

Making Comparisons (Ezekiel, Daniel, Gospel of St Matthew and Revelation)

Introduction

Both the Bible and those spiritual books that came after it are full...chock full...of comparisons. That is to say, they take examples from common life familiar to everyone and use them as a means to express what cannot be expressed. This fundamental premise is what this article is about. You can go through all the books of the Bible and come away with a fairly substantial list of such examples. Originally the intent of this article was to focus upon this human desire to make comparisons as found in the Book of Revelation only. Compared with other biblical books, it's loaded with exotic, even outlandish comparisons, a testament to St John's vivid imagination. Also it's interesting to compare Revelation with his Gospel, two books that don't seem to come from the same author.

A quick glance of the various comparisons in Revelation immediately led to two obvious words, "like" and "as." Often this can be rendered as either the adjective *homoios* or the adverb *hos*. Should another word be used, it will be noted when it occurs. Actually there are so many references to "like" in Revelation that it could be called The Book of Likes. Obviously making comparisons is applicable to all the books of the Bible. Shortly afterwards I decided to take a look at two books from the Hebrew scriptures, the prophets Ezekiel and Daniel. I singled them out not just because of their extraordinary character but a certain affinity they have with each other. In all three we can witness the authors trying as best they can to come to grips with their encounter with transcendent reality.

Another book deemed be helpful to this list, one representative of the life of Jesus Christ. I chose the Gospel of St Matthew because he's the most Semitic of all four authors. Special attention will be made to the parables, examples *par excellence* of making comparisons between the physical and transcendent realities.

The beauty of "like" and similar words is that the authors engaged in making a comparison have genuine insight into what they are seeing or hearing (or any other sense). At the same time they do not have the fullness of what they are

perceiving. That means they has to circumambulate what strikes them and say all the time “like, like, like.” You can almost feel “like” as well as “as” coming off as stuttering but a stuttering which has hit up something very real and causes great joy. At the same time there’s a realization that one hasn’t gotten the full picture. No problem. It’s accompanied by a sense that sooner or later that will come. This is what lays at the heart of the document at hand, a combination of fullness and emptiness or better, partial fullness.

Obviously not all references to “like” can or should be presented. In a word, it would result in an overload. The scriptural verses themselves will be in **the color red** to set them off for quick identification. With this in mind, it seems best to start with the Book of Ezekiel and work forward. Appropriate verses cited **in red** are followed by brief notations intended to shed some light on them. However, keep in mind that the goal is to read these verses in the spirit of *lectio divina*, the over-arching intent of this document which applies to all others on this homepage. Any other information can be garnered from appropriate sources.

As the text moves along, often there are similar reoccurring words. When this happens, the reoccurring word is followed by a + sign to indicate the last time it has appeared even if its in the same verse. Both *homoios* and *hos* are not included because they occur so frequently.

While this document deals with two books from the Hebrew Scriptures and two from the New Testament, it’s posted under the banner of the latter. Reason: as noted above, the original intent was to example the Book of Revelation.

The Book of Ezekiel

The so-called throne-chariot vision comprising Chapter One is one big “like” by reason of the incredible imagery involved. Perhaps by focusing upon the comparisons at hand we may obtain better insight into this remarkable vision for in a way, all the other “likes” find their source in it. We can start off with 1.5: **And from the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the form of men.** *Dmuth* is the noun for likeness, alternatively as similitude and appearance. The verbal root *damah* has several

basic meanings: to compare to, to be silent and to cut off. Thus it implies a certain finality or definiteness. In the case at hand, Ezekiel would admit it's the best he can do trying to wrap his mind around this vision.

As for the *dmuth* at hand, it's from (the Hebrew lacks the verb 'came') the very middle or *tok* of the stormy wind and great cloud of vs. 4. And so *dmuth* has origins in impenetrability and consists of four living creatures. Two words similar to *dmuth* come next:

-*Mir'eh* or appearance which derives from *ra'ah*, the common verb to see as it pertains to the four creatures.

-*Dmuth* or the second use of the noun likeness as it pertains to men.

Ezekiel sees more clearly that his vision assumes a *dmuth* which is more like things easily recognizable. 1.10 puts it as such: **As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man in front; the four had the face of a lion on the right side, the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and the four had the face of an eagle at the back.** Here *dmuth* applies to that which is instantly recognizable, the faces of a man and three other animals, *pane*h or face, also as that which is turned toward anyone. Such turning implies that it can move in any one of numerous directions as the quote at hand suggests.

As for the *dmuth* at hand, it's pretty much in the shape of a square with the faces (the Hebrew text has the plural) of a man in front whereas the other three are on the sides as well as the back¹. Though the plurality of faces for each being isn't given, they suggest a watching which is thorough as well as penetrating. If, for example, the faces of an angel were included, they would make Ezekiel uncomfortable. Now he can gaze without recrimination upon all four in their multiplicity.

1.13 reads as follows: **In the midst of the living creatures there was something that looked like burning coals of fire, like torches moving to and fro among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.** The square just delineated with four faces—multiple faces on each of the four sides—has something like the appearance of (*dmuth* +) of burning coals. The **RSV** adds “in the very midst” whereas the Hebrew has *mir'eh* or

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“Back” is lacking in the Hebrew text.

appearance. Such coals intimate a power supply for the fire at hand and can apply to sacrifices that will be made later on.

In addition to coals the text has torches or *lapyd* also as a lamp or flame going in between (*halak* and *byn*) the four creatures. They are described again as living so to set them off from simply as images. As for the fire provided presumably by the torches, they are bright or *nogah* whose splendor is that of lightning which suggests an intensity so strong it is clear to everyone.

As for this flashing, the next verse (1.14) says that the living creatures are not static as they are directed toward the front with their multiple faces as well as to the left, right and behind. They move about almost with a certain violence, literally as to run and to return, *ratsa'* and *shuv*, all within the confined space of that block, if you will. At the same time each did this within the further confines of their own space without violating that of their fellows.

1.16 shift attention to the appearance of the wheels as well as to their construction, *mir'eh* + and *mahseh* (also deed, action): **As for the appearance of the wheels and their construction: their appearance was like the gleaming of a chrysolite; and the four had the same likeness, their construction being as it were a wheel within a wheel.** This verse continues with the theme of brightness applied to the wheels (*'ophan*), the number of which is four corresponding to each end of the block at hand. As for gleaming or *bayn* (also as eye) they gave forth, it is a greenish-yellow color similar to the gem called chrysolite. Each of the four wheels had the same likeness (*mir'eh* + corresponding to their appearance in the same verse). It seems that the greenish-yellow color applies to the wheels' construction (*mahseh* +) as being one within the other, *betok* or *tok* with the preposition *b-* (in) prefaced to it. There seems no limit to how far inward these wheels go, the idea being that the block at hand is extremely mobile; not only that they are very fast.

1.22 attention is on the outside of the four living creatures: **Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of a firmament shining like crystal, spread out above their heads.** *Dmuth* + or likeness here is that of the firmament, *raqyah* or that which is spread out and fixed as in Gn 1.6: "And God said, 'Let their be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the water waters.'" In other words, *raqyah* is both a covering in the form of an arch as well as separator between the waters which are an image of chaos,

present above and below and always threatening. In the verse at hand, *raqyah* is a kind of mini-firmament for the four living creatures. Also note the continued theme of brightness, this time as a crystal or *hayn* + which is spread out or *natah* just above their heads, also as to extend or unfold which is precisely what *raqyah* is doing.

1.24: **And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many waters, like the thunder of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of a host; when they stood still, they let down their wings.** Ezekiel adds the going of the four living creatures after they made their appearance to him. The sound (*qol*) they make is described by means of three instances of “like” or *k-*. As for *qol*, it’s alternate meaning as voice lends it a certain personal air:

- Many waters
- Thunder of Almighty or *Shaday* (lacks reference to *qol*) along with tumult or *hamulah* as they went or *halak* +
- Host or *machaneh* or encampment

This threefold sound or *qol* ceased when the four living creatures stood still and let down their wings, *hamad* and *raphah* also as to take a position and to cast down.

1.26 shifts to the image of a throne: **And above the firmament over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness as it were of a human form.** As noted with regard to the firmament or *raqyah* + of Gn 1.6 which separates the waters and is above the heads of the four living creatures, we have two instances of a likeness or *dmuth* +:

-Of a throne or *kise'*. As in this case *dmuth* pertains to something familiar but may not be exactly like it. This throne is subject to yet another comparison, an appearance or *mir'eh* + of a sapphire which is blue in color.

-Of a form (*mir'eh* +) which was human, '*adam*. If the throne weren't high enough, still higher is something human-like. It seems this is the first time a human is associated with transcendence or above the firmament.

1.28 is significant in that Ezekiel associates this appearance of the four living creatures with the Lord and is quoted in part to bring this out: **Such was the**

appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking. Again both *mir'eh* and *dmuth* + or appearance and likeness are used to describe the divine glory or *kavod* also as splendor. The human form or person above the throne is speaking, *davar* as uttering a communication. Thus ends Chapter One which must have astonished Ezekiel as well as his readers that the Lord who is usually taken as completely transcendent has assumed this visible form with a man in that place. Naturally Ezekiel is eager to hear the *davar* which begins Chapter Two.

In Chapter Two the Lord as *'adam* addresses Ezekiel as *ben-'adam* or son of the same *'adam* in which he appeared. Not only that, while speaking or *davar* + the Spirit or *Ruach* entered Ezekiel thereby setting him on his feet. Note that enabled Ezekiel to hear (*shamah*) this *davar*. It seems he didn't hear the first *davar*. Also note the hiphil of *hamad* +, caused Ezekiel to stand; he didn't stand on his own.

3.23: So I arose and went forth into the plain; and, lo, the glory of the Lord stood there like the glory which I had seen by the river Chebar; and I fell on my face. The Hebrew has valley instead of plain where the divine *kavod* + or glory stood (*hamad* +) right there before Ezekiel. *Ky-* or "as" is prefaced to *kavod* and serves to remind him of the visions he had seen at the river Chabar in 1.1 which opens this book. In that verse the noun *mir'eh* + is used with the verb *ra'ah* + from which it is derived.

8.2: Then I beheld, and, lo, a form that had the appearance of a man; below what appeared to be his loins it was fire, and above his loins it was like the appearance of brightness, like gleaming bronze. Insertion of *hineh* or behold serves to enhance the suddenness of what Ezekiel sees or *ra'ah* +, both *dmuth* and *mir'eh* +. As in other instances, *dmuth* is the shape or container within which is the *mir'eh* or that which is seen. This *mir'eh* has two other instances, fire and brightness.

40.3: When he brought me there, behold, there was a man whose appearance was like bronze with a line of flax and a measuring reed in his hand; and he was standing in the gateway. The location is not mentioned by name but presumably Jerusalem, the Lord's hand being responsible for bringing Ezekiel there. *Hineh* + or behold is with regard to an unidentified man, *mir'eh* + again as appearance in his regard which resembles bronze. This metal has a certain

gleam about it which isn't bright but mellow, making the man's *mir'eh* less frightening but nevertheless not detracting from a sense of mystery.

43.2: **And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the east; and the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with his glory.** *Hineh* + or behold here connotes a suddenness of the divine glory or *kavod* + coming from the east, the direction of sunrise. It produces a sound or *qol* + resembling many waters, *ky-* + being prefaced to the second *qol*. And so the Lord brings his *kavod* as the sun and causes the earth to shine with it, 'or also the verbal root for light.

The Book of Daniel

The notations with regard to the Book of Daniel are taken from a document **Expansions on the Book of Daniel** also posted on this homepage.

3.25: **He answered, "But I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods."**

While both Nebuchadnezzar and his counselors agreed that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had been cast into the furnace (they didn't seem concerned about those who were burnt while doing it to them), the king saw four men. They were loose or *shere'*, that is, untied from "their mantles, their tunics, their hats and their other garments" noted in vs. 21. Obviously the flames had dissolved their bonds while not harming the wearers. *Shere'* is found last in 2.22 with another meaning, "dwells."

Furthermore, the three companions are not hurt, *chaval* (the only use of this word in the Bible), as they walk about within the furnace which, as noted earlier, must have been one the largest around due to its central location in Babylon and used for making bricks in the city's unending construction projects.

As for the fourth man who remains unidentified, his appearance or *damah* is singled out, the noun being close to the Hebrew verbal root *damah*, to be like. It occurs one other time, 7.5: "And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear." To both King Nebuchadnezzar and his counselors this fourth man

resembled a “son of the gods.” They must have had an idea of what such a being looked like from their tradition even though it could be an illusion due to the leaping of flames. Refer to vs. 28 where Nebuchadnezzar calls this being an angel.

4.8: There is in your kingdom a man in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him, and King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans and astrologers.

Everyone knew Daniel’s Babylonian name of Belteshazzar which the king uses, perhaps in deference to those whom he speaking. After all, Daniel is a foreigner exalted to a high governmental position and in the king’s favor. Nevertheless, reliance upon a foreigner, no matter how wise, could rouse suspicion and, course, jealousy. All the while Daniel has not made an appearance but must have been aware of what was transpiring.

Daniel had no choice by to be called Belteshazzar who is identified with the god of King Nebuchadnezzar. Furthermore, being put on a pedestal was embarrassing, for to be thought of such could set him up for a target of vengeance by the Babylonian religious officials. They would try to get at him behind the back of their king and most likely were already hatching a plot to eliminate him. If they tricked him up, it would be easier to go after Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

Ruach + is the noun for spirit, and the text, however, reads literally “the spirit of the Holy God.”

7.13: I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.

As far as this dream goes, it is the last time Daniel uses the verb *chazah* ('saw') which implies that while asleep, his heart and mind were awake to divine communication through night visions. Now Daniel sees...'*aru* (behold) a person resembling the son of man. This is the first (and last) time such a man appears in the Book of Daniel, perhaps the person who will restore the exiled Israelites in Babylon to their homeland. Note the word “like” which means Daniel had an

inkling of this son of man, perhaps a messiah or sorts. In 8.17 Daniel himself is addressed as such: “Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end.”

This mysterious person arrives on the scene “with the clouds of heaven,” that is, he descends to the court after the four beasts had been judged and dispensed with. There comes to mind the appearance of Jesus Christ in Mt 24.30: “and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” This appearance is preceded by people seeing the sign of the Son of man in heaven, *semeion* be taken as a signal or token.

The son of man in Daniel presents himself at court and then approaches the Ancient of Days (capital letters in the **RSV**). While drawing near, he has the full attention of the thousands and ten of thousands, all focused on what was to transpire although they knew the reason for his coming. Upon reaching the throne, the son of man is presented or *qerev*, a verb which means to draw near but in the sense of being escorted by some of the vast assembly present.

10.6: His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the noise of a multitude.

The physical description here and as begun in the previous verse is reminiscent of the bride in the Song of Songs (Chapter Five) describing her spouse and has some echos of Jesus Christ in Revelation. The man whom Daniel beholds—again, not identified—has five characteristics, the second of the pair being given here:

1) Body = beryl. *Tarshysh* is precious stone identified with Tarshish or modern Spain at the other end of the Mediterranean Sea. From there King Hiram brought precious commodities for King Solomon’s temple and to there the prophet Jonah intended to flee. Beryl comprises one of the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem: “The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every jewel...the eighth beryl” [Rev 21.19-20].

2) Face = appearance of lightning. *Mar’eh* means appearance and is used with *baraq* or lightning. “And the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning” [Ezk 1.13].

3) Eyes = flaming torches or literally, “torches (*lapyd*) of fire.” “And for

Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until her vindication goes forth as brightness and her salvation as a burning torch" [Is 62.1].

4) Arms and legs = gleam of burnished bronze. *Hayn* or gleam is found in a similar image as the previous example, Ezk 1.16: "their (wheels) appearance was like the gleaming of a chrysolite." This noun more commonly refers to an eye. The adjective *qalal* means burnished and has one other reference in line with the other two from Ezekiel (1.7): "and they (four living creatures) sparkled like burnished bronze."

5) Words = noise of multitude. Both sound or *qol* + and words or *davar* + go hand-in-hand, if you will. That is to say, *qol* as voice produces words. *Hamon* means multitude and can apply to a tumult.

10.16: And behold, one in the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me, "O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength.

The unidentified man who had spoken with Daniel seems to have disappeared, being replaced by another who is introduced by *hineh* + or behold. This new being seems to be a man..."in the likeness"...or *dmuth* +, the only use of this term in the book of Daniel. Perhaps the being who first appeared to Daniel decided his presence was too much and wished to send someone else, more human, if you will, to continue the revelation. The touching of Daniel's lips can be taken as a gesture of making him pure as is the case of Isaiah. "Behold, this (burning coal) has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin forgiven" [Is 6.7].

Daniel addresses this person as "my Lord" ('*Adony*) who could be the Lord God himself although this isn't spelled out. Anyway, Daniel spontaneously pours out his complaint about how pains came upon him by reason of the vision, *tsyr*, which also means a messenger. Perhaps without realizing it, Daniel saw a connection between the vision" or *mar'eh* + and his *tsyr* (messenger), the two being the same.

Hatsar means retain and is used with respect to *koach* which includes his whole being. To date Daniel has witnessed a lot for one man, including visions as they pertained to Babylonian kings. At the same time no resolution seems to appear on the horizon despite promises made which must have made it difficult for him to continue in his position in the government.

12.3: And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

Sakal is the verb for wise and connotes a looking at or a beholding. Thus the wisdom within these persons—presumably they are those who will awake to everlasting life—will then shine or *zahar*, a verb which connotes brilliance, not just the giving off of light. More generally, though, this verb means to admonish or to give a warning.

The brightness at hand is unlike anything upon earth which is why it's compared with the firmament or *raqyah* +. While this spreading-out is visible both by day and by night, stars are seen only at night. The verb “turn to righteousness” is *tsadaq*. In other words, those who do this conversion are more worthy of honor than those who are turned.

The Gospel of St Matthew

6.9: Pray then like this: “Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.”

This verse contains the opening words to the Our Father and has *houtos hun*, literally as “thus then.” While strictly speaking not a comparison, the two words deal with *proseuchomai* or to pray in the sense of making a petition. Jesus sets this off against the Gentiles who are fond of many words, *battalogo* which essentially means to stammer in the sense of rattling off words. And so “thus then” is a way to compare such stammering with making petition.

7.24: Every one then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock

The key word here is *homoioo*, to make like or to compare. The person first hears and does (*akouo* and *poieo*), both being done separately but joined with the interval of something akin to a nanosecond. They are effected so quickly as pretty close to being one. Such *homoioo* brings to mind not just anyone who builds his own house on a rock but a person who is wise or *phronimos* or having understanding associated with prudence and thoughtfulness. The verb at hand is *oikodomeo* which consists of two words pertaining to a dwelling: *oikos* or

house and *demo* or to construct usually associated with such dwellings. And so a homey verb embodies the more abstract or general nature of *akouo* and *poieo*.

7.26: **And every one who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand.**

This verse is the opposite of the previous one, using both *akouo* and *poieo* again but nullifies the latter. And so plain *akouo* is equivalent to (*homoioo* +) the act of building, *oikodomeo* + and the twofold sense it implies using sand as the foundation. In other words, the man who is wise (*phronimos* +) is in stark contrast with the man who is *moros* or downright stupid. And so there's a parallel between *phronimos* and *moros* with rock and sand.

11.16: **But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places and calling to their playmates.**

Jesus is putting forth out loud a rhetorical question with regard to how people felt about John the Baptist as well as himself as Son of man (cf. vs. 19). He's asking how to liken or *homoioo* + the current generation and answers his own rhetorical question. It resembles (the adjective *homoios*) children in a public area calling out to their playmates. They come off somewhat miffed because they played the pipe for them but they didn't not respond puppet-like.

13.31: **Another parable he put before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field.**

Two words prefaced with the preposition *para-*, essentially as beside: *parabole* and *paratithemi*, parable and to put before. Here Jesus likens (the adjective *homoios*) the kingdom of heaven to a grain of mustard. It's the smallest of all seeds yet grows into a tree. I.e., growth is the fundamental idea behind *homoios*, from small to large.

13.33: **He told them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."**

A parable dealing with growth similar to the previous one with the adjective *homoios*, this containing leaven which makes bread rise. I.e., the parable deals with something to eat.

13.43: Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Here those who are *dikaios* also as upright are compared (the adverb *hos* also ‘as’) to the light of the sun, *eklampeo* or to shine out (*ek-*, from). They do this in the kingdom of the Father. Because of the importance of this, Jesus asks his listeners to pay close attention.

13.44: The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Here we have a shift from the previous verse (‘kingdom of their Father’) to “kingdom of heaven.” The adjective *homoios* assumes a hidden presence after the image of a treasure or *thesauros* in a field. Both *thesauros* and it being in a field suggest a double hiding, *krupto* as to keep from being made visible. The man who finds it seems to have come upon it in a haphazard manner. The parable doesn’t say he examines its contents but presumes it because he covers it up, *krupto* again. He does this secretly and then purchases the field careful not to arouse suspicion from the one who owned it. I.e., the treasure is in someone else’s possession and is not one’s own, requiring a certain stealth to make it one’s own.

13.45: Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls.

This and the next parable begin with *palin* or again to show the rapid presentation of parables at hand. *Homoios* makes an association with a professional merchant on the hunt not just for pearls but for those which are fine, *kalos* fundamentally as beautiful. Such pearls stand out among others of lesser value. Here the verb *zeteo* or to search is what the parable is all about, not having found the kingdom of heaven.

13.47: Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net which was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind.

The second use of *palin* +as noted in the previous section. Here *homoios* is with respect to a net which gathers every kind of fish. That is to say, the person

casting it has no idea of what he will catch, if anything. In other words, he's taking a gamble.

13.52: And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

Jesus usually is in conflict with religious authorities, scribes included. However, here he singles out one particular scribe which he must have encountered but goes unidentified. The key word here is *matheteuo* or to become a pupil with regard to the kingdom of heaven. Such a man is like or *homoios* a householder, *oikodespotes* which can be a slave given responsibility over the owner's entire property as well as other slaves. In the case at hand, this person is in charge of the *thesauros* + or storage, bringing out what is new as well as old. What he gets there isn't specified but it implies he has laid up plenty for an emergency not unlike Joseph in Egypt in preparation for the seven years of famine.

17.2: And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light.

The verb for transfigured is *metamorphoo*, also to change, to exchange and literally means to change after (*meta-*) or to alter the fundamental character of something. Jesus takes pains to be transfigured before (*emprosthen*) Peter, James and John. It's more along the lines as in front of them or literally, to place his (human) form after or *meta-*. In this way Jesus assumes a new one or better, one that he already is yet has not made visible until now.

Metamorphoo obviously sets the stage for making a comparison, the only thing like it or *hos* being the sun's overwhelming brightness. The same can be said with regard to a second example of *hos* as it pertains to the whiteness of light.

18.3: Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Double use of *amen* is a way Jesus uses to speak of something of great importance. Here *hos* is used with regard to children, a necessary condition for entering the kingdom of heaven, the verb *eiserchomai* and the preposition *eis*, i.e., a double into, if you will.

20.1: For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.

The kingdom of heaven here is *homoios* a *oikodespotes* + as noted in 13.52. The element of early-ness is what this *homoios* is about in order to get workers for the vineyard, symbol of the kingdom of heaven.

22.30: For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven.

Hos or like shows the similarity between the mode of life “in (*en*) the resurrection” and “in (*en*) heaven.” Both are essentially the same, the latter the natural dwelling place of angels (*aggelos*) or messengers. That is to say, such persons assume the role of a go-between which means they carry communications to and from God as to the created realm.

22.39: And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Homoios or like with regard to the first and second commandments with regard to love, *agapao* being the verbal root for *agape*. The reference from Lev 19.18 runs in full as “You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.”

28.3: His appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.

Hos or like with regard to the appearance of an angel or *aggelos* + (messenger) after the resurrection of Jesus. *Eidea* is equivalent to lightning which can have a bluish, electric-like color. Apparently this is transmitted to his clothing.

The Book of Revelation

On occasion some elements from the following are taken from a document also on this homepage. It's entitled **Notes on the Book of Revelation**.

1.10: I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet.

Hos or “like” is conditioned upon John being in the Spirit (*Pneuma*, also as breath). How that differs from not being in the Spirit, John doesn’t specify, but one thing is for certain, it’s on the Lord’s day, a day of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He doesn’t see the person speaking until vs. 13 and does so in a voice which is loud, literally *megalos* or great. It must have scared John because it was *hos* a trumpet or *salpigx* which connotes loudness.

1.13: and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man clothed with a long robe and with a golden girdle round his breast.

Such is the “great” voice which John had heard behind him, not so much from a son of man but one *homoios* or like a son of man. Reference is to Dn 7.13: “I saw in the night visions and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.” Obviously “son of man” evokes Jesus Christ who uses this title as referring to himself.

In the next three verses are three comparisons with regard to this son of man:

- Hos* eyes/flame of fire,
- Homoios* with *hos* burnished bronze
- Hos* sound of many waters

3.3: Remember then what you received and heard; 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.

This verse has a fourfold sequence about it. *Mnemoneuo* or remember with regard to *lambano* and *akouo* +. First comes a receiving, a taking in, followed by a hearing or better, pondering of this which is inside oneself. This spills over into practice, if you will, *tereo* and *metanoeo*, to keep and literally to put one’s mind (*noos*) after, *meta-*.

And so what is delineated in this first sentence should result in being awake, *gregoreo* which is a precondition for *tereo*. Should this not be fulfilled, Jesus will come as (*hos*) a thief who comes without warning. Note that this coming will be sudden, “upon (*epi*) you.”

4.1: After this I looked and lo, in heaven an open door! And the first voice which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up hither, and I will show you what must take place after this."

Eidon (I saw): John's act of seeing signifies the transit from the earthly (churches) to the heavenly realm. Here we have no writing as was the case with the angels belonging to the seven churches but a simple and direct visual perception followed by *idou* (lo). It signifies the object of John's vision or the immediate presence of the open door. If the sky's flat surface represents heaven, this door is not vertically situated as with a conventional entrance; instead, it is flat or horizontal with the sky much like a hatch on a ship or an attic on a roof. Note a parallel between the seven churches and forty days, two instances of sacred numbers which occur in various forms throughout the Bible.

As for the first voice, cf. 1.10 where it was identified with (*hos*) a trumpet located behind John. This trumpet invites John to "come up hither" (*hode*), a specific place of ascent perhaps allowing him to be behind where the original trumpet sounded and which is now visible. As for the words "after this" (*tauta*, plural), they imply that John is in the same "place" as God and can view the drama about to be unfolded from this divine perspective.

4.6: And before the throne there is as it were a sea of glass like crystal. And round the throne on each side of the throne are four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind.

The sea of glass (*hualinos*) resembling crystal (*krustallos*) is a flat, infinite expanse stretching out from the center or divine throne. "And the street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass" [21.20]. Here the heavenly Jerusalem has one street, not many; it is as though the sea of glass flowed right from before the throne down the city's center, thereby illumining it. The reflective capacity of both the sea and the heavenly Jerusalem's only street resemble a mirror to reflect everything within. The words in vs. 6—as it were (*hos*) and like (*homoios*)—tend to heighten the distance between God on his throne and the heavenly Jerusalem.

Two prepositions: *en meso* and *kuklo* (round and on each side) are with respect to God's throne. The former implies the center of something, as though the four

living creatures resided within the throne itself. The latter suggests four sides to the same throne which concurs with the number of these same creatures. Such a paradoxical situation, of being in two places at the same time, is borne out by the fact that the four creatures have eyes (*gemo*: to be full, as though each creature were entirely an eye) looking in two directions: in front (*emprosthen*) and behind (*opisthen*). That is to say, towards the throne at their backs and away from it towards the sea of glass.

4.7: The first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle.

Homoios → lion, *homoios* → ox, *hos* → man and *homoios* → eagle. The close association of Revelation's throne with Ezekiel's chariot vision in 1.5-10 implies something which moves and is not static. The former specifically mentions face (*prosopon*) only in conjunction with a man, not the other three creatures. Each being connotes that which is strong, swift and noble; they all have eyes in front and behind.

6.14: The sky vanished like a scroll that is rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

Ouranos for sky, the realm where the heavenly bodies dwell. It is interesting to see that the sky is like (*hos*) this six scroll. For the sky to vanish (*apochorizo*; more accurately, to be removed or separated) suggests returning to that state before God made the firmament, namely, "without form and void" [Gen 1.2]. In other words, the verse at hand is a reversal of the divine creative process. In addition, mountains and islands—the former being symbolic of eternity—are removed (*kineo*) from their places (*topos*). Cf. Rev 16.20 for a similar verse. Despite the fact that "every mountain and island was removed from its place" vs. 15 has people of every class taking refuge in caves of mountains.

9.7-10: In appearance the locusts were like horses arrayed for battle; on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth; they had scales like iron breastplates, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. They have tails like scorpions and stings and their power of hurting men for five months lies in their tails.

These four verses are grouped together because they describe the locusts in eight various ways, *homoios* and *hos* being used: *homoios* → horses, *hos* → crowns, *hos* → human faces, *hos* → women's hair, *hos* → teeth of lions, → iron breastplates, *hos* → chariots and *homoios* → tails of scorpions.

10.1: Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven wrapped in a cloud with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun and his legs like pillars of fire.

Contrast this mighty angel (*ischuros*, in the sense of being strong) with the little scroll in the next verse. He is descending (*katabaino*) from heaven to earth and is wrapped (*periballo*) in a cloud, that is, fully surrounded by it much like the Lord on Mount Sinai. In addition to this (dark) cloud, the angel has a rainbow over his head. Most likely this phenomenon signifies that the cloud is full of rain and that the storm has passed. "I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant (i.e., the 'little scroll') which is between me and the earth" [Gen 9.13].

The angel's face resembled (*hos*) the sun and his legs, pillars of fire. Thus the image is of the angel's torso being wrapped in the cloud with the rest of his body endowed with a luminous quality. *Stulos* is the noun for pillar: "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light" [Ex 13.21]. Thus we have two types of pillars or means of support. Note that both are not stationary but are in the process of moving.

14.2: 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*) 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].

-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. 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 song 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].

14.14: **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.**

John’s looking and lo (*horao* and *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.

As for the 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 son of man is 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.”

Note the golden crown (*stephanos*) as in 4.4 with reference to the twenty-four elders. Also, the 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.

16.15: **Lo, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is he who is awake, keeping his garments that he may not go naked and be seen exposed!**

This verse 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.

Makrios 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 vs. 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.”

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.

19.6: 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.

19.12: 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:

-Eyes: resemble a flame (*phlox*) of fire as in 1.14 & 2.18.

-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. 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.

21.11: **Having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.**

Note the similarity between glory (*doxa*) of God and radiance (*phoster*). “That you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world” [Phil 2.15]. This type of moral shining is a reflection of divine glory or *kavod* + which had descended on Mount Sinai. “The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai” [Ex 24.16].

The heavenly Jerusalem's radiance resembled a rare (*timios*; superlative case used in Greek text) jewel” or a jasper (*iaspis*), a term referring any opaque stone. “And he who sat there appeared like jasper and carnelian” [4.3]. Thus Jerusalem is implied as having its true source in the divine throne. *Krustallizo* (to be clear): “And before the throne there is as it were a sea of glass like crystal” [4.6]. Here may be situated the heavenly Jerusalem not so much as upon the divine throne but before it on this glass sea.

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