

# Revelation 12-14, Introduction to the Seven Bowls

## Overview

Let's step back and get our bearings. The Revelation is a letter whose central body, like the book of Ezekiel, consists of a series of visions that John receives "in the Spirit" (Figure 1, chart). John has four visions that form a chiasm. The outer two, the letters to the churches and the Bride of Christ, show us God's people in their presently earthly struggle (ch. 2-3) and ultimate exaltation (ch. 21-22). The center two deal with God's judgments. First we have three series of seven judgments each, the seals, trumpets, and bowls. Then we zoom in to see the demonic system that lies behind the opposition to God's kingdom, the great Whore.

We are currently studying the second vision, and have completed the first two series of seven, the seals and the trumpets (Figure 2). The third series focuses on seven bowls poured out on the earth by angels. Like the first series, this series begins with an introduction to the main characters.

The introduction grows out of the setting prepared in the interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets (Figure 3), just as the trumpets emerged from the interlude between the sixth and seventh seals.<sup>1</sup> Table 1 shows the details of this preparation.<sup>2</sup>

Some try to find a series of seven scenes in chapters 12-14 or 12-15, but the divisions are not clear. So far, when John wants to organize a series of seven things, he has always made the count explicit: seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls. It seems better to discern scene changes in this section based on a change in the characters in focus (chart):

- chapter 12: the woman, her seed (individual and corporate), the dragon, and Michael
- chapter 13: the dragon and the two beasts
- chapter 14: God and his human creatures

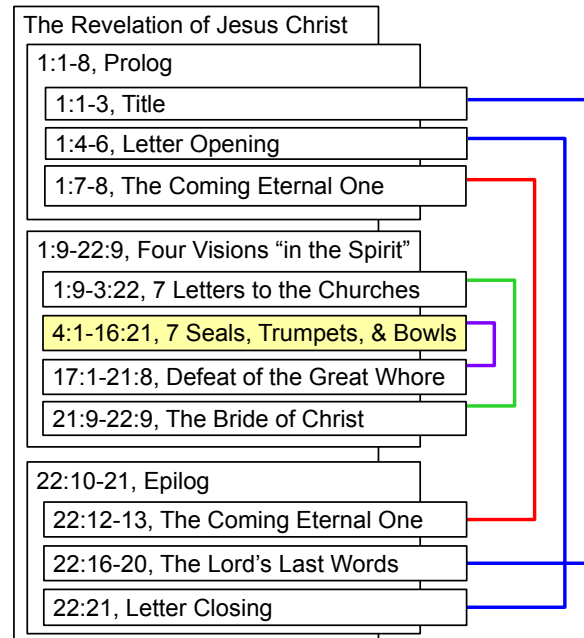


Figure 1: Structure of the Revelation

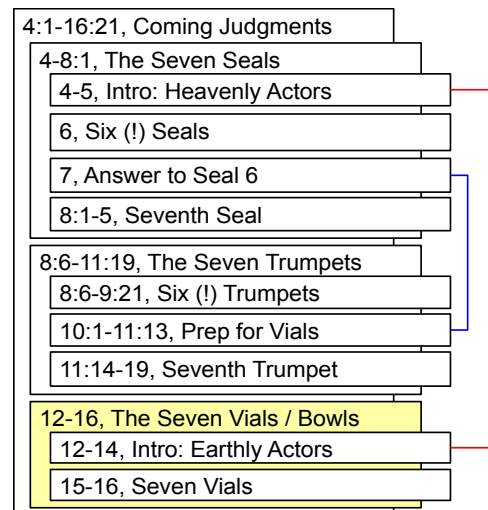


Figure 2: Structure of the Second Vision

Seals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Trumpets	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vials/ Bowls	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Figure 3: Nested Judgments

1 This figure is subtly different from that shown earlier. It makes explicit the role of the interlude between the sixth and seventh elements of the first two series in preparing for the following series.  
2 This table is not presented in the mp3 recordings of these studies.

Feature	Revelation 11	Revelation 12-14
42 months	2 ... the holy city shall they tread under foot <b>forty and two months</b> . 3 ... they shall prophesy <b>a thousand two hundred and threescore days</b> , ...	12:6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, ... that they should feed her there <b>a thousand two hundred and threescore days</b> . 13:5 power was given unto him to continue <b>forty and two months</b> .
Faithful witnesses	3 And I will give power unto <b>my two witnesses</b> , and they shall prophesy	14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him <b>an hundred forty and four thousand</b> , having his Father's name written in their foreheads.
Satanic beast	7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, <b>the beast</b> that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them,	13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw <b>a beast</b> rise up out of the sea,
Great city opposes God ...	8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of <b>the great city</b> ,	14:8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is <b>fallen</b> , is fallen, <b>that great city</b> , because <b>she made all nations drink</b> of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.
... and falls	13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and <b>the tenth part of the city fell</b> ,	Babylon is <b>fallen</b> , is fallen

Table 1: Chapter 11 prepares for 12-14

## 12, The Woman, the Dragon, the Seed, and Michael

This chapter is a kaleidoscope of images that are initially confusing. It helps to recognize the echoes that they present of several OT texts.

*Genesis 3* describes the serpent's temptation of Eve, the resulting sin, God's curse upon them (notably painful childbirth), and the promise of a child who will destroy the serpent.

*Genesis 37* recounts the early life of Joseph, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. Joseph has a dream that uses the sun, moon, and stars as a metaphor for the family.

*1 Kings 17* describes how God provided for his prophet Elijah during a time of spiritual oppression under Jezebel in the Northern Kingdom.

*Isaiah 49* describes Israel as a bereaved woman, who then is clothed with her restored children.

*Daniel 7* reports a vision of four world-ruling beasts, culminating in one with ten horns.

*Daniel 8* describes a mighty ruler casting the stars of heaven to the earth.

*Daniel 10, 12* describe angelic conflict in the heavens, with Michael leading the godly angels.

These images swirl around us in this chapter, and it will take some attention to recognize them and suggest how they merge into a coherent picture. We can discern a historical sequence through the first five verses, bringing us down to the era in which John is writing.<sup>3</sup> We will see:

1. Eve, with her sin and the curse (the woman in painful labor)
2. The emergence of the nation Israel (the sun, moon, and stars)
3. Israel's oppression by Satan, represented by Antiochus (stars swept from heaven)

<sup>3</sup> I find this a credible synthesis, but the dreamlike maelstrom of images makes certainty impossible.

4. The birth of the Messiah
5. The attempts to destroy him
6. His triumphant ascension to heaven.

12:6ff then look into the future. Figure 4 (chart) shows an overview of the chapter.

## 1-5, Past History, from Eden to the Ascension

**12:1 And there appeared a great wonder σημεῖον G4592 in heaven;**—“Wonder” is usually translated “sign” or “miracle.” It is an event with a meaning behind it. John uses the word often in his gospel to describe the Lord’s miracles (as in John 20:30), and emphasize that we are to draw conclusions from them.

**a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:**—The sun, moon, and stars point clearly to Joseph’s dream in Genesis 37 (chart):

Gen. 37:9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the **sun** and the **moon** and the **eleven stars** made obeisance to me. 10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father [Jacob] rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall **I and thy mother and thy brethren** indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

Jacob understands the astronomical images. The stars are his sons, eleven others bowing down to Joseph. Jacob himself is the sun. The moon represents Joseph’s mother.<sup>4</sup> Together, they represent the family of Jacob, whom God renamed Israel, from whom the nation is descended

In the Revelation, the woman is distinct from the moon and other heavenly bodies mentioned. They adorn her. Who is she? The next verses give us a clue, from an earlier episode in the OT.

**2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained βασανίζω G928 to be delivered.**—The theme of a difficult birth recalls the fall in Genesis 3:

Gen. 3:16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children;

This connection is strengthened by the word “pained,” which, with its cognates, is particularly common in the Revelation (11 out of 22 instances in the NT). Everywhere else in the Revelation, it describes the punishment of the wicked, and here it reminds us that painful childbirth is also a consequence of the sin of our first parents.<sup>5</sup>

Verse 3 reinforces the importance of Genesis 3 in understanding the passage:

**3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon,**—In 12:9 and again in 20:2, this dragon is identified with Satan, described as a serpent. This provides another link to the history in Genesis 3, where a serpent leads Eve into sin. The term “dragon”

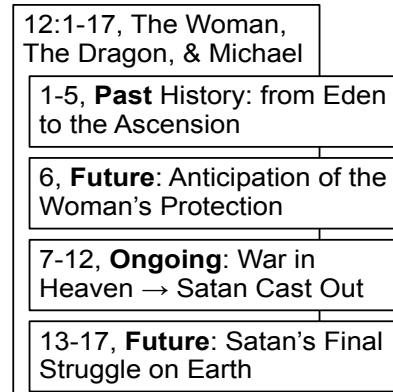


Figure 4: The Structure of Revelation 12

- 4 Rachel is deceased at this time. Jacob does not think it impossible that in the resurrection she would honor her son, though he does question the propriety of the action.
- 5 See note in the exposition of Revelation 8b-11. The emphasis of the pain that comes on the woman in bearing the messianic child and the clear relation of that pain to sin greatly complicate attempts to identify the woman with a supposedly sinless Virgin Mary.

(see note) has particular associations with mythical monsters who are in conflict with God, seeking to overthrow his creative work. This is Satan's role in Genesis.

These links with Genesis 3 suggest that the woman reflects Eve, attacked from the beginning by the serpent, suffering the penalty of painful childbirth. But she is adorned with the sun, moon, and stars. That is, in spite of her sin, she is honored to be the matriarch from whom Israel, God's chosen people, descend.

The idea of children as a mother's garment comes from Isaiah 49. Isaiah personifies the nation as "daughter Zion," a mother bereaved of her children in the captivities. When they are restored to her, she is said to be clothed with them, as this woman is with images representing Israel:

Isa 49:17 Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee. 18 Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the LORD, **thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all**, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth.

So it is reasonable to conclude that the woman clothed with the sun, moon, and stars represents Eve and her offspring, specifically the chosen nation Israel.

Genesis 3 gives her an even greater hope. There, God warns the serpent,

Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

One particular Israelite, descended from her, will one day destroy the serpent, explaining the serpent's animosity to the promised child.

**having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.**—This description of the dragon looks backwards and forwards.

Daniel 7 reports a vision of the course of world empire that parallels the statue that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream in Daniel 2 (chart). The culmination of that prophetic history in Daniel 7 is a fantastic beast (chart):

Dan 7:2 behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. 3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. 4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: ... 5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, ... 6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also **four heads**; and dominion was given to it. 7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had **ten horns**.

The dragon is the source of all these beasts that have sought through the ages to claim universal dominion. It has ten horns, like the last beast, and seven heads, more than even the third beast.

**4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth:**—The image here is drawn from Daniel's description of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (chart):

Dan 8:8 Therefore the he goat [the Greek empire] waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn [Alexander the great] was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven. 9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn [Antiochus IV], which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant

land. 10 And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and **it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.**

After Daniel sees this vision, Gabriel explains it to Daniel. The explanation of 8:10 is:

Dan 8:23 And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. 24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and **shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.**

Note that Antiochus operates “not by his own power,” Dan 8:24. He, like all oppressors of God’s people, is a tool of Satan, the tail of the dragon.

This interpretation shows that in Daniel, “the host of heaven” and “stars” are a reference to God’s saints, as in Daniel 12,

Dan 12:3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

It is likely that Rev 12:4a is referring to the same event as Dan 8:10. It would fit with the historical flow of the passage to see Rev 12:4a as a reference to the depredations of Antiochus.

**and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.**—In Daniel 7, the kingdom represented by this beast is overthrown by one called “the Son of Man,” the human descendant of the woman. The dragon wants to destroy the woman’s seed because that seed is destined to crush his head.

This opposition appears through history in Satan’s efforts to destroy the nation Israel, through which the Son of Man, the seed of the woman, is to come.

- Pharaoh sought to end the nation by slaughtering all the male children.
- Judges records repeated attacks, both military (seeking to destroy the nation) and spiritual (seeking to corrupt them).
- The Assyrians and later the Babylonians sought to disperse them among the nations.
- Antiochus IV tried to destroy the worship of God and turn the Jews into pagan Greeks.

The most focused manifestation of this effort was Herod’s attempt to destroy the newborn King of the Jews:

Mat 2:16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

It continued in Satan’s temptation of the Lord at the start of his ministry:

Mat 4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

It culminates in our Lord’s crucifixion, which Satan no doubt saw as a great triumph.

**5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron:**—In the face of this threat, the woman’s seed finally appears. The reference is clearly to the Messiah, who recounts God’s promise in Psalm 2,

Psa 2:7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me,  
Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.  
8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance,  
and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.  
9 **Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;**  
thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

**and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.**—John's vision takes us from the birth of the Lord Jesus directly to his resurrection and ascension, leaving us to recall all the intervening events from the gospels.

A detail here deserves comment. The child is clearly born on earth, for we are told that at this point he is “caught up unto God.” And the sweeping of the stars of heaven to the earth, according to Daniel, is the persecution of the people of God by Antiochus, a very earthly event. Yet both the woman who bears the child and the dragon who sweeps down the stars are “seen in heaven (12:1, 3).<sup>6</sup> There is a third sign yet to be seen in heaven (15:1), the angels with the final seven plagues, which again have very earthly manifestations. The point appears to be that the earthly events of Satan's opposition to the people of God, the birth of the promised Messiah, and the disasters of the last days are all determined in heaven by events in heaven. This theme will be critical in understanding the upcoming discussion of the war in heaven.

These references to historical events (woman in painful childbirth, Jacob's family, Antiochus, birth of the Lord, Herod, ascension) seem quite clear, and leads to the suggestion that so far we have an account of things that have already transpired:

1. Eve, with her sin and the curse
2. The emergence of the nation Israel
3. Israel's oppression by Satan, represented by Antiochus
4. The birth of the Messiah
5. Satan's attempts to destroy him
6. His triumphant ascension to heaven.

## 6, Future Protection of the Woman

We are about to turn our attention from the woman to the war in heaven. Before we do, John gives some closure to her story by describing an event that lies in the future, and will be picked up in more detail in 12:13-17. So this verse peeks ahead in time, before resuming the chronological history in v. 7.

**6 And the woman fled into the wilderness,**—The woman is Eve, but she is clothed with the emblems of the nation Israel, and thus represents the nation. She flees the wrath of the dragon, into the wilderness, just as Israel of old fled Pharaoh's wrath. Ezekiel anticipates this movement in his prediction of a future day before God finally establishes his kingdom in Jerusalem (chart):

Ezek 20:33 As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: 34 And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. 35 **And I will bring you into the**

6 Mounce understands “heaven” here to refer to the terrestrial sky in which the stars are situated, rather than the throne room of God. Ladd asserts that the does not refer to the birth and ascension of the Messiah, but to heavenly symbols portraying it.



**wilderness** of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. 36 **Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt**, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD. 37 And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: 38 And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

Ezekiel presents this eschatological time in the wilderness as a time of purging. But Hosea, anticipating the same purging, also emphasizes that it is a time of divine care:

Hos 2:13 And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the LORD. 14 Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and **bring her into the wilderness**, and speak comfortably unto her. 15 And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and **as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt**.

Hosea compares this wilderness time with the exodus from Egypt. This period had the same dual character: it was a time of purging, allowing for the death of the generation that refused to enter the land in Numbers 14. But those 40 years were also a time of God's gentle care (chart):

Deu 1:30 The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes; 31 And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place.

Isa 63:9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

Note in particular the tender irony of Isaiah's insight: "In all their affliction [which was brought on them because of their stubbornness against him] he was afflicted." God's discipline on his people is never vengeful, but always for their good, and he bears it with them. The time of purging in Revelation 12 and Ezekiel 20, like that in the days of the exodus, is also a time of tender care by the Lord. We should take comfort in this amazing combination of God's perfect holiness and tender mercy.

John goes on to illustrate this care by another OT episode:

**where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.**—Three and a half years of divine care in the wilderness recall Elijah in 1 Kings 17. The setting is the ascendancy of King Ahab and his pagan wife Jezebel, who promoted the worship of Baal, just as the antichrist will promote idolatry.

1 Ki 16:30 And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him. 31 And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and **went and served Baal**, and worshipped him. 32 And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. 33 And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

In response to this wickedness, God raises up Elijah the prophet, introduced in 1 Ki 17:1.

1 Ki 17:1 And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. 2 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, 3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. 4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. 5 So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. 6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

This drought is one of the OT examples of the kinds of judgment that the two witnesses of Revelation 11 proclaim during their ministry:

Rev 11:6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy:

The 1260 days are a recurring theme in the Revelation (Table 2, chart), suggested by the duration of Elijah's famine (Lk 4:25) during Jezebel's persecution of faithful worshippers of the Lord.<sup>7</sup> This period during which the woman is protected in the wilderness is mentioned again in 12:14 as

Rev.	Event	42 mnths	1260 days	time, times, ½
11:2	Gentiles trampling temple	X		
11:3	Two witnesses		X	
12:6	Woman in wilderness		X	
12:14	Woman nourished			X
13:5	Beast from sea	X		

Table 2: Designations of the 3.5 year oppression

“a time, times, and half a time,” an expression drawn from Dan 7:25 and 12:7 (Table 3) and associated with the coming “time of trouble” (Dan 12:1) imposed by the final horn from the fourth beast (Dan 7:24-25) (see note). It is also the period during which the court of the temple is abandoned to the Gentiles (11:2), the duration of the ministry of the two witnesses (11:3), and the period during which the beast from the sea is given power (13:5). It seems clear that, John, like Daniel six centuries earlier, expects a coming period of intense persecution, lasting about three and a half years, that God will permit just before Lord's return. Both Daniel and John encourage us that God has limited these periods of judgment, and like the ocean, they cannot overflow their appointed bounds.

## 7-12, Ongoing: War in Heaven

Now the historical sequence resumes (chart). Rev 12:1-5 described events that are past. After a brief anticipation in v. 6 of what

Dan.	Designation	Reference
8:14	2300 days	Period of oppression by Antiochus
7:25	<b>Time, times, dividing of time</b>	Fourth beast's dominion
12:7	<b>Time, times, half</b>	Duration of “time of trouble,” 12:1?
12:11f	1290 days, 1335 days	

Table 3: Time Periods in Daniel

<sup>7</sup> God provided for Elijah over these 3.5 years both in the wilderness by the brook Cherith (probably Wadi al-Yabis, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chorath>) and in the home of the widow of Zarephath, between Tyre and Sidon. A city is the antithesis of wilderness, but the brook Cherith sets the example for God's future provision for Israel under the Antichrist. The duration of God's supernatural provision for him is not emphasized in Kings. We might also consider Zarephath as a pagan city being a wilderness for a devout Israelite.



will become of the woman, vv. 7-9 describe the ongoing dynamics that have characterized our world from Eden until now. This period culminates in Satan's expulsion from heaven, celebrated by a heavenly choir in vv. 10-12. Then in 13-17, we look ahead to events of the end time.

Rev 12:7-9 follow the general flow of Daniel 10-12, a single vision centered around a visitor who comes in response to Daniel's prayer. Daniel 10 describes the principle of heavenly warfare, Daniel 11 shows how that warfare is reflected on earth, and Daniel 12 predicts a great time of trouble at "the time of the end" (Dan 12:9).

**7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,**—The vision of angelic combat in heaven, led by Michael, again reflects Daniel. He reports an extended period of prayer and fasting:

Dan 10:2 In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. 3 I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

Finally, a heavenly messenger arrives in response to his prayer:

Dan 10:4 And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel; 5 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz:

The messenger<sup>8</sup> explains that his delay is due to a geopolitical conflict (chart).

Dan 10:12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, **Michael**, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. 14 Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days. ... 20 and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. 21 But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but **Michael** your prince.

The princes of Persia and of Greece cannot be human monarchs, for they could not detain a heavenly visitor for three weeks. The involvement of Michael, elsewhere called the archangel (Jude 9), indicates that they must be angelic beings who stand behind the earthly kingdoms, contending for control. Michael, in Dan 12:1, represents Israel in these conflicts. The conflict is not just between Israel, represented by Michael, and the gentile nations. It is also among the gentile nations and their corresponding angels, as each seeks to gain superiority over the others.

This insight that earthly geopolitical conflicts reflect angelic combat in heavenly places is vital for understanding the worldview of the Revelation. Satan exercises his spiritual deception by way of human rulers, who serve his purpose for a time until he discards them to advance others in their place. The political overtones of "the great city" are dominant throughout.

Before departing to resume this conflict, the messenger declares his purpose: "to make thee understand what shall befall **thy people** in the latter days" (10:14, cf. 21). That explanation follows in Daniel 11, which gives a history of oppression against the Jews ("thy people"). The

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<sup>8</sup> Walvoord, anticipated by Luck and endorsed by Miller, distinguishes the divine "man clothed in linen" from the one who speaks of his conflict with the angelic princes. But it is difficult to distinguish the antecedent of the pronouns describing the one who speaks in 10:10ff from the mighty voice of the man clothed in linen in v. 6.

## Revelation 12-14, Introduction to the Seven Bowls

Jewish focus is consistent with the imagery in the Revelation, which has Satan's wrath directed against the woman clothed with the sun, moon, and stars, that is, Israel.

This chapter has three parts (Table 4):

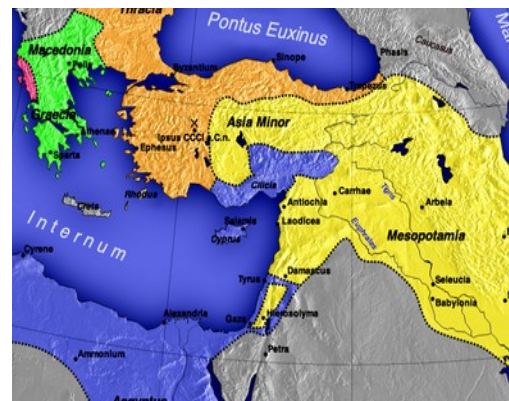
- 11:1-20 recounts the history of the middle east from Daniel's time (the third year of Cyrus of Persia, 10:1, 536-535 BC) through Alexander the Great and down to Antiochus IV (175 BC). The first four verses bring us to the breakup of Alexander's kingdom. The same kingdoms named in chapter 10, Persia and Greece, reappear:

Dan 11:	Dates	Description
1-20	536-175 BC	From 3rd year of Cyrus of Persia (10:1) to Antiochus IV
21-35	175-164 BC	Antiochus IV Epiphanes, king of Syria
36-45	?	Probably describes the Antichrist

*Table 4: The History of Oppression against Israel*

11:2 And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in **Persia**; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of **Grecia**. 3 And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will [Alexander the Great]. 4 And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven;

Alexander's "kingdom was broken" by conflicts among his generals. Two of the most powerful were Ptolemy, who governed Egypt but whose territories in southern Asia Minor showed his broader ambition, and Seleucus, whose kingdom was centered in Syria but extended east to India and west into Turkey. Seleucus founded the city of Antioch, naming it in honor of his father Antiochus, a name used by several later kings of the Seleucid kingdom. The rest of Dan 11:1-20 details ongoing conflicts between the King of North (the Seleucids) and the King of South (the Ptolemies). Figure 5 (chart) shows how this rivalry puts Israel squarely in the cross-hairs between the two realms.



*Figure 5: Israel as the battleground of the kings of the north (Seleucids) and south (Ptolemies). Orange: Lysimachus. Green: Cassander.*

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diadochi#/media/File:Diadochi\\_LA.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diadochi#/media/File:Diadochi_LA.svg)

- 11:21-35 focuses on one of these kings, Antiochus IV, who ruled Syria 175-164 BC. He sought to suppress the Jewish faith and compel God's people to deny him. His armies were defeated by the Jewish Maccabees, who restored worship in the Temple.
- 11:36-45 describes events that go beyond the historical facts concerning Antiochus. The person described here is widely understood to be the Antichrist, the Man of Sin of 2 Thessalonians 2, the beast from the sea of Revelation 13

The messenger's explanation of his angelic conflicts lends background to the prophecy of Daniel 11. Israel's oppressions under Antiochus, and the yet future ones under Antichrist, are earthly manifestations of the heavenly angelic conflict that John observes.

Daniel 12 goes on to describe the end game (chart). First the messenger speaks again of Michael:

Dan. 12:1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people:

The verb “stand” here is probably to be understood in the sense of “stand back.” The angelic opposition to Satan ceases.

and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time:

Here is the period of intense persecution described in Revelation 13ff.

and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

Finally the messenger promises the final, great deliverance.

The end of angelic opposition to Satan noted in Dan 12:1 is reflected in 2 Thessalonians 2, a chapter that we shall consider in more detail when we get to Revelation 13. There Paul describes the appearance of the Man of Sin, the Antichrist, before the Day of the Lord occurs:

2 Thes 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [of the Lord] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. ... 6 And now ye know **what withholdeth** that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only **he who now letteth [hindereth] will let [hinder]**, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

The appearance of the Man of Sin is hindered by heavenly combat against the angelic demons, led by Michael. When Michael finally stands back, Satan is unopposed in his project of earthly dominion, and the Antichrist will finally appear.

**8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.**—With heavenly opposition ceased (Dan 12:1), the dragon focuses his efforts on earth. He no doubt views this as an expansion of his rule over the earth, but in fact the door to heaven closes behind him.

**9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world:**—Note first his titles, and then the event of being cast out.

**that old serpent,**—We are reminded that the “dragon” who tries to destroy God’s creation is the serpent of Eden.

**the Devil, and Satan,**—The “dragon” who tries to destroy the creation of God is identified with the serpent of Eden. He bears two titles, one Hebrew and the other its Greek translation (chart).

- “Satan” השטן H78754 is literally “the accuser,” heaven’s district attorney.
- “Devil” διάβολος G1228 is “slanderer.”

Both titles reflect a function he repeatedly performs in the heavenly court.

- In Job 1, he accuses Job of serving God only because God prospers him.
- In Zechariah 3, he calls God’s attention to the sin of Joshua the high priest.
- Here in 12:10, he accuses (present tense) the believers before God day and night

These titles emphasize Satan’s role as the prosecuting attorney in heaven’s court, a role emphasized in 12:10. It is the most prominent reason he has access to heaven (though 1 Ki 22:22 shows one of his angels there and Ezek 28:13-14 shows Satan upon “the holy mountain of God,” probably representing the divine abode, in both cases without a court scene).

**which deceiveth the whole world.**—He is said not only to accuse before God, but also to “deceive the whole world.” When we first meet him, he is deceiving Eve, telling her (contrary to God’s word), “ye shall not surely die” (Gen 3:4). Paul describes him thus:

2Co 4:4 the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Our legal system recognizes the danger of entrapment, when law enforcement officers try to lure people into breaking it so that lawkeepers can appear more productive in prosecuting evildoers. Satan’s conduct with Eve and later with Job shows him as a master of entrapment. He does not simply bring accusations against sins we have already committed, but deliberately tries to lure people into sins that he can then bring before the heavenly court. This malice is active against “the whole world.” The only remedy is God’s sovereign enlightenment:

2Co 4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Who will defend us in the face of such a malicious accuser? Job was confident:

Job 16:19 Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record (שֹׁהֵד H7717 advocate) is on high.

In Zechariah 3, “the angel of the Lord” defends Joshua against Satan’s accusations, and throughout the NT, the Lord Jesus is presented as our “advocate” (1 John 2:1) who makes continual intercession for us (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25).

1 John 2:1 And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

Rom. 8:34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Heb 7:25 he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

**9 And the great dragon was cast out,**—This judicial setting helps us address the issue of the time at which Satan is cast out of heaven. Three times have been suggested:

*At some point before Genesis 1, a primeval fall, seen by some in Isaiah:*<sup>9</sup>

Is. 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!  
how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven,

I will exalt my throne above the stars of God:

I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;

I will be like the most High.

But in context, these verses clearly refer to the human king of Babylon.<sup>10</sup> And long after the creation, we see Satan still in heaven, accusing Job in Job 1 and Joshua in Zechariah 3.

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9 Some cite the Lord’s words in Lk 10:18, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven,” as evidence of an earlier fall, but his divine knowledge of God’s plan embraces things future as well as past.

10 Titles like “king” or “prince” can apply to spirit beings, as we see in Daniel 10, as well as Ezek 28:12 (cf. 28:2). But this individual is called a “man” in Isa 14:16, the very title that distinguishes the human “prince of Tyre” in Ezek 28:2 from the demonic “king of Tyre” in 28:12.

*At the cross*, suggested by our Lord's words:

John 12:31 Now **is** the judgment of this world: now **shall** the prince of this world be cast out. But note shift from present tense “now is the judgment” to future “now shall the prince ... be cast out.” Rev 12:10 sees him still actively accusing the saints at John's day.

The emphasis of the passage on his judicial function strongly suggests that the casting out in view here has not yet happened, but is part of the dynamics of the last 3.5 years (see note).

**he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.**—The outcome of this fierce conflict will be the utter defeat of Satan, who will be denied access to the heavenly court, and restricted to the earth. This heavenly defeat has not yet occurred. We can see, in the geopolitical battles around us today, clear evidence that the angels are still fighting in heaven. And one sign of the Antichrist may well be an apparent end to turmoil among nations.

This casting out brings rejoicing to those in heaven, but wrath from the dragon (chart).

**10 And I heard a loud voice**—This expression (φωνὴ μεγάλη) appears 18x in the Revelation (out of 37 in the entire NT) (note). It is very important that we hear what is said in this book.

**saying in heaven,**—Note who is speaking, and where they are situated.

The “who” seems fixed by “our brethren” later in the verse. Angels are never called the brethren of believers.<sup>11</sup>

The “where” is “in heaven,” where the great signs of the woman (12:1) and the dragon (12:3) appear, and where Michael battles the dragon and his angels (12:7). But now Satan is cast “into the earth” (12:9), and those in heaven rejoice over his defeat. That company is certainly the same as the “great multitude ... before the throne” of 7:9, as the doxology shows.

**Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ:**—This is one of many doxologies in the Revelation (Table 5, chart). Variations among the columns in such parallel structures help us trace the development of thought.

Several features of this doxology deserve attention.

1. It is anticipated by 11:15,<sup>12</sup> another utterance by “loud voices,” which announces the seventh trumpet.  
And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.  
Thus the events here are at the very end of the current era.
2. The earlier doxologies all look to the future: “praise and glory belong to God” or “God is worthy to receive praise and glory.” Now for the first time the declared attributes “have come” ἐγένετο. What God's people have asserted in faith through long centuries is now to be realized.
3. The ascription of “salvation” in 12:10 recalls the “many people” in 7:10, reinforcing our identification of this voice with theirs. Angels have no personal experience of salvation.
4. 11:15 and 12:10 are the first of the doxologies to mention God's kingdom (his rule). God has taken over the controls of the world, which up until now have been delegated to Satan.

11 I do not understand how Mounce can cite 19:10 to justify calling angels our “brethren.” That verse describes John and other believers as “brethren.” They are related to angels as “fellowservants.”

12 Not included in previous versions of this chart.



## Revelation 12-14, Introduction to the Seven Bowls

(Speaker)	1:6 John	4:9, Living Creatures	4:10-11, Elders	5:9-10, Elders: The slain Lamb is worthy...	5:12, Angel Host	5:13, All Creation	7:10, Many People	7:11-12, Angels, Elders, LCs	11:15, Loud Voices in Heaven	12:10 Loud Voice in Heaven	19:1 People in Heaven
(Recipient)	Jesus Christ	God	God		Lamb	God & Lamb	God & Lamb	God	God & his Christ	God & his Christ	Lord our God
(Form)	to ...	to ...	Worthy		Worthy	to ...	to ...	to ...	Now is come	Now is come	Alleluiah; to ...
Glory	1	1	1		6	3		2			2
Honor		2	2		5	2		5			3
Thanks		3						4			
Power δύναμις G1411			3		1			6		2	4
Blessing					7	1		1			
Riches					2						
Wisdom					3			3			
Strength, might ισχύς G2479					4			7			
Power κράτος G2904	2					4					
Salvation							1			1	1
Kingdom									1	3	
Power ἐξουσία G1849										4	
(Response)	Amen					Amen	Amen →	Amen			

Table 5: Doxologies in the Revelation

**for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused [accuses] them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him**—Recall the promises to the seven churches.

**by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony;**—Victory over Satan is the culmination of what the Lamb’s blood is said to do for us in the Revelation: wash away our sins (1:5), make us God’s property (5:9), and equip us for righteous lives (7:14). Together, these equip us to overcome (have victory) over the dragon. See note.

**and they loved not their lives unto the death.**—They embraced the Lord’s teaching (chart),

Mat 16:25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

**12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.**—Compare the “time of trouble” in Dan 12:1.

## 13-17, Future: Satan’s Final Struggle on Earth

Now John directs our attention from the heavenly chorus to the dragon, and events after his fall from heaven. First he attacks the woman (13-16), then “the remnant of her seed” (17).

**13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.**—The woman, absent since 12:6, now returns. At this future time, the emphasis is not on Eve herself, but on the people Israel that has come from her.

**14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness,**—Now we pick up the story of her flight into the wilderness. As we saw in 12:6, this sojourn recalls two OT passages.

1. It recalls Israel's 40 years in the wilderness after the Exodus.
2. It fulfills the prophesy in Ezekiel 20 that God would purge his people in the wilderness before establishing them finally in the land of Israel.

The image of eagles' wings also recalls the Exodus, and in particular its protective purpose. When Israel arrives at Sinai, God says to them,

Exo 19:4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how **I bare you on eagles' wings**, and brought you unto myself.

And at the end of the 40 years, in the plains of Moab, Moses recalls,

Deut 32:9 For the LORD's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.  
10 He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness;  
he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.  
11 **As an eagle stirreth up her nest**, fluttereth over her young,  
spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:  
12 So the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.

In Exodus and Deuteronomy, the Lord is the one whose wings carry his people to safety. Seven hundred years later, Isaiah, also reflecting on the Exodus, expands the image. Now it is the faithful themselves who have the wings that carry them above the fray:

Is. 40:31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings as eagles;  
they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

So here, the Lord delivers the woman from the serpent by enabling her to fly away. As often throughout the book, the passive “was given” indicates the Lord's sovereign oversight of the entire scenario, both in permitting Satan's activities and (here) in protecting his people.

**into her place,**—Israel during the 40 years in Sinai was constantly on the move.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, the (as 12:6 anticipated) “hath a place prepared of God.”

**where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time,**—Once again we are reminded of the period of 3.5 years, which apparently begins when Satan is cast out of heaven.

**from the face of the serpent. 15 And the serpent**—John describes the adversary here as “the serpent” rather than “the dragon.” “Dragon” is his usual title in the Revelation (13x). Besides these two references, “serpent” appears only in 12:9 and 20:2, to link the dragon to the history of Genesis 3. So whatever is going on with the flood in 12:15-16 must relate in some way to Eden.

**cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.**—Three clues suggest an interpretation of this perplexing image: the metaphor of a flood, the earth swallowing something, and the reference to the serpent of Genesis 3 (rather than the dragon).

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13 The verb commonly used to describe the 40 years, “wander,” is misleading (<https://cyber-chapel.org/blog/did-israel-wander-in-the-desert/>). But it does imply that they kept moving, rather than settling in a fixed “place.”

The metaphor of an overflowing flood can describe three ideas in the OT, each a focusing of the previous one (Figure 6, chart):<sup>14</sup>

1. Most generally, it describes an overwhelming disaster:<sup>15</sup>

Psa. 32:6 For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the **floods of great waters** they shall not come nigh unto him.

2. In particular, it refers to a multitude of persecutors:<sup>16</sup>

2Sam. 22:5 When the waves of death compassed me,  
the **floods of ungodly men** made me afraid;  
6 The sorrows of hell compassed me about;  
the snares of death prevented me;

3. Most specifically, it can be an army expanding its control over a country. For example, Isaiah pictures the Assyrian invasion as a flood:<sup>17</sup>

Is. 8:7 Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even **the king of Assyria**, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and **go over all his banks**: 8 And he shall pass through Judah; he shall **overflow** and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.

A second clue is the image of the earth's swallowing something. This image appears seven times in the OT: Ex. 15:12; Num. 16:30, 32, 34; 26:10; Deut. 11:6; Psa. 106:17. In every case, the reference is to the enemies of God and his people, and in all but Ex 15:12, it is to those who rebelled with Korah in Num 16. For example,

Psa. 106:16 They envied Moses also in the camp,  
and Aaron the saint of the LORD.

17 The earth opened and swallowed up **Dathan**,  
and covered the company of **Abiram**.

This favors an interpretation that focuses on “floods of ungodly men” as in Figure 6 #2.

The third clue to the flood in Rev 12:15, 16 is the use of “serpent” rather than the more common “dragon” as the agent of the flood, taking us back to Genesis 3. We have already seen the clear link of the serpent imagery with the promised seed of the woman in Gen 3:15. That verse anticipates another seed:

Gen. 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between **thy seed** and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Our Lord draws on this imagery to rebuke the unbelieving Jewish leaders:

Joh 8:44 Ye are of **your father the devil**, and the lusts of your father ye will do.

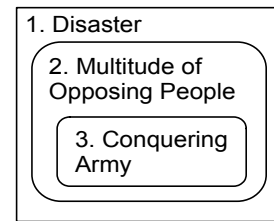


Figure 6: The Flood Metaphor in the OT

<sup>14</sup> This summary refines and rationalizes Beale's analysis.

<sup>15</sup> Compare also Ps 90:5.

<sup>16</sup> Also Pss. 18:4, 16; 46:3; 66:12; 69:1–2, 14–15; 124:4–5; 144:7–8, 11; Isa. 43:2. Beale couples this social opposition with the idea of deception, based on Qumran texts.

<sup>17</sup> Beale also notes Dan. 11:10, 22, 26, 40; and the emphasis on divine judgment in Ps. 88:7, 17; Isa. 17:12–13; Jer. 46:8; 47:2; 51:55; Hos. 5:10; cf. Isa. 10:22; 59:19; Mic. 1:4; Nah. 1:8.

The “flood” that “the serpent cast out of his mouth” is most likely his seed, who share his antipathy for the woman and her believing offspring.<sup>18</sup> Satan opposes the faithful not only with the centralized oppression of the Antichrist, but also with social pressure from multitudes of unbelievers who overwhelm the faithful with ostracism.

We have examples of this kind of Satanic flood in the Bible (chart). Recall the history of Korah, when the ground opened. The Levite Korah and three Reubenites object to the prominence of Moses and Aaron, insisting that all the congregation are holy.

Num. 16:1 Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: 2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, **two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation**, men of renown: 3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing **all the congregation are holy, every one of them**, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?

Their strategy is one used by revolutionaries in every age: present themselves as the voice of the people, and try to arouse widespread popular opinion against those they oppose. To the degree they are successful, they will produce a “flood of ungodly men,” in the words of 2 Sam 22:5.

In 2 Sam 22:5, David may be recalling the history of 1 Samuel 23. He courageously delivers the people of Keilah from the Philistines. In spite of this, perhaps because of their fear of Saul, they are willing to deliver him into the hands of Saul:

1Sa 23:12 Then said David, Will the **men of Keilah deliver me** and my men into the hand of Saul? And the LORD said, They will deliver thee up.

We think also of the multitudes in Matthew’s gospel. They enthusiastically welcome the Lord into Jerusalem:

Matt. 21:8 And a very great **multitude** spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. 9 And the **multitudes** that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

In fact, they were so enthusiastic in support of the Lord that the Jewish leaders feared to arrest him publicly:

Matt. 21:46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

But a few days later, they yield to satanic influence, becoming a “flood of ungodly men” to demand his death:

Matt 27:20 But the chief priests and elders persuaded the **multitude** that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. 21 The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. 22 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They **all** say unto him, Let him be crucified. 23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. 24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a

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18 It is tempting to see here an anticipation of the modern myth that snakes carry their young in their mouths, but I have been unable to find any references to this belief in ancient sources.

tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the **multitude**, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.

Recall the social and economic pressure on the seven churches to compromise with the idolatrous cults that were interwoven with their society. As our Lord warned us,

Mat 10:22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake:

We must expect social opprobrium and be prepared to stand against popular opinion. As the Lord opened the earth to swallow Korah's multitude, so he will deal with our social adversaries.

Finally, unable to destroy the nation as a whole, the dragon pours out his wrath on individuals associated with her.

**17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed,**—Up to this point, the focus has been on a single child from the woman, the one who will rule with a rod of iron, the Messiah. Since 12:5, that child has been with God in heaven. Now we learn that she has other offspring as well, something hinted by the symbols of Israel that clothe her. Some would see here the church in general, but it is more likely that the focus is on believing Israelites, such as the 144,000 from Revelation 7. These would not need the purging in the wilderness anticipated in Ezekiel 20. While the race at large is protected and purged in the wilderness, the 144,000 remain to face the Antichrist.

**which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.**—But whether Jew or Gentile, here are two characteristics that mark the people of God.

1. Toward God, we owe unquestioning obedience, whatever the consequences.
2. Toward unbelievers, we must bear witness to the Lord Jesus and his gospel.

What does it mean to “have the testimony of Jesus Christ”? We should remember that in Greek, the words “testimony,” “witness,” and “martyr” all come from the same Greek root, from which our English word “martyr” is derived. This word family sets the theme for the

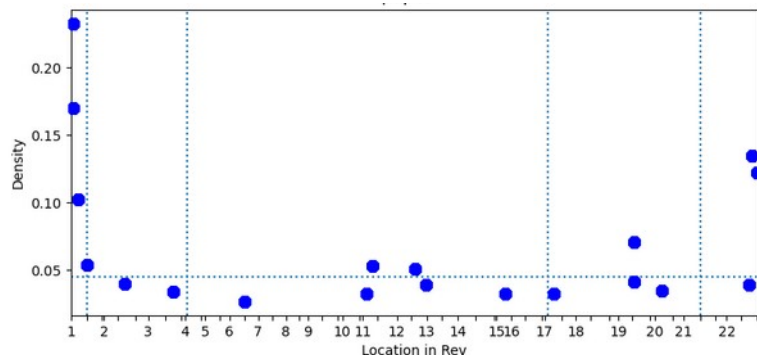


Figure 7: Instances of the Greek root μαρτυρ- in Revelation

Revelation, being especially prominent at its start and end (Figure 7, chart).

Notice in particular the cluster of occurrences at the very start of the book:

Rev 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: 2 Who **bare record** of the word of God, and of **the testimony of Jesus Christ**, and of all things that he saw. ... 4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; 5 And from Jesus Christ, who is **the faithful witness**, ...

These uses of the term describe a clear flow of information (Figure 8).

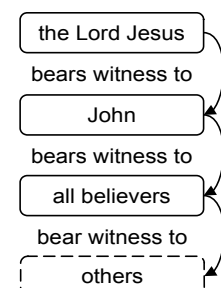


Figure 8:  
Having the  
testimony of  
Jesus Christ



1. The Lord Jesus is “the faithful witness” or martyr (v. 5).
2. He is giving a revelation to John (v. 1), which John calls “the testimony [witness] of Jesus Christ” (v. 2), that is, the testimony that the Lord Jesus bore.
3. John in turn “bears record [witnesses, testifies] to this revelation or witness.

So to “have the testimony of Jesus Christ” is to carry on with John’s role: to receive the testimony that our Lord bore to John, and then to represent it to others.

We should be encouraged with our Lord’s promise in the Beatitudes,

Mat 5:10 **Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake:** for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and **persecute you**, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

## 13, The Two Beasts

Chapter 12 gave us the historical background of the dragon’s enmity. It anticipates a time when he can no longer accuse the saints in heaven. At this point he brings forth two beasts, from the sea and from the earth. The beast from the sea is the antichrist, a world ruler who looks like the dragon (13:1) and demands worship. The beast from the earth, sometimes called “the false prophet,” speaks like a dragon (13:11), demanding that everyone worship the first beast. Together these three—dragon, antichrist, and false prophet—form a counterfeit trinity.

The word “beast” in the KJV translates two Greek words with different meanings.<sup>19</sup> In the heavenly throne room in Revelation 4-5, we met one group of “beasts,” more properly “living creatures,” who are angels. With a few exceptions, they are named only in chapters 4-7 (Figure 9, chart). The other Greek word, referring mostly to a wild animal, is concentrated in chapters 13, 17, and 20, where it describes the satanic emissaries we now study.

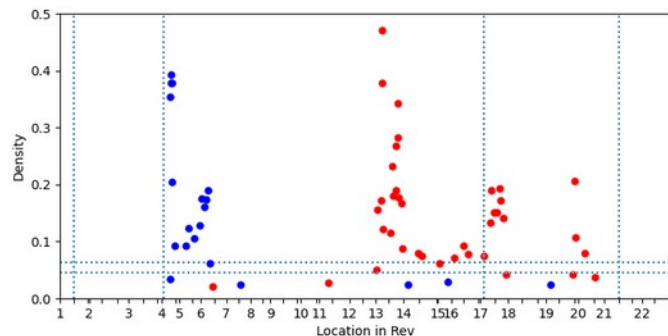


Figure 9: “Beast” in Revelation: ζῷον G2226 “living creature” (blue) and θηρίον G2342 “wild animal” (red).

Note the first instance of θηρίον, in 6:8.

After describing the four horsemen, John notes,

Rev 6:8 And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the **beasts** of the earth.<sup>20</sup>

19 Trench has a very helpful discussion of the two words. ζῷον G2226 is the more generic term, describing any living creature, while θηρίον G2342 describes wild animals. He makes the interesting observation that the LXX never uses θηρίον to describe a sacrificial animal. (Contrary to the usual pattern, in this case the more specific term, θηρίον, is more common [184x] than the more generic one [60x] in the overall Greek Bible.)

20 This expression “beasts of the earth” need not exclude the first beast, if we understand “earth” here as in contrast with “heaven,” following the description of the dragon’s fate in Revelation 12. Revelation 13 makes more specific where on earth each of the two beasts originates: the first ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης and the second ἐκ τῆς γῆς. The simple genitive θηρίον τῆς γῆς is most commonly used in the LXX not to distinguish land from sea creatures, but land creatures from the birds of heaven, Gen. 1:30; Deut. 28:26; 1 Sam. 17:46; Psalms 79:2; Isaiah 18:6;

## Revelation 12-14, Introduction to the Seven Bowls

Ezek 14:21	Lev 26:3 If you walk in my statutes ...	Lev 26:14 If ye will not hearken unto me ...	Rev 6
Sword	6c neither shall the sword go through your land. 7 And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword.	17 And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.	6:4, Red Horse
Famine	10 And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new.	20 And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits.	6:5, Black Horse
Evil beast	6b I will rid evil beasts out of the land,	22 I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate.	6:2, White Horse (!)
Pestilence (LXX Death)	(Exo 15:26 I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.)	16a I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, 25 I will send the pestilence among you;	6:8, Pale Horse

*Table 6: The Four Judgments and the Horsemen of Revelation 6*

When we studied this passage, we observed that these four disasters are a classic summary of the judgments that God promised to bring on Israel if they forsook him (Table 6, chart). They are introduced in Leviticus 26, and summarized in Ezekiel 14,

Eze 14:21 For thus saith the Lord GOD; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence [LXX death], ...

Three of these, the sword, famine, and pestilence (or death), align with the second, third, and fourth horsemen. So we naturally expect that the fourth judgment, delivery to wild beasts, is associated with the rider on the white horse. When we studied Revelation 6, we concluded that this horseman is the spirit of antichrist, described by John in his first epistle (chart):

1Jn 2:18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that **antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists**; whereby we know that it is the last time. ... 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that **spirit of antichrist**, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

John distinguishes the future “antichrist” that “shall come” from “the spirit of Antichrist” that “already ... is in the world.” The rider on the white horse, the very first of the judgments in the Revelation, represents this spirit of Antichrist that will eventually issue in the personal Antichrist, the beast from the sea. Paul also describes a current power of evil that will emerge in personal form in the last times:

2 Thes 2:7 For the **mystery of iniquity doth already work**: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 **And then shall that Wicked be revealed**, whom the Lord

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Jer. 7:33; 15:3; 16:4; 19:7; 34:20; Ezek. 29:5; Dan. 4:12.

## Revelation 12-14, Introduction to the Seven Bowls

shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

Given John's summary of the horsemen in 6:8, we expect the judgment of the white horseman to take the form of "beasts," and now in Revelation 13 that expectation is fulfilled.

The descriptions of the two beasts are parallel with one another (Table 7, chart).

- Both beasts are related to the dragon. The dragon sends the beast from the sea, which looks like the dragon, with seven heads and ten horns. The beast from the earth sounds like the dragon.
- Both cases refer to a deadly wound suffered by the beast from the sea, which was miraculously healed, leading people to worship him.
- Of both beasts, we repeatedly read, "it was given" (obscured in 13:14-15 in translation, where "he had power" is literally "it was given to him"). This expression peaks here and in the seal and bowl judgments (Figure 10, chart). It indicates that the power of evil is not absolute, but the result of permission from a superior power, and reflects God's sovereign control over these wicked forces.

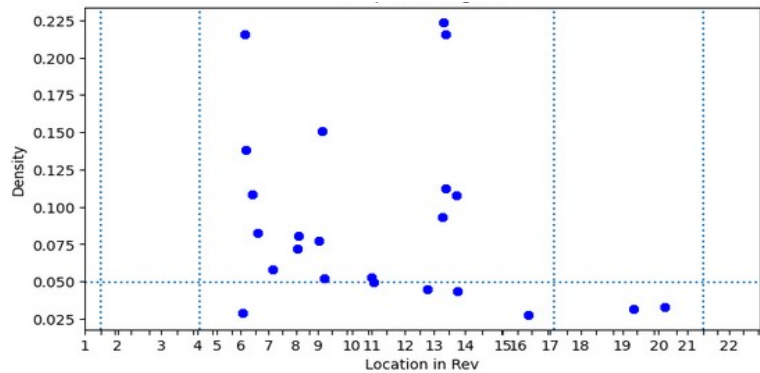


Figure 10: "It was given" (δίδωμι G1325 passive)

- Both descriptions mention distinctive signs for those who follow the beasts. In the case of the beast from the sea, the sign is negative: their names are not written in the Lamb's book of life. In the case of the beast from the earth, the signs are positive, a mark in the hand or forehead.
- Both descriptions exhort the reader to pay attention.

Knowing the OT as he does, when John sees these two beasts, he must have thought of two mighty beasts named in the book of Job, Leviathan (from the sea) and Behemoth (from the land). In understanding them, it will help to recall the structure of Job (Figure 11, chart).

At the outset, Satan tries to prove that Job, a righteous man whom God has blessed, serves God only for the benefits he receives. The Lord allows Satan to test Job, and after a series of disasters, Job laments the day of his birth. These introductory sections are echoed chiastically at the end, as Job first confesses God's might and righteousness, and is then restored to blessing.

The heart of the book is a series of rebukes. First, Job's three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, insist that Job's misfortunes prove that he has somehow displeased God, and urge him to confess his hidden sin and repent. Job, with a clear conscience but ignorant of the heavenly debate between Satan and God, defends himself, but accuses God of injustice in allowing him to suffer. Then a new character, Elihu, appears, condemning the friends for their groundless accusations, but also

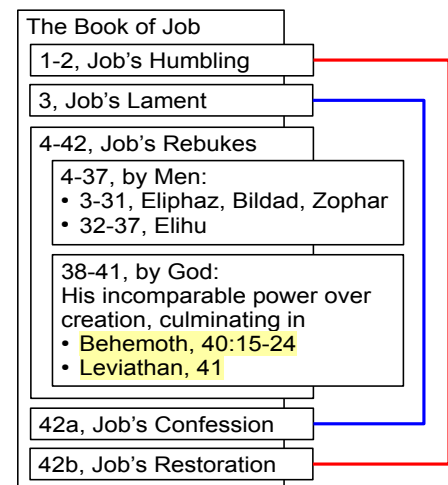


Figure 11: Structure of the Book of Job

# Revelation 12-14, Introduction to the Seven Bowls

	1-10, Beast from the Sea	11-18, Beast from the Earth
Relation to the Dragon	1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having <b>seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns</b> , and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great <b>authority ἐξουσία</b> .	11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and <b>he spake as a dragon</b> .
Worship, Wound	3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and <b>his deadly wound was healed</b> : and all the world <b>wondered</b> after the beast. 4 And they <b>worshipped</b> the dragon which gave <b>power ἐξουσία</b> unto the beast: and they <b>worshipped</b> the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?	12 And he exerciseth all the <b>power ἐξουσία</b> of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to <b>worship</b> the first beast, whose <b>deadly wound was healed</b> . 13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,
Divine Permission ("was given")	5 And <u>there was given</u> unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and <b>power ἐξουσία was given</b> unto him to continue forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 And <u>it was given</u> unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and <b>power ἐξουσία was given</b> him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. 8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall <b>worship</b> him,	14 And [he] deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which <u>he had power</u> [it was given to him] to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. 15 And <u>he had power</u> [it was given to him] to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not <b>worship</b> the image of the beast should be killed.
Distinctive Sign	whose <b>names are not written</b> in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.	16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to <b>receive a mark</b> in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.
Call to attention	9 If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.	18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

Table 7: Parallels between the Two Beasts

condemning Job for justifying himself rather than God. He gives an eloquent defense of God's righteousness, to which Job does not respond.

Finally, God himself speaks. The point of his speech is that Job has no business challenging God's righteousness because God is the creator and Job is only a creature. The Lord describes a series of natural wonders that he has created and controls, and over which Job is impotent, to show that Job must trust him rather than criticizing him.

## Revelation 12-14, Introduction to the Seven Bowls

The natural phenomena that the Lord presents to show his creative power culminate in two mighty beasts, called Behemoth and Leviathan. Behemoth, in 40:15-24, is a land animal of prodigious size and power, whose description best fits a brontosaurus.

Job 40:15 Behold now **behemoth**, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. 16 Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly. 17 He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. 18 His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. 19 He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him. ...

Leviathan, Job 41, is more mysterious. He is described as an unconquerable, fire-breathing sea monster. Sometimes he is identified as a crocodile, but many details do not fit (chart).

Job 41:1 Canst thou draw out **leviathan [LXX Dragon]** with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down? 2 Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn? ... 7 Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish spears? 8 Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more. 9 Behold, the hope of him is in vain: shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him? 10 None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me? ... 18 By his neesings [sneezes] a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. 19 Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. 20 Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron. 21 His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth. ... 33 Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear. 34 He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.

Elsewhere in the OT, Leviathan is identified with dragons, and described as in combat with God. God defeated Leviathan when he divided the Red Sea:

Psa 74:13 Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength:  
thou brakest the heads of the **dragons** in the waters.  
14 Thou brakest the heads of **leviathan** in pieces,  
and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.

Note the reference to Leviathan's multiple heads, anticipating the beast from the sea with seven heads and ten horns.

Isaiah describes him as an adversary whom the Lord will destroy in the last day:

Isa 27:1 In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword  
shall punish **leviathan** the piercing serpent,  
even **leviathan** that crooked serpent;  
and he shall slay the **dragon** that is in the sea.

As the last example in God's list of his creations in Job 38-41, Leviathan is presented as the greatest. He also occupies the most space, 34 verses out of 129, more than a quarter of God's speech. God reminds Job that even this demonic multi-headed serpent is his creature, and ultimately under his control.

Now John sees two great beasts, one from the sea, the other from the land. Against the background of Job we learn that for all their power, these beasts are ultimately created by God, and thus under his control. And from Isaiah, we understand that they will ultimately be destroyed, a promise that is fulfilled when the Lord Jesus returns. Here "the beast" is the beast from the sea, and "the false prophet" is the beast from the land.



Rev 19:19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And **the beast** was taken, and with him **the false prophet** that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

## 1-10, The Beast from the Sea

We saw that the descriptions of the two beasts are parallel, forming an alteration ABCDEabcde (Table 7, chart). We'll follow the divisions revealed by this structure.

### 1-2, Relation to the Dragon

Both beasts are related to the Dragon. The first beast looks like dragon.

**13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea,**—We are reminded of Leviathan, the great sea monster of Job 41, who was identified with the dragon (or dragons) in Psa 74:13-14 and Isa 27:1. In 2 Thessalonians 2, the antichrist is called the “man of sin,” so it is likely that Leviathan is another name for the dragon, while the point here is the similarity of the human Antichrist to him. His origin from the sea points us to Dan 7:3, introducing Daniel’s vision that lies behind the imagery here.

**having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.**—The seven heads and ten horns are the same combination of features ascribed to the dragon in 12:3. The beast looks like the dragon John has seen, and yet 13:2 shows that he is distinct from the dragon. He is the image of the dragon, just as the Lord Jesus is the image of the Father—“He who has seen me has seen the Father,” John 14:9.

The dragon wears a crown on each of his seven *heads*, while the beast has a crown on each of his ten *horns* (Osborne). Daniel 7 will help us understand the distinction.

**2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion:**—These are elements of the first three beasts in Daniel 7.

John’s vision of this beast reflects Daniel’s vision in Daniel 7 (chart):

Dan 7:3 And four great beasts came up **from the sea**, diverse one from another. 4 The first was like a **lion**, and had **eagle's wings**: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. 5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a **bear**, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. 6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a **leopard**, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also **four heads**; and dominion was given to it. 7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a **fourth beast**, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had **ten horns**. 8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and **a mouth speaking great things**. ... 24 And the ten horns out of this kingdom are **ten kings** that shall arise:

In Daniel, these four beasts represent the four great empires predicted in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2:

- Babylon, the lion;
- Media-Persia, the bear;
- Greece, the leopard (with four heads representing the diadochi, the four leading generals among whom Alexander's kingdom was divided);
- Rome, the beast with ten horns (recall the ten toes on the image in Daniel 2).

The heads thus represent dynasties or empires, and the dragon's seven crowns reflect his focus over this flow of history. Dan 7:24 tells us that the ten horns on the fourth beast represent kings, reflecting his engagement with the geopolitical alignment at a specific point in time.

The beast that John sees combines all four of these. It represents, not a sequence of ambitious rulers, but a single power that achieves the global ambitions of all of them, a single world ruler. Our Savior insisted, "My kingdom is not of this world," John 18:36. The first beast is the antithesis of his kingdom, an attempt to subdue all the world under a single authority.

**and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority ἐξουσία.**—The word "authority" (ἐξουσία G1849), sometimes translated "power," is central to this section (Figure 12, chart). It refers, not to raw energy, but to authority. It is what Satan claimed to have over the earth when he tempted the Lord:

Luke 4:6 And the devil said unto him, All this **power** will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

There is no reason to doubt his words. In this present evil age, he does have authority over the earth, but the Lord told his disciples after his resurrection,

Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All **power** is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Currently, he waits at the Father's right hand for the appointed time (Ps 110:1). When it comes, his authority will be manifest.

The distribution of this term in the book is striking (Figure 12). The red dots are instances of authority in the hands of evil agents. They form three prominent peaks: in the trumpets (ch. 9), describing the great harlot (ch. 17), and most notably, here in ch. 13, focused on the beast from the sea. The green dots, where God's people have authority, frame the rest of the book: in the promise to the overcomers at Thyatira in 2:26, again to overcoming believers at the end of the book, and to the two witnesses in ch. 11.

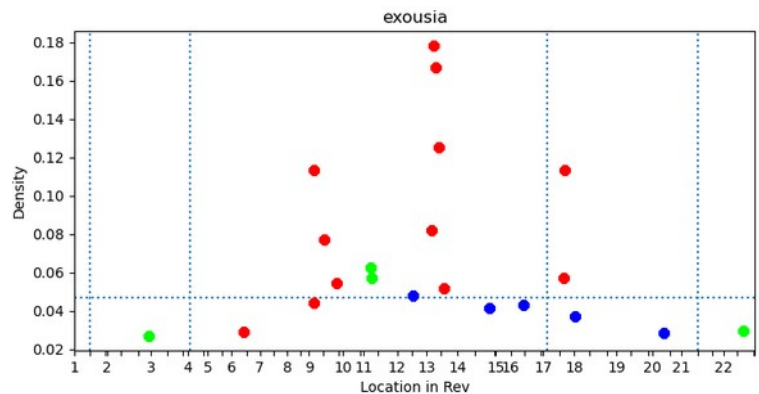


Figure 12: ἐξουσία G1849 (power, authority). Red: evil agents of destruction. Green: saints. Blue: God, Christ, his angels.

The blue dots represent authority ascribed to the Lord or his angels. We have just seen the first of these, in the doxology of 12:10, where the authority of the Lord Jesus is said to have come. Remarkably, this claim is made just before the most prominent exhibition of Satan's authority, in

ch. 13! We must never let the apparent triumphs of evil discourage us. God has his plan, and at the end the victory belongs not only to him, but to us in him.

### 3-4, Wound and Worship

The next paragraph identified by the parallelism between the beasts focuses on the first beast's recovery from a deadly wound and the worship to which it leads. The point of these details is to show him as a competitor to the Lord Jesus, who rose from the dead and now commands the worship of his people.

**3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his<sup>21</sup> deadly wound was healed:**—Those who see the Revelation as a record of past history seek to identify this wounded head, whether as a particular Roman Caesar (Nero, Caligula)<sup>22</sup> or as the Roman empire (crushed, but restored as the Christian Roman empire).<sup>23</sup> Our analysis of the book leads us to expect this individual as yet in the future, and in the nature of the case we cannot know in advance the identity of the beast or the nature of his wound. The point is that it will be an imitation of our Savior's death and resurrection, and will lead to the same result, worship:

**and all the world wondered after the beast. 4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power ἐξουσία unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast?**—Their adoring words put the beast in the place of God:

Ex. 15:11 **Who is like unto thee**, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

Psa. 89:8 O LORD God of hosts, **who is a strong LORD like unto thee?** or to thy faithfulness round about thee?

Mic. 7:18 **Who is a God like unto thee**, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage?

There is no one like our God, but the beast challenges his unique position.

**who is able to make war with him?**—As a result, he can take over the world without military opposition.

This description of the beast fits Paul's prediction of the man of sin in 2 Thessalonians 2 (Table 8, chart).

### 5-7, Divine Permission ("It was given...")

The third parallel section between the two beasts focuses on the divine permission under which they operate. 13:2, 4 say that the dragon gives the first beast his authority. But greater than Satan's gift, and overruling it, is the repeated emphasis of the passive verb "it was given" (Figure 10, chart), here used four times to characterize the beast's rule.

The unnamed agent of this action is God. But the passive is significant. An active verb would make God responsible for what the beast does. The passive reminds us that when he allows evil

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21 αὐτοῦ masculine, the beast, in contrast with feminine κεφαλῇ. The head is wounded; the beast dies and is revived. Or is this just another of John's grammatical irregularities?

22 Morris

23 Alford

## Revelation 12-14, Introduction to the Seven Bowls

Revelation 12-13	2 Thess 2
12:7-9, Michael occupies the dragon in heavenly combat	6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, ...
12:9, dragon descends as Michael stands back (Dan 12:1)	... until he be taken out of the way.
13:3, a deadly wound healed	9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,
13:4, worship offered to the beast	that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.
13:8, universal allegiance by those not in the Lamb's book of life	10 ... they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

*Table 8: Parallels between the Man of Sin and the Beast from the Sea*

to happen, another morally responsible agent always intervenes. Thus when he would slay Ahab at Ramoth-Gilead, he does not himself deceive the king,

1 Ki 19:19 And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. 20 And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. 21 And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. 22 And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so.

The deception does not come as a word from the Lord, but as a word from a lying spirit who is permitted to do this work for God's greater purpose. Compare also 2 Cor 12:7, "there **was given to me** a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me." As in 1 Kings 19, a demonic agent carries out a divine mission.

Consider the four things that the Lord allows the beast to do. They fall into three parts. The first two are a summary:

**5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies;**—Again we hear an echo of Daniel 7, the little horn:

Dan 7:8 behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and **a mouth speaking great things**.

These "great things" are described as blasphemies (ascensive καί).

and **power ἐξουσία was given unto him to continue make war forty and two months**.—He not only speaks, but acts, but only for a limited period.

The theme of warfare, introduced here in the MT and picked up in v. 7, is common throughout the Revelation, but peaks in chapters 12-13 (Figure 13, chart). The devil has been defeated in his

warfare in heaven, and cast out, so he continues his combat, on earth. But it is only by permission.

So he blasphemes and makes war. These two themes, blasphemy and warfare, are now amplified:

**6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle σκηνή G4633, and them that dwell σκηνόω G4637 in heaven.**<sup>24</sup>—“His tabernacle”

probably refers, as in Hebrews, to the heavenly sanctuary. This statement is preparatory to the culmination in Revelation 21,

Rev 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle σκηνή of God is with men, and he will dwell σκηνόω with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

In the MT God is said to “tabernacle” in heaven, as though it were a temporary dwelling place. In Genesis 3, he delighted to walk in the garden for fellowship with his creatures, and finally, having removed the curse of sin, he will once again delight to spend time with them on earth.

The beast’s blasphemy against heaven reflects the dragon’s spite at having been cast out of heaven. Before the events of Revelation 12, he had access to the heavenly courts. Now, excluded from them, he leads his representative to speak ill of them.

**7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them:**—This verse amplifies the second part of the summary in v. 5, and recalls the brief introduction to the first beast’s activity that we saw in the history of the two prophets,

Rev. 11:7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the **beast** that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall **make war** against them, and shall **overcome** them, and **kill** them.

Once again, we are seeing the fulfillment of Daniel 7:

Dan. 7:21 I beheld, and the same horn made **war** with the saints, and **prevailed** against them;

As our Savior warned us, we will be vulnerable to physical defeat. When these things happen, we are to remember that it is by the Lord’s permission, and for his purposes.

**and power ἐξουσία was given him over all kindreds, [and people, MT] and tongues, and nations.**—The beast’s permission is universal in scope, comparable to the other universal notices we have seen (Table 9, chart). Five of the lists share the same elements. The most similar in order are 5:9, the list of the redeemed, and 11:9, those who oppose the two prophets. There is no ethnic distinction among either the redeemed or the reprobate. The Savior has commanded us to be his witnesses throughout the entire world, and Satan’s influence is just as broad.

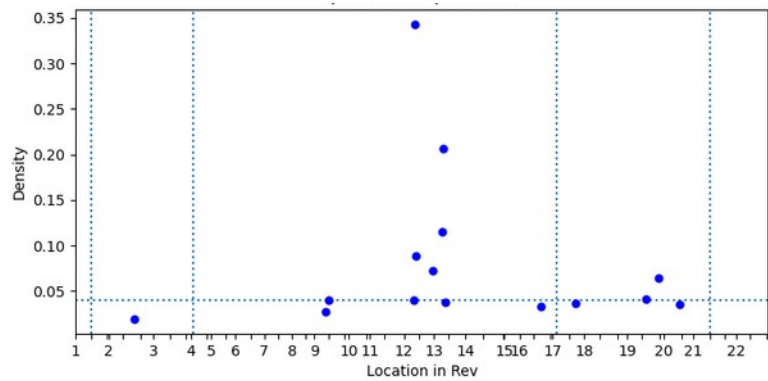


Figure 13: πόλεμος G4171 or πολεμέω G4170 in the Revelation

<sup>24</sup> MT omits the last καί, thus describing God and his tabernacle as “tabernacling in heaven.” The surprising inclination is that



	Theme	λαός G2992 People	ἔθνος G1484 Nation	γλῶσσα G1100 Tongue	βασιλεύς G935 King	φυλή G5443 Tribe	ὄχλος G3793 Multitude
5:9	Who is redeemed?	3	4	2		1	
7:9	Who is able to stand?	3	1	4		2	
10:11	Against whom does John prophesy?	1	2	3	4		
11:9	Who opposes God's prophets?	1	4	3		2	
13:7	Over whom does the beast have power?	2	4	3		1	
14:6	To whom is the everlasting gospel preached?	4	1	3		2	
17:15	Over whom does the Whore rule?	1	3	4			2

Table 9: Universal Lists in the Revelation. Numbers are order of terms in a given verse.

## 8, Distinctive Sign

The fourth point of parallelism is the distinctive marking of the followers of the beast. The mark associated with the first beast is negative:

**8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**—The Lord knows them that are his. Those who follow the beast show that they are not among that number.

This is the second of six<sup>25</sup> references in the Revelation to the Lamb's book of life (chart). We met it first in the letter to Sardis,

Rev 3:5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and **I will not blot out his name out of the book of life**, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

The final reference is in the description of the great whore, where again it identifies the followers of Antichrist by their exclusion:

Rev 17:8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, **whose names were not written in the book of life** from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

Rev. 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is **the book of life**: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

Rev. 20:15 And whosoever was not found written in **the book of life** was cast into the lake of fire.

<sup>25</sup> The KJV references this book again in 22:20, but this reading has no Greek mss support, and was supplied by Erasmus from his Vulgate because the Greek mss he was preparing for Froben lacked the last verses.

Rev. 21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in **the Lamb's book of life**.

But the concept appears elsewhere in the NT: Luke 10:20 (“your names are written in heaven”), Phil 4:3 (“whose names are in the book of life”), Heb 12:22 (“which are written in heaven”).

This is one of four heavenly books mentioned throughout the Bible (Table 10). Two of them record peoples’ actions, one in the past and one in future, while two more record their condition, one in the past, and one in the future. This reference to the “book of life” is one more reminder that behind all of the terrible events orchestrated by the dragon and his beasts, our Lord is in control.

*Table 10: Organization of God's Library*

	Accomplished Facts (Past)	Decreed Purposes (Future)
People's Actions	1. Record Book (OT, NT)	2. Book of Decrees (OT, NT)
People's States	3. Book of the Living (OT)	4. Book of Life (NT, maybe OT)

## 9-10, Call to Attention

Finally, both descriptions end with a call to attention.

**9 If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.**<sup>26</sup>—The Lord will hold accountable those who do violence to others. Vengeance belongs to him, not to us.

At first glance, this appears to be a threat to the beast, who indeed will be destroyed. But the second part is also a warning to us about a military response to the beast. We are not to take up arms to defend ourselves, but to commit ourselves to the Lord. Compare our Lord's rebuke to Peter in Gethsemane, when Peter drew his sword to attack those sent to arrest the Savior: \

Matt 26:52 Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

**Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.**—In this confidence of the Lord's sovereign control and ultimate vindication, we can continue through this brief period of oppression.

## 11-18, The Beast from the Earth

Once again, the parallels between the two beasts (Table 8) provide a helpful outline.

### 11, Relation to the Dragon

The first beast looked like the dragon. The second one sounds like a dragon.

**11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth;**—The origin of the first beast “out of the sea” reflected Daniel's vision,

Dan 7:3 And four great beasts **came up from the sea**, diverse one from another.

Daniel also is the source for the terrestrial origin of the second beast:

Dan 7:16 I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. 17 These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall **arise out of the earth**.

<sup>26</sup> See note for discussion of the textual options.

Surprisingly, the beasts come out of the sea, but the kings come out of the earth. The difference may reflect the military notion of “boots on the ground.” The four beasts are kingdoms, quasi-spiritual entities pictured as sea monsters (like Leviathan). But they also correspond to kings, who pursue the objectives of these kingdoms on the ground. The sea is the home of the dragon, who is behind this evil; the earth is the people live whom he seeks to destroy. Just as our Savior comes from heaven to earth, the first beast comes from the abyss to earth.

**and he had two horns like a lamb**,—The horns, like the death and resurrection of the first beast, are an attempt to counterfeit the Lord Jesus:

Rev 5:6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood **a Lamb** as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

But the parody is incomplete. The Lamb has seven horns, the number of completeness, but the second beast can only muster two.

In daily life, it is a human shepherd who leads sheep, but here a lamb leads multitudes of people into error and spiritual destruction.

**and he spake as a dragon**.—Here is the point of comparison with the dragon. The emphasis on his speech leads to his other name, “the false prophet.” In each case all three of this demon group appear: the dragon or devil, the beast [from the sea], and the false prophet.

Rev 16:13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of **the false prophet**.

Rev 19:20 And the beast was taken, and with him **the false prophet** that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Rev 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and **the false prophet** are, ...

Our Lord warned that the spirit of antichrist would be associated with false prophets:

Mar 13:22 For **false Christs** and **false prophets** shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

Now, at the very end, *the* false Christ and *the* false prophet appear.

## 12-13, Wound and Worship

**12 And he exerciseth all the power ἐξουσία of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed**.—Once again, our attention is drawn to the counterfeit resurrection that characterizes the first beast. The second beast, in his capacity as false prophet, promotes this phenomenon and urges people to worship the antichrist.

To persuade people to worship the beast, he does great miracles:

**13 And he doeth great wonders**,—Moses warned that there would be false prophets doing miracles to turn people to worship other gods (chart).

Deu 13:1 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, **2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass**, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, **Let us go after other gods**, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; 3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: **for the LORD your God proveth you**, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Note the Lord's motive: to prove the sincerity of peoples' faith. The wonders performed by the second beast have this same function.

**so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men**,—This particular sign recalls Elijah, who repeatedly called down fire from heaven: at Mount Carmel in his contest with the prophets of Baal,

1Ki 18:36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, ... 37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. 38 Then **the fire of the LORD fell**, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

and again when King Ahaziah sent companies of soldiers to apprehend him:

2Ki 1:9 Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. 10 And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And **there came down fire from heaven**, and consumed him and his fifty. 11 Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. 12 And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And **the fire of God came down from heaven**, and consumed him and his fifty.

The miracles of the two prophets in Revelation 11 recalled Elijah, in proclaiming a drought (11:6). Now the false prophet claims the same divine authority by mimicking Elijah. Remember that Malachi promised the return of Elijah at the coming of Messiah:

Mal 4:5 Behold, **I will send you Elijah the prophet** before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

By calling down fire from heaven, the false prophet poses as the fulfillment of this promise, presenting the first beast as the promised Messiah.

## 14-15, Divine Permission ("It was given ...")

The third point of comparison is the use of the passive, "it was given," to denote divine permission of demonic agency (as in 2 Cor 12:7). The AV obscures this expression by translating "it was given him to" as "he had power."

**14 And [he] deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power [were given him] to do in the sight of the beast**;—The question sometimes arises whether Satan is able to do miracles. This account clearly shows that he is. But it also shows that this power is limited, and subject to divine permission.

The man of sin in 2 Thessalonians 2 is able to deceive people by miracles (chart):

2Th 2:9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all **power and signs and lying wonders**, 10 And with all **deceivableness** of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong **delusion**, that they should believe a lie:

John shows that this power is exercised more specifically through the false prophet.

**saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.**—Like the false prophet in Deuteronomy 13, the false prophet seeks to seduce people into idolatry, in this case setting up an image of the beast.

Throughout history there have been many would-be antichrists, ambitious dictators who sought to control the world. They frequently set up images of themselves to attract the adoration of the people. We have an example of this in the denarius of Tiberius Caesar that was the object of the Pharisees' challenge to our Lord in Matthew 22. Part of the offense of paying tribute was using coinage bearing a graven image:

Mat 22:18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? 19 Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. 20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? 21 They say unto him, Caesar's.

Tiberius was known for splashing his image around liberally, and the false prophet will promote such idolatry of the ruler. Of course, our own coinage is not innocent of this offense (Figure 14), though we usually wait until after the death of the ruler to issue the coin. In every age, the spirit of Antichrist tempts people to exalt, honor, and even worship human rulers.

**15 And he had power [it was given him] to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.**—This will not be just a static image, but an animated one that can speak and kill those who refuse to worship it. One is reminded of various miraculous images, such as Madonnas that weep or crucifixes that bleed.



Figure 14: Images of rulers on coins. Top: Tiberius, Rome, AD 14-37

([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Emperor\\_Tiberius\\_Denarius\\_-\\_Tribute\\_Penny.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Emperor_Tiberius_Denarius_-_Tribute_Penny.jpg)).

Bottom: F.D. Roosevelt, US, 1933-1945

([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Emperor\\_Tiberius\\_Denarius\\_-\\_Tribute\\_Penny.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Emperor_Tiberius_Denarius_-_Tribute_Penny.jpg)).

## 16-17, Distinctive Sign

**16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:**—Earlier, the Lord sealed the 144,000 believing Israelites in their foreheads (chart):

Rev 7:3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God **in their foreheads**.

We will see this marked company again in the next chapter:



Rev 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having [his name and] **his Father's name written in their foreheads.**

Recall the promise to the church at Philadelphia:

Rev 3:12 Him that overcometh ... I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

The beast marks not only the forehead, but also the hand, perhaps as a counterfeit of the practice of godly Jews,

Deu 6:6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:... 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. (compare 11:18; Exod 13:9).

As with the horned lamb, recovery from death, and supernatural wonders, the markings are part of a program of counterfeit. The false prophet's strategy is not to deny the truth, but to imitate it. As the overcomers of 3:12 and the faithful of Revelation 7 bear the name of Christ and the Father, so the followers of the beast bear his name.

**17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.**—The beast's popularity excludes those without the mark from commerce. Compare the impact of the guilds in Asia Minor, where failure to participate in the idolatrous guild feasts meant exclusion from professional life and relegation to menial labor.

## 18, Call to Attention

**18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.**—The name of the beast is abbreviated as a number, probably through gematria, a common practice of using the letters of the alphabet as digits. The first nine letters represent 1-9, the next nine the decades 10-90, and so on. Every name has a corresponding number, computed as the sum of the values of its individual letters, read as numbers.<sup>27</sup>

Incredible brainpower has been invested in names that might yield this number.<sup>28</sup> But we should recall that the outlook of these chapters is future, not past. We should not expect to identify this number with past rulers, but recognize that when the antichrist appears, the significance of the number will be transparently clear.

## 14, The Divine Perspective

Chapter 12 traced the history of Satan's opposition from the Garden of Eden through the present age, in which he accuses God's people in heaven. Chapter 13 shows us how he seeks to control the earth after being excluded from heaven. Now in Chapter 14, as in the sixth seal and the seventh trumpet, we fast-forward to the final victory. The chapter has three scenes (chart):

27 Sibylline Oracle 1:323–331, cited by Bauckham (p. 397), shows the computation: the name "Jesus" is presented as 888 ( $\iota = 10 + \eta = 8 + \sigma = 200 + \omicron = 70 + \upsilon = 400 + \sigma = 200$ ). [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek\\_numerals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_numerals).

28 Bauckham has a particularly full discussion.

- 1-5, the **faithful witnesses** who have endured the oppression of the beasts, gathered in millennial victory
- 6-12, three **angelic proclamations** outlining to the inhabitants of the earth for one last time the choice they have to make
- 13-20, the **final harvest** of the earth, separating the wicked and the righteous.

This imagery, and in particular the angelic gospel in 14:6-7, emphasizes a point we have suggested repeatedly. God endures Satan's blasphemous rebellion in order to give his earthly creatures every opportunity to repent. Exod 34:6 calls this patience "slow to anger." But it is about to end. Like ch. 12 and 13, this chapter draws heavily on several OT passages (chart).

## 1-5, The Victors on Mount Zion

A major interpretive issue is whether the multitude seen here is in heaven or on earth. We will argue that it is an anticipatory vision of the earthly millennium of Revelation 20. Do not be misled by 14:5; "before the throne of God" is from the Vulgate, with no Greek mss support.<sup>29</sup>

**14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion,**—This vision fulfills a consistent promise through the OT about Zion's earthly prominence in the end time (chart):

Is. 2:2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that **the mountain of the LORD'S house** shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of **Zion** shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from **Jerusalem**.

Isa 24:21 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. 22 And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. 23 Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when **the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem**, and before his ancients gloriously.

Joel, having described a locust plague and famine, promises that its restoration will focus on Zion, clearly referring to the same earthly area that was blighted:

Joel 2:32 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for **in mount Zion and in Jerusalem** shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

And Zechariah sets Messiah's rule in a location that has recently been threatened by attack:

Zech. 14:2 For I will gather all nations against **Jerusalem** to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. 3 Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. 4 And his feet shall stand in that day upon **the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east**, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; ... 8 And it shall be in that day, that living waters

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29 Hodges-Farstad list only TR for the addition, and CNTSS lists no Greek mss.

shall go out from **Jerusalem**; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. 9 And the LORD shall be king over **all the earth**: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

Many more examples could be gathered. In view of John's dependence on the OT, the most straightforward understanding of Zion here is as an anticipation of "the beloved city" (20:9) in which our Lord rules during the Millennium. Chapters 12-14 thus carry us through the whole of human history on this present earth, from Eden in ch. 12 to the coming kingdom in ch. 14 that lies beyond the bowl judgments. Compare the role of the sixth seal in depicting the final return of the Lord, or the seventh trumpet in describing the Lord's coming rule.

**and with him an hundred forty and four thousand**,—It is natural to associate this multitude with the Israelites singled out in 7:1-8, 12,000 from each tribe.

**having [his name and] his Father's name written in their foreheads**.—7:3 tells us that this multitude has marked foreheads, a sign that the beast counterfeits with the mark he places on his followers. MT's addition of "his name" identifies them with overcomers, e.g. (chart),

Rev 3:12 Him that overcometh ... **I will write upon him the name of my God**, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: **and I will write upon him my new name**.

**2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder**:—The designation of the voice as "from heaven" further confirms our identification of "Mount Zion" with the earthly location (Aune). The heavenly chorus is responding to the earthly 144,000, just as in chapter 7 the 144,000 on earth (7:1-8) are paired with the great multitude in heaven (7:9-17). The description of the sound as waters and thunder probably indicates the same chorus as in ch. 19,<sup>30</sup>

Rev 19:6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and **as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings**, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Again, we have a glimpse of the final victory, after the conclusion of the bowl judgments.

**and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from ὁπό the earth**.—We heard of this "new song" back in chapter 5, sung by the elders.<sup>31</sup>

Rev 5:8 And when he [the Lamb] had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung **a new song**, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and **hast redeemed us** to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Note the links to the present description: harps, being played in heaven, singing a "new song."

The phrase "new song" comes from the Psalms. Four Psalms exhort us collectively (plural imperatives) to sing a new song (שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ H7892 H2318) to the Lord (Psa. 33:3; 96:1; 98:1;

<sup>30</sup> The voice of the Lord Jesus in 1:15 is like many waters, but is not compared to thunder.

<sup>31</sup> The discussion here repeats material from the exposition of 5:9.

149:1), echoed in Isa 42:10, while in two more David reports that he is singing a new song (Psa. 40:4 [ET v3]; 144:9). David was devoted to composing new songs, but how can he command the people collectively to sing a new song? Some of us can't even carry a tune. How can we be expected to compose new works?

The frequent repetition of this expression suggests that it calls our attention to a specific kind of Psalm. The LXX translates the Hebrew expression שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ in several different ways.<sup>32</sup> The Greek word used in the Revelation (ὥδή G5603) is used only in Ps 144:9, suggesting that John has this Psalm in mind in using this expression. That Psalm promises a “new song” in response to a work of God’s deliverance:

Psa 144:5 Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down:  
touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.  
6 Cast forth lightning, and scatter them:  
shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.  
7 Send thine hand from above;  
**rid me, and deliver me out of great waters,  
from the hand of strange children; ...**  
9 **I will sing a new song** unto thee, O God:  
upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.

The song of 14:3 is not recorded, but the parallels suggest that it is thanksgiving to God for deliverance from Satanic opposition, sung by martyrs in heaven. Only those who have faced such opposition can join in it with full understanding.

14:4-5 characterize the members of this multitude. The clauses fall into four independent statements, each with a qualifying clause (Figure 15, chart). The independent statements form an ABBA chiasm. The first and last (A) describe their *actions*, while the center two (B) describe their *associations*. Their actions are negative: they are not defiled, and they are without guile. Their association is stated positively: they have been redeemed out of the mass of people, and made the constant associates of the Lamb.

These statements echo two Psalms that tell how to ascend God’s holy hill, 15 and 24.

Ps 15:1 **LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle?  
who shall dwell in thy holy hill?**  
2 **He that walketh uprightly,**  
and worketh righteousness,  
**and speaketh the truth in his heart.**  
3 **He that backbiteth not with his tongue,**  
nor doeth evil to his neighbour,  
**nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.**  
4 In whose eyes **a vile person is contemned;**  
but **he honoureth them that fear the LORD.**  
He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.  
5 He that putteth not out his money to usury,  
nor taketh reward against the innocent.  
He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

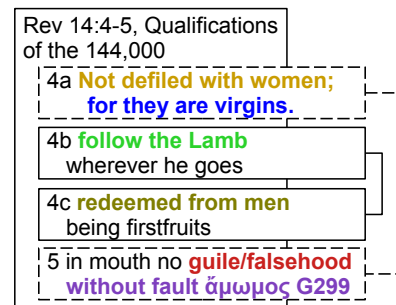


Figure 15: The qualifications of the 144,000. Outer two describe actions; inner two describe associations.

32 ὕμνος G5215 (Isa 42:10), ᾠσμα G779.1 (33:3; 40:4; 96:1; 98:1; 149:1); ὥδή G5603 (144:9)

Psa. 24:3 **Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD?**

**or who shall stand in his holy place?**

**4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;**

**who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.**

We'll study these statements, not in the order in which they occur, but starting with the clearest parallels with the Psalms, to strengthen our theory that the others also draw on these Psalms.

Verse 5 is the clearest parallel. Psa 15:2-3 describes the qualified worshipper as

2 He that walketh uprightly ἄμωμος G299,

... and speaketh the truth in his heart.

3 He that backbiteth not with his tongue, ...

nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor

Psa 24:4 requires that the worshipper “hath ... no[t] sworn deceitfully.”

**5 And in their mouth was found no guile:**—MT reads ψεῦδος G5579 “falsehood.” Its absence marks one who “speaketh the truth in his heart” and “hath not sworn deceitfully.” The TR reading, δόλος G1388 “guile,” refers to a spirit of malice, also reflected in the Psalm as “backbiting ... tak[ing] up a reproach against his neighbor.”

**for they are without fault ἄμωμος G299 before the throne of God [MT].**—LXX translates “uprightly” in Ps 15:2 with the same word “faultless” G299 used here.

The two qualifications of 14:5, coupled closely as main statement and substantiation, clearly reflect the beginning of Psalm 15.

Consider next the two main clauses of Rev 14:4b, c, each with its modifier. These emphasize the associations of the 144,000 (Table 11, chart). The first characteristic of Ps 15:4 describes those we are to avoid, while the second describes those with whom we are to associate. Rev 14:4 describes both, but in the opposite order.

Psa 15:4	Revelation 14
In whose eyes a vile person is contemned	These were redeemed from among men
he honoureth them that fear the LORD	These are they which follow the Lamb

Table 11: The Associations of the 144,000

**These are they which follow the Lamb**—Here is the second part of Psa 15:4. The Lamb is the epitome of “them that fear the Lord,” and the 144,000 honor him by following the Lamb wherever he goes.

**whithersoever he goeth.**—The qualifying phrase reminds us of our Lord’s interchange with Peter the evening before his crucifixion. As John recalls the incident (chart),

Joh 13:36 Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. 37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

In fact, as we know, Peter failed in this resolve. Though he intended to “follow the Lamb whithersoever he” went, in fact he was unable to follow him to the cross at this point. But later, empowered by the Holy Spirit, Peter fulfilled this mandate. Here, the clause reminds us that faithfully following the Lord Jesus may lead us, in his path, to face suffering and death.

**These were redeemed from among men,**—Now we come to the negative part of the association. Ps 15:4 speaks of “contemn[ing]” [despising] “a vile person.” Once we were among



those who are at enmity with God. But when the Spirit of God works repentance in our hearts, we find ourselves despising what once we enjoyed.

Rom 6:21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?

God has redeemed the 144,000 out from the corrupt mass of fallen humanity.

**being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.**—Firstfruits is originally a Jewish feast, held the day after the sabbath that follows Passover.

Lev 23:5 In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD'S passover. 6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: **seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.** ... 9 ... When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: 11 And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: **on the morrow after the sabbath** the priest shall wave it.

This sheaf, harvested in the spring, was the promise of the full harvest to come. So these 144,000 Jewish witnesses are presented as the firstfruits of the redeemed. We will see what leads to the full harvest in the second section of this chapter.

So far, we have found clear parallels in Psalms 15 and 24 for three of the four qualifications of the 144,000 who have indeed “ascend[ed] into the hill of the Lord.” Now we come to the first of the qualifications, and we naturally expect it also to reflect these Psalms.

**4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for *yap* they are virgins.**—This qualification has occasioned a great deal of discussion. Taken by themselves, the words imply that the 144,000 are celibate, a condition that many view as spiritually superior to the married state. But Paul warned against this attitude:

1Ti 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to **seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;** ... 3 **Forbidding to marry,** ...

1Co 7:1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 **Nevertheless, to avoid fornication,** let **every man** have his own wife, and let **every woman** have her own husband.

1 Corinthians is often understood as *endorsing* celibacy, but the positive view of celibacy is something that the Corinthians have suggested (“whereof ye wrote unto me”). Paul immediately responds “Nevertheless,” and seeks to correct their error, going so far as to urge universal marriage (“every man ... every woman”). All of Scripture endorses the Lord’s initial assessment that “it is not good that the man should be alone” (Gen 2:18), and it would be very surprising if the Lord were to reverse that judgment in the Revelation.

The condition in Rev 14:4 described is morally defiling, and the NT insists that marital relations are not morally defiling:

Heb. 13:4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed **undefiled**:<sup>33</sup> but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

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33 “Undefiled” ἀμίαντος G283 is not the same as Rev 14:4 μολύνω G3435, but the two are very close semantically.

## Revelation 12-14, Introduction to the Seven Bowls

It is true that reproduction brought ceremonial uncleanness under the law (Leviticus 12, 15), but this is always described as uncleanness, ἀκαθαρ\* G167,169, never as defilement.<sup>34</sup>

To be “defiled with women” naturally refers to harlotry, which was common in the culture of the day, in connection with idolatrous feasts. Recall from chapters 2-3 that the believers in the seven churches were tempted to engage in idolatry and fornication. The two were often closely associated. The Lord warns Pergamos (chart) of

Rev 2:14 ... the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto **idols**, and to commit **fornication**.

He criticizes Thyatira:

Rev 2:20 ... thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit **fornication**, and to eat things sacrificed unto **idols**.

And we read later in the Revelation,

Rev 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and **whoremongers**, and sorcerers, and **idolaters**, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Rev 22:15 For without [excluded from the heavenly Jerusalem] are dogs, and sorcerers, and **whoremongers**, and murderers, and **idolaters**, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Since the 144,000 are with the Lamb on Mt Zion, they must be free of these two faults. Fornication (whoremongering) is reflected in “not defiled with women.” Ps 24:4, “clean hands and a pure heart,” certainly precludes this behavior. But what about the statement that they are virgins? Are they unmarried? And where do Psalms 15 and 24 say anything about sex?

Let’s look more closely at Ps 24:4, “who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity ἄνψ H7723”<sup>35</sup> (chart). The Hebrew word “vanity, nothingness” often describes idols (chart):

Psa. 31:6 I have hated them that regard lying **vanities**: but I trust in the LORD.

Jer. 18:15 Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to **vanity**,

In fact, the very next Psalm<sup>36</sup> begins with a contrast to 24:4,

Psa. 25:1 **Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.**

2 O my God, **I trust in thee**: ...

3 Yea, let none that **wait on thee** be ashamed:

Lifting up one’s soul to something is an act of worship, like trusting or waiting. “Vanity” describes any object of worship other than the Lord.

The Scriptures use marriage as a symbol for the relation between God and his people. This was Israel’s relation to Jehovah.<sup>37</sup>

Isa 54:5 For **thy Maker is thine husband**; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

34 μολυ\* appears 27x in the Greek Bible, while ἀκαθαρ\* appears 261x, and is more general. The latter can describe moral impurity (2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19; Col 3:5; Eph 5:3, associated with πορνεία), but μολυ\* is unambiguously moral.

35 This discussion draws on Dahood’s comments on Ps 24:4, where see other references.

36 This Psalm is the center of Book 1, and summarizes it: [https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/psalms/notes/Ps\\_25.pdf](https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/psalms/notes/Ps_25.pdf)

37 The book of Hosea develops this metaphor at length.

It continues between Christ and his church:

Rev 21:9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee **the bride, the Lamb's wife**.

Similarly, in both the OT and NT, idolatry is spiritual fornication:

1Ch 5:25 And they transgressed against the God of their fathers, and **went a whoring after the gods of the people of the land**, ...

2Co 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as **a chaste virgin** to Christ.

Ps 24:4 warns that one who worships idols has no access to God's holy hill. Rev 14:4 expresses this requirement figuratively in describing the 144,000 as spiritual virgins (as in 2 Cor 11:2), absolutely separate from the idolatry that was threatening the church. Thus the first characteristic of the 144,000 is that they conform to both requirements of Ps 24:4: they are free from fornication ("clean hands, pure heart," "not defiled with women") and idolatry ("not lifted up soul to vanity," "they are virgins").

Thus the four characteristics associated with the 144,000 whom we see with the Lamb on Mount Zion are those given in Psalms 15 and 24 as the requirements for those who would in fact ascend to Mount Zion. In doing so, they summarize four guidelines for godliness to which we should pay attention: physical and spiritual purity, association with the Lord, separation from the world, and blamelessness in word and action.

## 6-12, Three Angelic Witnesses

Now the scene shifts, with a change in characters. Instead of the 144,000 humans who faithfully follow the Lamb, we encounter three angels, each with a distinct message.

## 6-7, The Everlasting Gospel

**6 And I saw another<sup>38</sup> angel**—"Another" seems surprising, and many mss omit it. But the Revelation often mentions angels (Figure 16, chart). Sixty-nine out of the 179 instances of the word in the NT appear in this book, seven out of every thousand words, the densest of any book (next is Hebrews, at 2.6/1000). We saw them most recently in the account of heavenly combat in 12:7, 9. The word literally means "messenger," and they are particularly common in describing the seven trumpets, which angels blow (ch. 8-11), and the bowls, which they pour out (15-16).

**fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth,**—In the MT,<sup>39</sup> "dwell" is more general than in 8:13 and parallels, including all on the

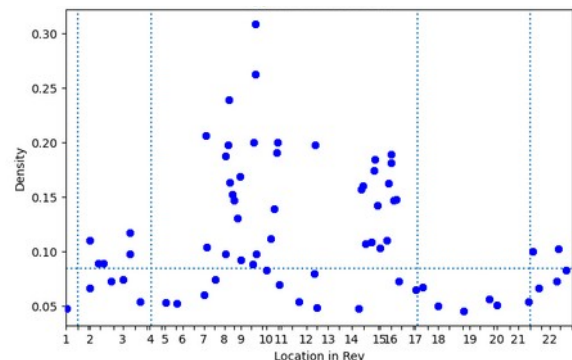


Figure 16: "Angel" in the Revelation

38 The MT is divided on whether to include ἄλλον, which is omitted in p47 and the original hand of  $\kappa$ . If it is retained, the most recent angel is the seventh of the trumpet angels in 11:15.

39 The TR has κατοικέω G2730 as in 8:13 and elsewhere, emphasizing the contrast with παροικέω G3939 and its cognates. The MSS are divided, but both Hodges-Farstad and Robinson-Pierpont prefer κάθημαι G2521 "to sit" (BDAG meaning 2 "to be a resident in a place, stay, be live, reside, settle," weakening the contrast).

earth. 14:12 emphasizes that the message is to encourage believers as well as woo unbelievers.

A question arises: why is an angel preaching the gospel here, when elsewhere this task is assigned to human believers? The disciples were sent to preach the gospel (chart).

Mar 16:15 And he said unto them, **Go ye** into all the world, and **preach the gospel** to every creature.

When the Lord first appeared to Saul, he deferred the task of evangelizing Saul to Ananias:

Act 9:6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and **it shall be told thee** what thou must do.

The angel that appeared to Cornelius did not preach the gospel, but told him to send for Peter:

Act 10:5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: 6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: **he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.**

The task of angels is to support us, as we do this work:

Heb 1:13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? 14 Are they not all ministering spirits, **sent forth to minister** for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

But sometimes angels do bring the end message, when there are no humans available. Mary and Elizabeth know that Mary's child is the Messiah, but a woman's testimony is of uncertain legal status in first century Judaism,<sup>40</sup> particularly in an adultery trial, so an angel tells Joseph:

Mat 1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for **he shall save his people from their sins.**

An angel preaches the good news to the shepherds at our Lord's birth:

Luk 2:10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David **a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.**

But as soon as people know it, they immediately pick up the message:

Lk 2:17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

An angel reveals the resurrection to the women, but then charges them to tell the disciples:<sup>41</sup>

Mat 28:5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. 6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the

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40 Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 4.8.15. <https://history.stackexchange.com/questions/41076/were-women-in-1st-century-israel-not-trusted-as-witnesses-in-court> has a good summary of Jewish and secular sources, including evidence from Justinian that they could testify. Couch, *Harvard Law Review* 8:1 (25 Apr 1894) 39-50 simply states that they could not testify in court. Fuchs, *HUCA* 82-83 (2011-2012), 119-159 emphasizes the ambiguity of first-century evidence.

41 As with Mary and Joseph, the acceptability of the women's testimony was questioned, until the Lord appeared directly to the male disciples, Lk 24:22-24. But the fact that the angel commanded them to carry the message anticipates the enhanced position of women in the church.

place where the Lord lay. 7 And **go quickly, and tell his disciples** that he is risen from the dead;

The direct angelic message is probably necessary in 14:6 because the antichrist has decimated the human witness to the gospel. Satan and his beasts cannot squelch the gospel. Even if they shut down all human testimony, angels from heaven, from which Satan and his beasts are now excluded, come to spread the news.

**and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,**—Once again, we are reminded of the universal scope of God’s dealings (Table 9), whether in salvation or in judgment.

**7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him;**—Here is a summary of the “everlasting gospel,” which the rest of the verse amplifies. What is this “everlasting gospel”?

We often summarize the gospel as in 1 Cor 15:1-8: Christ died for our sins, was buried, rose again, and was seen. Paul writes to *believers*, explaining how God delivers sinners, the substitutionary work of the Messiah. But this is not how our Lord, or the apostles (including Paul), confront *unbelievers*. Their message is to repent and submit to God’s rule (chart).

Mat 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, **Repent: for the kingdom of heaven** is at hand.

Mar 1:14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and **the kingdom of God** is at hand: **repent** ye, and believe the gospel.

Some say that this gospel differs from that of salvation through Christ.<sup>42</sup> But when the Lord told the disciples to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15), this was the only gospel they knew, and throughout Acts, they follow this example, commanding people to repent, and reminding them of God’s coming kingdom.<sup>43</sup> Consider Paul’s summaries of his ministry. He tells King Agrippa,

Act 26:20 [I] shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should **repent** and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. (See also 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 17:30)

And he reminds the elders of the church at Ephesus,

Act 20:25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone **preaching the kingdom of God**, shall see my face no more. (See also 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 28:23, 31).

The angel’s summary aligns with this simple proclamation (Table 12).

- “Fear God” corresponds to “Repent.” It calls on us to recognize our sin, and the deity whom it has offended.

Matt 4:17; Mark 1:14 Our Lord’s Summary	Rev 14:7a Summary	Rev 14:7b Detail
Repent	Fear God	the hour of his judgment is come
The kingdom of God is at hand	Give glory to him	worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters

*Table 12: The Angel’s Everlasting Gospel*

<sup>42</sup> E.g., Walvoord, Hengstenberg, Mounce, Osborne, but *contra* Alford

<sup>43</sup> For an extended discussion of this formulation of the gospel, see the fourth chapter of “Seeking the Kingdom of God,” <https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/special/KingdomOfGod/>



- “Give glory to him” corresponds to “the kingdom of God is at hand.” We are to acknowledge and submit to his rule.

Next he amplifies these two points:

**for the hour of his judgment is come:**—We fear God because he will judge our sin.

**and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.**—We give glory to him because he is the sovereign creator of all things.

So the angel’s “everlasting gospel” is the same gospel that our Lord and his disciples preached, a call to turn from our sin, and submit to our creator’s sovereign rule. God tolerates the antichrist’s blasphemy as long as he does, to keep the door of salvation open, displaying his longsuffering:

Exo 34:6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, **longsuffering**, and abundant in goodness and truth,

Rom 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and **forbearance and longsuffering**; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Even judgments like seals, trumpets, and bowls are prompts that will bring some to faith (chart):

Isa 26:8 Yea, **in the way of thy judgments**, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.

9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night;  
yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early:  
for **when thy judgments are in the earth**,  
the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

10 Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness:  
in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.

Now two more angels announce judgment, first on society as a whole and then on individuals.

## 8, The Doom of Babylon

**8 And there followed another [second MT] angel, saying, **Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city**,**—This is the first reference in Revelation to the name “Babylon.” Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and took the southern kingdom into captivity, and here serves as an emblem for the satanic political system described in Revelation 13. We will learn more about it in chapter 18.

But we have already seen it, under the title “the great city,” in 11:8 (chart),

Rev. 11:8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

Recall from our study of chapter 10 that chapters 10 and 11 echo the structure of the judgment upon Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in Daniel 4. In fact, the place outside of the Revelation that Babylon is called “great” is in Dan 4:

Dan 4:30 The king spake, and said, Is not this **great Babylon**, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

These alignments encourage us to recognize Nebuchadnezzar as a prototype of the antichrist (among many others). The beast is a man; Babylon is his kingdom.

Rev 11:8 called “the great city” Sodom for its impurity and Egypt for its opposition to God’s people, and identified it with Jerusalem for its rejection of the Lord. Now it is called Babylon, which was renounced for its idolatry, and in 17:9 she sits on seven hills, recalling Rome, who was oppressing God’s people at the time John writes. This kaleidoscope of names emphasizes different facets of the world-wide government imposed by the beast and the false prophet.

**because she made all nations drink of the wine**—Jeremiah introduces the image of a cup of wine as an instrument of God’s judgment (compare Isa 28:5-8):

Jer 25:15 For thus saith the LORD God of Israel unto me; Take **the wine cup of this fury** at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. ...

This passage goes on (vv. 15-29) to list the nations who must drink of the cup. Finally, in chapter 51, he describes what this cup is:

Jer 51:7 Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD’S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of **her wine**; therefore the nations are mad.

In Jeremiah’s day, the historical Babylonian empire served as God’s instrument of judgment on all the earth. Now the angel quotes Jer 51:7, applying it to the kingdom of Antichrist. The wrath is God’s, but it is served by Babylon.

**of the wrath of her fornication.**—The cup is characterized by wrath and fornication. A cup of wrath certainly aligns with Jer 25:15, “the wine cup of this fury.” We will read more of this in 14:10, “the wine of the wrath of God,” and in 16:19 Babylon herself must drink this cup:

Rev 16:19 great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

But what is “the wine of the wrath of her fornication”? The most natural interpretation (following Alford, Beasley-Murray, Thomas, and reflecting Jer 25 and 51) is that the wrath falls on her and her followers because of her fornication. The word “fornication” here likely refers to idolatry. Babylon was known for her many idols, and when Isaiah and Jeremiah predict the destruction of historical Babylon, they both emphasize the downfall of her idols:

Isa 46:1 **Bel** boweth down, **Nebo** stoopeth, **their idols** were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast. 2 They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.

Jer 50:2 Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, **Babylon** is taken, **Bel** is confounded, **Merodach** is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces.

The idea is that Babylon seduces the nations into idolatry, spiritual fornication, but this sin leads to God’s wrath. We will later read of “the wine of her fornication,”

Rev 17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: 2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been **made drunk with the wine of her fornication**.

But that sin in turn brings God’s wrath upon them. They drink not only of her fornication, but also of the wrath that inevitably follows such disregard for God’s law.

Wine is well suited as an image of seduction that turns into sorrow (chart). The Scriptures recognize the immediate pleasure that wine can bring (chart):

Psa 104:15 And wine that **maketh glad the heart of man**, ...

But it lures people into excess, leading to degradation:

Isa 28:7 But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. 8 **For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness**, so that there is no place clean.

The combination of the seduction of fornication and the sorrow of God's wrath recalls Solomon's warning in Proverbs 23,

Pro 23:29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? 30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. 31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. 32 **At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.** 33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. 34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. 35 They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

The drunkard is drawn irresistibly to the cup for the sensual pleasure it offers, but Solomon warns that "at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." In the light of the Genesis history, the imagery of a serpent anticipates the one who is behind Babylon and her cup.

## 9-12, Warning to Individuals

**9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice,—**The third angel in this trio announces God's judgment not only on this system, but on individuals who submit to it. The chiasmic structure of his announcement (Table 13, chart) corresponds to the phrase in 14:8, "the wrath of her fornication." The outer members describe the spiritual fornication that Babylon offers seductively, while the inner ones describe the resulting wrath of God. First the outside:

**9b If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, ... 10b who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.**—The outer members remind us of

the worship *demanded* by the beast,

*promoted* by the false prophet, and *recorded* in the mark. There has been much speculation about the mark, but this description makes three things clear:


	Singular: "any man," "he"		Plural: "who," "they"
8 the wine ... of her fornication	9b If any man (s) <b>worship the beast and his image</b> , and <b>receive his mark</b> in his forehead, or in his hand,		11b who (pl) <b>worship the beast and his image</b> , and whosoever <b>receiveth the mark</b> of his name.
8 the wine of the wrath ...	10 The same shall drink of <b>the wine of the wrath of God</b> , which is poured out without mixture into <b>the cup of his indignation</b> ; and he shall be <b>tormented with fire and brimstone</b> in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:		11a And <b>the smoke of their torment</b> ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night,

Table 13: Chiasm in 14:9-11

1. It consists of the name of the beast, identifying the person with the antichrist.
2. It is linked to worshipping the beast and his image.
3. It must be “received” λαμβάνω G2983.

There are two counterfeits here of the relation between the Lamb and his followers. First, the Lamb marks his followers with the name of God written in the forehead:

Rev 3:12 Him that overcometh ... **I will write upon him the name of my God, ... and I will write upon him my new name.**

Rev 14:1 ... a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, **having his Father's name written in their foreheads.**

Second, the verb “receive” is how the Lamb’s followers come to him:

John 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own **received** παραλαμβάνω G3880 him not. 12 But as many as **received** λαμβάνω G2983 him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Col. 2:6 As ye have therefore **received** παραλαμβάνω G3880 Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

The inner members detail the wrath that will come on those who yield to this seduction. 14:10a picks up the cup of judgment from 14:8, and adds another picture of judgment.<sup>44</sup>

**10a The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation;**—We have already discussed extensively the image of wine as the wrath of God. The image of God’s judgment as wine suggests that he allows their own lusts to take control of them and turn them into disgraceful wrecks, like drunks in the gutter.

**and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone**—Now we meet a new image of judgment, which will play a major role in Revelation 19-20, fire and brimstone. (Brimstone is an archaic term for sulfur, frequently produced by volcanoes, which has an acrid, irritating smoke when burning.) Like most images in the book, this rests on extensive OT antecedents (chart).

The earliest reference to fire and brimstone is in God’s judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah. Their fornication anticipates the beast’s demand for idolatrous worship.

Gen 19:24 Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah **brimstone and fire** from the LORD out of heaven;

David, like Revelation 14, combines this image with the cup to describe the fate of the wicked:

Psa 11:6 Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, **fire and brimstone**, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their **cup**.

Isaiah picks up the image in predicting God’s final judgment on the nations

Isa 30:33 For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is **fire** and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of **brimstone**, doth kindle it.

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44 In ABB’A’, B joins the idioms of the cup and the fire, while B’ mentions only the fire. One might suggest limiting B to the wine, so that B’ focuses on the fire, but this disrupts the shift from singular “he” in 10 to plural “their, they” in 11, which extends into the A-A’ pair as well.

And Ezekiel mentions it in God's judgment on Gog, whom we will meet in Revelation 20:

Eze 38:22 And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, **fire, and brimstone**.

We saw it previously in Revelation 9, the sixth trumpet, which anticipates a great army from the Euphrates with demonic horses:

Rev 9:17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of **fire**, and of jacinth, and **brimstone**: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued **fire** and smoke and **brimstone**. 18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the **fire**, and by the smoke, and by the **brimstone**, which issued out of their mouths.

Recall that the sixth seal brings us down to the final conflict at the end of the age, which we are now contemplating. In the final chapters, the lake of fire and brimstone (19:20; 20:10; 21:8) is the final destination of Satan, the beast, the false prophet, and all who follow them.

**in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:**—This detail reminds us that God's judgment on sin will endure as a public memorial of his absolute holiness,. Isaiah also realizes this sober truth, when he describes the eternal state:

Isa 66:23 And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. 24 And **they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me:** for their worm shall not die, **neither shall their fire be quenched;** and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

Contemplating the ongoing judgment of the wicked is a part of our eternal worship of the Lord.

**11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night,**—As Isaiah 66 emphasizes, this judgment continues for ever.

**12 Here is the patience of the saints:**—The noun “patience” ὑπομονή G5281 appears seven times in the Revelation. Two of them are in this section (12-14), this verse and earlier in 13:10, in explaining 13:9, “he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword” (chart).<sup>45</sup>

Rev 13:10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. **Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.**

Here, as there, knowledge that God's judgment will fall brings assurance and comfort to oppressed saints. Cf. the martyrs of the fifth seal, who prayed,

Rev 6:10 How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

The assurance of God's judgment on sin is a comfort to believers who suffer.

The other instances of the word “patience” are in chapters 1-3. John describes himself as

Rev. 1:9 your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and **patience** of Jesus Christ,

Then he goes on to commend three of the seven churches for their patience:

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<sup>45</sup> See note on textual variants, and in particular the Robinson-Pierpont reading.



*Ephesus*—Rev. 2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy **patience**, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3 And hast borne, and hast **patience**, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

*Thyatira*—Rev. 2:19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy **patience**, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

*Philadelphia*—Rev. 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my **patience**, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Now we learn what enables these saints to exhibit this patience: they are assured that God will bring justice on those who oppress them.

This alignment explains the relevance of the end-time prophecies to the day in which John wrote. The “spirit of antichrist” was “already ... in the world,” 1 Jn 4:3. They were already being tempted to participate in idolatry, spiritual fornication, whose followers will suffer the wrath of God. Their refusal was already bringing them persecution, and their patience comes from the assurance that God, after giving every opportunity to the lost to repent, will finally release his terrible and just judgments.

**here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.**—This is the same group whom the dragon has deliberately persecuted:

Rev 12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which **keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.**

The parallel with 12:17 suggests that we should understand “the faith of Jesus” as “the faith that Jesus teaches,” “the testimony of Jesus Christ,” the witness that he is giving throughout this book. Compare 1:2, which calls the book “the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Recall our earlier discussion of 12:17, and Figure 8. The testimony originates with the Jesus Christ. We have received it through John, and are now responsible to pass it on to others.

We might summarize the message of the three flying angels: Those who faithfully hold fast the Lord's teaching can be patient in the face of persecution, knowing that God will ultimately bring just judgment on their oppressors after first offering them every opportunity to repent.

## 13, A Beatitude from Heaven

Some commentators take 14:13 as the last verse of 6-12, assuring the faithful believers of v. 12 of the blessedness they will experience even in martyrdom. In this connection it further supports the patience to which 14:12 challenges them. But the reference to death also leads naturally into the discussion of the two harvests in 14-20, which describe the resurrection of the dead. Perhaps it is best to view the verse as a transition between the two sections.

**13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write,**—Twelve times in the Revelation, John hears the command, “Write,” always (except in 19:9) from the Lord Jesus.<sup>46</sup> Nine of these commands come in the first three chapters of the book, seven of them in the letters to the

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46 In 10:4, “a voice from heaven” commands John not to write the utterance of the seven thunders (μή plus subjunctive).

churches. The resumption of the command now reminds us that the book is addressed to these churches, and to us who now wrestle with the same spiritual foes that they confronted.

**Blessed**—This is the second of seven beatitudes in the Revelation (chart). One was at the start of the book:

Rev. 1:3 **Blessed** is he that **readeth**, and they that **hear** the words of this prophecy, and **keep** those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

From this point on, we find five more:

Rev. 16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. **Blessed** is he that **watcheth**, and **keepeth** his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Rev. 19:9 And he saith unto me, Write, **Blessed** are they which **are called** unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Rev. 20:6 **Blessed** and holy is he that **hath part in the first resurrection**: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Rev. 22:7 Behold, I come quickly: **blessed** is he that **keepeth** the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

Rev. 22:14 **Blessed** are they that **do his commandments**, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

Three of these beatitudes (14:13 “the dead which die in the Lord,” 19:9 “they which are called unto the marriage supper of the lamb,” 20:6 “he that hath part in the first resurrection”) declare blessings on those who are the recipients of God’s goodness, while the other four emphasize our responsibility to live in obedience to the Lord. The Spirit’s amplification in 14:13 brings in our responsibility, unifying the two.

In both the OT and NT, the English word “blessed” translates two different word families (Table 14, chart, see note). One family emphasizes the role of the one giving the blessing. You are “blessed” (consistent with the passive form

Hebrew	Greek	English	Emphasis
ברך H1288	εὐλογητός G2128 εὐλογέω G2127	blessed	focuses on the one doing blessing
אשרי H835, H837	μακάριος G3107 μακαρίζω G3106	blessed, happy	focuses on the joyful condition of the one blessed

Table 14: Two Word Families for “Blessed”

of the English verb) because someone has “blessed” you. The other family of words focuses on the happiness of the one described, and our version often translates it “happy.”<sup>47</sup> This latter expression, emphasizing the happiness of God’s people, is the term used in these seven beatitudes, as well as in Matthew 5 (“blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, ...”), and in the Psalms, which use the expression 25 times (Ps 1:1, “Blessed is the man that walketh not ...”). Of course, it is God who gives this happiness, but the term chosen focuses our attention on our happy state rather than the one who graciously brings us into it.

This recurring reminder is an important balance to another consistent theme in this book. The Revelation is quite frank about the conflict between God’s saints and the forces of evil, amplifying our Lord’s words, “In the world you shall have tribulation” (John 16:33). As the Lord

47 OT about 18/46x; NT (including verb μακαρίζω G3106) about 6/56.

fills in the details of this warning to John, there is the danger that we will lose hope and fall into despair. But our Lord went on to say, “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” The beatitudes of the Revelation are even more positive. “Be of good cheer” means “take heart,”<sup>48</sup> but the beatitudes give us reason to “be happy.” The future that God has prepared for his people goes far beyond the pleasures that the beast can offer his followers. This is, after all, what our Lord already promised in the sermon on the mount,

Matt. 5:10 **Blessed** are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 **Blessed** are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 **Rejoice, and be exceeding glad:** for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

And Peter echoes this teaching with the same word that the Revelation translates “blessed,”

1Pet. 3:14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, **happy are ye:** and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

1Pet. 4:14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, **happy are ye;** for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

We have a practical example of this in our brother Paul, in his epistle to the Philippians, written while he was in bonds (Php 1:7, 13, 14, 16). In spite of his bondage, he uses the words “joy” χαρά G5479 and “rejoice” χαίρω G5463 more than twice as frequently as in any of his other epistles.<sup>49</sup> He had learned, not just to bear tribulation patiently, but to rejoice in it.

Now let’s consider who is promised this happiness, and why.

**are the dead which die in the Lord**—Death in itself is not blessed, but rather a curse. But those who die “in the Lord” (cf. “dead in Christ” 1 Thes 4:16; “asleep in Christ” 1 Cor 15:18; “sleep in Jesus” 1 Thes 4:14) have a different prospect, as the phrase “asleep in Christ” suggests. They are “absent from the body, present with the Lord” (2 Cor 5:8), and will return with him when he comes to take his kingdom (1 Thessalonians 4).

**from henceforth:**—In the context, this promise has special reference to believers martyred under the reign of the beast. They should be encouraged with the blessing that awaits them beyond the grave.

**Yea, saith the Spirit,**—At this point, the voice of the Spirit breaks in. “Yea” has the sense of “even so,” and often appears next to “amen,” indicating agreement (1:7; 16:7; 22:20).

This role for the Spirit is consistent with the ministry the Lord assigns him in the Upper Room (chart):

Joh 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

**[in] that they may rest from their labours;**—Now the Spirit explains the happiness that the heavenly voice announced. “That” here, as often in John (Robertson p. 922), indicates not

48 It is the standard LXX rendering of אל תירא "fear not."

49 8.5 instances per 1000 words; the next highest is 1 Thessalonians, at 4.0 per 1000.

purpose, but content: “blessed are the dead, ... in that ... .” The Spirit is explaining the nature of the blessedness that comes on those who die in the Lord.

Both statements have to do with what the saints have done during their earthly lives. Two different words appear, and they look in different directions in time.

The first component of blessedness is rest from our labor κόπος G2873. This is not the generic word for “work” (ἔργον G2041), but adds the sense of toil or weariness. Looking back, the Spirit recognizes that the disciple’s life is one of labor and struggle, often bringing weariness. This toil is now past, and the saint is happy because he enters into rest.

Rev 7:17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and **God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.**

Rev 21:4 And **God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes**; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

**and their works do follow them.**—The other aspect of the blessing looks forward in time, and focuses, not on the toil and fatigue, but on what has been accomplished for the Lord. “Work” ἔργον G2041 emphasizes the fruit of one’s labor. That survives beyond the grave; compare

Mat 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

1Co 3:12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

## 14-20, The Final Harvests

The final section of chapter 14 describes two harvests, one of grain, the other of grapes. The two images are parallel (Table 15, chart), inviting us to compare the reapers in each harvest, the commands that set them working, and the actual action of harvest.

As we study these two harvests, the similarities and differences between them, as highlighted by this parallel structure, will be helpful. First, though, it will be helpful to review two earlier scriptures that use a double harvest to describe the final judgment at the end of the world.

The OT prophet Joel uses the occasion of a locust plague to anticipate the coming day of the Lord. In the third and final chapter, he describes God’s final judgment on all nations (chart):

Joe 3:11 Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD. 12 Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to **the valley of Jehoshaphat**: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. 13 Put ye in the sickle, for **the harvest is ripe**: come, get you down; for **the press is full**, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. 14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the **valley of decision**. 15 The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. 16 The LORD also shall roar out of **Zion**, and utter his voice from **Jerusalem**; and the heavens and the earth

## Revelation 12-14, Introduction to the Seven Bowls

	Grain Harvest (the Righteous)	Grape Harvest (the Wicked)
The Reaper	14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.	17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.
The Command	15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.	18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.
The Action	16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.	19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

*Table 15: Parallels between the Two Harvests*

shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

The word “harvest” קציר H7105 refers specifically to the grain harvest, which took place in Israel in May and June. A separate term בציר H1210, translated “vintage,” refers to gathering grapes, and though not in Joel 3:13, is presumed by the reference to the winepress and the fats (vats). This harvest occurred in September.<sup>50</sup> Joel’s use of the two harvests to describe the last judgment clearly anticipates Revelation 14.

The second helpful parallel is our Lord’s parable of the wheat and the tares:

Matt 13:24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. ... 30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. ... 37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the **Son of man**; 38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; 39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. 40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

This parable makes explicit the distinction between the righteous and the wicked in the two phases of the final judgment. Notably, it identifies the sower of the good seed with the Son of Man, who appears in the first of the two harvests in Revelation 14.

<sup>50</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gezer\\_calendar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gezer_calendar)



## 14-16, Reaping the Grain

Now let's consider the first harvest, of grain. Following the outline of Table 15, we begin with a description of the reaper.

**14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man,**—The cloud and the title “Son of Man” clearly bring to mind Daniel 7,

Dan 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like **the Son of man** came **with the clouds of heaven**, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

It is also the title that our Lord uses of himself in the parable of the tares in Matthew 13. It seems clear that this is a picture of our Lord, as he prepares to return with his saints in glory.

**having on his head a golden crown,**—We need to distinguish two different Greek words for crown: the wreath of victory, and the symbol of monarchy (Figure 17, chart).

The word here (στέφανος G4735) is the wreath of victory, given to athletes who win a context or generals who win a battle. Originally woven of leaves of laurel or ivy, it would sometimes be duplicated in precious metal or even jewels. It represents the glory that belongs to someone who has successfully overcome an adversary. In the Revelation, the Lord wears the wreath here. In addition, we see it seven other times:

- in 2:10 and 3:11, promised to the saints of Smyrna and Philadelphia
- on the heads of the 24 elders in 4:4, 10
- on the rider of the white horse, the antichrist, in 6:2, symbolizing his conquests
- in 9:7, on the demonic locusts set loose with the fifth trumpet
- in 12:1, upon the head of the woman who bears the man-child.

Thus only the last instance is applied to our Lord.

The other term translated “crown” is διάδημα G1238, a thin band, originally of silk, later of precious metal, marking a king. It appears three times in the Revelation:

- 12:3, on the seven heads of the dragon
- 13:1, on the seven heads of the beast from the sea
- 19:12, many crowns, on the Lord Jesus at his return.

Again, only the last one is applied to our Lord.

In both cases, he is the ultimate crown-wearer. In Rev 19:12, the διάδημα marks him as the ultimate monarch, king of all kings and lord of all lords (Rev 19:16). In the present passage, the στέφανος shows him as the final conqueror, overcoming “the last enemy that shall be destroyed, death” (1 Cor 15:26) as he raises the dead.



Figure 17: Wreathes (στέφανος, top) and diadems (διάδημα, bottom)

<https://www.lookandlearn.com/history-images/YR0111263/Three-laurel-wreaths-and-three-crowns> (Public Domain)

**and in his hand a sharp sickle.**—He is ready to reap the harvest.

**15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.**—This verse has led to some confusion about the reaper’s identity.

First, “another angel” might suggest that the reaper is himself only an angel. But in 14:6, the first of the three flying angels was “another angel,” simply relating him to the plethora of angels elsewhere in the book, and that is likely the sense here.

Second, it seems inappropriate for a mere angel to give commands to the Messiah. But note where the angel comes from, and the specific message that he brings. The message is “The time is come,” and the angel brings it from the temple, the abode of God. Recall our Lord’s words about the end of this present era (chart):

Mar 13:32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, **neither the Son**, but the Father.

This angel comes out of the temple, bearing the Father’s message that the time has now come.

This is not be the only place that angels help the Lord Jesus, particularly when his human nature is in view. Dan 7:13 says that “they brought [the Son of Man] near before [the Ancient of Days], as though he needed their escort to approach the Father. And during his earthly ministry, at the temptation (Matt 4:11) and in the garden (Lk 22:43), they comforted him.<sup>51</sup> As the Son of Man, he is fully human as well as divine. As the perfect man who is “heir of all things” (Heb 1:2), he may well depend on those ordained to minister to the “heirs of salvation” (Heb 1:14).

**16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.**—In 14:4, the 144,000 Jewish witnesses were presented as “the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.” As we discussed at that point, the firstfruits, offered when the grain first appeared in the spring, anticipated the full harvest later in the summer. The Jewish witnesses were followed by the angelic witness to “the everlasting gospel” (14:6), and now finally the full harvest resulting from this twofold witness is ready to be gathered in. The Lord has patiently waited, giving people every opportunity to receive the redemption he offers, but now the time has come.

## 17-20, Gathering the Grapes

We turn now to the second part of the harvest, gathering the grapes.

**17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.**—This time the reaper is said to be an angel, sent out from the temple.

**18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over [the] fire;**—Again, the harvester does not start on his own, but waits for instructions from an angel. The messenger who comes to him, comes “from the altar,” with “power over fire.”

We saw the altar originally when the fifth seal was opened, as the place where the martyrs wait for God’s vengeance:

Rev 6:9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge

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51 If the one who appears to Daniel in Daniel 9 is the preincarnate Son of God, it is another example of his receiving support from angels.

our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

A few chapters later, this altar yields the fire cast onto the earth at the start of the trumpets:

Rev 8:5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

This is probably the same angel we see here, who has power over **the** fire (article in Greek), that is, the fire we saw previously. The martyrs' long wait is now over. The time has come for their unrepentant oppressors to answer for their wickedness.

**and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.**—God in his longsuffering waits until sin is fully evident, as he did in delaying his judgment on the Amorites in the days of Abraham:

Gen 15:16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

**19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.**—In the messages of the second and third flying angels, 14:8, 10, we saw wine used as a symbol of the wrath of God, a figure anticipated in Jer 25:15ff. It is natural that the winepress, where grapes are violently trodden to make wine, should share in this imagery, as anticipated in Isaiah's vision of our Savior,

Isa 63:2 Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? 3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

Here and in Joel 3, God's wrath is pictured as grapes being trodden in a wine vat. Matthew 13 gives another image, as the tares (representing the wicked) are burned. Together, these images capture the two judgments of wine and fire promised in Rev 14:10,

Rev 14:10 The same shall drink of **the wine of the wrath of God**, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be **tormented with fire and brimstone** in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

**20 And the winepress was trodden without the city,**—The root of this prophecy in Joel 3:13 helps us identify the city. That same passage locates the judgment in "the valley of Jehoshaphat" (3:12, YHWH has judged), also called "the valley of decision" (3:14), and describes the judgment as coming from Mount Zion (chart):

Joel 3:12 Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to **the valley of Jehoshaphat**: for **there will I sit** to judge all the heathen round about. 13 Put ye in the sickle, for **the harvest is ripe**: come, get you down; for **the press is full**, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. 14 Multitudes, multitudes in **the valley of decision**: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. ... 16 The LORD also shall roar out of **Zion**, and utter his voice from **Jerusalem**;

If the Lord is judging from Jerusalem, the valley of judgment should be nearby. The obvious candidate is the Kidron, between the temple mount and the Mount of Olives.<sup>52</sup> It is interesting to recall that the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives were called in our Lord's time Gethsemene, "the oil press." There our Lord wrestled with the sacrifice by which he purchased for us the new covenant blessing of the Holy Spirit. There, the oil of gladness was pressed out for those who will receive it. In the last day, that location will host the great wine press of God's wrath for those who reject the Savior's sacrifice.

So Jerusalem brackets this chapter. We began with the Lamb and his faithful witnesses on Mount Zion, and end with the wicked being trodden out in the Kidron Valley, at the foot of Mount Zion.

**and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.**—A furlong στάδιον is 1/8 mile, 192 meters. So this blood extends 200 miles. One possible clue to the meaning of this number is that it represents the approximate length of the land of Israel. A circle 100 miles in radius around Jerusalem (Figure 18) reaches from Tyre at the northern edge of the land to the Wadi el-Arish in Sinai, often identified with the "river of Egypt" (Gen 15:18; 1 Ki 8:65).

The harvest and vintage anticipate the two resurrections in chapter 20 (chart):

Rev 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. 7 And when the thousand years are expired [Satan released, final battle] ... 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.



Figure 18: 1600 Furlongs = 200 miles, covering the Land of Israel

52 It has been objected that the Kidron is often called a נחל, a wadi or seasonal riverbed, but never an עמק, usually associated with a broader area. But Absalom erected a monument to himself in עמק המלך, presumably near Jerusalem, his capital, and when the Lord returns, the Mount of Olives will split, opening a great עמק, Zech 14:4.

## Notes

### References to 3.5 years

Table 16 lists the various designations of the 3.5 year period of oppression by the Antichrist.

This designation echoes numerous time periods mentioned in Daniel (Table 17). Daniel's closest parallel is the Aramaic expression עֶדְנִין וְכָלֵג עֶדְנִין in 7:25 and its Hebrew translation לְמוֹעֵד מוֹעֲדִים וְחֻצֵי in 12:7.<sup>53</sup> The durations given in days all differ from the 1260 in the Revelation. If the 2300 evening-mornings in 8:14 are whole days, they amount to about 6.4 years, while if they are half-days, they only give us 1150 days, less than 1260, while the 1290 and 1335 in 12:11f are longer than 1260.

Dan 8:14 is a reasonable description of the entire period of Antiochus' dominion over Israel. (The temple itself was rededicated on the third anniversary of its defilement, 1 Macc 1:54-59, 4:52, so the period of the temple's defilement fits neither the 2300 days nor the 3.5 "times.") It is popular in dispensational circles to link a 3.5 year period with "the midst of the week" in 9:27, but two observations urge caution here: Payne's alternative analysis of these verses as fulfilled in the first century (JETS 21/2 [June 1978] 97-115), and Newman's explanation of the sevens as sabbatical weeks, in which the first and last of the series could be shorter than seven years (JETS 16:4 [Fall 1973] 229-234), so that the "midst of the seventh week" might be less than 3.5 years.

Conclusion: Daniel leads us to expect a time of intense trouble on the order of 3.5 years in length, and the Revelation picks this up, primarily through the expression "a time, times, and half a time," refining it to 42 months of 30 days, or 1360 days in all.

### δράκων G1404 and ὄφις G3789 in the LXX

Table 18 shows that δράκων refers to the mythological monsters, while ὄφις is the mundane (though often noxious) serpent. The beasts involved in the contest between Moses and the magicians of Egypt are described as δράκοντες.

	תנין	לויטן	נחש	שרף	Total
δράκων	12	5	2	0	36
ὄφις	0	0	30	2	40
Total	14	6	31	7	

Table 18: Serpents in the OT

<sup>53</sup> The link to 42 months or 1260 days would lead one to expect the dual in 12:7, but the dual is obsolescent in biblical Aramaic (Rosenthal §45), and Daniel may be thinking in Aramaic in ch. 12, or even translating from words spoken to him in Aramaic.



## When is Satan cast out of heaven?

Osborne has a good discussion of the various options, and decides for a primordial fall, to which he sees a reference in the Lord's words,

Lk 10:18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven

Bauckham favors the Lord's passion, which has been argued based on

Joh 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

Thomas is a good representative of the position that this fall is eschatological.

The emphasis on the titles "Devil" and "Satan" in v. 9, and the reference to accusation in the heavenly court in v. 10 continuing in the time of John, strongly suggest that the point of this fall is denying him access to the heavenly court (*contra* Osborne p. 480 that Satan is now imprisoned on earth but "is still given access to heaven so he can accuse the saints before God"). In fact, do the Scriptures ever depict Satan in heaven on any occasion other than one in which he is accusing God's people? Lk 10:18 "I saw" describes the time of our Lord's knowledge of Satan's fall, not necessarily the time of the fall itself, and John 12:31 makes a deliberate distinction in tense between the present judgment of this world and a yet future casting out.

## φωνή μεγάλη (12:10)

In the Revelation, such a voice is heard several times, either from an undefined speaker, a single angel, a multitude of believers, or a joint group. Figure 19 shows the distribution of the term in the book.<sup>54</sup> There are three peaks:

- At 7:2, an angel holds back coming judgments. The density is enhanced by two cries from the saints, the first (6:10) a cry from the martyrs under the altar for vengeance, the second (7:10) from saints in heaven declaring God's salvation.
- At 11:15, in the seventh trumpet, a heavenly multitude declares God's reign in language aligned with 12:10, which we have assigned to saints in heaven.
- At 14:9, declaring God's judgment on those who worship the beast.

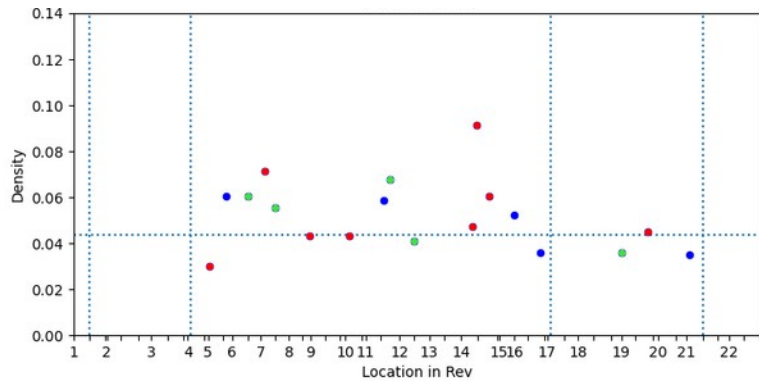


Figure 19: Great Voice(s) in Revelation. Red = Angels, Green = Saints

## Undefined

11:12 And they heard a **great voice** from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. --given the common use of the phrase for martyred saints in heaven (6:10; 7:10), perhaps this is coming from the martyrs inviting them to join their company. But parallel with 4:1 suggests it might be God himself.

*16:1 and 21:32 speak of God in the third person, yet (16:1) seem not to be an angel either.*

16:1 And I heard a **great voice** out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

16:17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a **great voice** out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

21:3 And I heard a **great voice** out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

## Angels

5:2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a **loud voice**, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

7:2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a **loud voice** to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

<sup>54</sup> In addition to these instances of the consecutive phrase, the disjoint phrase appears in 1:10 (the Lord Jesus), καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ὀπίσω μου μεγάλην ὡς σάλπιγγος,

8:13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a **loud voice**, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

10:3 And cried with a **loud voice**, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

14:7 Saying with a **loud voice**, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

14:9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a **loud voice**, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

14:15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a **loud voice** to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

19:17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a **loud voice**, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

## Believers

6:10 And they cried with a **loud voice**, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

7:10 And cried with a **loud voice**, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were **great voices** in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. *This is the only instance in the Revelation of the expression in the plural. The only other plural instance in the Greek Bible is Lk 23:23, And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified.*

12:10 And I heard a **loud voice** saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

19:1 And after these things I heard a **great voice** of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

## Joint Group

5:12 Saying with a **loud voice**, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

## The Blood of the Lamb (12:10-11)

The Revelation mentions blood αἷμα G129 19x, out of 98x in the NT, the second densest in the NT (after Hebrews). Five of these references are to the blood of Christ, six to the blood of martyrs, and eight to the blood of judgment. Review the references to the blood of Christ. They form a progression, of which 12:11 is the climax.

**1:5** Unto him that loved us, and **washed us from our sins in his own blood**, **6** And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.—We were polluted in our blood, defiled and completely alienated from God. Throughout the OT, blood is the sole means of dealing with this pollution, but the OT sacrifices had only limited and symbolic effectiveness.

Heb 9:13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

The blood of Christ truly purges even our conscience, so that we are no longer even conscious of sin:

14 How much more shall the **blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, **purge your conscience** from dead works to serve the living God?

**5:9** And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and **hast redeemed us to God by thy blood** out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; **10** And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.—“Redeemed” is commercial language. The blood of Christ did not simply relieve our consciences so that we could live with ourselves. It makes us God’s property, his bondslaves.

*A “great multitude” in heaven (7:9) praise him with a “loud voice” (7:10). Identified (7:14) by one of the elders: These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*—Washing our robes is a step beyond washing ourselves (1:5). By bringing us into the New Covenant, with its promise of Spirit-empowered obedience to God’s law (Ezek 36:27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them).

**12:11** And they overcame him **by the blood of the Lamb**, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.—Recall our responsibility to “overcome,” ch. 2-3. Secure in our consciences, dedicated to God’s service, and empowered by his Spirit, we are now equipped for warfare with the great adversary.

**19:13** And he was clothed with **a vesture dipped in blood**: and his name is called **The Word of God**.—The Revelation mentions not only righteous blood (the Lamb and martyrs), but also the blood of God’s judgment. Both kinds of blood mark the coming king. Isaiah 63 tells first we hear of his own redeeming blood:

Is. 63:2 Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? **3 I have trodden the winepress alone**; and of the people there was none with me

Then we are reminded of the blood of judgment that he will shed:

for **I will tread them in mine anger**, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

We praise God together for the blood of his Son, which washes our conscience, makes us his possession, purges our daily conduct, and fits us for spiritual victory.

## ἐξουσία in the Revelation

Who holds it? Figure 20 shows the term colored to indicate to whom it is ascribed. There is some ambiguity between red and blue, since some of the blue dots (14:8; 16:9) describe judgments, and ultimately all of the judgments of the red dots are sent by God. Still, the general pattern is very clear:

- Three peaks of satanic authority, in the trumpets (ch. 9), the beasts (13), and Babylon (17)
- Three reminders of authority given to the saints (2, 11, 22)

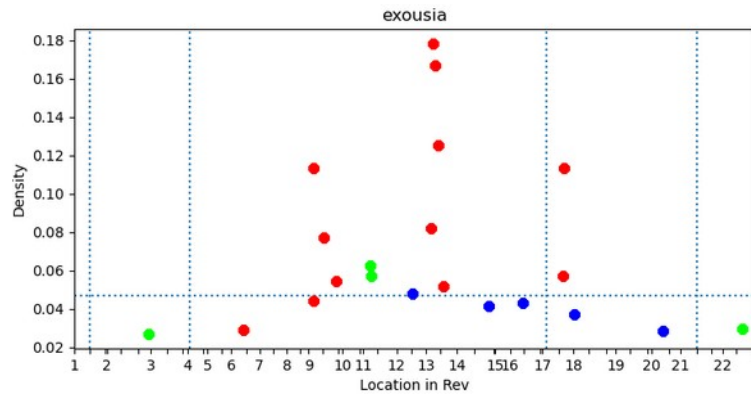


Figure 20: ἐξουσία G1849 (power, authority). Red: evil agents of destruction. Green: saints. Blue: God, Christ, his angels.

## Believers (Green)

Rev. 2:26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give **power** over the nations:

Rev. 11:6 These have **power** to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have **power** over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

Rev. 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have **right** to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

## God, Christ, Angels

Rev. 12:10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the **power** of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

Rev. 14:18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had **power** over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. *Isn't this an agent of disaster, as much as the horsemen?*

Rev. 16:9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath **power** over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

Rev. 18:1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great **power**; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

Rev. 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no **power**, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. *Putting this here because it is God who dooms them to this death.*



## Agents of Disaster (Red)

Rev. 6:8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And **power** was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

Rev. 9:3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given **power**, as the scorpions of the earth have **power**.

Rev. 9:10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their **power** was to hurt men five months.

Rev. 9:19 For their **power** is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

Rev. 13:2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his **power**, and his seat, and great authority.

Rev. 13:4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave **power** unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

Rev. 13:5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and **power** was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

Rev. 13:7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and **power** was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

Rev. 13:12 And he exerciseth all the **power** of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

Rev. 17:12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive **power** as kings one hour with the beast.

Rev. 17:13 These have one mind, and shall give their **power** and strength unto the beast.

## The Text of 13:10

There is wide variation in the first two clauses of the verse, with no clear majority. At some level the text is informed by Jer 15:2, in which God abandons Israel to the depredations of the Gentiles, including “wild beasts of the earth” (15:2), and 43:11 (LXX 50:11).

Jer 15:2 And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the LORD; Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity.

Jer 43:11 And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt, and deliver such as are for death to death; and such as are for captivity to captivity; and such as are for the sword to the sword.

Some variants of 13:10 favor this interpretation: believers must resign themselves to physical suffering and death.

The TR virtually reverses this meaning, by assigning the doom to the one who imposes it on others (compare the Lord’s words in Matt 26:52), and thus promises retribution to the persecutor,

## Revelation 12-14, Introduction to the Seven Bowls

as a source of encouragement to the believers. In doing so, it abandons the parallels with Jeremiah.

Mat 26:52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Hodges and Farstad conclude that the first clause is resignation to captivity (“if any has captivity, let him go away”) and the second is ambiguous (“if any with the sword, it is necessary that he be killed”).

Robinson and Pierpont agree, but resolve the ambiguity of the second clause to retribution (“if any kill with the sword”)

The latter reading is attractive in combining the two emphases: believers are to accept the sufferings imposed by the Antichrist, while remembering the Lord’s exhortation not to defend themselves violently lest they be judged by God.

I will expound the AV but mention the variation.

### **Pss 15 and 24 and the Attributes of the 144,000**

<b>Psalm 15</b>	<b>Psalm 24</b>	<b>Revelation 14</b>	<b>Notes</b>
2 He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness,	4 He that hath clean hands,  and a pure heart;		
and speaketh the truth in his heart.			
3 He that backbiteth not with his tongue,  nor doeth evil to his neighbour,  nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.	nor sworn deceitfully.		
4 In whose eyes a vile person is contemned;  but he honoureth them that fear the LORD.	who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,		
He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.	nor sworn deceitfully.		
5 He that putteth not out his money to usury,	4 He that hath clean hands,		
nor taketh reward against the innocent.	nor sworn deceitfully.		

*Table 19: Psalms 15 and 25 and Revelation 14*

## נשא אל

Deut. 24:15 At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and **setteth his heart upon it**:

Hos. 4:8 They eat up the sin of my people, and **they set their heart on their iniquity**.

Garrett: However, Hosea possibly is here uniquely using “wickedness” as a term to describe the sacrificial system of Israel’s religion. (note: If it seems odd that Hosea would use the word עָוֹן to refer to the sacrificial system, note that only a few verses later, in 4:15, he calls Bethel (“house of God”) בֵּית אֵלֹהִים (Beth Aven, “house of deception”).)

Psa. 25:1 **Unto thee**, O LORD, do I **lift up my soul**. 2 O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. 3 Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed:

Psa. 143:8 Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for **I lift up my soul unto thee**.

Prov. 19:18 Chasten thy son while there is hope, and **let not thy soul spare for his crying**.

וְאַל-תִּמְחָא אֶל-תַּשָּׂא נַפְשְׁךָ:

## נשא ל

Jer. 22:27 But to the land whereunto **they desire to return**, thither shall they not return.

Jer. 22:27 וְעַל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-הֵם מְנַשְּׂאִים אֶת-נַפְשָׁם לָשׁוּב שָׁם שָׁמָּה לֹא יָשׁוּבוּ: ס

“And concerning the land to which you wish to return, there you shall not return.”

Jer. 44:14 So that none of the remnant of Judah, which are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall escape or remain, that they should return into the land of Judah, to the which **they have a desire to return to dwell there**: for none shall return but such as shall escape.

Jer 44:14 וְלֹא יִהְיֶה פְּלִיט וְשָׂרִיד לְשְׂאֲרֵי יְהוּדָה הַבָּאִים לְגוּר-שָׁם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְלָשׁוּב אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר-הֵמָּה מְנַשְּׂאִים אֶת-נַפְשָׁם לָשׁוּב לְשִׁבְתָּ שָׁם כִּי לֹא-יָשׁוּבוּ כִּי אִם-פְּלִטִים: ס

Psa. 24:4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not **lifted up his soul unto vanity**, nor sworn deceitfully. *I should expect אל here, the lamedh in the other cases being driven by the infinitive.*

## Patience 14:12 υπομ\*ν\*

	קוה, מקוה, תקוה	יחל	etc בטח		Total
ὑπομένω, ὑπομονή	34	6	0		107
ἐλπίζω, ἐλπίς	21	12	64		228
πείθω	2	0	78		175
Total	84	43	166		

Table 20: Psalms 15 and 25 and Revelation 14

## LXX Correspondences for Words for “work” (14:13)

	עמל	און	עבדה	מעשה		Total	NT Total
κόπος	13	5	0	0		35	19
πόνος	45	5	0	0		93	3 all Rev
μόχθος	36	1	0	0		41	3 no Rev
ἔργον	0	0	36	159			
ποιήμα	0	0	0	26		28	
Total	76	85	145	236			

Table 21: Words for “Work”

## Beatitudes in the Bible

We must distinguish אשׁרי from ברוך, μακάριος from εὐλογητός.

	אשׁרי or אשׁר	ברוך		Total
μακάριος	41	0		68
εὐλογητός, εὐλογέω perfect passive ptc	0	68		130
Total	47	71		

Table 22: Psalms 15 and 25 and Revelation 14

TDOT: “this cry of happiness [אשׁרי] never refers to God,” and “demands that the believer do certain things.”

ברוך is mostly predicated of the Lord as an expression of thanksgiving (Gen 24:27), but can be applied to people as well, either as a statement of fact (Gen 24:31; 26:29) or (more often) as a prayer in appreciation for favors (may God bless you because you have done xyz) (1 Sam 23:21). Much less frequently it describes blessings given from one creature to another (Gen 27:29), but even here the divine hand is presumed, Gen 12:3.

The main difference appears to be of focus:

- אשׁרי emphasizes the mental and emotional state of the person blessed, without focus on the one giving the blessing. If agency is expressed, it is usually on the part of the person blessed, which results in their happy condition.
- ברוך emphasizes the role of one giving the blessing.

On the gospel beatitudes, in particular the pairing with woes in Luke 6, see the note “Μακάριος and the Deuteronomic Blessings” in my study on Matthew 5 (<https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/matt/notes/Matt5a.pdf>).

More needs to be done relating these concepts with the notion of “joy, rejoice.”