city of God will. This idea of "seeing" entails "a true understanding of who God is and a right relationship with him", Osborne. In mentioning the name inscribed on the forehead of the

redeemed, John is again making the point that they belong to God, and because they belong to him they are secure.

του αρνιου [ος] gen. "[the throne of God and] of the Lamb" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive. "God and the Lamb share the symbol of authority", Smalley.

εν + dat. "in [the city]" - [WILL BE] IN [THE CITY]. Local, expressing space; "the throne of God and the Lamb will be found in the city."

λατρευσουσιν [λατρευω] "will serve [him]" - [AND THE SERVANTS OF HIM] WILL SERVE [HIM]. Some translations have "worship him", so ESV, TEV, REB, NJB, NAB, CEV, but the word expresses service, not adoration, as NIV; "his servants shall render him sacred service", Berkeley. Probably a more powerful image than that of God walking with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, but the sense of the divine / human relationship carries over. The verb "to give service to" takes a dative of direct object, as here.

v4

επι + gen. "[his name will be] on [their foreheads]" - [THEY WILL SEE THE FACE OF HIM, AND THE NAME OF HIM will be] ON [THE FOREHEADS OF THEM]. John's favourite spatial preposition; "on, upon." In the city of God, the 144,000 / the redeemed have the name of the Lamb and the Father inscribed on their forehead, cf., 14:1. The inhabitants of the secular city, Babylon, have the mark 666 = BEAST inscribed on their forehead.

v5

d) The blessing of our eternal reign with the Lord, v5. John summarizes his description of the city of God by repeating 21:23-25 - a city of perpetual light. "The glory of God and the Lamb [is] the energy source that fuels the eternal illumination", Blount. John, drawing again on Daniel 7:18, reminds his readers of the eternal reign of the saints in Christ.

φωτος λυχνου gen. "[they will not need] the light of a lamp" - [AND NIGHT NOT STILL = NO LONGER WILL BE, AND THEY HAVE NO NEED] OF LIGHT OF A LAMP. The noun χρεια, when expressing "the need of something", often takes a genitive complement to express what is needed, here the need "of a light." The genitive λυχνου, "lamp", is adjectival, idiomatic / source, "they will need no light from a lamp." The same construction applies to "and *they will have no need of light of = from the sun.*"

οτι "for [the Lord will give them light]" - BECAUSE [*the LORD GOD WILL GIVE LIGHT UPON THEM*]. Introducing a causal clause explaining why the redeemed in the city of God will not need the light of a lamp, or the sun, "because the Lord will be their light", TEV.

εις τους αιωνας των αιωνων [they will reign] for ever and ever" - [AND THEY WILL REIGN] INTO THE AGES OF THE AGES. For this temporal phrase see 1:18.

22:6-11

Epilogue

i] General testimonies to Christ

Synopsis

John now concludes his apocalyptic letter with a series of testimonies that call for perseverance in faith.

Teaching

The Kingdom of God is at hand; Give weight to God's word for the end is near.

Issues:

i] Context: See 1:1-8. Aune argues that the epilogue, 22:6-21, parallels 1:1-3 such that "the author has self-consciously framed the entire composition with similar motifs." Osborne identifies three themes found in the epilogue which parallel the prologue, 1:1-8: "the hand of God and Christ who reveal this prophecy, the nearness of the end of all things, and the importance of faithful endurance for Christ." Given the piecemeal arrangement of the epilogue (presenting as a collection of independent sayings: v6, 7, 8-9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14-15, 16, 17, 18-19, 20, 21) there have been numerous attempts to rework it, even to view it as a kind of antiphonal liturgy, but such are all speculative.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *General testimonies to Christ*:

John restates the divine source of his revelation, v6;

An exhortation from Christ, v7:

"I am coming soon";

Honour the message, not the messenger, v8-9;

The message is for today, v10;

"Do not seal up the words of the prophecy."

Decide while you can, v11.

iv] Interpretation:

The epilogue restates the main themes of the revelation, namely, the impacting realization of the kingdom of God / the reign of God in Christ, and thus, for unbelievers to repent and for believers to persevere in faith.

John begins with what amounts to a divine authentication of the prophecy / revelation - the revelation is from Christ; John, as are the angels, is a mere conduit, v6. This fact is reinforced as John reminds his readers of

his experience (recorded in 19:10) where an angel tells him that the angels, John himself, the prophets, and all who persevere in faith, are fellow servants of the Lord most high, v8-9. Let the reader focus on the words of the revelation, not the speaker / writer.

Given that the message / revelation is from Christ, it is necessary for the reader to act on its words. The kingdom / reign of God in Christ is bursting in upon us and so it is important to remember that the person who is blessed is the person who acts on the message, v7. The message is for today, v10, a day for decision, a day for the sinner to repent and for the saint to persevere in faith / conquer, v11.

v] Homiletics

"I am interested in Heaven, interested in that land because I have held a clear title to a bit of property there for many years. I did not buy it. It was given to me without any money or price, although the Donor purchased it for me at a tremendous sacrifice. I am not holding it for speculation since the title is not transferable. It is not a vacant lot. For more than half a century the greatest architect and builder of the universe has been building a home for me on the site. This home will never need to be remodelled or repaired because it will suit me perfectly, individually, and will never grow old.

Termites cannot undermine its foundations for it has been built upon the 'Rock of Ages.' Fire cannot destroy or floods wash it away. No locks or bolts will ever be placed on its doors, for no vicious person can ever enter that land where my dwelling stands. It is now almost completed and ready for me to enter in and abide in peace eternally without fear of being ejected.



There is this valley of deep shadows between the place where I live here and that to which I shall journey in a very short time. I cannot reach my house in the City of God without passing through this dark valley of shadows. But, I am not afraid because my best friend, my Saviour, went through the same valley long ago and drove away its gloom. He has been patient with me through all my wanderings since I first realized His saving kindness. I have little fear, for I hold His promise to me. He alone will be with me as I walk through the Valley of shadows and I shall not lose my way when He is with me. As with the disciples in the storm, he will see me safely to that far shore." *Unknown*.

Text - 22:6

General testimonies to Christ, 22:6-11: i] John restates the divine source of his revelation, v6.

μοι dat. pro. "[**the angel said**] **to me**" - [AND HE SAID] TO ME. Dative of indirect object. Note variant **λεγει**, present tense, rather than the unexpected aorist **ειπεν**, "he said." Again, we don't know exactly who is speaking, but presumably the angel who is doing the talking in 21:9 through to 22:5.

πιστοι και αληθινοι "**trustworthy and true**" - [THESE WORDS *are*] FAITHFUL AND TRUE. Predicate nominative of an assumed verb to-be. See 21:5.

των πνευματων [α ατος] gen. "**who inspires [the prophets]**" - [AND THE LORD GOD] OF THE SPIRITS [OF THE PROPHETS]. Given that "spirit" here is "the faculty within a person that allows one to prophecy", Koester, then, as Mathewson suggests, the genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / subordination, such that "God sovereignly determines and controls the utterances of the prophetic servants so what they say and write is both reliable and true", Aune. The genitive "of the prophets" is adjectival, possessive - those who possess a spirit which is quickened by the Spirit of God, so Smalley, Sweet. John doesn't specify which prophets he has in mind, but presumably the prophets (preachers???) of the early church, so Aune.

δειξαι [δεικνυμι] aor. inf. "**to show**" - [SENT THE ANGEL OF HIM] TO SHOW. The infinitive is adverbial, expressing purpose; "in order to show" "Sent" may take the sense "commissioned", so Smalley; "commissioned in order to reveal"

τοις δουλοις [ος] dat. "**[his] servants**" - TO THE SERVANTS [OF HIM]. Dative of indirect object. The prophets, as also angels and believers, are designated servants of God.

γενεσθαι [γινομαι] aor. mid. inf. "**[must soon] take place**" - [WHAT *things*] TO HAPPEN [IN QUICKNESS IS NECESSARY]. The infinitive serves as the subject of the impersonal verb **δει**, "it is necessary", the accusative subject of the infinitive being the pronoun **ἃ**, "what *things*." The prepositional phrase **εν ταχει** is adverbial, temporal, "in quickness" = "quickly". John's language here reflects Daniel 2:28-29. The **ἃ**, "what", that is soon to come is obviously the Great Day of the Lord Almighty / the day of judgment. "He sent his angel to show his servants what must happen very soon", TEV.

v7

ii] An exhortation from Christ, v7. To emphasize his prophetic role, John now quotes the central message of the revelation, a message he received from Christ, a message he has already revealed in 2:16, 3:11; "I am coming quickly." For John, "the unveiling of God's salvific purposes for his creation is an ongoing and ever-present reality", Smalley. In another *macarism* (there are seven in the Revelation)

we have the words "Blessed / Happy is the person who acts on the teaching of this revelation."

ὁ τηρων [τηρεω] pres. part. "[blessed] is the one who keeps [the words]" - [AND BEHOLD I AM COMING QUICKLY, BLESSED] THE ONE KEEPING [THE WORDS]. The participle serves as a substantive, with μακαριος, "blessed", serving as a predicate adjective.

της προφητειας [α] gen. "of the prophecy" - The genitive is adjectival, best classified as exegetical, limiting "the words" by specifying the words in mind.

του βιβλιου [ον] gen. "written in [this] scroll" - OF [THIS] SCROLL, BOOK. The genitive is adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic, eg., "the words *which are written in* this book." Here the pronoun τουτου, serves as an adjective, with the noun "book" carrying the article του to indicate its adjectival function. "Happy is the person who acts on the prophetic message contained in this book."

v8

iii] Honour the message, not the messenger, v8-9. John virtually repeats 19:9-10 where he mistakenly seeks to worship the intermediary for the revelation God gave to him. The repetition of this failing serves as a call "to remain obedient to the covenant commands of God and to direct all worship to him alone." Such "emphasizes the need for members of the Johannine community, and the Church in general, to reject idolatry of all kinds, this has been a theme throughout the Apocalypse", Smalley.

καγω "I" - AND I. A shortened version of και + εγω = "and I"; the "I" serves as the nominative subject of an assumed verb to-be, with "John" standing in apposition to "I"; "And I, John, *am*" As at the beginning of the letter, we have a personal attestation of apostolic authority. See the issue of authorship in the introduction.

ὁ ακουων [ακουω] pres. part. "the one who heard" - THE ONE HEARING [AND THE ONE SEEING THESE THINGS (the visions)]. The participle, as with "the one seeing", is usually treated as a substantive, predicate nominative of an assumed verb to-be, "I, John, *am* the one who heard and saw these things", ESV.

οτε "when" - [AND] WHEN [I HEARD AND SAW]. Introducing a temporal clause. Note the textual variants for εβλαψα, "seen". John usually has ειδον, "I saw." Aune suggests the original was an imperfect, "I was seeing."

προσκυνησαι [προσκυνεω] aor. inf. "[I fell down] to worship" - [I FELL] TO DO OBEISANCE. The infinitive is adverbial, final, expressing purpose; "I fell down in order to worship." Phillips treats the action as inceptive; "At the time when I heard and saw them, I fell at the feet of the angel who showed them to me and I was about to worship him."

εμπροσθεν "at [the feet]" - BEFORE [THE FEET]. Spatial preposition; "before, in front of."

του αγγελου [ος] gen. "of the angel" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive.

του δεικνοντος gen. pres. part. "**who had been showing [them]**" - SHOWING [THESE THINGS TO ME]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "angel", as NIV.

μοι dat. pro. "**to me**" - Dative of indirect object.

v9

μοι dat. pro. "**[he said] to me**" - Dative of indirect object.

ὄρα μη "**don't do that!**" - This idiomatic elliptical construction of **ὄρα** + a negation / prohibition = "see *that you do not do that.*" ""That is what you must not do!, he said to me", Barclay.

σου gen. pro. "**[I am a fellow servant] with you**" - [I AM A FELLOW SERVANT] OF YOU [AND OF THE BROTHERS OF YOU]. The genitive is adjectival, possessive / relational, "I am nothing more than a fellow servant of yours", Cassirer, or association, as NIV; See **σου**, 19:10. So also the genitive "of the brothers", with the genitive pronoun "of you" being adjectival, relational. "I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brothers", Berkeley.

των προφητων [ης ου] gen. "**prophets**" - THE PROPHETS. Standing in apposition to "brothers"; "I am a servant just like you and your companions, the prophets", Peterson. The sense is as NIV, "you and your fellow servants the prophets", not "you, and your fellow servants, and the prophets."

των τηρουντων [τηρω] gen. pres. part. "**[and with] all who keep [the words]**" - [AND] THE ONES KEEPING [THE WORDS]. The participle serves as a substantive. The genitive as **σου** above, so "a fellow servant of / with those who keep the words of the book / scroll." "And all who keep the words of this book. Worship God", Peterson, are also "fellow servants" of/with the angels.

τω θεω [ος] dat. "**[worship] God**" - [DO OBEISANCE TO] GOD. Dative of direct object after the **προς** prefix verb "to do obeisance to / worship."

v10

iv] The message is for today, v10. The speaker is presumably the angel, so Mounce, Aune, ... Unlike some esoteric secret prophecy of an age to come (possibly like Daniel), John writes to his own generation, to his own contemporaries. "John's book is immediately relevant because it depicts a conflict with hostile forces that is already under way", Koester. This conflict is not going to drag on, given the central message revealed to John, namely, "I am coming soon", v7. John's realized eschatology (the kingdom of God is at hand) entails an

urgent message in the face of imminent judgment, and as such demands an immediate response - the revelation must not be sealed.

μοι dat. pro. "**[he told] me**" - [AND HE SAYS] TO ME. Dative of indirect object.

μη σφραγισης [σφραγιζω] aor. subj. "**do not seal up**" - Subjunctive of prohibition. "Don't put it away on the shelf", Peterson.

της προφητειας [α] gen. "**of the prophecy**" - The genitive is adjectival, epexegetic, specifying the words in mind.

του βιβλιου [ον] gen. "**of [this] scroll**" - The genitive is adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic / content, "the prophecy *which is contained in* this scroll."

γαρ "**because**" - BECAUSE [THE TIME IS NEAR]. Introducing a causal clause explaining why the scroll should not be sealed up, "because the time is up."

v11

v] Decide while you can, v11. Although this verse is usually viewed as an independent saying, it is integrally linked to v10. In v10 we are reminded that John's revelation must not be sealed because it requires urgent consideration; "the time (for judgment) is near." In v11 we are faced with the situation that will confront humanity on the day of judgment. In simple terms, there will be no time for the sinner to repent and so they may as well keep on sinning. The same is so for the Christian community, those who have persevered in faith, conquered, endured, continued to testify, need to just keep on keeping on for there is no time to change course. So, John again reminds the reader, particularly those of wavering faith, that now is the time to recommit to their faith, for a day will come when that opportunity will not exist. "John pictures the future in such a way that he hopes will either entice or frighten hearers and readers into making the appropriate decision to line up behind the Lordship of God and the Lamb (rather than the secular city)", Blount. See Mounce. Cf., Dan.12:10.

ὁ ἀδικων [αδικεω] pres. part. "**[let] the one who does wrong**" - THE ONE DOING HARM [LET HIM DO HARM]. The participle serves as a substantive, subject of the imperative verb "to harm / do wrong / act unjustly." A similar construction continues with three articular adjectives serving as substantives, "the impure one", "the righteous one", and "the holy one."

ετι adv. "**continue [to do wrong]**" - [LET HIM DO HARM] STILL. The temporal adverb, which "expresses the notion of continuance", Mathewson (BDAG 400.1a), also stands in three following constructs; "let the evil-doer go on doing evil; let the filthy-minded wallow in his filth; let the righteous man go on pursuing righteousness; let the holy man go on keeping himself holy", Cassirer. Note that Cassirer introduces the verse with "Meanwhile". This only works if John is reflecting the sense of Ezk.3:27, "Let those who will hear, hear; let those who refuse to hear, refuse." So, in this time when the scroll is open and the kingdom

near, let the wicked person who ignores its warning, continue in their wickedness, but let the righteous person who takes its warning to heart, continue in their righteousness. See Koester for this approach.

22:12-21

Epilogue, 22:6-21

ii] The testimony of Jesus

Synopsis

John now concludes his apocalyptic letter with a series of testimonies that call for perseverance in faith.

Teaching

The Kingdom of God is at hand; Jesus is coming soon so keep watch to your faith.

Issues:

i] Context: See 22:6-11.

ii] Background: See 1:1-8.

iii] Structure: *General testimonies to Christ:*

When Christ comes he will reward his people, v12;

The one who comes is the beginning of all things and the end of all things, v13;

Blessings and warnings, v14-15;

Jesus is the source of this revelation, v16;

A call to come to Christ, v17;

A warning against interfering with John's prophecy, v18-19;

Jesus testifies that he will come soon, v20;

Concluding benediction, v21.

iv] Interpretation:

John concludes his book with an epilogue, 22:6-21. It consists of loose sayings, prophecies and observations which sum up the character of the book. There is also a warning not to change or disregard the book and an assurance to the reader of Christ's return. The passage before us covers the central part of the epilogue.

Beale takes the view that the epilogue consists of five exhortations to holiness, v6-7, 8-10, 11-12, 13-17, 18-20. Certainly, exhortations to faithfulness, blessings for faithfulness and warnings, all with reference to Christ's coming, are central to the passage. As with the prologue, there are different speakers giving testimony, but here the identity of those speaking is not as clear. Still, it is possible to identify three testimonies: The testimony of the angel, v6-7; the testimony of John v8-11; and the testimony of Jesus

(along with John's response) v12-20. Some commentators (eg. Vanni 1991) treat the passage as an antiphonal liturgical dialogue consisting of three units, v6-11, 12-16, 17-21, although there is little agreement as to the speakers (God, John, an Angel, the Spirit and Jesus). It is probably best to treat the passage as a collection of loose independent sayings, prophecies and observations, which recapitulate the themes of the prologue: "the hand of God and Christ who reveal this prophecy, the nearness of the end of all things, and the importance of faithful endurance for Christ", Osborne. So, it seems best to approach v12-20 as a collection of seven independent sayings of Christ loosely tied together thematically, with v21 serving as a closing benediction.

Text - 22:12

Christ is coming soon, v12-20: i] When Christ comes he will reward his people, v12. Jesus announces his coming return, a return which he will complete quickly. When he comes in glory he will reward people on the basis of what they have done. This reward is either a blessing or a curse. John probably has in mind members of the Christian community / the redeemed, and the "what they have done" is most likely perseverance in faith / endurance ("to conquer").

ερχομαι pres. "**I am coming**" - [BEHOLD] I AM COMING. The "coming" of Christ is by no means easy to understand. We often see his coming as a return to earth, although from the perspective of Ezekiel, his coming is a coming to heaven with his saints, and there to take up his throne at the right hand of the Ancient of Days. This "coming" entails the day of judgment, a judgment / coming which has been enacted on days like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, or the destruction of Jerusalem, and will be enacted again at Armageddon, on the last day - all types of Christ's "coming". Fitting modern human history between Christ's ascension and his enthronement in heaven is not very easy for a people locked into linear time, but of course, time is a construct of the creation, not of heaven. Like the thief on the cross, all believers, having cast off this mortal coil, will meet in paradise this evening.

ταχυ adv. "**soon**" - SWIFTLY, QUICKLY, SOON. Temporal adverb. The message from Jesus is that he will not delay his *parousia* for very long, rather he will come soon. Given that we have waited nearly 2000 years, it is difficult to understand what Jesus means by "soon". As noted above, the problem is one of perspective - a thousand years is but a moment in the sight of God.

ὁ μισθος [ος] "[**my**] reward" - [AND] THE WAGES, REWARD, RECOMPENSE [OF ME]. Nominative subject of an assumed verb to-be. Jesus comes to give what is due. Given that his coming entails both blessing and cursing, "reward" misses

the mark due to its positive spin - "recompense" is better; "I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me", ESV.

μετα + gen. "**is with [me]**" - Association; "in company with."

αποδουναι [αποδιδωμι] aor. inf. "**and I will give**" - TO GIVE. The infinitive introduces a final clause expressing purpose; "in order to give"

εκαστω dat. adj. "**to each person**" - Dative of indirect object.

ως "**according to**" - AS, LIKE. Here the comparative serves to introduce a concrete example; "to repay each for (according to) what they have done."

το εργον "**what [he has / they have] done**" - THE WORK [OF HIM IS]. Nominative subject of the verb to-be. When Jesus returns, he will judge us on the basis of our works. Judgment on the basis of deeds done seems to strike at the heart of the doctrine of justification by grace through faith. The problem caused by texts that imply a *reward for works* is best resolved by arguing that the essential "work" demanded by God is faith / belief in Christ - perseverance in faith. Works, such as love, are a fruit of faith, and as James points out, a genuine faith issues in good works. Yet, as Paul points out, our works play no part in the issue of divine grace for such rests on Christ's work appropriated through faith.

v13

ii] The one who comes is the beginning of all things and the end of all things, v13. John is here repeating a concept he has already developed, cf. 1:8, 17, 2:8, 21:6. William Lee does a nice job paraphrasing these three titles: "I am He from whom all being has proceeded and to whom it will return. I am the primal cause and the final aim of all history. I am the one who has created the world and who will perfect it."

το αλφα και το ω "**the Alpha and the Omega**" - [I am] THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA [THE FIRST AND THE LAST AND THE BEGINNING AND THE END]. Predicate nominative of the assumed verb to-be. Both "first and last" and "beginning and end" stand in apposition to "the Alpha and Omega." We have here the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, with the last letter not spelled out. Omega was not normally spelled out until the 7th. century. The letters express "the totality of polarity", Beale, of Christ's sovereign standing over the beginning and end of creation.

v14

iii] Blessings and warnings, v14-15. Blessed are those who "wash" for they will be rewarded by Christ - justified by grace through faith, cf., 7:14. The washing image refers to washing in the blood of Christ, being covered by Christ's sacrificial death through repentance and faith. Those who wash have the right to feed on the

tree of life, cf., 22:2. For the unwashed, cursed are those who reside outside the city of God for they will be judged in the Great Day of the Lord Almighty.

οἱ πλυνοντες [πλυνω] pres. part. "**those who wash**" - THE ONES WASHING [THE ROBES OF THEM *are* BLESSED]. The participle serves as a substantive, nominative subject of an assumed verb to be. The washing image is used in the Bible to describe being immersed in the sacrificial death of Christ by means of which Jesus takes our punishment on himself and thus secures our acquittal, cf.7:14. So the phrase means, "blessed are those who repent." It is not just repentance at the time of our conversion, for the washing is a present continuous action, (durative present tense). The washing entails an ongoing act of repentance, an ongoing recognition of lostness apart from Christ, an ongoing desire for completeness in Christ = turning to Christ. Note the alternate reading found in some manuscripts and used in the AV, "do his commandments" - the Judaizers live on!

ἵνα + fut., subj. "**that**" - This clause may be read as introducing a final clause expressing purpose, "in order to" or better a consecutive clause expressing consequence / result, "with the result that", NRSV, NEB. Zerwick suggests that it may be causal, "because"; Such a use is rare in the NT. Note the interesting use of ἵνα + future of the verb to-be followed by the usual form of a verb in the subjunctive mood; "that will be their right and *that* they may enter" There are a number of examples of ἵνα + fut. in Revelation, which, as here, are best treated as standing in for a subjunctive.

ἐπι + acc. "**[the right] to**" - [THE AUTHORITY, POWER OF THEM] OVER [THE TREE OF LIFE]. John's favourite spatial preposition; "over", the right/authority "over" means the right / authority to feed on the fruit of the tree of life, or possibly "opens the way to the tree of life", Junkins. The image of feeding from the tree of life comes from the book of Ezekiel and harks back to the "tree of life" in the garden of Eden. It is an image of "eternal life", of eternal sustenance in union with Christ. For the genitive "[tree] of life", see v2.

τοῖς πυλῶσιν [ων ὠνος] dat. "**the gates**" - [AND] BY THE GATES. The dative is instrumental, expressing means.

εἰς "**into [the city]**" - [THEY MAY ENTER] INTO [THE CITY]. Spatial. It is those who wash who have the right to go through the gates and enter the city, not those who eat from the tree of life, given that the tree is in the city. Here again we have the use of a vivid Old Testament image. It pictures our coming into the kingdom of God, our coming into the presence of the living God, and our being blessed and ruled by him. cf., Zechariah.

v15

εξω adv. "**outside**" - Outside the city gate - those not allowed to enter.

οι κυνες [ων υνος] "**dogs**" - THE DOGS [THE SORCERERS AND THE FORNICATORS AND THE MURDERERS AND THE IDOLATORS *are* OUTSIDE]. Nominative subject of an assumed verb to-be. The term was used by Jews to describe unclean Gentiles, those without God. This may be the sense here = "unbelievers". John takes time to describe these *unwashed*. Note the full list in 21:8. They are: i) "cowardly" - they run from the battle and do not stand with Christ; ii) "Unbelieving" - unfaithful; iii) "Vile" - nasty; iv) "Murderers" - haters; v) "Sexually immoral"; vi) "Practise magic arts" - into power games; vii) "Idolaters" - worship the creation rather than the Creator; viii) "Love to lie" - full of deceit. These unwashed may also be pseudo-Christians, "dogs" as in Philippians 3:2, ie., those who bear the outward marks of religion.

φιλων [φιλω] pres. part. "[**everyone**] **who loves**" - LOVING [AND PRACTISING FALSEHOOD]. This, and the following participle "practising", are adjectival, limiting "everyone". It is interesting that the sin of lying is identified in a list of serious sinful living.

v16

iv] In two conjoined sayings Jesus is identified as the source of this revelation to John, sayings which further define his person, v16. Jesus announces that the revelation to John through the angel, and thus to "you" (the church), is a direct revelation from himself; it is his word. This revelation comes from the anointed one of God: the root of Jesse, of the Davidic line, the Davidic King; the "star" of Jacob, Num.24:17, Isa.11:1, 10, 53:2.

ὑμιν pl. dat. "**you**" - [I JESUS SENT THE ANGEL OF ME] TO YOU ALL. Dative of indirect object. Note the "you" is plural, so the revelation is not so much for John, but for the church.

μαρτυρησαι [μαρτυρω] inf. "**to give [you] this testimony**" - TO BEAR WITNESS, TESTIFY [TO YOU]. The infinitive introduces a final clause expressing purpose, "in order to testify". "To bear witness" here has the sense of declaring or announcing the revelation.

επι + dat. "**for [the churches]**" - Here expressing purpose / goal, end-view, as NIV.

ἡ ῥίζα και το γενος "**The Root and the Offspring [of David]**" - [I AM] THE ROOT AND THE OFFSPRING [OF DAVID]. Predicate nominative. A messianic title, The Warrior Messiah of the seed of David.

ὁ αστηρ ὁ λαμπρος ὁ πρωινος "**The bright Morning Star**" - Standing in apposition to "the root and offspring of David." Also, a messianic title referring to the star that will come out of Jacob, Num.24:17.

v17

v] A call to come to Christ, v17. Both the Holy Spirit and the "bride" (the church) call on humanity to "come" into God's presence and unite with him for eternity. The call to come and drink of the water of life is obviously the gospel invitation to enter the kingdom of God, ie., believe in Jesus and so find in him life eternal.

ερχου ... ερχου ερχεσθω [ερχομαι] imp. "**come come let him come**" - [AND THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE SAY] COME [AND THE ONE HEARING LET HIM SAY] COME [AND THE ONE THIRSTING] LET HIM COME. The invitation to come is rather confusing. It is possible that the first two invitations to come are a call for the return of Christ, so Beasley-Murray, although it is more likely that they are all a call to come to Christ, so Mounce, Beale, Osborne. Presumably Christ makes the first call to come, the second is from the church and the third a general call to come to Christ penned by John. There is some debate as to the identity of "the thirsty" and "whoever wishes". Most commentators argue that the invitation is for unbelievers to accept Christ, so Beasley-Murray, Mounce. Some think the invitation is to believers and is a call to faithfulness, for a closer walk with Jesus, so Beale. Possibly it is a call to both believers and unbelievers, a call to commitment and a call to a deeper commitment, so Osborne. If it is a call to commitment such that the one who is "thirsty", who "wishes", is an unbeliever, then we are again reminded that the gospel may only be for "seekers" rather than the whole of humanity, ie., the gospel functions as the key to unlock the mysteries of the universe, but functions as such only for those who seek the key. So for us today, this would mean that accurate communication is more important than a presentation reliant on motivational techniques. This is of course a rather contentious issue, but worthy of debate. (Note, the enigmatic saying of Jesus "do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs", Matt.7:6. These words are often used to support the "seeker" argument, but most likely have nothing do with presenting the gospel. The saying is found within the context of judging others and is most likely an example of pharisaic judgmentalism. Jesus is not saying "do this", rather he's saying "don't do it.")

ὁ ακουων [ακουω] pres. part. "**the one who hears**" - THE ONE HEARING [LET HIM SAY, COME]. The participle serves as a substantive. As noted above, this probably serves as the call of the church to come to Christ.

ὁ διψων [διψαω] pres. part. "[**let**] **the one who is thirsty [come]**" - The participle serves as a substantive, as does "the one desiring, wishing." Probably serving as a general call by John.

θωης [η] gen. "**[the water] of life**" - [THE ONE DESIRING LET HIM TAKE WATER] OF LIFE [FREELY]. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, "life-giving water

/ water which gives life", or better appositional / expegetic, "let the one who is thirsty come and take the free gift of the *living water that Jesus provides, namely, eternal life*" - new life in the kingdom, eschatological life.

v18

vi] A warning against interfering with John's prophecy, v18-19. John now gives a warning not to interfere with this prophecy on pain of judgment. The warning could be to copyists, but also applies to all who teach the truths found in the revelation.

μαρτυρω [μαρτυρεω] "I warn" - I BEAR WITNESS / TESTIFY. The sense is obviously "warn", but a word like "declare" would be closer to the Greek.

τω ακουοντι [ακουω] dat. pres. part. "[to everyone] who hears" - [TO EVERYONE] HEARING. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting the substantive dative of indirect object pronoun **παντι**, "everyone", dative in agreement with "everyone". "I declare to everyone who hears the prophecies of this book."

της προφητειας [α] gen. "[the words] of the prophecy" - The genitive may be treated as adjectival, possessive, "this prophecy's words", or expegetic, Mathewson, or idiomatic / source, "the words communicated *by/in/from* this prophecy" = "the revelatory words", Beale.

του βιβλιου [ον] gen. "of [this] scroll" - The genitive may be classified as adjectival, idiomatic / source; "*from* this scroll", or idiomatic / content, "*which are contained in* this book."

εαν + subj. "if" - Introducing a conditional clause 3rd class where the condition has the possibility of coming true, "if, *as may be the case*, *then*"

επιθη [επιτιθημι] aor. subj. "adds" - [ANYONE] LAY [UPON THEM]. Certainly "adds" properly represents the Greek, although in a general sense "alters" is acceptable. "Adds" is chosen to parallel the adding of the plagues upon those who add to the text, or better, the meaning of the text. For the plagues see chapters 15 and 16.

τας γεγραμμενας [γραφω] perf. pas. part. "described" - [GOD WILL LAY / ADD TO HIM THE PLAGUES] HAVING BEEN WRITTEN [IN THIS BOOK]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "the plagues"; "God will add to him the plagues which are recorded in this book."

v19

εαν + subj. "if" - Introducing a 3rd. class conditional clause, as above.

αφελη [αφειρεω] aor. subj. "[anyone] takes [words] away" - [AND IF ANYONE] TAKES AWAY, REMOVES, SUBTRACTS, DELETES, OMITTS, Remove the truth of the prophecy, not just the words.

απο + gen. "**from**" - Expressing separation, "away from." See above for "of the book of this prophecy."

του βιβλιου της προφητειας gen. "**[this] scroll of prophecy**" - [THE WORDS] OF THE BOOK OF [THIS] PROPHECY. Both genitives are adjectival, probably descriptive, idiomatic; "anyone who takes away from the words *which are contained in the book which reveals* this prophecy."

το μερος [ος ους] "**[his] share / [any] share**" - [GOD WILL TAKE AWAY] THE PART [OF HIM]. The noun "part" means that which a person possesses by right, their lot, their share of the inheritance. A person who fiddles with the truths in this revelation will lose their right to enter the city and eat the fruit of the tree of life = their right to eternal life. This statement seems to extend the requirement for salvation beyond that of faith in Christ - we are justified by grace through faith apart from works of the law. It seems likely that the warning carries its own power such that those who have "come" will not even want to tamper with the revelation. Those who do willfully tamper, show by their actions that they have not come and that their share / portion of the tree of life and the holy city was only apparent, and not real.

απο + gen. "**in [the tree of life]**" - FROM [THE TREE OF LIFE AND FROM THE HOLY CITY]. As with the following εκ + gen., rather than expressing separation, both prepositions serve as partitive genitives; "God will take away his (their) portion of the tree of life and of the Holy City." For the genitive "[tree] of life", see v2.

των γεγραμμενων [γραφο] perf. pas. part. "**which are described**" - OF THE THINGS HAVING BEEN WRITTEN. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "tree of life" and "holy city", as NIV; "of which a description has been given in this book", Cassirer.

εν + dat. "**in [this book]**" - Expressing space / sphere.

v20

vii] Jesus testifies that he will come soon, v20. Jesus again gives witness and affirms that he is coming soon. The response to this truth is "Amen" - we agree and affirm this truth. This response is then followed by a prayer - *Maranatha*, which is Aramaic for "Come, O Lord", 1Cor.16:22. Our burning desire should be for the coming of Christ and thus, for our union with him.

ὁ μαρτυρων [μαρτυρω] pres. part. "**he who testifies**" - [SAYS] THE ONE TESTIFYING [THESE THINGS, YES I AM COMING QUICKLY]. The participle serves as a substantive.

ερχου κυριε Ιησου "**come Lord Jesus**" - [AMEN] COME LORD JESUS. The imperative here is followed by a vocative of address. This imperatival phrase in Greek is equivalent to the Aramaic *Marana tha*, "our Lord, come."

v21

Concluding benediction, v21. The fact that this document ends with a benediction indicates that it is an epistle/letter. The benediction serves as a call (prayer request) for God's grace to flow to his people, a request which is supported by propositional promises in the scriptures and therefore a prayer request that will be answered. See Metzger for the many variants for this verse, eg.: **Χριστος** "Christ" is added in some texts; **αμην** "Amen" is found in some texts; and there are seven variant objects, **μετα παντων**, eg. "with you all", "all the saints", "with all of us", ...

του κυριου Ιησου gen. "[**the grace**] of the Lord Jesus" - [THE GRACE] OF THE LORD JESUS [*be WITH ALL*]. The genitive may be classified as adjectival, possessive, a grace *that is possessed by* Christ, but probably better as descriptive, idiomatic / source, "a grace *that flows from* Christ."

μετα + gen. "**with [God's people]**" - Expressing association, as NIV.

Sid 2/24

Finis



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