

Notes on the Book of Revelation (Apocalypse)
(two of two)

Chapter Thirteen

Vs. 1: And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems upon its horns and a blasphemous name upon its heads.

Another *beast* (therion) comes on the scene; cf. 12.3 for remarks on this word which connotes something wild. Chapter twelve concludes with the dragon standing at the seashore; perhaps he was awaiting the emergence of this beast from the sea.

This verse gives characteristics of the beast which resembles the dragon but here the order is reversed. The chief difference is that the sea-beast has a (singular) "*blasphemous* (blasphemia, noun) name" upon its (plural) seven heads. That is, one such name was written seven times. "Every sin and *blasphemy* against the Spirit will not be forgiven" [Mt 12.31]. Cf. 17.3 as well as Dan 7.5: "And behold, another *beast* (tinenyanah; cf. 12.3), a second one, like a bear." This bear-like beast was one of four which rose from the sea.

Vs. 2: And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.

Again, refer to Dan 7.4-6 where the four beasts represent four political powers: Babylon, the Medes, Persians and Greeks. In Revelation the singular beast has the characteristics of three animals which were equally like him in the sense of being therion (a *beast*): leopard, bear and lion. Traditionally this animal was representative of the Roman Empire which absorbed Daniel's four political powers.

The dragon conferred three governing powers to this beast which are opposite those of Jesus Christ: 1) *power* (dunamis): "He gave *power* to become children of God" [Jn 1.12]. 2) *throne* (thronos), already mentioned in Revelation plus: "When the Son of man comes in his glory...he will sit on his glorious *throne*" [Mt 25.31]. 3) "great *authority*" (exousia; cf. 12.10): "I do nothing on my own *authority*" [Jn 8.28].

Vs. 3: One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth followed the beast with wonder.

Hos for *seemed*: it indicates the appearance of a mortal wound which had been healed. The Greek text has a perfect passive participle for *mortal wound*, sphazo, which is in contrast to the Lamb in 5.6 which also uses this verb. Sphazo applies to killing by cutting the throat; the LXX uses this verb in Ex 12.6: "When the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall *kill* their lambs in the evening." Also note *wound* (wound) in reference to being healed.

The Greek text literally reads, "the whole *earth* (ge) wondered after the beast." Here the act of *wonder* (thaumazo) implies that people were so entranced by the *beast* (therion) that they looked at nothing else (cf. 17.8). Contrast this wonderment with that attributed to Jesus Christ: "And the men *marveled*, saying, 'What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him'" [Mt 8.27].

Vs. 4: Men worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

Worship (proskuneo) which here is opposite that attributed to God as in 4.9. With vs. 3 in mind, such adoration is similar to that wonder "after the beast." The reason for worship lies in the fact that the dragon imparted his *authority* or exousia to the beast and hence is deserving of the same respect. I.e., the dragon is superior to him and receives the same proskuneo.

The rhetorical question results from the "whole earth" being in wonder not only at the beast but his exousia.

Mention of *fighting* (polemeo) implies superiority, that is, no one can overcome the beast. “Repent then. If not, I will come to you soon and *war* against them with the sword of my mouth” [2.16]. Words addressed to the church at Pergamum against whom Jesus Christ will wage war unless they *repent* (metanoeo), a capacity the beast lacks.

Verses 5-7 describe a prime function of the beast which is to utter *blasphemy* (blasphemia). These curses are against God, his name and his *dwelling* (skene, literally, *tent*) which is equated with “those who *dwell* (skeno, literally, *make their tent*) in heaven.” In addition to such blasphemy directed towards heaven, the beast makes *war* (polemos) on the *saints* (hagios). Although such persons are not mentioned as dwelling in heaven, it is presumed they are on earth. Vss. 5 and 7 have the word *authority* (exousia); the latter specifies it as over various types of peoples. These verses also have four instances of verbs in the passive to indicate that a force larger than the beast is at work: “was given,” “was allowed,” “was allowed,” “was given.” It is interesting whether the beast was aware of his limited power by reason of this passive mode; perhaps it was due to the fury it has unleashed, knowing that time is limited.

Vs. 8: And all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain.

Katoikeo for *to dwell* in the sense of having settled down to make one’s home. “Then he (the unclean spirit) goes and brings with him seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter and *dwell* there” [Mt 12.45; also cf. Rev 2.13]. These dwellers will *worship* (proskuneo) the beast, the opposite form of veneration given by the elders in 5.14.

There is a direct correspondence between dwellers “*on* (epi, *upon*) the earth” and persons whose names were not written in the book of life (cf. 3.5). Note that the Greek text reads “the *name* (onoma, singular) of theirs” coupled with another verb in the passive, “written.” “Whoever has sinned against me, him will I blot out of my *book*” [Ex 23.23]. Both the Greek of Revelation and Hebrew of Exodus connote a scroll for *book* (biblion; cf. 5.1). The singular name belonging to the plural possessors of it had this onoma inscribed before the world’s *foundation* (katabole). “Even as he chose us in him before the *foundation* of the world” [Eph 1.4]. With the image of a scroll in mind, the singular name was written before the world’s foundation and was subsequently rolled up. Thus the “beatitude” pertaining to anyone who reads the Book of Revelation noted in 1.3 may be associated with the scroll’s unrolling.

In the verse at hand, this *biblion* belongs to the *Lamb* (arnion) who was *slain* (sphazo), literally, whose throat had been cut (cf. 5.6); this verb is also used in 13.3 with reference to the beast.

Vs. 9 is a brief exhortation to *listen* (akouo); the singular ear (cf. 2.7) is mentioned which may be paralleled with the singular name and singular life (12.11); such words signify total attention to the words which will follow, that “call for endurance and faith” of vs. 10.

Vs. 10: If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone slays with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

A verse based on Jer 15.2: “Those who are for pestilence, to pestilence, and those who are for the sword, to the sword; those who are for famine, to famine, and those who are for captivity, to captivity.” Also, cf. Jer 43.11. Words uttered in lament over Israel despite the fact that Moses and Samuel (vs. 1) interceded for her. With these two prophets in mind, harken back to the two witnesses of 11.3.

Such words are *endurance* (hupomone) and *faith* (pistis): “And as for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with *patience*” [Lk 8.15]. In this verse hearing the logos results in *katecho*, *holding* it *fast*, which is akin to *tereo* in 12.17 above.

Vs. 11: Then I saw another beast which rose out of the earth; it had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon.

Note the word *kai* (*and*) for “then” which signifies a continuous, rapid succession of events. This second *beast* (therion) rises from the *earth* (*ge*) after the first one from the sea (vs. 1); it is identified later as the false prophet (19.20). *Lamb* (arnion) lacks a definite article, not especially referring to Christ as Lamb but to false prophets: “For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect” [Mt 24.24].

This second beast has two *horns* (*keras*) as the sea-beast with ten horns, 13.1. Being “like a lamb,” the beast is young and resembles a *dragon* (*drakon*) in speech. Here dragon lacks a definite article which does not identify the second beast with the seven-headed dragon of chapter twelve. Being a reptile, a dragon’s speech consists of hissing; also refer to the serpent’s words to Eve in Genesis which contrast with the “*sound* of the Lord God walking in the garden” [3.8]. The Hebrew word here is *qol*, *voice*.

Vs. 12: It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast whose mortal wound was healed.

A verse reminiscent of 1 Jn 2.18: “Children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come; therefore we know that it is the last hour.” This second beast (therion) is more or less identical with the first in that it shares *exousia* (*authority*). Note how it is used, *in its presence*, *enopion*. For another reference of this preposition cf. 1.4: “from the seven spirits who are *before* his throne.”

This two-fold authority is imposed both upon the physical *earth* (*ge*) and its *inhabitants* (*kakoikeo*); this verb indicates as noted elsewhere (3.10, for example) a permanent residence, of making one’s home. Such *exousia* consists in making both *worship* (*proskuneo*) the first beast as noted in vs. 8. The healing of its mortal *wound* (*plage*) was noted in vs. 3.

Vs. 13: It works great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of men.

Signs (*semeion*) as found in 12.1 and as used by Jn 4.48, “*signs* and wonders.” Here the second beast is a kind of anti-Christ through these signs which caused people to worship it as noted in the last verse. Another reference with this same theme in vs. 11, that is, Mt 24.24, with regard to false prophets. Also cf. 1 Kg 18.24 which refers to the prophets of Baal and the prophet Elijah: “And you call on the name of your god and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God who answers by fire, he is God.” The signs worked by the second beast are *in the sight* of men” (*enopion*) which as noted in vs. 12, is the source of the second beast’s authority.

Vs. 14: And by the signs which it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast, it deceives those who dwell on earth, bidding them make an image for the beast which was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

Another used of *enopion* (the beast), to indicate the true source of these *signs* (*semeion*). Such signs are further specified in terms of *deception* (*planao*) as applied to the great dragon in 12.9. “Little children, let no one *deceive* you” [1 Jn 3.7]. This deception is directed towards those *dwelling* (*katoikeo*) on earth; same verb is used a second time in the Greek text: “bidding them” (such dwellers). Earth is the proper habitat of the great dragon to which he had been cast.

Earth dwellers are bidden to make an *image* (*eikon*) of the wounded beast which here is specified as having been struck by a sword which 13.3 does not mention. This verse does specify “one of its (seven) heads.” “From his mouth issued a sharp two-edged *sword*” [1.16]; here *romphaia* is used instead of vs. 14’s *machaira*. The former is a huge weapon requiring two hands to wield whereas the latter is a short sword.

The anti-Christ has precedent in Dt 13.1-3: “If a prophet arises among you or a dreamer of dreams and gives you a sign or a wonder...you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or to that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you.”

Note the preposition *among* (*qerev*), meaning that such deceivers come from the people’s very center or midst.

Vs. 15: And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast should even

speak, and to cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.

A verse imitating God's creation of man: "Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" [Gen 2.7]. In the verse at hand, note the passive used of "allowed" to indicate—in imitation of divine operation as noted elsewhere—that the second beast's authority is derivative. Here it assumes the form of bringing alive the beast's eikon. Keep in mind that this eikon is of the seven-headed beast of vs. 3, this multiplicity being symbolic of evil's tendency to expand and make copies of itself. *Pneuma* or *breath* imitates Christ's breathing: "He *breathed* (*emphusao*) on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy *Spirit* (*Pneuma*)" [Jn 20.22].

The image of the beast is made to speak like its real-life counterpart: "a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words" [13.5]. It also speaks in the sense of putting to death persons who do not *worship* (*proskuneo*) the image. The LXX uses this verb in the following: "You shall not *bow down* to them (graven images) or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God" [Ex 20.5].

Vs. 16: Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead.

Such *marking* (*charagma*) parodies the "seal of the living God" of 7.2; the second beast is the one who effects this identification which denotes something graven or a brand. Its negative use is also found in vss. 17; 14.9, 11; 16.2; 19.29; 20.4; also cf. Acts 17.29: "We ought not to think that the Deity is like gold or silver or stone, a *representation* by the art and imagination of man."

Compare *charagma* with *charakter* as found in Heb 1.3: "He reflects the glory of God and bears the very *stamp* of his nature." The former is limited to the right hand or forehead; the latter pervades the whole of Christ's being, *charakter* being associated with divine nature.

Vss. 17 & 18 show the economic function of the beast's *charagma* which may have something to do with its seven-headed (multiple) nature. It can assume two forms: the beast's *name* (*onoma*) or *number* (*arithmos*) of this same *name*. Again, *arithmos* may be related to the seven heads.

Vs. 18 calls the number *human* (*anthropos*, *of a man*) and 666. As the footnote to the RSV says, "Since Hebrew and Greek letters have numerical equivalents, the number of the beast (666) is the sum of the separate letters of his name. Of countless explanations, the most probable is *Nereon Caesar* (in Hebrew letters) which, is spelled without the final *n*, also accounts for the variant reading, 616."

Vs. 18 is cautious in that *sophia* (*wisdom*) is required with regards to the correct interpretation of symbolic language. It is equated with *nous* (*understanding*) whose practical expression is *reckoning* or *psephizo*. "And the peace of God, which passes all *understanding*" [Phil 4.7]. The verb *psephizo* applies to counting as with pebbles. "I will give him a white *stone* with a new name written on the stone which no one knows except him who receives it" [2.17]. Thus this "white stone" may be taken as an image which counters the number 666.

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Chapter Fourteen

Vs. 1: Then I looked and lo, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.

A new chapter which begins with *kai* (*and* for "then") to indicate the often noted theme of quick succession of events in Revelation. The fact that John looked and *beheld* (*idou*) as in 4.1 and 6.2 introduces a new section of his vision; *idou* can represent how suddenly he saw the vision of the *Lamb* (*arnion*, who was slain, 13.8). This Lamb was on Mount Zion, "joy of all the earth" [Ps 48.2]; this is the only mention of Zion in Revelation. The psalm celebrates Zion which here in Revelation achieves consummation by the Lamb's presence. Note his position, "*on* (*epi*) Zion," the highest summit.

The 144,000 with the Lamb are the “daughters of Judah who rejoice because of your judgments” [Ps 48.11]. This number was first mentioned in 7.4, that this, those who had been sealed, and is the sum of 12,000 from each of Israel’s tribes. It is also in contrast to the beast’s number of 666, 13.18. Such persons are similarly epi Zion along with the Lamb.

The 144,000 are inscribed with both the Lamb’s *name* (onoma) and his Father’s. With regard to the former’s name: “She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus” [Lk 1.21]. With regard to the latter’s name: “I am who am” [Ex 3.14] which “is my *name* forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations” [vs. 15]. These two names, Jesus and YHWH, are *written* (grapho) on the *forehead* (metopon): “until we have sealed the servants of our God upon their *foreheads*” [7.3]. Contrast this onoma with the “blasphemous *name*” of the beast, 13.1 and its charagma or *mark* [vs. 16]. The fact that the two divine names were written connotes a personal element and may be compared with God’s writing in Ex 24.12: “I will give you the tables of stone with the law and the commandments which I have *written* for their instruction.”

Vs. 2: And I heard a voice from heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; the voice I heard was like the sound of harpers playing on their harps.

Vs. 2 switches from the seeing and beholding of vs. 1 to the hearing of a *voice* (phone) which is reminiscent of 1.15 (also cf. 19.6): “and his *voice* was like the sound of many waters.” The verses at hand (2-5) attempts to describe (hos, as) this phone which emanates from heaven. The elements in vs. 2 may be outlined as follows:

-“many *waters*” (hudor): in the sense of a waterfall or cataract: “I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many *waters*” [Ezk 1.24]. Such waters bear semblance to Gen 1.2: “and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the *waters*.”

-“loud *thunder*” (bronte): cf. 6.1. “The Lord also *thundered* in the heavens” [Ps 18.13].

-*harpers* (kitharodos): 5.8 with reference to the four living creatures and twenty-four elders; also cf. 18.22. “Awake, my soul! Awake, O *harp* and lyre” [Ps 57.9]! Mention of harps indicates that the voice John heard was not chaotic but had a musical pattern of sorts. Contrast the waters of the Red Sea which drown the Egyptians and the order melody of Miriam (timbrel): “Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea” [Ex 15.21].

Vs. 3: And they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who had been redeemed from the earth.

Compare this “new *song*” (ode) by the 144,000 with that of 5.8 which here is in the presence (enopion, *before*) the four living creatures and elders who in 5.8 sang the new song. In the verse at hand, these two groups form a kind of audience to listen to this singing. The sound of this ode in vs. 3 may be likened to those many waters and thunder of the previous verse. “Sing to him a *new song*, play skillfully on the strings with loud shouts” [Ps 33.3].

The new song is unknown to everyone except the 144,000 who have learned (manthano) it, rather, the verb dunamai (*to be able*) here suggests impossibility as well as a type of initiation. The precondition: *redemption* (agorazo, *to purchase*) as *ransom* in 5.9. “You were *bought* with a price. So glorify God in your body” [1 Cor 6.20]. In vs. 3 agorazo is specified as “*from* (apo) the earth,” earth here being equivalent to the *world* (kosmos) of Jn 1.10: “He was in the *world*, and the *world* was made through him, yet the *world* knew him not.” Such learning therefore connotes being like Jesus Christ with respect to the world: in it yet knowing him.

Vs. 4: It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are chaste; it is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes; these have been redeemed from mankind as first fruits for God and the Lamb.

A verse reminiscent of 2.20-2, the practice of immorality with regard to pagan cults. Moluno: *to defile*, another way of expressing uncleanness. “You have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not *soiled* their

garments" [3.4]. The LXX uses this verb in Zech 3:3: "Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with *filthy* garments." For a connection with women, cf. Ex 19:15: "Be ready by the third day; do not go near a woman." Here it is not a question of prostitution but of refraining from legitimate sexual intercourse. The context is important, the Israelites at the base of Mount Sinai just before Moses ascended. This image may be tied in with 14.1, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion.

Parthenos: *chaste*, a word which implies virginity. "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be compared to ten *maidens* who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom" [Mt 25.1]. In the case at hand, these maidens went out to the bridegroom; in vs. 14.4, they meet him as Lamb on Mount Zion. With the maiden parable in mind, those who are parthenos are watchful (cf. Mt 25.13), the reward of which is *following* the Lamb (akoloutheo). This verb implies being a disciple of someone, of following in a specified order. "Immediately they left their nets and *followed* him" [Mt 4.20].

The akoloutheo of chaste persons is in accord with where the Lamb *goes* (hupago), which has the literal sense of leading or bringing under. "And you know the way I am *going*" [Jn 14.4]. A lamb is a young sheep noted for skipping which Christ the Lamb does: "O mountains, that you *skip* like rams? O hills, like lambs" [Ps 114.6]? The Hebrew verb raqad suggests lively dancing.

Agorazo: *to redeem* as in vs. 3 which there specifies as being "from the earth;" here it is "from mankind." Such redeemed persons are *first fruits* or aparche. "The first of the *first fruits* of your ground you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God" [Ex 23.19]. In the verse at hand, aparche is both for God and the Lamb. Aparche in the New Testament refers to Christ: "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the *first fruits* of those who have fallen asleep" [1 Cor 15.20].

Vs. 5: and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are spotless.

Amormos: *spotless*, a term related to sacrificial offerings. "You shall not offer anything that has a blemish" [Lev 22.20]. Vs. 5 applies such wholeness to those without *lie* (pseudos). "Deliver me, O Lord, from *lying* lips" [Ps 120.2]. The act of *finding* (heurisko) is passive, indicating that God has searched the mouths of such people in the sense of testing. "*Test* my heart and my mind" [Ps 26.2]. Here the Hebrew verb tsaraph connotes purifying in the sense of melting by fire.

Vs. 6: Then I saw another angel flying in midheaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and tongue and people.

The first of three angels introduced by kai (*then, and*); another instance of continuous action and connectivity of events. Here is the first mention of an angel since 11.15 (seventh angel), that is, before the portent of the woman, dragon and beast from the sea. The location of this new angel is in *midheaven*, mesouranema, as with the eagle of 9.13 who cried out "woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth." His location is below the divine throne yet above earth.

Purpose of this first angel: to *proclaim* (euaggelizo) not just the *gospel* (euaggelion) but the one which is *eternal* (aionios). Historically, Jesus Christ had already preached the Gospel: "And this *gospel* of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole *world* as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come" [Mt 24.14]. Here the *world* is oikoumene, more specifically, *in* (en) the inhabited part of the world, whereas in vs. 6 the angel does it to those "*on* (epi) the *earth* (ge)," epi indicating that he is above and looking down. This preaching is reminiscent of Ps 19.3-4: "There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world." Also Acts 1.8: "You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." Vs. 6's mention of various categories of peoples shows that the "aerial gospel" reaches everywhere.

Vs. 7: and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of water."

This "*loud* (megalos) voice" is akin to preaching that eternal gospel in the previous verse; also refer to Ps 19.3-4

quoted with regard to vs. 7. The act of fearing and glorifying God is intended that all people acknowledge him with a specific temporal event in mind, that is, the *hour* (hora), definite article used to show its definite nature. "The Son of man is coming at an unexpected *hour*" [Lk 12.40]. The angel's proclamation discloses this hour of *judgment* (krisis) even unknown to Jesus Christ (cf. Mt 24.36). Note that the verse at hand speaks of judgment whereas the context of Mt 24.36 does not specifically mention it.

Once this hora is broadcast, the angel bids everyone to *worship* (proskuneo) God who here is attributed being the creator. "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it" [Ex 20.11]. In vs. 7 note the phrase "*fountains* (pege) of water" or a spring. It is as if to show that God were at the source of these waters which are both creative and destructive. "All the *fountains* of the great deep burst forth" [Gen 7.11].

Vs. 8: Another angel, a second, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of her impure passion."

Akoloutheo: *to follow* as noted in vs. 4; the chief notion is to indicate the execution of a sequence which here is the second angel who may be said to *proclaim* (euaggelizo) in the same fashion as the first angel. He anticipates chapter 18 where Babylon—the early Church considered Rome a re-incarnation of this empire—is also proclaimed as fallen. For a precedent, cf. Is 21.9: "Fallen, fallen is *Babylon* and all the images of her gods he has shattered to the ground." The earliest reference is with regards to the tower of Babel which concerns the splendor of Babylon. It was there that mankind built a tower to "make a name for ourselves" [Gen 11.4], but God "confused their language" [vs. 7]. Perhaps vs. 8 is alluding to this multiplicity of languages; Rome as well as Babylon were international centers where many language were spoken.

Babylon is associated with having "impure *passion*" (thumos; cf. 12.12 & 14.10 as *wrath*); thumos itself is both positive and negative but in the New Testament the latter is stressed. This sentiment is equated with wine, thus implying drunkenness. Since Babylon is a traditional image of exile for Israel (cf. the prophet Jeremiah for numerous references), being in that foreign land may be considered a type of bitter intoxication. "By the waters of *Babylon*, there we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion" [Ps 137.1]...that is, the waters which caused Israel to become intoxicated.

Vs. 9: And another angel, a third, followed them saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand."

Vs. 9 continues as a single unit through vs. 11. The third and final angel who completes the euaggelizo of vs. 6; he and the second angel may also be located in the area of "midheaven" noted in that verse. Note that the first and third angels speak in a "loud voice" whereas the second does not. The third angel also comes on the scene in a specified sequence as indicated by the verb akoloutheo, *to follow*.

The conditional sentence ("if") sets the stage for indicating the consequence of having both the *image* (eikon) and *mark* (charagma). Cf. 13.16, 14.11, 16.2, 19.20 for further references with regard to being allied with the beast.

Vs. 10: he also shall drink the wine of God's wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

The Greek text reads "*from* (ek) the wine of God's *wrath*" (thumos) indicating a more thorough intake of this divine thumos. Vs. 8 has wine associated with thumos, that is, belonging to Babylon's impurity. "Upon them I will pour out my *wrath* like water" [Hos 5.10]. In the verse at hand, such wrath is *unmixed* or akratos. Contrast with Prov 9.2: "(Wisdom) has *mixed* her wine."

Thumos is allied with *anger* (orge) as in 6.16; here a cup suggests that such orge is intensified and concentrated. "Rouse yourself...you who have drunk at the hand of the Lord the *cup* of his wrath" [Is 51.17].

The next affliction is external, that is, the first one is internal as represented by drinking from the cup of divine anger. *Basanizo*: *torment* (cf. 9.5, sting like scorpions) is used here with regard to fire and *brimstone* (theion), a verse reminiscent of Gen 19.24: "The Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah *brimstone* and *fire* from the Lord out of heaven."

Such torment, both internal and external, occurs *in the presence of* (enopion) the holy angels (to distinguish them from evil angels) and the Lamb or Jesus Christ. Cf. 3.5: "I will confess his name *before* my Father and before his angels."

Vs. 11: And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name."

The closing words from the third angel's "loud voice" which again are reminiscent of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah noted just above in vs. 10. "And lo, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace" [Gen 19.28]. The destructive rise of such *smoke* (kapnos) may be contrasted with the incense of 8.4: "and the *smoke* of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel before God." In the verse at hand, this eternal sign of *torment* (basanismos; cf. use of verb in previous verse) fulfills Christ's words, "I tell you, it shall be more tolerable on that day for Sodom than for that town" [Lk 10.12]. Compare "that day" with the hora of God's judgment in 14.7. Also cf. Is 34.10: "Night and day it shall not be quenched; its smoke shall go up forever."

Rest or anapausis: contrast with the use of the verb in 4.8 regarding the four living creatures who praise God: "they never *cease* to sing, 'Holy, holy, holy...'" "For I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find *rest* for your souls" [Mt 11.29]. In the verse at hand, *proskuneo* (*to worship*) with regard to the beast never gives respite which is in contrast with that of the four living creatures and elders who "fell down and *worshiped*" [5.14]. It is as though the beast's eikon and charagma cruelly mimicked man being made in God's eikon: "and man became a living being" [Gen 2.7].

Vs. 12: Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

The Greek text lacks "call." *Endurance* or hupomone; the first part of this sentence is the same as 13.10, only here *saints* (hagios) are specified as with the *keeping* (tereo) of God's commandments (cf. 12.17) and *faith* (pistis) of Jesus. Note that Jesus is in the genitive case, that *pistis* belongs to him. Most likely reference is not to the faith Jesus had while on earth but to the faith belonging to the saints. Compare hupomone (which connotes extension through space and time) with that "no rest, day or night" of vs. 11; it is exactly the opposite of this depraved worship of the beast.

Vs. 13: And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"

Another hearing of a voice from heaven as in vs. 3, only here with the command to *write* (grapho) as in Ex 24.4: "Moses *wrote* all the words of the Lord." The statement has to do with a *blessedness* (makarios, adjective; cf. 1.3 and its relationship with the Hebrew 'ashry) pertaining to the *dead* (nekros). Such persons are not all those who suffer this common human destiny but those who have a presence-*in* (en) the Lord. Such "in-ness" is related to the "faith of Jesus." Compare vs. 13 with 1 Thes 4.16: "And the dead *in* Christ will rise first."

Ap' arti or *henceforth* in the sense of "from now on." Compare with Mt 23.39: "For I tell you, you will not see me again *until* you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" Here this word means at a later date; also note the use of makarios. In the verse at hand, *ap' arti* suggests that blessedness applies only to those who will die from the time of the voice's speaking until the descent of the heavenly Jerusalem.

As soon as John inscribes this statement the (Holy) *Spirit* (Pneuma) acknowledges his written words with a *beatitudo* (makarios, adjective) of his own. It does not seem that the voice John heard is the Spirit but the Father's; the former simply acknowledges the latter's request to put his wish in writing. The Spirit has the intent of identifying happiness with *rest* (anapauo, verb; cf. vs. 11). Note the connection between *labors* (kopos) and *deeds* (ergon): the former involves struggle whereas the latter, those actions accomplished within the context of this struggle. Deeds flow from labors and are subject to continuous association with those who are blessed. I.e., deeds *follow* (akoloutheo) the blessed: cf. vs. 4 with respect to following the Lamb according to a given order and sequence.

Vs. 14: Then I looked and lo, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man with a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand.

Another use of kai (*then, and*) to show the quick succession of events. John's *looking* (horao) and *lo* (idou in the sense of beholding) follow vs. 13's command for him to write. It is as though the vision of vs. 14 suddenly caught John's attention and he looked up from his writing.

"White *cloud*" (nephele): "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the *clouds* of heaven there came one like a son of man" [Dan 7.13]. This corresponds to 1.7 where Christ "is coming with the clouds" and will thus be visible to everyone. The visibility of vss. 1.7, 14.4 & Dan 7.13 may be contrasted with Mount Sinai: "And the people stood afar off while Moses drew near to the *thick darkness* where God was" [Ex 20.21]. Haraphel is used to express this impenetrability and is found only in two other places: Dt 4.11, 1 Kg 8.12 and Ps 18.11.

Vs. 14 has the "son of man" seated on this cloud, not unlike reference to the divine throne in 3.21. Note that vs. 14 has *like* (homoios) as used in 4.3, "appeared *like* jasper." This same uncertainty with how to describe a vision applies to Dan 7.13 in the paragraph above, "*like* a son of man."

The "like" son of man has two features: 1) "golden *crown*" (stephanos) as in 4.4 with reference to the twenty-four elders. 2) "sharp *sickle*" (drepanon): "But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the *sickle* because the harvest has come" [Mk 4.29]. This image fits in well with vs. 14, image of Christ about to reap his harvest as described in the verses which follow.

Vs. 15: And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat upon the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe."

This angel (the fourth) follows the third of vs. 9 who warned about person worshiping the beast; the angel of vs. 15 exclaims with a similar "loud voice." Presumably he was in the *temple* (naos) worshiping God much like the seraphim of Is 6.1.2: "and his train filled the *temple*. Above him stood the seraphim." Vs. 15 is somewhat parallel to Lk 2.37: "She (Anna) did not depart from the *temple*, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day." This verse has hierun, the outer precincts as opposed to the inner or holiest part signified by naos.

Note that the angel exits the temple to greet the son of man upon the cloud. Jesus Christ is exterior to the naos, the holy of holies. "For Christ has entered not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf" [Heb 9.24]. The angel has authority to bid the son of man to reap; he brings to his attention that it is the *hour* (hora) because the *harvest* (therismos) is ripe: cf. Mk 4.29 in vs. 14 with regard to drepanon, *sickle*.

Xeraino (*ripe*), literally, *to be dry* in the sense of being scorched. "And some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered away because it *had no moisture*" [Lk 8.6]. Perhaps the angel was calling attention to the fact that the harvest has already peaked and that it was of utmost urgency for the son of man to start his reaping. In this light, the son of man (vs. 16) began reaping from his cloud. Implied is that his sickle had a long handle reaching down to earth from the cloud.

Vss. 17-20 deal with the fifth and six angels: the fifth similarly exits (ek) the *temple* (naos) but it is "in heaven." Like the son of man, he has a sickle in imitation of him. The sixth angel (vs. 18) comes *out* (ek) of the *altar* or

thusiasterion (6.9, 8.3, 11.1) as though he did this in a physical manner. This image makes better sense in that he had “*power* (exousia) over fire,” that is, the fire used to consume sacrificial offerings upon the altar. The same could be applied to incense offered on the altar.

This six angel calls out in a “loud voice” to his colleague, the fifth angel with a sickle. Note that the son of man on a cloud is bidden to reap the harvest with a similar sickle. “Put in the *sickle*, for the harvest is ripe” [Jl 3.13]. The fifth angel imitates him by gathering “*clusters* (botrus) of the vine.” “Oh, may your breasts be like *clusters* of the vine and the scent of your breath like apples” [Sg 7.8].

The angel with the sickle casts it literally “*into* (eis) the earth, vs. 20. Next, God’s *wrath* (thumos, as in vs. 10) is equated with a wine press, an image which connotes the trampling of grapes into a fluid. “The Lord has trodden as in a *wine press* the virgin daughter of Judah” [Lam 1.15].

Note the location of this wine press, “*outside* (exothēn) the city” of Jerusalem, reminiscent of Christ’s crucifixion: “So they took Jesus, and he went out bearing his own cross” [Jn 19.17]. Also, these words could refer to the judgment of Israel which was to take place outside Jerusalem. Parallel the blood of this wine press (cf. 19.15) with that of Christ: “But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water” [Jn 19.34]. The height of flow from the wine press and the length of six hundred stadia may correspond with the river flowing from the temple: “Again he measured a thousand and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen” [Ezk 47.5].

All in all, the images of vss. 17-20 resemble the parable of Mt 13.36-43 where the Son of man sends angels to separate between good and evil persons.

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Chapter Fifteen

Vs. 1: Then I saw another portent in heaven, great and wonderful, seven angels with seven plagues which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is ended.

This new chapter begins with kai (*and, then*), yet another indication of continuous action or succession of events in the Book of Revelation. The last *portent* (semeion) was 12.3 (great red dragon), preceded by the one of vs. 1 (woman clothed with the sun). Only this one John calls “great and *wonderful*” (thaumastos) in the sense of causing people to be awe-struck. It consists of seven *plagues* (plage; cf. 13.3 where it means *wound*) by seven angels; keep in mind the significance of the number seven as discussed with the seven churches; also the seven angels and trumpets of chapters 8 and 9. The plagues now introduced are the *last* (eschatos) in the sense of achieving fulfillment. Note the connection between this adjective and the verb teleo (*to end*) in the sense of being to a conclusion. “The mystery of God, as he announced to his servants the prophets, should be *fulfilled*” [10.7]. The cessation here applies to God’s *wrath* or thumos: this word is used with the preposition en (*in, with*) which literally reads, “in them the *wrath* of God is ended,” as though the plagues were a receptacle of divine thumos.

Vs. 2: And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands.

Cf. 4.6 for “sea of *glass*” (hualinos) in reference to the divine throne and four living creatures which here has fire and is reminiscent of Ezk 1.4: “A stormy wind came out of the north and a great cloud with brightness round about it and *fire* flashing forth continually and in the midst of the *fire*.” Perhaps both references to the sea may apply to Miriam’s triumphant song at the destruction of the Egyptian forces at the Red Sea. “But the people of Israel walked on dry ground in the midst of the *sea*” [Ex 15.19], that is, for them the “sea” became flat and dry. With this image in mind, the fire with which it is mingled acts as a guiding light, a continuance of God as pillar of fire [cf. Ex 14.24] from the start of this miraculous crossing through to its completion. Nikao: *to conquer* as Moses’ song in chapter 15: “I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously” [vs. 1].

Such victory in vs. 2 applies not only to the *beast* (therion) but to its eikon and arithmos. That is to say, the beast's image or secondary representation as well as its ability to replicate (arithmos) is conquered.

Note the position of these victors, "*beside* the sea of glass;" the preposition *epi* is used here which connotes a being-*upon*. "And they saw the Lord God of Israel; and there was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness" [Ex 24.10].

Kithara or *harp* as in 5.8: "the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a *harp*." In the verse at hand, such harps are "of God," that is, they differ from those of 5.8 and the victors use them passively, as it were, to transmit divine songs.

Vs. 3: And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and wonderful are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty, O King of the ages!"

A *song* (*hode*) which continues through vs. 4, here specified as having two distinct parts. Both are preparatory and set the stage for action to follow:

-belonging to Moses (as well as the "people of Israel," vs. 1) which is chapter 15 of Exodus. He is a *doulos*: "So Moses the *servant* of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord" [Dt 34.5]. Revelation does not quote either the entirety or part of chapter 15. The victory thus proclaimed is similar to the miraculous crossing of Israel at the Red Sea.

-belonging to the Lamb which is laid out in vss. 3-4. It proclaims his deeds (*ergos*) and call (the Father) *pantokrator* as in 1.8. Also, the Greek text mentions him as "King of the *nations*" (*ethnos*) as opposed to "ages."

Vs. 4 calls God *holy* or *hosios* (as opposed to *hagios*), a term connoting undefiled by sin and observant of religious obligations. "For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, *holy*, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens" [Heb 7.26].

Vs. 4 continues by saying that divine judgments have been *revealed* (*phaneroo*, cf. 3.18) in the sense of being actualized. "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and *manifested* his glory" [Jn 2.18].

Vs. 5: After this I looked, and the temple of the tent of witness in heaven was opened.

The song of the last two verses cause John to *look* (*horao*), the sight being that of the *temple* (*naos*, cf. 14.17) or inner part of the sanctuary. Here this holy of holies is identified as *tent of witness*, *skene tou marturiou* as noted in Ex 33.7: "Now Moses used to take the *tent* and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp; and he called it the *tent* of meeting." Both vs. 5 and this verse refer to tent, a temporary dwelling, but keep in mind Jn 1.14 which uses the verbal root of this noun: "And the Word became flesh and *dwelt* (*skeno*) among us." Association of this tent with witness connotes martyrdom whose archetype is the death of Jesus Christ. Note that the Exodus verse has this tent "far off from the camp," as if to contrast its holiness with the profanity of daily life.

Vs. 5 thus has four parts, all being inside each other, as it were: first comes heaven in which is situated the temple, after which is the tent followed by witness. Note that *mohed* (*witness*) in Hebrew involves a set time as well as an assembly. In the verse at hand, this four-fold unit is opened, another use of a verb in the passive tense indicating that the power of opening does not reside with the temple.

Verses 6-8 (to the end of chapter 15) describe what exits the temple which may be outlined as follows:

-vs. 6: seven angels with seven plagues (cf. 15.1). Each angel had "pure bright *linen*" (*linon*), a fabric associated with priestly duties: "The priest shall put on his *linen* garment" [Lev 6.10]. Note that the angels and the evils they bear have the divine *naos* as their origin, the place where only priests could enter, and are so clothed. They are also girded with "golden *girdles*" (*zone*), another priestly garment. "For Aaron's sons you shall make

coats and *girdles*" [Ex 28.40]. Cf. 1.13 where the son of man is so girdled.

-vs. 7: four living creatures are mentioned for the first time since 14.3 where they were with the 144,000. One of them presents each of the seven angels with "seven golden *bowls*" (phiale) containing divine *wrath* or *thumos* (cf. 14.10). Refer to 5.8 where the creatures as well as the twenty-four elders had such bowls containing incense. These bowls parallel those used by priests during sacrifice: "You shall make pots for it to receive its ashes...all its utensils you shall make of bronze" [Ex 27.3]. Vs. 7 says that God lives "forever and ever;" perhaps there is a parallel between his eternal existence and *thumos*, the latter being implied with similar endurance.

-vs. 8: the naos is filled with *smoke* (kapnos) presumably associated with incense as in 8.4 which equates it with prayers of the saints. Note that such smoke originates from God's *glory* (doxa) and *power* (dunamis). "And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with *smoke*" [Is 6.4]. Also cf. Sg 3.6: "Who is that coming up from the wilderness like a column of *smoke*?" Both divine glory and power are associated with the seven plagues whose source is from within the temple. "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the *glory* of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the *glory* of the Lord filled the tabernacle" [Ex 40.34-5]. This verse is closely connected with 1 Kg 8.10: "The priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the *glory* of the Lord filled the house of the Lord." The verb *teleo* (*to end*) is used in conjunction with the seven plagues and suggests completion in the sense of their *kairos* or temporal duration is determined to be played out in next chapters.

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Chapter Sixteen

This chapter (which begins with *kai* or *and*) describes in some detail the pouring out of the bowls by the seven angels which correlate with the ten plagues of Egypt (Ex 7-12). While paralleling the respective plagues, it is helpful to keep in mind the resistance Moses and Aaron met from Pharaoh after each affliction. Also, the Israelites did not suffer from the plagues but enjoyed bounty while their Egyptian neighbors suffered.

The "loud *voice*" (phone) issues from the naos or *temple*. Such a voice is impersonal and is directed towards the seven angels. Note that the command to *pour* (excheo, literally, to empty out entirely) parallels Ps 69.24: "*Pour out* your indignation upon them and let your burning anger overtake them." Chapter Sixteen may be outlined as follows with regard to each of the seven angels and the contents of their bowls:

-First angel: he is bidden to *go* (hupago, literally, *to lead under*), a verb which connotes departure. "Leave your gift at the altar and *go*" [Mt 5.24]. Vs. 2 has this angel *going* (aperchomai); compare the two prepositions, hupo and apo in these two verbs of departure, that latter signifying departure from the voice's presence. The angel pours his *bowl* (phiale, cf. 15.7) "*on* (literally *into*, eis) the earth," indicating thorough penetration of the earth of divine *thumos*. Such *thumos* results in *sores* (helkos), the same term the LXX uses for the sixth plague in Egypt: "And it shall become fine dust over all the land of Egypt and become *boils* breaking out in sores" [Ex 9.9]. Also, "Moreover the dogs came and licked his (Lazarus) *sores*" [Lk 16.21]. The sores are *foul* (kakos, the usual word for iniquity and *evil* (poneros), the latter connoting something full of labors and morally bad. After the bowl was poured "into the earth" its contents came "*upon* (epi) men" who are marked by the beast and who worship it. It is as though the eis-ness of the sores which penetrated the earth rose up "epi" such men.

-Second angel: his phiale was poured "*into* (eis) the sea," reminiscent of the first plague: "And the Nile became foul so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile; and there was *blood* throughout all the land of Egypt" [Ex 7.21]. The second angel's plague has a worse type of blood, that of a dead corpse.

-Third angel: his phiale went *into* (eis) rivers and *fountains* (pege), causing them to become blood. These are sources of water for drinking as opposed to the sea of vs. 3. Vs. 5 mentions "angel of waters" who may be distinguished from the third angel; the former may be taken as a protector of the source of life. He directly addresses God (*Holy One*, Hosios) by acknowledging the just action of the second angel's phiale. The blood of saints and prophets directly correspond to the blood in the sea, rivers and fountains. Compare excheo (*to*

shed) with its use in vs. 1, *to pour out* (that is, the divine thumos). Those responsible for shedding such holy blood are *due* or *axios* which means *worthy*.

-After the angel of waters speaks, John hears the *altar* (thusiasterion) itself “cry;” the Greek text simply has *says, lego*. This is the same altar of 6.9 under which were located “the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and the witness they had borne.” Since the altar is used for sacrifice and thereby connotes the presence of blood, it rightly responds to the previous verses which speaks of blood. The altar refers to *judgments* or *krisis* with respect to the shedding of innocent blood; such judgments belong to God as Pantokrator, 1.8, where he is also the Alpha and Omega. Compare with Gen 4.10: “The voice of your brother’s *blood* is crying to me from the ground.”

-Fourth angel: his phiale is poured “*upon* (epi) the sun” which intensified its heat to *scorch* (kaumatizo) men, a plague which is clearly more devastating than drought. “But when the sun rose they were *scorched*” [Mt 13.6]. Note the result of such scorching: men *curse* (blasphemeo, 16.11) God. “The name of God is *blasphemed* among the Gentiles because of you” [Rom 2.24]. Connected with such profanation is a two-fold failure: 1) not to *repent* (metaneo). “I gave her time to *repent*, but she refuses” [2.21] and 2) not to give God *glory* or *doxa*.

-Fifth angel: his phiale is poured *on* (epi) the beast’s *throne* (thronos) causing it to be in *darkness* (skotoo). Cf. 13.1: “And to it (beast) the dragon gave his power and his *throne* and great authority.” I.e., the throne onto which the angel emptied his bowl ultimately is intended for the dragon; the beast remains subordinate to him. Cf. Ex 10.21: “Stretch out your hand toward heaven that there may be *darkness* over the land of Egypt, a *darkness* to be felt.” Here Moses’ hand acts to form a kind of eclipse. This verse is meant to be understood in the context of vs. 23: “But all the people of Israel had light where they dwelt.” The darkness mentioned in Revelation causes men to *curse* (blasphemeo) God; another mentioned of their failure to *repent* (metaneo).

-Sixth angel: his phiale is poured *on* (epi) the Euphrates River to dry it up not so much to cause a drought but to prepare a way for “kings from the east:” “Be dry, I will dry up your rivers;” who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfil all my purpose’ [Is 44.27-8]. Compare the drying up of the Red Sea in preparation for Israel’s exodus. In addition to this, “three foul *spirits*” (pneuma) came from the mouths of the dragon, beast and *false prophet* (pseudoprophetos) or the second beast of 13.11-15, despite the fact that this designation is not expressly used; cf. 19.20. Such spirits resemble frogs: “...cause frogs to come upon the land of Egypt” [Ex 8.7]. In addition to being foul, vs. 14 calls such frogs “*demonic* (daimonion) spirits” who assemble kings for battle “on the great day of God the *Almighty* (Pantokrator).” Cf. 19.19: “The beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who sits upon the horse and against his army.” Such a battle is designated as a *kairos* event or a *day* (hemera) belonging to God as Pantokrator.

-Vs. 15 is a kind of interpolation and is an exclamation which begins with the attention-getting idou, *behold*. Here (presumably) it has Jesus Christ identifying himself as a *thief* or *kleptes*, reminiscent of Mt 24.43-4: “If the householder had known in what part of the night the *thief* was coming, he would have watched...Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” This verse’s *hour* (hora) has a parallel with the “*great day* (hemera) of the *Almighty*” of vs. 14, i.e., another way of stating a *kairos* event. Bound up with this thief-like coming is an exclamation of *blessedness* (makarios, adjective), the third of seven beatitudes in Revelation. For the future coming of Jesus Christ, cf. 4.8 and 11.17, both of which are in the context of calling God Pantokrator. The beatitude of vs. 15 pertains to the person who is *awake* (gregoreo), the present participle being used to show continuous watchfulness. “*Watch* therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming” [Mt 24.42]. This verse is in the same context of vss. 43-4 cited just above, only here the time frame is *day* (hemera). The watchfulness of vs. 15 pertains to *keeping* (tereo) one’s garments. Parallel it with 3.3: “*Keep* that, and repent. If you will not awake, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you.” Refer to this verse for remarks with regard to *tereo*, etc. Reference to garments may connote having them on at all times in preparation for immediate departure: “Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the marriage feast” [Lk 12.35]. Failure to be thus prepared results in going about naked; the verb here is *peripateo* which connotes wandering from one place to another. Similarly, being *exposed* (aschemosune) has a fuller meaning of being ashamed.

-Vs. 16: a return to the main theme of battle preparation where the demonic spirits of vs. 14 assemble the world's kings at Armageddon. "The kings came, they fought; then fought the kings of Canaan at Taanach, by the waters of *Megiddo*" [Jdg 5.19]. Also, "On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadadrimmon (a fertility god) in the plain of *Megiddo*" [Zech 12.11]. In brief, Armageddon is a site of several decisive battles in Israelite history; for another, cf. 2 Kg 9.27. Mention of this place in vs. 16 indicates the final and conclusive engagement between forces of good and evil. The nature of this engagement is illuminated by reference to Christ as thief...as though he will sneak in among the assembled forces and thwart them from within. Such stealth is heightened by the words "at the *place*" (topos), that is, at that locality where the world's kings overtly gathered in contrast to the secret, stealth-like coming of Jesus Christ.

-Seventh angel: the final pouring of a phiale, this time epi (*upon*) the air, followed by vs 1's "loud voice" *from* (ek) the *temple* (naos), only here the same voice comes *from* (apo) the throne, the second preposition meaning "away from" as opposed to "out of" belonging to ek. In the verse at hand, the words *It is done* (Gegonen) issue forth, that is, they come "out of" as well as "away from." The double use of ek and apo can signify full departure (from the temple's sacred precincts) of the unidentified voice not unlike Jesus on the cross: *It is finished* (Tetelestai, Jn 19.30). This latter expression denotes a fuller sense of completion (verb is teleioo) as opposed to Gegonen (gignomai) which means something that has come to pass.

-Verses 18-21 spell out in greater detail the Gegonen which occurs at the same time the seventh angel pours his bowl "epi" the air and may be outlined as follows:

-Flashes of lightening, loud noises, peals of thunder: they result from a great earthquake and are reminiscent of 8.5 as well as the theophany at Mt. Sinai, Ex 19.16-19.

-This earthquake, resulting from the last of seven bowls being poured out, resembles that at Christ's death: "And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split" [Mt 27.51].

-The earthquake was one which no person had ever seen, evocative of Dan 12.1: "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation until that time."

-The earthquake noted with regard to Christ's crucifixion has as its chief purpose the revelation of the sanctuary in the temple made visible by the rent curtain. Its rending parallels the piercing of Christ's side from which blood and water flowed (cf. Jn 19.34). The six consequences of the earthquake are as follows:

1) "The great city" (split into three parts) is juxtaposed with "cities of nations" and is therefore most likely the Gentile city of Rome, not Jerusalem. The same phrase is used in 11.8 referring to Jerusalem: "the *great city* which is allegorically called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified." A similar theme: "On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives...which shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley" [Zech 14.4]. Compare this great divide with Lk 16.26: "between us (Abraham) and you (Lazarus) a great chasm has been fixed in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us."

2) Cities of nations fell, most likely those subject to the great Babylon or those within the Roman Empire.

3) God remembered great Babylon, symbol of Rome (cf. 17.9 & 18), that is, "the great city." The Greek text reads: "and great Babylon was *remembered* (mimnesko) *before* (enopion) God." The passive has greater force in that Babylon is remembered alike by God and his allies; a permanent (eternal) sense of duration is implied.

4) Islands fled away: "The sky vanished like a scroll that is rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place" [6.14].

5) No mountains were found: cf. 6.14 just above. With the removal of islands and mountains the earth is completely level to receive the great hailstones of the next verse.

6) Great hailstones as the seventh plague: "And the Lord sent thunder and *hail*, and fire ran down to the earth. And the Lord rained *hail* upon the land of Egypt" [Ex 9.23]. This plague like the others against Egypt was effected through Moses. Each plague commences with Moses stretching forth his hand which parallels the phiale or *bowls* of the seven angels. Men *cursed* (blasphemeo, cf. vss. 9 & 11) God as a result of this hail which in the Greek text is described literally as "great exceedingly." The force of impact is enhanced by two prepositions: "*from* (ek) heaven" and "*upon* (epi) men."

Chapter Seventeen

This and the next chapter deal with the fall of Babylon (Rome) and are filled with implications for readers who were contemporary with the Book of Revelation. Thus salient points will be outlined verse by verse, keeping in mind that these **Notes** are presented with the intention of reading Revelation in the light of lectio divina, not with a view of presenting historical facts and their various interpretations which may be obtained elsewhere.

-Vs. 1: Chapter Seventeen begins with kai (*then, and*), another indication of continuous action; the quote begun here by the angel continues through vs. 3. The identity of one of the seven angels having a bowl (cf. previous chapter) is not given. Note that the Greek reads, “came one *from* (ek) the seven angels,” the preposition ek implying, in a sense, that the angels were lined up in a row and that one stepped forth to speak with John. This angel has the purpose of *showing* (deiknumi) in the sense of revealing with respect to kríma or *judgment* (first use of this word in Revelation). “For the Father loves the Son and *shows* him all that he himself is doing” [Jn 5.20]. “For *judgment* I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind” [Jn 9.39]. Vs. one has this kríma with respect to the “great *harlot*” (porne), the verbal root implying immorality (cf. 2.14). She is seated upon “many waters,” a phrase reminiscent of the primeval waters of creation: “and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the *waters*” [Gen 1.2]. The harlot’s “*upon-ness*” (epi) may be taken as a mockery of the Spirit’s creative power. Also note that the serpent “poured *water* like a river out of his mouth after the woman” [12.15]. The harlot *seated* (kathemi) on these waters is also a mockery of the “one *seated* on the throne.”

-Vs. 2: *to commit fornication* or porneuo is used with respect to the earth’s kings; cf. 2.20 with regarding Jezebel, the false prophetess. This verse is reminiscent of Ezk 16 which contains an allegory of the unfaithful wife, Jerusalem. Vss. 1-14 depict God finding and then honoring her; vs. 15 has Jerusalem who “played the harlot because of your renown” and because she “trusted in her beauty.” Vs. 2 has the noun porneia (*fornication*) used in terms of being *drunk* (methusko). “...the servant begins to beat the men servants and the maid servants and to eat and drink and *get drunk*” [Lk 12.45]. This verse pertains to the delay of the servant’s master and may apply to vs. 2 in that those getting drunk on kings’ fornication do not trust in Christ’s coming but prefer to wait, as it were, and expend their energy on such inebriation. The word for *dweller* (katoikeo, present active participle used) has the preposition kata prefixed to it, signifying persons who have made earth their permanent home to the neglect of heavenly reality. “...to try those who *dwell* upon the earth” [3.10].

-Vs. 3: After the angel has spoken with John he *carried* him *away* (apophero), that is, from the “place” from which he had been having his visions. Perhaps the place from which John was conveyed was from his position outside the temple (16.1). Direction of this apo movement: “*into* (eis) a *wilderness* (eremos);” not just the wilderness but “*in* (en) the Spirit” (Pneuma). It may take the following outline: apo -> eis -> en; John, of course, was first en the Spirit before his transportation eis the wilderness. Note that eremos is the same as desert which was used in 12.6: “and the woman fled into the *wilderness* where she had a place prepared by God.” In this instance eremos is specified with a definite article made even more specific, as it were, by topos for *place*; vs. 3 lacks such an article, implying that this eremos lacks presence of the divine. In this wilderness John beholds a woman *sitting* (kathemi; cf. vs. 1) on an (indefinite) “scarlet *beast*” (therion; cf. 11.7, etc). *Scarlet*: kokkinos, symbolic of high rank within the Roman Empire; in the next verse this adjective applies to the woman. Note its use with regard to Jesus Christ who is made by Roman soldiers to be a mockery of honor: “And they stripped him and put a *scarlet* robe upon him” [27.28]. In the verse at hand, such a beast or Rome has the following: 1) “*blasphemous* (blasphemia) names” or in Greek, “names of blasphemy.” 2) seven heads and 3) seven horns, evocative of the sea therion of 13.1.

-Vs. 4: a description of the woman’s adornment, periballo (*to array*) being the verb with respect to two colors, purple and scarlet, the latter having the color kokkinos as used in vs. 3 with respect to the beast on which she is seated. Compare periballo with its use in 12.1 regarding the “woman *clothed* with the sun;” this verb means being fully enveloped (by the colors purple and scarlet), as though the beast’s native color were transferred into her very being. Furthermore, the woman is *bedecked* (chrusoo, the only New Testament use) with gold,

jewels and pearls, that is, precious objects, the opposite of God on his throne who appeared “like jasper and carnelian...a rainbow that looked like an emerald” [4.3]. For an LXX reference, “And you shall hang it (temple veil) upon four pillars of acacia *overlaid* with gold” [Ex 26.32]. For a negative use and one parallel to the verse at hand: “And you, O desolate one, what do you mean that you dress in *scarlet* (kokkinos), that you deck yourself with ornaments of gold” [Jer 4.30]? Finally, the woman of vs. 4 holds a golden cup containing *abominations* (bdelugma) and *impurities* (akathartos) which result from her *fornication* (porneia). Porneia is found in vs. 2 with respect to the “kings of the earth” and their association with this woman. Bdelugma applies to anything foul as in Lk 16.15: “For what is exalted among men is an *abomination* in the sight of God.” In the Old Testament this term pertains to idolatry: “He (King Ahaz) even burned his son as an offering according to the *abominable* practices of the nations” [2 Kg 16.3].

-Vs. 5: *Forehead* or metopon as in 7.3 & 14.1, both instances with respect to God’s servants; 13.16 refers to the mark of the beast. Also cf. Gen 4.15 and Ex 28.38 with reference to a mark placed on the forehead. In the verse at hand it is “a name of *mystery*” (musterion), this term being found in 1.20 (seven stars) and 10.7 (seventh trumpet of God). Such mystery relates to “Babylon the great” and is akin to that of 2 Ths 2.7: “The *mystery* of lawlessness is already at work.” Rome as Babylon has two designations regarding such a name: as mother of *harlots* (pornos) and of earth’s *abominations* (bdelugma, vs. 4). I.e., as mother, Rome/Babylon propagates that which is contrary to true Christian worship.

-Vs. 6: second reference to John seeing (cf. vs. 3), this time shifting action to the woman as *drunk* (methuo) on the blood of saints and martyrs of Jesus. Note use of preposition ek (*from*) with respect to these two groups as if to show more vividly the woman’s taking of blood. Also, cf. 18.24 & 19.2. Vs. 6 contains a new sentence in conjunction with vs. 7 which has John *marveling greatly*, an expression comprised of the verb thaumazo and a noun derived from it, thauma. These words are often used in a positive sense with respect to Jesus’ actions and miracles. “I did one deed, and you all *marvel* at it” [Jn 7.21].

-Vs. 7: Mention of the angel, hearkening back to vs. 1 (one of the seven) who seems to be standing beside John as he witnesses these sights. He offers John a solution to his thaumazo of the previous verse, that is, its musterion as pertaining to both woman and beast. This *beast* (therion) *bears* (bastazo) the woman, a verb referring to a burden. “Whoever does not *bear* his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple” [Lk 14.27]. Compare such bastazo with Christ’s same exhortation, “Take my yoke upon you” [Mt 11.29].

-Vs. 8: The angel continues speaking with John, this time about the *beast* (therion; commonly accepted reference is to the Roman Emperor Nero) who is presented as participating in three sequences of time: past (“was”), present (“is”) and future (“is to come”). Perhaps the angel wishes to ratify what John had beheld up to date in his vision and to make sure he identifies the future coming back to life of Nero with this beast which was first mentioned in 11.7. Vs. 8 has the beast first ascending from the *bottomless pit* (abussos) and then going to *perdition* (apoleia). Reference to abussos is helpful in light of 9.11: “They (locusts) have as king over them the angel of the *bottomless pit*.” Abussos is different from the tohu of Gen 1.1; it is the place reserved for condemnation, whereas the latter is that from which creation (and presumably abussos) is fashioned. The beast/Nero makes a transferal from this pit which lacks depth (i.e., a bottom) to apoleia which has an alternate meaning: “Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to *destruction*, and those who enter by it are many” [Mt 7.13]. In a sense, the beast/Nero fails to heed Christ’s words to narrow himself and so comes to perdition.

The second half of vs. 8 comprises a whole unit and refers to *dwellers* (katoikeo) on earth as cited in vs. 2; i.e., those who make their permanent home on earth. They are equated in 2.13 with the place of Satan’s throne and in the verse at hand do not have their names written in the “book of life” which was mentioned in 3.5 & 13.8; also cf. 20.12, 15 & 21.27. As witnesses first they *marvel* (thaumazo; contrast with John, vs. 6) and then will *behold* (blepo; contrast their beholding with John’s seeing in this chapter) the beast/Nero. Vs. 8 begins with the angel telling John about the beast participating in the three dimensions of time; i.e., he was unaware of it. The same verse attributes knowledge of the beast/Nero as participating in them to those lacking names in the book of life which may be equated with abussos.

-Vs. 9: This verse is an interjection of sorts; most likely John is the person uttering it. Regardless of the fact, the imagery presented so far requires a *mind* (nous) having *wisdom* or sophia. The same call for sophia was noted in 13.18 to understand the number 666 which is related to vs. 9. Nous is the faculty not only for intelligence but for feeling and judging. “I of myself serve the law of God with my *mind*, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin” [Rom 7.25]. The purpose of sophia which governs nous in the verse at hand: to understand the number seven as of the beast’s heads which represent the hills (of Rome).

-Vs. 10: Reference to specific historical events, namely, the succession of seven Roman emperors.

-Vs. 11: Reference to an eighth *beast* (therion) which is included among the seven Roman emperors of vs. 10. The preposition ek is used for *among* which connotes “from” in that the beast will emerge from the seven rulers. Note its identity, the same of vs. 8 with regard to the three dimensions of time (past, present and future). This eighth beast/emperor is also destined for *perdition* (apoleia) as in vs. 8.

-Vs. 12: Ten *horns* (keras) equal ten kings, hearkening back to 10.3, the great red dragon, who also had seven diadems. Reference could be to subordinate governing powers within the Roman Empire. Along with the beast, their *power* (exousia) lasts one *hour* (hora). Compare this short duration with “there was silence in heaven for about half an *hour*” [8.1]. While both are time frames are short, the experience can differ: the former can seem long whereas the latter seem short, depending on a person’s disposition and circumstances.

-Vs. 13: “One *mind*’ or gnome, a term implying purpose and intent. For an example of the opposite, cf. 1 Cor 1.10: “but that you are united in the same *mind* and the same judgement.” The oneness of vs. 13 is ironic in that the previous verse speaks of one hour when the ten kings exercise their authority. Their singleness of purpose results in handing over their *power* (dunamis) and *authority* (exousia) to the beast. Note that the English translation of this verse has *authority* for exousia in vs. 12.

-Vs. 14: The ten kings will make war on the Lamb. In the previous verse these rulers give their power and authority to the beast who presumably becomes their leader for the time frame of one hour. Thus the war may be said to last this brief period. Despite the forces of evil which have been arrayed, the Lamb will *conquer* (nikaos). “He who *conquers* and who keeps my works until the end, I will give him power over the nations” [2.26]. Contrast this exousia with that of vs. 13. This divine victory comes about because the Lamb is both *Lord* (Kurios, cf. 11.17 & 19.16, 1 Tm 6.15) of lords and *King* (Basileus) of kings. “Truly, your God is God of gods and *Lord of kings*, and a revealer of mysteries” [Dan 2.47]. Under the Lamb’s command are three types of people or his army as a whole with three characteristics: *called* (kletos), *chosen* (eklektos) and *faithful* (pistos). For the first two words, cf. Mt 22.14: “Many are *called* but few are *chosen*.”

-Vs. 16: For the burning of the harlot (Rome), cf. Lev 21.9: “And the daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the harlot, profanes her father, she shall be burned with fire.” This verse pertains to conduct of Israel’s priests which are implicitly contrasted with those who officiate at Rome’s pagan rituals.

-Vs. 17: Implied reference to the one hour duration of vs. 12. Here it is God who effects his *purpose* (gnome) which is distinct from that of the ten kings in vs. 13. This gnome is “put *into* their hearts,” the preposition eis signifies full presence and direction. Note the word *until* (achri) with the ten kings having yielded their power to the beast, that is, possibly pertaining to the duration of one hour already mentioned. Achri leads to the *fulfillment* (teleo, verb; cf. 10.7, 11.7, 15.1 & 8, all concerning temporal duration) of God *words* (logos, to be compared with Christ as Logos).

-Vs. 18: Basileia: the woman’s *dominion*, the opposite of that belonging to Christ in vs. 14. It is *upon* (epi) the earth’s kings, that is, much as a weight placed upon them. “And the devil took him up and showed him all the *kingdoms* of the world in a moment of time” [Lk 4.5]. Here chronos is used for *time*; stigmatē literally being a point. The juxtaposition of these two terms signifies absorption or inclusion with respect to spiritual reality.

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Chapter Eighteen

Vs. 1: After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was made bright with his splendor.

The Greek text reads “after these things” (plural), a phrase equivalent to the oft-mentioned *kai* (*and*) to signify rapid succession of events. The other angel’s *descent* (*katabaino*, verb) thus happens immediately; presumably he takes his stand next to one of the seven angels of the previous chapter. He holds “great *authority*” (*exousia*), a term important in the last several verses and as contrasted with the ten kings and the Lamb. The angel’s *exousia* is great whereas the Lamb’s lacks such an adjective; the latter requires no degree (“great”) of authority since he has it in full.

Intimately related to such angelic authority is his *splendor* (*doxa*), a term which implies (divine) glory. This radiance *brightens* (*photizo*) the earth much like the divine splendor on Mount Sinai. Also cf Num 14.21: “As I live and as all the earth shall be filled with the *glory* of the Lord.” Such *doxa* is reflected from God to the angel and then to earth. For another reference of *photizo*, cf. Jn 1.9: “The true light that *enlightens* every man was coming into the world.”

Compare the two uses of the preposition *ek*: “(angel) coming down *from* heaven” and “earth was made bright *with* his splendor.”

Verses 2-3 form the angel’s announcement or proclamation with regard to Babylon/Rome. The word *krazo* is used (*to cry out*, as in 6.10) which has the stronger sense of screaming aloud. The verses may be outlined as follows:

-*Fallen* (*pipto*): used twice for emphasis. Cf. 14.8, Is 21.9 & Jer 51.8 with reference to Babylon.

-*Dwelling place* (*katoiketerion*): contrast with Eph 2.22: “in whom you are built into it for a *dwelling place* of God in the Spirit.” This noun derives from the verb *katoikeo* as in 3.10 and connotes those persons who have made the earth into a permanent dwelling as opposed to heaven. In the verse at hand, the dwelling is one of *demons* (*daimon*); this is the only use of the word in Revelation. Perhaps allusion is made to the ten kings of the previous chapter as well as their subjects.

-*Haunt* (*phulake*) also means prison, a suggestive word intimating confinement with regard to the fallen Babylon. *Phulake* is used first concerning “foul *spirits*” (*pneuma*) and secondly, birds which are similarly foul and hateful. Note the resemblance: a spirit and bird are associated with flying creatures.

-In third place come “all nations;” note the association between being *drunk* (*pino*, usually *to drink* in the ordinary sense) and “impure *passion*” or *thumos* as in 17.2 which uses *methusko*, *to be intoxicated*. For *thumos*, cf. 12.12: “for the devil has come down to you in great *wrath*.”

-*Phulake* may also apply to the kings and merchants of vs. 3, though they are less explicit; both groups are “of the earth” or indirectly associated with those who permanently reside on earth. Cf. *katoiketerion* and its verbal root *katoikeo* above, vs. 2. Here is another mention of *porneia* (cf. 17.2) and *strenos* or *luxury*; the latter term paradoxically means excessive strength which thereby effects extravagance.

John next (*kai* again) hears another voice from heaven; not explicitly from an angel, just an impersonal voice which runs from vs. 4 through vs. 8 and may be outlined as follows:

-Vs. 4: A bidding to come out of Babylon/Rome addressed to “my people,” the image being one of returning from exile. Cf. Is 48.20: “Go forth from Babylon, flee from Chaldea, declare this with a shout of joy, proclaim it, send it forth to the end of the earth; say, “The Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob!” With this verse in mind, note the three-fold command bound up with this exodus: shout of joy, proclaim and sending the message forth. Contrast “ends of earth” with the “kings of the earth” and “merchants of the earth” of vs. 3. The purpose of the summons in the verse at hand: not to *share* (*sugkoinoneo*) in Babylon/Rome’s sins and *share* (*lambano*; basically, *to receive*) in plagues. For a parallel with the former verb, cf. Eph 5.11: “Take no *part* in the unfruitful works of darkness.”

-Vs. 5: Sins of Babylon/Rome are *heaped* (*kollao*) “*high* (*achri*) as heaven;” this verb literally means to stick, to

join to, giving the impression that her sins defy the force of gravity...not only this, but they cling above or in an accumulative fashion from earth to heaven. Note the close connection between such sticking and God's remembering of iniquities. For a parallel, cf. Gen 18.20-1: "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very great, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry which has come to me; and if not, I will know." That is to say, God will know whether or not the sins of these two cities has "clung" to his dwelling place, heaven.

-Vs. 6: This verse is addressed to "my people" of vs. 4, asking them to *render* (apodidomi) or pay back in the same way Babylon/Rome has behaved. "O daughter of Babylon, you devastator! Happy shall he be who *requites* you with what you have done to us" [Ps 137.8]! The verb *requite* or shalom (verbal root for shalom or *peace*) suggests giving back to Babylon the fullness of what she had done to Israel. This is emphasized by preparing a "double draught." Cf. 17.4: "holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations."

-Vs. 7: The image of "double draught" and "cup" is carried over with regard to a *measure* (tosoutos, literally, *so much*) of torment and mourning. This comes about because Babylon/Rome both *glorified* (doxazo) herself, the opposite of giving doxa to God and being *wanton* (streniaio). This second verb is the verbal root of strenos, *luxury*, as in vs. 3. The second sentence in vs. 7 has Babylon/Rome saying in her *heart* (kardia) or inmost being that she is a queen and free from mourning. "Who say in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one besides me; I shall not sit as a widow or know the loss of children; These two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day; the loss of children and widowhood shall come upon you in full measure" [Is 47.8-9]. Note the suddenness of bereavement: "in a moment, in one day," a kairos event not unlike that brief time of "one hour" when the ten kings wage war against the Lamb.

-Vs. 8: The theme of a brief time continues into this verse when Babylon/Rome sees plagues, pestilence, mourning, famine and being burned "in one day," another kairos event. Cf. 17.16 for a similar description. Vs. 8 concludes the address of that "voice from heaven" begun in vs. 4 with God as Kurios *judging* (krino) her. This verb is used in 6.10 in the sense of avenging and is posed as a question by those slain by the sword and which here finds fulfillment.

Verses 9 through 19 describe the laments by those groups which have associated with Babylon/Rome (cf. Ezk 26.16+) and may be outlined as follows:

-Vs. 9: Earth's kings (cf. vs. 3) who lewdly associated with her witness the "smoke of her *burning* (purosis). For the same word in a positive sense: "Do not be surprised at the *fiery* ordeal which comes upon you to prove you" [1 Pt 4.12]. For a different though parallel context describing the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah: "The smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace" [Gen 19.28].

-Vs. 10: The lament of these kings over the *judgment* (krisis) of Babylon/Rome. "For the hour of his *judgment* has come" [14.7]. Both verses refer to swiftness of the divine sentence in terms of one *hour* or hora, another kairos event as in 17.12. Note that the kings' sorrow takes place while they are *far off* (apo makrothen) or at a distance; they do not come to her aide.

-Vss. 11-19 contain a lament both by merchants and sailors with regard to Babylon/Rome. The former sums up her passion for material gain by calling it "the fruit for which you soul longed (vs. 14)." Epithumia is used to express this longing; it is related to thumos (*passion*) as found in 14.8 ("the wine of her impure *passion*"). "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its *desires*" [Rom 13.14]. Such epithumia is the specific reason why merchants and seafarers lamented; they were directly responsible for catering to it. Note that both groups "stood *far off*" (apo makrothen, vss. 15 & 17; also cf. vs. 10) as they beheld the fate Babylon/Rome.

-Vs. 20: After the lamentation of vss. 9 through 19 comes an interlude of sorts, most likely from the "voice from heaven" of vs. 4 which also had recounted the foregoing downfall of Babylon/Rome. This verse is directed to *heaven* (ournos), God's dwelling place, as though it were a personal being watching the drama unfold on earth below. Presumably situated there are saints, apostles and prophets who are similarly addressed. Reason

for such *rejoicing* (euphrainomai, cf. 12.12) is divine judgment against Babylon/Rome. The Greek text reads, “God has *judged* (krino) *judgment* (krisis),” as to express his strong condemnation. The power to execute such *krisis* is bestowed (again, presumably by the “voice from heaven”) upon heaven, saints, apostles and prophets: not angels but human beings who have had experience on earth with Babylon/Rome.

-Vs. 21: The interlude of the previous verse serves to introduce a “*mighty* (ischuros) angel” different from “another angel” of vs. 1 and “another voice” of vs. 4. This angel casts a stone resembling a mill stone into the sea, an analogy for “Babylon, the great city.” “When you finish reading this book, bind a stone to it and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates and say, “Thus shall Babylon sink to rise no more because of the evil that I am bringing upon her” [Jer 51.63-4]. Vs. 21 has the angel casting Babylon/mill stone with *violence* (hormema); i.e., it simply does not fall but is cast with vehemence. Such hormema is heightened by the words, “it shall be found no more.” The passive is used which may apply to those viewing Babylon’s fate from heaven and earth; this mode implies that it is an all-encompassing event.

-Vss. 22-23 spell out in some detail the effects of Babylon being *found no more*, (heurethe eti), these words being used five times in reference to the following in the city: harpers, minstrels, flute players, trumpeters, craftsmen, sound of mill stone, lamp light and the voice of bride and bridegroom. Vs. 23 calls merchants the “great men of the earth” by reason of the power they had in their commerce with Babylon. By reason of this commerce, Babylon’s influence extended throughout the world, thereby augmenting this city’s *sorcery* (pharmakeia, cf. 9.21), a term which also pertains to the administering of drugs. Thus sorcery and addiction are implied as being one and the same. Planao for *to deceive* is the result of such “drugs;” the term fundamentally means to wander about aimlessly. “*Wandering* over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth” [Heb 11.38].

-Vs. 24: Another use of the word heurethi (*was found*) only not in the five senses used in vss. 22-3 with respect to activity associated with Babylon. Vs. 21 has the mighty angel casting Babylon into the sea where it disappeared along with its inhabitants and activity. Despite this disappearance, there seems to remain the blood of prophets, saints and those who have been slain. Because Babylon was hurled into the sea, the collected blood of these groups floats, so to speak, upon the sea as if to leave a trace. The first two categories are persons with a correct relationship with God, whereas the third is not necessarily associated with them. This group, which is spread throughout the earth, appears to have been gathered in Babylon. Sphazo is the verb for *to slay* in the sense of cutting the throat (cf. 5.9, 13.3) as for sacrifice. I.e., those slain throughout the earth and who have been assembled in Babylon are sacrificed, as it were, making the city’s destruction a kind of offering to God.

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Chapter Nineteen

Vs. 1: After this I heard what seemed to be the mighty voice of a great multitude in heaven crying, “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God.

“After this” (plural in Greek) or another way of expressing kai (*and*). John is not certain what he heard next, hence *what seemed* (hos) which was a “great *multitude*” (ochlos). This term often has negative connotations, implying unruly behavior or those people distinct from upper classes. “And though he (Herod) wanted to put him (John the Baptist) to death, he feared the *people*” [Mt 14.5]. This ochlos is situated in heaven, that is, above the earth on which had recently unfolded the drama of Babylon/Rome’s demise. For a parallel verse: “A great *multitude* which no man could number...standing before the throne and before the Lamb” [7.9].

The heavenly throng begins a song which continues into the next verse with “Hallelujah,” traditional Hebrew expression of praise which introduces three common attributes to God. The Greek text has them refer to God by using the genitive case, i.e., “of God.”

Vs. 2: for his judgments are true and just; he has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her

fornication, and he has avenged on her the blood of his servants.”

Judgments (krisis); cf. vs. 18.20. As being true and just, God effects two things with regard to Babylon/Rome: he *judges* (krino) the great harlot by reason of her contagious *fornication* (porneia) and takes *vengeance* (ekdikēo) not so much on his servants per se but on their blood. Reference to blood was made in 18.24 which was found “floating” on the sea after Babylon’s destruction, so edkikeo may be viewed as a kind of divine looking-down from heaven upon this blood. “How long before you will *judge* (krino) and *avenge* our blood on those who dwell upon the earth” [6.10]? With this question and desire in mind, vs. 2 is the fulfillment these holy persons’ “how long.”

This verse brings to a close the words of that “great voice” (vs. 1) which runs from vs. 1 through vs. 2.

Vs. 3: Once more they cried, “Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.”

This verse is an interjection of sorts in that it is not specifically given as issuing from the “great voice” of vs. 1. The *once again* deuterion linked with kai (*and*) shows a connection between the first Hallelujah where the heavenly multitude attributes salvation, glory and power to God. In the verse at hand, the second Hallelujah is in direct reference to the destruction of Babylon/Rome.

Legō: *to cry*, a verb commonly used for simply making an utterance, not necessarily in a strong fashion.

Smoke was mentioned in 18.9 by the earth’s kings, reminiscent of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (cf. Gen 19.28).

Vs. 4 has the twenty-four elders and four living creatures joining in the chorus of Hallelujah of vs. 1 & 3, only these two groups add “Amen” as though to state completion of the action (of Babylon/Rome’s devastation) wrought by God. Cf. 4.2 & 9, 5.1 & 7 & 13, 6.16, 7.10 & 15, 21.5.

Vs. 5: And from the throne came a voice crying, “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.”

The introduction of a third voice in Chapter 19, this time coming from the throne and hearkening back to Chapter 4 which introduces the twenty-four elders and four living creatures with respect to the divine throne. I.e., this throne is alive by reason of God sitting upon it. The voice bids four groups of people to *praise* (aineō) God: servants, those who fear God, small and great. “You who fear the Lord, *praise* him! Stand in awe of him, all you sons of Israel” [Ps 22.22]! The Hebrew word *halal* is used here from which is derived *alleluia*. Also: “He will bless those who fear the Lord, both *small* and *great*” [Ps 115.13].

Vs. 6: Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunder peals crying, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

A fourth *voice* (phone) about which John is not fully certain, the reason for using the words “what *seemed*” (hos) as in vs. 1 which also pertains to a “great *multitude*” (ochlos). Perhaps both multitudes are the same; the present one resembling the *sound* (phone) of many waters. Note the same term used three times with two different nuances: that belonging to the ochlos, many waters and finally “mighty *thunder peals*” (bronte; cf. 6.1, 10.3, 14.2 and their references to Mt. Sinai). Here bronte equals the exclamation *Hallelujah*. Reason for such praise is the rule of God as Pantokrator as in 1.8, 4.8, 11.17, 15.3, 16.7 & 14. “And the Lord will become king over all the earth; on that day the Lord will be one and his name one” [Zech 14.9]. “That day” is a *kairos* event for the present reign of God described in the verse at hand.

Vs. 7: Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready.

“Us” can include the four voices of Chapter 19, the twenty-four elders, the four living creatures, as well as those

who fear God (small and great). Refer to 11.15, which then has the elders (vs. 17-18) acknowledging divine supremacy. All the groups of vs. 7 have as their object of *rejoicing, exulting* (chairō and agalliao) and giving God *glory* (doxa) the following two elements:

1) the Lamb's *marriage* (gamos), a precondition being the destruction of Babylon/Rome which had just taken place. Perhaps at this point in the Book of Revelation a shift may be made to the now-present reality of the Song of Songs which describes a wedding. "Go forth, O daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his *wedding*, on the day of the gladness of his heart" [Sg 3.11]. Such going forth is imaged by "another voice from heaven" bidding "Come out of her, my people" [vs. 18.4]. These two forms of exits can be seen in light of the Lamb's arrival for his wedding in the verse at hand.

With regard to the marriage preparation, cf. the sentiments expressed in Eph 5.32: "This is a great mystery, and I take it to mean Christ and the church." St. Paul situates this mystery in the context of his just cited verse of Gen 2.24 where a "man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one."

With reference to the bride's *preparation* (etoimazo, verb), cf. 21.2: "...the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, *prepared* as a bride adorned for her husband." Is 61.10 echoes this: "As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." The past tense of the verb in vs. 7 (etoimazo) can allude to the saints' trials which Revelation had described to this point.

Vs. 8: It was granted her to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

Note the passive verb, "it was granted," which is in line with other passive uses of verbs in Revelation; their use suggests divine transcendence almost in a personal fashion as well as the fact that such temporal developments already have been foreseen.

The bride or church (cf. Eph 5.23-32, parts of which were cited in vs. 7) is *clothed* or periballo (literally, wrapped about in the sense of being totally enveloped) previously used with respect to such bright objects as linen and a cloud (3.5, 7.9, 10.1). In the verse at hand, bussinos is used for *fine linen*, the material which clothes heaven's armies, 19.12. Note that Babylon/Rome was clothed in bussinos, 18.16. The bride being thus clothed is reminiscent of the same material used with regard to the tent in Ex 26.37: "And you shall make a screen for the door of the tent of blue and purple and scarlet stuff and *fine twined linen*, embroidered with needlework." This making is enhanced by the Hebrew verb raqam found in Ps 139.15: "*intricately wrought* in the depths of the earth."

The bride's fine linen has two luminous qualities: *bright* (lampros; cf. 15.6) and *pure* (katharos), terms which have associations of moral purity. This verse concludes the praise of the "great multitude" begun in vs. 6. The verse at hand concludes with saying that the bride's fine linen is equivalent to the saints' *righteous deeds* (dikaioma), the same word with a different nuance as in 15.4: "for your *judgments* have been revealed." Thus the saints' acts issue forth in accord with divine decrees.

Vs. 9: And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are true words of God."

The Greek text lacks angel. The command given to John is to record words pertaining to the marriage of vs. 7, that is, something like a list of persons invited. The verb here is kaleo; to reject it is considered discourteous; it refers to those who have been summoned, not necessarily those present. "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast, but they would not come" [Mt 22.2-3]. To be the object of kaleo is to be the object of *blessedness* (makarios, adjective); this is one of seven instances in Revelation, the others being 14.13, 16.15, 20.6, 22.7 & 14.

Deipnon: “marriage *supper*” the term “marriage” not being used in the Greek text. This word gives an indication of the time of day when the celebration is held. Referring to the king’s invitation in the last paragraph (Mt 22.2-3), vs. 13 gives a hint that the banquet was held at night: “cast him into the outer darkness.” Such darkness is intensified by the use of “outer” and may have deeper significance than a temporal one.

Because deipnon belongs to the Lamb who had been sacrificed, it can be associated with the Passover meal which also took place at night: “when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs in the evening. Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the house in which they eat them” [Ex 12.6-7].

Vs. 9 has what may be taken as an interlude from the time when John began to write to after he had written. That is, the voice/angel verifies them by saying they are true and belong to God.

Vs. 10: Then I fell down at his feet to worship him but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophesy.

This verse resembles 22.8-9; also cf. Acts 10.25-6. *Worship* (proskuneo) as in 4.10, that is, by the twenty-four elders. Here it is done at the angel’s feet or in Greek, emprosthen (*in front of*). “I will confess his name *before* my Father and *before* his angels” [3.5].

The verb horao (*to see*) coupled with me (*not*) is used for “You must not do that.” The angel says that despite his non-human nature, he is a *fellow servant* (sundoulos) not only with John but with his brethren; the Greek text has the genitive: “of you” and “of your brethren.” All three share the “sun”-(doulos) by reason of their *testimony* (marturia) with regard to Jesus Christ. “And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their *testimony*” [12.11]. Because their testimony implies the threat of death, the angel (who is not mortal) participates in this witness.

The angel gives John the proper object of *worship* (proskuneo), God. Note the dative case coupled with pros, the preposition suffixed to this verb, indicating direction-towards-which.

After the angel’s words comes a sentence which equates Jesus’ marturia with the *spirit* (pneuma) of prophecy; pneuma can imply the Holy Spirit or the diffusion of prophecy to those who exercise it on behalf of God. Although Jesus’ teaching and miracles are included, reference to his death, resurrection and ascension are suggested. For references to marturia, cf. 1.2 (of Jesus Christ), 6.9 (which they had borne, 12.17 (to Jesus).

Vs. 11: Then I saw heaven opened and behold, a white horse! He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

The appearance of Jesus Christ and his heavenly armies which John sees; vs. 11 begins with kai, continuous action, this time after he fell at the angel’s feet. Compare with 4.1: “in heaven an *open* door,” the same verb anoigoo being used. For a parallel verse, cf. Gen 7.11: “and the windows of the heavens were *opened*.” An obvious reference to rain but the idea of suddenness and full force is contained here as well as in vss. 4 & 11. The same applies to Ezk 1.1 with respect to his vision: “the heavens were *opened*, and I saw visions of God.” John’s vision is enhanced by idou (*behold*) which makes the scene more dramatic.

The color *white* (leukos) is found with reference to a horse in 6.2 which had a rider who set out to conquer. That rider is anonymous whereas the one of the verse at hand is *Faithful* (Pistos; cf. 1.5) and *True* (Alethinos, cf. 3.14).

This rider has two functions: to *judge* (krino) in *righteousness* (dikaiosune) and to *make war* (polemeo). Note the present tense regarding both verbs. Two parallel references: “Before the Lord, for he comes, for he comes

to *judge* the earth" [Ps 96.13]. "But with *righteousness* he shall judge the poor" [Is 11.4]. Vs. 17.14 uses *polemeo* (future tense) by the ten kings and beast against the Lamb.

Vs. 12: His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; and he has a name inscribed which no one knows but himself.

From here through vs. 17 we have a description of the rider. In this verse are three elements:

- 1) Eyes: resemble a "*flame* (phlox) of fire" as in 1.14 & 2.18.
- 2) Contrast the "many *diadems*" (diadema) with that of the great red dragon who has seven such diadems.
- 3) *Name* (onoma): here it is written but its location is not specified. Cf. 3.12 which refers to "my own new name" which is written on a victorious person. Such a name is a clue to the rider's identity despite that he alone knows it. Also 1.17 refers to a new name which is written on a white stone. Peter confesses Christ as "Son of the living God" [Mt 16.16], that is, his name and therefore his divine source. Note that Christ says (vs. 17), "For flesh and blood have not revealed this to you but my Father who is in heaven." In the verse at hand, the exclusive knowledge by the rider regarding his name does not fall under the category of being revealed, something which pertains to human beings, not God.

Vs. 13: He is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.

Robe: himation (cf. vs. 16), a garment of any sort or a mantle. Compare this robe having the color of blood with those of the transfiguration: "And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his *garments* became white as light" [Mt 17.2]. For a reference pertaining to vs. 13: "Why is your apparel red, and your *garments* like his who treads in the wine press" [Is 63.2]? The color red is enhanced by eyes/flames of the previous verse; contrast these eyes set against a blood-colored robe with the red dragon having seven heads and therefore fourteen eyes.

The robe is two-fold: *periballo* (*to be clad*) or fully enveloped by the robe. "It was granted her to be *clothed*, with fine linen, bright and pure." Also, *dipped* or *bapto* (related to the verbal root for baptism), that is, having been fully immersed in blood. In the only other references to *bapto* (finger and bread, Lk 16.24 & Jn 13.26), the objects are small yet are fully immersed.

In vs. 12 the rider alone knows his name, but here it is revealed as being God's Logos. "In the beginning was the *Word*, and the *Word* was with God, and the *Word* was God" [Jn 1.1]. Perhaps the former implies YHWH as communicated to Moses in Ex 3.14: "I am who am."

Vs. 14: And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, followed him on white horses.

Fine linen: *bussinos* as in 19.8; here it is *white* (*leukos*) as the rider's horse, vs. 11 as well as *pure* (*katharos*). The linen of 19.8 is similarly pure but *lampros*, *bright* in the sense of being luminous. Both adjectives are not joined by the conjunction "and" but are listed consecutively as if to indicate that they are both of the same nature.

Armies: *strateuma*, in contrast to those who maltreated Christ: "And Herod with his *soldiers* treated him with contempt and mocked him; then, arraying him in gorgeous apparel, he sent him back to Pilate" [Lk 23.11]. Two words worth observing here: *to array* or *periballo* as in vs. 13 and *gorgeous* or *lampros* as noted in the paragraph above. The *strateuma* are similar to heavenly legions: "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels" [Mt 23.11]? Also, *strateuma* parallel the hosts of heaven: "The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory" [Ps 24.10]!

The armies are also implied in 14.4 & 17.14 as consisting of human beings, not angels. The color of their horses is similarly *white* (*leukos*). The verb *to follow* (*akoloutheo*) as in 14.4: "these who *follow* the Lamb wherever he goes." Also cf. Jn 10.4: "And the sheep *follow* him, for they know his voice." This second verse may apply within the context of vs. 14 in that the rider/Shepherd calls out various commands to the troops under his command. The locusts of 9.7-10 which resemble horses are the exact opposite of these white horses.

Vs. 15: From his mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

Sword: romphaia as in 1.16, meaning a very large weapon to be wielded with two hands. Such a huge sword would be required to smite *nations* (ethnos), the Hebrew equivalent of which are the goym, Israel's traditional enemies. 11.2 has the nations treading the Jerusalem temple, presumably the first target of the rider. This romphaia may be contrasted with a verse where hostile forces are presented with similar armament: "spears and arrows, their tongues sharp *swords*" [Ps 57.4].

For "*rod* (rabdos) of iron," cf. 2.27 & 12.5 which is based upon Ps 2.9: "You shall break them with a *rod* of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Vs. 15 has the verb poimaino for *to rule* which basically means to function as a shepherd.

With regards to the wine press, cf. Is 63.2 (cited under vs. 13 above). Note that in this context the Lord effects a "day of vengeance," that is, a kairos or occasion which he intended. Also, cf. Lam 1.15: "The Lord has trodden as in a wine press the virgin daughter of Judah." This press consists of divine *fury* (thumos; cf. 12.12 & 14.10) in conjunction with *wrath* (orge; cf. 6.16); once combined in the limited, compact space of a wine press, these two elements are the strongest possible expression of divine displeasure. Their association with God as being pantokrator (noun used as adjective, *almighty*; cf. 1.8, 4.8, 11.17, 15.3, 16.7 & 14, 19.6) makes it even more ominous.

Vs. 16: On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, King of kings and Lord of lords.

The two-fold name, Basileos (*King*) and Lord (Kurios), to indicate divine sovereignty. Note its context, on the rider as engaged in battle which suggests that he is in the process of winning it, of not having possessed it. For another verse with this two-fold name, cf. 1 Tm 6.15.

The names are written on two places:

- 1) his *robe* (imation) as in vs. 13 which had been dipped in blood and is therefore red in color. For a verse with a certain parallel, cf. Jn 19.19: "Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the cross; it read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.'"
- 2) his *thigh* (meros): perhaps a banner of sorts. The rider's robe often may have been swept about him in various positions during the heat of battle, so putting the two-fold name on his thigh is an obvious place. Keep in mind that he is seated on a horse; hence his thigh was easily visible both to his troops and foes. It could be that one name was written on one thigh and the second on the other.

Vs. 17: Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly in midheaven, "Come, gather for the great supper of God.

A shift away from the rider on a white horse as indicated by the familiar kai. The angel's words are quoted here through the next verse. John next sees an angel standing in the sun, that is, in its very midst. To see this angel implies that he was either darker than the sun or brighter to discern his outline. He *calls* (krazo; implies a loud cry) not just birds but those in *mid heaven* (mesouranema); 8.13 locates in this area an eagle and 14.6 has present an angel, most likely implying birds of prey. This is borne out by a similar verse, Ezk 39.17: "Speak to the birds of every sort and to all beasts of the field, 'Assemble and come, gather from all sides to the sacrificial feast which I am preparing for you, a great sacrificial feast upon the mountains of Israel, and you shall eat flesh and drink blood.'"

A parallel reference to vs. 17 within the context of a meal, setting the tone for the Eucharist: "The bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh" [Jn 6.51]. The verb sunago (*to gather together*) implies forming an assembly. "When you are *assembled* and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus" [1 Cor 5.4].

Supper: deipnon as in vs. 9, the context of a marriage supper. Because this meal takes place at evening, the birds which are invited are likewise invited to come to roost for the night.

Vs. 18 gives the menu, as it were, for this supper: kings, captains, mighty men, horses with riders, the free and slave, the small and great...in other words, every category of people. "You may *eat* and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" [Lk 22.30]. The verb used here as in vs. 18 is *esthio*; the former deals with the present act of judging and the latter with it having been accomplished.

Vs. 19: And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who sits upon the horse and against his army.

The final battle between Christ and his foes (through vs. 21) as anticipated in 16.13-6. 17.17 was the last time the *beast* or therion had been mentioned, the intervening part having been taken up with the fall of Babylon/Rome and the victory of Christ. There kings entered into a pack with the beast to fight the Lamb which in the verse at hand is about to take place. In 11.7 the beast first makes its appearance, ascending from the bottomless pit. Perhaps the image of him and the armies gathering for war can be situated in this context of coming from the pit, that is, it is as though the kings and their forces were already present there with him.

These forces are directed against the ride on his horse and army; note the singular *army* (*strateuma*; cf. vs. 14) as opposed to the plurality of armies belonging to the earth's kings. The beast and his allies *gather* (*sunago*), that is, come together *against* (*meta*) the rider: they come to him and his forces, not the other way around.

Vs. 20: And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had worked the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with brimstone.

A terse description of the conclusive battle between Christ and the beast, perhaps in anticipation between Satan's loosening and the final conflict described in the next chapter. The verse at hand deals not so much with the armies (plural, as opposed to singular army of Christ as noted in vs. 19) but with their two leaders.

Piazo: *to capture* which implies being arrested. "So they sought to *arrest* him, but no one laid hands on him because his hour had not yet come" [Jn 7.30]. With the notion of a right time or *kairos* in mind, we might say that the *kairos* had come for the beast and false prophet to be arrested. Being apprehended suggests confinement which in this case should be familiar with the beast who came from the confinement of his bottomless pit.

Pseudoprophetos: *false prophet* mentioned in 16.13 or the second beast of 13.11-15. In 16.13 he along with the beast and dragon issue foul spirits resembling frogs; no mention is made in the verse at hand with regard to the dragon who is seized in 20.2. The false prophet was in the beast's *presence* or *enopion*; contrast this presence with two of many examples regarding the divine throne: "from the seven spirits who are *before* his throne" [1.4]. And: "they (twenty-four elders) cast their crowns *before* the throne" [4.10]. In contrast to the before-ness of this divine presence the false prophet works *signs* (*semerion*) with regard to the before-ness of the beast. "It (beast with two horns like a lamb) works great *signs*" [13.13].

The signs worked by the false prophet are intended not for the beast's entertainment but for the purpose of *deception* (*planao*, verb); cf. 18.23 where Babylon/Rome had deceived all nations by her sorcery, a term related to drugs. The deception is aimed at persons with the beast's *mark* (*charagma*; cf. 13.16, 14.9 & 11) and who worship its *image* (*eikon*).

Both beast and false prophet are cast alive into lake of fire (cf. 20.10 & 15). "For a burning place has long been prepared; yes, for the king it is made ready, its pyre made deep and wide, with fire and wood in abundance; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, kindles it" [Is 30.33]. This verse shows the source, the Lord's *breath* (*neshmath*), not *pneuma* but an outflow from it imparting life. "And breathed into his nostrils the

breath of life” [Gen 2.7]. With this in mind, note the paradox in vs. 20: *alive* (zao) in the lake of fire and neshmath which kindles the brimstone.

Vs. 21: And the rest were slain by the sword of him who sits upon the horse, the sword that issues from his mouth; and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

Another reference to romphaia (cf. vs. 15); associated with the rider’s mouth, such a huge sword may be taken as logoi (*words*) from which they issue. The birds were *gorged* (chortazo) as in vs. 17 with regard to the supper and Ezk 39.17 which was quoted there. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be *satisfied*” [Mt 5.6]. Contrast these dead bodies with in Lk 17.37 which refers to divine judgment: “Where the body is, there the *eagles* (aetos, more specifically, vulture; cf. 8.13, 12.14) will be gathered together.”

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Chapter Twenty

Vs. 1: Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain.

Kai (*and, then*) begins a new chapter to introduce the immediate descent from heaven of an angel. This *descent* (katabaino, verb) is in contrast with the *bottomless pit* (abussos); not only does the angel descend to earth, but the pit which lacks depth extends even further downwards (cf. 9.1 & 11, 11.7, 17.8). Compare this angel who descended with the star fallen from heaven which has the key to this abussos.

This angel holds two objects in his hand:

- 1) *key* or kleis to the abussos, meaning that he has been designated to guard its entrance. Two passages come to mind: “At the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life” [Gen 3.24]. And, “I will give you (Peter) the *keys* of the kingdom of heaven” [Mt 16.19]. Compare the plural keys of this verse with the singular key of vs. 1. Also cf. 1.18: “I have the *keys* of Death and Hades.”
- 2) “great *chain*” or alusis which refers to either handcuffs or leg irons. “And no one could bind him (man with an unclean spirit) anymore, even with a *chain*” [Mk 5.3]. The next verse refers to this restraint of the dragon.

Vs. 2: And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.

The *dragon* (drakon) is identified as an “ancient *serpent*” (ophis). He makes his first appearance in 12.3 as being colored red, having seven heads and ten horns and seven diadems on his multiple heads. Later in 12.9 the dragon is called “that ancient serpent who is the Devil and Satan.” Thus the verse at hand hearkens back to these two verses to recap, as it were, what transpired in the interim period.

The angel’s binding of the dragon suggests use of that alusis of vs. 1. If the dragon resembles a serpent and therefore has the sleek characteristic of a snake’s body, it would be difficult to attach any restraint. The time frame or kairos is one thousand years, symbolic of the martyrs’ reign with Jesus Christ.

Vs. 3: and threw him into the pit and shut it and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be loosed for a little while.

A continuation of the angel’s action begun in the previous verse. Here the abussos is not only shut but *sealed* (sphragizo), a sign of authority. “And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den, and the king *sealed* it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel” [Dan 6.17]. And, “So they went and made the sepulcher secure by *sealing* the stone and setting a guard” [Mt 27.66]. In the second verse Christ’s tomb is secured primarily by the seal and then by the guard,

thereby indicating the importance of this seal.

Once the symbolic term of a thousand years has been reached, the seal is broken (cf. 6.1 where the Lamb opens one of the seven seals) and the dragon emerges. This period of time comes to an *end* (teleo), he is loosened. The verb teleo connotes the bringing to perfection or attaining the right time or kairos of a situation. "The mystery of God...should be *fulfilled*" [10.7].

Luo: *to loosen*; compare alusis (*chain*) in vs. 1 which has alpha privative to indicate that which is not loosened. This setting free after the kairos of a thousand years sets the stage for another kairos of a "little *while*" (chronos) described in vss. 7-10. Chronos or chronological time is used which from the divine point of view is limited. "For a day in your courts is better than a *thousand* elsewhere" [Ps 84.10].

It is helpful to keep in mind that when various periods of time are mentioned in Revelation, John perceived them as one when he "was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" [1.10], that is, Sunday, which itself is the primary Christian kairos compared with the other six days (of creation).

Vs. 4: Then I saw thrones and seated on them were those to whom judgment was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

John's vision consists of two sections in this lengthy verse. First he saw thrones, not the first time he beheld them. Due to the importance of this word in Revelation, the most important references are listed as follows: 1.7; 2.13 (Satan's); 3.21, 22; 4.2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10; 5.1, 6, 7, 11; 6.16; 7.9, 10, 11, 15, 17; 8.3; 12.5; 13.2 (dragon's); 14.3; 16.10 (beast's), 17; 19.4, 5; 20.4, 11, 12; 21.3, 5; 22.1, 3.

The number of thrones of this verse is not specified yet belong to persons to whom *judgment* (krima) had been entrusted. "Come, I will show you the *judgment* of the great harlot who is seated upon many waters" [17.1], that is, judgment against Babylon/Rome. "...and sit on thrones *judging* (krino) the twelve tribes of Israel" [Lk 22.30]. Christ is speaking about his twelve disciples, one for each tribe. Also, cf. Mk 10.40: "But to sit at my right hand or my left (i.e., on thrones) is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." In brief, the plurality of thrones in vs. 4 can infer that those sitting on them will participate in the disciples' judgment.

The second part of John's vision pertain to *souls* (psuche) of persons who had been beheaded, possibly having in mind those souls under the altar (cf. 6.9), although they are not specified as having been beheaded. The group in the verse at hand did not worship the beast nor accept his mark (cf. 13.16-7). "He (King Herod) sent and had John beheaded in the prison" [Mt 14.10]. Pelekizo is used in vs. 4, *to behead* with an axe, the accepted form of Roman capital punishment; apocephalizo (a term with a more literal meaning) is used with regard to John and does not necessarily imply an axe.

The coming to life of those who had been beheaded is reminiscent of Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones which God brought back to life (37.1-14), "an exceedingly great host" (vs. 10). Once revived, these persons *reigned* (basileuo) with Christ. "And has made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall *reign* on earth" [5.10], that is, those ransomed for God (cf. 5.9). Like the dragon of 20.2, their reign lasted a thousand years, perhaps to show continuity of a kairos event between these two opposing groups. Note that the aorist is used, "reigned," which could be taken as "they began to reign." Keeping in mind the trans-temporal dimension of John's vision, chronological time is subordinate the drama of eternity which he is doing in Revelation.

Those who had been beheaded may be seen in light of Jn 5.28-9: "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment." This *hour* (hora) is not unlike the thousand years in that both dimensions of time are symbolic of an eternal reality and are not to be taken literally.

Vs. 5: The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection.

This group (loipos, *rest*) of people, generally considered as the wicked, is distinct from those who had been beheaded and reigned with Christ a thousand years. During this interim period they remained dead and therefore off the scene while the martyred group were in the process of reigning. The verb *to end* (teleo) was noted in vs. 3, again in conjunction with a thousand years and referring to the dragon. No clear indication is given as to the act of coming to life but keep in mind Ezk 37.1-14 cited in the verse above.

Here the kairos of one thousand years is equated with the first resurrection; this implies a second to follow in the near future. "Your dead shall live, their bodies shall rise, O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For you dew is a dew of light, and on the land of the shades you will let it fall" [Is 26.19].

Note that vs. 4 mentions "souls of those who had been beheaded" whereas vs. 5 simply has "the rest of the dead" who presumably lack psuche and are a type of living dead.

Vs. 6: Blessed and holy is he who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they shall reign with him a thousand years.

Vss. 4 & 5 spoke of two groups, martyrs for Christ and the "rest," both of whom are associated with one thousand years in different ways. Vs. 5 infers that the first resurrection (i.e., those lacking psuche) are slated for condemnation. Vs. 6 seems to contradict this, but note use of the word *share* (echon meros, *having part*) in the first resurrection. Perhaps these people had psuche to distinguish them from the "rest" who did not. Furthermore, the words makarios (*blessed*) and hagios (*holy*) are used, another indication of being endowed with psuche.

"Second death" refers not so much to physical death but to an eternal one; death cannot exert its *power* (in the sense of authority) or exousia, so the first resurrection is more in accord with that of Jesus Christ. "That through death he might destroy him who has the *power* (kratos) of death, that is, the devil" [Heb 2.14].

There is a close correlation between death's lack of exousia and being a *priest* (hierus), a fact announced in 5.9-10. Note the separation between God and Christ; 5.10 has priest related to God alone. Perhaps the distinction is due to mention of the first resurrection in vss. 4-6, that is, as related to Christ's resurrection which fulfilled his priestly sacrifice on the cross. "And might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross" [Eph 1.16]. The priests will *reign* (basileuo) for a thousand years, that is, their priestly offerings are a type of rule during this kairos period which is akin to the reign of the persons who had been beheaded, vs. 4 (i.e., were like priests by having sacrificed themselves). Note that their reign is in the aorist tense whereas that of the priests is in the future tense. Perhaps those who gave up their lives have effected their sacrifice once and for all...perhaps the priests who did not sacrifice themselves need to perform their sacrifice for the kairos of one thousand years.

Vs. 7: And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be loosed from his prison.

Another use of the verb teleo, *to end*, here in conjunction with the thousand years. The connotation is that this kairos has come to completion. This verb obviously plays an important role in Revelation, especially towards its conclusion. Teleo-as-completion sets the stage for Satan (as ancient serpent and Devil, vs. 2) to be *loosed* (luo): "After that, he must be *loosed* for a little while" [vs. 3]. In that verse a parallel was drawn between the verb luo and alusis or the *chain* which bound Satan, after which he was cast into the abussos. Compare this loosening which is a type of ascent with 11.7, the first appearance of the beast: "And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that ascends from the bottomless pit will make war upon them and conquer them and kill them."

Phukake: *prison* as in 18.2 where it is translated as "haunt" or Babylon which is fallen. Thus the fallen nature

of Babylon/Rome has a parallel with the bottomless pit from which Satan emerges.

Vs. 8: and will come out to deceive the nations which are at the four corners of the earth, that is, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea.

A continuation of action begun in previous verse where Satan's purpose is to *deceive* (planao). Cf. 12.9 (ancient serpent, Devil & Satan), 13.14 (the other beast), 18.23 (Babylon/Rome's sorcery), 19.20 (the beast). As noted elsewhere, planao fundamentally means to wander aimlessly, a sense to be mindful of in the context of vs. 8 which has nations at earth's four corners. These quadrants can represent the four cardinal points of the compass (north, south, east, west) which are firmly established; to have them "wander" signifies that the accepted bounds of familiar space and time are set in disarray.

Although the earth has four corners, vs. 8 mentions two nations situated there (i.e., two in four), Gog and Magog. Chapters 38 & 39 of Ezekiel are oracles describing in apocalyptic language the coming of Israel's foes from the north, possibly Gog in the service of Babylon (which earlier in Revelation was a symbol for Rome). While Magog has no specific locale, 38.1 has the Lord set Ezekiel's face "toward God, of the land of Magog" to prophecy against him. In the context of the verse at hand, prophecy can parallel deception-as-wandering (planao). The end result of Ezekiel's prophecy is "to set my (Lord's) glory among the nations" [39.21] and to "restore the fortunes of Jacob" [vs. 25]. Chapter 40 through the end of Ezekiel recounts the vision of the restored Jerusalem temple and land which is akin to the conclusion of Revelation.

Vs. 8 puts the forces of Gog and Magog "like the sand of the sea." Cf. Jos 11.4: "And they came out, with all their troops, a great host, in number like the sand that is upon the seashore, with very many horses and chariots." Contrast this multitude of evil forces with Israel's promised descendants: "I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore" [Gen 22.17]. This divine promise may be taken as a kind of foreshadowing of God's victory over the forces of evil in Revelation.

Vs. 9: And they marched up over the broad earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city; but fire came down from heaven and consumed them.

Anabaino: *marching up*, a verb which connotes the direct act of ascending and the indirect act of planao (*to deceive/wander*) by Satan of vs. 7 and here referring to Gog and Magog. More specifically, not only do they come up (perhaps from the abussos?) but go over the "*broad earth*" (platos), the addition of this noun to indicate the pervasiveness of such deception. For platos used regarding the New Jerusalem, cf. 21.16: "and he measured the city with his rod...its length and *breadth* and height are equal." For platos used regarding spiritual breadth, cf. Eph 3.18: may have power to comprehend...what is the *breadth* and length and height and depth."

Parembole: *camp*, as in the military sense and often the LXX word referring to the Israelites in the desert: "Then Moses brought the people out of the *camp* to meet God" [Ex 19.17]. In the verse at hand, the saints are implied as being out in the field waiting for an enemy to attack.

"*Beloved city* (Jerusalem):" agapao, the verbal root for what is well known as agape, love associated with Christ's message. Note the juxtaposition of a temporary dwelling (parembole) with the permanence of a city which is surrounded by that "wandering" (deception) of planao noted above. Contrast with Israel surrounding Jericho, chapter 6 of Joshua.

Despite this surrounding by Gog and Magog which traces its roots in Satan (vs. 7), divine help comes from heaven. "With direct reference to Gog, cf. Ezk 38.22: "I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples that are with him, torrential rains and hailstones, fire and brimstone." This image is also reminiscent of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Vs. 10: and the devil who has deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

A continuation of the previous verse which sums up several elements which have already been considered. Note that the way vs. 10 puts it, “where the beast and the false prophet were.” This can connote not only that both were alive in such an inhospitable place but it is their natural element, something akin to the verb *katoikeo* as noted several times, for example, “I know where you *dwell*, where Satan’s throne is” [2.13].

Basanizo: *to torment* as in 14.10: “He shall be *tormented* with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.” The permanence of such torment, which corresponds to the permanence connoted by *katoikeo* just noted, is emphasized by adding “forever and ever” to the cycle of day and night.

Vs. 11: Then I saw a great white throne and him who sat upon it; from his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.

John saw a throne in 4.2 though its color is not specified. The color *white* (*leukos*) signifies purity as with regards to the white horse of 19.11 and those belonging to his calvary (cf. 19.14). John also sees a person sitting on this throne who is not described but is assumed to have the characteristics of 4.3: he “appeared like jasper and carnelian and round the throne was a rainbow that looked like an emerald.”

The throne has no location but is the central reality at hand because what constitutes our physical existence disappears, namely, earth and sky. Note that they fled from his *presence* (*prosopon*, fundamentally means face) which is not unlike the sentiment expressed in 6.16: “Fall on us and hide us from the *face* of him who is seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.” We may say that the earth fled downward (natural direction of anything heavy) and that the sky fled upward (natural direction of anything light).

Topos: *place* or physical location, almost used ironically because earth and sky are places and no topos “is found for them.” The aorist passive of the verb here (*eurisko*) suggests that they have become orphans; they lack refuge and are abandoned (cf. 21.1).

Vs. 12: And I saw the dead, great and small standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books by what they had done.

The flight of earth and sky is something akin to the separation of the Red Sea while Israel passed through. In vs. 12 their flight leaves visible the dead, as it were. “And Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore” [Ex 14.30]. The adjectives “great” and “small” are intended to include each person who had lived. The fact that they were standing *before* (*enopion*; compare with *prosopon* as in the last verse) the throne means that they are in a position resembling an army at attention before their leader. “And they lived and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great host” [Ezk 37.10].

Biblion: *book* in the sense of a scroll as used in 5.1 and other places in Revelation. For a precedence, cf. Dan 7.9-10: “As I looked, thrones were placed and one that was ancient of days took his seat...and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.” Vs. 12 simply has “books” without specifying their content, but their opening suggests that they were unrolled. The verb is aorist passive, as though the books had opened themselves. This same passivity applies to “another book” identified as the one of life as in 3.5: “He who conquers shall be clad thus in white garments, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life.” Note the association of white clothing and life; refer to the white throne in the verse at hand.

Krino: *to judge*; here the verb is the third aorist passive verb in vs. 12 followed by a passive participle (“was written”). Thus a direct correspondence exists between the open books-dead-judge-written. That which was written had been rolled up in the sense that it had not yet been revealed. Such revelation takes the place, as it were, of the earth and sky which had fled.

Vs. 13: And the sea gave up the dead in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead in them, and all were judged by what they had done.

Sea, Death and Hades voluntarily relinquish their dead (there is no explicit mention of earth). For reference to the second two, cf. 6.8 which is in conjunction with the fourth sea. There Death has a pale horse followed by Hades. The act of *giving up* the dead (simple verb *didomi*, *to give*) does not necessarily mean handing them over but in a submissive fashion by their withdrawal much like the flight of earth and sky in vs. 11.

Compare the aorist passive of *krino* (*to judge*) with the active nature of “done” which in Greek reads “according to their works.” Cf. Mt 25.31-46 for a description of the last judgment where Christ identifies himself with the hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick and those in prison. Those who saw this identity went into eternal life and those who failed to see it, into eternal punishment (cf. vs. 49). With this two-fold “going” in mind, it is not to the sea, Death nor Hades but into the lake of fire of the next verse.

Vs. 14: Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

Earth and sky had vanished yet no mention is made of the sea; Death and Hades were *cast* (*ballo*, aorist passive verb again) into the “lake of fire” (cf. vs. 10) where the beast and false prophet were already present. As for the “second death,” cf. 2.11: “He who conquers shall not be hurt by the second death.” Mt 10.28 relates to the second death: “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” The sea which had also given up its is not condemned nor cast into the fiery lake.

Vs. 15: and if any one’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

A continuation of the previous verse. Here *name* (*onoma*) is equated with being inscribed in the book/scroll of life. The aorist passive *eurisko* is used (*to find*), which makes this process of finding all the more mysterious with regard to the source or one who had done the writing. The preposition *en* (*in*) is used here; compare it with the preposition *eis* (*into*) used concerning the “lake of fire” into which a person was thrown, second aorist passive verb (*ballo*) as in the previous verse.

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Chapter Twenty-One

Vs. 1: Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

