

Revelation 8b-11, The Seven Trumpets

Overview

With the opening of the seventh seal, the first account of God’s judgment has reached the final outpouring of God’s wrath. Now the seven trumpets (Figure 1) back up a bit in time to provide a more detailed view of the judgments leading up to that same culmination (Figure 2).¹

In addition to ending at the same point, each successive pair of series shares some structural features (Table 1).

1. Both the seals and the trumpets are divided into two parts, one with four elements, one with three. In the seals, the first four are horsemen, bringing the judgments of Ezekiel 14 and Leviticus 26. In the trumpets, the last three are called “woes.” The bowls show no such division.²
2. In both the seals and the trumpets, the sixth element is separated from the seventh by an interlude. The bowls continue without pause.

The 4/3 division and interlude in the first two series slows the action. The bowls rush on without interruption.³ In addition, the bowls are the shortest of the three series (21 verses). The seals occupy 22 verses plus 17 in the interlude, while the trumpets are the longest of the series, 35 verses plus 24.

A third similarity between the series noted in Table 1 is that the trumpets and bowls share many features of the plagues that God brought upon Egypt in delivering Israel from bondage (Table 2⁴).

The seals were almost entirely without quantitative description. Only one seal, the fourth, notes the extent of the judgment (chart):

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.

But each of the first four trumpets affects one-third of its target, and the bowls repeatedly note complete destruction. Though the objects of judgment are the same, the extent of damage by the bowls is much greater than that of the trumpets.

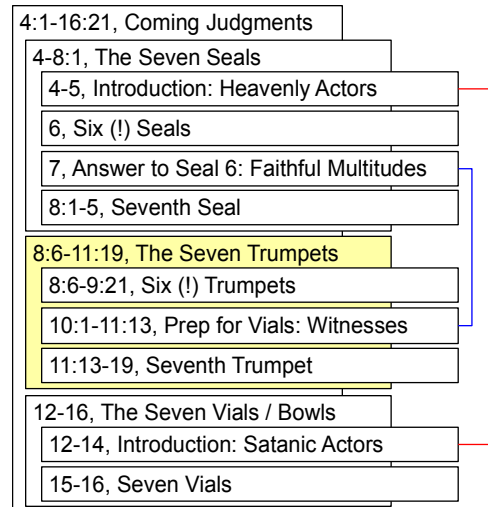


Figure 1: Structure of the Second Vision

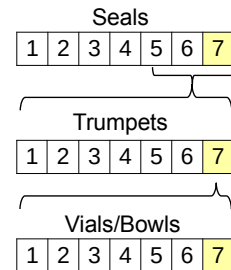


Figure 2: Alignment of seals, trumpets, and bowls

	Seals	Trumpets	Bowls
4/3 Structure	X	X	
6-7 Interlude	X	X	
Plagues		X	X

Table 1: Similarities between Series

1 The first six trumpets must precede the sixth seal, which describes the earthly reaction to the coming of the Lord. The best discussion of the alignment of the series is D. Davis, *JETS*, 16 [1973], 149–58.
 2 The efforts of many commentators to discern such a structure are not at all convincing.
 3 Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, pp. 8ff (Chapter 1.1, Structure, The Series of Sevens)
 4 Wilson, M. (2007). *Charts on the Book of Revelation: Literary, Historical, and Theological Perspectives* (p. 80). Kregel Academic & Professional, extended

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Trumpets (Rev. 8-9)	Ten Plagues (Exod. 7-11)	Seven Bowls (Rev. 16)
1. Earth hit with hail , fire , and blood, 1/3 of trees and all grass burned (8:7)	6. Boils (9:8-11) 7. Fiery Hail (9:13-34)	1. People with Beast's mark afflicted with sores (16:2)
2. 1/3 of sea turned to blood and 1/3 of sea creatures die (8:8-9)	(Burning mountain, Jer 51:24-25) 1. Blood (7:14-21)	2. Sea turned to blood and all sea creatures die (16:3)
3. 1/3 of fresh waters embittered by Wormwood (8:11)	(Falling star, 6:13) 1. Blood (7:14-21)	3. Rivers and springs turned to blood (16:4)
4. 1/3 of sun , moon, and stars darkened (8:12)	(Sun and moon, 6:12) 9. Darkness (10:21-23)	4. Sun scorches people with fire (16:8-9)
5. Locusts released on earth after Abyss is opened (9:1-11)	(Falling star, 6:13; Locusts, Joel) 6. Boils (9:8-11) 8. Locusts (10:3-19) 9. Darkness (10:21-23)	5. Darkness on earth and sores break out (16:10-11)
6. 200 million troops at Euphrates River released by 4 angels to kill 1/3 of men (9:13-16)	2. Frogs (8:2-14)	6. Kings from East gathered to Euphrates River by 3 unclean spirits resembling frogs (16:12-13)
7. Heavenly temple opens, accompanied by lightning, earthquake, and hail (11:15, 19)	7. Hail (9:18-34)	7. Lightning, severe earthquake, and plague of large hail (16:18-21)
	Egyptians wail loudly at loss of firstborn (12:30)	People curse God because of the plagues (16:9, 21)
Survivors of plagues refuse to repent (9:20-21)	Pharaoh hardens heart (7:22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 12, 34-35; 10:20, 27; 11:10)	Survivors of plagues refuse to repent (16:9, 11)

Table 2: Parallels among the Trumpets, the Bowls, and the Plagues of Egypt. Unused plagues: 3 lice (8:16-18), 4 flies (8:20-24), 5 murrain (9:1-7), 10 death of firstborn (11:4-8)

Figure 3 (chart) compares the lengths of each seal, trumpet, and bowl (excluding the interludes between the sixth and seventh seals and trumpets). In all three series, the elements tend to increase in length through the series, but the increase is striking in the last three trumpets, which are set apart as “woes” (8:13).

The overall impression as we move through the three series is of judgments that become more severe and that move faster and faster until they culminate in the Lord’s return. This pacing should encourage us. Compare God’s encouragement to Habakkuk when he predicted the ultimate defeat of Babylon:

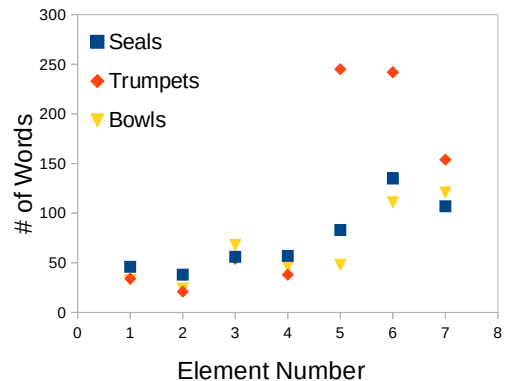


Figure 3: Length in words of each element (excluding interludes)

Hab 2:3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

In fact, Habakkuk’s encouragement is particularly relevant to our study, since we will see that the focus of the trumpets and bowls is on God’s coming judgment on spiritual Babylon, the continuation of Rome’s political and spiritual wickedness that has persisted for 2000 years.

8:6-12, The First Four Trumpets

8:6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. —

As we saw in 8:2, these angels are in heaven, and the judgments that they deliver either take place in heaven (8:12) or come from heaven to earth (red font below). Their number, and the context of judgment, recalls the order of battle at Jericho, one of the “great cities” that the spies feared, guarding an important ford of the Jordan at the entrance to Canaan:

Deut. 1:28 Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; **the cities are great and walled up to heaven;**

This history shapes the whole flow of Revelation 8-16 (Table 2, chart):

Josh. 6:2 And the LORD said unto Joshua, ... 3 ... ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. 4 And **seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams’ horns:** and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. 5 And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.

	Joshua	Revelation
Target	Jericho → Canaan	Babylon → Earth
Leader of Invasion	Joshua (Greek Jesus)	Lord Jesus
Seven Trumpets leading the Ark	6:2-5, 6, 8, 13	8:1-11:19
Initial Silence	6:10	8:1
Great Shout on the Seventh Day	6:20	11:15
Great City Destroyed		16:19

Table 2: Parallels between Joshua and Revelation

On each of six days, the army marched silently around the city.

Josh. 6:10 And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, **Ye shall not shout**, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.

The only sound was the blowing of the seven trumpets (6:6, 8, 13), leading the ark of the covenant. On the seventh day, the trumpet call was accompanied by “a great shout,” (6:20), and the city was destroyed.

Josh. 6:20 ... and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

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The priests with trumpets led the ark of the covenant in their march around the city. In keeping with this imagery, while each of the concluding judgments (the seventh seal, trumpet, and bowl) refers to the heavenly temple or its furniture, only the seventh trumpet mentions the ark:

Rev 11:19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple **the ark of his testament**: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

A reference to the conquest is reinforced by the echo of the Egyptian plagues in the trumpets and bowls. The plagues released Israel from their bondage and set them on the path to invade Canaan. That invasion began with Joshua's conquest of Jericho, announced by seven trumpets. Now seven trumpets announce plague-like judgments, and the silence of the seventh seal is replaced by "great voices in heaven" (Rev 11:15). The bowls will culminate with the fall of "the great city" (16:19), and the Lord Jesus (bearing the same Greek name as Joshua) will lead his triumphant hosts in their conquest of the earth.

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.—The first trumpet recalls the seventh plague on Egypt (chart).

Exod 9:22 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be **hail** in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. 23 And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and **hail**, and the **fire** ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained **hail** upon the land of Egypt. 24 So there was **hail**, and **fire mingled with the hail**, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. 25 And the **hail** smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the **hail** smote every **herb** of the field, and brake every **tree** of the field.

Here, as in Egypt, the hail is accompanied by fire, probably kindled by lightning from the thunderstorm that generates the hail. In both cases, the damage to plants is specifically noted, but while the hail affected every tree and herb, here it only destroys a third of the trees. The grass is probably all burned up by the fire, but naturally regrows after fire, so we see it again in 9:4, the preparation for the fifth trumpet.

8 And the second angel sounded,—The second trumpet, like the others, draws on the plagues of Egypt, but first it invokes an image of judgment from Jeremiah.

and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea:—This striking image of a burning mountain is drawn from Jeremiah, where it describes the coming fall of Babylon:

Jer 51:24 And I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the LORD. 25 Behold, I *am* against thee, **O destroying mountain**, saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee **a burnt mountain**.

This prophecy of Babylon's fall is also echoed in the seventh trumpet,

Rev. 11:18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets,

and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest **destroy them which destroy the earth.**

The final climax of the judgments (Revelation 19) is the destruction of Babylon, which is an image for Rome and its pagan religion. That event is anticipated earlier in the book. The second trumpet is the first such hint, echoed in the seventh. Then before the bowls start we read:

Rev 14:8 And there followed another angel, saying, **Babylon is fallen**, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

And in the seventh bowl,

Rev 16:19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and **great Babylon came in remembrance before God**, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

So the second trumpet is preparing John for this great climax, the destruction of Babylon.

and the third part of the sea became blood; 9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.—The rest of the second trumpet partially recalls the first plague:

Exod 7:19 And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their **rivers**, and upon their **ponds**, and upon all their **pools** of water, that they may become **blood**; and that there may be **blood** throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. 20 And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to **blood**. 21 And the **fish that was in the river died**; and the river stank, and **the Egyptians could not drink** of the water of the river; and there was **blood** throughout all the land of Egypt.

Two features of this plague are reflected in the second trumpet, and another two in the third.

- In this trumpet, water becomes blood, and the fish are killed, but “the sea” probably includes salt water, such as the Mediterranean (cf. Acts 10:32), as well as the fresh water Sea of Galilee.
- In the next, the fresh water is affected (though not with blood), and people cannot drink it.

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp,—This event recalls the cosmic disturbances of the sixth seal (chart),

Rev 6:12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13 **And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth**, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

This similarity suggests that the third trumpet and those following are close in time to the sixth seal, in keeping with the idea that the trumpets start later than do the seals. Here our attention is drawn to one of these stars, and in the fifth trumpet another will fall.⁵

and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;—This trumpet, like the first plague and unlike the second trumpet, affects fresh water

5 Other falling stars in the Bible besides these three: Matt 24:29, and Rev 14:12 (the morning star, symbolic of the king of Babylon).

11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.—The Greek word translated “wormwood” appears only here in the Greek Bible, but there is good reason to associate it with the Hebrew word translated “wormwood” in our OT (see note). Both the Greek and the Hebrew word describe a bitter-tasting plant extract that was used to treat intestinal worms, leading to the name “wormwood.” This word first appears in Moses’ renewal of the covenant with Israel in Deuteronomy 29,

Deut. 29:14 Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; 15 But with him that standeth here with us this day before the LORD our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day: ... 18 Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to **go and serve the gods of these nations**; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and **wormwood**;

Here, and consistently throughout the OT, wormwood describes the bitter result of infidelity to the Lord, as Israel turns to idols. We have seen the pervasive temptation to idolatry that the society of Asia Minor posed to the early churches, and it is appropriate that God’s judgment on the earth include one specific to the sin of turning aside after other gods.

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.—The fourth trumpet recalls the ninth plague on Egypt, three days of darkness.

Exo 10:21 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be **darkness** over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. 22 And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a **thick darkness** in all the land of Egypt three days: 23 They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

Here the darkness is directly traced to disruptions to the heavenly bodies, as in 6:12, “the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.” Again, where the Egyptian plague is universal, the trumpet judgment is limited to one-third.

8:13-9:21, The First Two Woes

The last three trumpets are set off from the first in three ways.

1. They are much longer than the first four trumpets (Figure 3, chart).
2. They are labeled “woes.”
3. While the first four trumpets affect the natural world, these directly affect people (Alford).

13 And I beheld, and heard an ~~angel~~ eagle 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!—Note three features.

First, where our translation has “angel,” the majority reading is “eagle.” NT Greek uses this word to describe vultures as well, and that is likely the meaning here. Compare our Lord’s words predicting the coming judgment on the wicked:

Lk 17:27 Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

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Vultures have been reported to follow armies going into battle in anticipation of feeding on the slain, and can detect carrion a great way off. The appearance of such a bird here anticipates a great slaughter. In fact compare the invitation given to the birds when the Lord returns:

Rev 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; 18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

Second, the lamentation “woe” has its origin in OT funeral lamentations:⁶

1Kings 13:30 And he laid his carcase in his own grave; and they mourned over him, saying, **Alas**, my brother!

Jer. 22:18 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, saying, **Ah** my brother! or, **Ah** sister! they shall not lament for him, saying, **Ah** lord! or, **Ah** his glory! 19 He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

These woes are proclaiming the coming death of a group of people.

Third, we should notice the group thus lamented: “the inhabitants of the earth.” This expression is common in the Revelation (Rev. 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 14; 17:2, 8), describing those who bear the mark of the beast and who rejoice in the death of God’s people (chart).

Rev. 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?**

Rev. 11:10 And **they that dwell upon the earth** shall rejoice over them [the two martyrs],

Rev. 17:2 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.

When we discussed 6:10, we noted that the verb “inhabit” or “dwell” κατοικέω G2730 and cognates (LXX 754x), to settle down and reside, contrasts with παροικέω G3939 and its cognates παροικία G3940 “pilgrimage” and πάροικος G3941 “stranger, pilgrim” (LXX 122x), which refer to transients. The difference is illustrated in the contrast between two cultures in Israel (Figure 4), the Bedouin living in tents, and the more European Israelis, with stone houses. The woes are not focused on God’s



Figure 4: Two kinds of dwelling: κατοικέω (top) and παροικέω (bottom left). (Photo by Van and Anita Parunak, from Nebi Samwil toward Jerusalem, Sept 1974)

⁶ Thus H.J. Zobel, יהי, TDOT 3:359ff. This is the most common Hebrew antecedent of οὐαί.

people, who are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, but on those who identify and sympathize with the world system.

9:1-11, The First Woe

9:1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall[en] from heaven unto the earth:—As in the sixth seal and the third trumpet, the theme of astral disruption continues. The star of the third seal (Wormwood) fell while John watched, but this star has already fallen at some point in the past,⁷ and is simply drawn to John’s attention at the time of the trumpet.

This time the star is personified. Recall 1:20, “the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.” It is possible that the falling star is actually Satan, anticipated in a teaching of our Lord (Beale, following Sweet) (chart):

Lk 10:18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning **fall from heaven**. 19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and **scorpions**, and over all the power of the enemy: and **nothing shall by any means hurt you**.

The fifth trumpet reflects three features of the Lord’s saying in Luke 10:

- the fall of a personal being from heaven (9:1);
- the threat of scorpions (9:3, 5, 10);
- the promise of protection to a select company (9:4).

In Revelation 12, we will see a review of the world’s spiritual history, as part of which

Rev 12:9 ... the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Luke 18, Rev 9:1, and Rev 12:9 may refer to the same event.⁸ Satan is now active in the world:

1Pe 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

With the first woe, he is allowed to set his worst generals loose on the earth.

and to him was given—The passive “it was given” (see note) appears 21 times in the Revelation, emphasizing things that can only happen with divine permission. In the midst of all the tumult of this book, God remains firmly in control.

the key of the bottomless pit ἄβυσσος G12.—This locale (Greek “abyss,” sometimes translated “deep”) appears seven times in the Revelation, and twice elsewhere in the NT (chart). When the Lord healed the Gergesene demoniac, the demons feared that he would send them into the abyss:

Luk 8:31 And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into **the deep**.

Do not confuse “the deep” here with the Sea of Galilee. The demons fear the *abyss*, but themselves drive the swine into the *lake* (Lk 8:33).⁹ The abyss is some sort of demonic prison, perhaps the one referred to in Jude 6, though the term “abyss” does not appear in that verse:

7 Perfect tense, contrast the aorist in 8:10, and compare Lk 10:18, which would make the fall of Satan from heaven something that happened in the past, perhaps as part of the work of the disciples in Luke’s context. These references should be considered when we study 12:9.

8 These three references envision someone falling from heaven to earth. In Rev 20:21, an angel descends from heaven in order to lay hold on the serpent, who therefore must be already on earth.

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Jud 1:6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

The term does appear in Rev 20:1, 3 as the prison where Satan is bound for the thousand years:

Rev 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into **the bottomless pit**, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him,

The idea of a locked prison for demons, requiring a key to open it, fits the references here (9: 1, 2, 11). The other two references in Revelation are to the origin of the antichrist, “the beast”:

Rev 11:7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, **the beast that ascendeth ἀναβαίνω G305 out of the bottomless pit** shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

Rev 17:8 **The beast** that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall **ascend out of the bottomless pit**, and go into perdition:

When the beast is formally introduced in chapter 13, his origin is described as the sea:

Rev. 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw **a beast rise up ἀναβαίνω out of the sea**, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

Does he come from the abyss, or from the sea? It is helpful to note that the two often appear in parallel in the OT (Psa. 32:7; 105:9; 134:6; Job 28:14; 38:16; 41:31; Is. 51:10). For example,

Psa 33:7 He gathereth the waters of the **sea** together as an heap: he layeth up the **depth** in storehouses.

Psa 106:9 He rebuked the Red **sea** also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the **depths**, as through the wilderness.

Israel was not a sea-faring nation. To them, the salt-water sea was a foreign, hostile element.¹⁰ It dominated the chaotic scene before God’s work of creation:

Gen. 1:2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the **deep ἄβυσσος**.

God’s first work of creation was to subdue this abyss, and in the new creation, it is done away, and ultimately,

Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and **there was no more sea**.

So the abyss is a demonic prison, visualized as the depths of the ocean. We are comforted to realize that our God is greater than these powers, and can constrain them at his will. But we are sobered to read that a time will come when at his command, some of its occupants are released to do their work on the earth.

9 Matthew and Mark say that the swine go into the “sea” (θάλασσα G2281), but Luke, the only author who mentions the abyss, here as always calls the Sea of Galilee a “lake” (λίμνη G3041), avoiding any confusion.

10 John Day, *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*. Cambridge, 1988. Contrast their friendly interaction with the fresh-water “sea” of Galilee, which Luke is careful to call a lake, not a sea.

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To set this in context, we should recall that even now, our contest is spiritual, not physical (chart):

Eph. 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Since the time of our Lord, Satan and some of his servants have been at large in the world, and we must wrestle against them. But others are imprisoned, as Jude 6 teaches. The fifth trumpet marks the release of some of these as part of God's increasing judgment.

While God is sending all of the judgments, it is helpful to distinguish the immediate agents of each of them (Table 3).

- Some of the judgments are the immediate result of human activity.
- Some are disturbances of natural phenomena.
- The fifth trumpet introduces explicit demonic action.
- The seventh of each series takes us to heaven, to remind us that God is the master of the whole series.

	Seals, 6:1-8:5	Trumpets, 8:6-11:19	Bowls, 16:1-21
People	1: False Christs 2: War 5: Martyrdom		6: Kings of the east ...
Nature	3: Famine 4: Pestilence 6: Cosmic signs	1: Fiery hail → plants 2: Sea to blood 3: Fresh water poisoned 4: Cosmic signs	1: Sores 2: Sea to blood 3: Fresh water to blood 4: Cosmic signs 5: Darkness
Demons		5: Locusts 6: Horses	6: Kings ... gathered by unclean spirits
Heaven	7: Fire from altar cast to earth	7: God's wrath poured out	7: Fall of Babylon

Table 3: Agents of the Judgments

Up to now, the judgments we have seen are such as the world has seen before, reflecting human sin and natural disaster, attributed (seventh seal) to divine initiative. The judgments of the four horsemen in the seals were frequently set loose in the OT, as Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel 14 show. And the first four trumpets are attenuated versions of four of the Egyptian plagues, limited to 1/3 of the potential targets. But now the demonic prison is opened. For the first time the Lord allows the worst of Satan's minions to perform his judgment.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.—Consistent with Jude 6, the pit is described as a place of utter darkness.

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth:—Much creative effort has been devoted to figuring out what the locusts represent. For our purposes, two points suffice:

1. They come from the abyss, so they are demonic, not natural.
2. Their description as locusts recalls two OT judgments.

The first OT judgment that comes to mind is the eighth Egyptian plague, locusts (chart):

Ex. 10:12 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the **locusts**, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left. 13 And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the **locusts**. 14 And the **locusts** went up over all the land

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of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such **locusts** as they, neither after them shall be such. 15 For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and **they did eat every herb** of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and **there remained not any green thing** in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

The Egyptian parallel is in keeping with the allusions to this series elsewhere in the trumpets. But we should not miss the book of Joel. He recalls a locust plague that came on Israel:

Joel 1:4 That which the **palmerworm** hath left hath the **locust** eaten; and that which the **locust** hath left hath the **cankerworm** eaten; and that which the **cankerworm** hath left hath the **caterpillar** eaten 6 For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion. . . . 7 He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white.

But then he describes features that anticipate John's vision. The plague represents the day of the Lord, which is the culmination of the Revelation (see notes):

Joel 2:1 . . . the **day of the LORD** cometh, for it is nigh at hand;

Like Rev 9:2, he notes the darkness:

Joel 2:2 **A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness**, there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, . . . 3 A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them.

And he observes (like John in Rev 9:7) their horse-like appearance:

Joel 2:4 The appearance of them is **as the appearance of horses**; and as horsemen, so shall they run.

There is reason to think that Joel may have Exodus in mind (Beale). Both emphasize the incomparability of the disasters they envision (chart):

Ex 10:14 very grievous were they; **before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such.**

Joel 2:1 for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; 2 A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, **there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it,**

(These do not contradict. Joel 2 refers to the Day of the Lord that the locusts anticipate.)

Both emphasize that the motive (of the plague in Exodus; of God's promised restoration in Joel) is to glorify the Lord in the eyes of his people:

Exo 10:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him: 2 And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; **that ye may know how that I am the LORD.**

Joe 2:25 And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you. 26 And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt

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wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed. 27 And **ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God**, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

But these locusts differ from those that Moses (in Exodus) and Joel describe:

and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.—Once again, their power is not innate, but is “given” to them, limited by God’s sovereign control.

Though these demonic hosts are described as locusts, three times (9:3, 5, 10) we are told that they can sting like scorpions. These noxious animals are found in arid regions, and generally classed with serpents. Moses warns Israel not to forget the Lord (chart),

Deu 8:15 Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and **scorpions**, and drought,

And our Lord mentions them in Lk 10:19 in connection with the fall of Satan. The demons are described as locusts to link them with the OT plagues in Exodus and Joel, but giving them the scorpion’s sting anticipates a peculiarity that distinguishes them from ordinary locusts:

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.—Natural locusts, like those of Exodus 10 and Joel, destroy vegetation. But these locusts target men. Ordinary locusts do not directly harm people. In fact, they were considered clean for the Israelites to eat (Lev 11:21-22), and formed part of the diet of John the Baptist (Matt 3:4). These are furnished with a scorpion sting specifically so that they can attack people.

One group of people is specifically excepted: those “which have ... the seal of God in their foreheads.” We read of such a group in chapter 7, between the sixth and seventh seal:

Rev. 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, 3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, **till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.** 4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

Rev 7:2-3 mentioned “four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea” with “the trees.” The four angels of the first four trumpets bring harm to the earth and sea, and trees. So the trumpets must follow this sealing, and when the first woe comes, the sealed are already protected (Figure 5, chart).

Chapter 7 distinguished between 144,000 sealed Israelites on earth and the great multitude in heaven.

This verse raises the question of whether Gentile believers on earth also have the protective seal.

Seals:	1-5: Horsemen, Martyrs	6: Terror on earth at the Lord's return	Interlude: Sealing of 144k on earth, multitude in heaven before "four angels ... hurt earth, sea, ... trees"	7: Heavenly vision
Trumpets:	1-4: Four angels announce plagues like Egypt that hurt earth, sea, trees	5: Demon Locusts; some already sealed	6: Demon Horsemen	Interlude: 10: little book 11: two witnesses
Woes				

Figure 5: Alignment of Seals and Trumpets

Chapter 14 again mentions a group of 144,000, usually understood to be the same as the group in ch. 7. Here we learn the nature of the seal that they carry (back):

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 Father's name written in their foreheads.**

Chapter 7 emphasized that the 144,000 Israelites were sealed, but didn't say that other believers were not sealed. A clue is given in the letter to Philadelphia, which like the other churches of Asia Minor would be predominantly Gentile. They are promised,

Rev 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and **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.

So every believer enjoys the seal of God's name, protecting against demonic harm.¹¹ Again, we hear echoes of Lk 10:18-19, "nothing shall by any means hurt you."

5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.—Note the repetition of the term "torment" in this verse. Of the 22 instances of this word family in the NT, 11 are in the Revelation. The word has a variety of senses, including the pain due to sickness, hard work, or mental stress (see note), but with the exception of 12:2 (the pain of childbirth), the instances in the Revelation all describe pain deliberately inflicted on someone as torture or punishment, and especially (3x in chapter 18) on Babylon.

When the Lord confronted the two demoniacs at Gergesa, they recognized that they were doomed to torment, but pled that he would not bring it upon them prematurely (chart):

Matt. 8:29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to **torment us before the time?**

Compare Lk 8:31, where these demons ask not to be sent into the abyss.

The God of the Bible offers his lovingkindness to all who will receive it. But those who reject it must expect his righteous wrath, and in the Revelation we see that wrath finally poured out on the unrepentant wicked.

6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire ἐπιθυμέω G1937 to die, and death shall flee from them.—Recall the desire of people in the sixth seal for the mountains to fall on them (6:16).

Two instances of the word-family "torment" may illustrate what people are feeling. Peter tells us that Lot was "tormented," suffered mental anguish, in seeing the wickedness of Sodom:

2Pet. 2:8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, **vexed** his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

And we will shortly read of the impact of the faithful testimony of God's people on sinners who do not want to be reminded of the God whom they have rejected:

¹¹ The alignment shown in Figure 5 shows that we are getting very close to the return of the Lord Jesus (ch. 19), when the church will rise to join him. Perhaps the Gentiles have already been removed, but a Jewish remnant left to bear a gracious testimony right to the end. Such speculation is seductive, but hardly secure. The main point is that those bearing God's name are protected against harm from demons.

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Rev. 11:10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets **tormented** them that dwelt on the earth.

A major part of the torment of the wicked is the mental anguish brought about by their own rejection of the Lord, when they are confronted with his power. They naively think that they can escape in death, but in fact their fire will burn forever.

Alford compares their desire for death with Paul's use of the same word family in Phil 1:23:

Phil. 1:23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a **desire ἐπιθυμία G1939** to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: 24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. 25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;

Behind the verbal correspondence is a deep contrast: for Paul, unlike those tormented by the locust-demons, "death is welcomed in prospect, not as an escape but for the riches of fellowship with Christ which it brings, but ... life is embraced for the opportunities of service it provides. To faith both life and death are full" (Beasley-Murray).

John now gives us a detailed description of the locusts. Several items of his description directly recall Joel 2 (horses, teeth, sound of chariots), but others do not, and perhaps recall other OT or contemporary images. If John were making this up, we would have to seek the inner meaning of every detail. But he is simply describing what he sees, and we may expect some of those details to be as obscure to us as they were no doubt to him.

7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle;—This is a prominent feature of Joel's description:

Joe 2:4 The appearance of them is as **the appearance of horses**; and as horsemen, so shall they run.

and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. 8 And they had hair as the hair of women,—These details do not come from Joel, but may reflect popular concepts of locusts.¹²

and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.—Again, we hear an echo of Joel:

Joe 1:6 For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, **whose teeth are the teeth of a lion**, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion.

9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron;—This detail comes from the description of Goliath:

1Sam. 17:5 And he had a helmet upon his head, and he wore a **breastplate** of chain armour; and the weight of his breastplate was five thousand shekels of brass and **iron**.

and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.—Once more, John draws on Joel:

Joe 2:5 Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap,

¹² Beasley-Murray documents some Arab proverbs that describe locusts in terms strikingly similar to those used by John, and some such folk-zoology may lie in part behind John's description.

10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.—Now the description returns to the details of v. 5, emphasizing the mission of the locust demons: to torment people.

11 And they had a king over them,—This is another contrast with conventional locusts (chart),

Pro 30:27 The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands;

which is the angel of the bottomless pit,—The reference probably takes us back to the fallen star in 9:1.

whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.¹³—The Hebrew word is quite rare (5x) in the OT, consistently translated “destruction.” All of its instances are in poetry, and its parallels form an interesting path (Figure 6, chart)¹⁴ that may help explain the scorpion stings on the locusts.

Three times it is parallel to sheol (hell in the KJV), the place of the dead:

Job 26:6 **Hell** is naked before him, and **destruction** hath no covering.

Prov. 15:11 **Hell** and **destruction** are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?

Prov. 27:20 **Hell** and **destruction**¹⁵ are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.

Once it is parallel to death,

Job 28:22 **Destruction** and **death** say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.

and the grave (קבר H6913),

Psa. 88:11 Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the **grave**? or thy faithfulness in **destruction**?

Hos 13:14 brings sheol and death into parallelism, and Paul quotes the LXX in 1 Cor 15:55,

Hos 13:14b LXX → 1Cor. 15:55 O **death**, where is thy sting? O **grave** [sheol], where is thy victory?

The supervisory role of Abaddon/Apollyon suggests that he is the angel who opens the pit in 9:2, and the parallels with Lk 10:18, 19 suggest that he is Satan, “the accuser,” the one who has “the power of death” (Heb 2:14). His identification with death and destruction is consistent with his character elsewhere in Scripture. He accuses, kills, and destroys, the very opposite of our God, who creates, gives life, and justifies.

We should ask ourselves: in our dealings with others, are we Satanic or Godly? Do we seek to develop people, bring them life, and help them overcome their weaknesses, even if we must sometimes bear their faults ourselves? Or are we critical, tearing down, seeking to destroy? This contrast lies at the heart of the fabric of the universe, and we are called to be transformed into the image of the life-giving, redeeming Creator.

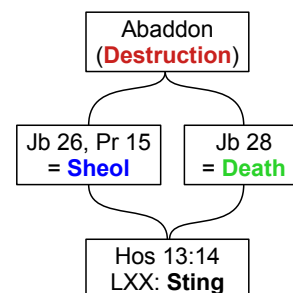


Figure 6: The Locusts' Sting

13 The LXX never uses ἀπολλύων, instead translating אַבְדֹן with ἀπόλεια. Possible explanations for the change are to create an allusion to the Greek god Apollon, with whom some of the Roman emperors identified themselves, and whose emblem was the locust (e.g., Charles, Beckwith, Oerke, Moffat, Beasley-Murray, Mounce, Osborne), or simply to have a concrete masculine parallel for Abaddon (Farrer).

14 Suggested by Beale.

15 Kethiv אַבְדֹן, qere אַבְדֹן, which are probably shortened versions of אַבְדֹן.

9:12-21, The Second Woe

12 One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.—The eagle of 8:13 set off the last three trumpets with the special title of woes:

8:13 Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth

We noted two things about these woes.

1. Based on its OT usage, this cry is a funeral lament: someone is about to die.
2. The ones in focus are those who are settled “inhabitants of the earth,” not the believing “pilgrims and strangers.”

Unlike the first four trumpets, which were natural disasters, and the seals, which reflected human depravity, the first two woes are clearly demonic. God releases Satan’s worst demons to have their way with those who have forsaken the Lord and his offer of mercy.

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,—This is the third of six passages in the Revelation that mention an altar (chart). In each case, the immediate context mentions God’s judgment. The first instance is the martyrs’ request for judgment:

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** our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

The next four passages describe various judgments that come in response to this prayer:

Rev. 8:3 And another angel came and stood at the **altar**, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden **altar** which was before the throne. . . . 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.

Rev. 9:13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden **altar** which is before God, 14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, **Loose the four angels** which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

Rev. 11:1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the **altar**, and them that worship therein. 2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and **the holy city shall they tread under foot** forty and two months.

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.

The last instance, after the third bowl, declares the justice of God’s judgments:

Rev. 16:7 And I heard another out of the **altar** say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy **judgments**.

The temple and tabernacle had two altars: the brazen altar in the court where animals were slain and burned, and the golden altar within the temple proper (Figure 7, chart). This altar

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corresponds to the latter: it is made of gold (8:3; 9:13) and stands inside the temple (11:1), before God (8:3; 9:13), that is, before the Holy of Holies, where incense is offered upon it (8:3).¹⁶

The Revelation associates judgment with the golden altar of incense. Leviticus 10 anticipates its ominous character (chart):

Lev 10:1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. 2 And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

These two altars reflect a fundamental balance in God’s character, captured in how he described himself to Moses in Exod 34:6 (Table 4, chart), and deriving from the second commandment,

Exod 20:5 I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, **visiting the iniquity** of the fathers upon the children unto the **third and fourth** generation of them that hate me; 6 And shewing **mercy** **thousands** of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

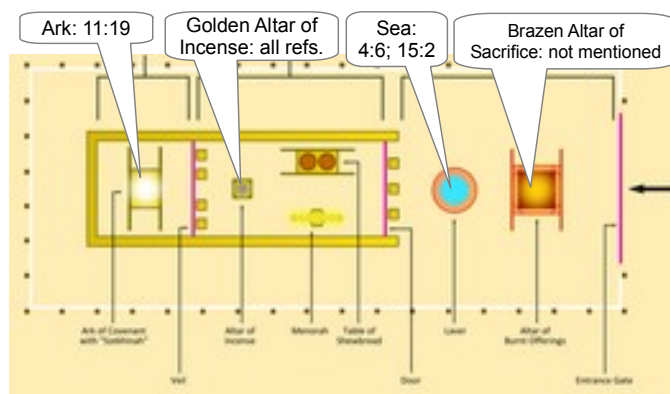


Figure 7: Layout of the Tabernacle and Temple.

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Facet	Text	Grammar
	Ex 34:6 The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness (mercy חַסֵּד) and truth.	Name (nouns) Attributes (adjectives)
Abundant in goodness (mercy חַסֵּד) → Brazen Altar	7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving [bearing] iniquity and transgression and sin,	Actions (verbs)
Abundant in... truth → Golden Altar	and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.	

Table 4: The God of Mercy and Judgment

Most of the attributes in Exod 34:6 emphasize his mercy, but the last two are in tension. “Goodness” is חַסֵּד H2617, translated “mercy” in v. 7, reflecting his love toward his people. But “truth” אֱמֻנָה H571 is commonly associated with words for judgment (chart, see note):

Is. 42:3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth **judgment** unto **truth**.

Is. 59:14 And **judgment** is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for **truth** is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

¹⁶ In our study of the fifth seal (6:9-11), I suggested that the altar there and in ch. 14 and 16 was the brazen altar. However, the association of every reference to the altar with judgment, and the appropriateness of that judgment as the response to the prayer of the martyrs, persuades me now that the golden altar is in view throughout. One implication of this identification is that the brazen altar is nowhere mentioned in the Revelation as part of the heavenly sanctuary. This striking omission emphasizes that there remains no more sacrifice for sin. We see only the Sacrifice, slain in the past (5:6, 12; 13:8 *σφάζω* perfect tense). There is no further need for the altar upon which that Sacrifice was offered, and it has no place in heaven, nor should it in our assemblies.

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Jer. 4:2 And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth, in **truth**, in **judgment**, and in **righteousness**; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.

The relation of these two attributes, אמת and חסד, is suggested in the description of the Davidic rule promised in Isaiah 16,

Is. 16:5 And in **mercy חסד** shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in **truth אמת** in the tabernacle of David, **judging**, and seeking **judgment**, and hastening **righteousness**.

Messiah's throne is established on the basis of mercy. He comes first as the slain Lamb, offering salvation to all who will receive it. But as a righteous king he will bring true judgment.

Exod 34:7, shifting from nouns and adjectives to verbs, emphasizes these two contrasting attributes of mercy and truth. "Forgive" in 34:7 is literally "carrying, bearing." His compassion and mercy toward his creatures lead him take their sin upon himself, a promise fulfilled in the Messiah (see note). But there is no hope for those who reject that merciful offer, and he will deal in truth and righteousness with their sin.

The structure of the tabernacle symbolizes this truth. As we approach God, we come first to the brazen altar, where sin offering was slain, the means by which the priests were able to bear the sin of the people (Lev 10:17). Only then dare one come before the golden altar of incense. The blood of the sin offerings was applied to the golden altar (Lev 4:7), showing the importance of coming by way of the brazen altar. In fact, Lev 10:17 suggests that Nadab and Abihu were slain because they, along with their brothers, had neglected to appropriate the sin offering in the correct way. At the end of the chapter that begins with their death, we read,

Lev 10:16 And Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin offering, and, behold, it was burnt: and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron which were left alive, saying, 17 Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD? 18 Behold, the blood of it was not brought in within the holy place: ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place, as I commanded.

If one bypasses the brazen altar (as Nadab and Abihu apparently did), one can expect only death from the golden altar.

The judgments of the Revelation emphasize God's truth, but his mercy is never far away. Even at the end of this sixth trumpet (9:20, 21), we are reminded that those who are destroyed suffer their fate because they "repented not." God does not pour out his wrath all at once, but slowly turns up the heat, to lead people to recognize that they cannot resist him, and to urge them to repent. As our redeemer, he recognizes that we sin, and him himself offers to bear our sin. But if we reject that offering, he as a righteous judge will deal truly with our sin as it deserves.

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in [upon] the great river Euphrates.—That they are bound shows their demonic character.

The Euphrates was the eastern boundary of the land promised to Abraham (chart):

Gen 15:18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.

All of Israel's OT adversaries came from the Euphrates or beyond (Figure 8). Isaiah describes the Assyrian invasion, which originated in their capital Nineveh, as a flood of the Euphrates:

Isa 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:



Figure 8: Geopolitical significance of the Euphrates to the churches of Revelation 2-3

Babylon, which conquered Judah, lies between the Euphrates and the Tigris, and the Persians came from beyond the Tigris. In the first century BC, one of Rome’s major enemies, the Parthians, also attacked from beyond the Euphrates, and continued to be a threat until the third century AD. This great river, which so often served as the launching point for invasions from the East, is now the gathering place of a demonic multitude.

15 And the four angels were loosed, which were [had been] prepared—We are reminded constantly that this book’s judgments, as terrible as they are, are all under God’s control. When the verb ἐτοιμάζω (G2090) appears in the perfect tense, as here (Matt. 20:23; 25:34, 41; Mark 10:40; 2 Tim. 2:21; Rev. 9:7, 15; 12:6; 21:2), the agent, where identified, is always the Lord.¹⁷ E.g. (chart),

Matt. 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit **the kingdom prepared for you** from the foundation of the world:

Matt. 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into **everlasting fire, prepared** for the devil and his angels:

Though the angels are demonic, they are prepared by God, and held bound until he chooses to release them.

for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year,¹⁸—The specific time for this judgment has been planned in advance, again emphasizing God’s control.

for to slay—In the first woe, people sought for death to escape the locusts, but could not find it. Now it comes upon them, but at “the hour, and day, and month, and year” of God’s choosing.

the third part of men.—The first four trumpets affected one-third of their targets. The fifth trumpet did not mention this fraction, but the sixth returns to the theme of restrained judgment.¹⁹ In the seals, the fourth horseman, Death, was given power over one-fourth of the world:

17 Osborne: “Ἐτοιμασμένοι ... is a major term for God’s predestined will.” Non-perfect tenses are used 31x, mostly of human preparation (Matt 26:17), but sometimes divine also (1 Cor 2:9).

18 The single occurrence of “for” suggests “the specific hour, day, month, and year,” but MT repeats it once, before “day.” The sense is probably “the specific hour, on a specific day, month, and year.”

19 Compare the notion of limited judgment in Jer 30:11; 46:28. The idea of limited judgment in these verses is not in מִשְׁפָּט (definite), which the AV translates “in measure.” This expression appears 19x in the OT, usually with the sense of purpose, “for judgment.” Rather, it depends on the verb יָרָה modified by מִשְׁפָּט (see also Isa 28:26, where our translators have not rendered “in measure”).

Revelation 8b-11, The Seven Trumpets

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.

Now the impact of the trumpets increases from a quarter to a third, and the plagues will bring unlimited destruction.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.—200 million is a huge force. In WWI, a total of 60M soldiers were mobilized across both sides,²⁰ while WWII mobilized a total of 127M.²¹ These thousands of thousands suggest angelic (or demonic) forces:²²

Psa. 68:17 The chariots of God are **twenty thousand, even thousands [or: twenty thousands of thousands]** of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.

Dan 7:10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: **thousand thousands** ministered unto him, and **ten thousand times ten thousand** stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

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:—It's not clear whether the breastplates are only on the riders, or on the horses as well. The colors anticipate what comes from the mouths of the horses. The horses bring two kinds of judgment: death from their heads, and torment from their tails.

and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.—These elements are a sign of divine judgment, as at Sodom:

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

The idea that it comes from the mouths of the horses recalls what God told Job about Leviathan,

Job 41:1 Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down? ... 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.

Leviathan will become important in ch. 13 when we consider the beast from the sea and the beast from the earth (probably recalling Behemoth, which God describes to Job at the end of the previous chapter, 40:15-24). (Bilson's picture)

18 By these three [plagues MT] was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.—The heads of the horses bring the death that the locusts had led men to desire, but in vain (9:6).

The majority reading calls these three “plagues” πληγή G4127, a term that returns in v. 20. This is its first instance in Revelation, used mostly for the coming bowl judgments (Figure 9, chart):

20 40M allies, 20M axis, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/world-war-i-rotogravures/articles-and-essays/events-and-statistics/mobilized-strength-and-casualty-losses/>

21 87M allies, 40M axis, <https://www.military-history.org/feature/world-war-2/behind-the-image-number-of-people-mobilised-in-world-war-ii.htm>

22 Ps 68:18 (MT 17) (cf. GKC §97h) and Num 10:36 are other possible instances of multiplied thousands, though the latter appears to describe the nation.

Revelation 8b-11, The Seven Trumpets

Rev. 15:1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last **plagues**; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

The predominant OT source for this word is מכה H4347, a blow or stroke, and emphasizes the deliberate nature of the injury. Plagues in the Bible, in the OT as well as the NT, describe deliberate judgments of God upon sinful people (see note).

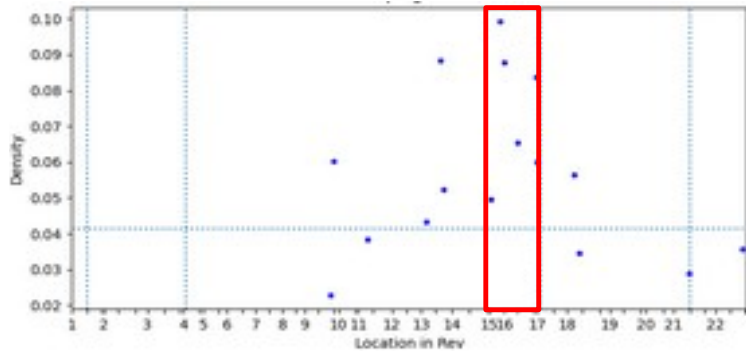


Figure 9: Plague G4127 (Bowls section boxed)

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 ἀδικέω G91.—The plagues from the horses’ mouths kill a third of the people, but others are not untouched. The horses’ tails, like those of the locusts (9:10), are able to hurt (ἀδικέω G91) people, to torment them.

The locusts had scorpion tails; the horses have serpent tails (chart). These are the two threats over which the Lord promised his disciples victory in Luke 10:19 (Osborne):

Luke 10:19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on **serpents** and **scorpions**, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt ἀδικέω you.

We are witnessing God’s judgments on unbelievers, from which his children are protected.

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and [even] idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:— Perhaps the καί is ascensive, identifying the devils with the idols, as Paul does,

1Co 10:19 What say I then? that the **idol** is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? 20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to **devils**, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.—Note the repetition of the statement that they did not repent. The purpose of God’s increasing judgments is to confront people with his power and urge them to repent.

God’s judgments on the entire world are anticipated in what he has already done with Israel. Compare the sequence of judgments in Lev 26:14-33 (Table 5, chart). He does not destroy them outright, but increases the judgments over time in an effort to motivate them to repentance. Consider also his explanation of his motives to Ezekiel:

If then ...
Lev 26:15 if ye shall despise my statutes	16-17 terror, consumption, enemies
18 if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me	19-20 famine
21 if ye walk contrary to me, and will not hearken unto me	22 wild beasts
23 if ye will not be reformed by me by these things	24-26 siege, pestilence, famine
27 if ye will not for all this hearken unto me	28-39 exile and captivity

Table 5: God's Incremental Judgments

Revelation 8b-11, The Seven Trumpets

Eze 33:7 So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. 8 When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. 9 Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. 10 Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live? 11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, **I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways;** for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

A hundred years earlier, Isaiah had laid down the principle that God's judgments are a means of getting people's attention and leading them to repentance:

Isa 26:9 ... when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

We should take two lessons from these judgments.

First, they are directed to those who reject the Lord. Our Lord's promise exempts his children from the hurt imposed by the scorpion tails of the locusts and the serpent tails of the horses. We should expect tribulation from jealous unbelievers, as we will see in Revelation 11, but we will never be the target of God's judgments.

Second, they are God's call to the whole world to repent. "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die?" He slays only some, to give those who remain opportunity to turn. The one who will come in irresistible power to destroy his enemies (Revelation 19) is first revealed as the slain lamb (Revelation 5) who offers salvation to "whosoever will" (22:17). While his patience so far has not borne fruit, we will see at the end of the interlude (11:13) that ultimately it does.

10:1-11:13, Interlude

The interlude has two parts. The first reminds John (and us) that he is getting close to the end of the story, but he has yet one more message to deliver. The second describes the dynamics of a world under judgment, in which the saints, protected by God from demonic attack, are persecuted by those who reject the Lord's mercy and the gospel that we bear.

10:1-11, The Little Book

10:1 And I saw another mighty angel ισχυρός G2478 come down from heaven,—We saw one "mighty angel," 5:2, also with the scroll, and a third appears in 18:21.

The appearance of a mighty angel from heaven recalls Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 4. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon saw a great tree that sheltered all the animals. Then (chart)

Dan. 4:13 I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, **a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven;**

See also 4:23 when Daniel interprets the dream of God's coming judgment on Nebuchadnezzar.

Revelation 8b-11, The Seven Trumpets

Topic	Daniel 4	Revelation 10-11
Strong angel from heaven	13 I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven (LXX an angel was sent in strength from heaven)	10:1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven , clothed with a cloud:
Warning of 7-fold judgment	16 Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.	3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.
Failure to repent	27 Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity. ... 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?	(9:20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, ... 21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.)
Warning voice	31 While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. 32 And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.	11:3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.
Judgment falls	33 The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.	13a And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand
Glorifying God	34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: ... 37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment:	13b and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Table 6: Parallels between Daniel 4 and Revelation 10-11

This part of Daniel is written, not in Hebrew, but in Aramaic. The Jews of Asia Minor would know some Hebrew from the synagogue, but Aramaic less well, and they would likely know the stories of Daniel from the LXX. There, instead of “a watcher and a holy one came down from heaven,” we read, “an angel was sent in strength ἐν ἰσχύι G2479 from heaven,” where “strength” is from the same root as the adjective “mighty” in 10:1. Numerous parallels suggest that we are intended to read Revelation 10 and the sequel in the light of Daniel 4 (Table 6, chart).²³

The setting of Daniel 4 in Babylon should not escape our notice. In the second part of the interlude (11:8), we read for the first time of “the great city” ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη, which later repeatedly designates spiritual Babylon, the system that sustains the antichrist (16:19; 17:18; 18:10, 16, 18, 19, 21).²⁴ We will also read of “the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit”

²³ Farrer points out the strong angel in Daniel 4, but does not develop the further parallel between the passages. The name “Gabriel,” “God is my mighty hero,” also emphasizes strength, but of God, not of the angel.

²⁴ After her destruction, it is applied once to spiritual Jerusalem (21:10).

(11:7), before the “beast from the sea” is formally introduced in 13:1. The Lord is giving John a preview of some of the major features that will dominate chapters 12-18.

clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head,²⁵ and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:—The angel resembles Christ in ch. 1 and 4 (chart):

1:7 Behold, he cometh with **clouds**; and every eye shall see him, [Dan 7:13]

4:3 and there was a **rainbow** round about the throne²⁶

1:16 and **his countenance was as the sun** shineth in his strength.

1:15 And **his feet** like unto fine brass, **as if they burned** in a furnace;

Yet he is called “another mighty angel,” comparing him with that in 5:2, who is clearly distinct from Christ. “Another” ἄλλος G243, in contrast with ἕτερος G2087, means “another of the same kind.”²⁷ If this angel is Christ, he would be only an angel. This must indicate an angel clothed with the full authority of the One who has opened the book, acting in his stead,²⁸ perhaps the one identified as “his angel” in 1:1 and 22:16.

2 And he had in his hand a little book open:—The parallels with ch. 5 encourage us to see this as the same scroll introduced there.

Rev. 5:1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. 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?

There, the book was sealed, but the seals were removed in Revelation 6, and now it is open. When we get to 10:8-11, the identity of the two books will be confirmed, when we see how Revelation 5 and 10 together fulfill a single vision of Ezekiel, which spans the end of Ezek 2 and the start of Ezek 3 (Table 7).

It is called “a little book,” not to distinguish it from the book in ch. 5, but to emphasize its size, a feature that has not up to this point been in view.²⁹ As we saw in our study of Exod 34:6-7, while God’s character includes both loving favor and absolute justice, the emphasis is on his loving favor. Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would bring both, but emphasizing the favor:

Isa 61:2 To proclaim the **acceptable year** of the LORD [the year when the Lord accepts people], and the **day of vengeance** of our God;

His favor is extended for a year; his vengeance lasts only a day. David understood this:

Psa 30:5 For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

This scroll is a book of judgment. The very act of opening it unleashed the seal and trumpet judgments, and it contains the bowl judgments as well. But we must understand that it is a *little* book, the warning of God’s just vengeance on the wicked in whose death he takes no pleasure.

25 Alford suggests that the cloud anticipates judgment (Rev 1:7) while the rainbow acknowledges mercy.

26 Christ is not named in Revelation 4, but the rainbow of mercy may reflect his presence, revealed in chapter 5.

27 ἄλλος, while attested in the early 3rd century P47, is not overwhelming, but it is not an isolated reading.

Robinson-Pierpont acknowledge it only in a footnote. Hodges-Farstad assign it to M^{b ept}, against M^{a c d ept} for its omission.

28 Compare the notion of God’s angel in Ex 32:34, or his presence in 33:14

29 Again, the mss tradition is divided. Various words for “book” appear four times in Revelation 10, in vv. 2, 8, 9, and 10. In all traditions, some of this are the diminutive βιβλίον, while others are the superdiminutive βιβλιδάριον (in the majority) or βιβλαρίδιον. But which verse uses which word varies.

and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,—These are the places from which the two beasts come (13:1, 11). Like the allusion to Babylon from Daniel 4 and the references to “the beast ... out of the bottomless pit” (11:7) and “the great city” (11:8) in the next chapter, they are preparing us for the historical review and final judgments in chapters 12-19.

Setting one’s foot upon an adversary symbolizes dominion over the adversary (chart):

Jos 10:24 Joshua ... said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, **put your feet upon the necks** of these kings.

Ps 110:1 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy **footstool**.

Mal 4:3 And ye shall **tread down** the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.

Rom 16:20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan **under your feet** shortly.

So this gesture indicates the dominion of the Lord’s direct representative over the domains from which the major opposition to God’s rule comes.

3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth:—The image is from Amos, who describes the Lord’s revelation as the roar of a lion,

Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. 8 The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?

The book that the angel gives to John is revelation that he is to deliver, a continuation of the prophetic tradition, as Rev 10:7 will remind us. So we hear the roar of the lion.

and when he had cried, [the] seven thunders uttered their voices.—The article (suppressed in AV) suggests that these are well-known thunders. The reference is probably to Psalm 29, which mentions קול יהוה "the voice of the Lord" seven times:

Ps 29:1 Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty,
give unto the LORD glory and strength.
2 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name;
worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.
3 **The voice of the LORD** is upon the waters:
the God of glory thundereth:
the LORD is upon many waters.
4 **The voice of the LORD is powerful;**
the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.
5 **The voice of the LORD** breaketh the cedars;
yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.
6 He maketh them also to skip like a calf;
Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.
7 **The voice of the LORD** divideth the flames of fire.
8 **The voice of the LORD** shaketh the wilderness;
the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.
9 **The voice of the LORD** maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests:
and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory.

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10 The LORD sitteth upon the flood;
yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever.
11 The LORD will give strength unto his people;
the LORD will bless his people with peace.

It is likely that these trumpets describe another series of seven judgments:

- Psalm 29 emphasizes their destructive power;
- they are a series of seven, in the midst of three other series of seven judgments each;
- the parallel with Daniel 4 focuses our attention on the judgment for the unrepentant;
- the parallel with Ezekiel 2-3 leads us to expect “lamentations, and mourning, and woe.”

4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.—Why would these judgments not be disclosed?

The nearest parallel is (chart)

2 Co 12:2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) 4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.³⁰

The delights of heaven cannot be described, but are only understood by those who participate in them. If the seven thunders, like Nebuchadnezzar’s seven times, represent God’s judgment on the unrepentant, perhaps John was allowed to glimpse their terrors, but (like Paul confronted with the glories of paradise) not given liberty to disclose them. Like the joys of heaven, the terrors of hell can be fully appreciated only by those who enter into them.³¹

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, 6 And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein,—The oath emphasizes God’s sovereignty over all of time and space. The scene recalls the last chapter of Daniel. Since Dan 10:5, Daniel has been speaking to “a man clothed in linen,” whose face and feet resemble those of this mighty angel:

Dan 10:5 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: 6 His body also was like the beryl, and his **face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass**, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

Chapters 10-11 describe the coming history of Israel, including the Maccabean period, but going on (starting around 11:36) into the time of Antichrist. Then, Daniel 12 concludes:

Dan 12:4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. 5 Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. 6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was

30 One might also compare 1 Cor 2:9, “the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,” though there Paul goes on (2:10) to say that God has revealed them to believers not yet in glory.

31 Morris: “Not all the counsel of God is open to every man.” Compare 1 Cor 3:2.

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upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? 7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when **he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever** that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. 8 And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? 9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

We'll come back to the "time, times, and an half" in Revelation 11. For now, note two things.

1. The man clothed in linen lifts his hands to heaven and swears an oath. These are the only two places in the Bible that someone does this, and the guarantor of the oath is in both cases "him that liveth for ever." This, and the similarity in the faces and feet, suggest that Revelation 10 is echoing Daniel 12.
2. Daniel was not permitted to know the answer to his question in Dan 12:8, "What shall be the end of these things?" "The man clothed in linen" said they were "sealed until the time of the end." Ever since Revelation 5, we have been watching the unsealing of a scroll, and now an angel who resembles the "man clothed in linen" of Daniel 10-12 brings the opened scroll to John. John is about to learn what was hidden from Daniel. The secret that was "sealed up" from Daniel is in the sealed scroll that is now open.³²

that there should be time χρόνος G5550 no longer:—"Time" is a misleading translation. The Greek word refers to a period of time, not time in the abstract. A particular period is about to come to an end.

The particular period is probably the one designated in Rev 6:11 (chart),

Rev 6:11 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 χρόνος G5550, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

The martyrs have been waiting for a "season," the same Greek word rendered "time" in 10:6. What is being declared is not the end of the space-time structure of the universe,³³ but the termination of the season mentioned in 6:11. God tolerates the martyrdom of his people to give space for their persecutors to repent. The partial judgments of the trumpets begin with the casting of coals from the altar, the source of the martyrs' prayers, down to earth (8:5-6), supporting Alford's observation, "This whole series of trumpet-judgments has been an answer to the prayers of the saints." But ultimately God's just vengeance must fall.³⁴ The mighty angel is proclaiming the end of the period of opportunity.³⁵

7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished,—The NT often speaks of mysteries. Our Lord explained his use of parables to his disciples,

32 What was sealed to Daniel is now unsealed to John and his readers, but the words of the seven thunders remain sealed.

33 See Rissi, *Time and History*, p. 24.

34 The distribution of the word "wrath" bears this out. Before 11:18, it appears only in the sixth seal (6:16, 17), which describes the time of the Lord's return, and otherwise is focused on the period of the bowls. Neither the seals nor the trumpets are ever described as evidence of God's wrath.

35 Some explain the end of time in terms of Dan 12:7, where, however, "time" is καιρός G2540 "point of time" rather than χρόνος G5550 "period of time."

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Matt. 13:11 ... it is **given unto you to know** the **mysteries** of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

Paul writes,

Rom. 16:25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the **mystery**, which was kept secret since the world began, 26 But **now is made manifest**, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

And again,

1Cor. 2:6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 7 But **we speak** the wisdom of God in a **mystery**, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Note in each case that the mystery is spoken of as revealed. In our common usage, a mystery is something that a clever person can figure out, but that is at present not known. In the Bible, the opposite is the case. A mystery is something that the mind of man can never discern, but that God is pleased to reveal to his servants.

The “mystery of God” here is the purpose of God toward his creation. He has a plan. As James reminded the conference in Jerusalem,

Act 15:18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

Now this divine plan, unknowable to the carnal mind, is about to be completed. But, like all divine mysteries, God is pleased to reveal it, and has done so down through the ages.

as he hath declared [evangelized] to his servants the prophets.—We usually think of the gospel as announcing deliverance from judgment through faith in the Lord Jesus. This gospel is the destruction of the kingdom of Antichrist, and the vindication of his saints. The good news is not just that God in his mercy has provided salvation for his people, but also that God in his righteousness will bring judgment on the wicked. This has been promised ever since Gen 3:15, when God promised to crush the head of the serpent. The destruction of God’s enemies and the triumph of his kingdom is the message of all the prophets, and it is good news.

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again,—The first time the voice spoke to him was in 10:4, forbidding him to disclose what the seven thunders said. Now it charges him with an opposite responsibility, disclosing the contents of the scroll.

and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. 9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. 10 And I took the little book out of the angel’s hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.—These verses are a clear echo of Ezekiel 2-3. Portions of that chapter lie behind Revelation 5, but other portions are seen here (Table 7, chart). The fact that both chapters are needed to fill out the picture originally seen in Ezekiel is an additional confirmation that the same scroll is in view in Revelation 5 and 10.

Revelation 8b-11, The Seven Trumpets

Topic	Ezekiel 2-3	Revelation 5, 10
Command to eat the scroll	2:8 open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee. 3:1a Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, ... 2 So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. 3a And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat , ...	10:9a And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up ;
Appearance of the scroll	2:9 And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein ;	5:1a And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book
Open scroll	2:10a And he spread it before me;	10:2 And he had in his hand a little book open :
Written on both sides	2:10b and it was written within and without: ... lamentations, and mourning, and woe.	5:1b a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.
Eating	3:3b Then did I eat it;	10:10a And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up;
Sweet ...	3:3c and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness .	10:9c but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey 10b and it was in my mouth sweet as honey :
Command to speak	3:1b go speak unto the house of Israel. ... 4 And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them .	10:11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.
... bitter	3:14 So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness , in the heat of my spirit;	10:9b and it shall make thy belly bitter , ... 10c and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter .

Table 7: The Scroll of Revelation 5, 10 and Ezekiel's scroll, Ezekiel 2-3

11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before [against] many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.—John is to prophesy again, confirming the description of his entire work as a prophecy (1:3). He is the last link in that chain through whom God has been evangelizing his mystery of victory over evil. We commonly speak of the gospel of John. In fact, he wrote two gospels, and the Revelation is the second one.

“Before” here is better translated “against” (Aune). The message of the outpouring of God’s wrath in the bowls and the destruction of Babylon is an adversarial one.

The list of the audience is one of seven that we find throughout the book (Table 8, chart). Note the order in which these announcements come. First we have two messages of redemption and victory offered to all the world, but now John turns to prophesy against them. Then we learn how the multitude turns against God’s people and is subject to the beast. Once more, in 14:6, the Lord graciously calls people to himself, but finally the Whore rules over all, and must be destroyed.

Four of the six terms are used in almost every list, but two appear only once each: kings (here), and multitude (17:15), and so merit special attention.

We will say more about “multitude” when we get to chapter 17. “King” appears 22 times in the book, of which this is the fifth. Most references appear in the plagues, showing how the beast exercises his control, by dominating the existing power structures of the world (Figure 10, chart). One instance refers to Satan:

Rev. 9:11 And they had a **king** over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

Four instances refer to God or his people:

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

Rev. 5:10 And hast made us unto our God **kings** and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Rev. 15:3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou **King** of saints.

Rev. 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and **King** of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

Rev. 19:16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.**

The other 17 are human kings, 9x called “kings of the earth.” Earthly monarchs are in conflict with our Lord, whose “kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). We should beware of any ecclesiastical system that seeks to support a particular political system.

11:1-13, A Divided Church

Chapter 10 emphasized that after the Egypt-like plagues of the first five trumpets and the demonic horses of the sixth, there is still a message to go out, entrusted to John. But the audience is great. Who will pass on what he is recording in this prophecy?

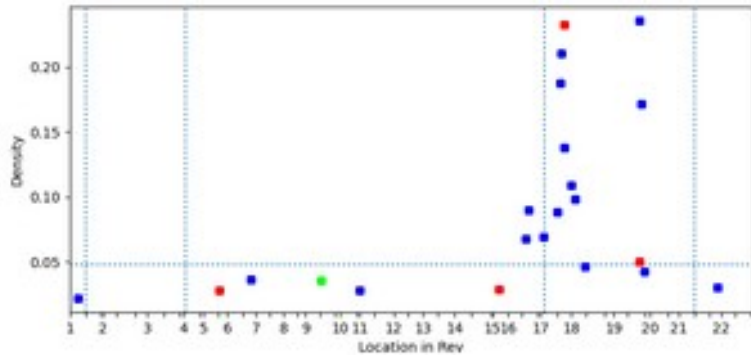


Figure 10: King βασιλεύς G935. Green: Abaddon/Apollyon. Red: God or his people. Blue human kings

This chapter offers two images from the OT, both drawing also on earlier portions of the Revelation, that make the same point from two perspectives (Table 9, chart). That point is that the visible people of God includes both true believers, chosen by God and effective in their witness for him, and a counterfeit church that he has excluded and that persecutes the true believers. The true believers are responsible for carrying the message of the little scroll, urging people to repentance and faith.

Image	OT Source	In Revelation	Perspective
Divinely ordained temple	Ezek 8, 40-43	3:12 believers as pillars	The Lord's purpose
Divinely empowered candlestick	Zech 4	1:20 churches as candlesticks	Satan's opposition

Table 9: Two Images of the Church in the World

The first image, of measuring the temple, comes from Ezekiel 40-42. The temple in vv. 1-2 is not a physical structure in Jerusalem, but (as elsewhere in the Revelation) the spiritual temple, made up of believers. It is divided into two parts, reflecting those who truly are the Lord's and those who are not.

The second image, of olive trees and candlesticks, comes from Zechariah 4. The two witnesses are called "candlesticks," which in Revelation 1-3 represent the churches. Seven churches were addressed in a stereotyped format. In every case but two, that format included a criticism. Those two are Smyrna and Philadelphia. Here we learn of their witness to unbelievers.

So vv. 1-2 show us that the visible church includes a portion that God acknowledges, and another that is given over to unbelievers, while 3-13 show us the vigorous testimony of the true churches and the opposition that Satan throws against them.

Now let's look at the details.

1-2, Measuring the Temple

The first image gives the Lord's perspective on the two parts of the visible church.

11:1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple $\nu\acute{o}\varsigma$ G3485 of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.—We saw in the eating of the scroll that John's experience parallels that of Ezekiel. This episode of measuring a temple with a reed also recalls Ezekiel:

Eze 40:2 In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, by which was as the frame of a city on the south. 3 And he brought me thither, and, behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and **a measuring reed**,³⁶ ...

For the next three chapters, through 42:20, the man with the reed guides him through the temple that he sees in his vision, and we are told 29 times that Ezekiel's escort "measured" some detail of the temple with the reed. Finally, we learn the purpose for this measuring:

Eze 43:10 Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and **let them measure the pattern**. 11 And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, **shew them the form of the house**, and the fashion thereof, and the goings

36 Only the reed is used in measuring the temple. The line of flax comes into play in measuring the stream that flows from the millennial temple, in Ezek 47:3-5.

out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, **that they may keep the whole form thereof**, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.

Ezekiel, in captivity in Babylon, is to convey the blueprint he has been given to the children of Israel, and they are to “keep the whole form thereof.” It appears that this vision is of the temple that God wanted the people to build when they returned to the land.

What temple is John to measure? Following the traditional date for the Revelation, Herod’s temple is no longer standing. Some think the reference is to a physical temple, rebuilt in Jerusalem before the Lord’s return. But how is the word used elsewhere in the Revelation?

ναός G3485 appears 16x in the Revelation. Two instances are in 21:22, which explain that there is no temple in the new Jerusalem. Setting aside the reference in 11:1, 2, we are left with twelve. The first refers to a structure in which believers can form elements:

Rev. 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make **a pillar in the temple** of my God, and he shall go no more out:

This is hardly a physical temple, but reminds us of the NT notion of the church as a temple:

1Co 3:16 Know ye not that **ye are the temple of God**, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

Eph. 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto **an holy temple** in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for **an habitation of God** through the Spirit.

1Pet. 2:5 **Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house**, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

In fact, every subsequent reference other than 11:1, 2 is to the heavenly temple: 7:15; 11:19 *bis*; 14:15, 17; 15:5–6, 8 *bis*; 16:1; 16:17. So “the temple of God” in 11:1 is most naturally understood of the spiritual temple, a structure composed of believers. In Ezekiel, the man with the rod defines the temple where God desired to meet with his people. Similarly, John’s actions define the true temple of God. But surprisingly, he leaves something out!

2 But the court which is without the temple leave out,³⁷ and measure it not;—This court includes all that is outside the ναός. Ναός G3485 describes the temple building, the part with a roof over it, as opposed to ἱερόσ G2413, which describes the entire temple complex (Figure 11, Figure 12, chart). The court here is the unroofed portion, which includes the brazen altar and the laver. Compare Matt 23:35, “between the temple ναός and the altar.”³⁸

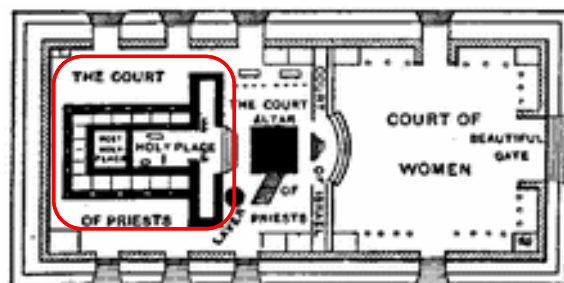


Figure 11: The plan of Herod’s temple. The ναός is the roofed building, excluding the courts. (Edersheim, *The Temple*)

37 Literally “cast it out.” See Bauckham p. 268 for possible rendering.
 38 Jauhainen (*Biblica* 83:4 (2002) 507-26) avoids the awkwardness of the semantic split in “measuring the temple ... and the worshippers” by rendering, “Measure the temple, but [adversative καί] the altar and them that

To understand this exclusion, recall Ezekiel’s second vision, when he saw the idolatry being practiced in Solomon’s temple (Ezekiel 8), leading to the departure of the Glory of the Lord and the eventual destruction of the first temple (chart).



Figure 12: Scale model of Herod's temple (Van and Anita Parunak, Feb 1975)

Ezek 8:5 Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward **at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry.** ... 8 Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had **digged in the wall**, behold a door. 9 And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. 10 So I went in and saw; and **behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed upon the wall round about.** ... 14 Then he brought me to **the door of the gate of the LORD’S house** which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat **women weeping for Tammuz.** ... 16 And he brought me into **the inner court** of the LORD’S house, and, behold, **at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.**

The idolatry was conducted in and around the inner court, not in the temple building itself. In Ezekiel, God abandons the entire structure. But in the Revelation, as we saw with Ephesus, each candlestick stands or falls by itself, and the Lord symbolically has John mark out only the sanctuary (the roofed portion) as his selected part. The court, delivered to unbelievers, looks like part of the temple, but is the counterfeit church.

for it is given unto the Gentiles:—As so often in the Revelation, the phrase “it is given” reminds us that the forces of evil can operate only under divine permission.

and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.—The idea of Gentiles trampling Jerusalem goes back to Daniel, describing the desolations under the Syrian king Antiochus IV Epiphanes around 170 BC (chart):

Dan. 8:13 How long shall the vision continue even the removal of the sacrifice, and the bringing in of the sin of desolation; and **how long shall the sanctuary and host be trampled?** 14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.³⁹

It happened again with the destruction of the city by Titus in AD 70, as predicted by our Lord:

Luk 21:24 ... Jerusalem shall be **trodden down of the Gentiles**, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

worship, even [ascensive καί] the court ..., leave out.” But then this altar would be the brazen altar, while all instances of “the altar” appear to refer to the golden altar. It seems better, given the roughness of John’s Greek, to accept the semantic discontinuity of using the same word for measure and count, particularly since believers have already been described as architectural components (3:12). In either case, the brazen altar is excluded.

39 This period of time, a bit less than seven years, probably reflects the full length of the Hasmonean revolt, ca. 167-160 BC (Wikipedia).

Revelation 8b-11, The Seven Trumpets

As so often in biblical history, earlier events anticipate later ones. The persecution by Antiochus is a particularly important example. In 168 BC he defiled the Jerusalem temple, offering a pig on the altar and sprinkling pig blood and pig broth everywhere. So the antichrist will attempt to defile the temple of God, and will succeed in part. The court, with its altar of sacrifice, is abandoned to the Gentiles. The saints have no further need for it. The one sacrifice for sin has been offered for all time, and now the brazen altar is like a piece of abandoned furniture, set on the curb. But the true church, the *ναός*, will be protected from his influence.

42 months is the first of several time references in these chapters, all about three and a half years in length. These echo a period of 3.5 times mentioned twice in Daniel. First, when Daniel sees the promotion of the Son of Man before the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7, Daniel asks his guide about the fourth beast in his vision at the start of the chapter, and is told,

Dan 7:25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand **until a time and times and the dividing of time.** 26 But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.

The second reference is in the last chapter of the book:

Dan. 12:7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for **a time, times, and an half**; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. ... 11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be **a thousand two hundred and ninety days.** 12 Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the **thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.**

Descriptions of persecution in Daniel can have two different references. Some refer to Antiochus Epiphanes. He defiled the temple in Jerusalem in 168 BC, and Judas Maccabaeus recaptured and purified it in 164 BC (about 3.5 years later); while others anticipate the final Antichrist, of whom Antiochus was a picture.

We will see more references to periods of about this length in the Revelation: first 11:3, then

Rev. 12:6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there **a thousand two hundred and threescore days.**

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.**

The reference in 11:2 to 42 months, like the allusion to Babylon in the parallels to Daniel 4 across these two chapters, the reference in 11:7 to the beast out of the pit, and in 11:8 to the Great City, anticipate details that will be more fully introduced in Revelation 12-19, and we will pay special attention to these details as we proceed. The point is that the Antichrist's power is limited, and however intense it is, it has an appointed end.

3-13, The Two Witnesses

3 And I will give power⁴⁰ unto my two witnesses,—The theme of “witness” is pervasive in the Revelation (Figure 13, chart).⁴¹ The book begins and ends with a flurry of references to this activity. In both cases, both John and the Lord Jesus are subjects of the verb.

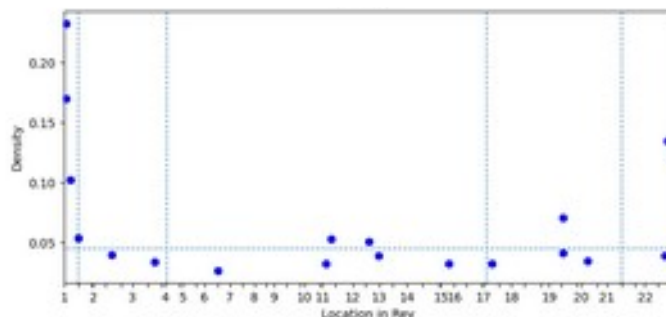


Figure 13: References to witness (μαρτυ*) in the Revelation

Rev. 1:2 Who **bare record** μαρτυρέω G3140 of the word of God, and of the **testimony** μαρτυρία G3141 of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Rev. 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful **witness** μάρτυς G3144, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.

Rev. 1:9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the **testimony** of Jesus Christ.

Rev. 22:16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to **testify** μαρτυρέω unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

Rev. 22:18 For I **testify** unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

Rev. 22:20 He which **testifieth** these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

When the Lord Jesus describes his ministry to Nicodemus, it is in terms of witness:

John 3:11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? 13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

One of the main messages we should take away from the Revelation is that God’s people are to bear witness to the true king, the Lord Jesus (Acts 1:8).

and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days,—Their testimony thus runs concurrently with the 42 months of Gentile domination of the temple court (the counterfeit church) in 11:2.

clothed in sackcloth.—Wearing sackcloth is a symbol of sorrow, first attested in Jacob’s mourning over the supposed death of Joseph (Gen 37:34). Isaiah apparently wore it, for when he is commanded to go naked, he is told to take it off (20:2), and Daniel wore it when praying in Daniel 9. God’s prophets do not take pleasure in reporting his judgment. They mourn over the disasters that they predict and over the sin that makes them necessary.

40 Lacking in Greek; parallel to 11:2 “it is given,” referring to divine permission and enabling.

41 And elsewhere in John’s writings. 83/173 (48%) instances of μαρτυ* are in John’s gospel, epistles, and the Revelation, though these make up only 28.4k of the 140.2k words in the NT (20%).

4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.—

The imagery comes from Zechariah 4 (Figure 14, chart).

Zech. 4:1 And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, 2 And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: 3 And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. ... 11 Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof? 12 And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? 13 And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. 14 Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.



Figure 14: The olive trees and the lampstand in Zechariah 4.

<https://torahsparks.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/zechariah-4-image-11.png>

The “two anointed ones” are Joshua the High Priest and Zerubbabel the governor, the leaders in rebuilding the temple and restoring worship in Jerusalem after the captivity. For example (chart),

Ezr 3:2 Then stood up **Jeshua** the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and **Zerubbabel** the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel,

The Lord pictures them as two olive trees, pouring their oil into the candlestick (representing the temple that they are building). Their ministry will enable the light of God to burn.

They faced an interesting form of opposition. When the captives returned from Babylon to Jerusalem, the land was not empty. The “people of the land” naturally felt threatened by the newcomers. Their initial response seems hopeful:

Ezra 4:1 Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the LORD God of Israel; 2 Then they came to **Zerubbabel**, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither.

2 Kings records the history of these people. After Sargon II conquered Samaria in 722 BC and took the Jews into exile, he resettles the land with people from other conquered territories.

2 Ki 17:24 And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: ...

As pagans, they naturally serve other gods, incurring the Lord’s wrath:

17:25 And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not the LORD: therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which slew some of them.

They recognize the problem, and suggest a solution.

17:26 Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: ...

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27 Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, ... 28 Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD.

But the priests of the northern kingdom are accustomed to syncretistic worship, and tolerate the new settlers' pursuing the same pattern, which we have already seen in many of the seven churches in Revelation 2-3:

17:29 Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt. ... 32 So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places. 33 They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, ...

These people come to Zerubbabel and Joshua in Ezra 4. The Jewish leaders from Babylon, unlike the priests of the northern kingdom, recognize that their visitors are not true believers:

Ezra 4:3 But **Zerubbabel**, and **Jeshua**, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, ... 4 Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building,

For a time these adversaries hindered the building of the temple, but Haggai and Zechariah encourage the Jews to persevere:

Hag 1:12 Then **Zerubbabel** the son of Shealtiel, and **Joshua** the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, **and the words of Haggai the prophet**, as the LORD their God had sent him, ...

Ezr 5:2 Then rose up **Zerubbabel** the son of Shealtiel, and **Jeshua** the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which *is* at Jerusalem: and **with them were the prophets of God** helping them. [the third class of anointed people in Israel]

Zechariah and Haggai are “the prophets of God” who helped them. The Lord gave Zechariah the vision of chapter 3 to encourage Joshua, and the vision of chapter 4 to encourage Zerubbabel.

As in Zechariah 4, so in Revelation 11. The two olive trees are two anointed servants of God, whose ministry sustains the pure worship of God. John's vision indicates that in a coming era, there will again be opposition to pure worship, and two anointed ones will stand against it.

But at this point John's vision diverges (chart). In Zechariah 4, the two anointed ones enable the integrated candlestick to operate. Here, they themselves are identified as two candlesticks (chart)! We have seen this symbol before, in Revelation 1:

Rev 1:20 the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

Zerubbabel and Joshua, the olive trees in Zechariah 7, are supporters of a centralized spiritual institution. In contrast, the two witnesses in Revelation 11 are instances of the decentralized church. They represent, not single men, but faithful assemblies of God's people, bearing witness to the unbelieving world in which they live.

There were seven candlesticks in Revelation 1. What happened to the other five?

The Lord's letters to the seven churches have a very regular structure (Table 10). A prominent feature in this structure is criticism, which focuses on their toleration for the idolatry of their

Revelation 8b-11, The Seven Trumpets

	Ephesus, 2:1-7	Smyrna, 2:8-11	Pergamos, 2:12-17	Thyatira, 2:18-29	Sardis, 3:1-6	Philadelphia, 3:7-13	Laodicea, 3:14-22
Command to write	1a	8a	12a	18a	1a	7a	14a
Title from ch. 1	1b	8b	12b	18b	1b	7b	14b
Message	2-6	9-10	13-16	19-25	1c-4	8-11	15-20
I know thy works	2a	9a	13a	19a	1c	8a	15a
Praise	2-3	9b	13	19		8-11	
Exhortation		10				11b	
Criticism	4-5		14-16	20-23	2-3		15-20
Exhortation	5		16		3		18-20
Praise	6			24	4		
Exhortation				25			
Promise to Overcomers				26-28	5	12	21
Let him hear	7a	11a	17a	29	6	13	22
Promise to Overcomers	7b	11b	17b				

Table 10: The Structure of the Seven Letters

1. These witnesses are called candlesticks, and we have already been told that candlesticks represent assemblies, not individual people.
2. The miracles are assigned to them jointly, not individually. We are not told that one of them (like Elijah) brings fire, and another (like Moses) plagues, but that they act together.
3. Other prophets in the OT bring judgments similar to these.

Thus it seems best to understand the witnesses as representing faithful churches, in contrast to the visible church.

In support of points 2 and 3, consider the specific judgments that John describes.

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth κατεσθίω their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.— This judgment recalls Elijah’s judgment on the troops sent to apprehend him by King Ahaziah:

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 κατεσθίω** thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

The fire did not come out of his mouth, though he did call down fire from heaven, and thus the words of his mouth did bring fire upon them. But the image is more broadly applicable to prophets. Thus we read of Jeremiah,

Jer 5:11 For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me, saith the LORD. 12 They have belied the LORD, and said, It is not he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine: 13 And the prophets shall become wind, and the word is not in them: thus shall it be done unto them. 14 Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye [plural, the people who reject the prophets] speak this

word, behold, **I will make my words in thy [singular, Jeremiah] mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour κατεσθίω them.**

Jeremiah is more similar to Revelation 11 than Elijah, in that the fire comes from his mouth.

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy:—Again, it is natural to think of Elijah (chart):

1Ki 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.

A Jewish tradition, adopted by the Lord, holds that Elijah’s drought lasted for three and a half years, recalling the 1260 days of the witnesses’ activity (11:3):⁴²

Luk 4:25 ... many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;

But Elijah did not shut up heaven. He declared that it would be shut, as have other prophets (Jer 14; Amos 4:7; Hag 1:9-11; 2:15-19; Acts 11:28). For example,

Hag 1:9 Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. 10 Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. 11 And I called for a drought upon the land, ...

And in 2:15-19, Haggai, like Elijah, promises restoration from drought.

and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.—These judgments, again by both witnesses, recall Moses in Egypt:

Ex. 7:17 Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood.

But again, the language is not restricted to this particular instance. Elisha promised Jehoram and Jehoshaphat a victory over Moab that involved a similar event:

2Ki 3:22 And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the **water** on the other side as red as **blood**:

We speak of the plagues that Moses brought on Egypt, but Exodus 7-10 (the “plague” chapters) use “plague” πλῆγῆ G4127 only twice, while the prophets use it 24x to describe the Lord’s judgment on his enemies (Table 11, see note).

Word	Exodus 7-12	Prophets	Total
Plague πλῆγῆ G4127	2	24	94
Plague מכה H4347	0	18	48
Smite נכה H5221	10	83	501

Table 11: Plagues in Exodus and the Prophets

So while the work of the witnesses recalls the judgments brought by Elijah and Moses, it is not restricted to them, but echoed throughout later prophets, in whose line these witnesses follow.

⁴² 1 Ki 18:1 notes that the word of the Lord marking the end of the drought comes to Elijah “in the third year.”

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit ἄβυσσος G12—We will learn much more about this beast in Revelation 13. This is one of several anticipations of chapters 12 and following that we see in chapters 10-11a (Table 12, chart). The events of 11:7-13 anticipate the final culmination.

Full discussion in Rev 12-19	Anticipation in Rev 10-11a
The beast from the sea, 13:1	The beast out of the abyss, 11:7
Babylon, 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21	Allusion to Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar, 10:1ff
great city, 14:8; 16:19; 17:18; 18 <i>passim</i>	Where the witnesses are slain, 11:8

Table 12: Anticipations of ch. 12-19 in ch. 10-11

shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.—Recall our survey of the verb νικάω G3528 in the Revelation (Figure 15). Most instances (green dots) describe the saints. Three (blue) describe our Lord, and four (red) describe the antichrist: the rider on the white horse at the start of Revelation 6, here, and in the full description of the beast from the sea,

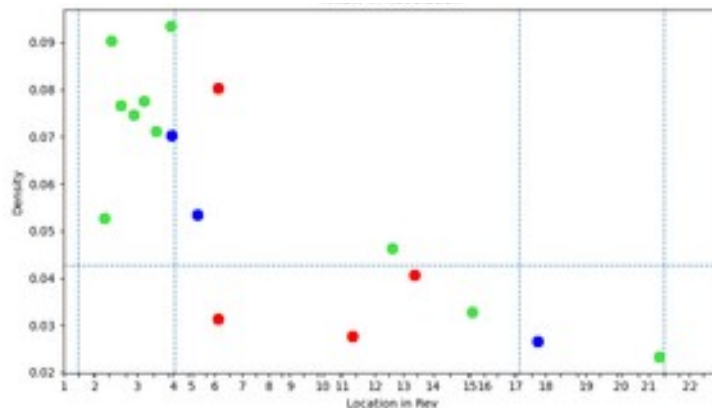


Figure 15: "Overcome" νικάω G3528 in Revelation: saints (green), Christ (blue), antichrist (red)

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.

Note again “It was given” The forces of evil are not autonomous. They operate with the Lord’s permission, like Satan’s oppression of Job. As with Job, the oppression ultimately brings greater glory to the Lord. The last two dots are blue and green: finally, we overcome with him.

8 And their dead bodies⁴³ shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.—The phrase “great city,” like “the beast” of 11:7, looks ahead to chapters 14-18, where this city is called “Babylon.”

Some understand “the great city” to be Jerusalem, but Jerusalem is never called Sodom or Egypt. More likely, the last clause, “where also our Lord was crucified,” like “Sodom” and “Egypt,” characterizes the structure that will later be called “Babylon.” Sodom was known for moral corruption, Egypt for oppression, and Jerusalem for the unbelief of rejecting its own Messiah.

The term “city” πόλις G4172 in Greco-Roman usage has overtones that may escape us today. We distinguish a city from a village or a town mainly in terms of size. In the ancient world, the main feature of a city was political (BDAG, TDNT). It was a city-state, making a formal distinction between citizens and non-citizens, and relating as a political entity to other cities. The Revelation identifies and contrasts two such cities (Figure 16, chart, see note for complete listing).

This verse is the first reference to the worldly city that opposes God and his people, often called “the great city.” It is mentioned 12x in ten verses, of which this is the first. For example:

43 “Bodies” here in the MT and in the first instance in 11:9 is singular, “body,” like “mouth” in v. 5, perhaps emphasizing that these two figures represent a single theme, the faithful church in its witness against the Beast. But TR here, and the MT in the second instance in v.9, reads the plural.

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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.

Rev. 17:18 And the woman which thou sawest is **that great city**, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

Rev. 18:10 Alas, alas, **that great city Babylon, that mighty city!** for in one hour is thy judgment come.

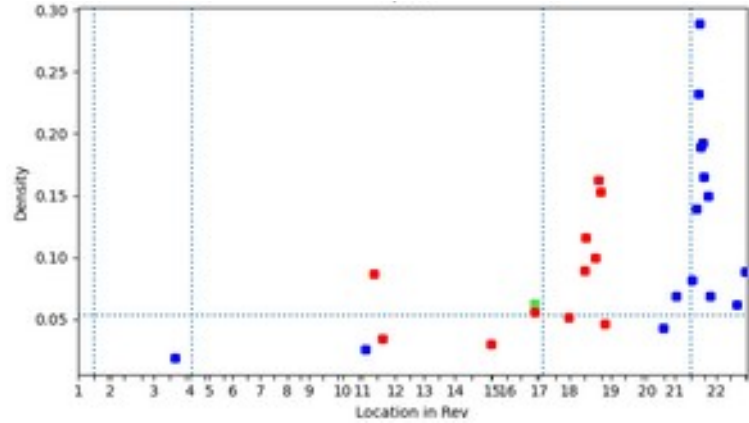


Figure 16: City πόλις G4172: Holy city (blue), Babylon (red), cities of the nations (green)

But there is another city, characterized as “the holy city” or “the city of God,” mentioned 14x. We hear of it first in the letter to 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: ...

The writing of the name of the city on the Overcomer reflects the political importance of citizenship in a city. It is subject to attack by God’s adversaries:

Rev. 11:2 ... for it is given unto the Gentiles: and **the holy city** shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

Rev. 20:9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and **the beloved city**: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

Thus far the city is heavenly, but as 3:12 anticipates, one day it will descend to earth:

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.

When that happens, Jerusalem will be “the great city,” its competitor having been done away:

Rev. 21:10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me **that great city, the holy Jerusalem**, descending out of heaven from God,

Most references to this city are in its detailed description in ch. 21. The final promises and warnings of the book are in terms of our standing as citizens of this heavenly city:

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**.

Rev. 22:19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of **the holy city**, and from the things which are written in this book.

Figure 16 shows an interesting progression. The first city mentioned is the city of God, in 3:12, which comes up again in 11:2 as the object of Gentile opposition. But immediately the focus

shifts to the wicked city, which peaks in the description of Babylon in ch. 18, only to be completely replaced by God's city in ch. 21-22.

9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations—We have seen lists like this elsewhere in the Revelation (Table 8, chart). In this case, the elements are the same used to describe the composition of the redeemed in 5:9 and 7:9, but here they describe those who oppose the witnessing church. We are reminded of the “multitude” (ὄχλος G3793) in the gospels. One day they enthusiastically welcome the Lord into Jerusalem (chart):

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. 10 And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? 11 And the **multitude** said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

The next they allow the Jewish leaders to influence them in demanding his death:

Matt. 27:20 But the chief priests and elders persuaded the **multitude** that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

What is the same between the redeemed in 5:9 and 7:9, and the persecutors in 11:9, is their ethnic and national distribution, not their individual identities. In both case the people involved are said to be *of* (ἐκ, from) this set. The claim is never that all people are redeemed (or that all reject the witnesses), but rather that both groups have universal representation.

shall see their dead bodies three days and an half,—The period of time is probably an allusion to the Jewish belief that the soul lingers near the body for three days, but after that departs, and the person is truly dead.⁴⁴ This belief may lie behind our Lord's delay in going to raise Lazarus in John 11, and Martha's subsequent comment:

Joh 11:39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

To make the miracle of raising Lazarus all the more impressive, the Lord waits long enough that all would agree he was truly dead. There is no question that these witnesses are indeed dead.

and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.—Refusing burial to a dead person, leaving them to be consumed as carrion, is regarded as a great dishonor in the OT:⁴⁵

Psa 79:2 The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. 3 Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them.

Ecc 6:3 If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he.

By leaving them exposed, their enemies affirm their contempt for them.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the

44 Gill and Strack-Billerbeck (II.262) on John 11:39. The same traditions also bear witness to the decomposition of the body by that time, so that legal witness to the identity of a corpse is not allowed after three days.

45 See also Jeremiah's prophecy against Jehoiakim in 22:18; 36:30.

earth.—Note the double reference to the earth-dwellers. We discussed this characterization in 6:10 and 8:13 (Figure 4). It describes those whose citizenship is on earth, who belong to “the great city,” as opposed to those who are strangers and pilgrims. We will hear more of the earth-dwellers in chapter 13.

“Torment” βασανίζω G928 usually describes physical suffering, and the witnesses do announce God’s physical judgments. But the term has broader applicability (see note). In the Greek Bible, it appears most commonly in 4 Maccabees, a Greek work written between AD 20 and 130, which describes the martyrdom of faithful Jews in the second century BC under the oppression of Antiochus Epiphanes.⁴⁶ In the midst of physical torture, one of the faithful Jews⁴⁷ declares,

4Mac. 9:30 Thinkest thou not, most cruel of all tyrants, that **thou art now tortured more than I**, finding thine overweening conception of tyranny conquered by our patience in behalf of our religion? 31 For I lighten my suffering by the pleasures which are connected with virtue. 32 But thou art **tortured** with threatenings for impiety; and thou shalt not escape, most corrupt tyrant, the vengeance of Divine wrath.

Thus the term can refer not only to physical suffering, but also to the guilt and fear felt by those who hear the proclamation of God’s claims and yet reject them. The wrath of the earth-dwellers against the witnesses is intensified by their fear of God’s coming judgment. We should recognize the intensity of persecution as one indicator of whether our witness is striking home.

11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.—Compare the impact of the raising of Lazarus on those who witnessed it (chart, cf. Jn 12:11):

John 11:43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. 45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

These witnesses have been dead long enough to start to decompose, but now God raises them up.

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.—The witnesses hear the voice, but the enemies only see them ascend.⁴⁸ Unbelievers regularly do not understand the voice of God. Recall:

Joh 12:28 [Jesus said:] Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. 29 The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered:

They heard the noise, but did not understand what was said. This insight can help resolve an inconsistency between two accounts of Paul’s experience on the road to Damascus:⁴⁹

46 First century documents like this, while not inspired scripture, are valuable for understanding how Greek words were understood in the linguistic environment of the New Testament.

47 The eldest son of the seven sons who were martyred with their mother. Eastern orthodox tradition preserves his name as Abim (<http://ww1.antiochian.org/node/19287>).

48 The point is even stronger in MT (not TR), which has “I heard,” but in either case the voice is understood only by believers.

49 Another example of this selective receptiveness is Dan 10:7.

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Act 9:7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, **hearing a voice**, but seeing no man. . . . 22:9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they **heard not the voice** of him that spake to me.

The word translated “voice” φωνή G5456 can mean either spoken words, or simply a noise or sound. It seems that Paul’s companions heard a loud noise, but did not understand it.

It is worthwhile remembering this distinction. In the ears of unbelievers, the word of God is only so much noise, unless the Holy Spirit opens their understanding.

13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand:—This earthquake is a repeated feature at the end of each series of judgments. It appears for the first time with the sixth seal:

Rev. 6:12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was **a great earthquake**; . . .

Again, in the summary of the seals, we read:

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**.

Now we have it between the sixth and seventh trumpets, and in many manuscripts also in the seventh trumpet:⁵⁰

Rev. 11:19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an **earthquake**, and great hail.

It will appear a final time in the seventh bowl:

Rev. 16:18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

It (and the voices, thunders, and lightnings that accompany it) recall the epiphany of God in Exodus 19, and present the Lord’s return as the greater fulfillment of that event.

and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.—Finally, unbelievers turn to the Lord!⁵¹ But earlier, at the end of the sixth trumpet, we read of a lack of repentance in the face of judgment:

Rev. 9:20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet **repented not** of the works of their hands, . . . 21 **Neither repented they** of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

The difference is that this time the judgments are accompanied with the words of the witnesses. God’s mighty acts by themselves, whether the glories of creation (Psalm 19, Romans 1) or his terrible judgments, are enough to condemn people for their failure to submit to him, but not enough to save them.

50 It appears in 11:19 in some components of the majority (Hodges-Farstadt M^{b,d,e}, but not M^{a,c}), but is excluded by Robinson-Pierpont). Its appearance in the sixth seal as well as at the end of the seals shows that the final return of Christ can be anticipated before the seventh element in the series, and the earthquake in 11:13 may well serve this function.

51 Bauckham notes that fearing God and giving him glory is a standard idiom throughout the Revelation for true repentance and worship of God: 14:7; 15:4; 16:9.

Rom. 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

And as we have seen, that word is only effective when accompanied by the work of God’s Spirit.

11:14-19, The Third Woe

14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.—At first glance this declaration is puzzling, for the seventh trumpet is more a shout of triumph than a woe. There are two explanations for this.

First, if we view the seventh of each series opening into the following series, it makes more sense. 11:18 in particular anticipates everything from Revelation 12 to the end of the book.

Second, to the dwellers on the earth, nothing can be more terrifying than the triumphant advent of the One whom they have rejected.

15 And the seventh angel sounded;—Much of what John records in this trumpet is the fulfillment of Psalm 2 (Table 13, chart).

It is important to recognize the political nature both of the Psalm and of the trumpet. Contrast the seventh seal, which focused on casting fire on the earth, in answer to the prayers of the martyrs:

Rev 8:3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; ...

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.

The effects of that fire were seen in the first six trumpets, echoing the plagues of Egypt. Now, the theme is political, and we will read much of the political structure that opposes the Lord in ch. 12-13 and of his response in 14-19.

and there were great voices in heaven, saying,—The body of the description comes from three sources. First (15), “great voices in heaven” announce the fulfillment of Psalm 2. Then (16-18) the twenty-four elders whom we met in chapter 4 offer their worship. Finally (19) John himself describes what he sees.

“Great voice” φωνή μεγάλη is used frequently in the Greek Bible in the singular, to describe the voice of God (Deut 5:22) as well as of people (Gen 27:34), but the plural appears only here and in Lk 23:23, describing the demand of the chief priests, rulers, and people (23:13) for the Lord’s death (chart):

Luke 23:23 And they were instant with **loud voices**, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

Psalm 2	Rev 11:15-18
1 Why do the heathen rage , and the people s imagine a vain thing?	18 And the nations were angry ,
2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD , and against his anointed ,	15a The kingdoms of this world
5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath , and vex them in his sore displeasure.	15b the kingdoms of our Lord , and of his Christ
12 Kiss, the Son, lest he be angry	18b thy wrath is come
6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.	15c and he shall reign for ever and ever.

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Their joint demand for the death of God's supreme righteous witness recalls the raging of the peoples in Psalm 2:1⁵² and anticipates the opposition we have just seen against the two witnesses in 11:3-13. Here we are reminded that God has a multitude who can cry "with loud voices" as well, perhaps angels as suggested by the LXX of Job 38:7,

Job 38:7 [LXX] When the stars were made, **all my angels praised me with a loud voice.**

Their cry summarizes the parallels with Psalm 2:

The kingdoms of this world—These are the kings and rulers of Psalm 2:2a.

Recall that the designation of "the great city" as the adversary of God's faithful church has political implications. The Antichrist promotes his objectives through political organization and power, supported (as Rome was in first-century Jerusalem) by apostate religious movements.

The majority of the mss actually read "the kingdom" (singular), anticipating Antichrist's unification of all earthly power under himself.

are become *the kingdoms*⁵³ of our Lord, and of his Christ;—This man-made, Satanically directed unified government ends up being subjected to Jehovah and his anointed one, who (as Psalm 2 goes on to make clear) is appointed to reign as king.

and he shall reign for ever and ever.—Psalm 2:6 declares that the Lord has set his anointed one upon his throne. While the Psalm does not emphasize the eternal nature of this rule, it is built on the promise to David in 2 Samuel 7, which includes eternal rule:

2Sam. 7:16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established **for ever.**

Psa. 89:4 Thy seed will I establish **for ever**, and build up thy throne to all generations.

Now the twenty-four elders whom we met in Revelation 4 pick up the praise.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before [the throne of] God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17 Saying,—Four times we hear from the 24 elders in the Revelation, and there is a clear progression as we move from one utterance to another. First, they acknowledge the Lord's authority by reason of creation over all the earth:

Rev 4:10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, **saying**, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive **glory and honour and power**: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Next, they rejoice that he has redeemed them by his blood. Of the four utterances, this is the only one that they are said to sing. We recognize and declare God's creative power and authority to judge, but our redemption is the great focus of our rejoicing.

Rev 5:8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, ... 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;⁵⁴

52 Acts 4:25-27 clearly includes unbelieving Israel among those anticipated by Psalm 2.

53 The noun is not repeated in the Greek: it has "become of the Lord ...", that is, his property.

54 The MT has "them" instead of "us" in v. 10, which is probably the response by the living creatures to the song of the elders. See notes on 5:10.

Our current passage is the third, and will describe God's judgment on those who have not received this redemption. Their fourth utterance is simply to say "Amen" to the worship of "much people in heaven." That worship spans the themes of the other three: "glory, honor, and power" from 4:11, "salvation" summarizing 5:9, and judgment to destroy the great whore and reward his servants from the present passage:

Rev 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: 2 For true and righteous are his **judgments**: for he hath **judged** the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of **his servants** at her hand. ... 4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, [and art to come];—We repeatedly read that the Lord "was, and is, and is to come" (1:4, 8; 16:5). Here and in 16:5, the majority reading omits "and art to come." The coming of the Lord is now underway. The promise "is to come" was needed while the delay imposed by Ps 110:1 was in place (chart):

The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, **until** I make thine enemies thy footstool.

That delay is now complete, the Lord is returning, and the judgments of which we shall yet read are the immediate effect of his return.

because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.—In confirmation of this timing, the first verb is in the perfect tense. He has already assumed his power.

18 And the nations were angry ὀργιζω G3710,—As Psalm 2 shows, this state of affairs has persisted throughout the history of the world.

and thy wrath ὀργή G3709 is come,—The Psalmist warned of God's future wrath against the angry nations, but also of his blessing on those who submit to him:

Ps 2:5 Then shall he speak unto them in his **wrath ὀργή**, ...

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be **angry** [LXX ὀργιζω], and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.

Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

The elders announce that the threatened wrath has now come. The judgments we have seen up to this point result from men's sins and demonic oppression, and God in his longsuffering has been waiting for repentance. That season is now over, and what we will see in the bowls is his unmitigated wrath.

and the time of the dead,—Something else has come, "the time of the dead." This expression, unique in the Greek Bible, indicates that death is not the end of existence. God yet has an appointment with those whose physical life has come to an end.

that they should be judged,—The purpose of that appointment is judgment. All must answer to God. That judgment includes reward to the righteous, and punishment to the wicked.

and that thou shouldest give reward—Five groups are named: thy servants, the prophets, the saints, them that fear thy name, and the small and great. The relation among these is extensively discussed in the commentaries,⁵⁵ but a clue comes later in the book:

55 My exposition basically follows Mounce and Osborne.

Revelation 8b-11, The Seven Trumpets

Rev. 19:5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

This summarizes all of God's people with two titles, "servants" and "them that fear him." It also emphasizes that rank in the eyes of the Lord is of no account in this holy company. Our passage starts and ends with these titles, and in between gives two main categories of God's servants.

thy servants—This term is used throughout the Revelation as a general title for God's people.⁵⁶ It reflects the spirit of our Savior, whom we are to imitate. He said,

Joh 6:38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

It is not limited to the prophets, but extends to the saints as well. Recall the first instance of the expression "my servants the prophets" in the OT. When Elisha anoints Jehu as king of Israel, he charges him,

2Ki 9:7 And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of **my servants the prophets**, and the blood of **all the servants of the LORD**, at the hand of Jezebel.

Under Jezebel's influence, Ahab repressed the Lord's prophets. Jehu is to avenge that oppression. And when the Lord sets the final judgment, the first ones to be rewarded are these faithful servants, who here (as in the days of Jehu) consist of two groups:

the prophets,—Seventeen times in the OT, the prophets are distinctively singled out as God's servants. A prophet is a spokesman for another person. The prophets in the early church were specially gifted individuals through whom God taught his people:

Act 13:1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain **prophets** and teachers;

As leaders, they would naturally be an initial target for the Antichrist's opposition, and the Lord distinguishes them first for reward. But (as in the days of Ahab) they are not the only ones.

and to the saints,—This is the broader company of believers, corresponding "all the servants of the Lord" in 2 Ki 9:7.

So the prophets and saints together make up God's servants. They can be characterized in another way as well:

and them that fear thy name,—A healthy fear of God's ultimate authority and infinite power is characteristic of God's people throughout the scripture. The elders here may be echoing the language of Psalm 115,

Psa 115:11 **Ye that fear the LORD**, trust in the LORD:
he is their help and their shield. ...

13 He will bless them **that fear the LORD**, both small and great.

This Psalm begins by mocking the impotence of idols:

Psa 115:5 They have mouths, but they speak not:
eyes have they, but they see not:
6 They have ears, but they hear not:
noses have they, but they smell not:

⁵⁶ Rev. 1:1; 2:20; 7:3; 19:2, 5; 22:3, 6. In 10:7 and 11:18 it appears next to "the prophets," as in the OT, but the other references do not appear to be restricted to this group.

Revelation 8b-11, The Seven Trumpets

7 They have hands, but they handle not:
feet have they, but they walk not:
neither speak they through their throat.

This psalm must have been a great comfort to the churches of Asia Minor in facing the temptations of idolatry. The answer to the fear of society that might tempt us into idolatry is a healthy fear of the true God, who jealously forbids us to bow down to created things.

small and great;—The final phrase, suggested by Ps 115:13, reminds us that worldly status is of no account with God. His rewards to his servants, like his judgment on the wicked (19:18; 20:12), do not depend on the world’s estimate of us, but on our faithfulness in cleaving to him.

and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.—The judgment that the elders mention not only rewards God’s servants, but also punishes his enemies. The description of his enemies as destroying the earth comes from the description of Babylon in Jer 51:25 (LXX 28:25),

Jer 51:25 Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which
destroyest all the earth:

It is thus another anticipation of the role of Antichrist that we will shortly see.

19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, [and an earthquake,] and great hail.—As at the end of each of the other series, we have an account of cosmic disturbances⁵⁷ that includes some aspect of the temple (Table 14, chart). In such parallel passages, it is important to look for what is distinct. In this case, we are struck by the explicit reference to the temple, and in particular to the ark of the covenant.

The temple element at the end of the seals was the incense altar. Coals from this altar, cast to the earth, kindled the judgments of the trumpets. We should pay special attention to how the ark now relates to the coming chapters. Its title “ark of the covenant” reminds us that it contained the tables of God’s covenant with Israel:

Exo 40:20 And [Moses] took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy seat above upon the ark:

So we should be watching for the role played by God’s covenant with his people as our attention moves to the age-long battle between Satan and God’s people in chapters 12-15.

	7th Seal 8:1-5	7th Trumpet 11:15-19	7th Bowl 16:17-21
Temple:		X	X
Incense Altar	X		
Ark of Covenant		X	
Throne	(X)	(X)	X
Signs of Sinai			
Voices	1	2	1
Thunderings	2	3	2
Lightnings	3	1	3
Earthquake	4	(4)	4
Hail		5	5

Table 14: Elements in the Conclusions of the Sevens. Numbers indicate order of appearance of the signs of Sinai.

⁵⁷ Bauckham’s chapter on the Eschatological Earthquake (p. 202) documents the allusion of these earthquake passages to Sinai. As in Exodus, they mark the Lord’s coming to earth.

Notes

Wormwood (8:11)

The Greek word translated “wormwood” (ἄψιθος G894) appears only here in the Greek Bible. The English word “wormwood” in the OT translates לענה H3939, but the LXX never translates it with this Greek word, preferring to call it πικρία G4088 “bitterness.” Aquila, a second century Jew who translated the OT into Greek, three times renders it ἄψιθος:

Prov. 5:3 For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb,
and her mouth is smoother than oil:
4 But her end is bitter as **wormwood**, sharp as a twoedged sword.

Jer. 9:13 And the LORD saith,
Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them,
and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein;
14 But have walked after the imagination of their own heart,
and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them:
15 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel;
Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with **wormwood**,
and give them water of gall to drink.

Jer. 23:15 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets;
Behold, I will feed them with **wormwood**, and make them drink the water of gall:
for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land.

The Hebrew word first appears in Moses’ warning to the nation not to turn aside after the gods of the nations:

Deut. 29:14 Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; 15 But with him that standeth here with us this day before the LORD our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day: ... 18 Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and **wormwood**;

This use of the word as a penalty for idolatry is consistent with Jer 9:15 and 23:15. After God judges Jerusalem for her idolatry, Lamentations twice describes the resulting sorrow as לענה,

Lam. 3:15 He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with **wormwood**.

Lam. 3:19 Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the **wormwood** and the gall.

The use of the word in Prov 5:4 is consistent with this application to idolatry under the metaphor of idolatry as marital unfaithfulness.

The word appears twice in Amos, to describe what becomes to משפט (5:7) and צדקה (6:12) as a result of Israel’s apostasy. The first of these follows a description of their idolatry.

In general, wormwood in the OT describes the bitter outcome of idolatry, and this sense fits well in the overall context of the Revelation, considering the warnings to the seven churches to abstain from idolatry.

Dwellers on the Earth, 8:13; 11:10

The expression appears throughout the Revelation, but is concentrated in the description of the beasts in Revelation 13, and the references here are preparing for that discussion.

ἐδόθη “It was given”

Figure 18 shows the distribution of this term in the Revelation, which contains 21 out of the 31 instances of the form in the NT. It is concentrated in the seals, the trumpets, and chapters 12-13 (the introduction to the bowls), though it is strangely sparse in the bowls themselves.

Joel 1 and 2

There is a shift from perfect verb forms that dominate chapter 1 to imperfects that prevail through the first part of ch. 2 (Figure 19, Table 15), emphasizing the shift from the purely historical description in the first chapter to the prophetic overtones of the second.

	ch. 1	ch. 2
Perfect	32	29
Imperfect	3	32

Table 15: Verb forms in Joel

Exodus and Joel

Beale notes several parallels between Exodus and Joel (Table 16), suggesting that those anticipate the first woe as an instance of manifold fulfillment. The focus of the repetition is probably on the last item: to know the Lord.

To these we can add that both the previous plagues, like this one, were accompanied by thick darkness: in Exodus from the locusts themselves,

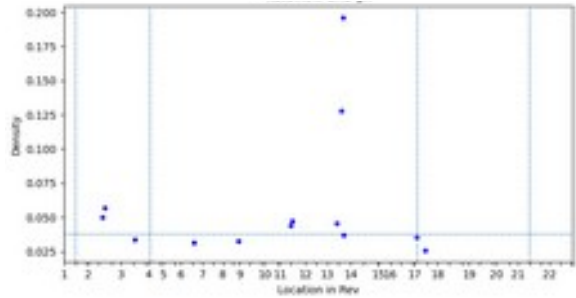


Figure 17: Dwellers on or in the earth

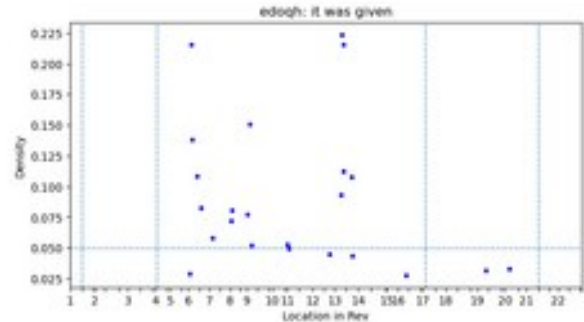


Figure 18: "It was given"--divine permission for judgment

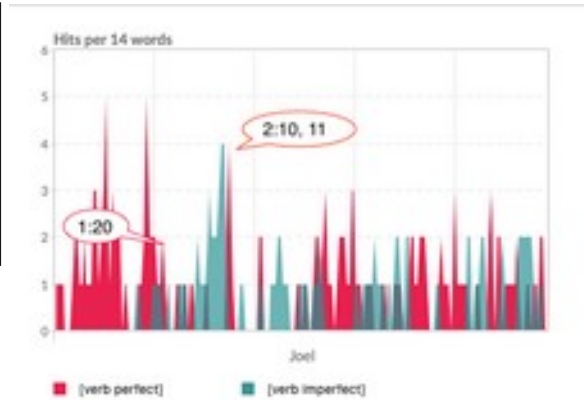


Figure 19: Perfect and imperfect verbs in Joel

Feature	Exodus	Joel
Unprecedented	10:6, 14	1:2; 2:2
Tell your children	10:2	1:3
Enter the houses	10:6	2:9
Purpose: know the Lord	10:2	2:27

Table 16: The Locusts in Exodus and Joel

Torment βασανίζω G928, βασανισμός G929, βάσανος G931

These terms are especially prevalent in the Revelation (11/22 instances in the NT; Revelation lacks βάσανος).

Rev. 9:5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be **tormented** five months: and their **torment** was as the **torment** of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

Rev. 11:10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets **tormented** them that dwelt on the earth.

Rev. 12:2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and **pained** to be delivered.

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:

Rev. 14:11 And the smoke of their **torment** ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Rev. 18:7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much **torment** and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

Rev. 18:10 Standing afar off for the fear of her **torment**, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

Rev. 18:15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her **torment**, weeping and wailing,

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, and shall be **tormented** day and night for ever and ever.

The words are concentrated in three areas: trumpets (fifth and interlude), intro to bowls, fall of Babylon (Figure 20). The fifth trumpet is by far the densest concentration.

Except for 12:2 (referring to labor pains), the term describes the punishment of the wicked (particularly Babylon, 3x in ch. 18). Elsewhere in the NT, it describes

- suffering due to sickness (Matt 4:24; 8:6), labor (Mk 6:48), or stress of nature (Matt 14:24);
- mental distress of the righteous seeing the wicked (2 Pet 2:8);

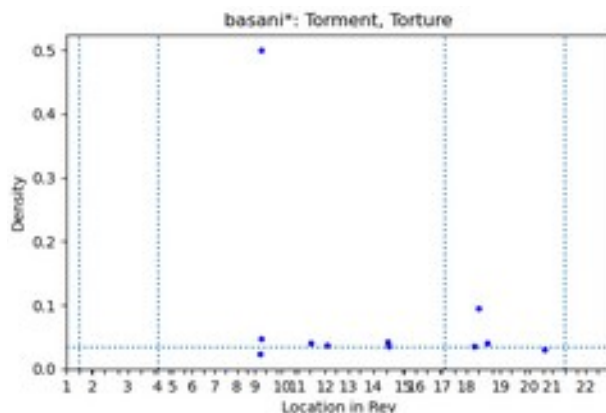


Figure 20: Distribution of βασανίζω G928, βασανισμός G929

- the suffering of the wicked in Sheol (Lk 16:23, 28);
- the work of a torturer (Matt 18:34) ;
- the torment due to the demons (Matt 8:29; Mk 5:7; Lk 8:28):

This latter case is presented as something expected at the end time:

Matt. 8:29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

11:10 is highly suggestive; compare 2 Pet 2:8. How much of eternal torment consists of mental distress based on frustration at the victory of the one whose authority the sinner rejects? In discussion of 11:10, note reference to the torture of the seven sons by Antiochus in 4 Maccabees:

4Mac. 9:30 Thinkest thou not, most cruel of all tyrants, that **thou art now tortured more than I**, finding thine overweening conception of tyranny conquered by our patience in behalf of our religion? 31 For I lighten my suffering by the pleasures which are connected with virtue. 32 But thou art **tortured** with threatenings for impiety; and thou shalt not escape, most corrupt tyrant, the vengeance of Divine wrath.

God's חסד ואמת

Does this phrase in Ex 34:6 anticipate the two parts of 34:7, so that אמת is related to God's judgment? Table 17 shows the number of times key words cooccur. Note the unusually strong association of truth with words for judgment and justice. For example,

Is. 42:3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth **judgment unto truth**.

Is. 59:14 And **judgment** is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for **truth** is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

Jer. 4:2 And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth, **in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness**; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.

חסד ואמת cooccur in 33 vv.

חסד, אמת, and משפט cooccur in three verses, and in one of these צדקה appears as well:

Zech. 7:9 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother:

Psa. 89:14 Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

Is. 16:5 And in **mercy** shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in **truth** in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking **judgment**, and hasting **righteousness**.

The last case is particularly interesting. The promised Davidic throne rests on a foundation of mercy, but issues forth truth, judgment, and righteousness.

	משפט	צדקה	Total
חסד	11	9	250
אמת	16	8	127
Total	425	159	

Table 17: # Verses where key words cooccur

Bearing Sin in the OT

I owe to Smeaton the observation that in the OT, four entities are said to bear sin: the sinner, the sacrifice, the priest, and God himself. But the second category requires some refinement. The only animal sacrifice that I can find in the OT that is said to bear sin or iniquity is the scape-goat (Lev 16:22), which is not slain on the altar. One expects sin-bearing to be the mission of the sin offerings, yet the language is not applied to them directly. It is, however, applied to the responsibility of the priests to eat the sin offerings:

Lev. 10:17 Wherefore have ye not eaten **the sin offering** in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it you to **bear the iniquity** of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD?

The sin-bearing work of the sin offering required not only that the blood be poured out at the altar, but also that the priests partake of it, anticipating the need for a human to bear the sin of other humans.

Plague πληγή G4127 in the OT

The dominant source for this word in the OT is מכה H4347 (Table 18), but πληγή appears in Exodus 7-12 (the “plague” chapters) only twice (11:1; 12:13, both times describing the death of the firstborn), and מכה is entirely lacking in the book, though the corresponding verb נכה H5221 does appear. However, all three terms are common in the prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve) (Table 11).

ναός in the OT (Table 19)

ἱερός appears only 4x in the canonical OT (Jos 6:8; Ezek 27:6; Dan 1:2; 9:27), never with a clear Hebrew parallel.

Importantly, ναός is used twice of the tabernacle: 1 /Sam 1:9; 3:3.

	מכה	מגפה	נגע	נגף	Total
πληγή	41	8	2	3	94
Total	48	26	228	49	

Table 18: Plague vocabulary in the OT

	היכל	אולם	בית	Total
ναός	52	4	0	112
ἱερός	0	0	0	39
οἶκος	15	1	1596	1968
Total	80	7	2092	

Table 19: Vocabulary for "temple" in the OT

ὀργή and θυμός

The LXX parallels (Table 20) suggest with Trench that θυμός is the more emotional word ((חמה), while ὀργή is longer lasting, more reasoned opposition. ὀργή, the most common word, subsumes both.

	א	חמה	קצף	חרון	כעס n,c	Total
ὀργή	98	26	4	23	5	298
θυμός	93	75	1	12	8?	320
Total	277	125	34	41	56	

Table 20: Vocabulary for anger in the LXX

The words are mostly applied to the wrath of God, and are focused in the bowls (Figure 21)

The Two Cities

There is a worldly city that opposes God and his people, often called “the great city”:

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.

Rev. 11:13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of **the city** fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Rev. 14:20 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.

Rev. 16:19 And **the great city** was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

Rev. 17:18 And the woman which thou sawest is **that great city**, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

Rev. 18:10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, **that great city Babylon, that mighty city!** for in one hour is thy judgment come.

Rev. 18:16 And saying, Alas, alas, **that great city**, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

Rev. 18:18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, **What city is like unto this great city!**

Rev. 18:19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, **that great city**, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

Rev. 18:21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall **that great city Babylon** be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

But there is another city, characterized as “the holy city” or “the city of God”:

Rev. 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and 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.

Rev. 11:2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and **the holy city** shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

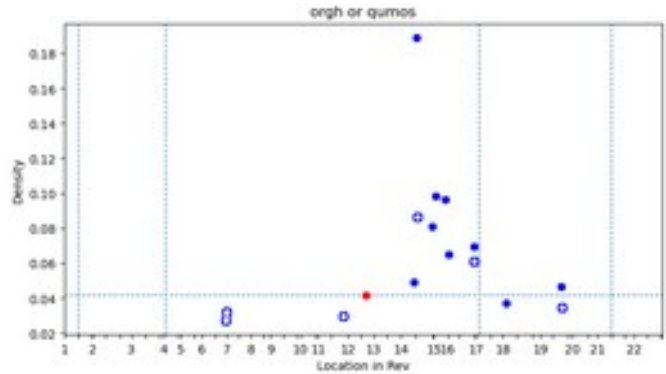


Figure 21: "Wrath" in the Revelation. Blue = God, Red = Dragon. Hollow = ὀργή, solid = θυμός

Revelation 8b-11, The Seven Trumpets

Rev. 20:9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and **the beloved city**: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

Thus far the city is heavenly, but as 3:12 anticipates, one day it will descend to earth:

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.

It is now qualified as “the great city,” its competitor having been done away:

Rev. 21:10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me **that great city, the holy Jerusalem**, descending out of heaven from God,

Most references to this city are in its detailed description in ch. 21:

Rev. 21:14 And the wall of the **city** had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Rev. 21:15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the **city**, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

Rev. 21:16 And the **city** lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

Rev. 21:18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the **city** was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

Rev. 21:19 And the foundations of the wall of the **city** were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

Rev. 21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the **city** was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

Rev. 21:23 And the **city** had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

The final promises and warnings of the book are in terms of our standing as citizens of this heavenly city:

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**.

Rev. 22:19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of **the holy city**, and from the things which are written in this book.