

Chapter Seven

7-Vs. 1: After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree.

“After this,” a phrase which indicates an interlude between the sixth and seventh seals. Note the correspondence between the four angels and four corners of the earth. *Gonia* or corners which have four parts can represent the four cardinal directions and four elements of earth, air, fire and water; in brief, the sum of physical creation or as indicated more specifically in vs. 1, the source of these elements. *Gonia* also represents a cornerstone: “The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner” [Mt 21.42, quoting Ps 118.23-3]. The Hebrew word here is *pinah* which also means a battlement: “Against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements” [Zeph 1.16].

The verse at hand speaks of four winds (*anemos*) as in Mt 24.31: “and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Perhaps Christ had in mind the four angels of Revelation. Vs. 1 has the angels restraining (*krateo*) these winds in order not to harm creation. The preposition *epi* (upon) is used with respect to earth, sea and trees. Compare this restrain or implied tranquility with 8.1: “there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.”

7-Vs. 2: Then I saw another angel ascend from the rising of the sun with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea.

Compare two similar forms of movement as though both were equivalent: the angel ascending and the rising (*anabaino* and *anatole*) of the sun. Implied is that the angel precedes sunrise or perhaps foretells it much as twilight before dawn. He may be paralleled with the Magi of Mt 2.1: “Behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem” inquiring about the birth of Christ. I.e., they came just prior to sunrise or before his birth. Also vs. 2 contains *anatole*: “We have seen his star in the East.”

Seal or *sphragis* as in 5.1, the scroll sealed with seven seals, only in vs. 2 it is more specific, as belonging to the “living God” (*zao*), that is, God who is actively engaged in what is going on. Such a seal indicates that God has property rights, so to speak, over his creation, but this emblem is not further designated. Perhaps it is more like a standard for all to behold much like the sun as it comes over the horizon. This

particular angel transmits the seal, as it were, to the four angels just mentioned, that is, those endowed with the power to harm (*adikeo*), a verb which also means to treat unjustly. “For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality” [Col 3.25].

7-Vs. 3: saying, “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the servants of our God upon their foreheads.”

Note the first person plural, “we,” which includes the four angels as well as the angel with the seal in the previous verse. Also, this angel mentions the servants (*doulos*) of “our” God: he acknowledges their subjection to God in the same fashion as his fellow angelic beings.

Forehead or *metopon*: a verse reminiscent of Gen 4.15: “And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest any who came upon him should kill him.” Although not specified as on Cain’s forehead, this mark or ‘*oth* is a sign of favor clearly visible to people. Another reference: “It shall be upon Aaron’s forehead” [Ex 28.38], that is, referring to a signet with the engraving “Holy to the Lord” [vs. 36]. Such a sign is *zontos* or living to correspond with the “living God” of vs. 2.

7-Vs. 4: And I heard the number of the sealed, a hundred and forty-four thousand sealed, out of every tribe of the sons of Israel.

Note the verb hear (*akouo*)...John did not see this number as he did with regard to four angels and the other angel in vss. 1 & 2. This number (144,000) was already present rolled up, as it were, and is now fully revealed. As vss. 5-8 describe, this number can signify perfection since it is divisible by the number twelve and pertains to each of the twelve tribes of Israel (also cf. 14.1 & 3). The twelve tribes can trace their origins back to Jacob as their father in Gen 49 where he blesses each one. In the context of this story, Joseph plays the most important role in that as virtual king of Egypt, he was responsible for burying his father Jacob not in that country but in Canaan, the future promised land (cf. 50.12).

7-Vs. 9: After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands.

Another use of “after this,” “look” and “behold” which connotes temporal extension of John’s vision which took place outside the confines of space and time. Cf. back to 1.10: “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.”

Ochlos or crowd as in Mt 15.33: “Where are we to get bread enough in the desert to feed so great a crowd?” In the verse at hand, such a multitude is beyond counting; three general categories of human society are enumerated: tribe, people and tongue. Note emphasis upon tribe (*phule*), the basic division of Israel as recounted in vss. 5-8. Compare with Acts 2.5: “Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.” The next few verses recounts the wide variety of foreigners at Jerusalem who observed the disciples as they spoke after having been filled with the Holy Spirit. The “great multitude” of vs. 9 can be taken as those who were made disciples and baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (cf. Mt 28.19).

The redeemed are depicted as before the throne, an inverse image of the tower of Babel: “because the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth” [Gen 11.9]. Also note the distinction in vs. 9 between throne and Lamb.

“White robes” or stole as in 6.11; here *periballo* is used for clothed, more specifically, to be cast about in the color white as though these people were permeated by it. In addition to these garments, they hold palm branches or *phoinix* in their hands. “So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel’” [Jn 12.13]! Note that this fabulous bird, the *phoenix*, is the same term, perhaps due to the branches’ resemblance to plumage. This mythical bird died in the fire after which it rose, a symbol which can be applied to Jesus Christ in this triumphal procession into Jerusalem.

7-Vs. 10: and crying with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb!”

An exclamation similar to the one noted in the previous verse, that is, Jn 12.13. There the crowd welcomed Christ as he entered Jerusalem; here they acknowledge him as having entered, as it were, for he is by God the Father on the throne. *Soteria* or salvation which in Hebrew is *yeshuhah*, the proper name and function of Jesus Christ. Note here that such *yeshuhah* is first attributed to God (the Father) on the throne and then to Jesus the Lamb; i.e., both share in this salvation which is being disclosed as Revelation continues. (Cf. elsewhere on this Home Page for an article entitled “The Name of *Yeshuhah* and the Psalms” which gives a full list of those this word (some 136 examples) and its verbal root which forms the basis of the name Jesus.

7-Vs. 11: And all the angels stood round the throne and round the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God.

Around or *kuklos* as in 5.11. Here the angels form a circle not only around the throne but the elders and four living creatures, that is, forming an outer circumference embracing these other groups. It is as though their praise were directed through the elders and creatures towards the throne, rather before (*enopion*) it. They manifest praise by falling on their faces, a common act of submission. “Then Abram fell on his face” [Gen 17.3]. Note the two prepositions used in vs. 11: upon (*epi*) and worship (*proskuneo*; *pros-* or direction towards-which), that is on and then towards.

7-Vs. 12: saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

Observe how this verse begins and ends with Amen, a term commonly used to conclude a prayer. Its situation at both ends, as it were, shows that praise of God has no beginning nor end. Seven attributes are given to God; all are joined by the conjunctive and as if to show that one flows into another.

7-Vs. 14: I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “these are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

In vs. 13 one of the twenty-four elders asks if John knows the identity and source of those persons first mentioned in vs. 9. Most likely this elder acts as an interpreter for much of John’s vision and continues to speak through vs. 17, the conclusion of chapter seven. John defers to the elder who begins to give the source, the *pothen* (whence, vs. 13 and *ek* (from, vs. 14), which is the “great tribulation” (*thlipsis*): “For then there will be great tribulation such as not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be” [Mt 24.21]. This verse has its precedent in Dan 12.1 in conjunction with “Michael, the great prince.” Those who destined to be delivered from this cataclysm are “written in the book,” that is, they are rolled up, so to speak, much like the scrolls of Revelation. Cf. vs. 4: “but you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book until the time of the end.” Such rolling up of the scroll/book makes knowledge grow: “Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall increase.”

Those clothed in white have come out (*ek*) of the great *thlipsis*, the location where they had washed their robes (*pluno*). This is a special type of washing: whiteness derives from redness, of blood, and is akin to baptism: “Are you able to drink the cup that I drink or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized” [Mk 10.38]?

7-Vs. 15: Therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night within his temple; and he who sits upon the throne will shelter them with his presence.

The place of arrival after having experienced the “great tribulation” for those in white robes is “before (*enopion*) the throne of God” as in vs. 9. It is these people as opposed to the angelic hosts that gets John’s attention and makes him inquire (vs. 14) about them. To serve (*latreuo*) as in Mt 4.10 (taken from Dt 6.13): “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.” Thus *latreuo* connotes worship in a priestly sense as in a temple (*naos*, better, ‘sanctuary’) as vs. 15 point out. Compare with Lk 2.37: “She (the prophetess Anna) did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day.” Here the word *hieron* is used which means the precincts compared with the inner sanctuary inferred by *naos*. Anna also engages in *latreuo*.

To shelter or *skenoo*: literally, “to live in a tent,” that is, God will “tent” those before the throne. Cf. Jn 1.14: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” or pitched his tent among us. The Greek has *en* for among, “in us.” With this incarnational verse in mind, the verse under discussion can imply that God will make Christ the tent. Note that vs. 15 has “upon (*epi*) the throne” and “upon (*epi*) them” (in the Greek). “Tenting” involves presence.

7-Vs. 16: They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.

Skenoo involves physical satisfaction of hunger and thirst as well as protection against the sun’s rays. Cf. Sg 2.3 for an expression of this sentiment: “With great delight I sat in his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.” The verse at hand is a quote from Is 49.10 which continues further with “for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them,” reminiscent of the words of Ps 23. The Hebrew verb *racham* (to pity) is an expression of tender pity and mercy.

7-Vs. 17: For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Several times Revelation mentions the throne upon (*epi*) which God is sitting. Here Christ the Lamb is situated in its midst (*ana meson*), which can also mean between which if taken literally could imply several thrones. It is as though the Lamb were somehow interpenetrating God *epi* with regards to the throne; it is also as though he

were seating on God's lap or even between God and the throne itself. Nevertheless, this image reveals the intimate connection between God the Father and Jesus Christ.

It is from this "midst-ness" that the Lamb will function as shepherd (*poimaino*, verb). Note use of future tense for the rest of this verse; action is yet to be completed. "And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them; he shall feed them and be their shepherd" [Ezk 34.23]. There also comes to mind the classic image of Christ as Good Shepherd: "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" [Jn 10.11]. The Hebrew noun for this is *roheh*, a rich word from which is also derived *raheyah* (love) as found in nine places in the Song of Songs, for instance, 2.10, "Rise up, my love, my fair one."

Implied in vs. 17 is that the sheep are thirsty, not hungry, which is why the shepherd will lead his flock not just to water but to "springs (*pege*) of living water." I.e., a spring indicates that point at which water wells up from beneath the ground and is the source of water...where one could say that it is most alive (*zoes*). Compare such water with that of Ps 23.2: "He leads me beside still waters." The Hebrew reads "waters of quietness;" *menuchah*, from the verbal root *nuach*, which is related to the verb *na'ah*: "Like cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest" [Is 63.14].

Tears (*dakruon*) hearkens back to that "great tribulation" of vs. 14. This part of the verse at hand is lifted from Is 25.8: "He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord will wipe away tears from all faces." Also cf. Rev 21.4 for the same verse.

Chapter Eight

8-Vs. 1: When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

The seventh and final seal which caused a temporal pause in heaven in the form of silence (*sige*). While relatively short, this thirty minute *chronos*-logical interval is significant in the context of Revelation with a sequence of rapidly evolving events. The only other two New Testament references with this word: "And when there was a great hush, he (Paul) spoke to them in the Hebrew language" [Acts 21.40]. The verb form: "And they kept silence and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen (about Christ's Transfiguration, Lk 9.36). This instance of silence is not unlike that of the verse at hand with its two dramatic events.

8-Vs. 2: Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

These seven angels may be the ones associated with the seven churches in chapters two and three. If so, then the seven churches may be included along with the angels standing “before God” (*enopion*). Compare such standing before God with Rev 1.4: “and from the seven spirits who are before his throne.”

“Were given:” aorist passive denotes that an intermediary gave the angels trumpets as opposed to God giving them directly. Perhaps any one or more angels were involved here. *Salpax* for trumpet as in 1.10: “a loud voice like a trumpet.” As noted elsewhere, seven of these instruments played a crucial role in bringing down the walls of Jericho (cf. chap. 6). There they preceded the ark of the Lord (cf. vs. 6); thus their location is important as though the Lord transmitted sound from his ark to these trumpets and then against Jericho’s defenses.

8-Vs. 3: And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer; and he was given much incense to mingle with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the throne.

“Golden censer” (*libanotos*) as in 1 Chron 9.29 where reference is made to incense, not its container: “Other were appointed over...all the holy utensils, also over the fine flour, wine, oil, incense and the spices.” For a related word (*libanos*): “They (Magi) offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.” In the verse at hand, the altar (cf. 6.9) is located before the throne and hence within the heavenly tabernacle. Note the angel’s position: “at the altar;” *epi* also meaning upon which here means right at the altar, almost as though the angel were hovering over it.

There is a connection between the amount of incense (*thumiama*) and “prayers of all the saints,” *proseuche* meaning more petitionary prayer or intercession. Thus incense and prayer are one in the same with the implication that both rise like smoke from below to above. In 5.8 the twenty-four elders hold such bowls of incense.

The Greek text lacks “mingle.” The “golden altar” (*thusiasterion*) is a place where sacrifices were made; cf. 6.9 but here altar is specified as being made of gold. Its location is also *epi* with regard to the throne (cf. paragraph above, *epi* regarding the altar). “And you shall put the golden altar for incense before the ark of the testimony and set up the screen for the door of the tabernacle” [Ex 40.5].

8-Vs. 4: And the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel before God.

Anabaino for to rise; here with respect to incense's smoke and the saints' prayers, implying that both have been burnt and have assumed a new substance. The angel's hand acts as a censer (cf. vs. 3), so incense and prayers do not rise from the altar as one would imagine. This angel is situated "before God" (*enopion*). In a sense, we have here a degree of ascent from small to large starting with incense and prayers, moving to the angel and then to God.

8-Vs. 5: Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth; and there were peals of thunder, loud noises, flashes of lightening and an earthquake.

Two verses come to mind: Lev 16.12: 1) "And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar before the Lord and two handfuls of sweet incense beaten small; and he shall bring it within the veil." 2) Ezk 10.2: "Go in among the whirling wheels underneath the cherubim; fill your hands with burning coals from between the cherubim and scatter them over the city." Vs. 5 again mentions this censer or *libanotos* in conjunction with filling (*gemizo*) it with the altar's fire which he then casts on the earth. Note the preposition *eis* for on or into, denoting full penetration of earth by this divine fire.

Such fire causes disruption on earth: thunder, noise, lightening and earthquake, which pertain to the divine throne in 4.5. This atmosphere associated with divine revelation is transferred to the physical realm as in Ex 19.16: "On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightening and a thick cloud upon the mountains, and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled." In the Leviticus passage above, the incense is brought within the veil or *paroketh* which concealed the Holy of Holies. "And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in tow, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split" [Mt 27.51]. Also: "By the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh" [Heb 10.20].

Verses 6-13 or through the end of chapter eight, mentions the first of seven angels which may be outlined as follows:

-vs. 6: All seven angels prepare (*etoimazo*) to blow the trumpets which in the context of the Jericho event, is marching around the city (cf. 6.7). Perhaps these angels did the same with regard to the entire earth, that is, they marched all around it. As

with the Jericho account, the ark of the Lord preceded the priests and people (cf. vs. 7). Keep in mind the plagues God inflicted on Egypt through Moses. Also note the division of three or a third. Perhaps this division is large enough to inspire awe while at the same time not fully destroying natural resources.

-vs. 7: First angel; result of his trumpet blast is hail and fire mixed with blood. A third of the earth caught fire. Cf. Ex 19.16-19.

-vss. 8-9: Second angel; a mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea, killing a third of its living creatures and a third of its ships. Cf. Ex 7.20-1.

-vss. 10-11: Third angel; a large star called Wormwood (*Apsinthos*) fell on a third of earth's rivers and fountains resulting in people dying because of the water. "I will feed this people with wormwood and give them poisonous water to drink" [Jer 9.15].

-vs. 12: Fourth angel; third of sun, moon and stars were struck or darkened as well as a third of the night. "For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising and the moon will not shed its light" [Is 13.10]. And, "There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves" [Lk 21.25]. *Semeion* means sign which foreshadows Christ's coming "in a cloud with power and great glory" [vs. 27].

-vs. 13: An eagle (*aetos*); this term can also refer to a vulture. Note its location, mid-heaven (*mesouranema*): cf. 19.17 for another use of this term with regard to birds of prey. He cries out woe three times (*ouai*) as a warning to earth's inhabitants, more specifically, to prepare them for the remaining three trumpets.

Chapter Nine

The entirety of this chapter deals with the next two angels and may be outlined as follows:

-vs. 1: The fifth angel, vss. 1-12. He begins by blowing his trumpet causing John the observer to see a star falling to earth which can represent Satan falling to earth: "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" [Lk 10.18]. This identity of Satan with a star, more accurately, a shooting star which appears bright for a brief moment and then disappears, is born out by the rest of vs. 1. Note that he fell "into (*eis*) earth." Once there, he was given the key to the "bottomless pit." The words "was given" or the passive indicates that God is in control of events. Pit or *Abussos* is the home of the dead: "Who will descend into the abyss?", that is, to bring Christ up from the dead" [Rom 10.7]. Here Christ is described as having descended into this pit but does not remain there as is the case with Satan. Compare with Eph 4.8 which quotes Ps 68.18: "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to

men.” Satan is not necessarily present in this pit; rather, he is given the key to it, the opposite of the apostolic privilege: “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven” [Mt 16.19].

-vs. 2: Here either the fifth angel or the star/Satan (not clear which, most likely the latter) opens the shaft (*phrear*; also means well) to this pit resulting in smoke as from a furnace (*kapnos*). “The smoke of the land (referring to Sodom and Gomorrah) went up like the smoke of a furnace” [Gen 19.28]. Contrast this image with the offering of incense mentioned earlier.

-vs. 3: From the smoke came locusts, that is, from the bottomless pit, reminiscent of Ex 10.15: “They covered the face of the whole land so that the land was darkened.” Such locusts had the capacity (again, “was given,” as to indicate ultimate divine authority) to bite like scorpions. “Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you” [Lk 10.19]. Note the direct transmission of power (*exousia*) as opposed to the indirect transmission already noted, “was given.”

-vs. 4: These locusts/scorpions were commissioned to harm (*adikeo*, as in 2.11 & 6.6) only persons without the “seal of God” (*sphragis*). Cf. 7.2-3 which mentions this same word but with regard to the “living God.” “Go through the city, throughout Jerusalem, and put a mark upon the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it” [Ezk 9.4]. Perhaps there is a connection between this seal and those belonging to the seven seals, as though persons with it are immune to the seven destructive forces unleashed upon their unrolling. A similar notion is expressed with regard to the seven plagues against Egypt. Although the Egyptians suffered, Israel did not; for example: “Only in the land of Goshen where the people of Israel were, there was no hail” [Ex 9.26].

-vs. 6: As a result of the locusts’ sting, men will seek death but not find it: “Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us’” [Mt 23.30].

-vss. 7-10: A description of the locusts: like horses for battle, crowns of gold, human faces, woman’s hair, lion’s teeth, scales like iron breastplates, wings sounded like chariots, tails like scorpions, their stings lasted five months. Contrast the locusts’ armor with that of faith in Jesus Christ. The italicized terms are those defensives to combat the locusts: “Having girded your loins with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God” [Eph 6.14-17]. In sum we have truth, breastplate, equipment, shield, helmet and sword to counter the locusts.

-vs. 11: King over locusts: the angel of bottomless pit (*abussos*). The Hebrew name is Abaddon (Destruction) and the Greek name is *Apollyon* (Destroyer). “Sheol is naked before God, and Abaddon has no covering” [Job 26.6].

-vs. 13: Introduction of the second angel who also blows his trumpet. He receives instructions from a voice (*phone*) or in the Greek text, “one voice.” While certainly attributable to God, it is not expressly mentioned here. The voice’s location, however, is enough to associate it with him: “from (ek) four horns of the golden altar.” While one, this *phone* is four-fold or from these horns (*keras*). “And you shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and its sides round about and its horns” [Ex 30.3]. Note that this altar is one on which incense is to be burned (cf. vs. 1). The location of this incense-altar is “before (*enopion*) God.”

-vs. 14: This one/four-fold voice gives a command to release the four angels at the River Euphrates, eastern boarder of the Roman Empire. Note the transference of this one voice to one angel and then to four angels.

-vs. 15: The four angels are held in readiness for a specific time which here is given ascending from the smallest to the greatest division of time in the sense of *chronos*: hour, day, month and year. Their purpose: to kill a third of mankind.

-vs. 16: Number of troops released by the four angels: twice ten thousand times ten thousand or two hundred million. John hears their number, not necessarily sees it.

-vs. 17: John states that this hearing takes place in the context of a vision (*horasis*). “And your young men shall see visions” [Acts 2.17, quoting from Joel]. Refer back to 1.10: “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.” Thus the Holy Spirit and Sunday are part of this vision. Vs. 17 continues to describe the horses and riders: breastplates the color of fire, sapphire and sulfur; horse heads like heads of lions with fire, smoke and sulfur issuing from their mouths which slew a third of mankind (vss. 18-19).

-vs. 20: Despite such horrible plagues, the rest of mankind did not repent (*metanoeo*) which here has two parts: 1) their works and worship of demons and 2) murders, sorceries, immorality and theft (vs. 21). “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand” [Mt 3.2]. Perhaps such persons failed to see the role the four angels had in sending these plagues.

Chapter Ten

10-Vs. 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.

Verses 10.1 through 11.13 provide an interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets. Contrast this “mighty angel” (*ischuros*, in the sense of being strong) with the little scroll (*biblaridion*) in the next verse. He is descending (*katabaino*) from heaven to earth, an action inverse to Christ’s ascension: “This Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven” [Acts 1.11].

The angel is wrapped (*periballo*) in a cloud, that is, fully surrounded by it much like *YHWH* on Mount Sinai: “Lo, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe you forever” [Ex 19.9]. The Hebrew here is *behav hehanan*, the former term signifying anything dark.

In addition to this (dark) cloud, the angel has a rainbow (iris, cf. 4.3) 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 the sun and his legs, pillars of fire. Thus the image is of the angel’s torso being en-wrapped in the cloud with the rest of his body endowed with a luminous quality. *Stulos* for pillar (cf. 3.12): “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.

10-Vs. 2: He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land.

Biblaridion for little scroll in contrast to 5.1’s (and elsewhere) scroll (*biblion*). The perfect passive participle of *anoigo* (to open) suggests that this book has been opened in heaven before the angel’s descent and will remain so into the future.

Two uses of the preposition *epi* (upon): sea and land. Implied here is that both feet rest upon the surface of each element, not in it as in the sea, symbolic of God’s lordship over the two.

10-Vs. 3: And called out with a loud voice like a lion roaring; when he called out, the seven thunders sounded.

A continuation from the previous verse where the mighty angel roars (*mukaomai*) like a lion quite different from the one of Ps 22.13: “They open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.” However, the angel’s roaring is a threat to those who hide themselves from God as depicted in the last several verses.

“Seven thunders” (*bronte*) as in 6.1 with regard to one of the four living creatures. These thunders are not specified, but again consider the importance of the number seven which was noted earlier. They may correspond to the seven churches and seven angels whose trumpet blasts sound like thunder. Often thunder is used to signify God

speaking, and Psalm 27 has the following characteristics of this divine voice: powerful, full of majesty, breaks cedars of Lebanon, makes Lebanon skip like a calf, makes Sirion skip like a young wild ox, shakes the wilderness of Kadesh, makes oaks whirl, strips forests bare. Also note that vs. 7 has this same voice “flash forth flames of fire.” I.e., the invisible voice manifests itself not only by sound but by light.

10-Vs. 4: And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write but I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down.”

Here John stands ready to record the sound of the seven thunders but a voice (*phone*) hinders him. Such a voice is not identified, perhaps from God or an angel “from (*ek*) heaven.” This phrase situates John as not being in heaven *per se* but in a kind of middle ground of “in the Spirit” (1.10) when he started having his vision. Nevertheless, John proceeds not to write but to seal (*sphragizo*) what he heard. In a sense, this action is opposite to that of the “little seal” of vs. 2. Thus John resembles one of the angels by his sealing; he alone is entrusted with knowing the content of this sounding by the seven thunders. “The vision of the evenings and the mornings which has been told is true; but seal up the vision, for it pertains to many days hence” [Dan 8.26].

10-Vs. 5: And the angel whom I saw standing on sea and land lifted up his right hand to heaven.

Such lifting up (*airo*) of one’s hand—in this case an angelic one—can be the sign of a pledge or an oath which follows in the next verse. Both vss. 4 & 5 are taken from Dt 32.40 and Dan 12.7 respectively: “For I (Moses) lift up my hand to heaven and swear, as I live forever.” “The man clothed in linen who was above the waters of the stream raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven; and I heard him swear by him who lives forever that it would be for a time...when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be accomplished.” Note that the verse under consideration has “into (*eis*) heaven” as though his hand penetrated into its very center.

10-Vs. 6: and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there should be no more delay.

In the verse above cf. “into (*eis*) heaven” and compare with “forever (*eis tous aionas*) and ever.” It is as though the two prepositions demonstrate a unity between the angel’s

swearing an oath and God's eternity. This "eis-ness" is carried over into the three divisions of creation: "what is in (en) it." The oath (*omnumai*) here pertains to a hastening of the fulfillment of God's plan contained in the little scroll. The word for delay here is *chronos* which also means temporal extension. I.e., that there should be no more time left.

10-Vs. 7: but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God as he announced to his servants the prophets, should be fulfilled.

Another use of the preposition *en* (in) with respect to "days of the trumpet call" (*phone*), this term implying a personal note to the trumpet's sound. Again, refer to the number seven as used pertaining to the siege and fall of Jericho where the priests sounded the trumpet (6.8). *Hotan* (when) in the Greek text is used here to show the simultaneity of the days, trumpet call and the angel. It serves to introduce the fulfillment (*teleo*) or completion of temporal extension noted in the last verse by the word *chronos*. "After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the scripture, Ps 69.21), 'I thirst,'" [Jn 19.28]. Here *teleo* is used twice, once with regard to the entirety of his mission and second, with regard to a particular Psalm verse.

Musterion or mystery connotes a secret, hidden purpose known only to initiates, in this case belonging to God. "...and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for long ages" [Rom 16.25]. In the verse at hand, *musterion* refers to the prophets: "Surely the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets" [Am 3.7]. The Hebrew *sod* has a wider sense as in Ps 24.14: " Vs. 14: The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant. Those who enjoy divine friendship (*sod*) stem from Jacob/Israel as in vs. 13; it requires that fear of Prov 1.7. *Sod* also means a couch, assembly, therefore an abiding relationship; the notion of reclining may be associated with sharing a meal as Christ with his disciples at the Last Supper. At a *sod* there is often intimate conversation, reminiscent of Christ's discourse on his mission and coming of the Holy Spirit, that is, Christ divulged to the disciples his covenant, *beryth*: "for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" [Mt 26.28].

10-Vs. 8: Then the voice which I had heard from heaven spoke to me again saying, "Go, take the scroll which is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land."

Note the preposition "to (*meta*; also means with) me," signifying not so much a command which is present here but a conversation. John's going implies that he has to

move from his place as observer to become an active participant. He takes the scroll or *biblion* from the angel mentioned in vs. 2 where the word *biblaridion* (little scroll) is used. Both scrolls are open; the latter seems intended for John as opposed to the former which is not. For John to get this *biblion*, he must traverse that in-between space, as it were, because the angel holding it is standing on both sea and land.

10-Vs. 9: So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll; and he said to me, “Take it and eat; it will be bitter to your stomach but sweet as honey in your mouth.”

A verse reminiscent of Ezk 2.8-3.3 where the scroll contains “lamentation and woe.” This scrolls which Ezekiel eats is sweet to the taste; the one John eats is similarly sweet (*glukos*) but bitter (*pikraino*) in his stomach. Note the use of *biblaridion* or little scroll in contrast to the regular scroll (*biblion*) in vs. 8. This verse does not mention the angel holding open the former but does not preclude him having it. The sweetness in John’s mouth is transitory despite its comparison with honey; its transference into bitterness is more abiding as it stays in the stomach.

Compare this sweetness and bitterness with Ps 34.8: “Taste and see that the Lord is good.” The Hebrew verb *taham* (taste) involves full perception which here immediately results in seeing not the Lord himself but that he is good or *tov*.

Vs. 10 restates vs. 9 but from John’s perspective, indicating that he is willing to follow the angel standing on sea and land; cf. remarks under vs. 8 above.

10-Vs. 11: And I was told, “You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.”

The purpose of eating the little scroll, namely, for John to prophesy or *propheteuo*. This is in the form of a command, *dei* (must), which in Greek is combined with *legousin moi*, they said to me. “I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy” [Acts 2.18, citing Jl 3.28]. In the verse at hand, John is bidden to prophesy again (*palin*) which refers to the second half of Revelation, that is, to its conclusion.

The preposition *epi* (upon, over) is used with regard to peoples, nations, tongues and kings, a way of saying that John’s prophecy will be “upon” them or from a position of authority much as God speaks from “above” to that which is “below.” For a correspondence of this *epi*, cf. Jer 1.10: “See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms.”

Chapter Eleven

11-Vs. 1: Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, “Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there.

The rod and staff (*kalamos* and *rhabdos*) are symbolic of John’s prophecy in that he may be said to be a type of Moses. The passive “was given” is used, most likely by the angel but perhaps to show that these two objects came from God. *Kalamos* fundamentally means a reed. “What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind” [Mt 11.7]? Also, “Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates...with nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon” [Sg 4.14]. With the Song verse in mind—the image of a garden enclosed—it may be seen as paralleling the similarly enclosed space of the temple John was bidden to measure. John’s rod was “like a staff,” the same term used in 2.27, “a rod of iron” (cf. that section). For another reference to *rhabdos*: “By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff” [Heb 11.21].

Another passive verb: “I was told,” the result of which has three parts:

1) Rise (*egeiro*) in the sense of be awakened as well as to stand up. Once awoken, John is told to measure or *metreo* the temple at Jerusalem as well as its altar. This is similar to Zech 2.2: “Where are you going?” And he said to me, “To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its breadth and what is its length.” The Hebrew term is *chevel*, something twisted or braided which can be applied to anything inherited in the sense of having been meted out for one’s possession. Another verse: “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” [Ezk 40.3]. The Hebrew term is *madah* which connotes extension. This second verse introduces a detailed description of temple area through chapter 42 which introduces the next chapter where “behold, the glory of the God if Israel came from the east.”

2) The second part to be measured is the altar or *thusuasterion* as in 6.9 under which resided the souls of those who had been slain.

3) The third part to be measured are persons who worship (*proskuneo*) in the temple. Usually the act of measuring applies to inanimate objects. Since the temple and altar are intimately related to Israel as a nation, such measuring applies to their act of worship. John was determining the “breadth and length and height and depth” of Christ’s love [Eph 3.18].

11-Vs. 2: But do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample over the holy city for forty-two months.

Aule for court which was reserved for non-Jewish people, in this case nations (*ethnos*), the equivalent of *goy*: “I will scatter you among the nations and disperse you through the countries, and I will consume your filthiness out of you” [Ezk 22.15]. *Ethnos* is accentuated by the adverb *exothern* (outside), and the two are mutually interchangeable. According to the prophetic books, the worst curse for Israel to endure is dispersion among nations, especially being driven from the Jerusalem temple.

John is bidden not to measure (*metreo*) *exothern* which is further emphasized the command, leave that out or *ekbale exothern*, a second use of this same adverb. *Exballo* is a strong verb meaning to vigorously cast or throw something out (*ek*). Here the verb has a sense of permanent abandonment, never to be recovered.

Because the exterior court lacks divine measurement, the nations will trample (*pateo*) not only the temple but Jerusalem. “When you come to appear before me, who requires of you this trampling of my courts” [Is 1.12]? A temporal duration is set for this *pateo*, forty-two months or three and one-half years. “And I heard him swear by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, two times, and half a time; and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be accomplished” [Dan 12.7].

11-Vs. 3: And I will grant me two witnesses power to prophesy for one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”

The conclusion of the words spoken to John by that voice from heaven (10.8) which here assumes a personal nature, “I.” *Martus* or witness, not mentioned but possibly referring to Zerubbabel and Joshua (Zech 3.14) as well as Elijah and Moses (2 Kg 1.10). Regardless of who they are, these witnesses which act as a pair and thus have greater authority, are to prophesy (*propheteuo*); cf. 10.11 where John is given this ability with regard to peoples, nations, tongues and kings. In the case at hand, such prophecy has a specific duration, one thousand two hundred and sixty days or the forty-two months as in the previous verse. That is, their prophecy will last the same time as the nations when they trample Jerusalem.

Rev 6.12 has the sun “black as sackcloth” (*sakkos*), a sign of mourning. The verse at hand has the verb *periballo* (clothed) in the sense of being enveloped. One example is the population of Nineveh: “Let every man and beast be covered with sackcloth” [Jon

3.8]. Joshua in Zech 3.3 was clothed with filthy garments, and God exchanged them for “rich apparel” [vs. 4].

11-Vs. 4: These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands which stand before the Lord of the earth.

Comparison of the two unnamed prophets first to olive trees (*elaia*) because they provide fuel for the lampstands (*luchnia*) which may be compared with the seven in 1.12; they in turn are related to the seven churches to which Revelation is addressed. “I am like a green olive tree in the house of the Lord” [Ps 52.8]. *Rahnan* is the word for green. “He is like a tree planted by water...for its leaves remain green” [Jer 17.8]. With regard to the lampstands: “You shall make a lampstand of pure gold” [Ex 25.31] which is for the altar. Note the singular case as opposed to the plural. It is made “after the pattern which is being shown you on the mountain” [vs. 40] which is not unlike the “mountain” where John is receiving his revelation of these events. Both prophets as olive trees and lampstands are before the Lord (*enopion*), more specifically, the Lord of “all the earth.” That is to say, the two prophets are sent from heaven to earth.

11-Vs. 5: And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes; if anyone would harm them, thus he is doomed to be killed.

Adikeo for to harm, the same verb used, for example, in 2.11; here the verb is in conjunction with *thelo* (to wish, would), the present tense. Because the two prophets witness on God’s behalf, they are protected by him. What they behold on earth to which they are sent thereby participates in the son of man’s eyes which “were like a flame of fire (*pur*)” [1.14]. In light of this, this divine fire flows from Christ’s eyes to the prophets’ mouth; note singular as though to signify that they spoke as one man. “Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him” [2 Sam 22.9]. Such words are situated within the context of God at the Red Sea; cf. Ps 18 which is similar to chapter twenty-two. The fire of vs. 5 is for consuming (*katesthio*) foes, the same verb used for the LXX of Is 1.7: “Your country lies desolate, your cities are burned with fire.”

The verse at hand repeats the same injunction with regard to *adikeo* where the accompanying same verb (*thelo*) is now in the aorist active subjunctive, indicating a more vague type of threat. The Greek for “doomed” is *dei*, it is necessary, suggesting predetermination and a sense of binding.

11-Vs. 6: They have power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

The two unnamed prophets can prevent rainfall, reminiscent of Elijah to whom God said “there shall be neither dew nor rain these years except by my word” [1 Kg 17.1]. Here God’s word parallels the prophets’ act of prophesying, the noun *propheteia* being used. Note that such prophecy is restricted to days which implies a *kairos* or special time; according to 11.3 this *kairos* last 1260 days. Also their prophecy is divinely mandated: *exousia* or power. “Since you have given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him” [Jn 17.2].

The second *exousia* is with respect to waters which here suggests potable water. The two prophets resemble Moses and Aaron: “and all the water that was in the Nile turned to blood” [Ex 7.20]. Moses effected this transformation through his rod; while the two prophets of Revelation were not given a rod, John was given a measuring rod (cf. 11.1).

The third *exousia* is to inflict earth with plagues (*plege*) which are indefinite as opposed to the specific seven plagues of Exodus. The two prophets could do this at will (*thelo* being the verb).

11-Vs. 7: 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.

Finished or *teleo* in the sense of bringing to a completion at the end of their testimony (*marturia*) which lasts 1260 days. This verb connotes attainment of a given time, a *kairos*, which is either complete in and by itself or sets the stage for something else. For the use of a noun derived from this verb, cf. Heb 7.11: “Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood, what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek?”

The finishing mentioned in this verse leads from the *kairos* of the two prophets’ testimony to the *kairos* of the beast or *therion* which connotes something wild and untamed. It is at this juncture that the beast makes his entry into Revelation. “All you beasts of the field, come to devour” [Is 56.9]. He ascends from the bottomless pit (*abussos*) or lowest part of the earth; cf. 9.1 where the fifth angel is given a key to this place. “And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another” [Dan 7.3]. Also, “As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them”

[vs. 7.21]. Perhaps the number four can be taken as the opposite to the traditional four cardinal directions as well as the four elements of earth, air, fire and water.

The beast's *kairos* consists in three stages against the two prophets: making war, conquering and then killing them.

11-Vs. 8: And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which is allegorically called Sodom and Egypt where their Lord was crucified.

The city is Jerusalem, the adjective great (*megalos*) suggesting it being center of Israel's religion centered upon the temple. Note singular street (*plateia*) as well as singular body (*ptoma*, "of them"); cf. vs. 5 with singular mouth and the two prophets. Compare the singular street of this Jerusalem with the equally singular street of the heavenly Jerusalem: "and the street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass" [21.21].

The Greek for allegorically is *pneumatikos* which literally reads spiritually as referring to Sodom and Egypt. The former was destroyed because God did not find even ten righteous people in it (cf. Gen 18.32); the latter was the scene of seven plagues and the land which held Israel bondage. "If the Lord of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we should have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah" [Is 1.9].

There seems to be a connection between *pneumatikos* and *hopou* (where), that is, a direct correspondence between Jerusalem and Christ's crucifixion as well as the two prophets. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you" [Lk 13.34]! Although this Jerusalem has one street as noted above, Christ was crucified outside the city (cf. Mt 27.32-3).

11-Vs. 9: For three days and a half men from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb.

The preposition *ek* (from) is used with people, tribes, tongues and nations to indicate that not everyone from these groups is involved, only an unspecified amount. Such were gathered in Jerusalem and may be contrasted with those who witnessed Pentecost (cf. Acts 2.5-12). The time period during which these peoples gazed (*blepo*) at the two dead prophets is three and a half days. Compare with the comparable time (another *kairos*) between Christ's death and resurrection: "and when he is killed after three days he will rise" [Mk 9.31].

Mnema is the word for tomb. “And laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock” [Mk 15.46]. It is as though the temporal duration of three and one half days is intended for all the people assembled in Jerusalem to behold the slain prophets.

Perhaps this seeing has a relevance with the bronze serpent Moses fashioned to cure the people: “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live” [Num 21.9]. In this instance, seeing effects life.

11-Vs. 10: And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.

Those dwelling on earth (*katoikeo*) in the sense of making a permanent home. Such permanency is also associated with Satan: “I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is” [2.13]. Such persons may include the groups of people in the previous verse as well as others who share their earthly permanency. Those who witnessed the prophets’ deaths acted as emissaries to proclaim their demise, the opposite of Christ’s commission “to make disciples of all nations” [Mt 28.19].

As a result of hearing such “good news,” earthly dwellers express their delight by rejoicing, making merry and exchange of presents (*chairo, euphraino* and *dora pempo*). The Greek adds *allellos* (one another) to stress the intensity of this joy. The obvious cause is that their torment (*basanizo*, verb) has been apparently cured. Compare with that torment sent by the fifth angel in the form of locusts: “They were allowed to torture them for five months but not to kill them, and their torture was like the torture of a scorpion” [9.5]. It is though the earthly dwellers sought revenge for this fifth plague. Note the second use of *katoikeo*; it and the first one have the preposition *epi* (upon) to signify permanence.

11-Vs. 11: But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.

A verse reminiscent of Ezk 37: “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live” [vs. 9]. Here breath is *ruach*, a term commonly used for the (Holy) Spirit. In the verse at hand note the use of prepositions: “breath of life from (*ek*) God entered (*eiserchomai*; prefix *eis*, into) them.” I.e., a singular “from” effects a double “into,” signifying thorough penetration by the divine *ruach*. Such penetration is signified by the two prophets “standing on their feet:” they are fully and thoroughly alive. The Greek equivalent for the Hebrew *ruach* here is *pneuma*; better, it is associated with life (*zoe*).

As a result of this in-breathing people who saw (*theoreo*) the two revived prophets were afraid. Note use of the verb which signifies a beholding, not just a simple gaze. The impact of such beholding is enhanced by the fact that the people weren't simply afraid; rather, fear fell upon (*epi*) them...it impacted them with as much thoroughness as the *ruach* which revived the prophets.

11-Vs. 12: Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up hither!" And in the sight of their foes they went up to heaven in a cloud.

Compare with 4.1, the same command to ascend (*anabaino*): "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.'" Once the divine *pneuma/ruach* had entered the two prophets, they do not remain on earth but are summoned hither (*hode*) or in a place which is radically different from their previous condition. Here a "loud voice" effects the command; with respect to Christ's Ascension (*anabasis*), he accomplished this by having been acted upon: "He was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight" [Acts 1.9]. Also, cf. Elijah's ascent: "And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" [2 Kg 2.11].

Addition of the prophets' foes who beheld this event enhances the dramatic element. Note that the Greek text uses the verb *theoreo* again, they saw. Both the above two ascents occur in the sight of disciples as opposed to foes (*echthros*).

11-Vs. 13: And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Hour (*hora*) is the equivalent to a *kairos* event, the book of Revelation forming one with numerous subdivisions. The *kairos* under consideration consists of an earthquake (*seismos*) much as at Christ's crucifixion: "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]. In addition to a relatively small part of Jerusalem being destroyed—the other nine tenths are to remain as witness for further events or *kairoi*—seven thousand people perish. The Greek text reads, "the names (*onoma*) of men." Use of "name" can imply a more thorough destruction, name being synonymous with the essence of a person or thing. "Whose names are in the book of life" [Phil 4.3].

The destruction in vs. 13 first causes terror (*emphobos*), the prefix *em-* signifying thoroughness. Such terror is not an end in itself but to cause those so penetrated to

give God glory (*doxa*). Note the added “of heaven” as to stress the sharp distinction between it and the events taking place on earth.

11-Vs. 14: The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come.

A brief statement with regard to the second of seven woes or *ouai*. This word is an interjection as well as a noun; cf. 8.13. The adverb *tachu* is used for soon which implies quickly. This suddenness may be contrasted with the verb *aperchomai*, to pass.

11-Vs. 15: Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”

Cf. 8.2: “Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.” The verse at hand has a direct correspondence between this trumpet (*salpizo*, the verb being used) and “loud (*megalos*, great) voices.” As noted in other places, the number seven suggests the fall of Jericho. There the priests blew the trumpets at Joshua’s command; he also told the Israelites to shout (cf. Jos 6.16), a direct result of the trumpet sound.

Vs. 15 does not specific the source of voices, only their location, heaven. From their position there, such voices proclaim a transference of two locations with one common element, kingdom (*basileia*), which suggests a hierarchy and distribution of power. The Greek text brings out the definitive nature of this transference by the word order: of world, of Lord and of Christ (*tou kosmou, tou kuriou* and *tou Christou*). Compare with Jn 18.36: “My kingship is not of this world.” Here the preposition *ek* (from) is used with respect to *kosmos*; Christ’s rule does not emanate from the world which is a different sense from vs. 15’s *tou* (*kosmou*).

Vs. 15 clearly states that Christ’s *basileia* has fully assumed the nature of the world by use of *gignomai*, to become. Two distinctions are made: “of our Lord” and “of his (God the Father) Christ.” Thus the divine *basileia* is governed from above and from below, the latter in the sense of “our” sharing in this governance. “Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” [Mt 16.19].

Vs. 15 concludes with the verb *basileuo* (to reign) with respect to Jesus Christ. Note future tense of this verb; the tense implies in completion which remains to be developed in the remaining chapters of Revelation.

Verse 16 mentions the twenty-four elders first introduced in 4.4 which could be taken as Israel's twelve patriarchs as well as the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ. Their position on thrones signifies rule much in the sense of *basileia* does in vs. 15. In the verse at hand, such elders worship (*proskuneo*, cf. 4.10) God which serves as a preface to hymn of praise in vss. 17-18 which may be outlined as follows:

-vs. 17: The twenty-four elders give thanks (*eucharisteo*) to God as *Kurios* and *Pantokrator* which here is equivalent to God being acknowledged in two tenses: "who are" and who was." Compare this use of present and past tenses with the future tense of vs. 16 ('and he shall reign forever and ever'). The verb *eucharisteo* often signifies a religious gesture performed before a meal and has liturgical connotations: "He took the seven loaves and the fish, and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples" [Mt 15.36]. Vs. 17 resembles 1.8 with the title *Pantokrator* as well as the two tenses.

-vs. 18: *Orgizo* for to rage; compare this verse with Ps 46.6: "The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts." This psalm verse parallels such raging with an earthquake to symbolize the intense violence by nations. "The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city" [Mt 22.7]. Here Christ-as-king is the one who is angry to counter that of the nations; *ethnos*, the Hebrew term being *goy* as in Ps 46.6. Such is one meaning of divine orge coming in vs. 18.

Concomitant with this *orge* both by nations and by God is the time for judgment (*kairos* and *krino*) with regard to the dead (cf. 20.12+). "For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get" [Mt 7.2]. Such judgment has two parts:

1) A reward (*misthos*) for servants which are subdivided into prophets and saints along with those fearing God's name who are also subdivided into small and great. "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven" [Mt 5.12].

2) Destroying those who destroy the earth. The same verb *diaphtheiro* is used suggesting a type of ecological destruction.

11-Vs. 19: Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, loud noises, peals of thunder, and earthquake and heavy hail.

An apt conclusion for Chapter Eleven which has the heavenly temple (*naos*) opened in heaven, implying that the one in Jerusalem has been closed or destroyed. The same applies to the ark (*kibotos*). *Kibotos* also applies to Noah: "until the day when Noah

entered the ark” [Mt 24.38]. Consider this verse in light of Lk 23.45: “and the curtain of the temple was torn in two.” The verse at hand does not specify who or what opens the temple; it is as though a self-actuated motion effects this. The same applies to the ark which remains closed and its contents unseen. King Solomon was the one who brought the ark into the temple which replaced the tent: “Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place, in the inner sanctuary, underneath the wings of the cherubim” [1 Kg 8.6].

The ark contained “nothing except the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb (cf. Dt 10.2), where the Lord made a covenant with the people of Israel when they came out of the land of Egypt” [1 Kg 8.9]. The use of nothing (*‘eyn*) is interesting as if to negate human curiosity. It also serves to focus attention upon the stone tables given at Horeb, also known as Sinai. God descended upon this mountain God, and the opening of the temple to make the ark visible in vs. 19 may be seen as fulfilling this manifestation. “On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightening and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled” [Ex 19.16]. The dramatic elements belonging to the heavenly and earthly manifestations of God may be perceived as a barrier: “The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for you yourself did charge us saying, ‘Set bounds about the mountains and consecrate it’” [Ex 19.23]. Such boundary making harkens back to John at the beginning of Chapter Eleven: “Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff and I was told, ‘Rise and measure the altar and those who worship there.’”

Chapter Twelve

12-Vs. 1: And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

Woman or *gune* appears in Revelation a total of nineteen times, this being the first occasion. She seems symbolic of God’s people and/or Israel; Catholic tradition often identifies her with the Virgin Mary. Here *gune* is a portent or *semeion*. In light of Jn 4.48, this word can refer to supernatural events: “Jesus therefore said to him, ‘Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.’” In the verse at hand, *semeion* has a specific location, heaven. Several times earlier it was noted that events unfold in a passive way, this being yet another example: appeared or *orao* in the sense of having been seen.

Semeion-as-gune may be outlined with three additional features, all of which connote a certain luminosity attributable to the woman:

1) sun with which she is clothed (*periballo*, cf. 7.9) or fully enveloped. “In them he has set a tent for the sun” [Ps 19.4].

2) moon (*selene*): “Behold...the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me (Joseph, Gen 37.9).” In the verse at hand, the sun is the dominant image; the moon and crown are subordinate.

3) crown (*stephanos*): compare with 4.4: ‘twenty-four elders clad in white garments with golden crowns upon their heads.’ Note use of *periballo* regarding the woman so clothed with the sun. The “twelve stars” may represent the twelve tribes of Israel and twelve disciples; for the latter, cf. Acts 1.14: “All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, with his brothers.” Here Mary is seated with the disciples just before the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

12-Vs. 2: She was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery.

Keeping in mind the reference to the Virgin Mary and Pentecost in the last verse, the mother of Jesus may be seen in light of being in “pangs of birth” with respect to the Holy Spirit’s descent. The verse at hand reads “with child” as “having something in (her) stomach” (*gaster*).

“Writhe and groan, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail; for now you shall go forth from the city and dwell in the open country; you shall go to Babylon” [Mic 4.10]. Here Revelation’s woman clearly parallels Zion about to leave Israel for Babylon, traditional place of exile. This verse is similar to the woman’s crying out (*krazo*) and anguish (*odino*). For the former: “And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit” [Mt 27.50]. For the latter: “My little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you” [Gal 4.19]! Such forming or *morphoo* is Paul’s wish for the *morphe* of Christ be present in his listeners. “Though he was in the form of God” [Phil 2.6].

12-Vs. 3: And another portent appeared in heaven; behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns and seven diadems upon his heads.

Another use of *orao* (appeared): note the similar location (heaven, which here as in vs. 2 can be taken as the sky above) of the “great red dragon” identified in vs. 9 as Satan. *Drakon* (dragon) is derived from the verb *derkomai*, to see clearly, most likely having in

mind the way a reptile stares without blinking as is the case with mammals. This Greek word translates the Hebrew *tannin* as found in Ex 7.10: “Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent.” This dragon could also have a connection with the serpent of Gen 3.1: “Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made.” With this verse in mind, we have a clue regarding the dragon’s character, subtle or *haram*; the verbal root connotes nakedness or an uncovering, most likely to reveal malevolence. “They lay crafty plans against your people” [Ps 83.3]. Note that *therion* is the LXX translation for wild creature as found in 11.7: “the beast that ascends from the bottomless pit.”

Four characteristics of this dragon:

1) Red or *purros* in the sense of being fiery in color. Cf. 6.4: “And out came another horse, bright red.” Also cf. Sg 5.10 where this word is used in the LXX: “My beloved is all radiant and ruddy.” The Hebrew adjective is ‘*adom*, closely related to ‘*adam* or man and referring to the earth’s color from which he had been formed.

2) “Seven heads” or *kephale*. Frequent reference had been made in this document with regard to the sacred number seven, mostly in connection with the seven churches and as well as with regard to Jericho. *Kephale* can represent the source of authority, and here is the exact opposite of Jesus Christ’s authority over his church (of which seven were noted in Revelation): “He is the head of the body, the church” [Col 1.18].

3) “Ten horns” or *keras*. “A fourth beast, terrible and dreadful and exceedingly strong...different from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns” [Dan 7.7]. The Chaldean word *qarnayn* closely resembles the Hebrew *qeren* which connotes strength and power. Horns were also used as part of the altar of sacrifice: “And you shall make horns for it on its four corners” [Ex 27.2].

4) “Seven diadems” or *diadema*. Another “anti-seven” number to the seven churches of Revelation. Compare with *stephanos* (crown) in 3.11: “so that no one may seize your crown.” *Diadema* differs from *stephanos* in the sense that it represents royal authority; the latter can apply to derived authority. In the verse at hand, *diadema* may signify that the beast shared his authority in imitation (in the sense of mockery) of the seven churches. That is, this authority is essentially fractured into “seven heads” with one body of a dragon.

12-Vs. 4: His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth.

This verse reveals the enormous size of the dragon who apparently is positioned on earth by reason of his proximity to the woman. *Oura* or tail is the source of its power.

“And the prophet who teaches lies is the tail” [Is 9.15], that is, once the Lord has severed head and tail from Israel (cf. vs. 14).

The dragon brings down one third of the stars to earth; *suro* is the verb used here which implies a dragging. A result of such dragging is a casting of the stars (literally) “into (*eis*) earth,” that is, making them fall and impact the earth similar to meteorites. For a comparable reference: The little horn “cast down to the ground some of the host of the stars and trampled upon them” [Dan 8.10].

Since the dragon had destroyed part of the firmament, we may assume that this occurred at night. Perhaps this is why he was able to be present when the woman was about to give birth; it was easy for him to sneak up on her. As the verbal root for dragon (*derkomai*) suggests, this beast...with all seven heads...is staring at the woman in anticipation of her son’s birth. “Before she was in labor she gave birth; before pain came upon her she was delivered of a son” [Is 66.7].

Katethio or to devour as in Mk 12.40: “Who devour widows’ houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”

12-Vs. 5: She brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne.

Compare this verse to Christ’s birth: “And she gave birth to her first-born son” [Lk 2.7]. This verse calls Jesus *protokos* as in Col 1.15: “He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.” *Protokos* is closely related to Christ as *eikon* (image) of God who remains invisible. Such an image mirrors the activity of the invisible God which in the context of vs. 5 is to rule or *poimaino*; this verb fundamentally means to shepherd (cf. Lk 17.7). This sense is lacking in the context of vs. 5 which is partly lifted from Ps 2.9: “You shall break them with a rod of iron.” Here the LXX uses *poimaino* for to break which in Hebrew is *rahah*. In light of this, consider Ps 23.4: “Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.” Here rod or *shevet* can mean tribe; staff or *mishhan* implies a support of any kind.

In the verse at hand, *rabdos* (rod) signifies rule as found in the LXX of Ps 45.6: “Your royal scepter is a scepter of equity.” Its composition of iron shows that such rule is harsh with respect to the nations (*ethnos* or *goym*), traditional foes of Israel.

The verb *arpazo* (to snatch) is in the aorist passive, another instance where action is taken with respect to the person or object at hand (here, the male child) to indicate divine intervention. Note the two-fold direction of this snatching: “to (*pros*) God” and

“to (*pros*) the throne.” *Thronos* (throne) is the place from which this child will wield his “rod of iron.” Cf. Rev 3.21: “He who conquers I will grant him to sit with me on my throne as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.”

12-Vs. 6: and the woman fled into the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

The woman’s flight happens after her son was born, the immediacy of this flight signified by “and” which connects this verse with the previous one. Compare her escape with the Holy Family’s descent into Egypt: “And he (Joseph) rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod” [Mt 2.14]. As noted with regard to vs. 4, the action took place at night; the same may apply to the woman which parallels that of the Holy Family.

Eremos or wilderness in the sense of an uninhabited region. “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness” [Jn 1.23], that is, I, John the Baptist am a voice in an uninhabited region. In the verse at hand, *eremos* is a special place (*topos*) “prepared (*etoimazo*) by God” or as this word connotes, a place which stands ready waiting to receive the woman.

This prepared place is also one of nourishing (*trepho*), a verb commonly associated with infants. “Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly father feeds them” [Mt 6.26]. Such nourishing has a temporal duration, 1260 days, the same amount of time (in the sense of *kairos*, a special event or occasion) as the two witnesses who prophesied, 11.3.

12-Vs. 7: Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought.

Now or *kai* (and) in the sense of continuing the action; as already noted, *kai* is used frequently in Revelation to indicate quick succession of events. Attention shifts to Michael (the only reference in Revelation) who is mentioned in the Book of Daniel several times (10.13, 21; 12.1); the last verse runs as follows: “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people...but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book.” The LXX translation uses *hora* for time instead of *kairos*.

Polemos (war) is situated in heaven; the verb *polemeo* is used twice which specifies the nature of this conflict: Michael allied with his angels against the seven-headed dragon. It seems that this heavenly army has taken the initiative to engage in battle to which

the dragon and his angelic host responded. “But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, disputed about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a reviling judgment upon him” [Jude 9].

12-Vs. 8: but they were defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.

Another use of *kai* (and) for but signifying continuous action, here the battle which had transpired in heaven. *Ischuo* for to defeat; this verb implies one side being stronger than the other. Note another passive use of a verb as if to imply that victory had come about by God through Michael and his angels. Such defeat means banishment from heaven: the dragon and his angels now lacked a place or *topos* in heaven. Cf. 2.5: “Remember then from what you have fallen, repent...If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.” That is, God will banish the church of Ephesus into the same location as the dragon (i.e., to the earth, 12.9).

12-Vs. 9: And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Another passive use of a verb, *ballo* (to throw down) referring to the dragon who is also identified under four names:

1) “Ancient serpent (*ophis*, cf. 20.2).” “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” [Lk 10.18]. This verse has Jesus Christ as witness to Satan’s fall, “like lightning” (*astrape*), the same comparison with regard to Christ’s coming: “For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of man” [Mt 24.27]. The former has a downward motion; the latter, a lateral one or from one cardinal point to another. In the verse at hand, the serpent is ancient (*archaios*) in the sense of something which has existed from the beginning: “Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made” [Gen 3.1]. Note that God is the creator of this serpent. The Hebrew term here is *nachash*, from a verbal root meaning to whisper; implied is the practice of enchantment and sorcery.

2) Devil or *Diabolos*, proper name used here. “Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” [Mt 25.31].

3) Satan who here is the same as the Devil. “I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is” [Rev 2.13].

4) Deceiver or *planao*, in the sense of leading astray; here the verb is in a present participle indicating continuous, habitual action. “Take heed that no one leads you astray” [Mt 24.4]. In the verse at hand, *planao* is with respect to “the whole world

(*oikoumene*),” more specifically, the inhabited world, another term for the Roman Empire.

Two more (passive) instances of *ballo*, the insertion of the just noted four names belonging to the dragon serving to intensify this action. The place to which the dragon is cast is “to the earth,” the preposition *eis* (into) suggesting full penetration. Compare *ge* (earth) with *oikoumene* just noted. Along with the “*eis*-ness” are the dragon’s angels.

12-Vs. 10: And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.

Here John interjects himself as witness, the first time since 11.1 when he was given a measuring rod to measure the temple. The source of this “loud (*megalos*, in the sense of great) voice” is not specified, either coming from God or an angel. Compare this indeterminate voice with the one at Christ’s transfiguration: “and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my beloved Son’” [Mt 17.5].

Four elements which “have come,” that is, after the dragon has been cast down to earth:

1) salvation (*soteria*): “For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed” [Rom 13.11].

2) power (*dunamis*) in the sense of might: “You will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven” [Mk 14.62].

3) kingdom (*basileia*): “Receive the kingdom of God like a child” [Mk 10.15].

4) authority (*exousia*): “For I have not spoken on my own authority” [Jn 12.49].

The first three belong to God whereas the fourth belongs to Christ. What effects them is that the “accuser (*kategor*) of our brethren” or the dragon has been cast down (*ballo*, another passive use of a verb). Note the first person plural here as with “our God.” The dragon-as-*kategor* accuses (*kategoreo*) “our brethren” continuously. He does this “before (*enopion*) God.”

12-Vs. 11: And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.

Another use of *kai* (and) to show the immediate connection between this and the previous verse. Those who have conquered (*nikao*) are “our brethren” of vs. 10. “He who conquers and who keeps my works until the end” [2.26].

Two parts to this victory:

1) The Lamb's blood (*haima*): "I saw a Lamb standing as though it had been slain" [5.6]. "He entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood" [Heb 9.12]. Christ's blood present in this Holy Place (*hagia*) enabled "our brethren" of vs. 10 to achieve victory. That is to say, this blood was able to extend from within the *hagia* to outside its precincts.

2) "Word of testimony" (*marturia*) signifying martyrdom which is equated with a word or *logos*, that is, their speech or testimony.

The verb *agapao* (love) is applied to "our brethren's" lives: such persons did not have agape toward their personal biological continuance but with respect to the Lamb. The text reads "the soul (*psuche*) of theirs; a singular soul for a multitude of "our brethren."

12-Vs. 12: Rejoice then, O heaven and you that dwell therein! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath because he knows that his time is short!"

The conclusion of those words from the "loud voice" which John heard in heaven (cf. vs. 10). *Euphraino* (to rejoice) in the sense of being happy. "Rejoice over her, O heaven, O saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her" [18.20]! Those bidden to rejoice are two fold: heaven itself (plural used, *ouranos*) and those who dwell there (*skenoo*); this verb connotes living in a tent. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" [Jn 1.14]. That is to say, those living in heaven have sent up their tent there because the Word had already tented "among (*en*, in) us." The plural of dwellers may be paralleled with the plural of heavens.

Ouai or woe with respect to earth and sea, the opposite of that rejoicing for heaven and its dwellers. While earth and sea have no intrinsic evil, they stand in contrast to heaven from which later the new Jerusalem will descend. The devil (*diabolos*) presumably is situated in heaven (in the sense of being in the firmament) and is destined to come down (*katabaino*). Compare the devil's coming with that of Christ: "and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" [Mt 24.30]. Here as well as in Acts 1.11 Christ does not *katabaino*; rather, he comes (*erchomai*) laterally, so to speak.

The devil will descend in "great wrath" (*thumos*), a term pertaining to passion, that is, to the spirit panting in the body and the rage with which the person pants. "When

they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath” [Lk 4.28]. The devil knows that his *kairos*, his designated opportunity, is short (*oligos*); on the other hand, Jesus Christ does not have this knowledge: “But of that day and hour (i.e., that *kairos*) no one knows, not even the angels of heaven nor the Son, but the Father only” [Mt 24.36].

12-Vs. 13: And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had borne the male child.

Because the dragon had seven heads and thus seven sets of eyes, this seeing (*oida*) is a type of *derkomai* (cf. vs. 4, the verbal root of dragon) or staring. Vs. 10 expressly states that the dragon had been cast down followed by two verses of rejoicing. It almost seems that the dragon was unaware of his fall which according to Christ’s own words, was like a lightning bolt (cf. Lk 10.18). The thoroughness of his fall is evident by the phrase “to (*eis*, into) the earth.” Once “into the earth” the dragon pursues (*dioko*) the woman, this verb connoting that he persecutes her. “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake” [Mk 5.10].

12-Vs. 14: But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time and times and half a time.

A verse reminiscent of Ps 55.6: “O that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest.” Here the psalmist gives voice to a two-fold aspiration, that he be endowed with dove’s wings: to fly away or *huph*. The psalm’s use of *huph* combines a positive and negative sense: first to escape affliction and then to rest or *shakan* which implies a laying down; the latter certainly includes repose from the former but involves a dwelling or abiding presence. “And let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell in their midst” [Ex 25.8].

Vs. 14 is another example of a verb in the passive mode (“was given”) which perhaps happened as abruptly as the dragon had fallen “into the earth” much like lightning as noted with regard to vs. 13. The eagle (*aetos*) is symbolic of Israel’s return from exile: “But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles” [Is 40.31]. Thus the woman of Revelation “renews (*chalaph*) her strength,” a verb implying change and is reminiscent of 2 Cor 3.18: “being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another.” She effects this by flying “into (*eis*) the desert.” Compare this “into-ness” as it was first applied to the dragon’s fall in vs. 13. It is followed by another *eis* with respect to (literally) “her place” (*topos*). Cf. Ps

18. 19: “He brought me forth into a broad place; he delivered me because he delighted in me.”

In this two-fold desert/place the woman is nourished (*trepho*) as in vs. 6 which parallels this verse. The duration for such nourishment is three and one half years, *kairos* being used three times in vs. 14. Cf. Dan 7.25: “He shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, two times, and a half a time.”

12-Vs. 15: The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with the flood.

Note the use of serpent (*ophis*, cf. vs. 9) as opposed to dragon; this beast has one mouth as opposed to seven belonging to the dragon. Contrast the flow of this water as river (*potamos*) with that river which flowed from the Jerusalem temple: “Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east” [Ezk 47.1]. The serpent’s attempt to destroy the woman is reminiscent of the Great Flood: “And the waters prevailed so mightily upon the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered” [Gen 7.19]. Vs. 15 uses the adjective *potamophoretos*, swept away. “He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the air” [Gen 7.23].

12-Vs. 16: But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river which the dragon had poured from his mouth.

Here the earth (*ge*)...into (*eis*) which the dragon had been cast, takes on a personal quality by helping the woman, *boetheo*. “If you can do anything, have pity on us and help us” [Mk 9.22]. By opening its mouth, the earth acted as a chasm to swallow (*katapino*) the river spewed by the dragon. “By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as if on dry land; but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned” [Heb 11.29]. Thus the woman may symbolize the nation of Israel saved at the Red Sea.

Note that the dragon, not serpent (cf. vs. 15), is mentioned, that is, the beast with seven mouths. Two mouths (*stoma*): that of the dragon and that of the earth, the latter being more formidable in that it could consume water spewed out by the seven mouthed dragon.

12-Vs. 17: Then the dragon was angry with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.

Another use of *kai* (and, then) to show continuous action continuing from vs. 13; each subsequent verse began with this word. After such uninterrupted activity, it is fitting that chapter twelve come to a conclusion.

Orgizo: to become angry, which shows the dragon's sentiment at not having caught the woman, similar to Pharaoh at the Red Sea: "And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host; and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord" [Ex 14.4]. The preposition *epi* (with, upon) shows his thorough anger as though it rested "upon" the woman.

The dragon expresses his anger now not so much by pursuing her further but by making war (*polemos*) upon her offspring (*sperma*, literally, seed). "As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them" [Dan 7.21]. His "going off" shows intent at this point in the narrative, to intensify action which will follow in successive chapters. Note rest (*loipos*), implying that the dragon already had waged war which he as "accuser of our brethren" had done (cf. vs. 11).

Offspring is equated with two types of persons (actually, one and the same): keeping (*tereo*) God's commandments. Cf. 1.3: "Blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written therein; for the time (*kairos*) is near." For an intensification of this verb, cf. Lk 2.19: "But Mary kept (*suntereo*) all these things, pondering them in her heart."

Entole for commandment is equivalent to the Hebrew *mitswah* as found often in Ps 119: "I revere your commandments which I love" [vs. 48].

The second type of persons against whom the dragon will wage war are those who bear testimony (*marturia*) to Jesus as noted in 11.7. In the verse at hand, such *marturia* is used with the name Jesus in the genitive case, "of Jesus."

The Greek text has the last sentence of vs. 17 as vs. 18. The sea is symbolic of chaos, a fitting place for the dragon to stand. This dramatic positioning is a kind of interlude for the action which will soon follow.

Chapter Thirteen

13-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.

13-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].

13-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 plague (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].

13-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.

13-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.

13-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, hearken back to the two witnesses of 11.3. Such words are

endurance and faith (*hupomone* and *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.

13-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.

13-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 I 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.

13-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.

13-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.

13-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].

13-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.

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 n one knows except him who receives it” [2.17]. Thus this “white stone” may be taken as an image which counters the number 666.

Chapter Fourteen

14-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 his Father’s (*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.”

14-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].

14-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.

14-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]. 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].

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.

14-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.

14-Vs. 6: Then I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven 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 mid-heaven (*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. Vs. 6's mention of various categories of peoples shows that this Gospel reaches everywhere.

14-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. 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]. 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.

14-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.” 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.

14-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 “mid-heaven” 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 and mark (*eikon* and *charagma*). Cf. 13.16, 14.11, 16.2, 19.20 for further references with regard to being allied with the beast.

14-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.”

14-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 (*karnos*) 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* [cf. Gen 2.7].

14-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.

14-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*) about the blessedness (*makarios*, adjective) pertaining to the dead. Such persons are not all those who suffer this common human destiny but those who have a presence-in (*en*) the Lord. 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” and 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 beatitude (*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 and deeds (*kopos* and *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.

14-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 the conjunctive *kai* to show the quick succession of events. 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.

“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.” 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.

14-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.” 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. He has authority to bid the son of man to reap; also 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 (*exothern*) 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. 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.

Chapter Fifteen

15-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 the conjunctive *kai*, 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 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*.

15-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.” 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 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.

15-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].

-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 being 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.

15-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 (*skenoo*) 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 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. 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.

-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 and power (*doxa* and *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]. Both divine glory and power are associated with the seven plagues whose source is from within the temple. 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.