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1. INTRODUCTION

Revelation 1:9–3:22

I. UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK OF REVELATION

A. SYMBOLS

1. Symbols present not describe

John writes of a realm that is completely outside our experience: “the Apocalypse writes of heaven and things to come, that is, of a realm which has no shape at all but that which the images give it.”¹ John has no language to describe heaven. But symbols allow him to present something of the theological and spiritual reality of heaven.

St John’s images do not mean anything you like; their sense can be determined. But they still have an astonishing multiplicity of reference. Otherwise, why write in images rather than in cold factual prose? It has been said that the purpose of scientific statement is the elimination of ambiguity, and the purpose of symbol is the inclusion of it. We write in symbol when we wish our words to present, rather than analyse or prove, their subject-matter... Symbol endeavours, as it were, to be that of which it speaks, and imitates reality by the multiplicity of its significance... There is a current and exceedingly stupid doctrine that symbol evokes emotion, and exact prose states reality. Nothing could be further from the truth: exact prose abstracts from reality, symbol presents it.²

John wrote so that his symbols be readily understood to the initiated, just as a political cartoonist draws cartoons to be immediately understood. The task of the teacher is to provide enough background and identification that the symbols once again become immediately understandable.

2. The Old Testament

The primary reference book for understanding Revelation is the OT. John “is always doing something with the Old Testament.”³ The OT contains the “matrix of images” which are rebirthed through the Spirit, and mined by John. Though there is not a single direct quote from the OT, scholars have counted 350 or more allusions to the OT.

3. Numbers

The Book is full of numbers, especially numbers which have symbolic significance: 4, 7, 10, 12. Multiples of these numbers are also used.

a) Four

Four represents universality, just as today we talk of the four points of the compass.

- 4 living creatures (cherubim) 10x.
- 4 angels at 4 corners of earth, holding back 4 winds of the earth (7:1)
- 4 angels at Euphrates (9:14-15)
- dragon deceives the nations at the 4 corners of earth (20:8)
- four-fold division of cosmos into sky, earth, sea, springs, all of which receive God’s judgment.

b) Seven

Seven represents perfection. The word ἑπτά “seven” occurs 55 times.

- Most obvious are the 4 series of sevens: 7 messages (2:1-3:22), 7 seals (5:1; 6:1-17; 8:1), 7 trumpets (8:2, 6-9:21; 11:15-19), 7 bowls (15:1; 16:1-21)

1. Austin Farrer, *A Rebirth of Images* (London: Dacre, 1949; republ. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1970), 17.

2. Farrer, *Rebirth*, 19-20.

3. Farrer, *Rebirth*, 19.

- 7 spirits (1:4; 4:5; 5:6), 7 thunders (10:3-4), 7 angels, 7 hills (17:9), 7 kings (17:9), 7 plagues (15:1)
- 7 churches (1:4, 11, 20), 7 lampstands (1:12,20; 2:1), 7 stars (1:16,20; 2:1)
- Lamb has 7 horns, 7 eyes (5:6)
- dragon has 7 heads, 7 crowns (12:3); beast has 7 heads (13:1).

Multiples of 7:

- 7000 killed (11:13)

Reductions of seven: 3-1/2 is half of 7, i.e. a cutting short of a complete period of time. 3-1/2 years is equated with 42 months and 1260 days (42 months of 30 days).

- 3-1/2 days: during which world will gaze on slain witness (11:9), after which god raises them to life (11:11).
- 3-1/2 times: period during which woman (Church) must be preserved from dragon (12:14)
- 42 months: duration of Gentile trampling of holy city (11:2) and of beast's blasphemy (13:5)
- 1260 days: duration of witnesses' prophecy (11:3); and of woman's preservation in wilderness (12:6)

The beast's number, 666, is also a reduction of 7: he falls thrice short of perfection.

The number seven is used more subtly:

- 7-fold ἔρχομαι "I am coming": 2:5,16; 3:11; 16:15; 22:7,12,20.
- 7 beatitudes μακάριος: 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14.
- 7-fold reference to language, nation, tribe, tongue.
- 7 visions form the bridge between the Babylon Appendix and the Jerusalem Appendix.

c) Ten

Ten is somewhat akin to seven, representing completion.

- dragon has 10 horns (12:3); beast has 10 horns, 10 crowns (13:1; 17:3,7,12,16). 10 horns = 10 kings (17:12).
- the saints in Smyrna will suffer 10 days tribulation (2:10).

Multiples of 10: thousand being ten-cubed represents a very large number.

- 1000 years (20:2-7): it is a long time.
- 12x12x1000 in the heavenly army of the redeemed: they are very numerous.
- New Jerusalem is 12,000 stadia on a side: it is huge.

d) Twelve

Twelve represents the people of God, whether OT Israel or NT Church.

- 12 stars on the Queen of Heaven's crown (12:1)
- New Jerusalem: 12 gates, 12 angelic gate-keepers, inscribed with names of 12 tribes, in form of 12 pearls (21:12,21); 12 foundations, inscribed with names of 12 apostles (21:14); tree of life yields 12 kinds of fruit (22:2).

Multiples of 12:

- 24 elders
- New Jerusalem 12,000 stadia per side (21:16), walls 144 cubits thick (21:17)
- 12,000 from each tribe (7:5-8)
- The Lord's army of the redeemed numbers 144,000 (7:4; 14:1,3)

e) Other numbers

- The 2 witnesses (11:3) = 2 olive trees and 2 lampstands (11:4) = 2 prophets (11:10), references to the OT authenticity of two witness (Deut 19:15)
- The beast has 2 horns (13:11)
- 2 myriad myriad troops loosed at sixth trumpet (9:16)
- 1600: blood flow (14:20). Can this really be the only non-symbolic number in the book?

I. INTRODUCTION

4. Multivalency of images

Some of the imagery is multivalent, i.e. a symbol can mean several different things:

- the seven spirits before God's throne (1:4) are equated with the seven lamps blazing before throne (4:5), but they are also the seven eyes of the Lamb (5:6).
- the dragon has 7 heads, 10 horns, and 7 crowns; whereas the beast has 7 heads, 10 horns, but 10 crowns.
- the 7 heads of beast are equated with 7 hills, and also with 7 kings (17:9), but his 10 horns also 10 kings (17:12).

B. CHRONOLOGY

1. Sequence of Visions

Revelation records a sequence of visions not a chronological sequence of events. The verb "saw" occurs 56 times, 54 times with John as subject:

- καὶ εἶδον "then I saw" 32x;
- μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον "After this I saw" 4x;
- μετὰ τοῦτο εἶδον "After this I saw" 1x.

The book is arranged as a series of symphonic variations on a few themes.

But the most serious objection to imposing a pattern on the Revelation is that it obliterates the important distinction between numbered and unnumbered vision. John is like an expert guide in an art gallery, lecturing to students about a vast mural. First he makes them stand back to absorb a general impression, then he takes them close to study the details. In John's symbolic language seven is the number of completeness, and the sevenfold visions—seals, trumpets, and bowls—are his general views of the totality of divine judgment. The unnumbered visions are his close-ups, his studies of detail. They are not meant to be a comprehensive view and therefore do not constitute a seven. This explains why the numbered visions are more stereotyped and appear at first sight to add little or nothing to the teaching of the Old Testament, from which John has derived his framework. It is in the unnumbered visions and those which interrupt the sequences of seven that John is able to bring his Christian insight most powerfully to bear, and so to transform the whole corpus of his traditional imagery.

The unity of John's book, then, is neither chronological nor arithmetical, but artistic, like that of a musical theme with variations, each variation adding something new to the significance of the whole composition. This is the only view which does adequate justice to the double fact that each new series of visions both recapitulates and develops the themes already stated in what has gone before.

When the Lamb breaks the seventh seal, instead of the denouement there is a dramatic silence. It is as though there is one bar's rest for the whole orchestra and choir of heaven before they launch on the second of John's symphonic variations.⁴

Certain events seem to occur several times: e.g., troops gather for the final battle four times; the book reaches a natural climax at 11:19.

2. Fulfillment

There are four schools of interpretation concerning the fulfillment of Revelation:

- a) Preterist: the book has already been fulfilled.
- b) Historicist: the book is in the process of being fulfilled throughout the Church Age.
- c) Futurist: the book will be fulfilled in the future.
- d) Idealist: the book symbolically presents the situation of the world throughout the Church Age.

4. George B. Caird, *The Revelation of St John the Divine* (London: A & C Black, 1966), 106.

C. VOCABULARY

1. Words

Certain words are used very frequently in the book. A lot can be learnt by paying attention to these.

- νικάω *conquer; overcome* 17x.
- μαρτυρέω vb. 4x, μάρτυς n. 5x, μαρτυρία n. 9x—*witness, testimony*.
- προσκυνέω *worship* 24x.
- ὑπομονή *endurance* 7x.
- ἐδόθη *it was given* 21x.
- θρόνος *throne* 47x.

2. Phrases

- τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ “the word of God and the testimony of Jesus”
- οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς “the inhabitants of the earth”
- οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς “the kings of the earth”
- ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον “the one seated upon the throne”

D. TRUE VS COUNTERFEIT

Revelation presents several pairs of contrasts between the true and the counterfeit.

1. True and False Trinities

True	False
God	Dragon
Lamb	Beast
Spirit	False Prophet

2. Two sets of people

False	True
Babylon	New Jerusalem
worship beast	destined to worship Lamb
mark of beast	seal of Lamb
inhabitants of earth	destined to be dwellers in heaven

3. Two cities

False	True
Babylon	New Jerusalem
the great city	the holy city
prostitute	bride
seated on waters/beast	descends from heaven
dressed in luxury	dressed in purity
orgy	wedding

E. STRUCTURE

Revelation is the most carefully and intricately structured book of any in the NT.

Careful attention must be paid to structure.

II. THE BASICS: WHO, WHEN, TO WHOM, WHY?

A. AUTHOR

The author four times identifies himself as John (1:1, 4, 9; 22:8). But which John is this? There are two areas of disagreement:

1. Is this John the Apostle or John the Elder?
2. Did this John also write the gospel and the letters?

Whichever John this is, he obviously knew the churches to which he was writing. Tradition identifies him as John of Ephesus. He was on the island of Patmos “because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus” (1:9). He had presumably been exiled there.

B. DATE

Irenaeus dated the book near the end of the reign of Domitian (81-96). Most scholars accept a date ca. AD 95.

C. RECIPIENTS

The seven churches in the province of Asia: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea (1:4, 11). There were presumably other churches in Asia: Troas, Colosse, Hierapolis.

D. OCCASION

1. Suffering
2. Imperial cult: Pressure to acknowledge Caesar as Lord (*Kurios*).
3. Temptation to deny faith—forsake “testimony”

III. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Rome was founded in 753 BC. In the third century BC, Rome expanded its power: in 272 Rome conquered the Greek cities of Lower Italy; in 202 Scipio defeated Hannibal of Carthage and Rome became dominant in the western Mediterranean; in 188 it became dominant in the eastern Mediterranean.

In its first few centuries it was ruled by kings. After the abolition of the monarchy, power technically rested in the Assembly of the People. In practice, power rested in the Senate, an assembly of the wealthiest men. The Senate elected two consuls each year to run affairs. In times of emergency a dictator would be appointed for six months and given absolute power.

A. THE TWELVE CAESARS

1. Julius Caesar (100-44 BC)

Highly energetic and hard-working, a superb general. In 60 he formed with Pompey and Crassus the First Triumvirate, an unofficial agreement of mutual support, mostly in the face of opposition from the Senate. After appointment as governor of Gaul, he conquered all of Gaul (58-51). In 52 Pompey was elected sole consul to restore order to Rome which had dissolved into anarchy. Instead, the Republic degenerated into Civil War (49-46) between Caesar and Pompey. Caesar crossed the Rubicon, the boundary of his territory, and marched on Rome. Pompey fled to Greece, and then Egypt where he was killed. Caesar pursued Pompey to Egypt, where he took Cleopatra as his mistress and installed her as queen of Egypt, before returning to Rome in triumph in 46. He adopted the title Imperator; formerly this meant "general," but he took it as "The General." He had himself appointed Perpetual Dictator in 44. Perhaps influenced by Cleopatra's tradition of divine kings, he had himself enshrined into state worship with a priest devoted to his cult. His portrait appeared on Roman coinage, a first for a living Roman. On The Ides of March (March 15) 44 he was assassinated by a senatorial conspiracy led by Cassius and Brutus.

2. Augustus (63 BC - AD 18)

Born Gaius Octavius, and known as Octavian, his mother Atia was Caesar's niece. Though he had been adopted as Caesar's heir, Antony grasped the inheritance. Octavian sided with the Senate against Antony, but when the Senate snubbed him, he formed in 43 a Second Triumvirate with Antony and Lepidus. In 42 this Triumvirate declared Caesar a god, allowing Octavian to call himself "Caesar, son of a god." The three men divided the Republic's territories between themselves. In 36 Antony married Cleopatra after divorcing Octavian's sister. War broke out. At the Battle of Actium in 31, Octavian's fleet defeated Cleopatra's fleet. The next year Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide. In 27, Octavian resigned his powers, ostensibly enabling the full restoration of the Republic. But the Senate gave him the honorific title Augustus and acclaimed him as Savior. In 17 world peace (pax Augusta) was proclaimed. Augustus worked hard to rebuild the Empire, which prospered greatly under his care. Upon death in AD 14 he was deified.

3. Tiberius (r. AD 14-37)

Adopted heir of Augustus.

4. Caligula (b. AD 12, r. 37-41)

Was adopted in 32 by Tiberius. When he became Emperor, Caligula considered himself divine and tried to enforce emperor worship. He was assassinated in 41 by the Prefect of the Praetorian Guard.

5. Claudius (b. 10 BC, r. AD 41-54)

On Caligula's assassination he only surviving member of the Julio-Claudian line. The Praetorian Guard acclaimed him emperor much to the dislike of the Senate. Like Augustus he was a good administrator. His fourth wife was Agrippina, his niece, who in 50 arranged for him to adopt her son Nero. In 54 Claudius was poisoned by Agrippina to ensure succession of Nero. She then arranged for the deification of Claudius.

6. Nero (b. AD 37, r. 54-68)

For the first few months, Agrippina was the effective ruler, till she fell out of favor, eventually being killed by Nero in 59. For the next few years Rome prospered as the still under-age Nero was guided by his tutor Seneca, and Burrus,

I. INTRODUCTION

Prefect of the Praetorian Guard. In 62 Burrus died and Seneca retired. Nero was far too interested in artistic endeavors to devote any attention to administering the Empire. In 64 Rome suffered a great fire, for which Nero blamed the Christians. This led to local persecution. In 68 the Senate declared Nero a public enemy and condemned him to death. The next day Nero committed suicide.

Nero's death precipitated the Year of the Four Emperors (AD 68-69)

7. Galba

Two months before Nero's suicide, Galba, governor of Nearer Spain, announced himself leader of Rome; his troops soon acclaimed him emperor. He returned to Rome to assume power, but quickly fell to two revolts. The armies of Upper Germany revolted against him. He adopted Piso as son and heir, but Otho wanted that position for himself, so he killed both Galba and Otho.

8. Otho

Governor of Lusitania. After killing Galba, the armies of North Africa, the Danube and the Euphrates declared their support for Otho. But the German armies, who had already declared their support for Vitellius, crossed the Alps and attacked Otho. He committed suicide just 3 months after killing Galba.

9. Vitellius

Governor of Lower Germany; acclaimed Emperor by the troops in Upper and Lower Germany. He, too, traveled to Rome to assume power, only to find that the eastern armies had declared Vespasian emperor. He was killed after Rome fell to a Danube army.

10. Vespasian (b. AD 9, r. 69-81)

From a humble background. Nero appointed him Governor of Judea to suppress the First Jewish Revolt. In 69, having been acclaimed emperor by his troops in Egypt, Syria and Judea, he returned to Rome to claim the throne, leaving his son Titus to finish suppressing the revolt. In 71 Vespasian and Titus celebrated their Triumph in Rome. Founded Flavian dynasty which would last till 96. The first emperor to have a capable son (Titus) to share rule and then succeed. Devoted great energy to rebuilding the empire which had been shattered by civil war. Restored peace (*pax Romana*). Unpretentious, he said on his deathbed, "I fear I am about to become a god." Died a natural death.

11. Titus (b. AD 39, r. 79-81)

Eldest son of Vespasian. Had greatly assisted his father in running the Empire. Died a natural death at young age.

12. Domitian (b. AD 51, r. 81-96)

Younger brother of Titus. An initially benevolent rule degenerated into despotism. Claiming the title *dominus et deus* (Lord and God). Actively promoted the cult of emperor worship. Hostile to the Senate, but curried favor with the army, recognizing his safety depended on them. Murdered in a palace conspiracy. The Senate pronounced damnation upon his memory (*damnatio memoriae*). His name was chiseled from the many monuments erected during his life.

B. THE ADOPTED EMPERORS

With the end of the Flavian line, a new method of choosing emperors was introduced: adoption of the person fittest to rule.

1. Nerva (96-98). Appointed Princeps by the Senate on death of Domitian. Adopted Trajan.
2. Trajan (98-117). Spanish. Great administrator; perhaps the best Emperor Rome ever had. The Empire reached its greatest extent under Trajan.
3. Hadrian (117-38). Abandoned policy of expanding Empire in favor of peace treaties.
4. Antonius Pius (138-61). Continued the peace policies of Hadrian.
5. Marcus Aurelius (161-80). A philosopher.
6. Commodus (180-92). Son of Marcus Aurelius. Return to dynastic succession. Thought himself the reincarnation of Hercules. Assassinated by palace insurrection.

- 313 Edict of Milan (or Edict of Toleration) by Constantine, tolerating Christianity.
- 391 Christianity declared the official state religion; all heathen cults outlawed.
- 395 Empire partitioned in E (Rome) and W (Constantinople), each ruled by a son of Theodosius the Great.
- 404 Western capital moved to Ravenna; 410 Fall of Rome; 476 End of W Empire.
- 1453 End of E Empire with fall of Constantinople to Ottoman Turks.

IV. GENRE

Correct interpretation of a piece of writing requires that we know what type of writing it is. Revelation identifies itself as three types of literature: an apocalypse (1:1), a prophecy (1:3), and a letter (1:4).

A. APOCALYPSE

Though we call the book the Apocalypse (or Revelation) of John (the title in the Greek NT is ἀποκάλυψις Ἰωαννοῦ, apocalypse of John), 1:1 identifies it as “The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ.”

What is an apocalypse?

Apocalypse is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial, insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.⁵

1. “Revelatory literature with a narrative framework”

The narrative chronology in the book is a sequence of visions not a sequence of events. The events seen in the visions need not unfold chronologically.

2. “Mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient”

This apocalypse was given through a chain of revelation that begins with God (1:1):

God → Jesus Christ → angel → John → servants of God.

3. “Disclosing a transcendent reality”

An apocalypse reveals realms that are normally unseen. These hitherto-unseen realms have both temporal and spatial horizons:⁶

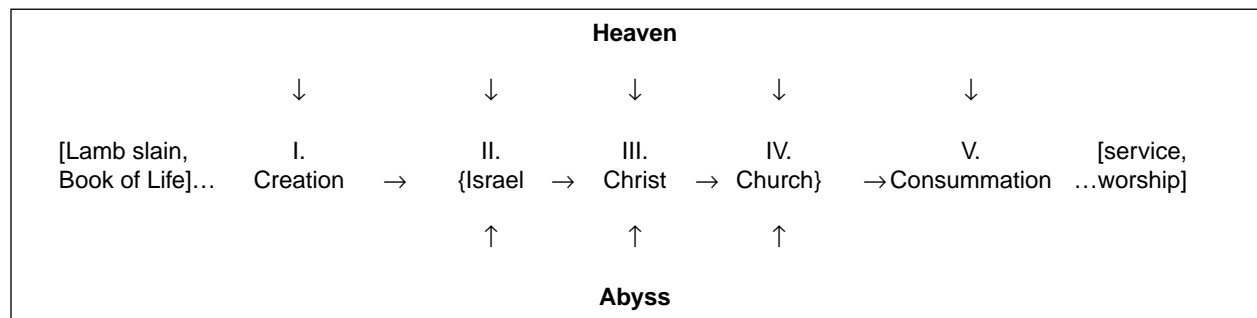


Figure 1-1: The twin horizons of apocalyptic

B. PROPHECY

The book is also a prophecy (1:3; 22:7, 10, 18, 19).

John understands himself to be following in footsteps of OT and NT prophets, God’s servants who proclaimed (forth-told) his word.

5. John J. Collins, “Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre,” *Semeia* 14 (1979) 9. This is the definition developed by a group within the Society of Biblical Literature.

6. This diagram is based on M. Eugene Boring’s diagram of John’s “hermeneutical perspective,” in “The Theology of Revelation,” *Interpretation* 40:3 (July 1986) 268.

C. LETTER

Epistolary framework 1:4-5; 22:21, marks the whole book as a letter to seven churches of Asia Minor.

John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. (1:4-5)

...

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen. (22:21)

To be read aloud (1:3), probably during a worship service (cf. the many liturgical elements in the book).

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near. (1:3)

V. STRUCTURE

Revelation is the most very carefully-structured book in the NT. Encompassed by a prologue and an epilogue, the series of visions is divided into four major sections by the four-fold phrase ἐν πνεύματι “in the spirit.”

1. Prologue (1:1-8)
2. The Vision (1:9–22:7) ἐν πνεύματι “in the spirit” 4x.
 - a) on Patmos (1:9–3:21)
 - i) Jesus Christ among the lampstands (1:9-20)
 - ii) 7 messages to 7 churches (2:1–3:21)
 - b) in heaven (4:1–16:21)
 - i) The throne room in heaven (4:1–5:14)
 - ii) Seven seals (6:1-17; 8:1)
 - iii) inserted vision (7:1-17)
 - iv) Seven trumpets (8:2–9:21; 11:15-19)
 - v) inserted vision (10:1–11:14)
 - vi) The dragon and the two beasts (12:1–13:18)
 - vii) Salvation and Judgment (14:1-20)
 - viii) Seven bowls (15:1-16:21)
 - c) in a desert (17:1–21:8)
 - i) Fall of Babylon (17:1–18:24)
 - ii) Rejoicing (19:1-10)
 - iii) 7 unnumbered visions (19:11-21:8)
 - d) on a mountain (21:9–22:7)
 - i) The New Jerusalem (21:9–22:7)
3. Epilogue (22:6-21)

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VII. THE TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY OF REVELATION

Formal trinitarian theology was not developed till the great ecumenical church councils of the 4th century (e.g. Nicea 325). The ontological relationship of “three in one” was not developed until these councils, but John presents God, Christ and Spirit as distinct existential and functional “persons.”

A. SALUTATION (1:4-5)

The salutation is trinitarian:

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη	Grace to you and peace,
ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄντος καὶ τοῦ ἦν καὶ τοῦ ἐρχόμενου καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἑπτὰ πνευμάτων ἃ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ ἔκαστος ἀπὸ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,	from Him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ,
ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός,	the faithful witness,
ὁ πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν καὶ	the first-born of the dead, and
ὁ ἀρχὼν τῶν βασιλείων τῆς γῆς.	the ruler of the kings of the earth. (1:4-5, NASB).

This is the only trinitarian salutation at the beginning of any NT epistle. Paul’s normal greeting is “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

B. GOD

1. The one who is and who was and who is to come

the one who is and who was and who is coming, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος (1:4, 8; 4:8).

the one who is and who was, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν (11:17; 16:5).

“the one who is and who was,” ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν, is a reference to God’s personal name, יהוה Yahweh. ὁ ὢν “the one who is” is LXX translation of יהי יהי *‘ehyeh* “I am” in Exod 3:14. Emphasis is not on God’s ontological existence, but on his existential presence.

Instead of ἔσομαι, “I will be,” John uses ὁ ἐρχόμενος, (present participle), “the one who is coming.”

In OT verb בא “come” is used of God coming in eschatological judgment and salvation (e.g. Isa 40:10).

ὁ ἐρχόμενος used in NT of Messiah, “the Expected One” (Matt 11:3; 21:9; 23:39; Mark 11:9; Luke 7:19, 20; 13:35; 19:38; John 6:14; 12:13).

The beast who “was and is not and will be present,” ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν καὶ παρέσται (17:8; cf. 17:11) is Satanic parody. John clearly avoids ascribing the title ὁ ἐρχόμενος, “the one who comes” to the beast.

2. The beginning and the end

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty,” Ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ, λέγει κύριος ὁ θεός, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ παντοκράτωρ (1:8).

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end,” ἐγὼ [εἰμι] τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος (21:6).

3. Lord God Almighty

... says the Lord God,...the Almighty, λέγει κύριος ὁ θεός, ... ὁ παντοκράτωρ (1:8).

“Lord God Almighty” 7x: κύριος ὁ θεός ... ὁ παντοκράτωρ (1:8); κύριος ὁ θεός ὁ παντοκράτωρ (4:8; 19:6; 21:22); κύριε ὁ θεός ὁ παντοκράτωρ (11:17; 15:3; 16:7). cf. “God Almighty,” ὁ θεός ὁ παντοκράτωρ (16:14; 19:15).

κύριος ὁ θεός ὁ παντοκράτωρ, “Lord God Almighty,” is LXX translation of יהוה אלהים יהוה “Lord God of Hosts” (e.g. Amos 3:13; 4:13).

“Omnipotent,” “Almighty” emphasize God’s absolute power, but παντοκράτωρ, *Pantokrator*, emphasizes his active rule over all.

As trinitarian theology was developed in the church councils, *Christus Pantokrator*, became a title for Christ, especially in the Eastern church (Orthodox).

4. The one seated upon the throne,

“the one who sits upon the throne,” ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνον (4:9; 5:1, 7, 13; 6:16; 7:15; 21:5; cf. 4:2, 3; 7:10; 19:4; 20:11).

The harlot Babylon, who sits upon the waters (17:1, 15), on the scarlet beast (17:3), on seven heads/hills (17:9) is a Satanic parody, the anti-type of the one seated on the true throne in heaven.

C. JESUS CHRIST

1. The beginning and the end

“I am the first and the last,” ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος (1:17).

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end,” ἐγὼ τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ, ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος (22:13).

These titles, in different combination, are applied to both God and Christ, either side of the central visions. The allocation of these titles, formerly used of God alone, reaches a climax in the epilogue:⁷

A 1:8 end of prologue God Alpha and Omega	B 1:17 beginning of vision Christ first and last	B ¹ 21:6 end of vision God Alpha and Omega beginning and end	A ¹ 22:13 beginning of epilogue Christ Alpha and Omega first and last beginning and end
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2. “I am coming”

“I am coming,” ἔρχομαί, 7x: 2:5, 16; 3:11; 16:15; 22:6, 12, 20.

Jesus applies to himself language used of God: ὁ ἐρχόμενος “the one who is coming” (see B1).

D. SPIRIT

“the seven spirits who are before his throne” (1:4; cf. 3:1; 4:5; 5:6).

“He who has the seven Spirits of God...” (3:1).

“seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God” (4:5)

“And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth” (5:6).

7. Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 57.

2. THE SEVEN MESSAGES

Revelation 1:9–3:22

I. THE VISION OF JESUS (1:9-20)

John's apocalyptic prophetic letter to the churches of Asia is prefaced by a call vision, reminiscent of the OT (e.g. Isaiah 6).

A. JOHN'S SETTING (1:9)

1. John's solidarity with the suffering believers. As their "brother and companion," he shares three things with them in Christ:
 - a) suffering (θλίψις): the tribulation is present not future.
 - b) kingdom: the kingdoms of heaven and hell (Abyss) each have a colony on earth. Jesus is King of the heavenly colony; its residents are the saints. The dragon has enthroned the beast as king of the hellish colony; its residents are "the citizens of the world." One kingdom is true, the other is counterfeit.
 - c) patient endurance (ὑπομονή): the saints conquer by enduring.
2. The word of God and the testimony of Jesus
John's share in the tribulation is to be in exile on Patmos "because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus," i.e. because he is a faithful witness to Jesus (cf. 1:2; 6:9; 12:17; 19:10; 20:4).
The word of God and the testimony of Jesus is a major theme of the book:
 - a) the contents of the book (1:2; 22:16)
 - b) The Word of God is the name of the rider on the white horse (19:13)—Christ, the faithful witness (1:5).
 - c) to worship God alone and not worship the beast (19:10; 20:4).
 - d) the faithful witnesses are killed (overcome) for their faithful testimony (6:9; 11:7; 12:17; 20:4).
 - e) the faithful witnesses in turn overcome (12:10-11; 20:4).
3. The phrase "in the Spirit" marks the first of the four major sections of the visions.

B. THE CALL TO WRITE (1:10-11)

To the seven churches located in seven cities in the province of Asia;

C. THE VISION (1:12-16)

Turning around to identify the voice, John sees:

1. seven golden lampstands. This is a composite image of three sets of OT gold lampstands (*menorahs*):
 - a) Tabernacle: seven-branched gold lampstand (menorah) (Exod 25:31-37)
 - b) Temple: ten gold lampstands (1 Kgs 7:49)
 - c) Zechariah's vision: seven-wicked gold lampstand (Zech 4:2)
2. a figure among these lampstands. This is also a composite image:
 - a) one like a son of man, who receives the kingdom from the Ancient of Days (Dan 7:13-14). A favorite Messianic title used by Jesus.
 - b) robed and girdled: three sets of OT people wore such a robe "reaching down to his feet":
 - i) High Priest (Exod 28:4; 29:5; Lev 16:4).
 - ii) royalty (1 Sam 18:4; 24:5,11; Ezek 26:16).
 - iii) Daniel's interpreting angel (Dan 10:5)
 - c) snow-white hair: the Ancient of Days (Dan 7:9)
 - d) eyes of blazing fire, feet of burnished bronze: interpreting angel (Dan 10:5-6)
 - e) voice like many waters: God (Ezek 43:2)

This figure is a composite of God, prophet, priest and king. But John does not yet know who this is.

D. JOHN'S RESPONSE (1:17)

John falls down in worship, cf. Isaiah (Isa 6:5); Ezekiel (Ezek 1:28; 3:23; 43:3).

E. CHRIST'S COMMISSION OF JOHN (1:17-20)

The figure before whom John has fallen issues two commands:

1. "Do not fear": the most frequent command in Scripture.

Only now is the identity of the figure in the vision revealed: he is the one who was dead, but is now alive forever—the risen Christ.

- a) the First and the Last: Jesus applies to himself a title used of God.
- b) the Living One: defeated death.
- c) hold the keys of death and Hades: they are therefore subject to his power.

2. Write. There are two major schools of interpretation concerning what John is to write:

- a) Three-part interpretation: what you see (ch 1), what is (ch 2-3), and what will happen after these things (ch 4-22).
- b) Two-part interpretation: what John sees is subdivided into two categories:
 - i) what is: conflict between two kingdoms; God's saints are being killed; false worship on earth.
 - ii) what will be: God will overthrow the kingdom of the earth, together with its leaders (dragon and two beasts). The counterfeit will be removed, and heaven and earth become one.

II. THE SEVEN MESSAGES (2:1–3:22)

A. STRUCTURE

Each of the seven messages has a similar format:

1. Command to write:

- a) Destination (*adscriptio*): "To the angel of the church in _____" Τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν _____ ἐκκλησίας.
- b) Command: "write" γράψον.

2. Formula introducing the prophetic message:

- a) "Thus saith..." Τάδε λέγει. Deliberately archaic. In LXX (Greek OT) this is the usual translation of "Thus saith the Lord" יהוה אלהים אלהים. It is also the language of Persian imperial edicts.
- b) Christological predications: description of Christ, all except the 7th using language of the previous vision (1:9-20). Four of these begin ὁ ἔχων "the one having" (2:12, 18; 3:1, 7).
 - i) Ephesus: "the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands" (1:16, 13).
 - ii) Smyrna: "the First and the Last, who was dead but has come to life" (1:18).
 - iii) Pergamum: "the one who holds the sharp double-edged sword" (1:16)
 - iv) Thyatira: "the Son of God, who has eyes like flaming fire, and feet like burnished bronze" (1:14-15).
 - v) Sardis: "the one who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars" (1:16).
 - vi) Philadelphia: "the Holy and True One, who holds the key of David, who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens."
 - vii) Laodicea: "the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation."

3. Prophetic Message

- a) Narrative (*narratio*): 2:2-3, 9, 13-15, 19-21; 3:1b, 8, 15.
 - i) Assurance of Christ's awareness: "I know" Οἶδα. Οἶδα σου τὰ ἔργα "I know your works" (2:19; 3:1, 8, 15); Οἶδα τὰ ἔργα σου (2:2).
 - ii) Positive endorsement:
 - iii) Negative censure: "But I have against you..." ἀλλὰ ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ (2:4, 14, 20).
- b) Prophetic message (*dispositio*): 2:5-6, 10, 16, 22-25; 3:2-4, 9-11, 16-20.
 - i) Commands: remember μνημόνευε (2:5; 3:3), repent μετανόησον (2:5, 16; 3:3, 19).
 - ii) Promise of Christ's quick coming: "I am coming" ἔρχομαι.

4. Conclusion: Proclamation

- a) Exhortation to hear: "The one having an ear let him hear what the spirit says to the churches" ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. Identical in all 7. This functions as a prophetic signature. ὁ ἔχων balances ὁ ἔχων in the descriptions of Christ.
- b) Promise to the one who conquers, ὁ νικῶν or τῷ νικῶντι. These promises are consummated at the end of the book. νικάω *nikaō*, *conquer*, *overcome*, is a key word in Revelation, used 17 times (of 28 NT occurrences). In the epistles it is those who have faith or love that are commended, but here it is the ones who overcome and endure (ὑπόμονή *hypomonē*, *endurance*, is used 7x).
 - i) Ephesus: "to the one who conquers I will allow him to eat from the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God" (22:2, 19).
 - ii) Smyrna: "the one who conquers will in no way be harmed by the second death" (20:6, 14; 21:18).
 - iii) Pergamum: "to the one who conquers I will give him some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white pebble, and upon the pebble a new name written which no one knows except the recipient."
 - iv) Thyatira: "and the one who conquers and keeps my works until the end, I will give him authority over the nations, and he will rule them with an iron rod, as earthen vessels are shattered, as I also have received from my father, and I will give him the morning star" (22:16)
 - v) Sardis: "the one who conquers will in the same way be clothed in white robes, and I will in no way blot out his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before my father and before his angels."
 - vi) Philadelphia: "the one who conquers I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will never ever go outside again, and I will write upon him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven, and my new name" (21:2, 11; 22:4).
 - vii) Laodicea: "the one who conquers I will allow him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat with my father on his throne."

B. COMMON THEMES

According to theme, the seven messages fall into three pairs and a single:

1. Ephesus and Sardis: earlier passion has grown cold; both are called to remember.
2. Smyrna and Philadelphia: the two most positive churches; both facing opposition from the synagogue of Satan.
3. Pergamum and Thyatira: both succumbing to the teaching of Balaam/the Nicolaitans/Jezebel.
4. Laodicea:

Churches 1–4, Revelation 2 (NRSV)

Adscript.	2 To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:	8 And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write:	12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write:	18 And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write:
Intro.	These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands:	These are the words of the first and the last, who was dead and came to life:	These are the words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword:	These are the words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze:
Edict <i>narrative</i>	2 I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance. I know that you cannot tolerate evil-doers; you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them to be false. 3 I also know that you are enduring patiently and bearing up for the sake of my name, and that you have not grown weary. 4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.	9 I know your affliction and your poverty, even though you are rich. I know the slander on the part of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.	13 I know where you are living, where Satan’s throne is. Yet you are holding fast to my name, and you did not deny your faith in me even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan lives. 14 But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the people of Israel, so that they would eat food sacrificed to idols and practice fornication. 15 So you also have some who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.	19 I know your works—your love, faith, service, and patient endurance. I know that your last works are greater than the first. 20 But I have this against you: you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet and is teaching and beguiling my servants to practice fornication and to eat food sacrificed to idols. 21 I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her fornication.
<i>arrangement</i>	5 Remember then from what you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. 6 Yet this is to your credit: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.	10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Beware, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison so that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have affliction. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.	16 Repent then. If not, I will come to you soon and make war against them with the sword of my mouth.	22 Beware, I am throwing her on a bed, and those who commit adultery with her I am throwing into great distress, unless they repent of her doings; 23 and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am the one who searches minds and hearts, and I will give to each of you as your works deserve. 24 But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call ‘the deep things of Satan,’ to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden; 25 only hold fast to what you have until I come.
Proclamation	7 Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers, I will give permission to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God.	11 Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Whoever conquers will not be harmed by the second death.	17 Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give a white stone, and on the white stone is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it.	26 To everyone who conquers and continues to do my works to the end, I will give authority over the nations; 27 to rule them with an iron rod, as when clay pots are shattered— 28 even as I also received authority from my Father. To the one who conquers I will also give the morning star. 29 Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

2. THE SEVEN MESSAGES

Churches 5–7, Revelation 3 (NRSV)

Adscript.	3 And to the angel of the church in Sardis write:	⁷ And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:	¹⁴ And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write:
Intro.	These are the words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars:	These are the words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens:	The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the origin of God’s creation:
Edict <i>narrative</i>	I know your works; you have a name of being alive, but you are dead.	⁸ I know your works. Look, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.	¹⁵ I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot.
<i>arrange- ment</i>	² Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death, for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God. ³ Remember then what you received and heard; obey it, and repent. If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you. ⁴ Yet you have still a few persons in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes; they will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy.	⁹ I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but are lying—I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. ¹⁰ Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. ¹¹ I am coming soon; hold fast to what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.	¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷ For you say, ‘I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing.’ You do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. ¹⁸ Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich; and white robes to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen; and salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. ¹⁹ I reprove and discipline those whom I love. Be earnest, therefore, and repent. ²⁰ Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.
Proclamation	⁵ If you conquer, you will be clothed like them in white robes, and I will not blot your name out of the book of life; I will confess your name before my Father and before his angels. ⁶ Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.	¹² If you conquer, I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God; you will never go out of it. I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. ¹³ Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.	²¹ To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne, just as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. ²² Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Churches 1–4, Revelation 2

Adscript.	2 Τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον·	8 Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Σμύρνῃ ἐκκλησίας γράψον·	12 Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Περγάμῳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον·	18 Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Θυατείροις ἐκκλησίας γράψον·
Intro.	Τάδε λέγει ὁ κρατῶν τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀστέρας ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ, ὁ περιπατῶν ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἑπτὰ λυχνιῶν τῶν χρυσῶν·	Τάδε λέγει ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ὃς ἐγένετο νεκρὸς καὶ ἔζησεν·	Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἔχων τὴν ῥομφαίαν τὴν δίστομον τὴν ὀξεῖαν·	Τάδε λέγει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ὁ ἔχων τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ ὡς φλόγα πυρός καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὅμοιοι χαλκολιβάνῳ·
Edict narrative	2 Οἶδα τὰ ἔργα σου καὶ τὸν κόπον καὶ τὴν ὑπομονήν σου καὶ ὅτι οὐ δύνῃ βαστάσαι κακοὺς, καὶ ἐπέειπας τοὺς λέγοντας ἑαυτοὺς ἀποστόλους καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν καὶ εὗρες αὐτοὺς ψευδεῖς, 3 καὶ ὑπομονὴν ἔχεις, καὶ ἐβάστασας διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου καὶ οὐ κεκοπίακες. 4 ἀλλὰ ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὅτι τὴν ἀγάπην σου τὴν πρώτην ἀφήκες.	9 Οἶδά σου τὴν θλιψὶν καὶ τὴν πτωχείαν, ἀλλὰ πλούσιος εἶ, καὶ τὴν βλασφημίαν ἐκ τῶν λεγόντων Ἰουδαίους εἶναι ἑαυτούς, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ συναγωγὴ τοῦ Σατανᾶ.	13 Οἶδα ποῦ κατοικεῖς, ὅπου ὁ θρόνος τοῦ Σατανᾶ, καὶ κρατεῖς τὸ ὄνομά μου καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὴν πίστιν μου καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἀντιπᾶς ὁ μάρτυς μου ὁ πιστὸς μου, ὃς ἀπεκτάνθη παρ' ὑμῖν, ὅπου ὁ Σατανᾶς κατοικεῖ. 14 ἀλλ' ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὀλίγα ὅτι ἔχεις ἐκεῖ κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν Βαλαάμ, ὃς ἐδίδασκεν τῷ Βαλὰκ βαλεῖν σκάνδαλον ἐνώπιον τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυτα καὶ πορνεῦσαι. 15 οὕτως ἔχεις καὶ σὺ κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν [τῶν] Νικολαϊτῶν ὁμοίως.	19 Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν διακονίαν καὶ τὴν ὑπομονήν σου, καὶ τὰ ἔργα σου τὰ ἔσχατα πλείονα τῶν πρώτων. 20 ἀλλὰ ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὅτι ἀφεῖς τὴν γυναῖκα Ἰεζάβελ, ἣ λέγουσα ἑαυτὴν προφῆτιν καὶ διδάσκει καὶ πλανᾷ τοὺς ἑμοὺς δούλους πορνεῦσαι καὶ φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυτα. 21 καὶ ἔδωκα αὐτῇ χρόνον ἵνα μετανοήσῃ, καὶ οὐ θέλει μετανοῆσαι ἐκ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς.
arrangement	5 μνημόνευε οὖν πόθεν πέπτωκας καὶ μετανόησον καὶ τὰ πρῶτα ἔργα ποιήσον· εἰ δὲ μή, ἔρχομαί σοι καὶ κινήσω τὴν λυχνίαν σου ἐκ τοῦ τόπου αὐτῆς, ἐὰν μὴ μετανοήσῃς. 6 ἀλλὰ τοῦτο ἔχεις, ὅτι μισεῖς τὰ ἔργα τῶν Νικολαϊτῶν ἃ κἀγὼ μισῶ.	10 μὴ δὲν φοβοῦ ἃ μέλλεις πάσχειν. ἰδοὺ μέλλει βάλλειν ὁ διάβολος ἐξ ὑμῶν εἰς φυλακὴν ἵνα πειρασθῆτε καὶ ἔξετε θλιψὶν ἡμερῶν δέκα. γίνου πιστὸς ἄχρι θανάτου, καὶ δώσω σοι τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς.	16 μετανόησον οὖν· εἰ δὲ μή, ἔρχομαί σοι ταχύ καὶ πολεμήσω μετ' αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ ῥομφαίᾳ τοῦ στόματός μου.	22 ἰδοὺ βάλλω αὐτὴν εἰς κλίνην, καὶ τοὺς μοιχεύοντας μετ' αὐτῆς εἰς θλιψὶν μεγάλην, ἐὰν μὴ μετανοήσωσιν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῆς, 23 καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς ἀποκτενῶ ἐν θανάτῳ, καὶ γνώσονται πᾶσαι αἱ ἐκκλησίαι ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἔραυνῶν νεφροὺς καὶ καρδίας, καὶ δώσω ὑμῖν ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα ὑμῶν. 24 ὑμῖν δὲ λέγω τοῖς λοιποῖς τοῖς ἐν Θυατείροις, ὅσοι οὐκ ἔχουσιν τὴν διδαχὴν ταύτην, οἵτινες οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰ βθέα τοῦ Σατανᾶ ὡς λέγουσιν· οὐ βάλλω ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἄλλο βάρος, 25 πλὴν ὃ ἔχετε κρατήσατε ἄχρι[ς] οὐ ἂν ἤξω.
Proclamation	7 ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ φαγεῖν ἐκ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τοῦ θεοῦ.	11 ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. ὁ νικῶν οὐ μὴ ἀδικηθῆ ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ δευτέρου.	17 ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ τοῦ μάνα τοῦ κεκρυμμένου, καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ ψῆφον λευκὴν, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα καινὸν γεγραμμένον ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ ὁ λαμβάνων.	26 καὶ ὁ νικῶν καὶ ὁ τηρῶν ἄχρι τέλους τὰ ἔργα μου, δώσω αὐτῷ ἔξουσίαν ἐπὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν 27 καὶ ποιμανεῖ αὐτοὺς ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ ὡς τὰ σκεύη τὰ κεραμικὰ συντρίβεται, 28 ὡς κἀγὼ εἴληφα παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου, καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ τὸν ἀστέρα τὸν πρωϊνόν. 29 ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

2. THE SEVEN MESSAGES

Churches 5–7, Revelation 3

Adscript.	3 Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Σάρδεσιν ἐκκλησίας γράψον·	7 Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Φιλαδελφείᾳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον·	14 Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον·
Intro.	Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἔχων τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀστέρας·	Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἅγιος, ὁ ἀληθινός, ὁ ἔχων τὴν κλεῖν Δαυίδ, ὁ ἀνοίγων καὶ οὐδεὶς κλείσει καὶ κλείων καὶ οὐδεὶς ἀνοίγει·	Τάδε λέγει ὁ Ἄμην, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός, ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ·
Edict narrative	Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα ὅτι ὄνομα ἔχεις ὅτι ζῆς, καὶ νεκρὸς εἶ.	8 Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα, ἰδοὺ δέδωκα ἐνώπιόν σου θύραν ἠνεωγμένην, ἣν οὐδεὶς δύναται κλείσαι αὐτήν, ὅτι μικρὰν ἔχεις δύναμιν καὶ ἐτήρησάς μου τὸν λόγον καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὸ ὄνομά μου.	15 Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα ὅτι οὔτε ψυχρὸς εἶ οὔτε ζεστός, ὄφελον ψυχρὸς ἢς ἢ ζεστός.
arrangement	2 γίνου γρηγορῶν καὶ στήρισον τὰ λοιπὰ ἃ ἔμελλον ἀποθανεῖν, οὐ γὰρ εὗρηκά σου τὰ ἔργα πεπληρωμένα ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ μου. 3 μνημόνευε οὖν πῶς εἴληφας καὶ ἤκουσας καὶ τήρει καὶ μετανόησον. ἐὰν οὖν μὴ γρηγορήσης, ἦξω ὡς κλέπτῃς, καὶ οὐ μὴ γνῶς ποίαν ὥραν ἦξω ἐπὶ σέ. 4 ἀλλὰ ἔχεις ὀλίγα ὀνόματα ἐν Σάρδεσιν ἃ οὐκ ἐμόλυναν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν, καὶ περιπατήσουσιν μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν λευκοῖς, ὅτι ἄξιοί εἰσιν.	9 ἰδοὺ διδῶ ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς τοῦ Σατανᾶ τῶν λεγόντων ἑαυτοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ ψεύδονται. ἰδοὺ ποιήσω αὐτοὺς ἵνα ἦξουσιν καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν ἐνώπιον τῶν ποδῶν σου καὶ γνῶσιν ὅτι ἐγὼ ἠγάπησά σε. 10 ὅτι ἐτήρησας τὸν λόγον τῆς ὑπομονῆς μου, κἀγὼ σε τηρήσω ἐκ τῆς ὥρας τοῦ πειρασμοῦ τῆς μελλούσης ἔρχεσθαι ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης πειράσαι τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. 11 ἔρχομαι ταχύ· κράτει ὁ ἔχεις, ἵνα μηδεὶς λάβῃ τὸν στέφανόν σου.	16 οὔτως ὅτι χλιαρὸς εἶ καὶ οὔτε ζεστὸς οὔτε ψυχρὸς, μέλλω σε ἐμέσαι ἐκ τοῦ στόματός μου. 17 ὅτι λέγεις ὅτι Πλούσιός εἰμι καὶ πεπλούτηκα καὶ οὐδὲν χρεῖαν ἔχω, καὶ οὐκ οἶδας ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ ταλαίπωρος καὶ ἐλεινὸς καὶ πτωχὸς καὶ τυφλὸς καὶ γυμνός, 18 συμβουλεύω σοι ἀγοράσαι παρ' ἐμοῦ χρυσοῖον πεπυρωμένον ἐκ πυρὸς ἵνα πλουτήσης καὶ ἱμάτια λευκὰ ἵνα περιβάλλῃ καὶ μὴ φανερωθῇ ἡ αἰσχύνῃ τῆς γυμνότητός σου, καὶ κολλ[ο]ύριον ἐγχεῖσαι τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς σου ἵνα βλέπῃς. 19 ἐγὼ ὅσους ἐὰν φιλῶ ἐλέγχω καὶ παιδεύω· ζήλευε οὖν καὶ μετανόησον. 20 ἰδοὺ ἔστηκα ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν καὶ κρούω· ἐὰν τις ἀκούσῃ τῆς φωνῆς μου καὶ ἀνοίξῃ τὴν θύραν, [καὶ] εἰσελεύσομαι πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ δειπνήσω μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς μετ' ἐμοῦ.
Proclamation	5 ὁ νικῶν οὕτως περιβαλεῖται ἐν ἱματίοις λευκοῖς καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐξαλείψω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς βίβλου τῆς ζωῆς καὶ ὁμολογήσω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐνώπιον τοῦ πατρὸς μου καὶ ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ. 6 ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.	12 ὁ νικῶν ποιήσω αὐτὸν στύλον ἐν τῷ ναῶ τοῦ θεοῦ μου καὶ ἔξω οὐ μὴ ἐξέλθῃ ἔτι καὶ γράψω ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ μου καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς πόλεως τοῦ θεοῦ μου, τῆς καινῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ ἣ καταβαίνουσα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ μου, καὶ τὸ ὄνομά μου τὸ καινόν. 13 ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.	21 ὁ νικῶν δώσω αὐτῷ καθῆσαι μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ μου, ὡς κἀγὼ ἐνίκησα καὶ ἐκάθισα μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ αὐτοῦ. 22 ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

C. THE PROVINCE OF ASIA



Figure 2-1: Roman Anatolia

Asia was the first and most important Roman province in the eastern Mediterranean. In 133 BC, King Attalus III of Pergamum died without an heir, willing his kingdom to Rome. From this kingdom of Pergamum, Rome created the province of Asia. It was governed by a proconsul (hence was called a proconsular province, or proconsular Asia). Each year the Senate selected a former consul to act as governor for one year.

When the province of Asia was created out of the kingdom of Pergamum, Pergamum remained the capital, but in due course the capital was transferred to Ephesus. There was bitter rivalry between three large cities: Pergamum, Smyrna, Ephesus.

2. THE SEVEN MESSAGES

D. EPHEBUS

Ephesus was originally located on or near the shore of an inlet of the sea, near the mouth of the Cayster river. Around 1000 BC settlers from Greece founded twelve cities, forming a pan-Ionic league with Ephesus as its capital. The city was later incorporated into the kingdom of Lydia. The last Lydian king, Croesus, besieged Ephesus, but was then the primary benefactor of the temple of Artemis. The ancient city was located near this temple. Around 290 BC, Lysamachus relocated the city to the valley between Panayir Dagħ and Bülbül Dagħ. Half of the city moved back in the late Byzantine period. The remainder of the city was abandoned in the tenth century.

With a population of 250,000, Ephesus was the fourth largest city in the Roman Empire. It was a free city, i.e., self-governing. It was the largest commercial center in Asia Minor, and enjoyed great prosperity under the reign of Augustus, up till the mid second century. It eventually replaced Pergamon as the capital of the province of Asia. The Great Theater sat 25,000. The stadium built during Nero's reign sat 75,000. Ephesus called itself "First and Greatest Metropolis of Asia."

Ephesus contained many temples, including:

1. Artemisium: the Temple of Artemis was declared one of the Seven Wonders of the World by Antipater of Sidon (2nd century BC). It was the largest Greek temple in antiquity, four times larger than the Parthenon in Athens. The temple was plundered by the Goths c. AD 262.
2. Dea Roma and Divus Julius: a single temple, authorized by Augustus, for the worship of the goddess Roma and the divine Julius Caesar. The construction of this temple probably reflected the desire of the people to honor Augustus for the peace that he had restored to Asia, which brought renewed commercial prosperity.
3. Temple of the Sebastoi: an immense temple constructed during the reign of Domitian. It contained a colossal statue of Domitian. Following the *damnatio memoriae* of Domitian, his name was chiselled out of all inscriptions and replaced by the name of Vespasian.

1. Description of Jesus

2. Prophetic Message

- a) Narrative:
 - i) Commendation: for labor and endurance, and for testing false apostles.
 - ii) Chastisement: for abandoning first love.
- b) Arrangement:
 - i) Command: remember, repent, repeat.
 - ii) Warning: Christ will remove lampstand. Perhaps a reference to fact that Ephesus had already been moved twice, and to ongoing threat of harbor silting up.
 - iii) Commendation: hate the work of the Nicolaitans, while the Pergamene church holds to their teaching. Their teaching seems similar to that of Balaam (Pergamum) and Jezebel (Thyatira): eating meat offered to idols, and sexual immorality, the two things specifically forbidden Gentile believers by the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:29).

3. Promise

Access to the tree of life in God's paradise. In this sanctuary there will be no room for any wicked people, unlike the asylum sanctuary (*temenos*) around the Temple of Artemis which became a refuge of criminals.

E. SMYRNA

Smyrna was an important port, located in a beautiful setting at the head of a large bay. Strabo called it “the most beautiful city of all.” With a population of 200,000, it was not much smaller than Ephesus. It disputed with Ephesus the claim to be “First City in Asia.” In 195 BC it was the first city in Asia to erect a temple to Dea Roma. Technically Smyrna was warden (*neokoros*) of all the temples of the province.

In 155 Polycarp was martyred in Smyrna for his refusal to acknowledge Caesar as Lord.



Figure 2-2: The Martyrdom of Polycarp

1. Description of Jesus

2. Prophetic Message

- a) Narrative:
 - i) Commendation: Christ knows their treatment by “those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.” This synagogue of Satan also active in Philadelphia. Probably refers to Jews who denounced Christians to Roman authorities, as they later denounced Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna.
 - ii) Chastisement: none.
- b) Arrangement:
 - i) Command: do not fear, be faithful.
 - ii) Promise: The one who is faithful unto death will receive the victor’s wreath.

3. Promise to Victor

Will not be harmed by second death (20:6, 14; 21:18)

F. PERGAMUM

Pergamum is 45 miles north of Smyrna, 85 miles north of Ephesus, and 15 miles inland, near the river Caicus. Its most prominent feature is the huge acropolis that rises 1300 feet above the surrounding plain. The early city was built atop this acropolis, eventually spreading to the plain below. Today the modern city of Bergama lies at the foot of the acropolis.

After the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC, his successors (mostly Alexander's generals) fought amongst themselves. Twenty years of infighting, eventually produced four independent kingdoms: Thrace and Asia Minor ruled by Lysimachus, Macedonia ruled by Cassander, Egypt ruled by Ptolemy, and Persia ruled by Seleucus. Lysimachus chose to locate his treasury in Pergamum, entrusting it to the care of Philataerus. But in 281 Lysimachus was defeated by Seleucus, and Philataerus took advantage of the chaos to establish his own kingdom, ruled by what would become known as the Attalid dynasty (after his nephew and third ruler, Attalus).

As Rome was spreading its tentacles throughout the Mediterranean, the kingdom of Pergamon was her most important ally in the east. In 212 BC the king of Pergamon made an alliance with Rome, and in 189 Pergamon assisted Rome in its defeat of Antiochus. Rome rewarded this loyalty with large grants of land taken from Antiochus. In 133 BC, King Attalus III died without an heir, and willed his kingdom to Rome. From this kingdom Rome created the province of Asia, with Pergamon its capital. Probably in the second century AD Rome transferred the capital to Ephesus, but the latter had been the *de facto* capital for a century already.

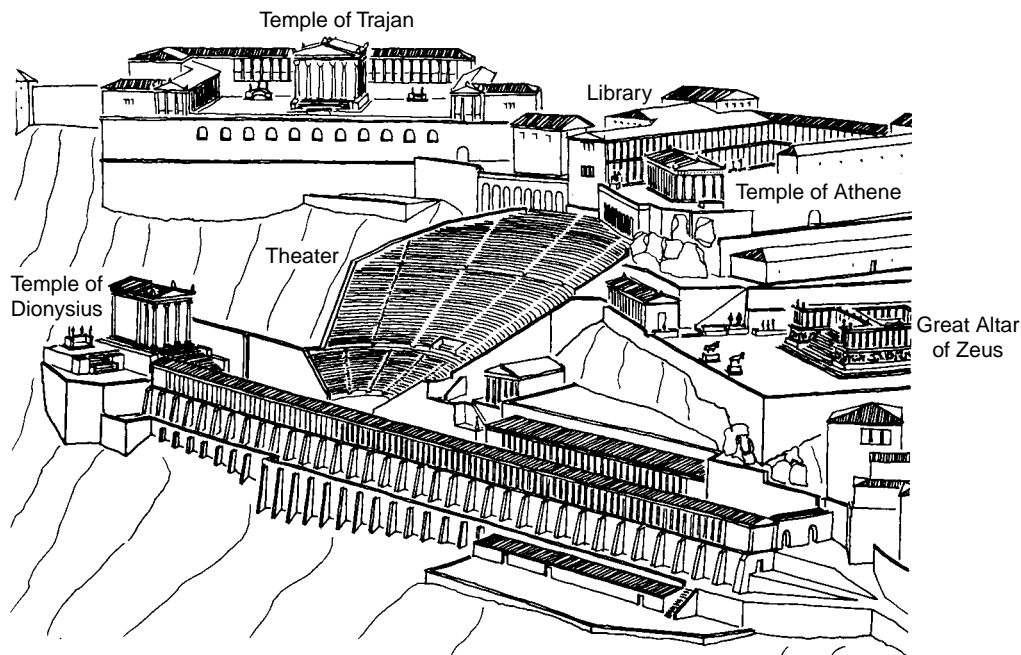


Figure 2-3: Archaeologist's reconstruction of Pergamum in the early 2nd century AD

In the second century BC, King Eumenes II built a magnificent set of buildings atop the acropolis, including a massive theater (the steepest in the ancient world), a library, and the great altar of Zeus (now in the Pergamon Museum, Berlin). Other buildings were later added, including a temple to Trajan.

The library in Pergamon was second only to Alexandria. Threatened by Pergamon's growing importance, Alexandria prohibited the export of papyrus. Needing a new writing material, artisans in Pergamon developed parchment (animal skins), naming it after their city. This use of parchment in turn led to the development of the codex (bound book) because parchment scrolls were much bulkier than papyrus ones.

Temples were prominent in Pergamum:

- a) Temple of Athene: the goddess of Pergamum. The oldest temple on the acropolis.
- b) Great altar of Zeus: built to commemorate victory over the Galatians (Celtic invaders from Gaul) ca. 240 BC.
- c) Temple to Rome and Augustus: 29 BC. The first temple of the imperial cult.
- d) The Asklepion: a famous medical center dedicated to Asklepius, the god of healing, whose symbol was the serpent. On the plain below the acropolis.
- e) Temple to Trajan: built on the highest point of the Acropolis.
- f) Temple of Serapis:



1. Description of Jesus

Jesus is the one with the sharp double-edged sword (ῥομφαία), the symbol of judicial power. The Roman proconsul wielded the judicial sword in Pergamum, but it is Jesus who has ultimate authority.

2. Prophetic Message

- a) Narrative:
 - i) Commendation: holding fast as faithful witnesses, even in shadow of Satan's throne and despite martyrdom of Antipas. Suggested identities of Satan's throne in Pergamum: altar of Zeus Soter (Zeus Savior), whole complex of temples atop acropolis, city as seat of provincial government, Asklepion (medical center dedicated to god Asklepius, whose symbol is serpent), throne-like appearance of theater on hillside.
 - ii) Chastisement: some hold to the teaching of Balaam and the Nicolaitans (presumably the same), who deceived people to eat food sacrificed to idols, and to physical or spiritual adultery (cf. Acts 15:29). Balaam incited the Israelites to participate with Moabite women in immorality, idolatry, and sacrificial feasts to their gods (Num 25:1-3; 31:16).

While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods. The people ate and bowed down before these gods. So Israel joined in worshiping the Baal of Peor. And the LORD's anger burned against them... They [the foreign women] were the ones who followed Balaam's advice and were the means of turning the Israelites away from the LORD in what happened at Peor, so that a plague struck the LORD's people (Num 25:1-3; 31:16).

- b) Arrangement:
 - i) Command: repent of compromise with the pagan world.
 - ii) Warning: Christ will come soon (ἔρχομαί σοι ταχύ) to wage war.

3. Promise to Victor

- i) Hidden manna: heavenly food provided by God in messianic banquet to replace the earthly food in pagan idolatrous banquets that the faithful one has declined to eat.
- ii) White pebble: signal of acquittal, or token of admission to heavenly banquet.
- iii) New name:

2. THE SEVEN MESSAGES

G. THYATIRA

Thyatira was an important center of the wool trade. Thyatira was the home town of Lydia, “a dealer in purple cloth” and “a worshiper of God” whom Paul met in Philippi (Acts 16:14-15, 40).

1. Description of Jesus

Son of God

2. Prophetic Message

- a) Narrative:
 - i) Commendation: growing love, faith, service, endurance.
 - ii) Chastisement: toleration of Jezebel, whose teaching seems similar to that of Balaam and the Nicolaitans.

- b) Arrangement:
 - i) Warning: judgment against Jezebel.
 - ii) Command: hold fast to Christ.

3. Promise to Victor

- a) Rule over the nations

- b) The Morning Star

H. SARDIS

Sardis was the capital of the Lydian empire (c. 680 - c. 547 BC), whose most famous king was Croesus (c. 560 - c. 547). Prosperity was due to local gold supplies; coinage was invented here. The city was destroyed by an earthquake in AD 17.

The citadel was built on an acropolis towering 1500 feet above the plain. The people of Sardis thought this to be invincible, but it was twice captured by surprise attacks at the seemingly most invincible point “where no guard was stationed, for there was no fear that it would ever be captured at that place, for the acropolis is sheer and impregnable there”¹: Cyrus (546 BC), Antiochus III (214 BC).

Sardis contained a large Jewish population, dating to OT times (תַּרְפֻּן Obad 20). It contained the largest synagogue ever found in the Mediterranean; furthermore, this synagogue was in the center of town.

1. Description of Jesus

The one holding the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars (cf. Ephesus 2:1).

2. Prophetic Message

- a) Narrative:
 - i) Commendation: none.
 - ii) Chastisement: reputation of being alive, but actually dead. The Sardian church is complacent, just like the defenders of the citadel in 546, 214 BC.
- b) Arrangement:
 - i) Command: wake up; remember, repent (cf. Ephesus 2:5).
 - ii) Warning: Christ will come like thief in night—like Cyrus and Antiochus who captured the citadel by surprise, and like the earthquakes which suddenly destroyed Sardis.

3. Promise to Victor

1. Herodotus, *The Histories*, 1.84.

2. THE SEVEN MESSAGES

I. PHILADELPHIA

Philadelphia was founded by Eumenes II (197-159 BC), king of Pergamon, or possibly by his brother Attalus II (159-138 BC), whose loyalty had earned him the name *philadelphus* (brother-lover). Philadelphia was the last town before the major road (the Roman imperial post road from Troas, Pergamon, Sardis to all points east; the old Persian highway from Sardis to Persepolis) climbed up to the interior plateau of Phrygia. Philadelphia was an outpost of Greek culture.

The city lay in a prosperous agricultural region, where volcanic soil nurtured a rich viticulture. Dionysius was the chief local deity.

The region was prone to earthquakes. In AD 17, the city was destroyed by an earthquake that Pliny described as the greatest in human history. Strabo reports that because of the frequent earthquakes people preferred to live in the surrounding countryside rather than in the town.

Tiberius granted a five-year exemption from tribute to help the city rebuild, dispatching his adopted son Germanicus to supervise aid. In gratitude for this aid, Philadelphia added a new name, Neocaesarea. Later, during the reign of Vespasian (70-79, founder of the Flavian dynasty), and presumably in response to further imperial aid, it took another new name, Flavia. It was a great honor for a city to be allowed to take an imperial name.

In AD 92 Domitian ordered that half the vineyards in the provinces be destroyed to encourage grain production and to protect the Italian wine industry. Philadelphia Flavia, heavily dependent upon viticulture, must have felt betrayed.

1. Description of Jesus

- a) The Holy and True (ὁ ἅγιος, ὁ ἀληθινός):
- b) The one who holds the key of David:
- c) The one who opens and no one can shut, and shuts and no one can open:

2. Prophetic Message

- a) Narrative:
 - i) Commendation: faithfulness to Christ despite weakness.
 - ii) Chastisement: none.
- b) Arrangement:
 - i) Resolve: will make members of synagogue of Satan acknowledge Christians; will keep safe from tribulation.
 - ii) Command: hold fast to Christ.

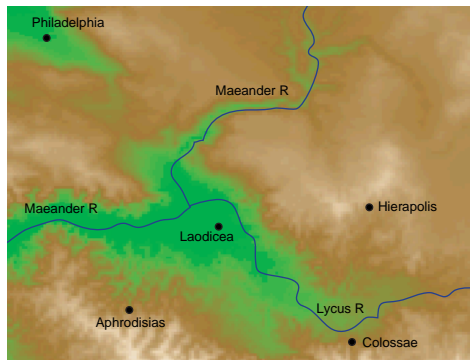
3. Promise to Victor

- a) Will make a pillar in God's temple: a secure building.
- b) Will never again go outside: a permanent dwelling, from which one will never again have to flee to the countryside to escape earthquake damage.
- c) Will write on him three names: in contrast to the new names which Philadelphia took.
 - i) the name of God
 - ii) name of God's city, New Jerusalem
 - iii) Jesus' new name

J. LAODICEA

Laodicea is on a hill above the Lycus River, ten miles downstream from Colossae, and 6 miles from Hierapolis. It was founded by the Seleucid king Antiochus II (r. 261- BC), who named it after his wife Laodice, before he divorced her in 253. The city's great prosperity was based on its woollen industry; it was especially noted for its black wool. Laodicea was so prosperous that it was able to rebuild itself from its own resources after devastating earthquakes in AD 17, 60. Laodicea was also strategically located at the intersection of the road from Ephesus to the east, and the road from Pergamum and Sardis to the south. It was the chief medical center of Phrygia.

The gospel was probably brought to Laodicea, Hierapolis and Colossae by Epaphras of Colossae during Paul's two-year stay in Ephesus (Col 1:7-8; 4:12-16).



The Church in Colossae

⁷You learned it [the gospel, the word of truth] from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, ⁸and who also told us of your love in the Spirit. (Col 1:3-8)

¹²Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. ¹³I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. ¹⁴Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. ¹⁵Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. ¹⁶After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea. (Col 4:12-16)

1. Description of Jesus

Unlike the other 6 messages, this description of Jesus does not draw from the inaugural vision of Jesus (1:12-20).

- a) The Amen: cf. “the Amen God” (ἡ ἀμὴν θεὸς, ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἀλήθινος, Isa 65:16). John again applies to Jesus a name appropriate to God alone.
- b) The faithful and true witness
- c) The beginning/ruler (ἀρχή) of God's creation: presumably John was acquainted with Paul's letter to Colossae, which describes Jesus as “the firstborn over all creation” (πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως) and “the beginning” (ἀρχή) (Col 1:15, 18). Both Paul and John draw on the imagery of Yahweh establishing Lady Wisdom from the beginning (ἀρχή) (Prov 8:22-23)

2. Prophetic Message

- a) Narrative:
 - i) Commendation: none.
 - ii) Chastisement:
 - useless: neither hot nor cold. Probably a reference to local water supply: Hierapolis had hot mineral springs of medicinal value, Colossae had cold refreshing springs, Laodicea had neither and was thus useless.
 - unaware of need: material self-sufficiency of city paralleled spiritual self-sufficiency of church.
- b) Arrangement:
 - i) Warning: Christ will spew them out, for their self-sufficiency. The city prided itself for its self-sufficiency in recovering from the earthquakes of 17, 60. The church was unaware of its spiritual poverty, of its need for Jesus.
 - ii) Command:
 - buy from Christ three things, each alluding to some local product:
 - gold: city was a major banking center
 - white robes: city was famous for its black wool garments
 - eye-salve: region was famous for its eye-salve.
 - Be zealous and repent

2. THE SEVEN MESSAGES

- iii) Promise: Jesus will dine with whoever invites him in. NB this is not a gospel invitation; this is addressed to the church, a church that has forgotten its need for Jesus.

3. Promise to Victor

- a) To sit with Jesus on his Father's throne: to follow in his footsteps, receiving the same reward for victory.



3. THE THRONE ROOM IN HEAVEN

Revelation 4–5

After receiving the messages to the seven churches, the interpreting angel issues an invitation to John: “Come...I will show you” (cf. 17:1; 21:9). Again he is “in the Spirit” (cf. 1:10; 17:3; 21:10), this time caught up to heaven. The visions that the interpreting angel shows him in heaven form the central portion of the book (4:1–16:21).

This central portion includes the seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls, each depicting divine judgment upon earth. Each of these is preceded by a vision of the heavenly throne:

- Heavenly throne (4:1-5:14)
- Seven seals (6:1-17; 8:1)
- Heavenly throne room (7:1-17)
- Seven trumpets (8:6-9:21; 11:15-19)
- Heavenly throne room (15:1-8)
- Seven bowls (16:1-21)

God’s judgments only makes sense when seen in the context of his throne.

I. THE FIRST VISION (4:1-11)

A. THE THRONE

John sees a throne with someone seated upon it.

1. **The throne:** 47x in Rev. Of these 40x referring to God’s throne in heaven. But, Satan also has a throne (2:13; 13:2; 16:10).
2. **The one seated upon the throne:** the most common title for God (13x). But there is an earthly parody: Babylon is portrayed as “seated on many waters” (17:1, 15) and seated upon a seven-headed scarlet beast (17:3, 9). Furthermore, there is another, unspoken throne room in mind: that of the Roman emperor.

God is described in language drawn from Ezekiel’s vision of the throne room (Ezek 1).

B. AROUND THE THRONE

1. Rainbow.
2. Cherubim (the four living creatures): God’s throne attendants (cf. Gen 3:24; Ezek 1).
3. Seven lamps, representing the seven-fold Spirit of God (or the seven spirits of God)—before the throne.
4. “What looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal”: brilliance surrounding God.
5. Twenty-four thrones, occupied by the 24 elders. Probably representative of God’s people: 12 for OT Israel, 12 for NT Church. Robed in white (another important motif of Rev).
6. Theophany: lightning and thunder (cf. Exod 19:16-19; Rev 8:5; 11:19; 16:18).

C. WORSHIP

1. The cherubim continually praise God:
 - a) holy
 - b) omnipotent
 - c) eternal
2. The 24 elders respond to the lead of the cherubim, by removing their crowns, falling down, and worshiping. They proclaim that God is worthy for he is the Creator. This is the first of three songs that begins “Worthy” (cf. 5:9, 12). Domitian referred to himself as *dominus et deus*, “lord and God.” But it is God to whom this title properly belongs. It is God and the Lamb who are worthy to receive glory, etc., not Caesar.

II. THE SECOND VISION (5:1-14)

A. THE SCROLL

The record of what will happen in the last days. Who is able to unseal this?

B. THE LION AND THE LAMB

John *hears* one of the elders announce two messianic titles:

1. The Lion of the tribe of Judah :Gen 49:9.
2. The Root of David: Isa 11:1,10.

John *sees* a Lamb.

- the usual title for Jesus in Rev (29x)
- standing in the center of the throne: alongside God
- as though slain
- seven horns: power
- seven eyes = seven-fold Spirit of God

C. WORSHIP

Three rounds of worship:

1. Four cherubim and 24 elders: Lamb is worthy to open scroll.
 - a) slain lamb has redeemed for God a people from every tribe, etc.
 - b) made this people to be kings and priests (cf. Exod 19:5-6; 1 Pet 2:9).
2. Myriad angels: worthy is the Lamb to receive praise.
3. Every creature in every realm: praise to both the one seated on the throne and the lamb.

III. WORSHIP IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

A. THE WORSHIPED

1. The One who sits upon the throne. Heaven is portrayed as a throne room, with the throne and the one seated upon it as the focal point.
2. The Lamb. He is not upon the throne, and is always referred to distinctly from “the One who sits upon the throne” (but in 22:3 the throne is of both God and the Lamb). Nevertheless, the Lamb is worshiped rather than being one of the worshipers.

B. THE WORSHIPERS

1. **The four living creatures.** John draws the imagery from Ezek 1:5-25. These are the cherubim (Ezek 10:20). They are God’s throne attendants. They lead the heavenly worship (4:8; 5:14).
2. **Twenty-four elders.** Probably represent the 12 tribes and the 12 apostles, i.e. God’s people in OT and NT.
3. **Multitudes of angels.**
4. **The martyrs.** Those who refused to worship the beast on earth, and are killed for that refusal, join the heavenly choir, worshiping around the true throne.
5. All creation.

C. THE WORSHIP

1. Responsive: always in response to something that is seen or heard.
2. Antiphonal: the worshipers sing back and forth to one another.
3. Maintains distance. The opening song proclaims **Holy, holy, holy**: the *qēduššah* (Heb. “holy”), *trisagion* (Gk. “thrice-holy”), *sanctus* (Lat. “holy”), *tersanctus* (Lat. “thrice-holy”). cf. Isa 6:3. Worship leaves the worshipers flat on their face (4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4)
4. Affirms both God and the Lamb as worthy. Domitian referred to himself as *dominus et deus noster*, “our Lord and God.” But it is God alone who is worthy to be called “our Lord and God” (4:11). God is worthy as Creator; the Lamb as Redeemer.
5. Ascribes to both God and the Lamb: power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory and praise. 7-fold in 5:12; 7:12.

D. WHAT WORSHIP DOES

Eugene Peterson identifies five things that worship does:¹

1. **Centers:** “worship is a meeting at the center so that our lives are centered in God and not lived eccentrically.”
2. **Gathers:** all God’s people gather around the throne.
3. **Reveals:** worship reveals God and invites sinners to participate.
4. **Sings:**
5. **Affirms:** “the worshiping affirmation to the God who affirms us.”

1. Eugene Peterson, *Reversed Thunder* (San Francisco: Harper& Row, 1988), 59.

IV. THE HYMNS OF REVELATION

A. THE WORSHIP OF GOD IN THE HEAVENLY THRONE ROOM

A.1. The four living creatures (4:8) #1

<p>Ἅγιος ἅγιος ἅγιος κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος.</p>	<p><i>Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God Almighty Who was and is and comes</i></p>
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A.2. Antiphonal response by the twenty-four elders (4:11) #2

<p>Ἄξιός εἰ, ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, λαβεῖν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν, ὅτι σὺ ἔκτισας τὰ πάντα καὶ διὰ τὸ θέλημά σου ἦσαν καὶ ἐκτίσθησαν.</p>	<p><i>Worthy are you, our Lord and God, To receive glory and honor and power, For you created all things, and by your will they existed, yea, were created.</i></p>
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B. THE WORSHIP OF THE LAMB IN THE HEAVENLY THRONE ROOM

B.1. The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders (5:9) #3

<p>Ἄξιός εἰ λαβεῖν τὸ βιβλίον καὶ ἀνοῖξαι τὰς σφραγίδας αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἐσφάγης καὶ ἠγόρασας τῷ θεῷ ἐν τῷ αἵματί σου ἐκ πάσης φυλῆς καὶ γλώσσης καὶ λαοῦ καὶ ἔθνους καὶ ἐποίησας αὐτοὺς τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν βασιλείαν καὶ ἱερεῖς, καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.</p>	<p><i>Worthy are you to take the scroll, and to open its seals, because you were slaughtered and you purchased for God with your blood from every tribe and language and people and nation, and made them for our God a kingdom and priests, and they will reign upon the earth.</i></p>
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B.2. Response of myriads of angels (5:12) #4

<p>Ἄξιόν ἐστιν τὸ ἀρνίον τὸ ἐσφαγμένον λαβεῖν τὴν δύναμιν καὶ πλοῦτον καὶ σοφίαν καὶ ἰσχὺν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν καὶ εὐλογίαν.</p>	<p><i>Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.</i></p>
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B.3. Response of every creature (5:13) #5

<p>Τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ καὶ τῷ ἀρνίῳ ἢ εὐλογία καὶ ἡ τιμὴ καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.</p>	<p><i>To the one seated upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and power for ever and ever.</i></p>
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3. THE THRONE ROOM IN HEAVEN

B.4. Response of the four living creatures (5:14)

Ἀμήν.

Amen!

C. INTERLUDE BETWEEN SIXTH AND SEVENTH SEALS

C.1. Great multitude (7:10) #6

Ἡ σωτηρία τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ
τῷ θρόνῳ καὶ τῷ ἀρνίῳ.

*Salvation belongs to our God,
the one seated upon the throne,
and to the Lamb.*

C.2. Response of all the angels (7:12) #7

Ἀμήν, ἡ εὐλογία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ σοφία καὶ
ἡ εὐχαριστία καὶ ἡ τιμὴ καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ
ἰσχὺς τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων·
ἀμήν.

*Amen.
Praise and glory and wisdom and praise
and honor and power and strength
be to our God for ever and ever.
Amen.*

D. THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

D.1. Loud voices in heaven (11:15) #8

Ἐγένετο ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ κόσμου τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν
καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ,
καὶ βασιλεύσει εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

*The kingdom of the world has become our Lord's,
and his Christ's,
and he will reign for ever and ever.*

D.2. Antiphonal response of the twenty-four elders (11:17-18) #9

Εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι, κύριε ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ,
ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν,
ὅτι εἴληφας τὴν δύναμίν σου τὴν μεγάλην
καὶ ἐβασίλευσας.
καὶ τὰ ἔθνη ὠργίσθησαν,
καὶ ἦλθεν ἡ ὀργή σου
καὶ ὁ καιρὸς τῶν νεκρῶν κριθῆναι
καὶ δοῦναι τὸν μισθὸν τοῖς δούλοις σου τοῖς
προφήταις
καὶ τοῖς ἁγίοις καὶ τοῖς φοβουμένοις τὸ
ὄνομά σου,
τοὺς μικροὺς καὶ τοὺς μεγάλους,
καὶ διαφθεῖραι τοὺς διαφθείροντας τὴν γῆν.

*We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,
who is and was,
because you have taken your great power,
and became king.
The nations were wrathful,
but your wrath has come
and the time to judge the dead,
and to give the reward to your servants the proph-
ets
and to the saints and those who fear your name,
both small and great,
and to destroy those who destroy the earth.*

E. DRAGON THROWN OUT OF HEAVEN**E.1. Loud voice in heaven (12:10-12) #10**

Ἄρτι ἐγένετο ἡ σωτηρία καὶ ἡ δύναμις
καὶ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν
καὶ ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ,
ὅτι ἐβλήθη ὁ κατήγωρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν,
ὁ κατηγορῶν αὐτοὺς ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν
ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός.
καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐνίκησαν αὐτὸν διὰ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ ἀρνίου
καὶ διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν
καὶ οὐκ ἠγάπησαν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτῶν ἄχρι
θανάτου.
διὰ τοῦτο εὐφραίνεσθε, [οἱ] οὐρανοὶ
καὶ οἱ ἐν αὐτοῖς σκηνοῦντες.
οὐαὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν,
ὅτι κατέβη ὁ διάβολος πρὸς ὑμᾶς
ἔχων θυμὸν μέγαν,
εἰδὼς ὅτι ὀλίγον καιρὸν ἔχει.

*Now have come the salvation and the power
and the kingdom of our God
and the authority of his Christ,
For the accuser of our brothers has been thrown out
who accuses them before our God day and night.
They conquered him through the blood of the Lamb
and through the word of their testimony
and they did not love their lives until death.
Therefore, rejoice, O heavens,
and those who dwell in them.
Woe to the earth and the sea,
because the devil has gone down to you
having great fury,
knowing that he has a little time.*

F. APPEARANCE OF SEVEN ANGELS WITH SEVEN LAST PLAGUES**F.1. Those who had conquered the beast and his image (15:3-4) #11**

Μεγάλα καὶ θαυμαστά τὰ ἔργα σου,
κύριε ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ·
δίκαια καὶ ἀληθινὰ αἱ ὁδοὶ σου,
ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν ἐθνῶν·
τίς οὐ μὴ φοβηθῆ, κύριε,
καὶ δοξάσει τὸ ὄνομά σου;
ὅτι μόνος ὁσῖος,
ὅτι πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἤξουσιν
καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν ἐνώπιόν σου,
ὅτι τὰ δικαιώματά σου ἐφανερώθησαν.

*Great and wonderful are your works,
Lord God Almighty;
Just and true are your ways,
King of the nations;
Who does not fear you, O Lord,
and glorify your name?
For you alone are holy
for all nations will come
and will worship before you,
for your righteous acts have been revealed.*

G. THIRD BOWL**G.1. Angel in charge of the waters (16:5-6) #12**

Δίκαιος εἶ, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν, ὁ ὁσῖος,
ὅτι ταῦτα ἔκρινας,
ὅτι αἷμα ἁγίων καὶ προφητῶν ἐξέχεαν
καὶ αἷμα αὐτοῖς [δ]έδωκας πιεῖν,
ἄξιοί εἰσιν.

*Just you are, who is and was, the Holy One,
because you judged these things,
because they have shed the blood of the saints and the
prophets,
and blood you have given them to drink,
they are worthy.*

3. THE THRONE ROOM IN HEAVEN

G.2. Antiphonal response by altar (16:7) #13

Ναί κύριε ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ,
ἀληθινὰ καὶ δίκαια αἱ κρίσεις σου.

*Yes, Lord God Almighty,
true and just are your judgments.*

H. AFTER OVERTHROW OF BABYLON

H.1. Roar of great multitude in heaven (19:1-3) #14

Ἀλληλουϊά·
ἡ σωτηρία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ
ἡμῶν,
ὅτι ἀληθινὰ καὶ δίκαια αἱ κρίσεις αὐτοῦ·
ὅτι ἔκρινεν τὴν πόρνην τὴν μεγάλην
ἣτις ἔφθειρεν τὴν γῆν ἐν τῇ πορνείᾳ αὐτῆς,
καὶ ἐξεδίκησεν τὸ αἷμα τῶν δούλων αὐτοῦ
ἐκ χειρὸς αὐτῆς.
.....
Ἀλληλουϊά·
καὶ ὁ καπνὸς αὐτῆς ἀναβαίνει εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας
τῶν αἰώνων.

*Hallelujah!
Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,
for true and just are his judgments;
for he has judged the great whore
who corrupted the earth with her whoring,
and he avenged the blood of his servants
from her hand.*

.....
*Hallelujah!
Her smoke goes up for ever and ever.*

H.2. Antiphonal response of the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures (19:4) #15

Ἀμήν Ἀλληλουϊά.

Amen. Hallelujah!

H.3. Voice from throne (19:5) #16

Αἰνεῖτε τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν
πάντες οἱ δούλοι αὐτοῦ
[καὶ] οἱ φοβούμενοι αὐτόν,
οἱ μικροὶ καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι.

*Praise our God
all his servants
those who fear him,
both small and great.*

H.4. Antiphonal response of great multitude (19:6-8) #17

Ἀλληλουϊά,
ὅτι ἐβασίλευσεν κύριος
ὁ θεὸς [ἡμῶν] ὁ παντοκράτωρ.
χαίρωμεν καὶ ἀγαλλιῶμεν
καὶ δώσωμεν τὴν δόξαν αὐτῷ,
ὅτι ἦλθεν ὁ γάμος τοῦ ἀρνίου
καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ ἠτοίμασεν ἑαυτήν
καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῇ ἵνα περιβάληται
βύσσινον λαμπρὸν καθαρὸν·
τὸ γὰρ βύσσινον τὰ δικαιώματα τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν.

*Hallelujah!
For the Lord reigns
our God Almighty.
Let us rejoice and be glad
and give glory to him,
for the wedding of the Lamb has come
and his bride has prepared herself
and it was given her that she might be clothed
fine linen, bright and clean;
for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

4. THE SEVEN SEALS

Revelation 6:1–8:5

I. THE SERIES OF SEVENS

The 7 seals, 7 trumpets and 7 bowls are presented as parallel sets with many features in common.

A. PATTERN OF 4+3

The first 4 of each set are presented as a unified sequence of 4, followed by a less-unified sequence of 3.

Seals 1-4	4 horsemen modeled on Zech 1:7-11; 6:1-8.
Trumpets 1-4	affect earth, sea, fresh waters, heavenly bodies, respectively.
Bowls 1-4	affect earth, sea, fresh waters, heavenly bodies, respectively.

B. INTENSIFICATION

in the scope of judgment unleashed by the first four of each set:

seals 1-4	1/4 of the earth
trumpets 1-4	1/3
bowls 1-4	all

C. THEOPHANY

Each set concludes with physical phenomena heralding both the appearance of God (theophany cf. Exod 19:16-19) and the eschatological earthquake. There is intensification:

Seal 7	“and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake” (8:5). καὶ ἐγένοντο βρονταὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ ἀστραπαὶ καὶ σεισμός.
Trumpet 7	“and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm” (11:19). καὶ ἐγένοντο ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταὶ καὶ σεισμός καὶ χάλαζα μεγάλη.
Bowl 7	“And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since men came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty” (16:18). καὶ ἐγένοντο ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταὶ καὶ σεισμός ἐγένετο μέγας, οἷος οὐκ ἐγένετο ἀφ’ οὗ ἄνθρωπος ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς τηλικούτος σεισμός οὕτω μέγας.

D. INTERLUDES

1. The initial sight of the seven seals (5:1), seven trumpets (8:2) and seven bowls (15:1) is followed by an interlude: a vision of events in heaven (5:2-14; 8:3-5; 15:2-8).
2. The sixth seal and sixth trumpet are each followed by an interlude (7:1-17; 10:1-13) before the seventh seal and trumpet. The seventh trumpet is followed by an interlude (12:1–15:8).

Especially attention should be paid to these interludes or intercalations.

E. HUMAN INTRANSIGENCE

Throughout Scripture God’s judgments are intended as redemptive: to drive people to repentance. But it becomes increasingly clear that this does not work. The human response to the judgments unleashed by the seals, trumpets and bowls is: 1) they did not repent; 2) they blasphemed God (9:21; 16:9, 10, 21).

F. HEAVEN VS. BABYLON

The seventh seal and seventh trumpet constitute a vision of heaven. The seventh bowl heralds the fall of Babylon, the antithesis of heaven.

The Series of Sevens (NRSV)

	Seals	Trumpets	Bowls
Intro.		8 Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets made ready to blow them.	16 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.”
1	6 Then I saw the Lamb open one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures call out, as with a voice of thunder, “Come!” ² I looked, and there was a white horse! Its rider had a bow; a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering and to conquer.	⁷ The first angel blew his trumpet, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were hurled to the <u>earth</u> ; and a <u>third</u> of the <u>earth</u> was burned up, and a <u>third</u> of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.	² So the first angel went and poured his bowl on the <u>earth</u> , and a foul and painful sore came on those who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped its image.
2	³ When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature call out, “Come!” ⁴ And out came another horse, bright red; its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people would slaughter one another; and he was given a great sword.	⁸ The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the <u>sea</u> . ⁹ A <u>third</u> of the <u>sea</u> became blood, a <u>third</u> of the living creatures in the <u>sea</u> died, and a <u>third</u> of the ships were destroyed.	³ The second angel poured his bowl into the <u>sea</u> , and it became like the blood of a corpse, and <u>every</u> living thing in the <u>sea</u> died.
3	⁵ When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature call out, “Come!” I looked, and there was a black horse! Its rider held a pair of scales in his hand, ⁶ and I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a day’s pay, and three quarts of barley for a day’s pay, but do not damage the olive oil and the wine!”	¹⁰ The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the <u>rivers</u> and on the <u>springs of water</u> . ¹¹ The name of the star is Wormwood. A <u>third</u> of the waters became wormwood, and many died from the water, because it was made bitter.	⁴ The third angel poured his bowl into the <u>rivers</u> and the <u>springs of water</u> , and they became blood. ⁵ And I heard the angel of the waters say, “You are just, O Holy One, who are and were, for you have judged these things; because they shed the blood of saints and prophets, you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!” ⁷ And I heard the altar respond, “Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, your judgments are true and just!”
4	⁷ When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature call out, “Come!” ⁸ I looked and there was a pale green horse! Its rider’s name was Death, and Hades followed with him; they were given authority over a <u>fourth</u> of the earth, to kill with sword, famine, and pestilence, and by the wild animals of the earth.	¹² The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a <u>third</u> of the <u>sun</u> was struck, and a <u>third</u> of the moon, and a <u>third</u> of the stars, so that a <u>third</u> of their light was darkened; a <u>third</u> of the day was kept from shining, and likewise the night. ¹³ Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew in midheaven, “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!”	⁸ The fourth angel poured his bowl on the <u>sun</u> , and it was allowed to scorch them with fire; ⁹ they were scorched by the fierce heat, but <u>they cursed the name of God</u> , who had authority over these plagues, and <u>they did not repent</u> and give him glory.
5	⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered for the word of God and for the testimony they had given; ¹⁰ they cried out with a loud voice, “Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be before you judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?” ¹¹ They were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number would be complete both of their fellow servants and of their brothers and sisters, who were soon to be killed as they themselves had been killed.	9 And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit; ² he opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft. ³ Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given authority like the authority of scorpions of the earth. ⁴ They were told not to damage the grass of the earth or any green growth or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵ They were allowed to torture them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torture was like the torture of a scorpion when it stings someone. ⁶ And in those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will flee from them. ⁷ In appearance the locusts were like horses equipped for battle. On their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, ⁸ their hair like women’s hair, and their teeth like lions’ teeth; ⁹ they had scales like iron breastplates, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. ¹⁰ They have tails like scorpions, with stingers, and in their tails is their power to harm people for five months. ¹¹ They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon. ¹² The first woe has passed. There are still two woes to come.	¹⁰ The fifth angel poured his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness; people gnawed their tongues in agony, ¹¹ and <u>cursed the God of heaven</u> because of their pains and sores, and <u>they did not repent</u> of their deeds.

The Series of Sevens [cont.]

	Seals	Trumpets	Bowls
6	<p>¹²When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and there came a great earthquake; the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, ¹³and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree drops its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. ¹⁴The sky vanished like a scroll rolling itself up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. ¹⁵Then the kings of the earth and the magnates and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; ¹⁷for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”</p>	<p>¹³Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, ¹⁴saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river <u>Euphrates</u>.” ¹⁵So the four angels were released, who had been held ready for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, to kill a third of humankind. ¹⁶The number of the troops of cavalry was two hundred million; I heard their number. ¹⁷And this was how I saw the horses in my vision: the riders wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur; the heads of the horses were like lions’ heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths. ¹⁸By these three plagues a third of humankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. ¹⁹For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they inflict harm.</p> <p>²⁰The rest of humankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands or give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk. ²¹And <u>they did not repent</u> of their murders or their sorceries or their fornication or their thefts.</p>	<p>¹²The sixth angel poured his bowl on the great river <u>Euphrates</u>, and its water was dried up in order to prepare the way for the kings from the east. ¹³And I saw three foul spirits like frogs coming from the mouth of the dragon, from the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴These are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. ¹⁵(“See, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and is clothed, not going about naked and exposed to shame.”) ¹⁶And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Harmagedon.</p>
Inter-lude	7:1-17	10:1-11:13 11 ¹⁴ The second woe has passed. The third woe is coming very soon.	
7	<p>8 When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ²And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. ³Another angel with a golden censer came and stood at the altar; he was given a great quantity of incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar that is before the throne. ⁴And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. ⁵Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth; and there were <u>peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake</u>.</p>	<p>11¹⁵Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever.”</p> <p>¹⁶Then the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷singing, “We give you thanks, Lord God Almighty, who are and who were, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.</p> <p>¹⁸ The nations raged, but your wrath has come, and the time for judging the dead, for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints and all who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”</p> <p>¹⁹Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were <u>flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail</u>.</p>	<p>¹⁷The seventh angel poured his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” ¹⁸And there came <u>flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a violent earthquake</u>, such as had not occurred since people were upon the earth, so violent was that earthquake. ¹⁹The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. God remembered great Babylon and gave her the wine-cup of the fury of his wrath. ²⁰And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found; ²¹and huge hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds, dropped from heaven on people, until <u>they cursed God</u> for the plague of the hail, so fearful was that plague.</p>

II. THE SEVEN SEALS

As with the 7 trumpets and the 7 bowls, the 7 seals follow a 4+3 pattern.

The 7 seals portray a picture similar to that painted by Jesus in his Olivet Discourse (Matt 24; Mark 13; Luke 21).

A. SEALS 1-4

Four horsemen modeled on Zech 1:7-11; 6:1-8.

Each horseman comes out in response to a summons from one of the cherubim: “Come!” “Coming” is a major theme of the book:

- God is the one “who is, and who was, and who is to come” (1:4,8; 4:8). Twice he is called simply “the one who is and who was” (11:17; 16:5) because at those moments he has come.
- “Look, he is coming with the clouds” (1:7)
- Jesus says that he will come to the seven churches (2:5,16; 3:11), either in judgment or in deliverance.
- Judgment is coming/has come:
- The four cherubim summon the horsemen to come (6:1,3,5,7).
- God’s wrath has come (6:17; 11:18)
- Three woes are coming (9:12; 11:14)
- The hour of God’s judgment has come (14:7); the hour to reap has come (14:15)
- The marriage supper of the Lamb is coming (19:7)
- Three times Jesus says “I am coming soon” (ἔρχομαι ταχύ, 22:7,12,20), to which John responds, “Come, Lord Jesus” (ἔρχου κύριε Ἰησοῦ, 22:20).
- “The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.” (22:17)

The coming of the Lord is a common motif in the OT. On the day of his coming, he will judge and punish his enemies, and will vindicate and deliver his people. Both activities are simultaneous; indeed, they are flip sides of the same coin. In both activities God will demonstrate and vindicate his righteousness.

The “divine passive” ἐδόθη “it was given” (3s aor. pass. δίδωμι) is used 22x in Rev. It is a circumlocution for God, and emphasizes his sovereignty. 6:2, 4, 8, 11; 7:2; 8:3.

1. The first horseman is not the same as the rider on the white horse in 19:11, who is clearly Christ.
2. Removal of *pax romana*.
3. Quart of wheat = one day’s ration; 3 quarts of barley = one day’s ration for a horse; denarius = one day’s wage.
4. Sword, famine, plague and wild animals are the archetypal OT agents of God’s judgment: e.g., Deut 32:24; Jer 14:12; Ezek 5:16-17.

B. SEAL 5

Cry of the martyrs for justice. They are given white robes and an answer: they must wait till the full number of martyrs is complete.

οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς “those who dwell upon the earth,” “the inhabitants of the earth” is a technical term used 9x; = the enemies of God and his martyrs; those who are “at home in the present world order” (Caird).

C. SEAL 6

Earthquake, darkened sun, blood-red moon are cosmic phenomena recognizable to both Jew/Christian and pagan Roman as portents/prodigies marking divine judgment. Both great and small recognize these events as heralding “the great day of his wrath” and seek shelter from the terrifying presence of God.

The Day of Wrath (*Dies Irae*) is one of a complex of OT terms that refer to the same event: the coming of the Lord in judgment and vindication, in punishment and salvation:

- The Day of the Lord יְהוָה יוֹם: OT 19x

4. THE SEVEN SEALS

- The Day of [the Lord's] wrath עֲבָרָה יוֹם, יוֹם עֲבָרַת יְהוָה, יוֹם אָף, יוֹם אַף־יְהוָה, יוֹם אָפוֹ, יוֹם חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ: OT 19x
- On that day בְּיוֹם הַהוּא: OT 211x
- At that time בְּעֵת הַהִיא: OT 69x
- In the last/latter days בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים: OT 14x

The NT draws a contrast between two ages:

1. this age: ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος, ὁ αἰὼν ὁ ἐνεστῶν, ὁ νῦν αἰὼν. Marked by “the end of the age” ἡ συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος.
2. the age to come: ὁ αἰὼν ἐκείνος, ὁ αἰὼν ὁ ἐρχομένος, ὁ αἰὼν ὁ μέλλοντος, οἱ αἰῶνες οἱ ἐπερχομένοι, μέλλον αἰὼν.

The Day of the Lord comes on at least three sets of occasions:

1. In the history of Israel and Judah, ca. 800-500 BC.
2. In Christ
3. At the end of this age, immediately prior to the new heavens and the new earth.

But the day of the Lord is continually coming throughout the period between the cross and the consummation, as God repeatedly pours out his judgment upon his enemies while delivering his people.

Dies Irae

Dies Irae is a Latin poem, attributed to Thomas of Celano (ca. 1200-55), a friend of Thomas of Assisi. The original poem probably contained 17 stanzas of three lines each. To this have been added six additional lines: the first four drawn from a twelfth-century hymn.

Latin	literal translation	poetic translation
Dies irae, dies illa, solvat saeculum in favilla, teste David cum Sybilla.	Day of wrath, that day Will dissolve the earth in ashes As David and the Sibyl bear witness.	That day of wrath, that dreadful day, shall heaven and earth in ashes lay, as David and the Sybil say.
Quantus tremor est futurus Quando iudex est venturus Cuncta stricte discussurus.	What dread there will be When the judge shall come To judge all things strictly	What horror must invade the mind When the approaching Judge shall find And sift the deeds of all mankind!
Tuba mirum spargens sonum Per sepulcra regionum Coget omnes ante thronum.	A trumpet, spreading a wondrous sound Through the graves of all lands, Will drive mankind before the throne.	The mighty trumpet's wondrous tone Shall rend each tomb's sepulchral stone And summon all before the Throne.
Mors stupebit et natura Cum resurget creatura Judicanti responsura.	Death and Nature shall be astonished When all creation rises again To answer to the Judge.	Now death and nature with surprise Behold the trembling sinners rise To meet the Judge's searching eyes.
Liber scriptus proferetur In quo totum continetur Unde mundus iudicetur	A book, written in, will be brought forth In which is contained everything that is, Out of which the world shall be judged.	Then shall with universal dread The Book of Consciences be read To judge the lives of all the dead.
Judex ergo cum sedebit Quidquid latet apparebit, Nil inultum remanebit.	When therefore the Judge takes his seat Whatever is hidden will reveal itself. Nothing will remain unavenged.	For now before the Judge severe All hidden things must plain appear; No crime can pass unpunished here.
Quid sum miser tunc dicturus Quem patronum rogaturus, Cum vix justus sit securus?	What then shall I say, wretch that I am, What advocate entreat to speak for me, When even the righteous may hardly be secure?	O what shall I, so guilty plead? And who for me will intercede? When even Saints shall comfort need?
Rex tremendae majestatis, Qui salvandos salvas gratis, Salve me, fons pietatis.	King of awful majesty, Who freely savest the redeemed, Save me, O fount of goodness.	O King of dreadful majesty! Grace and mercy You grant free; As Fount of Kindness, save me!
Recordare, Jesu pie, Quod sum causa tuae viae, Ne me perdas illa die.	Remember, blessed Jesu, That I am the cause of Thy pilgrimage, Do not forsake me on that day.	Recall, dear Jesus, for my sake You did our suffering nature take Then do not now my soul forsake!
Quaerens me sedisti lassus, Redemisti crucem passus, Tantus labor non sit cassus.	Seeking me Thou didst sit down weary, Thou didst redeem me, suffering death on the cross. Let not such toil be in vain.	In weariness You sought me, And suffering upon the tree! Let not in vain such labor be.
Iuste iudex ultionis Donum fac remissionis Ante diem rationis.	Just and avenging Judge, Grant remission Before the day of reckoning.	O Judge of justice, hear, I pray, For pity take my sins away Before the dreadful reckoning day.
Ingemisco tamquam reus, Culpa rubet vultus meus, Supplicanti parce, Deus.	I groan like a guilty man. Guilt reddens my face. Spare a suppliant, O God.	Your gracious face, O Lord, I seek; Deep shame and grief are on my cheek; In sighs and tears my sorrows speak.
Qui Mariam absolvisti Et latronem exaudisti, Mihi quoque spem dedisti.	Thou who didst absolve Mary Magdalen And didst hearken to the thief, To me also hast Thou given hope.	You who did Mary's guilt unbind, And mercy for the robber find, Have filled with hope my anxious mind.
Preces meae non sunt dignae, Sed tu bonus fac benigne, Ne perenni cremer igne.	My prayers are not worthy, But Thou in Thy merciful goodness grant That I burn not in everlasting fire.	How worthless are my prayers I know, Yet, Lord forbid that I should go Into the fires of endless woe.

4. THE SEVEN SEALS

Inter oves locum praesta,
Et ab haedis me sequestra,
Statuens in parte dextra.

Confutatis maledictis
Flammis acerbis addictis,
Voca me cum benedictis.

Oro supplex et acclinis,
Cor contritum quasi cinis,
Gere curam mei finis.

Lacrimosa dies illa
Qua resurget ex favilla
Judicandus homo reus.
Huic ergo parce, Deus,

Pie Jesu Domine,
Dona eis requiem. Amen.

Place me among Thy sheep
And separate me from the goats,
Setting me on Thy right hand.

When the accursed have been confounded
And given over to the bitter flames,
Call me with the blessed.

I pray in supplication on my knees.
My heart contrite in the dust,
Safeguard my fate.

Mournful that day
When from the dust shall rise
Guilty man to be judged.
Therefore spare him, O God.

Merciful Jesu, Lord
Grant them rest.

Divorced from the accursed band,
O make me with Your sheep to stand,
As child of grace, at Your right Hand.

When the doomed can no more flee
From the fires of misery
With the chosen call me.

Before You, humbled, Lord, I lie,
My heart like ashes, crushed and dry,
Assist me when I die.

Full of tears and full of dread
Is that day that wakes the dead,
Calling all, with solemn blast
To be judged for all their past.

Lord, have mercy, Jesus blest,
Grant them all Your Light and Rest. Amen.

Who can stand in the day of his wrath? The answer is given in the interlude before Seal 7.

D. INTERLUDE

Two visions:

1. Vision on earth of the 144,000 from the 12 tribes of Israel who are sealed with the protective seal of God.
2. Vision in heaven of the innumerable multitude.

The identity of these two groups and whether they are the same is a major question.

1. Dispensationalists identify the 144,000 as Jews, the multitude as Gentile believers. E.g., Stedman identifies the 144,000 as “Christ’s Commandos” commissioned to special service in the Tribulation.
2. The 144,000 = the Church Militant; heavenly multitude = Church Triumphant.
3. Earthly and heavenly perspectives on the same group.

Whatever their identity, ch. 7 gives the answer to the terrifying question of 6:17, “Who can stand?”

1. Those on earth sealed with God’s seal withstand his wrath.
2. The martyrs in heaven stand in the presence of God.

III. PRAYER HEARD IN HEAVEN

When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

²And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.

³Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. ⁴The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand. ⁵Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

(Rev 8:1-5, NIV)

The Apocalypse is a fusion of vision and prayer. When the seventh seal is opened, there is silence in heaven for about half an hour. A climax has been reached. The silence prepares the imagination to receive an incredible truth. While conflicts raged between good and evil, prayers went up from devout bands of first century Christians all over the Roman empire. Massive engines of persecution and scorn were ranged against them. They had neither weapons nor votes. They had little money and no prestige. Why didn't they have mental breakdowns? Why didn't they cut and run? They prayed.

It was in order to hear those prayers that there was silence in heaven. Out of the silence, action developed: an angel came before the altar of God with a censer. He mixed the prayers of the Christians with incense (which cleansed them from impurities) and combined them with fire (God's spirit) from the altar. Then he put it all in the censer and threw it over heaven's ramparts. The censer, plummeting through the air, landed on earth. On impact there were "peals of thunder, voices, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake" (Rev. 8:5). The prayers which had ascended, unremarked by the journalists of the day, returned with immense force—in George Herbert's phrase, as "reversed thunder." Prayer reenters history with incalculable effects. Our earth is shaken daily by it.

(Eugene Peterson, *Reversed Thunder*, 87-88).

Prayer

Prayer the Church's banquet, Angel's age,
 God's breath in man returning to his birth,
 The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,
 The Christian plummet sounding heav'n and earth;
 Engine against th' Almighty, sinners' tower,
 Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear,
 The six-days world-transposing in an hour,
 A kind of tune, which all things hear and fear;
 Softness, and peace, and joy, and love, and bliss,
 Exalted Manna, gladness of the best,
 Heaven in ordinary, man well dressed,
 The milky way, the bird of Paradise,
 Church-bells beyond the stars heard, the soul's blood,
 The land of spices; something understood.

George Herbert, 1593-1633 (*The Complete English Poems*, Penguin Classics, 45-46).

5. THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

Revelation 8–11

A. CHRONOLOGICAL ARRANGEMENT

The Seven Trumpets do not follow chronologically after the Seven Seals, but tell the same story using alternative images.

B. TRUMPETS IN THE OT

1. Seven priests with trumpets led ark in march around Jericho (Josh 6:4).
2. Trumpets blown at all liturgical feasts, on first of each month, at daily sacrifice (Num 10:1-10); esp. 1st Tishri (in Rabbinic times this came to be Rosh Hashana, civil New Year), start of the High Holy Days climaxing in Yom Kippur on 10th Tishri. Blast of *shofar* on Day of Atonement in 50th year proclaimed Jubilee Year (*Yôbbēl* = trumpet) (Lev 25:10-15).
3. Trumpet blast proclaimed coronation of Solomon (1 Kgs 1:34, 39); Jehu (2 Kgs 9:13). Represented God's kingship (Ps 47:5; 98:6; Zech 9:14).
4. Trumpet blast is alarm call, warning sinful nation of God's impending judgment, and calling her to repentance (Jer 4:5; 6:1, 17; Ezek 33:3-6; Isa 58:1; Joel 2:1, 15).

C. TRUMPETS 1–6 (8:6–9:21)

1. Trumpets 1–4

Trumpets 1-4 are a set, just as Seals 1-4 are a set.

OT models:

1. Plagues of Egypt: Plagues 7 (hail), 1 (Nile turned to blood), 9 (sun darkened) in Egypt. These plagues in Egypt were a challenge to Pharaoh to let God's people go; they presaged God's deliverance of his people from Egypt. So, the trumpets are a challenge to Rome; they presage a new and greater deliverance.
2. Other OT motifs:
 - a) Hail
 - b) Blazing mountain fallen into sea: Jer 51:25, 42.
 - c) Star Wormwood fallen from heaven: Isa 14:12-20.
 - d) Heavenly lights darkened: Joel 2:30-31.

2. Trumpets 5–6

Intensified judgments, identified as Woes 1 & 2

Fallen star given key to Abyss to release evil forces against those who do not have seal of God.

Any power which fallen star and locusts wield is given them by God.

Locusts based on Joel 1–2, where they were God's army of judgment against Israel.

King over locusts is angel of Abyss, Abaddon (Heb. = Destruction), or Appolyon (Gk. = Destruction),

Sixth Trumpet unleashes invasion from beyond Euphrates: from the East (Roman view), from the North (Israelite view).

Purpose: Trumpets 1–6 are OT-style call to repentance, but unsuccessful (9:20-21).

D. INTERLUDE (10:1–11:14)

Trumpets 1-6 have proclaimed nothing that is not out of the OT. The interlude of 10:1–11:13 introduces NT theology—the martyrdom of the faithful witnesses.

Seven Thunders: presumably would have brought destruction to half the earth, sea, sky. But sealed because time for incremental judgment (the delay) is over.

3-1/2 years = 1260 days = 42 months: period of persecution seen by Daniel. At John's time of writing this had already commenced.

E. THE SEVENTH TRUMPET (11:15-19)

Trumpets 1-6 were to allow time for repentance. Trumpet 7 proclaims another message:

1. the heavenly choir proclaims God as king (11:15).
2. worship in heaven by the twenty-four elders (11:16).
3. the ark is seen in God's temple in heaven (11:19). In OT, the ark was center-stage at overthrow of Jericho; in Rev it is center-stage at overthrow of Babylon. Jericho blocked Israel's entrance into Promised Land; Babylon blocks saints entrance into New Jerusalem; both must be destroyed (Caird, 108).

6. WAR: THE DRAGON AND THE BEASTS

Revelation 12–14

In the interlude between the seventh trumpet and the seven bowls we are finally given an explanation for the tribulation of the saints.

I. THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON

A. THE WOMAN

Her son's rule of all nations with an iron scepter (12:5, quoting Ps 2:9) identifies the woman as the personification of God's people.

B. THE DRAGON

1. Names & Titles

1. **Dragon** (δράκων, *drakōn*): 13x — “the dragon” 12:4, 7, 7, 13, 16, 17; 13:2, 4, 11; 16:13; 20:2; “the great dragon” 12:9; “a great red dragon” 12:3.
LXX translation of לְוִיָּאֵת Leviathan (Job 41:1 [MT 40:25, LXX 40:20]; Ps 74:14 [LXX 73:14]; Isa 27:1).

Most ANE cultures believed that opposing forces of good and evil were fighting it out for control of the universe. Biblical scholars call this the Combat Myth (*Chaoskampf*). The evil personnel of this myth show up in the OT under various names: Yam (יָם *yām*, Sea), Rahab (רָהַב Isa 51:9), sea monster (תַּנִּינִי *tannîn*, Isa 27:1; 51:9; pl. תַּנִּינִימ *tannînim*, Gen 1:21), Leviathan (לְוִיָּאֵת), serpent (נָחַשׁ *nāḥāš*, Isa 27:1). But the OT authors do not use these myths blindly; they rob them of power, leaving “broken myths” (Brevard Childs)¹ or “disarmed myths” (Helmut Thielecke).²

old mythological motifs were not slavishly borrowed; there is no question of uncreative imitation. Sometimes, in fact, these motifs seem to have been deliberately used in order to empty them of their polytheistic content and to fill them with totally new meaning, refined, dynamic and vibrant. At other times, they have been torn out of their life context to become mere literary devices, static and conventionalized. In either case, it is in this sphere that the uniqueness of biblical revelation becomes apparent. The Hebrew cosmology represents a revolutionary break with the contemporary world, a parting of the spiritual ways that involved the undermining of the entire prevailing mythological world-view.³

It is amazing to see how sharply little Israel demarcated herself from an apparently overpowering environment of cosmological and theogonic myths.⁴

2. **Serpent** (ὄφις, *ophis*): “the serpent” (12:14, 15); “the ancient serpent” (12:9; 20:2).
3. **Devil** (Διάβολος, *diabolos*) (2:10; 12:9, 10; 20:2, 10), lit. “slanderer.”
4. **Satan** (Σατανᾶς, *Satanas*) (2:9, 13, 13, 24; 3:9; 12:9; 20:2, 7). Heb. שָׂטָן *šāṭān*, “accuser”; LXX διάβολος (Job 1, 2; Zech 3: 1-2).

1. Brevard S. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament* (London: SCM & Naperville, Ill.: Allenson, 1960) 48, 70-71.
2. Helmut Thielecke, *Evangelical Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) 1:84.
3. Nahum Sarna, *Understanding Genesis* (New York: Schocken, 1966) xvii-xviii.
4. Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis*, OTL (Philadelphia, Westminster, 1961) 49.

C. THE DRAGON WAGES WAR

1. Against the child

The dragon first seeks to devour the child (12:4), who is Christ. But the child is snatched up to heaven, frustrating Satan's efforts.

2. Against Michael and his angels

In the "war in heaven," Michael (the angel over Israel) and his angels defeat the dragon and his angels (12:7-9). They are thrown from heaven to earth, again frustrating Satan's efforts. This expulsion elicits a song of rejoicing.

3. Against the woman

The woman is a symbol for God's people. Prior to the son's birth this was Israel; following his ascension it is the Church. It is not that the Church has replaced Israel, but that the membership of the God's people has been transformed from being physical Israel to being Jew and Gentile as one spiritual family in Christ.

The woman is snatched away to the desert, where she is preserved, frustrating Satan's efforts.

4. Against the rest of woman's offspring

The only ones left to make war against are the remaining offspring of the women, "those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus" (12:17), i.e. the faithful saints. God allows this warfare to proceed.

II. THE TWO BEASTS

To help him wage war against the rest of the woman's offspring, the dragon summons two beasts.

A. THE BEAST FROM THE SEA

aka "the beast"

- ten horns, seven heads, ten crowns (13:1; 17:3) = Rome; on each head a blasphemous name: divine titles claimed by emperors.
- composite of leopard, bear, lion (13:2): composite of four beasts of Dan 7:3-7 (winged lion = Babylon, bear = Medo-Persia, leopard = Greece, terrifying beast = Seleucid Empire). Composite of all former Satanic tyrannical human kingdoms.
- Recovered from a fatal wound to one head (13:3, cf. "once was, now is not, and will come" 17:8): Nero (r. 54-68), under whose rule Roman Empire degenerated into near chaos; after his suicide, Roman Empire almost fell apart with competing generals (Galba, Otho, Vitellius) laying claim to throne in quick succession. Recovery has double referent:
- Vespasian: a fourth general restored stability, and established a new dynasty (Flavian line: Vespasian, Titus, Domitian); the Roman Empire recovered.
- *Nero redivivus*: widespread belief that Nero was secretly still alive in the east, and would return at head of a Parthian army.

1. The number of the beast

Thrice short of perfection. Perhaps more particularly, Nero: Heb. קסר נרון *nrwn qsr* = 666 (50+200+6+50; 100+60+200); var. קר נרון *nrw qsr* = 616 (MSS var.).

Counterfeit of Jesus, who is thirs one more than perfection: Ἰησους *Iēsous* = 888.

The beast receives the worship of humanity.

6. WAR: THE DRAGON AND THE BEASTS

B. THE BEAST FROM THE LAND

aka “the false prophet” (16:13; 19:20; 20:10)

Role: to act on behalf of the beast, and to lead the world to worship the beast. In John’s time this was the provincial administration of Asia that orchestrated the worship of Rome and its Caesar, “the propaganda machine of the imperial cult.”⁵

The triumvirate of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet are a Satanic parody of the Trinity:

1. Dragon usurps God the Father.
2. Beast usurps Christ, being enthroned by the dragon, and receiving worship of humanity.
3. False prophet usurps Holy Spirit, pointing men to worship the beast.

C. WAR!

The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet wage war against God’s people.

1. How long?

1. 3-1/2 years (a time, times, and half a time, 12:14).
2. 1260 days (12:6) [= 42 months of 30 days]
3. 42 months (13:5) [= 3-1/2 years]

This is the symbolic length of opposition by the dragon and beast to God and his people. It is of limited duration: only half of a full period of time (7 years).

2. Who conquers whom?

Saints conquer the dragon by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony (12:11). But this victory prompts Satan to delegate authority to the beast, who wages war against the saints and conquers them (13:7). Many will be killed, but the saints are called to endure (13:10-11).

On earth it seems that all the saints are being killed, that the beast is victorious.

But the counterpart to the visions of the dragon and the beasts (ch. 12-13) is the vision of the Lamb and His army (14:1-5).

III. THE LAMB AND JUDGMENT

A. THE LAMB AND HIS ARMY (14:1-5)

John sees in heaven a huge army of 144,000, prepared for Holy War. They fight not with the sword but with faithful endurance to the point of death. In so doing they are victorious over the beast (15:2).

B. PRONOUNCEMENTS OF JUDGMENT (14:6-13)

C. JUDGMENT (14:14-20)

5. Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 89.

7. THE SEVEN BOWLS

Revelation 15–16

John sees the third and final of three great signs in heaven: the Queen of heaven (12:1), the dragon (12:3), seven angels with the seven last plagues (15:1). Before the bowls are poured out, we are shown two scenes in heaven that set the bowls in context.

A. THE NEW SONG (15:2-4)

From an earthly perspective, the beast conquered the saints (13:7), but from a heavenly perspective, the saints conquered the beast (15:2). The song sung in heaven—the new song (5:9; 14:3)—is now seen to be the Song of Moses (Exodus 15, cf. Deut 32), commemorating the exodus of Israel from bondage in Egypt, and the destruction of Pharaoh. The Song of Moses has become the Song of the Lamb. This song that the saints sing celebrates not their own victory, but God’s holiness and righteous deeds.

B. THE GLORY FILLS THE TEMPLE (15:5-8)

From the heavenly temple come 7 angels, dressed as priests. They are given golden bowls, in which the incense representing the prayers of the saints (5:8) has been replaced by the fury of God’s judgment. The cries of the saints (6:10; 8:3-4) are about to be answered.

The climax to the building of the Tabernacle and the Temple was the entrance of the Shekinah cloud, the Lord’s glory:

³⁴Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting (אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד), and the glory of the LORD (כְּבוֹד יְהוָה) filled the tabernacle (הַמִּשְׁכָּן). ³⁵Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. (Exod 40:34-35, NIV).

¹⁰When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place (הַקֹּדֶשׁ), the cloud filled the temple of the LORD (בֵּית יְהוָה).

¹¹And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled his temple. (1 Kgs 8:10-11).

¹³The trumpeters and singers joined in unison, as with one voice, to give praise and thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, they raised their voices in praise to the LORD and sang: “He is good; his love endures for ever.” Then the temple of the LORD was filled with a cloud, ¹⁴and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the temple of God. (2 Chr 5:13-14).

C. BOWLS 1–4 (16:2-9)

Bowls 1-4 repeat Trumpets 1-4:

1. Trumpet 1 and Bowl 1 affect the earth.
2. Trumpet 2 and Bowl 2 affect the sea.
3. Trumpet 3 and Bowl 3 affect the rivers and the springs of waters.
4. Trumpet 4 and Bowl 4 affect the sun.

But the destruction is intensified: the Trumpets affected only a third, but the Bowls affect all. The trumpets were warnings to persuade people to repent; the Bowls are judgments, for the time for repentance is over.

Like the Trumpets, Bowls 1-4 recall the Plagues with which God struck the Egyptians:

1. Bowl 1: earth turned to boils, cf. Plague 6 (Exod 9:8-12).
2. Bowl 2: sea turned to blood, cf. Plague 1 (Exod 7:14-24).
3. Bowl 3: fresh water turned to blood, cf. Plague 1.

4. Bowl 4: sun burns men. Opposite of Plague 9 (Exod 10:21-29) and Trumpet 4.

After the Third Bowl, the angel of the waters (cf. the angels) breaks in to proclaim the justice of God’s judgment. In a parody of the question, “Who is worthy?” (5:2), he proclaims that those who killed the martyrs are worthy (16:6) of God’s judgment: because they poured out blood, they must drink blood. The altar, which has sheltered the martyrs’ blood (6:9) and received their prayers (8:3), agrees.

D. BOWLS 5–7 (16:10-21)

1. Bowl 5: Beast’s Kingdom in Turmoil

God effortlessly darkens the beast’s throne, and engulfs his kingdom in darkness, cf. Fifth Trumpet.

2. Bowl 6: The Eschatological Battle

The Sixth Bowl develops the theme of the Sixth Trumpet:

- Trumpet 6 released the four angels bound at the great river Euphrates (9:13-21), so that an army of two myriad myriad horsemen might invade and kill a third of mankind.
- Bowl 6 dries up the Euphrates, so that the kings of the east (presumably heading this invading army) might cross over.

The theme of both the Sixth Trumpet and the Sixth Bowl is the eschatological battle, “the battle of the great day of God Almighty” (16:14). This battle is described in 19:11-20:10.

In the OT this battle was between Israel/Judah and her enemies (e.g., Gog–Magog, Ezek 38–39); in Revelation it is the battle between Parthia and Rome. In either case, it is the battle that marks the end of this age, the battle in which God puts all things right.

The Euphrates marked the boundary between Israel/Judah and her enemies, Assyria and Babylon; and it marked the boundary between Rome and its enemy, Parthia. Israel/Judah saw her enemies coming from the north; Rome saw its enemies coming from the east. These are the same direction: from beyond the Euphrates.

The three frog-like evil spirits (echoes of the second plague), coming from the dragon (Satan), the beast (imperial Rome), and the false prophet (imperial propaganda system), gather the armies to Armageddon, הַר־מֶגִּידוֹ *Har-Mēgiddō*, “the hill of Megiddo.” Megiddo guarded the narrow ravine through which passed the Via Maris, “The Way of the Sea,” between Galilee and the Mediterranean, between Mesopotamia and Egypt. It was a very strategic location at which several important battles were fought (Judg 5:19; 2 Kgs 9:27; 23:29; 2 Chr 35:22-25).

3. Bowl 7: The Eschatological Earthquake

Between the Sixth and Seventh of the series of Seals and Trumpets there was an interlude to set the Seventh event in context. There is no need of an interlude between the Sixth and Seventh Bowls, because the end is here: ΓΈΓΟΝΕΝ “It is done!” (16:17).

Each series of seven has ended with a description of the terrifying phenomena associated with the theophany of God (Exod 19:16-19; Rev 4:5):

Exod 19:16-19 ¹⁶On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. ¹⁷Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently, ¹⁹and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him.

Rev 4:5 καὶ ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου ἐκπορεύονται ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταί. *And from the throne went forth lightning and sounds and thunder.*

7th Seal καὶ ἐγένοντο βρονταὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ ἀστραπαὶ καὶ σεισμός.

7. THE SEVEN BOWLS

- And there was thunder and lightning and an earthquake (8:5).*
- 7th Trumpet καὶ ἐγένοντο ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταὶ καὶ σεισμός καὶ χάλαζα μεγάλη.
And there was lightning and sounds and thunder and an earthquake and great hail (11:19).
- 7th Bowl καὶ ἐγένοντο ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταὶ καὶ σεισμός ἐγένετο μέγας, οἷος οὐκ ἐγένετο ἀφ' οὗ ἄνθρωπος ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς τηλικούτος σεισμός οὕτω μέγας.
And there was lightning and sounds and thunder and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came upon the earth, so great was the earthquake (16:18).

The 7th Bowl precipitates the great eschatological earthquake (cf. Ezek 38:18-19; Hag 2:6, 7; Heb 12:18-27):

The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found. From the sky huge hailstones of about a hundred pounds each fell upon men... (16:19-21).

This earthquake brings the destruction of the great city, Babylon. The Fall of Babylon will be described more fully in the next section (17:1–19:10). It must be destroyed, to make way for the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem (21:9–22:9).

None of the bowls produces repentance (16:9, 11, 21), yet the new song offers the prospect of universal worship of God (15:4).

8. THE BABYLON APPENDIX

Revelation 17:1–19:10

I. LITERARY STRUCTURE

Two literary features mark this as a new literary unit:

A. CHANGE OF LOCATION

Chapters 4–16 have been under the rubric of 4:2—“immediately I was in the spirit (ἐν πνεύματι).” In Chapter 17, John is carried away “in the spirit” into the desert (17:3).

B. INTERMEDIARY ANGEL

The interaction between John and the intermediary angel—“one of the angels who had the seven bowls”—produces a clear parallel between the Babylon Appendix (17:1–19:10) and the Jerusalem Appendix (21:9–22:9).

Babylon Appendix

17 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I shall show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, ²with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality.”

³And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.

19 ¹⁰And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said to me, “Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

Jerusalem Appendix

21 ⁹And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

¹⁰And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

22 ⁸And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹And he said to me, “Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book; worship God.”

This literary structure draws a sharp contrast between the character and fate of the two cities: Babylon and New Jerusalem.

Babylon

the great city
prostitute
seated on waters/beast
dressed in luxury
orgy

New Jerusalem

the holy city
bride
descends from heaven
dressed in purity
wedding

Structure of the Babylon Appendix:

1. Invitation to witness judgment upon the Prostitute (17:1-2)
2. Vision and interpretation of the Great Prostitute and the Beast (17:3-18)
3. Judgment: the fall of Babylon (18)
4. Response in heaven to execution of judgment (19:1-8)
5. Epilogue (19:9-10)

II. THE PROSTITUTE AND THE BEAST (17:3-18)

John sees a woman sitting on a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns. The angel tells John that he will explain the mystery of the woman and of the beast (17:7).

A. THE VISION (17:3-6)

1. Vision of the Beast

- blasphemous names (cf 13:1): the blasphemous titles claimed by the emperors:
 - revered one (Lat. *Augustus*, Gk *Sebastos*)
 - divine (Lat. *divus*, Gk *theios*)
 - savior (Gk *soter*)
 - lord (Lat. *dominus*, Gk *kurios*)
 - seven heads and ten horns (cf 13:1)

2. Babylon the Great Prostitute

- the great prostitute: based based on OT symbolism of God’s taking his covenant people in marriage, and his equation of idolatry with adultery.
- sits (enthroned) on many waters: Cf. Babylon described as “you who live by many waters” (Jer 51:13). The Euphrates flowed through Babylon, the city was surrounded by a canal, and canals criss-crossed the surrounding countryside. On a coin (Fig. 1) Rome is depicted beside the Tiber river god. These many waters are interpreted as “peoples, multitudes, nations and languages” (17:15).
- sits (enthroned) on the beast: the Roman imperial system.
- dressed in purple and scarlet, etc.: colors of royalty.
- holds a golden cup filled with her abominations: the “kings of the earth” and the “inhabitants of the earth” get drunk on this (cf. 18:3,9).
- name on forehead: Babylon the Great. Since Genesis 11, Babylon has been symbolic of the city that lives in autonomy from God.
- drunk with the blood of the faithful martyrs.

B. THE INTERPRETATION (17:7-18)

1. Identity of the Beast (17:8-17)

a) The one who was, is not, and will come

Three times the beast is identified in a similar manner:

- “he was and is not and is about to rise from the Abyss” ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν καὶ μέλλει ἀναβαίνειν ἐκ τῆς ἀβύσσου (17:8).
- “he was and is not and will be present” ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν καὶ παρέσται (17:8).
- “he was and is not” ὃ ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν (17:11).

This is a parody (counterfeit) of the divine name:

- “the one who is and who was and who comes” ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος (1:4, 8; 4:8)
- “the one who is and who was” ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν (11:17; 16:5).

This is probably a reference to *Nero redivivus*, Nero returned to life (see comments below). This could mean one of three things:

- Nero literally returning at the head of a Parthian army to take revenge on Rome.
- The Roman Empire recovering under the Flavian dynasty after the chaos of the “year of four emperors” (68-69 AD) following Nero’s suicide.
- Domitian restoring Nero’s tyrannical rule.

b) Seven heads

The seven heads of the beast represent seven hills (17:9), an obvious reference to Rome.

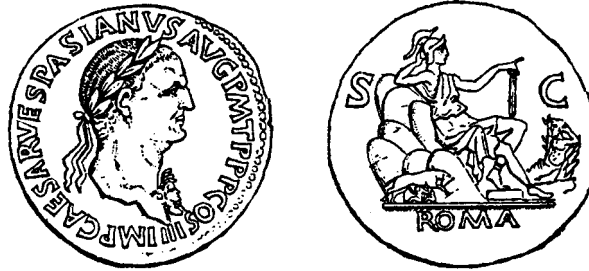


Figure 8-1: A Roman coin minted in the Roman province of Asia, AD 71

The seven heads also represent “seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while” (17:10). The seven-headed beast is himself an eighth: “And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction.” (17:11). It seems most likely that this is somehow a reference to the Roman emperors, but which one?

Table 8-1: The Twelve Caesars

		A	B	C	D	E
Julius Caesar	–44 BC	1	1	-	-	1
Augustus	31 BC–AD 14	2	2	1	1	2
Tiberius	14–37	3	3	2	2	-
Gaius (Caligula)	37–41	4	4	3	3	-
Claudius	41–54	5	5	4	4	3
Nero	54–68	6	6	5	5	-
Galba	68–69	7	-	6	-	-
Otho	69	8	-	7	-	-
Vitellius	69	-	-	8	-	-
Vespasian	69–79	-	7	-	6	4
Titus	79–81	-	8	-	7	5
Domitian	81–96	-	-	-	8	6
[Nero <i>redivivus</i>]		-	-	-	-	7

- A: traditional enumeration of the emperors.
- B: omitting the 3 short-lived emperors of 68-69.
- C: starting with Augustus, the first to be called emperor (Julius Caesar was dictator).
- D: starting with Augustus and omitting the three short-lived emperors of 68-69.
- E: emperors deified by Roman senate, followed by Domitian who claimed divinity while alive, and mythical Nero revived.

There has been no successful identification of the five, the sixth, the seventh and the eighth from this list. But John’s imagery is too fluid to be tied to one individual. Furthermore, it is highly likely that 7 is a symbolic number, representing the fullness of the Roman imperial government.

c) Ten horns

The beast is also specifically Nero, based on the popular myth of *Nero redivivus* (Nero revived): Nero who committed suicide in AD 68, was popularly believed to be in hiding in Parthia, whence he would lead a great army (headed by the ten horns/kings) which would destroy Rome (17:16).

Like the seven heads, ten is also most likely a symbolic number, representing the totality of earthly counterfeit rule.

The beast and the kings wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb easily overcomes them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings. So they turn against Babylon and wage war on her. But even in this, it is God who is at work, using pagan nations and kings as his instruments of judgment, just as in the OT.

2. Identity of the Woman (17:18)

III. THE FALL OF BABYLON (18:1-24)

Chapter 18 is a taunt song over the Fall of Babylon the Great, reminiscent of the laments of the OT over Babylon (Isa 21:9; Jer 51:8) and Tyre (Ezek 26–27). The great city (18:2, 9, 15, 19, 21) is brought to ruin because of her pride (18:7) and her role in the death of the saints (18:24).

The chapter is structured as three speeches by three angels: 1-3, 4-20, 21-24.

Within the second speech, three separate dirges or woes are pronounced by those who profited from Babylon:

1. the kings of the earth (18:9-10)
2. the merchants of the earth (18:11-17a)
3. the merchant marine (18:17b-19)

Each party weeps and mourns, stands far off, laments, “Woe, woe, O great city,” and observes that doom required but “one hour.”

In contrast, heaven and all God’s people are called to rejoice (18:20). Whereas heaven is filled with song, there is silence in Babylon.

IV. THE RESPONSE IN HEAVEN (19:1-8)

In response to the fall of Babylon, the Hallelujah chorus is sung first in heaven (19:1-4) then on earth (19:5-8). The saints are prepared for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

V. EPILOGUE: JOHN’S RESPONSE (19:9-10)

John is so overwhelmed by the sequence of visions (17:3-19:8) that he falls down at the feet of the interpreting angel to worship him. The angel’s response serves as a motif for the whole book: Worship God.

9. THE FINAL INTERLUDE

Revelation 19:11–21:8

A series of unnumbered visions (some identify seven, each introduced by καὶ εἶδον “And I saw” [19:11, 17, 19; 20:1, 4, 11; 21:1] but this ignores 20:12).

Must read these not as consecutive history, but as a literary symphony.

Babylon has fallen (The Babylon Appendix, 17:1–19:10), but the dragon and the two beasts are still loose. They must be banished before the new Jerusalem is consummated (The Jerusalem Appendix, 21:9–22:9).

I. MESSIANIC WARRIOR DEFEATS THE BEAST (19:11-21)

A. THE RIDER ON THE WHITE HORSE (19:11-16)

The rider, who can only be Christ, has four names:

1. *Faithful and True* (11). Jesus is the faithful and true witness (1:5; 3:14). Following in his footsteps, his people are to be faithful and true witnesses.
2. *a name...that no one but he himself knows* (12).
3. *The Word of God* (13).
 - a) The Revelation contains the testimony of what John saw, viz, “the word of God and the testimony of Jesus” (1:3)
 - b) John is in exile on Patmos “because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus” (1:9)
 - c) the faithful who witness to “the word of God and the testimony of Jesus” die (6:9; 20:4).
 - d) the “word of God” is Jesus himself; the “testimony of Jesus” is the witness that Jesus is Lord.
4. *King of kings and Lord of lords* (16; cf. 17:14; this is a Hebrew way of saying Most High King and Most High Lord). Jesus, not Caesar, is Lord.

These are worthy names, unlike the blasphemous names of the beast (13:1; 17:3).

He leads his heavenly armies, the 144,000 martyred saints (7:4-8; 14:1-5; 17:14).

As righteous “judge” he will both destroy the enemy and deliver his people, cf. Isa 63:1-6. These are the twin aspects of the day of the Lord, the day of his wrath.

His robe is stained red from the blood of his enemies; his troops’ robes are cleansed white by his blood.

B. THE GREAT SUPPER OF GOD (19:17-18)

An angel summons the birds of prey to God’s great supper, a parody of the Lamb’s marriage supper, and an indication that the last battle is at hand, cf. Ezek 39:4, 17-20.

C. THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET THROWN INTO THE LAKE (19:19-21)

The beast (beast from the sea, 13:1), the kings of the earth, and their troops gather for the eschatological battle (cf. 16:14,16; 17:14; 20:8; Ezek 38:14-16; Zech 12:1-9).

The beast and the false prophet (beast from the land, 13:11) are thrown into the lake of fire, where they will soon be joined by the dragon (20:10), death and Hades (20:14), those not written in the book of life (20:15), and all the ungodly (21:8). The lake of fire is identified as the second death (20:14; 21:8).

The armies of the beast and the false prophet are killed by the Rider’s sword, the Word of God.

II. SATAN DEFEATED (20:1-10)

A. THE DRAGON BOUND AND THROWN INTO THE ABYSS (20:1-3)

There phrase χίλια ἔτη “a thousand years” (20:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7) occurs only here in NT. Nevertheless, there has been tremendous speculation about the timing and nature of the millennium (Lat. “thousand years”).

During the thousand years:

- a) Satan is bound (20:2)
- b) Satan can no longer deceive the nations.
- c) the martyred saints come to life and reign with Christ (20:4) = the first resurrection

After the thousand years:

- a) Satan is released for a little while to deceive the nations (20:3, 7ff), but he is destroyed
- b) the rest of the dead come back to life (20:5)

When does this binding of Satan occur?

- Jesus says he bound the strong man at his incarnation (Matt 12:29; Mark 3:27; Luke 11:21). He demonstrated this by delivering the demon-possessed, etc. Cf. the fall of Satan (Luke 10:18; John 20:12-26)
- Pentecost showed that Satan could no longer deceive the nations; the heavenly choir contains people from every tribe, nation, tongue, people (Rev 5:9; 7:9).
- 1000 years = 3-1/2 times = 42 months = 1260 days.

B. REIGN OF THE SAINTS (20:4-6)

Who sits on the thrones? The saints who have been killed for being faithful (holding the testimony of Jesus and the word of God; refusing to worship the beast or his image; not bearing the mark of the beast).

C. FINAL BATTLE (20:7-10)

Satan released to gather the nations for the final showdown (cf. 16:14; 17:14; 19:19). John uses Ezekiel's imagery of "Gog of the land of Magog" (Ezek 38:2) to represent the immense army which goes up to attack God's people. But God effortlessly overpowers them by sending down fire from heaven (cf. 1 Kgs 18:38; 2 Kgs 1:10, 12). Satan is thrown into the lake, joining the two beasts.

Excursus: The Millennium

D. DIFFERENT VIEWS OF THE MILLENNIUM

1. Historic Premillennialism

Premillennialism believes that Christ will return before (pre-) the millennial kingdom. The Early Church held such a view. In their day this was called chiliasm (Gk. χίλια = thousand); it is now called Historic Premillennialism, to distinguish it from the much more recent Dispensational Premillennialism (see below).

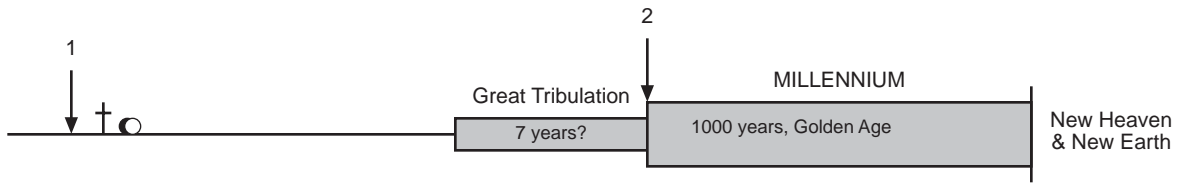
After the Great Tribulation, which may or may not last 7 years, Christ will return and usher in a millennial kingdom of 1000 years. Little is specified about this period other than that it will be a Golden Age of peace and prosperity. At the end of this period, Satan will rebel but be utterly and finally defeated. The judgment of unbelievers then follows, before the inauguration of the eternal state with the new heavens and the new earth.

2. Amillennialism

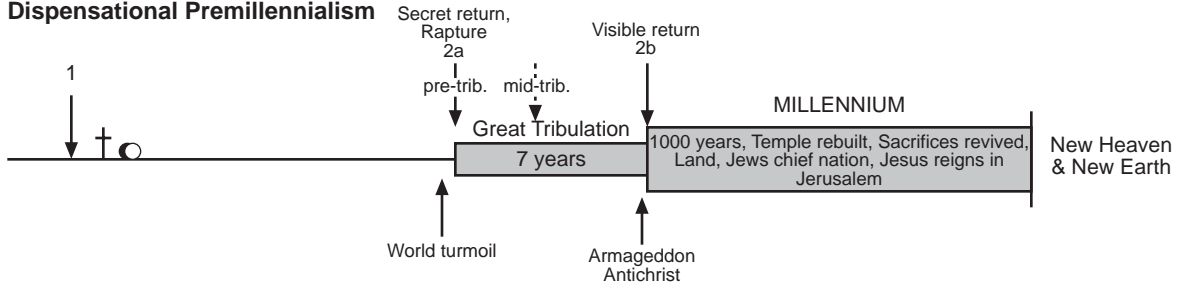
Augustine (354-430) rejected the literal interpretation of the thousand years held by the chiliasts. He argued that the reference to 1000 years was a symbolic reference to the entire Church Age. There is thus no need for a literal thousand-year period, hence the name amillennial (no millennium). Augustine's position was dominant for the next 1300 years. Amillennialism sees the return of Christ, resurrection of the dead and judgment occurring together at the end of this age, whereupon follows the new heavens and new earth. The "millennium" is the entire period from Christ's death and resurrection to his return, during which Satan is bound, Christ reigns on David's throne in heaven, and the dead saints are reigning with him. Amillennialists are vague on details of the future. Some see a period of tribulation and apostasy with an Antichrist before the return of Christ, and some see a mass conversion of the Jews before the end.

9. THE FINAL INTERLUDE

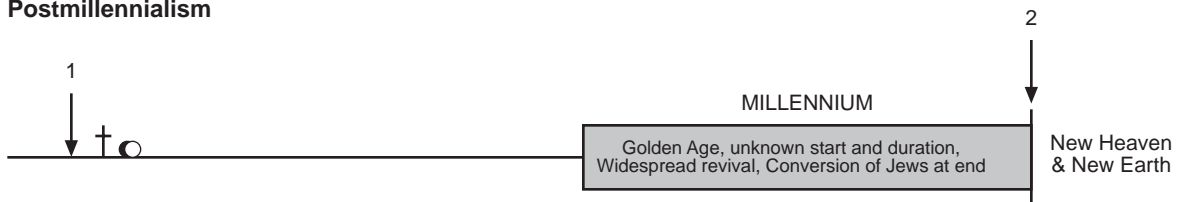
Historic Premillennialism



Dispensational Premillennialism



Postmillennialism



Amillennialism

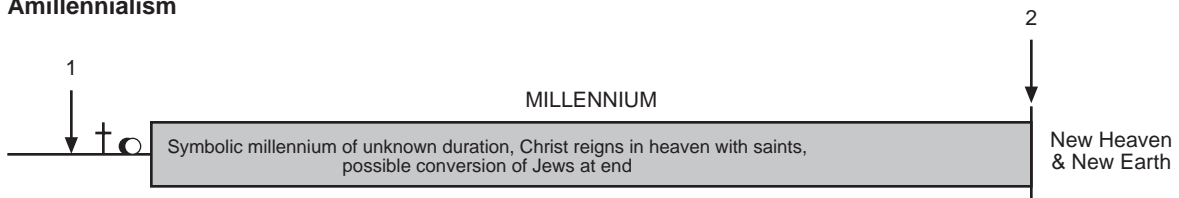


Figure 9-1: Different millennial timelines

3. Postmillennialism

This view believes that Christ will return after (post-) the millennium. It sees the Church, functioning as salt and light, progressively changing the world for the better as God's kingdom expands on earth. At some, perhaps imperceptible, moment, this kingdom has so expanded that it has become the millennial kingdom. This millennium, of indeterminate beginning and length, will be characterized by peace, prosperity and widespread revival. Christ's return at the end will herald the defeat of Satan, resurrection of the dead, judgment of all, and the new heavens and new earth.

This view became popular during the 19th Century. The 18th century Enlightenment gave people great confidence in mankind's ability to improve the world, a confidence that seemed to be borne out by the events of the 19th century. The modern missions movement, which started only in 1792, brought the gospel to the ends of the earth. Two world wars dealt a hard blow to postmillennialism, but there has been a recent revival of popularity in the form of Reconstructionism and Theonomy, which would like to make the USA into a theocratic country under the rule of God.

4. Dispensational Premillennialism

The newest of the four views, this was first proposed by the Irish pastor J.N. Darby (a founder of the Plymouth Brethren movement), and popularized by the Scofield Bible (1909).

After a period of world turmoil and the appearance of the Antichrist, Christ will secretly appear to remove the Church prior to the Great Tribulation (The Pre-Tribulation Rapture). A variant view has Christ removing the Church midway through the Tribulation (Mid-Tribulation Rapture). This doctrine of the Rapture is built on a single verse, 1 Thess 4:17. The Great Tribulation of 7 years will end in Armageddon. Christ will then return to usher in the Kingdom of God, during which he will reign from David's throne in Jerusalem, Israel will be converted and have world prominence, and sacrifices will be revived in a rebuilt temple. At the end of the millennium Satan will rebel but be defeated. After the judgment of unbelievers, the new heavens and the new earth will be created.

This school insists on a literalistic reading of Scripture (both OT prophecy and Revelation) in which predictions must be fulfilled exactly to the letter. Allegorical and symbolic interpretations ("spiritualizing") are ruled invalid. Interpreting Scripture literalistically, proponents of this school have developed numerous highly-complex timelines for the Last Days.

E. HERMENEUTICAL ISSUES

Behind these four viewpoints lie some important hermeneutical differences.

1. The validity of the NT in interpreting the OT

Probably the major hermeneutical issue is whether or not it is valid to use the NT to control our interpretation of the OT. The dispensationalist insists that the OT must be interpreted in its own light, from whence it is but a short step to insist upon a literalistic fulfillment of the letter of the prophecy. Non-dispensationalists use the NT to guide their interpretation of the OT. In the NT they see that the apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, applied the OT prophecies to their day in a wholly unexpected way, interpreting them with a new hermeneutic. Dispensationalists recognize this new hermeneutic, but explain it as applying only to the Church, and continue to insist upon a literal fulfillment of the OT prophecies to physical Israel.

2. Literalistic vs. Symbolic Interpretation

Dispensationalists frequently suggest that the commitment of non-dispensationalists to the infallibility of Scripture is suspect due to their non-literal interpretation of certain passages. Yet many non-dispensationalists are among the staunchest supporters of biblical inspiration and authority. Furthermore, no one applies a completely literal hermeneutic to Scripture: all are agreed that certain sayings are *obviously* figurative, *e.g.*, the "I am" statements of Jesus. It is therefore a question of where to draw the line between literal and symbolic interpretation.

Because of this difference in hermeneutic, a case can be made that the major divide between views is not between premillennial and non-premillennial positions, but between dispensational and non-dispensational positions. Although the dispensational and historic premillennial positions share the belief in a literal 1000-year millennium, the nature of this millennium is very different in the two views. The dispensationalist expects the literal fulfillment of OT prophecy, including a rebuilt temple, the restoration of sacrifice, a literal throne in Jerusalem, occupation of the land promised to Abraham, and Israel as chief of the world's nations. The historic position expects none of this, recognizing that these were all but shadows that have been replaced by NT realities; although the kingdom will be physical, it will be a symbolic fulfillment of OT prophecy.

Two features of Biblical prophecy should caution us against a strictly literalistic interpretation:

- *Progressive fulfillment.* This study in OT Redemptive History has shown that God's redemption of a world gone wrong has been unfolding progressively since Gen 3:15. Human recalcitrance has not prevented God moving his plans forward in a progressive manner in which he repeatedly interacts with mankind in a hitherto unexpected manner. For example, although Jesus came in fulfillment of the OT, he did so in a manner that defied all Messianic

expectation. It is only with hindsight that we can see that certain OT passages “clearly” predict Jesus. The prophets used the language of their day to deliver God’s word, but the fulfillment itself is necessarily a progression.

- *Apocalyptic literature.* The two Biblical books most used for developing millennial timelines are an unusual type of literature—*apocalyptic* (from ἀποκάλυψις, “revelation, disclosure”). Written at a time when God and His people seemed powerless before godless world powers (Babylon in Daniel’s day; Rome in John’s day), the apocalyptic writers saw world history differently. From a cosmic and eternal perspective they saw that these world empires would fall and that God’s Kingdom would be victorious. They used fantastic images which are not intended to be identified with specific historical events.

3. Israel and the Church

A third major area of difference is the nature of the Church: is it the “New Israel” or does Israel still have a place in redemptive history apart from the Church? Dispensationalism insists that Israel has a separate place within God’s purposes, and anticipate the literal fulfillment of OT prophecy to physical Israel. Many non-dispensationalists acknowledge the significance of the survival of the Jews, but believe their redemptive destiny is to be incorporated into the Church *in the same way* in which Gentiles are now being incorporated, namely through faith in Jesus Christ as God’s Redeemer. There is one people of God (OT and NT). In the OT membership of this people was primarily national: it was physical Israel. But in Christ, God has opened membership of his one people to include all nations.

While non-dispensationalists believe that the Church is the NT people of God, dispensationalism teaches that the Church is a temporary siding to God’s real purposes for the Jews. According to this view, Christ offered the kingdom to the Jews, but they rejected it. He accordingly adopted Plan B and gave the gospel to the gentiles, inaugurating the Church Age. Nonetheless, this Church Age remains Plan B, a “parenthesis” to God’s primary purposes for the Jews, which will be accomplished in the millennium.

Here again we see that the main eschatological divide is not between premillennial and non-premillennial views, but between dispensational and non-dispensational interpretations. The three non-dispensational positions agree on what has happened in redemptive history up to the present, disagreeing only on what lies ahead. Using a different hermeneutic, dispensationalism has a different opinion on what has happened in the past as well as a different opinion on what will happen in the future.

F. WORDS OF CAUTION

History has shown just how divisive an issue this has been. Several points of caution should help us avoid bitter controversy.

- There are valid historical reasons for the popularity of each view. Each view therefore needs to be understood within the milieu that gave rise to it.
- In each camp there are those who dearly love the Lord and in whom the Lord is clearly at work. These are our brethren whom we are to love.
- In each camp there are also those in whom there is little evidence of the Spirit’s activity. Among the dispensationalists are those who love endless debate about minutiae. Among the postmillennialists are “humanists” who believe in the continual upward progress of man with little place left for God. Among the amillennialists are those who reject a God who reveals himself in Scripture and who authenticates himself by predicting the future. We should not use these people as “straw men,” typical of their position, through whom we can then easily discredit the whole position.
- Evangelicals of all four views affirm certain fundamental eschatological truths in common: that Christ will indeed return, that there will be a judgment, that there will be an eternal state, and that there will be a new heaven and a new earth.
- Each viewpoint is not a narrow position, but a broad continuum of views. Consequently, someone near the edge of one position may be closer to someone in another camp than to people at the other end of his own millennial camp.
- The history of world redemption is progressive, i.e., whatever happens in the future must be a redemptive advance on what has happened until now.
- This progressive nature of revelation and redemption makes it difficult and dangerous to specify the precise manner of fulfillment of promise and prophecy. Redemptive history shows how frequently God has done a new thing and exploded the categories of man’s thinking. He did so with Jesus, and will surely do so again.

III. FINAL JUDGMENT (20:11-15)

This is the END:

- the old cosmos comes to an end (earth and sky flee) to make way for a new cosmos.
- Death and Hades release their dead for final judgment.
- Death & Hades are thrown into the Lake (cf. 1 Cor 15:26).

IV. THE NEW ORDER (21:1-8)

The old cosmos having fled, John now sees a new cosmos in which Christ makes all things new, declaring “It is done!” (cf. 16:17).

In this new cosmos seven things οὐκ ἔστιν ἔτι “are no longer”: sea (21:1); death, mourning, crying, pain (21:4); anything cursed (22:3); night (22:5).

God dwells with his people, fulfilling his basic covenant: I will be your God, you will be my people, and I will dwell with you.

The features introduced here will be developed in greater detail in the Jerusalem Appendix ((21:9–22:9).

10. THE JERUSALEM APPENDIX

Revelation 21:9–22:9

A. THE THREE WOMEN

Queen of Heaven (12:1-17) = Community of God's people (Israel/Church)

Babylon the Great Harlot (17:1–18:24), God-defying society

New Jerusalem, the bride of the Lamb (21:1–22:5).

The New Jerusalem is presented as the heavenly antithesis of Babylon:

Babylon Appendix

17 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I shall show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, ²with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality."

³And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.

19 ¹⁰And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Jerusalem Appendix

21⁹ And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

¹⁰And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

22 ⁸And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹And he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book; worship God."

Babylon

the great city
prostitute
seated on waters/beast
dressed in luxury
glitters with gold, precious stones, pearls
orgy

New Jerusalem

the holy city
bride
descends from heaven
dressed in purity
shines with the glory of God
wedding

The New Jerusalem is also the Queen of Heaven transformed:

Queen of Heaven

clothed with sun, standing on moon (12:1)
crown of 12 stars (12:1)
pregnant, crying out in pain (12:2)

New Jerusalem

no sun or moon
12 gates (tribes) + 12 foundations (apostles)
no more crying or pain (21:4); no more curse (22:3)

B. STRUCTURE

1. The angel shows John the city (21:10-14)
2. the angel measures the city (21:15-21)
3. John describes life in the city (21:22-27)
4. The angel shows John the river of the water of life (22:1-5)

C. THE SYMBOLIC UNIVERSE OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

The New Jerusalem consists of: city, wall, 12 gates, 12 foundations, river of the water of life, tree of life, throne of God & Lamb. It contains no temple, nor sun and moon.

These elements are symbolic, part of the “symbolic universe” of Biblical imagery; they form the climactic fulfillment of numerous strands of Biblical expectation.

1. The Glory of God

The Glory of God (ἡ δόξα τοῦ θεοῦ ἰδοῦν ἡ δόξα), which came to be known as the *Shekinah* glory (from *shakan*, to dwell), represents God’s very presence:

- appears in cloud in wilderness (Exod 16:7, 10)
- rests on Mt. Sinai (Exod 24:16, 17)
- fills tabernacle (Exod 40:34-35)
- witnesses Aaron’s commencement of priestly service (Lev 9:6, 23)
- appears at times of rebellion (Num 14:10, 21; 16:19, 42; 20:6)
- fills Temple (1 Kgs 8:10-11; 2 Chr 5:14; 7:1-3)
- Ezekiel sees the glory in heaven (Ezek 1:28; 3:12, 23)
- Ezekiel sees glory leave the Temple (Ezek 10:4, 18; 11:23)
- fills Ezekiel’s temple (Ezek 43:4, 5; 44:4)
- prophetic promises that glory of the Lord will again be seen (Isa 35:2; 40:5; 58:8; 60:1; Hab 2:14)
- Jesus “tabernacled” on earth, and his glory was seen (John 1:14)

Hitherto, the God’s glory has been so overwhelming as to impose a barrier between God and humans. But in the New Jerusalem, God’s glory will suffuse the whole city.

2. The Gates and Foundations

The framework of New Jerusalem contains the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles, the OT and NT people of God.

3. Dimensions

- cube: the Holy of Holies was a cube in both tabernacle (10 cubits) and the Temple (20 cubits, 1 Kgs 6:20). Implies perfection.
- 12,000 stadia per side: a symbolic number (12 x 1000), not to be translated into modern dimensions (e.g., “fifteen hundred miles” NASB). City is co-extensive with creation; i.e. holy space disappears because all is holy (as implied also by absence of temple).
- walls 144 cubits thick (not “72 yards” NASB): also symbolic = 12 x 12. Wall is necessary because in the ancient world a city is defined as a settlement with a wall. But in this wall the gates stand open.

4. Precious stones

Babylon glittered with gold, precious stones, and pearls (17:4; 18:16), but her adornment was the work of man (18:12). The new Jerusalem is a heavenly city.

- The city’s radiance is like a precious stone, specifically like jasper, clear as crystal (21:11).
- Her 12 foundations, inscribed with the names of the 12 apostles, adorned with “every” (=12) precious stone (21:14, 19-20)
- Her 12 gates, inscribed with the names of the 12 tribes, are 12 pearls (21:12, 21).
- The internal surface of her wall is jasper, and the city is of pure gold, like pure glass (21:18).

Precious stones in settings of gold are found in the OT:

- gold and onyx in Eden, specifically in the land of Havilah (Gen 2:11-12).
- Two onyx stones, mounted in gold filigree settings on shoulders of high priest’s ephod; names of 12 sons of Israel inscribed on stones, six on each, in order of birth; “memorial stones” זָכָרֹתֵי אֲבֹתָיִךְ (Exod 28:9-12; 39:6-7).

10. THE JERUSALEM APPENDIX

- High Priest's breastplate had 12 precious stones, mounted in gold filigree settings, in 4 rows of 3, one for each of the names of the sons of Israel (Exod 28:15-21; 39:8-14).
- King of Tyre, who was in Eden, the garden of God, was adorned with 12 (LXX; 9 in Heb.) precious stones, mounted in gold settings (Ezek 28:13).
- *O afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted, I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires. I will make your battlements of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and all your walls of precious stones.* (Isa 54:11-12, NIV).

Jasper seems to be the most precious of the precious stones (4:3; 21:18).

The jasper wall + gold city (21:18), and the pearl gates + gold street (21:21), culminate the OT symbolism of precious stones in gold settings.

5. Temple, sun, moon

The Temple signified holy space. In the OT, the Holy of Holies in the Temple was the apex of a hierarchy of holiness. The sun and moon were created not only to illuminate, but also to divide time into day and night, and to mark the festivals (Gen 1:14-19). They marked holy time from unholy time.

The absence of the Temple signifies the end of holy space; the absence of the sun and moon signify the end of holy time. In the new cosmos all space and time is holy.

6. River of the water of life

flowed from Eden (God's sanctuary) to fructify the four corners of the earth (Gen 2:10-14).

flowed from Ezekiel's temple to fructify the Dead Sea (Ezek 47)

flows from the believer (John 7:38)

7. Tree of life

Mankind has had no access to the tree of life since being expelled from Eden (Gen 3:24)

Trees lined the banks of the river flowing from Ezekiel's temple, serving for food and healing (Ezek 47:12).

Restored access to the tree of life implies that the curse is removed (22:3; Gen 3; Zech 14:11).

The presence of the river of life and the tree of life identify New Jerusalem as Paradise Regained.

D. ACTIVITY WITHIN THE NEW JERUSALEM

1. World pilgrimage to Zion

Because there is no night, there is no need to shut the gates of the city. The nations and the kings of the earth will bring their tribute into the city and lay it at the foot of the throne, the climax of the world pilgrimage to Zion (Isa 2:2-4; 60:3, 5, 11; Mic 4:1-3; Zech 8:20-23).

2. See and serve God

We were created to serve God (Gen 2:15); in both OT and NT, service = worship.

At last we will be able to see God, something hitherto impossible. Rendered holy, we are able to tolerate God's radiant presence, and will live forever with him. His dwelling place (heaven) and our dwelling place (earth) are combined.

E. CONCLUDING REMARKS

"I see," [Lucy] said at last, thoughtfully. "I see now. This garden is like the stable. It is far bigger inside than it was outside."

“Of course, Daughter of Eve,” said the Faun. “The further up and the further in you go, the bigger everything gets. The inside is larger than the outside.”

Lucy looked hard at the garden and saw that it was not really a garden but a whole world, with its own rivers and woods and seas and mountains. But they were not strange: she knew them all.

I see,” she said. “This is still Narnia, and more real and more beautiful than the Narnia down below, just as *it* was more real and more beautiful than the Narnia outside the stable door! I see...world within world, Narnia within Narnia...”

Yes,” said Mr Tumnus, “like an onion: except that as you go in and in, each circle is larger than the last.”

...

There *was* a real railway accident,” said Aslan softly. “Your father and mother and all of you are—as you used to call it in the Shadowlands—dead. The term is over: the holidays have begun. The dream is ended: this is the morning.”

And as he spoke He no longer looked to them like a lion; but the things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.¹

This is my Father’s world,
And to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres.
This is my Father’s world:
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas—
His hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father’s world,
The birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white,
Declare their Makers praise.
This is my Father’s world:
He shines in all that’s fair;
In the rustling grass, I hear Him pass,
He speaks to me everywhere.

This is my Father’s world,
O let me ne’er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the Ruler yet.
This is my Father’s world:
The battle is not done;
Jesus who died shall be satisfied,
And earth and heav’n be one.

Maltbie D. Babcock

1. C. S. Lewis, “Farewell to Shadowlands,” last chapter of *The Last Battle* (1956).