

Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 343 – December 9th – Revelation 1:1-20

Introduction to Revelation

Author

There is much discussion concerning the authorship of this (and each of the elements of the Johannine literature). This book was written by one who could be identified among the churches of Asia Minor simply by the name John. It may be argued that this fits none better than John the Apostle. Witherington, however, stresses that the author classifies himself as among the 'prophets' rather than the apostles. He concludes, "In short the author is John the seer who offers up prophetic testimonies and proclamations. He does not identify himself as an apostle, nor does he call himself the Beloved Disciple or, for that matter, the Elder (see 2 and 3 John)... Yet John the seer has some sort of relationship with those who wrote the rest of the Johannine corpus or with their communities or with both. In my view John the seer is a prophet from the Johannine community operating at a time when there is apparently no apostolic presence left in the community."

Date and Background

The book was probably written in the time of the Emperor Domitian (about 90-95 AD). Domitian regularly used the form of punishment known as relegation which in one form (*deportatio ad insulam*) meant deportation to an island where one enjoyed a degree of freedom. Witherington comments, "It is very possible that John was suffering such a lifetime ban from the western coast of Asia Minor, hence the urgency to write to his converts. Note that he nowhere states that he hopes to come to them soon. Indeed he only speaks of Jesus coming quickly."

Witherington adds, "If it is true that John had suffered banishment from Asia Minor, from a sociological point of view this strongly suggests that he was someone important not only in a general sense as I have just suggested but also as a leader in the churches of Asia Minor, and not merely as a peripheral prophet. This would explain why he takes it upon himself to exhort these various churches – he has some intimate knowledge of their spiritual and social conditions. Writing before the time of the monarchical bishops but probably after the time when the apostles were present in the region, John sought to assert his prophetic authority to help these churches get through a dark period of oppression and suppression that sometimes led to martyrdom."

There is evidence of the practice of emperor-worship which became widespread at this time. It was written to encourage embattled Christians to see that the last word is not with Satan or with the kingdoms of this world but with God and his Christ. The heavenly vision is to enable them to rise above the perplexity of their present experience and to trust God and remain faithful to Jesus Christ.

Rhetorical Form

Witherington comments, "Instead of pretending to be an ancient luminary, while actually writing 'history' in the guise of prophecy, John grounds his work in his own historical situation. He begins by addressing particular congregations dealing with specific issues. The 'attachment of an epistolary format to the visions, along with the personal identification of John, lifts the book out of the realms of pseudonymous apocalypses and places it within the context of real churches with specific problems in a fairly limited setting.' [Fekkes] John knows his audience and their issues, and he reflects a detailed knowledge of their geographical, historical, political, and religious circumstances. But what we find in this book should hardly be called mere prophetic letters. The epistolary form that frames this work involves too little of the document to be seen as a defining feature. No, John wishes to unveil

some of the revelation, in particular the revelatory visions, he has received from God and to do so in a manner that exhorts and comforts his audience. I tend to agree with Fekkes that the initial phrase 'revelation of Jesus Christ' is not some technical term for the genre of the work or the manner of the revelation or some specific sort of vision experience, but rather an indication that all that follows ultimately comes from God and is divine revelation."

Witherington continues by suggesting that the "command to listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches (plural; cf., e.g., 2:7, 11, 17; 3:6, 13, 22)... refers not to what is said within each individual letter but to the contents of the rest of the work beginning with Rev. 4.

The rhetorical hyperbole in both the images and language of the work often involves caricature. Witherington comments, "Such is the stuff of polemics. It is important to bear in mind, however, that these are polemics about real persons and entities. While the language is not descriptive in any literal sense, it is none the less referential, which is also in keeping with the apocalyptic prophecy in this work."

Witherington comments, "John's revelation comes to him at a time when the imperial cult was increasingly being used as the social glue to bind each major Asian city, but also the province, together... These observations raise important questions about how particularistic John's Revelation really was intended to be. Are his symbols really multivalent (or universal) in character, or are they particularistic? Or do they involve the use of universal symbols in a particular way? It is my view that in fact the lattermost option is the case. John's Revelation is on target for his Asian audience, but the symbols he uses are flexible enough that they could and would be appropriately used to address many another situation of crisis in church life."

Moreover, the dramatic language was designed to do more than entertain or even inform. Callahan writes, "Those first ancient auditors of the Apocalypse came together not merely to be informed, but to be transformed, to undergo a collective change in consciousness, an aspiration that makes modern individual and group reading practices trivial by comparison, with the possible exception of the reading of wills. Reading the Apocalypse aloud, and hearing the Apocalypse read aloud, was effectual: through exhortations and exclamations, threat and thunder, the reading of the Apocalypse moved its hearers, affected them; the text *did* something to them."

Structure

Witherington suggests that "The storm centre of the debate about the work centres on Rev. 6-19. Is this a continuous chronological series of revelations, or does it represent a two- or threefold repetition of the same sequence? Put another way, are the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls or cups describing the same reality, perhaps with some variation?" Witherington suggests, "Perhaps the most helpful discussion of the structure and composition of Revelation is that of Bauckham [*Climax of Prophecy*]. It is the most helpful not least because he shows how both scholars who stress recapitulation and those who stress progression in the central section of Rev. 6-19 are partially correct. Bauckham stresses that the structure of the book, which is crucial to understanding its meaning must have been recognisable in oral performance (1:3), which requires clear linguistic markers; that is, it requires repetition of certain key terms and phrases." He quotes Bauckham who writes, "The three series are so connected that the seventh seal-opening includes the seven bowls. Thus each series reaches the same end, but from starting points progressively closer to the end. This is why the three series of judgments are of progressive severity."

There are many different suggestions concerning the main divisions of this book. Bauckham suggests the following structure:

1:1-8	Prologue
1:9-3:22	Inaugural vision of Christ and seven messages to churches
4:1-5:14	Inaugural vision of heaven leading to three series of sevens and two intercalations

6:1-8:1; 8:3-5	Seven seals
8:2; 8:6-11:19	Seven trumpets
12:1-14:20; 15:2-4	The story of God's people in conflict with evil
15:1; 15:5-16:21	Seven bowls
17:1-19:10	Babylon the harlot
19:11-21:8	Transition from Babylon to New Jerusalem
21:9-22:5	The New Jerusalem, the bride
22:6-21	Epilogue

Bennie Wolvaardt suggests that the Book can be divided into seven main sections, each covering the same period from the incarnation to the second coming but from a different point of view. While these are in one sense parallel cycles, there is yet development and progress – the latter parts focus progressively more on the final judgement and the new heavens and new earth. He suggests that the sections are chiastically arranged:

- A Chs 1-3 Christ and his battling and suffering church on earth
- B Chs 4-7 Persecution and trials of the church
- C Chs 8-11 Unbelievers are warned and punished
- D Chs 12-14 The church is victorious because of Christ's victory over Satan
- C* Chs 15-16 Unbelievers are judged
- B* Chs 17-19 Those who persecuted the church are judged
- A* Chs 20-22 Christ and his victorious church in the new earth and heaven

"This arrangement highlights the centrality of the role of Christ in the history of the world and in the well-being of his church. It also brings out the difference in emphasis between the first three parts and the last three. In the first three the emphasis is on the suffering of the church. In the last three it is on the judgment of the church's enemies and Satan." (*How to Interpret the Bible*, p.307).

Literary Style

The book of Revelation is generally classed with Apocalyptic literature on account of its symbolism and its theme of the establishment of God's kingdom. However, it is unlike other apocalyptic literature in that it claims to be prophecy – to continue the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament. Witherington calls it 'apocalyptic prophecy' and suggests that it "reflects the confluence of the Jewish prophetic and sapiential traditions." He suggests that the "major cause of the shift from traditional prophecy to apocalyptic was ... the conviction that God's people were living at the dawn of or actually in the eschatological age."

Interpretation

Through the centuries the book of Revelation has been interpreted in a variety of ways. The principle views can be summed up as follows:

The 'preterist' view – understands the Seer to be wholly preoccupied with the church of his day. The book was full of meaning for the people to whom it was written, but has little direct relevance for us.

The 'historicist' view – sees the book as an inspired forecast of the whole of human history. The history of such an approach to interpretation exposes its folly. In the words of S. A. Cartledge, "No one who studies the widely divergent conclusions reached by this school through the centuries is likely to become a member of this school and believe in the particular scheme which makes his own days necessarily the last days."

The 'futurist' school – Apart from the first few chapters, the book is entirely concerned with what will happen at the end of the age. This tends to rob the book of significance for all generations except the last.

The 'idealist' view – argues that the book is not concerned with particular events but with ideas and principles. Morris comments, "This secures its relevance for all periods of the church's history. But its refusal to see a firm historical anchorage seems to most students dubious to say the least."

None of these traditional approaches to the interpretation of the book of Revelation is adequate. For all its peculiarity, the interpretation of Revelation requires the same disciplines that must be applied to any other NT book. It was written out of and into a particular historical context, a context which shapes the book and its message. Yet, at the same time it forms part of the larger story of the purposes of God in history, purposes set forth in the sweep of Scripture from its first page to its last and purposes which centre in the Lord Jesus Christ: it therefore needs also to be read in canonical context. Last, but by no means least, we who read this book are also embraced in the drama of the Scripture story: in this way, this book, as with every book of Scripture, speaks also to us. It will not do to look for hermeneutical shortcuts.

Of its first century setting Witherington comments, "The text's meaning must be understood in terms of the plausibility structure that existed between the original author and audience of this work. On the one hand, what the text meant back then is what it still means today, though of course with multivalent images it can have ever new applications and fresh significance. On the other hand, what the original author and audience could not possibly have understood the text to mean (e.g., the Beast is the European Common Market, or the anti-Christ is the Pope, etc.) cannot be the meaning of the text today either, if one believes meaning is not in the eye of the beholder but rather resides in the text, encoded by the original author."

Furthermore, there are over 500 allusions to the OT in the 404 verses in this book. Peterson writes, "No one has any business reading the last book who has not read the previous sixty-five... Much mischief has been done by reading Revelation in isolation from its canonical context." (*Reversed Thunder*).

The Text

Beckwith states that "The text of the Apocalypse is less certainly settled than that of any other book in the New Testament" (*The Apocalypse of John*, p.411). This is partly due to Revelation being omitted from several of the older MSS (Witherington writes, "Indeed there really is no Western text of Revelation"), and partly due to the peculiarity of style, grammar and vocabulary which led to scribal errors and emendations.

The Last Word

Let the last word again go to Witherington who writes, "The book of Revelation has much to tell us about 'what was, and is, and is to come.' It is our job to have ears capable of hearing what John says on all of these matters. If we do so, we will learn that God's yes to life is louder than evil's and death's no to it, that justice and redemption will one day prevail on earth, and that this is Good News coming in the form of a 'revelation from Jesus Christ,' which is to say coming from one who has both experienced death and triumphed over it. It is Christ who knows what is above and beyond our present mundane historical concerns and situation. He alone is worthy and is able to reveal such profound truths. Bearing these things in mind, we must now take up the challenge of working through the text of Revelation itself, praying that the scales will fall from our eyes as the seals are opened and that we will understand something more about the vision glorious."

Works frequently referenced in these notes on the book of Revelation

Morris, Leon	<i>The Revelation of St John</i> (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries), Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1969
Mounce, Robert H	<i>The Book of Revelation</i> (New International Commentary on the New Testament), Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1977
Peterson, Eugene H	<i>Reversed Thunder</i> , San Francisco, HarperCollins, 1991
Witherington, Ben	<i>Revelation</i> (New Cambridge Bible Commentary), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003

Revelation 1:1

Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἣν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ, ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει, καὶ ἐσήμανεν ἀποστείλας διὰ τοῦ ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννῃ,

ἀποκαλυψις, εως f revelation

Mounce says that "The term as used here is not a literary classification, but an indication of the nature and purpose of the book." The work has similarities with non-canonical Jewish apocalyptic literature but it is also distinctly different.

The opening phrase could be understood in one of several ways:

- A revelation *about* Jesus Christ which God gave John to show...
- A revelation *from* Jesus Christ which God gave Jesus to pass on to his servants...

Most probably it indicates that the revelation comes from Christ even though it is passed on via an angel.

ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s δίδωμι

δεικνυμι show, point out, reveal

δουλος, ου m slave, servant

δει impersonal verb it is necessary, must

ταχος, ους n speed, quickness; ἐν τ.

speedily, quickly, soon

Morris says that the prophetic perspective is sometimes foreshortened, "In other words the word may refer primarily to the certainty of the events in question." But Witherington comments, "The author anticipates that much of what he has seen is likely to be on a near historical horizon not over 2,000 years hence." Wilcock draws attention to the contrast between these words and Dan 2:28. The last days have now dawned. The book of Revelation is a drama of the last days. Mounce says, "History is not a haphazard sequence of unrelated events but a divinely decreed ordering of that which must come to pass. It is a logical necessity arising from the nature of God and the revelation of his purpose in creation and redemption."

σημαινω indicate, make known

"The Greek verb carries the idea of figurative representation. Strictly speaking it means to make known by some sort of sign... Thus it is admirably suited to the symbolic character of the book. This should warn the reader not to expect a literal presentation of future history, but a symbolic portrayal of that which must yet come to pass." Mounce.

ἀποστελλω send, send out

Mounce suggests that ἀγγέλου may here have the general meaning 'messenger' and could refer to Christ himself. Witherington, however, comments, "The revelation ... is mediated through an angel, which is typical of apocalyptic literature. This may provide the clue to the reference to the angels of the churches shortly after this introduction. Just as the word is mediated to John through an angel so it is mediated to the churches through angels, for this is visionary material that requires special handling and care."

The author does not call himself a prophet, but, in a manner similar to Paul in his letters, styles himself δουλος – though this is a term used in the OT of the prophets (cf. Amos 3:7).

Revelation 1:2

ὃς ἐμαρτύρησεν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅσα εἶδεν.

μαρτυρεω bear witness, testify

Morris suggests an epistolary aorist.

μαρτυρια, ας f testimony, witness

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as;

pl. as many as, all

εἶδεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ὁραω see

The final clause is appositional and defines the scope of the initial phrases. Witherington comments, "Notice the language used here – the testimony of Jesus was something signified to John through an angel. Thus we are meant to think of images being given to John, an indirect means of revelation. Clearly we are not to think of these images as snapshots of heaven since they draw on and modify OT images over and over again, with which our author was already familiar."

Revelation 1:3

μακάριος ὁ ἀναγινώσκων καὶ οἱ ἀκούοντες
τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας καὶ τηροῦντες τὰ
ἐν αὐτῇ γεγραμμένα, ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς.

μακαριος, α, ον blessed, fortunate, happy

The first of seven beatitudes (cf. 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14). For this one, cf. Lk 11:28. Bauckham comments, "Together they spell out the adequate response to John's prophecy (reading/hearing and keeping: 1:3; 22:7; faithfulness as far as death: 14:13; 22:14; readiness for the Lord's coming: 16:15) and the fulness of divine blessing that attends that response (rest from labours: 14:13; invitation to the Lamb's marriage supper: 19:9; participation in the first resurrection: 20:6; the tree of life and entry into the new Jerusalem: 22:14; but these are only *representative* of the complete blessing indicated by the number seven). The seven beatitudes comprise a kind of summary of Revelation's message."

ἀναγινώσκω read, read in public worship

The book was written as a letter (see the following verse) to be read (out loud) in the churches. B Ramsay writes, "We do wrong to neglect this book of Scripture because of its supposed difficulty. God has spoken of the blessing which shall come to those who read or hear these words and take them to heart."

τηρεω keep, observe, maintain
γεγραμμένα Verb, perf pass ptc, n nom/acc pl
γραφω
καιρος, ου m time (occasion rather than
extent), appointed time, season, age

Used here and elsewhere in an eschatological sense to indicate a time of crisis or a decisive moment.

ἐγγύς adv near

Witherington comments, "These words are given so that they might be kept. In short, the function of these prophecies is hortatory. They are not given to satisfy idle curiosity about the future. They are imperatival, entailing a call to action. Unlike in some apocalyptic works, here the revelation is to be unsealed, not sealed up. It is to become known, not hidden for some remote future generation to discover. For John, since the eschatological time is at hand, the time for unsealing the revelation is now."

Revelation 1:4

Ἰωάννης ταῖς ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαις ταῖς ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ·
χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄντος καὶ τοῦ ἔρχομένου,
καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἑπτὰ πνευμάτων ἃ
ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ,

ἑπτα seven

ἐκκλησια, ας f congregation, church

These may have been seven churches with which John was particularly associated. Ramsay suggests that the towns mentioned were regional centres of the Roman province of Asia. However, the number seven is also indicative of completeness – the letter is for all churches.

χαρις, ιτος f grace

εἰρηνη, ης f peace

ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος A Christian elaboration of Ex. 3:14-16. "In the terrible days in which he was writing, John stayed his heart on the changelessness of God." Barclay. Witherington comments, "He is behind, among and ahead of the church."

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

θρονος, ου m throne

"An unusual way of designating the Holy Spirit" Morris. Signifying the Spirit of God in all the fulness of his activity and power. Witherington, however, suggests that "the reference is to the angels who are the eyes of the great King, keeping watch over the church for the Lamb." Cf. Rev 5:6; 3:1; Heb 1:14. Caird comments, "Coins from the early part of Domitian's reign portray the emperor's heir, who had died in childhood, as an infant Zeus playing with the stars, as though he had compensation by a cosmic dominion for the earthly empire he was never to inherit. The use that John makes of seven spirits, lamps, or stars was a direct challenge to the imperial myth of the divine ruler, and, since defiance of emperor worship was one of the main themes of his vision, it is reasonable to suppose that the challenge was intended."

Revelation 1:5

καὶ ἀπὸ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός, ὁ
πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν καὶ ὁ ἄρχων τῶν
βασιλέων τῆς γῆς. Τῷ ἀγαπῶντι ἡμᾶς καὶ
λύσαντι ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ
αἵματι αὐτοῦ –

Wilcock sees the three phrases of the first half of this verse as a reference to the threefold office of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King. Aune suggest the three images may echo Ps 89:24-40.

μαρτυς, μαρτυρος dat pl μαρτυσιν m
witness

πιστος, η, ον faithful, trustworthy

"Throughout Revelation the word [μαρτυς] is associated with the penalty of death which results from a firm and constant witness (cf. 2:13; 11:3; 17:6). To the Asian Christians about to enter into a time of persecution, Jesus is presented as the faithful witness. He is the model of how to stand firm and never compromise the truth of God (cf. 1 Tim 6:13)." Mounce.

πρωτοτοκος, ον first-born, first
νεκρος, α, ον dead

Cf. Col 1:18; Ps 89:27. The risen Christ exercises sovereign control.

άρχων, οντος m ruler
βασιλευς, εως m king
γη, γης f earth

Witherington comments, "All three of these traits are presented as models for John's audience – they should be faithful unto death, they will receive a good resurrection like Christ's, and they will rule with him over the earth (see Rev. 20). Put another way, John is reassuring his audience that the major factor that they might fear at this juncture, namely a shameful death at the hands of their own rulers, will be overcome, as it was for Christ. Neither death nor rulers are beyond the control of Jesus. He is ruling over them, and so Christians should not fear such authorities."

ἀγαπῶντι Verb, pres act ptc, m dat s ἀγαπαω
love

Note the use of present and aorist participles: the abiding love came to expression in a particular act.

λύσαντι Verb, aor act ptc, m dat s λυω
loose, release, set free

The TR, following later uncials and most minuscules reads λουσαντι, 'washed'

ἁμαρτια, ας f sin
αἷμα, ατος f blood

Revelation 1:6

καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς βασιλείαν, ἱερεῖς τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ – αὐτῷ ἢ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.

ἱερευς, εως m priest

Cf. Ex 19:5-6; Isa 61:6; 1 Peter 2:5,9. "Christ is said to save believers *from* sin, but *for* the task of being a saved zone on earth, and priests to the world and to God's people. There is nothing here about a clerical class of Christians called to be priests. Rather the whole kingdom of believers are to be priests." Witherington.

δοξα, ης f glory; praise, honour
κρατος, ους n might, power, dominion
αἰωνων Noun, gen pl αἰων, αἰωνος m age, eternity

Witherington comments, "In AD 90, shortly before this work was written, the Roman Empire received a new name – *Imperium Aeternum*, the eternal empire – and the Emperor was meant to be the eternal king, as the court poet Statius suggested to Domitian. But John's theology is that Jesus alone is King of Kings, and his followers are not slaves but rather kings and priests."

Revelation 1:7

Ἴδου ἔρχεται μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν, καὶ ὄψεται αὐτὸν πᾶς ὀφθαλμὸς καὶ οἴτινες αὐτὸν ἐξεκέντησαν, καὶ κόψονται ἐπ' αὐτὸν πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς. ναί, ἀμήν.

Combines quotations from Dan 7:13; Zech 12:10-13:1. This combination occurs also in Matt 24:30.

νεφελη, ης f cloud
ὄψεται Verb, fut act indic, 3 s ὄραω
οἴτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἦτις, ὁ τι
who, which, whoever, whichever
ἐκκεντεω pierce

"The Fourth Gospel indicates that the piercing of Jesus' side by the Roman soldier fulfilled the Scripture, 'They shall look on him whom they have pierced' (Jn 19:37 quoting Zech 12:10). The reference in Revelation should not be limited to that incident or, as in Zechariah 12:10, to the tribes of Israel, but extends to all those of every age whose careless indifference to Jesus is typified in the act of piercing." Mounce.

Jesus is here presented as the 'pierced one'. Both Jews and Gentiles conspired in his death, but he will now return in triumph and glory to the shame and horror of all who despised him.

κοπτω cut; midd mourn, wail, lament

"The mourning of Zechariah 12:10-12 was that of repentance, but the mourning of Revelation is the remorse accompanying the disclosure of divine judgement at the coming of Christ (cf. 16:9, 11, 21)." Mounce.

φυλη, ης f tribe, nation, people
ναί yes, yes indeed, certainly

Revelation 1:8

Ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ἼΩ, λέγει κύριος, ὁ θεός, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ παντοκράτωρ.

Ὁν τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ἼΩ cf. 21:6.

"God is the sovereign Lord of all that takes place in the entire course of human history." Mounce.

This name and title of God is here applied to the Lordly Christ. Compare 1:8; 1:17; 21:6 and 22:13 and also Isa 44:6. Bauckham notes, "The one designation of God which appears in Revelation as a self-designation by God also appears as a self-designation by Christ.... He has the first word, in creation, and the last word, in new creation. Therefore, within John's literary structure, he speaks twice, declaring himself Alpha and Omega first, before the outset of John's vision (1:8), and last, in declaring the eschatological accomplishment of his purpose for his whole creation: 'it is done' (21:6)."

παντοκρατωρ, ορος m Almighty

This word occurs only 10 times in the NT, nine of which are in Revelation – the tenth being in a quote from the OT. It is grounded in the OT revelation of God's character (cf. 2 Sam 5:10; Jer 5:14; Hos 12:5; Amos 3:13; 4:13). "The stress in this book is not on divine sovereignty in the abstract but on the exercise of that sovereignty on behalf of the church. The Lord is in control, the churches are being reassured, despite appearances to the contrary." Witherington.

Revelation 1:9

Ἐγὼ Ἰωάννης, ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὑμῶν καὶ συγκοινωνὸς ἐν τῇ θλίψει καὶ βασιλείᾳ καὶ ὑπομονῇ ἐν Ἰησοῦ, ἐγενόμην ἐν τῇ νήσῳ τῇ καλουμένῃ Πάτμῳ διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ.

συγκοινωνος, ου m sharer, participant
θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering

"Refers to the suffering which accompanies faithfulness to Christian principles (cf. Jn 16:33; Acts 14:22; 2 Tim 3:12) but extends to include the first period of intensified affliction which precedes the establishment of the... kingdom." Mounce.

ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance

"The order of the three is instructive. Since the present is a time of tribulation and the kingdom a period of future blessedness, believers must during the interim period exercise that kind of patient endurance which was exemplified by Jesus." Mounce.

νησος, ου f island

Patmos was one of the islands off the coast of Asia Minor regularly used for political banishment. Ramsay first suggested that it was a penal settlement in which John was sentenced to hard labour in the quarries, but there is no evidence to support this view. Witherington suggests that the aorist ἐγενόμην may indicate that John had returned to the mainland before the letter was completed – perhaps after the death of Domitian.

μαρτυρια, ας f see v.2

Revelation 1:10

ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ, καὶ ἤκουσα ὀπίσω μου φωνὴν μεγάλην ὡς σάλπιγγος

'In the Spirit' Mounce says "refers to a state of spiritual exultation best described as a trance. Peter at Joppa (Acts 10:10; 11:5) and Paul at Jerusalem (Acts 22:17; cf. 2 Cor 12:2-4) had similar ecstatic experiences." Cf. 4:2; 17:3; 21:10. Witherington comments, "This use of the Spirit language is more like the references to the Spirit falling on the prophetic figures (see Ezek 3:12, 14) than like the NT discussions about being filled with the Spirit."

κυριακος, η, ον belonging to the Lord

Some have argued that the phrase refers to the eschatological 'day of the Lord' and that John is carried forward by the Spirit to receive revelation concerning that day. Mounce says, "It is more probable that this is the first mention in Christian literature of the Lord's day as a technical term for the first day of the week. It is the Lord's day because on the first day of the week Christ rose victorious from the grave. As paganism had set aside a day on which to honour their emperor, so also Christians chose the first day of the week to honour Christ." In contrast with the Jewish sabbath which ends the week, this day marks the dawn of a new creation.

ὀπισω prep with gen after, behind
μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great
σαλιξ, ιγγος f trumpet; trumpet blast

Revelation 1:11

λεγοῦσης· Ὁ βλέπεις γράψον εἰς βιβλίον καὶ πέμψον ταῖς ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαις, εἰς Ἐφεσον καὶ εἰς Σμύρναν καὶ εἰς Πέργαμον καὶ εἰς Θυάτειρα καὶ εἰς Σάρδεις καὶ εἰς Φιλαδέλφειαν καὶ εἰς Λαοδίκειαν.

βλεπω see, look

γράφον Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s γραφω
βιβλιον, ου n book, scroll

Witherington comments, "If βιβλίον here actually means book, Revelation was possibly one of the first Christian documents to be produced in book form."

πεμπω send
έπτα see v.4

Revelation 1:12-20

"The Christians were a pitifully small remnant, persecuted by mighty forces. To all outward appearances their situation was hopeless. But it is only as Christ is seen for what he really is that anything else can be seen in its true perspective. So for these persecuted ones it was important that first of all the glory and the majesty of the risen Lord be brought out. In doing this John persistently makes use of words and concepts associated in the Old Testament with God. He does not hesitate to employ divine attributes to describe the glorious Christ." Morris.

Revelation 1:12

Καὶ ἐπέστρεψα βλέπειν τὴν φωνὴν ἣτις ἐλάλει μετ' ἐμοῦ· καὶ ἐπιστρέψας εἶδον ἑπτὰ λυχνίας χρυσᾶς,

ἐπιστρεφω turn back, turn round, turn
ὅστις, ἣτις, ὅ τι who, which
λαλεω speak, talk
ἐπιστρέψας Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s
ἐπιστρεφω
εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὁραω see
λυχνία, ας f lampstand, stand

Witherington comments, "John turns and sees seven gold lampstands or candlesticks, suggesting a temple setting."
Mounce comments, "λυχνία was a lampstand, not a candlestick. λυχνος was the portable lamp which was placed on the stand. Candles as we now know them were not in use.
"Exodus 25:31-37 records the instructions given to Moses for making the seven-branched lampstand of pure gold. In John's vision, however, there are seven separate lampstands, perhaps like those placed before the inner sanctuary by Solomon when he dedicated the temple (1 Kings 7:49). From Revelation 1:20 we learn that the lampstands signify the seven churches to whom the letters were addressed. The purpose of the church is to bear the light of the divine presence in a darkened world (Mt 5:14-16). Failing this, its reason for existence has disappeared (cf. Rev 2:5)."
Caird says that the church is the new Israel, but with this difference, that each local congregation of Christians is also the church in all its fullness.

χρυσους, η, ουν made of gold, golden

Revelation 1:13

καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν λυχνιῶν ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου, ἐνδεδυμένον ποδήρη καὶ περιεζωσμένον πρὸς τοῖς μαστοῖς ζώνην χρυσᾶν·

μεσος, η, ον middle; ἐν μ., εἰς μ. among
ὁμοιος, α, ον like, of the same kind as

Cf. Dan 7:13. See also Rev 14:14.
Witherington comments, "Jesus is being identified with this human and yet more-than-human figure, who is seen in Daniel as a representative of God's people to God, and of God to God's people. While in Daniel the son of man is distinguished from the Ancient of Days, here the son of man is described as if he were the Ancient of Days."

ἐνδεδυμένον Verb, perf midd ptc, m acc s
ἐνδύω dress, clothe; midd put on,
wear

ποδηρης, ους m long robe

The clothing of the high priest (cf. Ex 28:4; 29:29).

περιεζωσμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc s
περιζωννυμι wrap around (of clothes)
μαστος, ου m breast, chest
ζωνη, ης f belt

Morris points out that the girdle of the priest was a woven sash not a golden clasp. The latter is a symbol of royalty. Here are further symbols of Christ's threefold office of Prophet, Priest and King.

Revelation 1:14

ἡ δὲ κεφαλὴ αὐτοῦ καὶ αἱ τρίχες λευκαὶ ὡς ἔριον λευκόν, ὡς χιῶν, καὶ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ ὡς φλόξ πυρός,

κεφαλη, ης f head
θριξ, τριχος f hair
λευκος, η, ον white, shining

Cf. the description of the 'Ancient of Days' in Dan 7:9-10.

ἐριον, ου n wool
χιων, ονος f snow
φλοξ, φλογος f flame
πυρ, ος n fire

Cf. Dan 10:6. "Expresses the penetrating insight of the one who is sovereign, not only over the seven churches, but over the course of history itself." Mounce.

Revelation 1:15

καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὅμοιοι χαλκολιβάνῳ, ὡς ἐν καμίνῳ πεπυρωμένης, καὶ ἡ φωνὴ αὐτοῦ ὡς φωνὴ ὑδάτων πολλῶν,

πους, ποδος m foot
ὁμοιος, α, ον like, of the same kind as

χαλκολιβανον, ου n and χαλκολιβανος, ου m brass (or copper) melted in a furnace and then polished

"The etymology of this Greek word (which occurs nowhere in the literature independent of Rev) is difficult but best understood as an alloy of gold or fine brass." Mounce.

καμινος, ου f furnace
πεπυρωμένης Verb, perf pass ptc, f gen s
πυροομαι burn; perf. be refined

Witherington writes, "The bronze feet refined in the furnace likely are meant to indicate his stability or unmoveableness. He is no god with feet of clay."

Peterson similarly, contrasting this vision with the statue seen by Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2), writes, "The succession of kingdoms of this earth, no matter how impressive and powerful, is set on a base that is flawed. Christ's kingdom is set on a base that is as strong as its superstructure is magnificent. The bronze base is firm. Bronze is a combination of iron and copper. Iron is strong but it rusts. Copper won't rust but is pliable. Combine the two in bronze and the best quality of each is preserved, the strength of the iron and the endurance of the copper. The rule of Christ is set on this base: the foundation of his power has been tested by fire."

ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water

"Suggesting the awe-inspiring power of a great waterfall." Mounce.

Revelation 1:16

καὶ ἔχων ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ ἀστέρας ἑπτὰ, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ ῥομφαία διστομος ὀξεῖα ἐκπορευομένη, καὶ ἡ ὄψις αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος φαίνει ἐν τῇ δυνάμει αὐτοῦ.

δεξιός, α, ον right, δεξιά right hand
χειρ, χειρός f hand, power
ἀστὴρ, ερος m star

Cf. v.20. "That Christ has the full complement of stars in his right hand indicates his sovereign control over the churches. It may also imply protection (Jn 10:28)." Mounce.

στομα, τος n mouth
ῥομφαία, ας f sword
διστομος, ον double-edged
ὀξυς, εια, υ sharp, swift

Cf. Is 11:4; 49:2.

ἐκπορευομαι go or come out

The effective power of the word of Christ.

ὄψις, εως f face
ἥλιος, ου m the sun
φαινω shine, give light
δυνάμει Noun, dat s δυναμεις

Cf. the transfiguration (Mt 17:2, see also Ex 34:29; Jud 5:31; Mt 13:43).

Revelation 1:17

Καὶ ὅτε εἶδον αὐτόν, ἔπεσα πρὸς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ὡς νεκρός· καὶ ἔθηκεν τὴν δεξιάν αὐτοῦ ἐπ' ἐμὲ λέγων· Μὴ φοβοῦ· ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος,

ὅτε conj when

εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὄραω see, observe

ἔπεσα Verb, aor act indic, 1s πιπτω fall, fall down

πόδας Noun, acc pl πους, ποδος m foot

Cf. Josh 5:14; Ezek 1:28; Dan 8:17; 10:15; Matt 17:6; Acts 26:14.

νεκρός, α, ον dead

Indicates that this is not an Oriental prostration designed to show respect but the physical effect of this tremendous vision.

ἔθηκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3s τιθημι place, set

δεξιός, α, ον see v.16

The same hand that holds the stars. Christ has the whole church in his hand yet he also cares for the needs of the individual.

ἐμὲ Pronoun, acc s ἐγὼ
φοβεομαι fear, be afraid (of)

Cf. for instance Mt 14:27; 17:7.

πρῶτος, η, ον first, foremost

ἔσχατος, η, ον adj last, final

Means much the same as the 'Alpha and Omega' used of God in v.8 (see also 22:13). Recalls Is 44:6; 48:12, applying a divine title to Christ.

"This prerogative is three times claimed for the Lord Jehovah in Isaiah (41:4; 44:6; 48:12) and in like manner three times in this book (1:17; 2:8; 22:13). It is the expression of absolute Godhead: 'I am the first and the last, and beside me there is no God' (Is 44:6). He is from eternity to eternity, so that there is no room for any other. All creation comes forth from Him (Jn 1:1-3), and creation returns to Him again, as from whom and by whom and to whom are all things." Trent. In particular, in the context of the Book of Revelation, there is no place for any other Lord. Caesar is dethroned.

Revelation 1:18

καὶ ὁ ζῶν – καὶ ἐγενόμην νεκρός καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶν εἰμι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων – καὶ ἔχω τὰς κλεῖς τοῦ θανάτου καὶ τοῦ ᾄδου.

ζῶω live, be alive

"The designation is based on OT references to 'the living God' (Josh 3:10; Ps 42:2; 84:2 etc.) and is used freely in the NT (Mt 16:16; Acts 14:15; Rom 9:26; etc.). It declares that in his essential nature Christ possesses life." Mounce. There is paradox here in the death of ὁ ζων.

αἰωνων Noun, gen pl αἰων, αἰωνος m age,
world order, eternity
κλεις, ειδος f key
θανατος, ου m death
ἀδης, ου m Hades, the world of the dead,
death

The reference here is probably not to 'hell' but to the OT concept of the place of the dead. Caird comments, "By the resurrection he had not just resumed the eternal life which he had with the Father before the world began; he had entered upon a new victorious life in which death was for ever conquered. Not only had he burst out of the prison, he had carried away the keys. His followers may pass confidently into the dungeons of death and the grave, knowing that he holds the authority to unlock the gates and set them free."

Revelation 1:19

γράψων οὖν ἃ εἶδες καὶ ἃ εἰσὶν καὶ ἃ μέλλει
γίνεσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα.

γράψων Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s γραφω
εἶδες Verb, 2nd aor act indic, 2 s ὁραω
μελλω (before an infin) be going, be about,
be destined

Mounce points out that, "Many commentators accept a threefold division of the verse, interpreting 'the things which thou sawest' as a reference to the vision of the Son of man (in the verses immediately preceding), 'the things that are' as referring to the present condition of the church in chapters 2 and 3, and 'the things which shall come to pass hereafter' in reference to the visions beginning in chapter 4 and continuing to the end of the book." However, Caird says that this is an oversimplification, "It is better to take the words ἃ εἶδες to mean the whole of John's vision, which in all its parts is equally concerned with the interpretation of past and present and future." Witherington similarly points out that "Rev 11 makes evident that the whole book involves the past, present and future."

Revelation 1:20

τὸ μυστήριον τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀστέρων οὓς εἶδες ἐπὶ
τῆς δεξιᾶς μου, καὶ τὰς ἑπτὰ λυχνίας τὰς
χρυσᾶς· οἱ ἑπτὰ ἀστέρες ἄγγελοι τῶν ἑπτὰ
ἐκκλησιῶν εἰσὶν, καὶ αἱ λυχνίαι αἱ ἑπτὰ ἑπτὰ
ἐκκλησίαι εἰσὶν.

μυστηριον, ου n secret, mystery

Something that men could never work out for themselves but which God has now made known. Cf. Dan 2:47.

ἄστηρ, ερος m see v.16

λυχνια, ας f see v.12

χρυσους, η, ουν see v.12

"Many explanations have been proposed for the angels. If they are human beings (Mt 11:10 and other verses would allow this), they could be prominent officials of the local congregations or delegates sent to Patmos to be entrusted with the letters. The use of 'angel' in the book of Revelation (it occurs some sixty times) favours identifying the angels with heavenly beings. They could be guardian angels (cf. Dan 10:13,20-21; Mt 18:10; Acts 12:15) or perhaps heavenly counterparts which came to be identified with the church. The most satisfactory answer, however, is that the angel of the church was a way of personifying the prevailing spirit of the church. This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that all seven letters are addressed to separate angels, a strange phenomenon if they refer to anything but the church since the contents are obviously intended for the congregation as a whole." Mounce.

Revelation 2 & 3

Each of the letters to the seven churches has the same structure:

- i) A description of Christ, mostly from Ch.1.
The aspects of Christ's character reflect the particular situation of the church.
- ii) Praise for the church's good record (except in the case of Laodicea).
- iii) Complaint about deficiencies (except in the case of Smyrna and Philadelphia).
- iv) Command to repent or go back to the beginning (except Smyrna and Philadelphia).
- v) A warning (except Smyrna and Philadelphia).
- vi) Encouragement.
- vii) Promise to the conqueror.

Churches 1 and 7 are in grave danger.

Churches 2 and 6 are in excellent shape, churches 3,4 and 5 are middling – neither good nor bad.

Caird says, "The churches are being investigated to see whether they are strong enough to survive a thorough-going persecution. The virtues promised – patience, endurance, constancy and loyalty – are those most necessary to withstand persecution." Each of the letters displays a detailed knowledge of the history, topography and economics of the city to which it is written.

Revelation 2:1

Τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ κρατῶν τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀστέρας ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ, ὁ περιπατῶν ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἑπτὰ λυχνιῶν τῶν χρυσῶν·

Ephesus, with a population of approximately a quarter of a million, was the most important city of proconsular Asia. It was an important sea port and commercial and export centre. The mother goddess had long been worshipped there – the Greeks identified her with Artemis and the Romans with Diana. Her temple was four times the size of the Parthenon. However, there were also two temples to Augustus in Ephesus and Domitian had named Ephesus the guardian of the imperial cult. "Only a few years before Revelation was likely to have been written, Ephesus had a new cult site for the emperors and celebrated the Olympic games in honour of Domitian." Witherington. Paul had spent 3 years of ministry in Ephesus (Acts 20:31). By the latter part of the first century Christianity had been there for more than four decades and it seems to have become the literary centre of Asiatic Christianity. "John is mostly addressing those who have been Christians for some time but whose initial enthusiasm has waned." Witherington.

γράφον Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s γράφω
ὁδε, ἡδε, τοδε this; he, she, it
κρατεω hold, hold fast

Denotes a firm and constant grip.

περιπατεω walk, walk about
μεσος, η, ον see 1:13
λυχνια, ας f see 1:13
χρυσους, η, ουν see 1:13

Cf. Lev. 26:12, "I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people." Christ applies to himself what is written of God. He is the mediator and guarantor of the covenant between God and his people.

At the same time there is here a note of warning. "It is the invisible Christ who already [pre-parousia] walks among the churches and inspects them and calls them to into account in the present. His work always involves redemptive-judgment, or in this case beatitude follows correction of behaviour." Witherington.

Revelation 2:2

Οἶδα τὰ ἔργα σου, καὶ τὸν κόπον καὶ τὴν ὑπομονὴν σου, καὶ ὅτι οὐ δύνῃ βαστάσαι κακοὺς, καὶ ἐπείρασας τοὺς λέγοντας ἑαυτοὺς ἀποστόλους, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν, καὶ εὗρες αὐτοὺς ψευδεῖς·

κοπος, ου m work, labour, trouble
ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance

'Toil and patience' give the active and passive sides of the life summed up in τα ἔργα σου.

δύνῃ Verb, fut midd dep indic, 2 s δυναμαι
can, be able to

βασταζω carry, bear, endure, tolerate
κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm

Paul had warned the Ephesian elders that such 'evil men' or 'wolves' would arise in the church after his departure (Acts 20:29).

πειραζω test, put to the test
ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/herself, itself
εὑρισκω find, discover
ψευδης, ες false, lying

"The necessity of testing doctrine and advice was widely recognised in the early church (1 Thess 5:21; 1 Cor 14:29; 1 Jn 4:1). Jesus provided the very simple and pragmatic, 'You will know them by their fruits' (Mt 7:20)... The Ephesians heeded this advice, tested those who called themselves apostles, and found them not simply self-deceived, but deceivers. They were liars because when tested they could not measure up to their pretensions." Mounce.

Revelation 2:3

καὶ ὑπομονὴν ἔχεις, καὶ ἐβάστασας διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου, καὶ οὐ κεκοπίακες.

ὄνομα, τος n name

κεκοπίακες Verb, perf act indic, 2 s κοπιαω
work hard, labour, become tired

Revelation 2:4

ἀλλὰ ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὅτι τὴν ἀγάπην σου τὴν πρώτην ἀφήκες.

πρωτος, η, ον first, earlier

ἀφήκες Verb, aor act indic, 2 s ἀφημι
leave, forsake, let go

"Jesus had made it clear that 'by this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another' (Jn 13:35).

Brotherly love was the distinctive badge of Christian discipleship, but at Ephesus hatred of heresy and extensive involvement in the works appropriate to faith had allowed the first fresh glow of love to God and one another to fade." Mounce. Witherington comments, "Perhaps, in their zeal for orthodoxy or orthopraxy, they have lost their ability to distinguish between hating the sin and loving the sinner."

Cf. Jer 2:2, "I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness."

Revelation 2:5

μνημόνευε οὖν πόθεν πέπτωκας, καὶ μετανόησον καὶ τὰ πρῶτα ἔργα ποιήσον· εἰ δὲ μὴ, ἔρχομαί σοι, καὶ κινήσω τὴν λυχνίαν σου ἐκ τοῦ τόπου αὐτῆς, ἐὰν μὴ μετανοήσης.

μνημονευω remember, keep in mind

A call to continuous remembrance.

ποθεν interrog adv. from where

πέπτωκας Verb, perf act indic, 2 s πιπτω fall

μετανοεω repent

The aorist points to a sharp break with the present state.

ἔρχομαί σοι present tense, 'I'm on my way'.

κινεω move, remove

τοπος, ου m place

"Without love the congregation ceases to be a church. Its lampstand is removed." Mounce.

Revelation 2:6

ἀλλὰ τοῦτο ἔχεις ὅτι μισεῖς τὰ ἔργα τῶν Νικολαϊτῶν, ἃ κἀγὼ μισῶ.

μισεω hate, despise

The only certain information which we have concerning the Nicolaitans is that found in this book. It has been suggested that the Nicolaitans and Balaamites (2:14-15) are one and the same and that three churches were therefore affected by this sect.

"D.M.Beck takes the Nicolaitans to be a 'heretical sect, who retained pagan practices like idolatry and immorality contrary to the thought and the conduct required in Christian churches'... Broadly speaking, they had worked out a compromise with the pagan society in which they lived... Their claim to practice idolatry and immorality under the banner of spiritual liberty was soundly rejected by the Ephesian congregation." Mounce.

Witherington wonders whether their name was significant (i.e. a self-adopted name) – Nicolaitans = 'victory people.'

κἀγω a compound word = καὶ ἐγω

Revelation 2:7

ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ φαγεῖν ἐκ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τοῦ θεοῦ.

οὖς, ὠτος n ear, hearing

Cf. Mk 4:4 etc. for the common saying of Jesus. "The exhortation to hear what the Spirit says introduces a promise in the first three letters and follows a promise in the last four." Mounce.

νικαω conquer, overcome

Maybe a pun on the name Nicolaitans. One who remains faithful to Christ through all opposition and persecution (cf. 2:26; 3:21; 12:11; 15:2).

δωσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s διδομι

φαγεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐσθιω eat

ξύλον, ου n wood, tree

ζωη, ης f life

Cf. Gen 2:9; 3:22-24; Rev 22:2.

παραδεισος, ου m paradise

"Paradise was originally a Persian word for pleasure garden. In later Judaism it was used to portray the abode of the righteous dead. The Paradise of God in Revelation symbolises the eschatological state in which God and man are restored to that perfect fellowship which existed before the entrance of sin into the world." Mounce.

Revelation 2:8

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Σμύρνῃ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ὃς ἐγένετο νεκρὸς καὶ ἔζησεν·

Smyrna was a seaport rivalling Ephesus. The old city had been destroyed and a new one was built by the successor of Alexandria the Great. The city made claim to be the first city of Asia, disputing this title with Ephesus and Pergamum.

Nothing is known of the origin of this church. Mounce suggests that it was founded during the time Paul lived in Ephesus on his third missionary journey (cf. Acts 19:26).

γράψον see v.1

ὁδε, ἡδε, τοδε see v.1

πρωτος, η, ου see 1:17

Cf. note on 1:17.

ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s γινομαι
νεκρος, α, ου dead

ζαω live, be alive

Cf. 1:18. Ramsay has pointed out that the description of Christ as the first and the last, who was dead and came to life is well suited to a city which had also been dead and came to life, and which now claimed to be 'first'.

Revelation 2:9

Οἶδά σου τὴν θλιῖν καὶ τὴν πτωχείαν, ἀλλὰ πλούσιος εἶ, καὶ τὴν βλασφημίαν ἐκ τῶν λεγόντων Ἰουδαίους εἶναι ἑαυτούς, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν, ἀλλὰ συναγωγὴ τοῦ Σατανᾶ.

θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering

"The burden which crushes" Morris. A reference to affliction the church was suffering at the hands of Jewish and heathen persecutors.

πτωχεια, ας f poverty

"The linking of tribulation and poverty suggests a close connection between the two. In an antagonistic environment it would be difficult for the Christian to make a living, and thus many were economically destitute. They may also have been victims of mob violence and looting (cf. Heb. 10:34). Their poverty, however, was a material poverty: spiritually they were rich (note the contrast with the Laodicean church which claimed to be rich but was poor; 3:17)." Mounce.

Witherington suggests that their poverty may have been linked to the guild system – Christians may have been unwilling to participate in the guilds because of their inclusion of pagan or imperial ceremonies.

πλουσιος, α, ον rich

βλασφημια, ας f slander, blasphemy

"Jewish hostility to Christians seems to have stemmed both from their conviction that to worship a Galilean peasant who had died a criminal's death would be blasphemy and the apparent success of the Christians in evangelising God-fearers and even some from within Judaism." Mounce.

Witherington suggests that Jews, angered by Christian's witnessing in the synagogues, may have sought to make trouble for Christians by reporting them to the authorities as practicing an illegal religion, a *superstitio*. Christians had previously enjoyed a measure of protection from imperial power by being viewed as simply another Jewish sect. He comments, "Jews of course had a right to practice their own religion (something Rome allowed most ethnic groups they conquered to do), but in the Jews' case abstaining from other gods was a component of their faith. If Christians could be shown to be Gentiles or no longer Jews, they could not claim the benefits of an exemption from emperor worship, a precarious position in which to be."

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

Cf. Rom 2:28-29; 9:6 for Jews who are not real Jews – it takes more than physical descent.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/herself, itself

συναγωγη, ης f synagogue

Σατανας, α the Adversary, Satan

Cf. Jn. 8:31-47. Jesus said of Jewish opponents in his day that they were not children of Abraham but of Satan.

The strong language here is self-defensive rhetoric making deliberate use of hyperbole. It is not the rhetoric of hate or anti-Semitism. John means that by opposing and persecuting (or instigating the persecution of) the Christians, these Jews were doing the devil's work.

Revelation 2:10

μηδὲν φοβοῦ ἃ μέλλεις πάσχειν. ἰδοὺ μέλλει βάλλειν ὁ διάβολος ἐξ ὑμῶν εἰς φυλακὴν ἵνα πειρασθῆτε, καὶ ἔξετε θλιῖν ἡμερῶν δέκα. γίνου πιστὸς ἄχρι θανάτου, καὶ δώσω σοι τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς.

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing
φοβεομαι fear, be afraid (of)

Cf. Mt 10:28.

μελλω (before an infin) be going, be about

πασχω suffer, experience

βαλλω throw, place

διαβολος, ου m the devil

They should be strengthened in recognising this attack as the work of the devil. John spends much time in this book showing how Satan's hand can be detected in the affairs of this world but that the last word is always with God – it is *his* plans which will triumph.

φυλακη, ης f prison, imprisonment

Probably to await execution.

πειρασθητε Verb, aor pass subj, 2 pl πειραζω
test, put to the test, tempt

δεκα ten

A round number indicating a short period of time.

πιστος, η, ον faithful, believing
 ἄχρι prep with gen until, as far as
 θανατος, ου m death
 δωσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s διδωμι
 στεφανος, ου m wreath, crown

A wreath, not a royal crown which would be διαδημα. Smyrna was famous for its games. The picture here is of the victory wreath. Witherington adds that Smyrna had the wreath as a symbol for its city, a symbol often found on inscriptions.

ζωη, ης f life

Life is the victor's prize (cf. James 1:12; 2 Tim 4:8; 1 Thess 2:19; 1 Peter 5:4; Heb 2:9).

Revelation 2:11

ὁ ἔχων οὓς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. ὁ νικῶν οὐ μὴ ἀδικηθῆ ἕκ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ δευτέρου.

οὓς, ὅτος n see v.7.

νικαω conquer, overcome
 ἀδικηθῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s ἀδικεω
 harm

δευτερος, α, ον second

"The second death is a rabbinic term for the death of the wicked in the next world ... In Revelation 20:14 it is identified as the lake of fire, and in 21:8 as the final lot of 'the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted,' etc. Over the faithful, who share in the first resurrection, it has no power (20:6)." Mounce.

Revelation 2:12

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Περγάμῳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἔχων τὴν ῥομφαίαν τὴν δίστομον τὴν ὀξεῖαν·

Pergamum was the seat of government of the Roman province of Asia. The first temple of the imperial cult was built there in 29 B.C. in honour of Rome and Augustus. This is why John speaks of Pergamum as the 'place where Satan has his throne'. It was also the centre of the worship of Asklepios, the serpent-god who was famed for healing and who was referred to as 'saviour'. Witherington adds, "Pergamum was also famous for its 200,000 volume library. Here above all the church was likely to clash with the dictates of Hellenistic culture and the imperial cult."

ῥομφαία, ας f see 1:16

δίστομος, ον see 1:16

ὀξυς, εἰα, υ see 1:16

"In the context of life in a provincial capital where the proconsul was granted the 'right of the sword' (*ius gladii*), the power to execute at will, the sovereign Christ with the two-edged sword would remind the threatened congregation that ultimate power over life and death belongs to God." Mounce.

Revelation 2:13

Οἶδα ποῦ κατοικεῖς, ὅπου ὁ θρόνος τοῦ Σατανᾶ, καὶ κρατεῖς τὸ ὄνομά μου, καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὴν πίστιν μου καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἀντιπᾶς, ὁ μάρτυς μου, ὁ πιστός μου, ὃς ἀπεκτάνθη παρ' ὑμῖν, ὅπου ὁ Σατανᾶς κατοικεῖ.

ποῦ interrogative adverb where (?)

κατοικεω live, settle, inhabit

ὅπου adv. where

θρονος, ου m throne

Some think that the allusion is to the serpent god Asklepios. Most however, see it as a reference to the fact that Pergamum was the official cult centre of emperor worship in Asia. Caird says "John believed that Rome was the latest and greatest agent of Satan, not only because of her totalitarian demand for that absolute allegiance which is due to God alone, but also because he saw in her the epitome of all paganism and worldliness."

κρατεω hold, hold fast

ἠρνήσω Verb, aor midd dep indic, 2 s

ἀρνεομαι deny, disown, renounce

πιστις, εως f faith

By yielding to the pressure of burning incense to the emperor and declaring 'Caesar is Lord'.

μαρτυς, μαρτυρος dat pl μαρτυσιν m
 witness, martyr

Suggests that he alone had thus far lost his life for the faith. It is not clear whether this was by judicial execution or mob violence.

πιστος, η, ον see v.10

Withington comments, "It is striking that Antipas is given the same title as Jesus, 'the faithful witness'."

ἀπεκτάνθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s

ἀποκτεινω kill, put to death

"A contrast is intended with the first clause [of the verse] – both the believers and their ultimate adversary live in the same locality." Mounce.

Revelation 2:14

ἀλλὰ ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὀλίγα, ὅτι ἔχεις ἐκεῖ
κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν Βαλαάμ, ὃς ἐδίδασκειν
τῷ Βαλάκ βαλεῖν σκάνδαλον ἐνώπιον τῶν
υἰῶν Ἰσραήλ, φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυτα καὶ
πορνεῦσαι·

ὀλιγος, η, ον little, small; pl. few

There may be more than a few things we do not like about a church, but what matters is the verdict of Christ.

ἐκεῖ there, in that place

κρατεω see v.13

διδαχη, ης f teaching, what is taught

"John's opprobrious name for the teaching of the Nicolaitans." Caird.

διδασκω teach

βαλεῖν Verb, aor act infin βαλλω throw
σκανδαλον, ου n that which causes sin/
offence, obstacle

ἐνώπιον prep + gen before, in front of

"This reference is not to a body of doctrine but to Balaam's activity of advising the Midianite women how to beguile the Israelites into acting treacherously against the Lord. Numbers 25:1ff. reports that the Israelites 'began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab,' who in turn were successful in getting them to worship their gods and take part in their sacred meals. Although there is no mention of Balaam at this point, we learn in Numbers 31:16 of his role in Israel's apostasy... Thus Balaam became a prototype of all corrupt teachers who betrayed believers into fatal compromise with worldly ideologies." Mounce.

φαγεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐσθιω eat
εἰδωλοθυτον, ου n meat offered to idols

Probably at pagan festivals.

πορνευω commit sexual immorality

May either be literal (pagan festivities often included sexual licence), or figurative (i.e. religious infidelity).
Witherington comments, "Whether John has in mind sex with sacred prostitutes (which would mean that πορνεία is used in its technical and root sense) or, more likely, the sexual dalliance that went on at dinner parties held in the temple precincts is uncertain. In either case John is warning against going to pagan temples and participating in events there."

Revelation 2:15

οὕτως ἔχεις καὶ σὺ κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν
Νικολαϊτῶν ὁμοίως.

οὕτως thus, in this way

Suggests that the previous verse referred to the Nicolaitans.

ὁμοίως likewise, in the same way

Witherington writes, "G.R.Beasley-Murray makes the appealing suggestion that the Nicolaitans may have been high-status Christians who believed a certain amount of compromise with the dominant culture was all right. They could have argued, 'Even Romans don't really believe the Emperor is a god, so why not just go along, and have a good living as a member of a guild?' They might have been dualists like some of the Corinthians (see 1 Cor. 8-10), arguing that what one did with the body did not affect one's spiritual condition and status. The complaint against Balaam is a complaint against syncretism, the luring of Christians into participation in pagan cults."

Revelation 2:16

μετανόησον οὖν· εἰ δὲ μὴ, ἔρχομαί σοι ταχύ,
καὶ πολεμήσω μετ' αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ ῥομφαίᾳ τοῦ
στόματός μου.

μετανοεω repent

"Only a portion of the church has fallen prey to the pernicious doctrine of the Balaamites, but all are guilty of not taking action against their presence. The fault is the opposite of Ephesus where the heretics were rooted out but love was missing (2:2, 4)." Mounce.

ταχυ adv quickly, without delay, soon

πολεμεω wage war, fight

The sword of Christ's mouth is more to be feared than the sword of Rome.

Revelation 2:17

ὁ ἔχων οὓς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς
ἐκκλησίαις. τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ τοῦ μάννα
τοῦ κεκρυμμένου, καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ ψῆφον
λευκὴν, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα καινὸν
γεγραμμένον ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ ὁ λαμβάνων.

νικαω see v.11

δώσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s δίδωμι
κεκρυμμένου Verb, perf pass ptc, m & n gen
s κρυπτω hide

Reflects a Jewish legend that the pot of manna from the Ark was taken by Jeremiah at the time of the destruction of Solomon's Temple and hidden underground. There it would remain until the time of the Messiah when the manna, the ark and the temple would all be restored. "To those who conquer is offered not idol food but hidden manna (i.e., bread that is not currently visible and that comes from heaven). Here is the promise of a much more lasting and satisfying fellowship than one could get at a pagan feast, drawing on Jewish messianic traditions about the repetition of the manna miracle in the messianic kingdom." Witherington.

δώσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s δίδωμι

ψηφος, ου f pebble, stone; vote
λευκος, η, ον white, shining

There are several explanations of the white stone:

- i) Stones were used as tickets of admission to the theatre or to a banquet. Caird and Mounce say that this is the conqueror's ticket of admission into the heavenly banquet.
- ii) Some suggest that a white stone was used in a court of law to signify acquittal.
- iii) Some think that it refers to a Rabbinic belief that in the last days the manna would be accompanied by precious stones falling from heaven.

Morris says, "We simply do not know what the white stone signified, though clearly it did convey some assurance of blessing."

καινος, η, ον new
γεγραμμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
nom/acc s γραφω

Mounce thinks it could be the name of the victor himself. Witherington adds, "The new name implies a new identity and being someone special in the kingdom. Christians did not have to compromise on earth by socialising with pagans in temples when they had a much better engraved invitation to a much better banquet."

οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing

Revelation 2:18

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Θυατείροις ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ὁ ἔχων τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ ὡς φλόγα πυρός, καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὅμοιοι χαλκολιβάνῳ·

Thyatira was a prosperous centre for manufacturing and trade (cf. Acts 16:14). "Since the trade-guilds were inseparably intertwined with local religious observances, they posed a special problem for the economic well-being of Christians. The divine guardian of the city was Tyrinnos (identified with the Greek sun-god Apollo), who would be conceived of as the patron of the guilds and therefore honoured in their festivities." Mounce.

ὁδε, ἦδε, τοδε see v.1

Cultic worship of Apollo Tyrinnos was merged with that of the emperor, both being considered sons of Zeus. In contrast with their empty claims, Christ declares himself the Son of God. The title also prepares the way for the quotation from Psalm 2 in v.21.

φλοξ, φλογος f see 1:14

πυρ, ος n see 1:14

In contrast with Thyatira's sun-god. He is one who sees all.

πους, ποδος m see 1:15

ὁμοιος, α, ον see 1:15

χαλκολιβανον, ου n see 1:15

It has been conjectured that the local guild of bronze-smiths would have known the precise meaning of this term which occurs nowhere else in Greek literature.

Revelation 2:19

Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα, καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν διακονίαν καὶ τὴν ὑπομονὴν σου, καὶ τὰ ἔργα σου τὰ ἔσχατα πλείονα τῶν πρώτων.

διακονια, ας f ministry, service
υπομονη, ης f patience, endurance
ἐσχατος, η, ον adj last, final
πλειων, πλειον οι πλεον more, most
πρωτος, η, ον first

Cf. the message to the church at Ephesus in v.4.

Revelation 2:20

ἀλλὰ ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὅτι ἀφεῖς τὴν γυναῖκα Ἰεζάβελ, ἣ λέγουσα ἑαυτὴν προφῆτιν, καὶ διδάσκει καὶ πλανᾷ τοὺς ἔμους δούλους πορνεῦσαι καὶ φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυτα.

ἀφημι allow, tolerate

Cf. v.4 for a contrasting use of the same verb. Christian *laissez faire* can be a carelessness either about the demands of love and Christian discipleship or about the inroads of heresy.

γυνη, αικος f woman

"She is described as 'That Jezebel of a woman' because here relaxation of the terms of the apostolic decree or further compromise with paganism (cf. v.14) placed her in the succession of the OT Jezebel, whose Baal-cult was marked by idolatry and ritual prostitution." Bruce.

προφητις, ιδος f prophetess

διδασκω teach

πλαναω lead astray, mislead, deceive

ἐμος, η, ον 1st pers possessive adj my, mine

δουλος, ου m slave, servant

πορνευω see v.14

φαγεῖν see v.14

εἰδωλοθυτον, ου n see v.14

A charge similar to that concerning the Nicolaitans (cf. vv. 14-15). "The Thyatiran Jezebel is probably some prominent woman within the church who, like her OT counterpart, was influencing the people of God to forsake loyalty to God by promoting a tolerance toward and involvement in pagan practices. This extended to fornication and participation in the religious feasts connected with membership in trade guilds." Mounce.

Morris comments, "The strong trade guilds in this city would have made it very difficult for any Christian to earn his living without belonging to a guild. But membership involved attendance at guild banquets, and this in turn meant eating meat which had first been sacrificed to an idol."

Revelation 2:21

καὶ ἔδωκα αὐτῇ χρόνον ἵνα μετανοήσῃ, καὶ οὐ θέλει μετανοῆσαι ἐκ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς.

ἔδωκα Verb, aor act indic, 1 s διδωμι
χρονος, ου m time, period of time
μετανοεω repent
θελω wish, will
πορνεια, ας f sexual immorality

"The concept of religious infidelity under the figure of harlotry is common in the OT. 'Rejoice not, O Israel!... for you have played the harlot, forsaking your God' (Hos 9:1; cf. Jer 3:6; Ezek 23:19; etc.). The fornication of which Jezebel was not willing to repent was her adulterous alliance with the pagan environment." Mounce.

Revelation 2:22

ἰδοὺ βάλλω αὐτὴν εἰς κλίνην, καὶ τοὺς μοιχεύοντας μετ' αὐτῆς εἰς θλίψιν μεγάλην, ἐὰν μὴ μετανοήσωσιν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῆς:

κλινη, ης f bed, couch, sickbed

Here a sickbed. She will be struck with disease as a punishment.

μοιχευω commit adultery
θλιψις, εως f see v.9
μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great
ἐὰν μη unless
μετανοήσωσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3 pl
μετανοεω see v.21

Witherington comments, "Christ inflicted great suffering in the hopes of repentance not because he wanted even Jezebel to undergo final judgment at the eschaton."

Revelation 2:23

καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς ἀποκτενῶ ἐν θανάτῳ· καὶ γνώσονται πᾶσαι αἱ ἐκκλησίαι ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἐραυνῶν νεφροὺς καὶ καρδίας, καὶ δώσω ὑμῖν ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα ὑμῶν.

τεκνον, ου n child

"Jezebel's 'children' are not the literal offspring of her adulteries (so Beckwith...) or a second generation of heretics (Lenski...), but those who have so unreservedly embraced the antinomian doctrines of their spiritual mother that they are best described as younger members of her family." Mounce. They are the same as 'those who commit adultery with her' v.22.

ἀποκτενῶ Verb, fut act indic, 1 s ἀποκτενω
kill, put to death

θανατος, ου m see v.10

To 'kill with death' is a Hebraism meaning either 'to slay completely' or 'to kill by pestilence' (cf. Ezek 33:27; Rev 6:8).

γνωριζω make known, disclose, know
ἐραυνωω search, examine, try to find out
νεφρος, ου m (lit kidney) mind, thought

Used of the will and affections.

He searches heart and mind with burning eyes.

δωσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s διδωμι
ἐκαστος, η, ον each, every

Cf. Jer 17:10, also Mt 16:27; Rom 2:6.

Witherington comments, "There is indeed a judgment of Christian works, with rewards and punishment depending on the evaluation."

Revelation 2:24

ὑμῖν δὲ λέγω τοῖς λοιποῖς τοῖς ἐν Θουατείροις, ὅσοι οὐκ ἔχουσιν τὴν διδαχὴν ταύτην, οἵτινες οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰ βαθέα τοῦ Σατανᾶ, ὡς λέγουσιν, οὐ βάλλω ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἄλλο βάρος:

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other
ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as;
pl. as many as, all

διδαχη, ης f see v.14

οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἡτις, ὁ τι
who, which, whoever, whichever

ἔγνωσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl γνωσκω
βαθος, εια, υ deep

Either:

i) This was actually their claim. They sought to get involved in pagan society in order to become knowledgeable in the mysteries of evil and so prove that evil is unable to touch the person who is saved by grace.

Or:

ii) Like Paul (1 Cor 2:10) they claimed to know the deep secrets of God and it is John who contemptuously calls their knowledge Satanic (so Witherington).

ὡς λεγουσιν uncertain whether this refers to the apostates themselves or to those who remained faithful.

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other
βαρος, ους n burden, weight

Phillips and Mounce connect verses 24 and 25 so that it reads 'no other burden except that you hold onto what you have until I come'.

Revelation 2:25

πλὴν ὃ ἔχετε κρατήσατε ἄχρι οὗ ἂν ἦξω.

πλὴν conj. but, nevertheless, however

ὃ ἔχετε The sum total of Christian doctrine and hope and privilege.

κρατεῶ hold, hold fast

ἄχρι and ἄχρι οὗ until

ἦξω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s ἦκω come, have come, be present

Revelation 2:26

καὶ ὁ νικῶν καὶ ὁ τηρῶν ἄχρι τέλους τὰ ἔργα μου, δώσω αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν,

νικῶ see v.11

τηρεῶ keep, observe, maintain

τέλος, οὐς n end, conclusion

τὰ ἔργα μου in contrast with 'her works' (v.22); cf. also v.19.

δώσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s δίδωμι

ἐξουσία, ας f authority, power

ἔθνος, οὐς n nation, people

John here quotes from Psalm 2. Those who are faithful to Christ will share in *his* reign.

Revelation 2:27

καὶ ποιμανεῖ αὐτοὺς ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ ὡς τὰ σκευῆ τὰ κεραμικὰ συντρίβεται,

ποιμανεῖ Verb, fut act indic, 3 s ποιμαίνω

tend as a shepherd, rule

This verb, while in the Greek used only of tending sheep, reflects an ambiguous Hebrew verb which may mean either to shepherd or to rule. Among the Hebrews the ruler was regarded as shepherd of his people (Jer 23:4f.; 25:34f.; Ezek 34 etc.).

ῥάβδος, οὐ f stick, rod, sceptre

σιδηρούς, α, οὐν made of iron

Mounce thinks the shepherd's staff or club. Perhaps an oak club capped with iron to ward off the attacks of marauding beasts.

σκευός, οὐς n object, vessel

κεραμικός, η, οὐν earthen, made of clay

συντριβῶ break in pieces, shatter

"The description of this rule as the shattering of the potter's vessel speaks of the absolute power of the victorious Christ and his followers over the rebellious nations." Mounce.

Revelation 2:28

ὡς κἀγὼ εἴληφα παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου, καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ τὸν ἀστέρα τὸν πρωϊνόν.

κἀγὼ a compound word = καὶ ἐγὼ

εἴληφα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s λαμβάνω

ἀστηρ, ερος m star

πρωῖνος, η, οὐν morning

"No completely satisfactory answer for this symbol has been offered. Among the many suggestions one finds

i) An allusion to Lucifer of Isaiah 14:12,

ii) Christ himself (cf. 22:16),

iii) a reference to Daniel 12:3 and the immortality of the righteous,

iv) the dawn of eternal life,

v) a literal reference to the planet Venus, and

vi) the Holy Spirit." Mounce.

Witherington, referring to Rev 22:16, comments, "The morning star is Venus, which to Romans was the symbol of victory and sovereignty. Christians will not obtain such things through pagan rituals or by following pagan teaching, but from Christ."

Revelation 2:29

ὁ ἔχων οὓς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

οὓς, ὄτος n cf. 2:7

Revelation 3:1

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Σάρδεσιν ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἔχων τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀστέρας·

Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα, ὅτι ὄνομα ἔχεις ὅτι ζῆς, καὶ νεκρὸς εἶ.

"In the sixth century BC Sardis was one of the most powerful cities of the ancient world. Yet by the Roman period it had declined to the point that Ramsay could appropriately describe it as 'a relic of the period of barbaric warfare, which lived rather on its ancient prestige than on its suitability to present conditions.'" Mounce.

The city possessed an almost impregnable acropolis which had never been captured in battle. However, the acropolis had twice fallen, on both occasions the invaders had come under the cover of darkness and had met no resistance – like a thief in the night.

ὁδε, ἦδε, τοδε see 2:1

The Spirit is the giver of life, hence the reference here to Christ as the one who possesses the fulness of the Spirit.

ἀστηρ, ερος m see 1:16

ὄνομα, τος n name, reputation

ζῶ live, be alive

νεκρός, α, οὐν dead

Despite the appearance of life, the lack of persecution from outside and lack of division by heresy within, the church is without spiritual life – it is dead. Mounce says that "the majority had so fully compromised with the pagan environment that the church was Christian in name only (ie. 'nominally' Christian)."

Revelation 3:2

γίνου γρηγορῶν, καὶ στήρισον τὰ λοιπὰ ἃ ἐμελλον ἀποθανεῖν, οὐ γὰρ εὔρηκά σου τὰ ἔργα πεπληρωμένα ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ μου·

γρηγορεω be or keep awake, be alert

'Show yourself watchful'. It's a wake-up call. "The exhortations to watchfulness would carry special weight in Sardis because twice in its history the acropolis had fallen to the enemy due to a lack of vigilance on the part of the defenders... As in history, so in life, to consider oneself secure and fail to remain alert is to court disaster." Mounce.

στηρίζω strengthen
λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining

There is a small residue of spiritual vitality.

μελλω (before an infin) be going, be about
ἀποθνήσκω die

εὔρηκά Verb, perf act indic, 1 s εὕρισκω
find, discover

πεπληρωμένα Verb, perf pass ptc, n nom/acc
pl πληροω fill, make full

Their works fall short of what they ought to have been. Perhaps also an allusion to the immense temple to Artemis which remained unfinished in Sardis.

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

Picking up on the lack of reference here to persecution, Caird remarks, "Content with mediocrity, lacking both the enthusiasm to entertain a heresy and the depth of conviction which provokes intolerance, it was too innocuous to be worth persecuting."

Revelation 3:3

μνημόνευε οὖν πῶς εἴληφας καὶ ἤκουσας καὶ τηρεῖ, καὶ μετανόησον· ἐὰν οὖν μὴ γρηγορήσης, ἦξω ὡς κλέπτης, καὶ οὐ μὴ γνῶς ποῖαν ὥραν ἦξω ἐπὶ σέ·

μνημονευω remember, keep in mind

"Although πῶς regularly indicates manner ('how'), the connection with τηρεῖ, which needs an object, suggests it should be translated 'what' (cf. Beckwith...)." Mounce.

εἴληφας Verb, perf act indic, 2 s λαμβανω
τηρεω keep, observe, maintain

μετανοεω repent

ἦξω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s ἴκω come

κλέπτης, ον m thief

Cf. Mt 24:42-44; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10. Here however the reference is not to the second coming but to an imminent act of judgement – which nevertheless anticipates the final day of judgement.

γνῶς Verb, aor act subj, 2 s γινώσκω
ποιος, α, ον interrog pro. what
ώρα, ας f hour, moment

Revelation 3:4

ἀλλὰ ἔχεις ὀλίγα ὀνόματα ἐν Σάρδεσιν ἃ οὐκ ἐμόλυναν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν, καὶ περιπατήσουσιν μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν λευκοῖς, ὅτι ἄξιοί εἰσιν.

ὀλιγος, η, ον little, small; pl. few
ὄνομα, τος n name, person

Name here stands for the whole person.

ἐμόλυναν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl μολυνω
defile, make unclean

ἱματιον, ον n garment, clothing, robe

"It is often noted ... that since the manufacture and dying of woollen goods was a principal trade in Sardis, an allusion to defiled garments would be immediately recognised." Mounce. The reference is to compromised witness through accommodation to a pagan society.

περιπατεω walk
λευκος, η, ον white, shining

Cf. Rev 7:9. The white robes are a symbol of purity and holiness. Cf. Rev 19:8.

ἄξιος, α, ον worthy, deserving, fitting

"They themselves have done nothing to merit their exalted position, but are worthy in the sense that they have withstood the pressure to apostatise and hence have done nothing which would result in forfeiting their position." Mounce.

Revelation 3:5

ὁ νικῶν οὕτως περιβαλεῖται ἐν ἱματίοις λευκοῖς, καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐξαλείψω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς βίβλου τῆς ζωῆς, καὶ ὁμολογήσω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐνώπιον τοῦ πατρὸς μου καὶ ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ.

νικαω conquer, overcome

οὕτως thus, in this way

περιβαλεῖται Verb, fut midd indic, 3 s

περιβαλλω put on, clothe, dress

"It would seem therefore, that the white garments promised to the overcomer in 3:5 represent attire appropriate to the heavenly state. Since they are made white by washing in the blood of the Lamb (7:13), the figure is highly appropriate to portray justification." Mounce.

ἐξαλειψω wipe out, remove, cancel

βιβλος, ου f book, record
ζωη, ης f life

Cf. Ex 32:32. All ancient cities kept a register in which the names of the citizens were recorded. The Book of Life is the register of citizenship of the heavenly city. Mounce considers whether or not this passage teaches that those who have been saved may subsequently be lost. Having considered the arguments on both sides he wisely concludes, "It is hermeneutically unsound to base theological doctrine solely on either parables or apocalyptic imagery. Better to allow the text, even when difficult, to present its own picture."

ὁμολογεω confess, declare
ἐνώπιον see v.2

Cf. Mt 10:32 and parallels. It is a courtroom picture – Christ vouches for his people.

Revelation 3:6

ὁ ἔχων οὐδὲ ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

οὐδὲ, ὅτος n see 2:7

Verse 7

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Φιλαδελφείᾳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἅγιος, ὁ ἀληθινός, ὁ ἔχων τὴν κλεῖν Δαβὶδ, ὁ ἀνοίγων καὶ οὐδεὶς κλείσει, καὶ κλειῶν καὶ οὐδεὶς ἀνοίγει·

Philadelphia was the newest of the cities addressed in these seven letters. It stood in a region where earthquakes were common and had been totally destroyed along with Sardis in 17 AD. The city had later been rebuilt and was devoted to Hellenistic culture – being called 'little Athens' for all its temples.

ὁδε, ἦδε, τοδε see 2:1

ἅγιος, α, ον holy

ἀληθινος, η, ον real, genuine, true

Cf. 6:10 where applied to God. Jesus is God and is the true Messiah.

κλεις, ειδος f key

ἀνοίγω open

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδεν no one, nothing

κλειω shut, shut up, lock

Because the letter is primarily concerned with the church's relation to the Jews, it opens with Christ's claim to be the true Messiah, who holds the key of David. John echoes here the language of Is 22:22 in which the key of the house of David is entrusted to a new steward Eliakim, as a symbol of his complete control over the royal household and of his authority to grant or refuse access to the king's presence.

Morris thinks that the opening and shutting refers to admission to the city of David, the heavenly Jerusalem. Mounce adds "It may be an intentional contrast with the practice of the local synagogue in excommunicating Christian Jews."

Revelation 3:8

Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα – ἰδοὺ δέδωκα ἐνώπιόν σου θύραν ἠνεωγμένην, ἣν οὐδεὶς δύναται κλεῖσαι αὐτήν – ὅτι μικρὰν ἔχεις δύναμιν, καὶ ἐτήρησάς μου τὸν λόγον, καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὸ ὄνομά μου.

δέδωκα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s διδομι

ἐνώπιον see v.2

θύρα, ας f door, gate

ἠνεωγμένην Verb, perf pass ptc, f acc s

ἀνοίγω

Most think this refers to opportunity for missionary activity (1 Cor 16:9, cf. 2 Cor 2:12; Col 4:3).

"Ramsay explains the expression in terms of Philadelphia's geographic position at the eastern end of the valley leading up onto the great central plain. As the 'keeper of the gateway to the plateau' it had been given a unique opportunity to carry the gospel to the cities of Phrygia... A different interpretation, however, fits the context better. The preceding verse spoke of a messianic kingdom whose access was under the absolute control of Christ. He is the one who possesses the key and can open and shut at will. Now in verse 8 he reminds the Christians at Philadelphia who may have been excommunicated from the local synagogue (vs. 9) that he has placed before them an open door into the eternal kingdom, and no one can shut it." Mounce. So also Morris.

δυναμαι can, be able to

ὅτι μικρὰν ἔχεις δύναμιν continues the thought of the first four words. The RSV makes this explicit by repeating 'I know' and continuing 'that you have little power...'

Probably a small congregation that had not made a major impact on the city.

τηρεω keep, observe, maintain

ἠρνήσω Verb, aor midd dep indic, 2 s

ἄρνεομαι deny, disown, renounce

The aorists suggest a particular period of trial that had been faced.

Revelation 3:9

ἰδοὺ διδῶ ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς τοῦ Σατανᾶ, τῶν λεγόντων ἑαυτοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ ψεύδονται – ἰδοὺ ποιήσω αὐτοὺς ἵνα ἤξουσιν καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν ἐνώπιον τῶν ποδῶν σου, καὶ γνώσιν ὅτι ἐγὼ ἠγάπησά σε.

διδῶ Verb, pres act indic (variant form)

διδωμι

Cf 2:9 By rejecting the Messiah they have lost their right to claim that they are Jews. Cf. Rom 2:28,29; Gal 6:16. In opposing Christ and his people they show themselves to be the servants of Satan, cf. Jn 8:44.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/herself, itself

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἰμι

ψευδομαι lie, speak untruth, deceive

ἴκω come

προσκυνεω fall at another's feet

πους, ποδος m foot

Cf. the OT prophecies in Is 45:14; 49:23; Zech 8:20ff. which are in the context of the conversion of the Gentile nations (Is 49:6). Mounce says, "What the Jews fondly expected from the Gentiles, they themselves will be forced to render to the Christians. They will play the role of the heathen and acknowledge that the church is the true Israel of God." Mounce thinks that the reference is not to conversion but simply eschatological "acknowledgement that the church is the object of Christ's love."

γνωσις Verb, fut act indic, 3 s γινωσκω

ἀγαπαω love, show love for

σε Pronoun, acc s συ

Revelation 3:10

ὅτι ἐτήρησας τὸν λόγον τῆς ὑπομονῆς μου, κἀγὼ σε τηρήσω ἐκ τῆς ὥρας τοῦ πειρασμοῦ τῆς μελλούσης ἔρχεσθαι ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης, πειράσαι τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance

The believers at Philadelphia had kept "Christ's command to endure patiently for his sake." Bruce.

καγω from και ἐγω and I, I also

ἐκ τῆς ὥρας is either:

i) 'Keep you from undergoing trial...', or

ii) 'Keep you right through the trial...'

The latter is the more likely. Cf Jn 17:15.

ὥρα, ας f hour, moment, period of time

πειρασμος, ου m period or process of testing, trial

Reference is to the worldwide πειρασμος which is the subject of the rest of this book.

μελλω (before an infin) be going, be about

οικουμενη, ης f world, inhabited earth

ὅλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire

πειραζω test, put to the test

κατοικεω live, inhabit

Revelation 3:11

ἔρχομαι ταχύ· κράτει ὁ ἔχεις, ἵνα μηδεὶς λάβῃ τὸν στέφανόν σου.

ταχυ adv quickly, without delay, soon

Cf. 1:1

κρατεω see 2:25

μηδεις, μηδεμα, μηδεν no one, nothing

στεφανος, ου m see 2:10

Philadelphia was well known for its games and festivals.

Revelation 3:12

ὁ νικῶν ποιήσω αὐτὸν στῦλον ἐν τῷ ναῷ τοῦ θεοῦ μου, καὶ ἔξω οὐ μὴ ἐξέλθῃ ἔτι, καὶ γράψω ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ μου καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς πόλεως τοῦ θεοῦ μου, τῆς καινῆς Ἰερουσαλήμ, ἡ καταβαίνουσα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ μου, καὶ τὸ ὄνομά μου τὸ καινόν.

νικαω see 2:11

στυλος, ου m pillar, column

Cf. Gal 2:9; 1 Tim 3:15. A picture of stability and permanence.

ναος, ου m temple, sanctuary

ἐξω adv. out, outside, away

ἔτι still, yet, any more

"To a city that had experienced devastating earthquakes which caused people to flee into the countryside and establish temporary dwellings there, the promise of permanence within the New Jerusalem would have a special meaning." Mounce.

γραφω write

πολις, εως f city, town

καινος, η, ον new

καταβαινω come down, descend

οὐρανος, ου m heaven

"The impact of the threefold inscription is to show that the faithful belong to God, hold citizenship in the New Jerusalem, and in a special way are related to Christ." Mounce. Cf. 7:3; 14:1; 22:4 also Gal 4:26; Phil 3:20. Reddish comments, "Now those who have kept 'the name' will be inscribed with the name."

Revelation 3:13

ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

οὖς, ὠτος n see 2:7

Revelation 3:14

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Λαοδικεῖα ἐκκλησίας γράβων· Τάδε λέγει ὁ Ἄμην, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός, ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ·

Laodicea was an extremely wealthy city, famous for its wool and textiles. Agricultural and commercial prosperity had resulted in Laodicea also becoming a centre for banking. It also had a notable medical school which, among other things, was famed for its eye-salve. However, the city lacked a natural water supply. Its water was piped in from hot springs 6 miles away, arriving tepid and so impure as to have an emetic effect. There was a sizable Jewish community in the city. The church had probably been founded during Paul's stay at Ephesus. Paul wrote them a letter (Col 4:16) which was subsequently lost.

ὁδε, ἦδε, τοδε see 2:1

μαρτυς, μαρτυρος dat pl μαρτυσιν m
witness

πιστος, η, ον faithful, trustworthy, reliable

"Ford suggests that it was added to clarify for the non-Hebrew-speaking audience the meaning of 'amen'... It presents the trustworthiness of Christ in sharp contrast to the unfaithfulness of the Laodicean church." Mounce. God is called the Amen in Isa 65:16.

ἀληθινος, η, ον see v.7

ἀρχη, ης f beginning, origin

κτισις, εως f creation

Cf. Col 1:15. The Laodiceans should have been familiar with the Colossian letter (see Col 4:16).

Revelation 3:15

Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα, ὅτι οὔτε ψυχρὸς εἶ οὔτε ζεστός, ὄφελον ψυχρὸς ἢς ἢ ζεστός.

οὔτε not, nor (οὔτε ... οὔτε neither ... nor)

ψυχρος, α, ον cold

ζεστος, η, ον hot

ὄφελον would that, I wish that

ἦς Verb, imperfect indic, 2 s εἰμι

ἢ or

"In an important article, Rudwick and Green argue that the adjectives 'hot,' 'cold,' and 'lukewarm' are not to be taken as describing the spiritual fervour (or lack of it) of people. The contrast is between the hot medicinal waters of Hierapolis and the cold, pure waters of Colossae. Thus the church in Laodicea 'was providing neither refreshment for the spiritually weary, nor healing for the spiritually sick. It was totally ineffective, and thus distasteful to the Lord'... On this interpretation the church is not being called to task for its spiritual temperature but for the barrenness of its works. Among the several advantages of this interpretation is the fact that it is no longer necessary to wonder why Christ would prefer the church to be 'cold' rather than 'lukewarm'." Mounce. See also Colin Hemer's Article in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol 1, pp 317-319.

Revelation 3:16

οὕτως, ὅτι χλιαρὸς εἶ καὶ οὔτε ζεστός οὔτε ψυχρὸς, μέλλω σε ἐμέσαι ἐκ τοῦ στόματός μου.

οὕτως thus, in this way

χλιαρος, α, ον tepid, lukewarm

μέλλω (before an infin) be going, be about

ἐμεω spit out, vomit

στομα, τος n mouth

Revelation 3:17

ὅτι λέγεις ὅτι Πλούσιός εἰμι καὶ πεπλούτηκα καὶ οὐδὲν χρειάν ἔχω, καὶ οὐκ οἶδας ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ ταλαίπωρος καὶ ἐλεινὸς καὶ πτωχὸς καὶ τυφλὸς καὶ γυμνός,

πλουσιος, α, ον rich

πεπλούτηκα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s

πλουτεω be rich, grow rich

οὐδεις, οὐδεμα, οὐδεν no one, nothing

χρεια, ας f need, want

ταλαιπωρος, ον miserable, wretched

ἐλεινός, η, ον pitiable

πτωχος, η, ον poor, pitiful

τυφλος, η, ον blind

γυμνος, η, ον naked, poorly dressed

Cf. 2:9.

Revelation 3:18

συμβουλεύω σοι ἀγοράσαι παρ' ἐμοῦ χρυσίον πεπυρωμένον ἐκ πυρὸς ἵνα πλουτήσης, καὶ ἱμάτια λευκὰ ἵνα περιβάλῃ καὶ μὴ φανερωθῇ ἡ αἰσχύνη τῆς γυμνότητός σου, καὶ κολλούριον ἐγχεῖσαι τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς σου ἵνα βλέπῃς.

συμβουλεω advise, counsel

ἀγοραζω buy, redeem

χρυσιον, ου n gold

πεπυρωμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
nom/acc s πυροομαι burn; perf. be
refined

πυρ, ος n fire

ίματιον, ου n see v.4

λευκος, η, ον see v.4

"A contrast with the black woollen fabric for which for which the city was famous could be intended, but the figure of white garments as symbolic of righteousness is so widely used in Revelation (3:4,5; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9,13-14; 19:14) that no local allusion is necessary." Mounce.

περιβάλλη Verb, aor act subj, 2 s περιβαλλω
see v.5

φανερωθῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s φανερωω
make known, reveal, make evident

αίσχυνη, ης f shame, disgrace

γυμνοτης, ητος f nakedness

κολλουριον, ου n eye salve

"Laodicea was known for its famous medical school ... and exported 'Phrygian powder' widely used as an eye-salve." Mounce.

έγγριω rub on (of ointment)

βλεπω see, be able to see

Revelation 3:19

έγω όσους εάν φιλω έλέγχω και παιδεύω·
ζηήλευε ούν και μετανόησον.

Ramsay considers vv 19-22 an epilogue to all 7 letters but this view has attracted little support.

όσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as,
whoever; pl. as many as, all
φιλω love, have deep feeling for

Charles comments, "It is a touching and unexpected manifestation of love to those who deserve it least among the seven churches." And Witherington writes, "Even with such people as the Laodiceans, Christ does not give up."

έλεγχω show (someone his) fault, convince
(someone of his) error, rebuke

παιδευω instruct, train, discipline, correct

Cf. Prov 3:11,12; Heb 12:5,6.

ζηλωω be jealous of, be zealous

μετανοεω repent

Revelation 3:20

ιδου έστηκα επί την θύραν και κρούω· εάν τις
ακούση τῆς φωνῆς μου και ανοίξη την θύραν,
και εισελεύσομαι προς αυτόν και δειπνήσω
μετ' αυτού και αυτός μετ' έμοῦ.

έστηκα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s ιστημι
stand

θυρα, ας f door, gate

κρουω knock (at a door)

Present continuous.

ανοίξη Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ανοιγω open

εισελεύσομαι Verb, fut midd sep indic, 1 s

εισερχομαι enter, come in

δειπνήσω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s δειπνω

eat, dine

Cf. Lk 22:30. A picture of that fellowship with Christ which is an anticipation of the future messianic kingdom (cf. Mt 26:29; Rev 19:9).

Revelation 3:21

ό νικων δώσω αυτόν καθίσει μετ' έμοῦ έν τῷ
θρόνῳ μου, ώς κάγω ένίκησα και έκάθισα
μετά του πατρός μου έν τῷ θρόνῳ αυτού.

νικωω see 2:11

δώσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s διδωμι

καθίζω sit down, sit, take one's seat

θρονος, ου m throne

Cf. Mt 19:28; 2 Tim 2:12.

κάγω a compound word = και έγω

έκάθισα Verb, aor act indic, 1 s καθίζω

Revelation 3:22

ό έχων ούς άκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς
έκκλησίαις.

ούς, ώτος n see 2:7.

Postscript

Of the letters to the churches (and of the book of Revelation as a whole), Talbert writes, "It speaks harshly to those so-called Christian prophets who eagerly advocate assimilation to an alien ethos as something compatible with Christian faith. It also speaks a word of warning to the unthinking mass of Christians who simply want to share in the economic fruits of Babylon's wealth and luxury and are quite willing to assimilate in order to reap temporal benefits. Revelation addresses not so much those alienated from the larger society because they belong to the 'have-nots' as it does those with upward social mobility who want to be totally immersed in the larger society and are consciously or unconsciously willing to lose their souls in order to do so."

Revelation 4:1

Μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον, και ιδου θύρα ήνεωγμένη
έν τῷ οὐρανῷ, και ή φωνή ή πρώτη ήν ήκουσα
ώς σάλπιγγος λαλούσης μετ' έμοῦ, λέγων·
Ανάβα ὧδε, και δείξω σοι ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι. μετὰ
ταῦτα

εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὁραω trans
see, observe

θυρα, ας f see 3:20

ήνεωγμένη Verb, perf pass ptc, f nom s

ανοιγω see 3:20

Cf. Ezek 1:1. The perfect tense suggests a door permanently opened, "perhaps as a result of Jesus' death and resurrection. The church has permanent and open access to heaven and to their God." Witherington.

οὐρανός, ου m heaven

πρῶτος, η, ον first

σαλπίζω, ιγγος f see 1:9

λαλέω speak, talk

ἀνάβα Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s ἀναβαινώ
go up, come up

ὧδε adv here

Cf. 1:19. "A true insight into history is gained only when we view all things from the vantage point of the heavenly throne." Mounce.

δείξω Verb, fut act indic, 3 s δεικνυμι

show, point out, reveal

δεῖ impersonal verb it is necessary, must

There is a necessity about what will happen, it is in the sovereign hand of God.

Revelation 4:2

εὐθέως ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι· καὶ ἰδοὺ θρόνος ἔκειτο ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον καθήμενος,

θρονός, ου m see 3:21

Fiorenza says that the central question of concern in the book of Revelation is "To whom does the earth belong? Who is the ruler of this world? The book's central theological symbol is therefore the *throne*, signifying either divine and liberating or demonic and death-dealing power."

κειμαι lie, be laid; exist; stand

καθημαι sit, sit down, live

Cf. 1 Kings 22:19; Isa 6:1.

Witherington argues that "John's portrayal of the throne scene [that follows] owes something ... to Roman scenes of the enthroned Emperor surrounded by his council and holding an open scroll in his hand. The hymns that emanate from the throne room in heaven can be seen in the light of the hymnic acclamations and acts of bowing down before the Emperor not only in the Roman court but also in the imperial cult in Asia, where the statue of the Emperor might have obeisance done before it. The scenes in Rev 4-5 then become John's rhetorical means of offering an alternative vision of who is really in charge of the world in which John's audience lives."

Revelation 4:3

καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ὅμοιος ὀράσει λίθῳ ἰάσπιδι καὶ σαρδίῳ, καὶ ἶρις κυκλόθεν τοῦ θρόνου ὅμοιος ὀράσει σμαραγδίνῳ.

ὅμοιος, α, ον like

The repeated use of ὅμοιος reflect John's attempt to describe the indescribable.

ὀρασις, εως f vision, appearance

λίθος, ου m stone, precious stone

ἰάσπις, ἰδος f jasper (a semi-precious stone of varying colours, but the jasper of the NT was probably green)

σαρδίον, ου n carnelian or cornelian (a semi-precious stone, usually red in colour)

Cf. Ezekiel 1.

ἶρις, ἰδος f rainbow; varicoloured halo

The rainbow is also the symbol of the covenant. The covenant of mercy is part of the crowning glory of God.

κυκλόθεν prep with gen round, about
σμαραγδίνος, η, ον made of emerald

Revelation 4:4

καὶ κυκλόθεν τοῦ θρόνου θρόνοι εἴκοσι τέσσαρες, καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς θρόνους εἴκοσι τέσσαρας πρεσβυτέρους καθημένους περιβεβλημένους ἐν ἱματίοις λευκοῖς, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν στεφάνους χρυσοῦς.

εἴκοσι twenty

τέσσαρες neut τέσσαρα gen τεσσαρων four
πρεσβυτερός, α, ον elder, eldest

Most take as a symbol of the 12 Israelite patriarchs plus the 12 apostles – the totality of the Church. Mounce, however, argues that they are an exalted angelic order who serve and adore God. Witherington comments, "Whatever the twenty-four are, their function in the drama is secondary, for all they do in this book is fall down and worship God or play a harp and so are contributors to heavenly worship (cf. 5:8, 14; 11:16; 19:4 cf. 5:5; 7:13 where an elder is an interpreter). One thing is certain: there is no known parallel to these twenty-four elders in other Jewish apocalyptic literature, so this is a new and perhaps important element in John's vision... That these are symbols of the Christian elect is shown by their reaction when God acts on behalf of earthly Christians."

περιβεβλημένους Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc
pl περιβαλλω see 3:5

ἱματιον, ου n see 3:4

λευκός, η, ον see 3:4

κεφαλή, ης f head

στεφανός, ου m see 2:10

χρυσός, η, ον made of gold, golden

Their white garments speak of holiness and their golden crowns of royalty.

Revelation 4:5

καὶ ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου ἐκπορεύονται ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταί· καὶ ἑπτὰ λαμπάδες πυρὸς καίόμεναι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου, ἃ εἰσὶν τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ θεοῦ,

ἐκπορευομαι go or come out
ἀστραπη, ης f lightning, ray
βροντη, ης f thunder

Symbolic of the awesome power and majesty of God. Cf. Ex. 19:16ff.

ἑπτα seven
λαμπας, αδος f lamp, lantern
πυρ, ος n fire
καιω light; pass be lit, burn
ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

Witherington writes, "The burning lamps before the throne are said to be the seven spirits, again the angelic representatives of the churches keeping the churches' fires burning, in part by returning and being in the presence of God."

Revelation 4:6

καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου ὡς θάλασσα ὑαλίνῃ ὁμοία κρυστάλλῳ.
Καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ κύκλῳ τοῦ θρόνου τέσσαρα ζῶα γέμοντα ὀφθαλμῶν ἔμπροσθεν καὶ ὀπισθεν·

θαλασσα, ης f sea
ὑαλινος, η, ον of glass, clear as glass
ὁμοιος, α, ον see v.3
κρυσταλλος, ου m crystal; ice

"A visual phenomenon which adds to the awesome splendour of the throne-room scene." Mounce.

Witherington comments, "In view of 13:1, where the sea monster rises out of the glass sea, it is probably a reference to the reality of evil symbolised by the ancient image of the chaos waters. Even the source of evil is not outside the control of God."

μεσος, η, ον middle; ἐν μ., εἰς μ. in the middle, among

Here meaning 'in the immediate vicinity'.

θρονος, ου m throne
κυκλω prep with gen round, around
τεσσαρες neut τεσσαρα gen τεσσαρων four
ζωον, ου n living creature; animal

Cf. Ezekiel 1.

γεμω be full, be covered with
ἐμπροσθεν adv in front
ὀπισθεν adv. behind, on the back

"A consistent interpretation of the entire throne-room vision requires us to understand the living creatures as an exalted order of angelic beings who as the immediate guardians of the throne lead the heavenly hosts in worship and adoration of God. It is possible that they also represent the entire animate creation. That they are full of eyes before and behind (cf. vs. 8: 'round about and within') speaks of alertness and knowledge. Nothing escapes their notice." Mounce.

Revelation 4:7

καὶ τὸ ζῶον τὸ πρῶτον ὅμοιον λέοντι, καὶ τὸ δεύτερον ζῶον ὅμοιον μόσχῳ, καὶ τὸ τρίτον ζῶον ἔχων τὸ πρόσωπον ὡς ἀνθρώπου, καὶ τὸ τέταρτον ζῶον ὅμοιον ἀετῷ πετομένῳ·

πρωτον adv. first
ὁμοιος, α, ον like
λεων, οντος m lion
δευτερος, α, ον second
μοσχος, ου m calf, young bull
τριτος, η, ον third
προσωπον, ου n face, appearance
τεταρτος, η, ον fourth
ἀετος, ου m eagle, vulture
πετομαι fly

Hendriksen thinks this a fourfold picture of the qualities of these angelic beings: they have the strength of a lion, the ability to serve of an ox, the intelligence of a man, and the swiftness (to serve) of an eagle.

Revelation 4:8

καὶ τὰ τέσσαρα ζῶα, ἐν καθ' ἑνὸν αὐτῶν ἔχων ἀνὰ πτέρυγας ἕξ, κυκλόθεν καὶ ἔσωθεν γέμουσιν ὀφθαλμῶν· καὶ ἀνάπαυσιν οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς λέγοντες· Ἅγιος ἅγιος κύριος, ὁ θεός, ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος.

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

ἐν καθ' ἑν each.

ἀνα prep used distributively with acc. each, each one

περυξ, υγος f wing
ἕξ six

Cf. the seraphim of Is 6:2.

κυκλοθεν adv all around, all about
ἔσωθεν adv. within, inside

Maybe, since they encircle the throne, the picture is of eyes both looking out, away from the throne, and in, towards the throne.

γεμω see v.6
ἀναπαυσις, εως f rest, resting-place, stopping
νυξ, νυκτος f night
ἅγιος, α, ον holy

παντοκρατωρ, ορος m Almighty

"To churches about to enter a period of severe testing and persecution a declaration of God's unlimited might would bring strength and encouragement..."

"Beyond this, his holiness and omnipotence stretch from eternity to eternity: he is the One 'who was and who is and who is to come' (cf... 1:4). The truth which finds expression in this phrase – an expression of God's 'I AM WHO I AM' in Exodus 3:14 – is repeated in the following verses where God is twice designated the one 'that liveth for ever and ever' (vss. 9-10)." Mounce.

Revelation 4:9

καὶ ὅταν δώσουσιν τὰ ζῶα δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ εὐχαριστίαν τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ, τῷ ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων,

ὅταν when, whenever

δώσουσιν Verb, fut act indic, 3 pl δίδωμι

δοξα, ης f glory; praise

τιμη, ης f honour

εὐχαριστια, ας f thanksgiving

καθημαι sit, sit down, live

ζωω live, be alive

αἰῶνας Noun, acc pl αἰων, αἰωνος m age, eternity

Revelation 4:10

πεσοῦνται οἱ εἴκοσι τέσσαρες πρεσβύτεροι ἐνώπιον τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου, καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, καὶ βαλοῦσιν τοὺς στεφάνους αὐτῶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου, λέγοντες:

πεσοῦνται Verb, fut midd/pass dep indic, 3 pl πιπτω fall, fall down

εἴκοσι twenty

τέσσαρες see v.6

πρεσβυτερος, α, ον elder

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

προσκυνεω worship

βαλοῦσιν Verb, fut act indic, 3 pl βαλλω throw, throw down

στεφανος, ου m wreath, crown

Acknowledging that their authority is a delegated authority. "The honour given them is freely returned to the One who alone is worthy of universal honour." Mounce.

Revelation 4:11

Ἄξιός ἐστι, ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, λαβεῖν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν, ὅτι σὺ ἔκτισας τὰ πάντα, καὶ διὰ τὸ θέλημά σου ἦσαν καὶ ἐκτίσθησαν.

ἄξιος, α, ον worthy, deserving

"Lilje notes that the first words of the hymn are taken from the political language of the day: 'Worthy art thou' greeted the entrance of the emperor in triumphal procession, and 'our Lord and God' was introduced into the cult of emperor worship by Domitian... For the Christian only the One upon the heavenly throne is worthy: the claims of all others are blasphemous." Mounce.

λαβεῖν Verb, aor act infin λαμβανω

δυναμις, εως f power, strength, might

κτιζω create, make

θελημα, ατος n will, wish

ἐκτίσθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl κτιζω

"This unusual phrase suggests that all things which are, existed first in the eternal will of God and through his will came into actual being at his appointed time." Mounce.

Witherington concludes concerning chapter 4, "This chapter is a vision in praise of the Creator God. The next is a vision in praise of the Redeemer God."

Revelation 5:1

Καὶ εἶδον ἐπὶ τὴν δεξιὰν τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου βιβλίον γεγραμμένον ἔσωθεν καὶ ὀπισθεν, κατεσφραγισμένον σφραγῖσιν ἑπτὰ.

εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὁραω see δεξιός, α, ον right, δεξια right hand

καθημαι see 4:9

βιβλιον, ου n book, scroll

γεγραμμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n nom/acc s γραφω write

ἔσωθεν adv. within, inside

ὀπισθεν adv. behind, on the back

The reading ἔσωθεν καὶ ἔξωθεν is strongly supported, but the reading given above best explains the several variants.

κατασφραγιζω seal

σφραγις, ιδος f seal, mark

ἑπτα seven

"Filled to overflowing and sealed with seven seals to insure [sic] the secrecy of its decrees, it contains the full account of what God in his sovereign will has determined as the destiny of the world." Mounce. Cf. Ps 139:16. In particular, it contains God's plan for the establishment of his kingdom – the purpose of history.

Witherington thinks that there is an allusion to Ezek 2:9,10 and that the scroll is a scroll of judgments.

Revelation 5:2

καὶ εἶδον ἄγγελον ἰσχυρὸν κηρύσσοντα ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· Τίς ἄξιος ἀνοῖξαι τὸ βιβλίον καὶ λῦσαι τὰς σφραγίδας αὐτοῦ;

ἰσχυρος, α, ον strong, mighty, powerful
κηρυσσω preach, proclaim
μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great
ἄξιος, α, ον worthy, deserving, fitting
ἀνοιγω open
λυω loose, release

Who is capable of effecting the purposes of God – able to establish his kingdom?

Revelation 5:3

καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ οὐδὲ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς οὐδὲ ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς ἀνοῖξαι τὸ βιβλίον οὔτε βλέπειν αὐτό.

οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing
δυναμαι can, be able to, be capable of
οὐρανος, ου m heaven
γη, γης f earth, land
ὑποκατω prep with gen under, beneath

"The tripartite division of the universe (heaven, earth, under the earth) is also found in Philippians 2:10 – incidentally in a scene of universal adoration of Christ – and probably stems from the second commandment which forbids making any likeness of that which is in 'heaven above, or ... in the earth beneath, or ... in the waters under the earth' (Ex 20:4). As used here it stresses the universality of the proclamation rather than some particular cosmology." Mounce.

οὔτε not, nor, neither
βλεπω see, look, be able to see

I.e. look into it, read its contents.

Revelation 5:4

καὶ ἐγὼ ἔκλαιον πολὺ ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἄξιος εὐρέθη ἀνοῖξαι τὸ βιβλίον οὔτε βλέπειν αὐτό·

Many MSS read καὶ ἐγώ. A majority of the UBS committee considered that ἐγώ was added by copyists to identify the subject of the otherwise ambiguous ἔκλαιον.

κλαιω weep, cry
πολυ much, greatly
εὐρέθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s εὐρισκω
find

It would mean that the promise of 4:1 will remain unfulfilled.

Revelation 5:5

καὶ εἷς ἐκ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων λέγει μοι· Μὴ κλαῖε· ἰδοὺ ἐνίκησεν ὁ λέων ὁ ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς Ἰούδα, ἡ ρίζα Δαβὶδ, ἀνοῖξαι τὸ βιβλίον καὶ τὰς ἑπτὰ σφραγίδας αὐτοῦ.

Preston and Hanson consider this, together with the next verse, among the most profound in the entire book in that "they relate Jewish Messianic hopes to the distinctively Christian good news of the advent of the Messiah in the person of Jesus of Nazareth."

εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one
πρεσβυτερος, α, ον see 4:10
νικαω conquer, overcome, win the verdict
λεων, οντος m lion
φυλη, ης f tribe

Cf. Gen 49:9-10.

ρίζα, ης f root, source

Cf. Is 11:1.

"John is to cease weeping, for Christ has conquered once and for all. Paradoxically, this decisive victory over Satan and death was accomplished on the cross. He conquered by an act of total self-sacrifice. The result is that he alone is worthy to open the scroll of destiny both to reveal and to carry out the final dissolution of all forces set in opposition to the eternal kingdom of God." Mounce.

Revelation 5:6

Καὶ εἶδον ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἄρνιον ἐστηκὸς ὡς ἐσφαγμένον, ἔχων κέρατα ἑπτὰ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὺς ἑπτὰ, οἳ εἰσὶν τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀπεσταλμένοι εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν.

μεσος, η, ον middle; ἐν μ., εἰς μ. in the middle

τεσσαρες see 5:4
πρεσβυτερος, α, ον see 5:10
ἄρνιον, ου n lamb, sheep

Cf. John 1:29. This title is used of Jesus 28 times in Revelation. Comparing vv 5 & 6, Keener comments, "Jesus conquered not by force but by death, not by violence but by martyrdom. The Lion is a Lamb!"

ἐστηκὸς Verb, perf act ptc, n nom/acc s
ἰστημι stand
ἐσφαγμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
nom/acc s σφαζω slaughter, put to death

The perfect tenses emphasise the lasting benefits of Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection.

Witherington writes, "A Boesak makes the additional good point that the slain lamb is standing, whereas we might have expected it to be a limp corpse lying on an altar. The enemy may have thought they conquered it, but they did not. It overcame death though bears scars. This is at the heart of John's message of hope to his congregations facing and no doubt fearing persecution and even execution."

κερας, ατος n horn
 ἑπτα seven
 ἀπεσταλμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
 ἀποστελλω send, send out

"The seven horns of the Lamb symbolise his irresistible might. His seven eyes speak of that completeness of vision which leads to perfect knowledge." Mounce.

Revelation 5:7

καὶ ἦλθεν καὶ εἴληφεν ἐκ τῆς δεξιᾶς τοῦ καθήμενου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου.

εἴληφεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s λαμβανω
 δεξια see v.1
 καθημαι sit, sit down

Revelation 5:8

καὶ ὅτε ἔλαβεν τὸ βιβλίον, τὰ τέσσαρα ζῶα καὶ οἱ εἴκοσι τέσσαρες πρεσβύτεροι ἔπεσαν ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἄρνιου, ἔχοντες ἕκαστος κιθάραν καὶ φιάλας χρυσᾶς γεμούσας θυμιαμάτων, αἱ εἰσὶν αἱ προσευχαὶ τῶν ἁγίων·

ὅτε conj when
 ἔλαβεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s λαμβανω
 βιβλίον, ου n see v.1
 εἴκοσι see 4:10
 ἔπεσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl πιπτω fall,
 fall down
 ἐνώπιον prep with gen before
 ἄρνιον, ου n see v.6
 ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every

Mounce suggests that this refers not to the four living creatures but only to the 24 elders. They are representative of the entire people of God.

κιθαρα, ας f harp
 φιάλη, ης f bowl
 χρυσοῦς, η, ουν made of gold, golden
 γεμω be full
 θυμιαμα, ατος n incense
 προσευχη, ης f prayer
 ἅγιος, α, ον holy; οἱ ἅγιοι God's people

Cf. Ps 141:2.

Revelation 5:9

καὶ ᾄδουσιν ᾠδὴν καινὴν λέγοντες· Ἄξιός ἐστι λαβεῖν τὸ βιβλίον καὶ ἀνοῖξαι τὰς σφραγίδας αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἐσφάγης καὶ ἠγόρασας τῷ θεῷ ἐν τῷ αἵματί σου ἐκ πάσης φυλῆς καὶ γλώσσης καὶ λαοῦ καὶ ἔθνους,

"In chapter 4 the twenty-four elders praised the worthiness of God for his work in creation (vs.11). In chapter 5 they direct their praise to the Lamb for his work of redemption." Mounce. Jesus is therefore worshipped in the same way as God (cf. 1:17-18 etc.) while other heavenly beings may not be worshipped (cf. 19:10; 22:8-9).

ᾄδω sing
 ᾠδη, ης f song, song of praise
 καινος, η, ον new

Cf. Ps 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; Is 42:10. "Every new act of mercy calls forth a new song of gratitude and praise... The song of the Lamb is a new song because the covenant established through his death is a new covenant. It is not simply new in point of time, but more important, it is new and distinctive in quality." Mounce.

ἄξιος, α, ον see v.2

The Lamb is worthy for a threefold reason: he was slain; he purchased a people for God; he made them a kingdom and priests.

λαβεῖν Verb, aor act infin λαμβανω
 ἀνοίγω see v.2
 σφραγις, ιδος f see v.1
 ἐσφάγης Verb, aor pass indic, 2 s σφαζω
 see v.6
 ἀγοραζω buy, redeem

Cf. Mk 10:45; 1 Cor 6:20.

αἷμα, ατος f blood
 φυλη, ης f see v.5
 γλωσσα, ης f tongue, language
 λαος, ου m people, a people
 ἔθνος, ος n nation

"It is fruitless to attempt a distinction between these terms as ethnic, linguistic, political, etc. The Seer is stressing the universal nature of the church and for this purpose piles up phrases for their rhetorical value. In contrast with the exclusivism of Judaism which prided itself in having been chosen out from among the nations, the church was genuinely ecumenical, recognising no national, political, cultural, or racial boundaries." Mounce.

Revelation 5:10

καὶ ἐποίησας αὐτοὺς τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν βασιλείαν καὶ ἱερεῖς, καὶ βασιλεύουσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

ἱερεὺς, εως m priest

Cf. 1:6; Ex 19:6. "Both of these terms are active in meaning: as a *kingdom* 'they shall reign,' and as *priests* they serve. By his death Jesus established his church 'a Kingdom of Priests in the service of our God' (Twentieth Century New Testament)." Mounce.
Beasley-Murray stresses the Exodus imagery: Jesus is the passover Lamb and has led to the creation of a new people of God.

βασιλευω rule, reign

The future tense has slightly better attestation than the present. "The promise is that the church is to share in the eschatological reign of Christ and all that it will involve (2:26-27; 20:4; 22:5)." Mounce.

Revelation 5:11

Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ἀγγέλων πολλῶν κύκλῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῶν ζώων καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, καὶ ἦν ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτῶν μυριάδες μυριάδων καὶ χιλιάδες χιλιάδων,

The adoration of the Lamb moves out in ever widening circles.

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου i)
much, many

κυκλω see 4:6

ἀριθμος, ου m number, total

μυριας, αδος f group of ten thousand, countless thousands

χιλιας, αδος f (group of) a thousand; χιλιοι, αι, α thousand

I.e. so numerous as to be beyond human calculation. Cf. Dan 7:10.

Revelation 5:12

λέγοντες φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· Ἄξιόν ἐστιν τὸ ἄρνιον τὸ ἐσφαγμένον λαβεῖν τὴν δύναμιν καὶ πλοῦτον καὶ σοφίαν καὶ ἰσχὺν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν καὶ εὐλογίαν.

ἄρνιον, ου n see 5:6

ἐσφαγμένον see 5:6

Mounce follows Beckwith in saying "Power, riches, wisdom and might are not benefits which the Lamb is about to receive but qualities which he possesses and for which he is worthy to be praised." Cf. 1 Cor 1:24; 2 Cor 8:9; Eph 3:8; Lk 11:20; Phil 2:11; Jn 1:14; Rom 15:29.

πλουτος, ου m & n riches, wealth

σοφια, ας f wisdom

ισχυς, υος f strength

τιμη, ης f see 4:9

δοξα, ης f see 4:9

εὐλογία, ας f blessing, praise

Of this last, Barclay says it is "the one gift that we who have nothing can give Him who possesses all."

Revelation 5:13

καὶ πᾶν κτίσμα ὃ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης, καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς πάντα, ἤκουσα λέγοντας· Τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ καὶ τῷ ἄρνιῳ ἡ εὐλογία καὶ ἡ τιμὴ καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

κτισμα, τος n what is created, creature

ὑποκατω see v.3

θαλασσα, ης f sea

"No living creature fails to join in the great and final hymn of praise (cf. Phil 2:9-11)." Mounce.

καθημαι see 4:9

"The praise of the entire created order is addressed to the One who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb. Throughout the Apocalypse the two are regularly joined. In 22:1 the water flows "from the throne of God and of the Lamb" (cf. 6:16; 17:10)." Mounce.

εὐλογία, ας f see v.12

κρατος, ους n might, power, dominion

αίωνων see 4:9

Revelation 5:14

καὶ τὰ τέσσαρα ζῶα ἔλεγον· Ἀμήν. καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ἔπεσαν καὶ προσεκύνησαν.

ἔπεσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl πιπτω fall, fall down

προσκυνεω worship

The cry of 'Amen' from the angelic beings and falling down in worship of the elders may have been repeated after each of the seven attributes in v.12 is announced. Witherington, commenting on this worship of the Lamb writes, "The implication is clear that the Lamb is divine."

The Seven Seals

"The vision of the glorified Son of man in chapter 1 led to the writing of the seven letters to the churches (chaps 2-3). Similarly the throne-room vision of chapters 4 and 5 sets the stage for the opening of the scroll with its sequence of seals, trumpets and bowls (chaps 6-16). The dramatic portrayal of God's righteous judgement is now under way. It should be noted that the scroll is not actually opened until all seven seals are removed. Thus the content of the scroll begins with chapter 8 and the sounding of the seven trumpets. As each seal is removed we are introduced to a series of preliminary judgements representing forces operative throughout history by means of which the redemptive and judicial purposes of God are being carried out prior to the end." Mounce.

The three sets of seven – seals, trumpets and bowls – overlap, "with the second set beginning before the end of the first and then carrying things further, and the third picking up in the midst of the second set and carrying things even further." Witherington. All three sets of seven end with the same final judgment demonstrated by the repeated use of the terms thunder, lightning, earthquake and hail in varying order at 4:5; 8:5; 11:19 and 16:18-21. This phrase echoes Exod 19:16. Witherington comments, "There are a whole series of judgments that happen *prior* to what amounts to final judgment. This suggests that these preliminary temporal judgments should not be seen as purely punitive. Rather they are calls to repentance and opportunities for amendment of life." John believed that these judgments were already in train, the seals were already being broken. The timing of the final day of judgment is unknown but the world is living on borrowed time.

Revelation 6:1

Καὶ εἶδον ὅτε ἤνοιξεν τὸ ἀρνίον μίαν ἐκ τῶν ἑπτὰ σφραγίδων, καὶ ἤκουσα ἐνὸς ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων λέγοντος ὡς φωνῆ βροντῆς· Ἔρχου.

ὅτε conj when, at which time

ἀνοιγῶ see 5:2

εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one
σφραγίς, ἰδος f see 5:1

The judgments that follow "happen because of Christ's action of taking the scroll and unsealing the seals. He is then in some sense sovereign over them and responsible for them."

ζῶον, ου n see 4:6

βροντη, ης f thunder

ἔρχου Verb, pres midd/pass dep imperat, 2 s
έρχομαι

The call 'come' is a call for the first of the apocalyptic horsemen to ride forth. The reading 'come and see' is the result of copyists who thought the command an invitation to the Seer.

Revelation 6:2

καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος λευκός, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἔχων τόξον, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ στέφανος, καὶ ἐξῆλθεν νικῶν καὶ ἵνα νικήσῃ.

ἵππος, ου f horse

λευκός, η, ον white, shining

The imagery of various coloured horses is from Zech 1:8-17; 6:1-8.

τόξον, ου n bow (of an archer)

ἐδόθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s δίδωμι

στεφανός, ου m wreath, crown

νικᾶω conquer, overcome, win the verdict

There are various suggestions concerning the identity of the rider on the white horse. Many think the rider is Christ himself as in 19:11-16. The picture is then one of the activity of Christ in establishing his kingdom alongside the acts of judgement – wars, earthquakes, famine etc. – which also mark the period between the advents (cf. Lk 21:9ff; Mk 13:7ff; Mt 24:6ff). Others argue that this cannot be so, pointing out the differences between the picture here and that of chap 19 and also the phrase 'it was given' which they argue to be inappropriate of Christ. Mounce follows many others in seeing the first horse as a symbol of the spirit of conquest and of militarism. The crown is a symbol of victory and white symbolises the conqueror. DT Niles writes, "When men wage war they always pretend to be fighting for righteousness."

Witherington suggests that the picture may owe something to "the Parthian archers, who in AD 62 (as well as in 53 and 35 BC) came riding from the east and won against the Romans." They were famed and dreaded cavalrymen and skilled mounted archers whose armies included sacred white horses.

Witherington concludes, "While to some degree we have here a general symbol of military conquest, John has chosen his general image so it would be familiar and thus on target with his audience."

Revelation 6:3

Καὶ ὅτε ἤνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν δευτέραν, ἤκουσα τοῦ δευτέρου ζώου λέγοντος· Ἔρχου.

δευτερός, α, ον second

Revelation 6:4

καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἄλλος ἵππος πυρρός, καὶ τῷ καθήμενῳ ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἐδόθη αὐτῷ λαβεῖν τὴν εἰρήνην ἐκ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἵνα ἀλλήλους σφάζουσιν, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ μάχαιρα μεγάλη.

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

πυρρός, α, ον red, fiery red

The colour is symbolic of war, slaughter and bloodshed.

λαβεῖν Verb, aor act infin λαμβανῶ

εἰρήνη, ης f peace

Perhaps to destroy the Pax Romana? The figure may represent "civil or internal strife, which was tearing the world apart during this and earlier periods." Witherington.

ἀλλήλων, ος, ους reciprocal pronoun one another

σφάζουσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3 pl σφαζῶ
slaughter, put to death

Cf. Zech 14:13.

μαχαιρα, ης f sword, war, violent death
μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great

Revelation 6:5

Καὶ ὅτε ἤνοιξε τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν τρίτην, ἤκουσα τοῦ τρίτου ζῶου λέγοντος· Ἔρχου. καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος μέλας, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἔχων ζυγὸν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ.

τρίτος, η, ον third
μελας, αινα, αν gen ανος, αινης, ανος black

Symbol of scarcity.

ζυγος, ου m yoke, balance scale
χειρ, χειρος f hand, power

"The balance indicates a time of scarcity when the basic commodities of life are measured out at greatly inflated prices. In portraying the siege of Jerusalem, God told Ezekiel that its inhabitants would 'eat bread by weight [and] drink water by measure' (Ezek 4:16; cf. Lev 26:26)." Mounce.

Revelation 6:6

καὶ ἤκουσα ὡς φωνὴν ἐν μέσῳ τῶν τεσσάρων ζῶων λέγουσαν· Χοῖνιξ σίτου δηναρίου, καὶ τρεῖς χοίνικες κριθῶν δηναρίου· καὶ τὸ ἔλαιον καὶ τὸν οἶνον μὴ ἀδικήσης.

χοινιξ, ικος f quart (a dry measure)
σιτος, ου m grain, wheat
δηναριον, ου n denarius

A day's wage.

τρεις, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three
κριθη, ης f barley
ἔλαιον, ου n olive oil, oil
οἶνος, ου m wine
ἀδικήσης Verb, aor act subj, 2 s ἀδικεω
harm

There are limits to the famine. The succeeding seals mark increasingly severe judgments. Witherinton draws attention to the act of Domitian in 92 AD whereby he destroyed half the vineyards throughout the provinces. He comments, "We may take the exempting of the vineyards and the olive trees as a sign of how God was merciful in comparison to Domitian. The loss of a grain crop could be endured, for another one would come along the following year, but the destruction of vines and olive trees would cripple the region's economy for years, and there were indeed areas in Asia Minor where this judgment would be particularly devastating (e.g. Philadelphia with its vineyard culture)."

Revelation 6:7

Καὶ ὅτε ἤνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν τετάρτην, ἤκουσα φωνὴν τοῦ τετάρτου ζῶου λέγοντος· Ἔρχου.

τεταρτος, η, ον fourth; το τ. a fourth part, a quarter (of the earth)

Revelation 6:8

καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος χλωρός, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ὁ Θάνατος, καὶ ὁ ᾄδης ἠκολούθει μετ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἐξουσία ἐπὶ τὸ τέταρτον τῆς γῆς, ἀποκτεῖναι ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ καὶ ἐν λιμῷ καὶ ἐν θανάτῳ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν θηρίων τῆς γῆς.

χλωρος, α, ον green (pale)

"χλωρος is used elsewhere in Rev to describe the yellow green of vegetation (8:7; 9:4; cf. Mk 6:39 and Gen 1:30, χροτον χλωρον), but here describes the pallor of death or the blanched appearance of a person struck with terror." Mounce. Witherington suggests, "the colour of a putrefying corpse."

ἐπάνω prep with gen. on, upon
ὄνομα, τος n name
θάνατος, ου m death
ᾄδης, ου m Hades, the world of the dead
ἀκολουθεω follow, accompany
ἐδόθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s διδομι
ἐξουσια, ας f authority, power

Not a geographic area but a proportion. Again, expressing a limit to the judgement.

ἀποκτεῖναι Verb, aor act infin ἀποκτεινω
kill, put to death
ρομφαια, ας f sword, pain, sorrow
λιμος, ου m & f famine, hunger
θηριον, ου n animal, beast, wild animal

Cf. Ezek 14:21. "Death by wild beasts ... would be expected in a land decimated by war and famine." Mounce.

Revelation 6:9

Καὶ ὅτε ἤνοιξεν τὴν πέμπτην σφραγίδα, εἶδον ὑποκάτω τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἐσφαγμένων διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἣν εἶχον.

πέμπτos, η, ον fifth
ὑποκατω prep with gen under, beneath
θυσιαστηριον, ου n altar

"It is probably unimportant to conjecture whether the altar is the altar of burnt offering or the altar of incense. The theme of sacrifice would suggest the former, and the prayers which rise (vs. 10) seem to indicate the latter. There is no reason why in John's vision the two should not blend together as one." Mounce.

ψυχη, ης f life, 'soul', living being

"In OT ritual sacrifice the blood of the bullock was poured out at the base of the altar of burnt offering (Lev 4:7; Ex 29:12). This blood contained the life, or soul, of the flesh (Lev 17:11). That the souls of the martyrs were underneath the altar is a way of saying that their untimely deaths on earth are from God's perspective a sacrifice on the altar of heaven." Mounce. Cf. 2 Tim 4:6; Phil 2:17. E Boring comments, "The chopping block of the Roman executioner has become a cosmic altar. Christians who refuse to sacrifice to the image of the Emperor are nonetheless Christian priests who sacrifice themselves on the altar of God."

ἐσφαγμένων Verb, perf pass ptc, gen pl
σφαζω see v.4
μαρτυρία, ας f testimony, witness

"The martyrs' testimony was not primarily their witness about Jesus but the witness that they had received from him (cf. 12:17; 20:4)." Mounce.

Revelation 6:10

καὶ ἔκραξαν φωνῇ μεγάλη λέγοντες· Ἔως πότε, ὁ δεσπότης ὁ ἅγιος καὶ ἀληθινός, οὐ κρίνεις καὶ ἐκδικεῖς τὸ αἷμα ἡμῶν ἐκ τῶν κατοικούντων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς;

κραζω cry out, call out
ἕως conj/prep with gen. until, while
πότε interrog adv. when? (ἕως ποτε how long?)
δεσποτης, ου m Lord, Master

Emphasises absolute power.

ἅγιος, α, ον holy
ἀληθινος, η, ον real, genuine, true
κρινω judge, pass judgement on
ἐκδικεω help (someone) get justice,
avenge, punish
αἷμα, ατος f blood
κατοικεω live

"This request does not rise from a personal desire for revenge, but out of concern for the reputation of God." Mounce. And, we might add, for those who continue to suffer injustice and persecution. Cf. Ps 79:10; 94:3; Hab 1:2.

Revelation 6:11

καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἑκάστῳ στολὴ λευκή, καὶ ἔρρεθη αὐτοῖς ἵνα ἀναπαύσονται ἔτι χρόνον μικρόν, ἕως πληρωθῶσιν καὶ οἱ σύνδουλοι αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ τῶν οἰκιστῶν οἱ μέλλοντες ἀποκτείνεσθαι ὡς καὶ αὐτοί.

ἐδόθη see v.2
ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every
στολη, ης f robe, long robe
λευκος, η, ον white, shining

Symbol of blessedness and purity, cf. 3:5; 7:9-14; 19:8 also 3:18.

ἔρρεθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s λεγω
ἀναπαύσονται Verb, aor midd subj, 3 pl
ἀναπαυω refresh; midd relax, rest
ἔτι still, yet
χρονος, ου m time, period of time
πληρωθῶσιν Verb, aor pass subj, 3 pl
πληρωω fill, fulfill, accomplish
συνδουλος, ου m fellow-servant
μελλω (before an infin) be going, be about
ἀποκτείνεσθαι Verb, pres pass infin
ἀποκτεινω see v.8

"The charge is not to control their impatience but to rest in the enjoyment of their blessedness. There are others who are yet to join their number." Mounce.

Revelation 6:12

Καὶ εἶδον ὅτε ἤνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν ἕκτην, καὶ σεισμός μέγας ἐγένετο, καὶ ὁ ἥλιος ἐγένετο μέλας ὡς σάκκος τρίχινος, καὶ ἡ σελήνη ὅλη ἐγένετο ὡς αἷμα,

ἕκτος, η, ον sixth
σεισμος, ου m earthquake

Cosmic disturbances which precede the end. Earthquake signals divine visitation, cf. Ex 19:18; Is 2:19; Hag 2:6; Matt 27:45,51 (Heb 12:26).

ἥλιος, ου m the sun
μελας, αινα, αν gen ανος, αινης, ανος black
σακκος, ου m sackcloth, mourning dress
τριχινος, η, ον of hair (σακκος τ. sackcloth)

The reference is to rough cloth made of black goats' hair, worn in time of mourning.

σεληνη, ης f moon
ὅλος, η, ον whole, all, complete
αἷμα, ατος f blood

"The deep blood-red colour of the moon would result from whatever in the atmosphere caused the sun to be darkened." Mounce. Cf. Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:20; Is 13:10; Ezek 32:7; Amos 8:8; Mk 13:24.

Revelation 6:13

καὶ οἱ ἀστέρες τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἔπεσαν εἰς τὴν γῆν, ὡς συκὴ βάλλει τοὺς ὀλύνθους αὐτῆς ὑπὸ ἀνέμου μεγάλου σειομένη,

ἄστηρ, ερος m star
ἔπεσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl πιπτω fall,
fall down
συκη, ης f fig tree
βαλλω throw, throw down
ὀλυνθος, ου m late fig, unripe fig
ἀνεμος, ου m wind
σειω shake

Cf. Is 34:4; Mk 13:25-26.

Witherington comments, "The opening of the sixth seal brings us to the end of the cosmos as we know it (cf. Isa 13:9-11; 24:21-23; 1 En 102:2-3)."

Revelation 6:14

καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς ἀπεχωρίσθη ὡς βιβλίον ἑλισσόμενον, καὶ πᾶν ὄρος καὶ νῆσος ἐκ τῶν τόπων αὐτῶν ἐκινήθησαν.

ἀπεχωρίσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s
ἀποχωρίζομαι separate; perhaps vanish or split open

βιβλίον, ου n book, scroll
ἑλισσω roll up

"The heavens are removed like an unrolled papyrus scroll which, should it break in the middle, would roll quickly back on either side." Mounce.

ὄρος, ους n mountain, hill
νησος, ου f island
τοπος, ου m place
ἐκινήθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl κινεω
move, shake, remove

Revelation 6:15

καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς καὶ οἱ μεγιστάνες καὶ οἱ χιλιάρχοι καὶ οἱ πλούσιοι καὶ οἱ ἰσχυροὶ καὶ πᾶς δούλος καὶ ἐλεύθερος ἔκρυψαν ἑαυτοὺς εἰς τὰ σπήλαια καὶ εἰς τὰς πέτρας τῶν ὀρέων·

βασιλευς, εως m king
μεγισταν, ανος m person of high status
χιλιάρχος, ου m commander (a high ranking military officer generally in charge of 600-1000 men), high ranking officer
πλουσιος, α, ου rich, well-to-do
ἰσχυρος, α, ου strong, mighty, powerful
δουλος, ου m slave, servant
ἐλευθερος, α, ου free, free person

The stress is particularly upon those who presently feel secure – though the last two categories make it clear that terror will be universal. Witherington points out that this "sevenfold categorisation of humanity ... [is] a symbol of completeness or totality" – though again he recognises that the stress is upon the wealthy and powerful.

κρυπτω hide, conceal, cover
ἑαυτος, εαυτη, εαυτον him/herself, itself
σπηλαιον, ου n cave, hideout (for robbers)
πετρα, ας f rock, solid rock
ὄρος, ους n see v.14

Cf. Is 2:10,19,21. "From the day when Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of God (Gen 3:8), the guilty conscience has made man a fugitive from God. But now there is no longer a place to hide." Mounce.

Revelation 6:16

καὶ λέγουσιν τοῖς ὄρεσιν καὶ ταῖς πέτραις· Πέσετε ἐφ' ἡμᾶς καὶ κρύψατε ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ὀργῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου,

πέσετε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl πιπτω see v.13

Cf. Hos 10:8

προσωπον, ου n face, appearance, presence
ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger
ἀρνιον, ου n lamb

"The wrath of God is a fundamental theme of NT teaching. It is both a present reality (Rom 1:18) and an eschatological event (Rev 19:15). It is neither personal vindictiveness nor an impersonal process of retribution which works itself out in the course of history. It is rather the 'response of [God's] holiness to persistent and impenitent wickedness' (Bruce). The wrath of the *Lamb*, however, is an unusual and dramatic expression." Mounce.

Revelation 6:17

ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ἡμέρα ἡ μεγάλη τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτῶν, καὶ τίς δύναται σταθῆναι;

Cf. Joel 2:11; Zeph 1:14-18.

δυναμαι can, be able to
σταθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin ἰστημι stand

Cf. Nahum 1:6; Mal 3:2. "The beginning of the end has arrived, and the plagues of 8:7-9:21 and 16:2-21 follow upon the actual opening of the seven-sealed scroll." Mounce.

Revelation 7

Chapter 7 comes as a parenthesis between the sixth and seventh seals. Mounce writes, "Chapter 7 ... serves as a dramatic interlude. It delays for a brief moment the disclosure of that which is to take place when the seventh and final seal is removed from the scroll of destiny. The chapter consists of two visions – one, the sealing of the 144,000, and the other, the blessedness of the great multitude before the heavenly throne. A great deal has been written about the identity of the 144,000 as well as the relationship between the two visions..." The view taken by Mounce is that "in both visions it is the church which is in view, but from two vantage points. Prior to the trumpet judgements the last generation of believers is sealed so as to be saved from the destruction coming on the earth and to be brought safely into the heavenly kingdom. The second vision is anticipatory of the eternal blessedness of all believers when in the presence of God they realize the rewards of faithful endurance."

Revelation 7:1

Μετὰ τοῦτο εἶδον τέσσαρας ἀγγέλους ἑστῶτας ἐπὶ τὰς τέσσαρας γωνίας τῆς γῆς, κρατοῦντας τοὺς τέσσαρας ἀνέμους τῆς γῆς, ἵνα μὴ πνέῃ ἄνεμος ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς μήτε ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης μήτε ἐπὶ πᾶν δένδρον.

ἑστῶτας Verb, perf act ptc, m acc pl ἴστημι stand

γωνία, ας f corner

κρατεῶ hold, hold back

ἄνεμος, ου m wind

Cf. Zech 6:1-8 which associates horsemen and winds.

πνεῶ blow (of wind)

μήτε and not; μήτε ... μήτε neither ... nor

θάλασσα, ης f sea

δένδρον, ου n tree

A picture of destruction kept back or delayed.

Revelation 7:2

καὶ εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον ἀναβαίνοντα ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου, ἔχοντα σφραγίδα θεοῦ ζῶντος, καὶ ἔκραξεν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ τοῖς τέσσαρσιν ἀγγέλοις οἷς ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἀδικῆσαι τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν,

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

ἀναβαίνω go up, come up, ascend

ἀνατολή, ης f rising sun, dawn, east

ἡλιος, ου m the sun

σφραγίς, ιδος f seal

ζῶ live, be alive

κραζῶ cry out, call out

ἐδόθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s δίδωμι

ἀδικεῶ harm

Revelation 7:3

λέγων· Μὴ ἀδικήσητε τὴν γῆν μήτε τὴν θάλασσαν μήτε τὰ δένδρα, ἄχρι σφραγίσωμεν τοὺς δούλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν.

ἄχρι prep with gen/conj until

σφραγίζω seal, secure/mark with a seal

μετώπον, ου n forehead

Cf. 9:4; 14:1; 22:4; Ezek 9:4; Isa 44:5; 2 Cor 1:22; 2 Tim 2:19. Signifies ownership and protection. Witherington writes, "What sort of sealing is in mind? Possibly it is the sort mentioned in Ezek 9:4, or possibly the Exodus painting of blood on the doorpost is being echoed. If the former, the symbol painted was the Hebrew letter tau, sometimes written in the form of a cross or X. This would indeed be appropriate as a symbol for the people of the cross."

Revelation 7:4

Καὶ ἤκουσα τὸν ἀριθμὸν τῶν ἐσφραγισμένων, ἑκατὸν τεσσεράκοντα τέσσαρες χιλιάδες, ἐσφραγισμένοι ἐκ πάσης φυλῆς υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ·

ἀριθμὸς, ου m number, total

ἐσφραγισμένων Verb, perf pass ptc, gen pl

σφραγίζω

ἑκατὸν one hundred

τεσσερακοντα forty

χιλιάς, αδος f (group of) a thousand;

χιλιοί, αι, α thousand

12 x 12 x 1,000 – a number signifying completeness. Witherington comments, "A clue about who these servants are is found in Rev 9:4, where everyone but believers is called upon to repent, and they are said to be the ones without the sealing. This suggests that the 144,000 are coterminous with the total number of believers. Here as elsewhere the language about Israel is applied to Jew and Gentile united in Christ... [144,000] here is a symbolic number for the whole people of God."

φυλή, ης f tribe

Revelation 7:5

ἐκ φυλῆς Ἰούδα δώδεκα χιλιάδες

ἐσφραγισμένοι,

ἐκ φυλῆς Ρουβὴν δώδεκα χιλιάδες,

ἐκ φυλῆς Γαδ δώδεκα χιλιάδες,

Ἰούδα Noun, gen s Ἰουδας

Priority is given to Judah because Christ was from Judah.

δώδεκα twelve

Revelation 7:6

ἐκ φυλῆς Ἀσὴρ δώδεκα χιλιάδες,

ἐκ φυλῆς Νεφθαλίμ δώδεκα χιλιάδες,

ἐκ φυλῆς Μανασσῆ δώδεκα χιλιάδες,

One peculiarity is that Manassah, one of Joseph's sons, is included in place of Dan. Dan may have been omitted because of early associations with idolatry (cf. Judg 18:1; 1 Kings 12:25-33).

Revelation 7:7

ἐκ φυλῆς Συμεὼν δώδεκα χιλιάδες,

ἐκ φυλῆς Λευὶ δώδεκα χιλιάδες,

ἐκ φυλῆς Ἰσσαχάρ δώδεκα χιλιάδες,

Revelation 7:8

ἐκ φυλῆς Ζαβουλὼν δώδεκα χιλιάδες,

ἐκ φυλῆς Ἰωσήφ δώδεκα χιλιάδες,

ἐκ φυλῆς Βενιαμὴν δώδεκα χιλιάδες

ἐσφραγισμένοι.

Revelation 7:9

Μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ὄχλος πολὺς, ὃν ἀριθμῆσαι αὐτὸν οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο, ἐκ παντὸς ἔθνους καὶ φυλῶν καὶ λαῶν καὶ γλωσσῶν, ἐστῶτες ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἄρνιου, περιβεβλημένους στολὰς λευκάς, καὶ φοίνικες ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτῶν·

ὄχλος, ου m crowd, multitude

πολυσ, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου i)
much, great, many

This is no longer a number on earth but a multitude in heaven who have come out of trial (v.14.) and have entered glory.

ἀριθμεω count, number

οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing
δυναμαι can, be able to, be capable of

They are a vast multitude that no one can number. "As God promised Abraham, they are in number as the stars of heaven (Gen 15:5) and the sand of the sea (Gen 32:12)." Mounce. Witherington comments, "Although at the end of the first century the total number of Christians cannot have been huge, the point would be that this vision encourages John about the eventual success of the Christian mission."

ἔθνος, ους n nation

For this phrase see 5:9.

ἐστῶτες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl ἵστημι
ἐνώπιον prep with gen before
ἄρνιον, ου n see 6:16
περιβεβλημένους Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc
pl περιβαλλω put on, clothe, dress
στολη, ης f robe, long robe
λευκος, ης, ον white, shining

Cf. v.14.

φοίνικες Noun, nom pl φοινίξ or φοινίξ,
κος m palm branch
χειρ, χειρος f hand

A picture of festal joy as on the day when Jesus entered Jerusalem (Jn 12:13).

Revelation 7:10

καὶ κράζουσι φωνῇ μεγάλη λέγοντες· Ἡ σωτηρία τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ καὶ τῷ ἄρνιῳ.

κραζω cry out, call out

σωτηρια, ας f salvation

"The great multitude joyfully acknowledges that their deliverance rests on the sovereign will of God and the redemptive activity of the Lamb." Mounce.

Revelation 7:11

καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι εἰστήκεισαν κύκλῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων, καὶ ἔπεσαν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου ἐπὶ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θεῷ,

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας

εἰστήκεισαν Verb, pluperfect act indic, 3 pl
ἵστημι

κύκλῳ prep with gen round

ἔπεσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl πιπτω

προσωπον, ου n face

προσκυνεω worship

Revelation 7:12

λέγοντες· Ἀμήν· ἡ εὐλογία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ σοφία καὶ ἡ εὐχαριστία καὶ ἡ τιμὴ καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ ἰσχὺς τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.

A sevenfold doxology of praise. "How unbelievably great will be the joyful adoration of the heavenly host when *all* the redeemed stand before their God!" Mounce.

εὐλογία, ας f blessing, praise

δοξα, ης f glory

σοφια, ας f wisdom

εὐχαριστια, ας f thanksgiving

τιμη, ης f honour, respect

ισχυς, υος f strength

αἰώνας Noun, acc pl αἰων, αἰωνος m age,
eternity

Revelation 7:13

Καὶ ἀπεκρίθη εἷς ἐκ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων λέγων μοι· Οὗτοι οἱ περιβεβλημένοι τὰς στολὰς τὰς λευκάς τίνες εἰσὶν καὶ πόθεν ἦλθον;

ἀπεκρίθη Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s

ἀποκρινομαι answer, reply

εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

περιβεβλημένοι see v.9

στολη, ης f see v.9

ποθεν interrog adv. from where, how

ἦλθον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3 pl ἔρχομαι

Revelation 7:14

καὶ εἶρηκα αὐτῷ· Κύριέ μου, σὺ οἶδας. καὶ εἶπέν μοι· Οὗτοι εἰσὶν οἱ ἐρχόμενοι ἐκ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς μεγάλης, καὶ ἐπλυναν τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐλεύκαναν αὐτὰς ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ ἄρνιου.

εἶρηκα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s λεγω

Charles interprets the present participle to mean 'these are such as come from...' implying they still continue to come. Mounce thinks the context "favours a point in time when the complete number of the redeemed stand before God and the blessings of the eternal state are about to be realized."

θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering

The definite article points to a particular 'Great Tribulation' (cf. Dan 12:1).

ἐπλυναν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl πλυνω
wash

ἐλεύκαναν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl λευκαινω
make white

For white or splendid robes as a picture of righteousness see Is 61:10; Rev 3:4,5,18; 19:8.

αἷμα, ατος f blood

"The idea of making robes white by washing them in blood is a striking paradox. It is the sacrifice of the Lamb upon the cross which supplies white garments for the saints." Mounce.

The picture of robes washed in blood is a complex one. It may owe something to the ceremony by which the old covenant was ratified and the blood of the covenant sprinkled on the people, signifying their part in the covenant and its benefits (Ex 24:8 – perhaps combined with Ex 19 where the children of Israel wash their garments in readiness for the descent of the Lord on Sinai).

Revelation 7:15

διὰ τοῦτό εἰσιν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ λατρεύουσιν αὐτῷ ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς ἐν τῷ ναῷ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὁ καθηήμενος ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου σκηνώσει ἐπ' αὐτούς.

λατρεῦω serve, worship

νύξ, νυκτος f night

ναος, ου m temple, sanctuary

"In John's vision heaven itself is the sanctuary: within, all God's children are worshipping priests (1:6; 5:10)." Mounce.

σκηνοῶ live, dwell

"For the tabernacle to be *over* his people is a way of saying that the immediate presence of God will shelter and protect them from all harm (Isa 4:5-6). It is the fulfilment of the OT promise that God will dwell in the midst of his people (Ezek 37:27; Zech 2:10)." Mounce.

Revelation 7:16

οὐ πεινάσουσιν ἔτι οὐδὲ διψήσουσιν ἔτι, οὐδὲ μὴ πέση ἐπ' αὐτούς ὁ ἥλιος οὐδὲ πᾶν καῦμα,

"The eternal blessedness of the redeemed is pictured in phrases drawn for the most part from Isaiah's description of the exiles returning from Babylon (Isa 49:10)." Mounce.

πειναῶ be hungry

ἔτι still, any more

διψήσουσιν Verb, fut act indic, 3 pl διψαῶ
be thirsty

Cf. Mt 5:6.

πέση Verb, aor act subj, 3 s πιπῶ fall

ἥλιος, ου m the sun

καυμα, τος n heat

Revelation 7:17

ὅτι τὸ ἄρνιον τὸ ἀνά μέσον τοῦ θρόνου ποιμανεῖ αὐτούς, καὶ ὀδηγήσει αὐτούς ἐπὶ ζωῆς πηγᾶς ὑδάτων· καὶ ἐξαλείψει ὁ θεὸς πᾶν δάκρυον ἐκ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν.

ἀνα μεσον among, between

ποιμανεῖ Verb, fut act indic, 3 s ποιμαινω
keep sheep, tend as a shepherd

"The idea of the Lamb as the shepherd of God's flock is an intriguing exchange of roles. Elsewhere in the writings of John, Christ is pictured as the good shepherd (Jn 10:1-30; 21:15-17; cf. 1 Jn 3:16 with Jn 10:11). The metaphor builds on the OT picture of God as the shepherd of Israel. Such passages as Psalm 23:1 ('The Lord is my shepherd') speak of the gentle care and daily provision of the ancient shepherd. God through Ezekiel tells of a coming shepherd – 'my servant David' – who is to tend his flock (Ezek 34:23). Christ is this promised good shepherd." Mounce.

ὀδηγεῶ lead, guide

ζωη, ης f life

πηγη, ης f spring, fountain

ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water

Cf. Ps 36:8-9; Jn 4:14; 7:38. "As a fresh-water spring in a semi-arid land would be to a shepherd and his thirsty flock, so will be the eternal presence of God to redeemed man in his longing for spiritual wholeness." Mounce.

ἐξαλείφω wipe away, remove

δάκρυον, ου n tear (as in weeping)

Revelation 8

Following the parenthesis of Ch 7 the drama returns to the opening of the seventh and final seal.

Revelation 8:1

Καὶ ὅταν ἤνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν ἑβδόμην, ἐγένετο σιγὴ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ὡς ἡμῶριον.

ὅταν when

ἀνοιγῶ see 5:2

σφραγις, ιδος f see 5:1

ἑβδομος, η, ον seventh

ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s γινομαι

σιγη, ης f silence

οὐρανός, ου m heaven

ἡμῶριον, ου n half an hour

A dramatic pause. Cf. Hab 2:20; Zeph 1:7-8; Zech 2:13.

The seven trumpets and seven bowls in part recapitulate the themes of the seven seals. But it is not wise to seek to impose too rigid a structure upon the book.

Revelation 8:2

καὶ εἶδον τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλους οἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστήκασιν, καὶ ἐδόθησαν αὐτοῖς ἑπτὰ σάλπιγγες.

ἑπτὰ seven

The use of the definite article indicates particular angels. Jewish tradition and apocalyptic seems to have considered that there were seven angels who stood in the very presence of God and presented to him the prayers of the saints (Tobit 12:15). These seven angels are named in the book of Enoch. Cf. Isa 63:9; Lk 1:19.

ἐνώπιον see 7:9

ἐστήκασιν Verb, perf act indic, 3 pl ἵστημι stand

ἐδόθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl δίδωμι σαλπῖξ, ἰγγός f trumpet

These are trumpets which will herald the day of God's wrath, Zeph 1:14-16 – like the trumpets blown before the fall of Jericho.

Revelation 8:3

Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἦλθεν καὶ ἐστάθη ἐπὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου ἔχων λιβανωτὸν χρυσοῦν, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ θυμιάματα πολλὰ ἵνα δώσει ταῖς προσευχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων πάντων ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον τὸ χρυσοῦν τὸ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου.

ἄλλος, ἡ, ο another, other

ἐστάθη Verb, 2 aor act indic, 3 s ἵστημι

θυσιαστηριον, ου n altar

λιβανωτος, ου m censer, incense container

χρυσους, η, ουν made of gold, golden

θυμιαμα, ατος n incense

προσευχη, ης f prayer

ἅγιος, α, ον holy; οἱ ἅγιοι God's people

Similar to the scene in 5:8 which preceded the opening of the seven seals.

ἵνα δώσει ταῖς προσευχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων πάντων 'that he might add it to the prayers...'. Some suggest that the reference is to Christ and his intercession. Mounce thinks it unlikely that Christ would be referred to in such an indefinite fashion. Witherington writes, "Does the adding of incense by the angel mean that the angel's prayers are being added to those of the saints, or does the incense simply facilitate the prayers of the saints reaching and being acceptable to God? ... It seems likely that the angel is seen as the saints presenting their prayers to God. Once the prayers are offered, they are just as quickly answered as the angel becomes an avenging angel, casting coals from the altar upon the earth."

Revelation 8:4

καὶ ἀνέβη ὁ καπνὸς τῶν θυμιαμάτων ταῖς προσευχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων ἐκ χειρὸς τοῦ ἀγγέλου ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ.

ἀνέβη Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἀναβαίνω go up, ascend

καπνος, ου m smoke

χειρ, χειρος f hand

Revelation 8:5

καὶ εἶληφεν ὁ ἄγγελος τὸν λιβανωτὸν, καὶ ἐγένετο αὐτὸν ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου, καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν γῆν· καὶ ἐγένοντο βρονταὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ ἀστραπαὶ καὶ σεισμός.

εἶληφεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s λαμβάνω λιβανωτος, ου m see v.3

γεμίζω fill

πυρ, ος n fire

βαλλω throw, pour

ἐγένοντο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 pl γίνομαι

βροντη, ης f thunder

ἀστραπη, ης f lightning

σεισμος, ου m earthquake

Cf. Ex 19:16ff. "The action is somewhat parallel to that of Ezekiel's vision in which a man clothed in linen fills his hands with coals of fire from between the cherubim and scatters them over the city (Ezek 10:2-7). The prayers of the saints play an essential part in bringing the judgement of God upon the earth and its inhabitants. The martyrs' plea in 6:10 ('How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?') is here answered in part." Mounce.

Revelation 8:6-11:19 – 7 Trumpets

"The second series of sevens centres around the blowing of trumpets... The first four [judgments announced by these trumpets] are attacks on nature and the cosmos, the last three are directed against wicked humanity – the destroyers of the earth (11:18).

"Though these judgments are much more fearsome than the seven seals, they are balanced in a way the seals are not; namely, there is an announcement of the coming salvation as well. The trumpet scenes end in joy with a virtual coronation scene, like in Rev 5. These judgments, however gruesome, are not (at least in the case of the preliminary ones) punitive or final but rather are chastisements meant to lead humans to repentance. John's ultimate aim is to proclaim the calm and victory after the storm, though he gives us the storm in graphic detail as well...

"Notice that while the first four judgments affect the church [though are not directed against it], the last three do not. The last three are demonic attacks from which the church is protected." Witherington.

Revelation 8:6

Καὶ οἱ ἑπτὰ ἄγγελοι οἱ ἔχοντες τὰς ἑπτὰ σάλπιγγας ἠτοίμασαν αὐτοὺς ἵνα σαλπίσωσιν.

ἑπτὰ see v.2

ἑτοιμαζῶ prepare, make ready

σαλπίζῶ sound a trumpet

Revelation 8:7

Καὶ ὁ πρῶτος ἐσάλπισεν· καὶ ἐγένετο χάλαζα καὶ πῦρ μεμιγμένα ἐν αἵματι, καὶ ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν γῆν· καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῆς γῆς κατεκάη, καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν δένδρων κατεκάη, καὶ πᾶς χόρτος γλωρὸς κατεκάη.

πρῶτος, η, ον first

χάλαζα, ης f hail

"The first trumpet corresponds to some degree with the seventh plague in Exod 9:23ff. except that this hail is mixed with blood – a gruesome rain indeed." Witherington.

πυρ, ος n fire

μεμιγμένα Verb, perf pass ptc, f nom s & n
nom/acc pl μίγνυμι mix, mingle

αἷμα, ατος f blood

τρίτος, η, ον third; το τ. one third

A larger fraction than the effect of the seven seals.

κατεκάη Verb, 2nd aor pass indic, 3 s

κατακαίω burn, burn up, consume

δένδρον, ου n tree

χόρτος, ου m grass, vegetation, shoot

γλωρός, α, ον green (pale)

"The trumpet-plagues are directed against a world adamant in its hostility toward God. As the intensity of the judgments increases, so also does the vehemence with which man refuses to repent (9:20-21; 16:9, 11, 21). But the trumpet judgements are not final. They affect a significant proportion but not all of the earth (one-third occurs twelve times in vss. 7-12). Their purpose is not so much retribution as to lead men to repentance. Like the watchman and his trumpet in Ezekiel 33, they warn the people of impending danger...

"As plagues preceded the release of the children of Israel from their Egyptian masters, so also will plagues precede the Exodus of the church from hostile political powers. We are dealing here with that montage of divine judgments upon a recalcitrant world which leads to the return of Jesus Christ as sovereign Lord." Mounce.

Revelation 8:8

Καὶ ὁ δεύτερος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν· καὶ ὡς ὄρος μέγα πυρὶ καιόμενον ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν· καὶ ἐγένετο τὸ τρίτον τῆς θαλάσσης αἷμα,

ὄρος, ος n mountain, hill

καίω light, keep burning, burn

The picture may have come from the eruption of Vesuvius that destroyed Pompeii and which had occurred less than 20 years before John wrote the Apocalypse. But it clearly "represents an eschatological judgement which goes beyond any explanation in terms of natural phenomena." Mounce.

θάλασσα, ης f sea

Witherington writes, "It is not clear whether John envisions a sea full of blood, or just a boiling blood-red sea."

Revelation 8:9

καὶ ἀπέθανε τὸ τρίτον τῶν κτισμάτων τῶν ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ, τὰ ἔχοντα ψυχάς, καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν πλοίων διεφθάρησαν.

ἀπέθανεν Verb, aor act indic, 3s ἀποθνήσκω
die

κτίσμα, τος n what is created, creature

ψυχή, ης f life, 'soul'

πλοῖον, ου n boat, ship

διεφθάρησαν Verb, 2nd aor pass indic, 3 pl

διαφθείρω destroy, ruin

Revelation 8:10

Καὶ ὁ τρίτος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν· καὶ ἔπεσεν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀστὴρ μέγας καιόμενος ὡς λαμπάς, καὶ ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν ποταμῶν καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς πηγὰς τῶν ὑδάτων.

ἔπεσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s πίπτω fall

ἀστηρ, ερος m star

καιω see v.8

λαμπας, αδος f lamp, lantern

"The figure is that of a great meteorite set afire as it plunges through the earth's atmosphere. Like the blood-red storm and the burning mountain, it is a symbol of divine visitation." Mounce.

ποταμος, ου m river, stream

πηγη, ης f spring, fountain; well

ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water

Revelation 8:11

καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ ἀστέρος λέγεται· ὁ Ἄψινθος. καὶ ἐγένετο τὸ τρίτον τῶν ὑδάτων εἰς ἄψινθον, καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπέθανον ἐκ τῶν ὑδάτων, ὅτι ἐπικράνθησαν.

ὄνομα, τος n name

ἀψινθος, ου m & f wormwood

A plant with a strong and bitter taste. For the metaphorical use of this name cf. Prov 5:3-4; Lam 3:19; Jer 9:15; 23:15 – the latter two passages speak of drinking wormwood as God's punishment on his people.

ἀπέθανον Verb, aor act indic, 1s & 3pl

ἀποθνησκω die

ἐπικράνθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl

πικραίνω make bitter; pass. become bitter

"This contamination of the fresh water supply recalls the first Egyptian plague in which the water was turned to blood (Ex 7:20)." Mounce.

Revelation 8:12

Καὶ ὁ τέταρτος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν· καὶ ἐπλήγη τὸ τρίτον τοῦ ἡλίου καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῆς σελήνης καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀστέρων, ἵνα σκοτισθῇ τὸ τρίτον αὐτῶν καὶ ἡ ἡμέρα μὴ φάνη τὸ τρίτον αὐτῆς, καὶ ἡ νύξ ὁμοίως.

τέταρτος, η, ον fourth

ἐπλήγη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s πλησσω strike, smite

ἡλιος, ου m the sun

σεληνη, ης f moon

σκοτισθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s σκοτιζομαι be or become darkened

φάνη Verb, aor act subj, 3 s φαινω shine, give light

νύξ, νυκτος f night

ὁμοίως likewise, in the same way

"The scene recalls the ninth Egyptian plague with its thick darkness which spread over the land for a period of three days (Ex 10:21-23). Constant allusion to the Egyptian plagues is a way of saying that in the last days God will again bring punishment upon those hostile powers which oppress his people. They are the prelude to the great and final Exodus in which the church is taken out of the world and enters into the eternal presence of God." Mounce.

Revelation 8:13

Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἤκουσα ἑνὸς ἀετοῦ πετομένου ἐν μεσουρανήματι λέγοντος φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· Οὐαὶ οὐαὶ οὐαὶ τοῖς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐκ τῶν λοιπῶν φωνῶν τῆς σάλπιγγος τῶν τριῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν μελλόντων σαλπίζειν.

"Verse 13 serves as a transition between the four plagues brought by God upon nature to lead man to repentance and the subsequent demonic woes in which man will be directly subject to the forces of the abyss." Mounce.

εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὄρω see
εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one, a
ἀετος, ου m eagle, vulture

The message of doom is announced by a bird of prey, cf. 19:17-18. Witherington suggests that the bird spoken of here may be a vulture, as in Luke 17:37; cf. also Hosea 8:1.

πετομαι fly

μεσουρανημα, τος n mid-heaven, high in the sky

οὐαὶ interj. woe! how horrible it will be!

The threefold 'woe' corresponds with the three last trumpets.

κατοικεω live, settle, inhabit

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other

τρεις, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three

μελλω (before an infin) be going, be about

Witherington comments, "Here and in the rest of these plagues John has taken some of his audience's worst fears and experiences of wars and natural disasters and 'blown them into apocalyptic proportions, and cast them in biblically allusive terms. The point is not to predict a series of events. The point is to evoke the meaning of divine judgment which is impending on the sinful world.' [Bauckham]"

Revelation 9:1

Καὶ ὁ πέμπτος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν· καὶ εἶδον ἀστέρα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πεπτωκότα εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἡ κλεῖς τοῦ φρέατος τῆς ἀβύσσου·

πέμπτος, η, ον fifth

πεπτωκότα Verb, perf act ptc, m acc s & n nom/acc pl πιπτω fall

Cf. Is 14:12; Lk 10:18.

ἐδόθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s δίδωμι
κλεις, ειδος f key
φρεαρ, ατος n well, pit
ἀβυσσος, ου f abyss, world of dead

Cf. 20:1. Many see this as a reference to a fallen angel or Satan, but Mounce argues that it is more likely to be a divine agent, an angel sent to open up the abyss.

Revelation 9:2

καὶ ἤνοιξεν τὸ φρέαρ τῆς ἀβύσσου, καὶ ἀνέβη καπνὸς ἐκ τοῦ φρέατος ὡς καπνὸς καμίνου μεγάλης, καὶ ἐσκοτώθη ὁ ἥλιος καὶ ὁ ἀήρ ἐκ τοῦ καπνοῦ τοῦ φρέατος.

ἀνοίγω open
ἀνέβη Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἀναβαίνω go up, ascend
καπνός, ου m smoke
καμινός, ου f furnace
μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great
ἐσκοτώθη see 8:12
ἥλιος, ου m see 8:12
ἀήρ, ερος m air, space

Revelation 9:3

καὶ ἐκ τοῦ καπνοῦ ἐξῆλθον ἀκρίδες εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐταῖς ἐξουσία ὡς ἔχουσιν ἐξουσίαν οἱ σκορπίοι τῆς γῆς.

ἀκρις, ιδος f locust, grasshopper

Cf. Ex. 10:1-20; Joel 1:2-2:11.

ἐξουσία, ας f authority, power
σκορπιος, ου m scorpion

Revelation 9:4

καὶ ἐρρέθη αὐταῖς ἵνα μὴ ἀδικήσουσιν τὸν χόρτον τῆς γῆς οὐδὲ πᾶν γλωρὸν οὐδὲ πᾶν δένδρον, εἰ μὴ τοὺς ἀθρώπους οἵτινες οὐκ ἔχουσι τὴν σφραγίδα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων.

ἐρρέθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s λεγω

This and ἐδοθη in the previous and following verse "suggests that this plague, even though demonic, is under the sovereign control of God." Mounce.

ἀδικεω harm
χορτος, ου m grass, vegetation, shoot
γλωρος, α, ον green, green plant
δένδρον, ου n tree
οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἡτις, ὁ τι who, which
σφραγίς, ιδος f seal, mark
μετωπον, ου n forehead

"As the children of Israel were protected from the plagues which fell upon the Egyptians (Ex 8:22; 9:4,26; 10:23; 11:7), so also will the new Israel escape the torments which are to arise from the abyss." Mounce.

Revelation 9:5

καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἵνα μὴ ἀποκτείνωσιν αὐτούς, ἀλλ' ἵνα βασανισθῶσιν μῆνας πέντε· καὶ ὁ βασανισμὸς αὐτῶν ὡς βασανισμὸς σκορπίου, ὅταν παῖση ἄνθρωπον.

ἀποκτείνω kill, put to death
βασανισθῶσιν Verb, aor pass subj, 3 pl
βασανίζω torment
μην, μηνος m month
πεντε (indeclinable) five

Perhaps corresponding to the life-cycle of the locust. The picture is one of limited or constrained punishment (cf. the use elsewhere in Revelation of βασανίζω and βασανισμός).

βασανισμός, ου m torture, torment
ὅταν when
παίω strike, sting

Revelation 9:6

καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ζητήσουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὸν θάνατον καὶ οὐ μὴ εὕρῃσουσιν αὐτόν, καὶ ἐπιθυμήσουσιν ἀποθανεῖν καὶ φεύγει ὁ θάνατος ἀπ' αὐτῶν.

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that, those
ζητεω seek, look for
θάνατος, ου m death
εὕρισκω find
ἐπιθυμew long for, desire
ἀποθνησκω die
φευγω flee

"What a dramatic contrast to Paul's desire "to depart and be with Christ" (Phil 1:23)! For one, death leads to eternal blessing; for the other, it is an 'escape' from torment on earth to torture in the lake of fire." Mounce.

Revelation 9:7

Καὶ τὰ ὁμοιώματα τῶν ἀκρίδων ὅμοια ἵπποις ἠτοιμασμένοις εἰς πόλεμον, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν ὡς στέφανοι ὅμοιοι χρυσῷ, καὶ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν ὡς πρόσωπα ἀνθρώπων,

ὁμοίωμα, τος n likeness
ἀκρις, ιδος f see v.3
ὅμοιος, α, ον like
ἵππος, ου f horse

Cf. Joel 2:4.

ἠτοιμασμένοις Verb, perf pass ptc, m & n dat pl ἑτοιμαζω prepare, make ready
πόλεμος, ου m war, battle
κεφαλη, ης f head
στεφανος, ου m wreath, crown

χρυσος, ου m gold

"They possess power to carry through their mission to a victorious end." Mounce.

προσωπον, ου n face

Revelation 9:8

καὶ εἶχον τρίχας ὡς τρίχας γυναικῶν, καὶ οἱ ὀδόντες αὐτῶν ὡς λεόντων ἦσαν,

τρίχας Noun, acc pl θριξ, τριχος f hair
γυνη, αικος f woman

Maybe a picture of vitality.

ὄδους, ὀδοντος m tooth

λεων, οντος m lion

Cf. Joel 1:6.

Revelation 9:9

καὶ εἶχον θώρακας ὡς θώρακας σιδηροῦς, καὶ ἡ φωνὴ τῶν πτερύγων αὐτῶν ὡς φωνὴ ἀρμάτων ἵππων πολλῶν τρεχόντων εἰς πόλεμον·

θωραξ, ακος m breastplate, chest

σιδηρους, α, ουν made of iron

They are invulnerable.

περυξ, υγος f wing

άρμα, τος n chariot

τρεχω run, exert oneself

πολεμος, ου m see v.7

Revelation 9:10

καὶ ἔχουσιν οὐράς ὁμοίας σκορπίοις καὶ κέντρα, καὶ ἐν ταῖς οὐραῖς αὐτῶν ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν ἀδικῆσαι τοὺς ἀθρώπους μῆνας πέντε.

οὔρα, ας f tail

κεντρον, ου n sting, goad

ἐξουσια, ας f see v.3

ἀδικεω see v.4

μην, μηνος m see v.5

Revelation 9:11

ἔχουσιν ἐπ' αὐτῶν βασιλέα τὸν ἄγγελον τῆς ἀβύσσου· ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἑβραϊστί Ἀβαδδών, καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἑλληνικῇ ὄνομα ἔχει Ἀπολλύων.

βασιλέα Noun, acc s βασιλευς, εως m king

Mounce (unlike Witherington) argues that this is not the same as the angel that unlocked the Abyss. This is a demonic leader.

Ἑβραϊστί in Hebrew or Aramaic

Ἀβαδδων m Abaddon, Destroyer (Hebrew name of a demon transliterated into Greek)

Cf. Job 31:12; 28:22; Ps 88:11; Prov 15:11.

Witherington argues that this "is just another name for Hades, the land of the dead."

Ἑλληνικος, η, ον Greek (ἐν τῇ Ἑ. in Greek)

Ἀπολλων, ονος m Destroyer

"Many commentators feel that the verse contains a derogatory reference to the Greek god Apollo and to those emperors who claimed a special relationship with him. To name the king of the underworld Apollyon would be a cryptic way of saying that an emperor such as Domitian who liked to be regarded as Apollo incarnate was in reality a manifestation of the powers of the underworld... The allusion is strengthened by the observation that the locust was one of the symbols of the god Apollo. Beasley-Murray says that if John had in mind that both Caligula and Nero aped the deity of Apollo, and Domitian claimed to be his incarnation, 'His last word about the fifth trumpet was a master stroke of irony: the destructive host of hell had as its king the emperor of Rome.'" Mounce.

Revelation 9:12

Ἡ οὐαὶ ἡ μία ἀπῆλθεν· ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται ἔτι δύο οὐαὶ μετὰ ταῦτα.

οὐαὶ see 8:13

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

ἔτι still, yet

Revelation 9:13

Καὶ ὁ ἕκτος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν· καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν μίαν ἐκ τῶν κεράτων τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τοῦ χρυσοῦ τοῦ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ,

ἕκτος, η, ον sixth

τεσσαρες neut τεσσαρα gen τεσσαρων four

Textual evidence is evenly divided for the inclusion and omission of τεσσαρων.

κερας, ατος n horn

θυσιαστηριον, ου n altar

Mounce argues that the voice comes not from the horn(s) but from the altar itself.

χρυσους, η, ουν made of gold, golden

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

"The voice could be that of the angel-priest of 8:3-5 who presented the prayers of the saints to God upon the golden altar. Or it could be the prayers themselves with their unified concern for vindication (cf. 6:9). In either case John is recalling the fundamental truth that the prayers of God's people play an active role in the eschatological drama." Mounce.

Revelation 9:14

λέγοντα τῷ ἕκτῳ ἀγγέλῳ, ὁ ἔχων τὴν σάλπιγγα· Λῦσον τοὺς τέσσαρας ἀγγέλους τοὺς δεδεμένους ἐπὶ τῷ ποταμῷ τῷ μεγάλῳ Εὐφράτῃ.

ἕκτος, η, ον sixth

σαλιξ, ιγγος f trumpet

λυω loose, untie, release, set free

There is considerable speculation concerning the identity of these angels. Mounce is of the view that they "appear to be in charge of the limitless horde of demonic horsemen who ride across the pagan world spreading terror and death. They correspond to the king of the locusts in 9:11 and like him seem to disappear into the demonic forces they release."

δεδεμένους Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc pl δεω
bind, tie

ποταμος, ου m river, stream

The Euphrates was a natural boundary between Israel and her enemies (cf. Gen 15:18; Deut 11:24; Josh 1:4; Is 8:5-8) and also later of the Roman Empire. So Witherington comments, "The location of these angels is significant, for not only were the Romans frightened of the Parthian hordes that might charge out of the east, but the Jews were as well, for their captors – both Babylonians and Assyrians – had come from beyond the Euphrates."

Revelation 9:15

καὶ ἐλύθησαν οἱ τέσσαρες ἄγγελοι οἱ ἠτομασμένοι εἰς τὴν ὥραν καὶ ἡμέραν καὶ μῆνα καὶ ἑνιαυτόν, ἵνα ἀποκτείνωσιν τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

ἐλύθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl λυω
ἠτομασμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
έτομαζω prepare

ώρα, ας f hour, moment

μην, μηνος m month

ἐνιαυτος, ου m year

The angels have been prepared for this specific moment. "All the forces of history are under the sovereign control of God. He is the Almighty One (1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 19:15; etc.)." Mounce.

ἀποκτενω kill, put to death

τρίτος, η, ον third

Revelation 9:16

καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν στρατευμάτων τοῦ ἵπικοῦ δισμυριάδες μυριάδων ἤκουσα τὸν ἀριθμὸν αὐτῶν.

ἀριθμος, ου m number, total
στρατευμα, τος n troops, soldiers, army
ἵπικον, ου n cavalry, horsemen
δισμυριας, αδος f twenty thousand
μυριας, αδος f group of ten thousand

200 million! An immense force which no-one can escape. Witherington comments, "probably a larger number than the entire population of those who lived in the Mediterranean crescent!"

Revelation 9:17

καὶ οὕτως εἶδον τοὺς ἵππους ἐν τῇ ὀράσει καὶ τοὺς καθημένους ἐπ' αὐτῶν, ἔχοντας θώρακας πυρίνους καὶ ὑακινθίνους καὶ θειώδεις· καὶ αἱ κεφαλαὶ τῶν ἵππων ὡς κεφαλαὶ λεόντων, καὶ ἐκ τῶν στομάτων αὐτῶν ἐκπορεύεται πῦρ καὶ καπνὸς καὶ θεῖον.

ἵππος, ου f horse

ὀρασις, εως f vision

καθημαι sit, sit down, live

θωραξ, ακος m breastplate, chest

πυρινος, η, ον fiery red, the colour of fire

ὑακινθινος, ου m jacinth, hyacinth (a
precious stone, perhaps blue in colour)

θειωδης, ες sulphur-yellow

The colours match the fire, smoke and brimstone from the mouths of the horses.

κεφαλη, ης f head

λεων, οντος m lion

στομα, τος n mouth

ἐκπορευομαι go or come out

πυρ, ος n fire

καπνος, ου m smoke

θειον, ου n sulphur, brimstone

A picture of demonic forces.

Revelation 9:18

ἀπὸ τῶν τριῶν πληγῶν τούτων ἀπεκτάνθησαν τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἐκ τοῦ πυρός καὶ τοῦ καπνοῦ καὶ τοῦ θείου τοῦ ἐκπορευομένου ἐκ τῶν στομάτων αὐτῶν.

τρεις, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three

πληγη, ης f plague

The fire, smoke and brimstone are each separate plagues.

ἀπεκτάνθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl

ἀποκτενω

Revelation 9:19

ἡ γὰρ ἐξουσία τῶν ἵππων ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν καὶ ἐν ταῖς οὐραῖς αὐτῶν· αἱ γὰρ οὐραὶ αὐτῶν ὅμοιαι ὄφεσιν, ἔχουσαι κεφαλὰς, καὶ ἐν αὐταῖς ἀδικοῦσιν.

ἐξουσια, ας f power

οὔρα, ας f tail

ὅμοιος, α, ον like, of the same kind as

ὄφις, εως m snake, serpent

Perhaps another way of indicating their demonic nature.

ἐχουσαι Verb, pres act ptc, f nom pl έχω

κεφαλη, ης f head

ἀδικεω harm

Witherington comments, "Again the author is not describing what will happen but using images to create a sense of the horrible nature of undergoing God's wrath. In 12:9 Satan is called the old serpent, which is probably an indication of the demonic nature of these creatures. The point is that God allows evil but uses it for his own just purposes – he makes the wrath of even Satan serve Him. That the horses are harmful before and behind may also be reminiscent of the Parthians, who shot both going forward and turning around facing backward."

Revelation 9:20

Καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, οἳ οὐκ ἀπεκτάνθησαν ἐν ταῖς πληγαῖς ταύταις, οὐδὲ μετενόησαν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν, ἵνα μὴ προσκυνήσουσιν τὰ δαιμόνια καὶ τὰ εἰδῶλα τὰ χρυσαῖα καὶ τὰ ἀργυρᾶ καὶ τὰ χαλκᾶ καὶ τὰ λίθινα καὶ τὰ ξύλινα, ἃ οὐτε βλέπειν δύνανται οὔτε ἀκούειν οὔτε περιπατεῖν,

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other

ἀπεκτάνθησαν see v.18

μετανοεω repent

χειρ, χειρος f hand

προσκυνεω worship

δαιμονιον, ου n demon

εἰδῶλον, ου n idol

χρυσους, η, ουν made of gold, golden

ἀργυρους, α, ουν made of silver

χαλκος, ου m copper, brass, bronze

λιθινος, η, ον made of stone

ξύλινος, η, ον wooden

οὔτε not, nor (οὔτε ... οὔτε neither ... nor)

βλεπω see, look, be able to see, beware of

περιπατεω walk

Cf. Deut 4:28; Ps 115:4-7; 135:15ff; Dan 5:23.

Revelation 9:21

καὶ οὐ μετενόησαν ἐκ τῶν φόνων αὐτῶν οὔτε ἐκ τῶν φαρμάκων αὐτῶν οὔτε ἐκ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῶν οὔτε ἐκ τῶν κλεμμάτων αὐτῶν.

φονος, ου m murder, killing

φαρμακον, ου n witchcraft, sorcery

Cf. Gal 5:20; Rev 18:23; 21:8. Witherington comments, "The use of witchcraft and potions was part and parcel of pagan religion. It was used to gain control of supernatural forces or of events controlled by those forces."

πορνεια, ας f sexual immorality

κλεμμα, τος n theft, robbery

"When men turn from the knowledge of God, the path leads downward to idolatry and immorality (cf. Rom 1:18-32)." Mounce.

Revelation 10 & 11

"between the sixth and seventh seal there was an interlude consisting of two visions – the sealing of the 144,000 (7:1-8) and the heavenly multitude (7:9-17)... With the close of chapter 9 six of the seven trumpets have sounded. Once again we encounter an interlude of two related visions – the angel with the little book (10:1-11) and the two witnesses (11:1-13). These interludes are not so much pauses in the actual sequence of events as they are literary devices by which the church is instructed concerning its role and destiny during the final period of world history." Mounce.

Revelation 10:1

Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον ἰσχυρὸν καταβαίνοντα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, περιβεβλημένον νεφέλην, καὶ ἡ ἶρις ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος, καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὡς στῦλοι πυρός,

ἰσχυρος, α, ον strong, mighty, powerful

καταβαινω come down, descend

Some suggest that the 'angel' is Christ, but Mounce says that this must be rejected since Christ never appears as an angel in Revelation. Witherington writes that "we probably should see this as the angel or messenger of Christ who partakes of some of the features of Christ mentioned in Rev 1."

περιβεβλημένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n nom/acc s περιβαλλω clothe, dress

νεφελη, ης f cloud

ἶρις, ιδος f rainbow; varicoloured halo

κεφαλη, ης f head

προσωπον, ου n face, appearance

ἥλιος, ου m the sun

πους, ποδος m foot

στυλος, ου m pillar, column

πυρ, ος n fire

"Farrar notes that the description of the angel fits his message – the affirming of God's fidelity to covenants (10:7): the bow reminding of God's promise through Noah, the pillar of fire God's presence in the wilderness, and the scroll the tablets of stone." Mounce.

Revelation 10:2

καὶ ἔχων ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ βιβλαρίδιον ἠνεωγμένον. καὶ ἔθηκεν τὸν πόδα αὐτοῦ τὸν δεξιὸν ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης, τὸν δὲ εὐώνυμον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς,

χειρ, χειρος f hand

βιβλιαριδιον, ου n little book or scroll

Cf. Ezek 2:8-3:3.

ἠνεωγμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc s & n nom/acc s ἀνοιγω open

I.e. what it reveals is no secret.

ἔθηκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s τιθημι place,
set
δεξιός, α, ον right
θάλασσα, ης f sea
εὐωνυμός, ον left (hand side)

A picture of immense size – and possibly indicating the scope of the relevance of his message.

Revelation 10:3

καὶ ἔκραξεν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ ὥσπερ λέων
μυκάται. καὶ ὅτε ἔκραξεν, ἐλάλησαν αἱ ἑπτὰ
βρονταὶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν φωνάς.

κραζω cry out, call out
ὥσπερ as, even as, just as
λέων, οντος m lion
μυκαομαι roar

Cf. Hos 11:10; Amos 3:8.

ὅτε conj when
λαλεω speak, talk
ἑπτα seven
βροντη, ης f thunder
ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/herself, itself

"Premonitions of God's anger about to burst forth in judgement." Beckwith. (Cf. 8:5; 11:19; 16:18).

Revelation 10:4

καὶ ὅτε ἐλάλησαν αἱ ἑπτὰ βρονταί, ἤμελλον
γράφειν· καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ
λέγουσαν· Σφράγισον ἃ ἐλάλησαν αἱ ἑπτὰ
βρονταί, καὶ μὴ αὐτὰ γράψῃς.

ἤμελλον Verb, imperf act indic, 1 s & 3 pl
μελλω be going, be about
γραφω write
σφραγιζω seal, secure with a seal

Contrast 1:9. Mounce suggests that the seven thunders, "like the seals and trumpets, formed another series of warning plagues. Man's adamant decision not to repent (9:20-21) would render another series useless. Possibly it is too late to record any further warnings... In the verses which immediately follow, an angel under oath will declare that there shall be no further delay (vss 5-7)."

Revelation 10:5

καὶ ὁ ἄγγελος, ὃν εἶδον ἐστῶτα ἐπὶ τῆς
θαλάσσης καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ἤρεν τὴν χεῖρα
αὐτοῦ τὴν δεξιάν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν,

ἐστῶτα Verb, perf act ptc, n nom/acc pl
ἵστημι stand
ἤρεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s αἰρω raise

Cf. Gen 14:22-23. The lifting of the hand was part of making an oath.

Revelation 10:6

καὶ ὤμοσεν τῷ ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν
αἰώνων, ὃς ἔκτισεν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὰ ἐν
αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ τὴν
θάλασσαν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ, ὅτι χρόνος οὐκέτι
ἔσται·

ὤμοσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ὀμνωω and
ὀμνυμι swear, vow, make an oath
ζω live, be alive
αἰων, αἰωνος m age, eternity
κτιζω create, make

"The One who brought all things into being can carry them through in fulfilment of his redemptive purpose. The end of history, as was the beginning, is under the sovereign control of God." Mounce.

χρονος, ου m time, period of time
ουκετι adv no longer, no more
ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 2 s εἰμι

I.e. no more delays of God's judgement – not that time itself will be swept away.

Revelation 10:7

ἀλλ' ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ ἑβδόμου
ἀγγέλου, ὅταν μέλλῃ σαλπίζειν, καὶ ἐτελέσθῃ
τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ, ὡς εὐηγγέλισεν τοὺς
ἑαυτοῦ δούλους τοὺς προφήτας.

ἑβδομος, η, ον seventh
ὅταν when
σαλπίζω sound a trumpet
ἐτελέσθη Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s τελεω
complete, finish, fulfill, carry out
μυστηριον, ου n secret, mystery

God's plans for the consummation of human history encompassing both the salvation of his people and the judgement of sinners (cf. Eph 3:1-6; Rom 11:25; 1 Cor 15:55; 2 Thess 2:7). In summary, it is God's purpose to establish his kingdom (Mt 6:10; Rev 11:15).

εὐαγγελιζω act. and midd proclaim the
good news
δουλος, ου m slave, servant

Cf Amos 3:7.

Revelation 10:8

Καὶ ἡ φωνὴ ἣν ἤκουσα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, πάλιν
λαλοῦσαν μετ' ἐμοῦ καὶ λέγουσαν· Ὑπαγε
λάβε τὸ βιβλίον τὸ ἠνεωγμένον ἐν τῇ χειρὶ τοῦ
ἀγγέλου τοῦ ἐστῶτος ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ ἐπὶ
τῆς γῆς.

πάλιν again, once more
λαλοῦσαν Verb, pres act ptc, f acc s λαλεω
ὑπαγω go, go one's way, depart
λάβε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s λαμβανω
βιβλιον, ου n book, scroll
ἠνεωγμένον see v.2

ἑστῶτος Verb, perf act ptc, m gen s ἴστημι
see v.5

Revelation 10:9

καὶ ἀπῆλθα πρὸς τὸν ἄγγελον λέγων αὐτῷ
δοῦναί μοι τὸ βιβλαρίδιον. καὶ λέγει μοι· Λάβε
καὶ κατάφαγε αὐτό, καὶ πικρανεῖ σου τὴν
κοιλίαν, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ στόματί σου ἔσται γλυκὺ
ὡς μέλι.

ἀπῆλθα Verb, 2 aor act indic, 1 s ἀπερχομαι
δοῦναί Verb, aor act infin δίδωμι

Cf. Ezek 2:8-3:3, see also Jer 15:16ff.

κατάφαγε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s

κατεσθίω eat up

πικρανεῖ Verb, fut act indic, 3 s πικραίνω
make bitter

κοιλία, ας f stomach

στόμα, τος n mouth

ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 3 s εἶμι

γλυκὺς, εια, υ sweet

μέλι, ιτος n honey

Cf. Ps 119:103. The scroll is sweet to the mouth because it is the word of God. It is bitter to the stomach because it speaks of the trials that God's people must face before they enter glory (Ch 11).

Revelation 10:10

καὶ ἔλαβον τὸ βιβλαρίδιον ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ
ἀγγέλου καὶ κατέφαγον αὐτό, καὶ ἦν ἐν τῷ
στόματί μου ὡς μέλι γλυκὺ· καὶ ὅτε ἔφαγον
αὐτό, ἐπικράνθη ἡ κοιλία μου.

ὅτε conj when

ἔφαγον Verb, aor act indic, 1s & 3pl ἐσθίω
and ἐσθίω eat

ἐπικράνθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s πικραίνω
see v.9

Revelation 10:11

Καὶ λέγουσίν μοι· Δεῖ σε πάλιν προφητεῦσαι
ἐπὶ λαοῖς καὶ ἔθνεσιν καὶ γλώσσαις καὶ
βασιλεῦσιν πολλοῖς.

δεῖ impersonal verb it is necessary

σε Pronoun, acc s συ

πάλιν see v.8

λαος, ου m people, a people

ἔθνεσιν Noun, dat pl ἔθνος, ους n nation

γλώσσα, ης f tongue, language

βασίλευς, εως m king

Revelation 11

Mounce, and others, consider chapter 11 to correspond to the contents of the little book of chapter 10. This chapter is particularly difficult to interpret.

Witherington comments, "Koester suggests that in Rev 11 we have an overture to the last half of the book, introducing us in summary form to the conflict between God's people and the Beast that is recounted in Rev 12-19."

Revelation 11:1

Καὶ ἐδόθη μοι κάλαμος ὅμοιος ῥάβδῳ, λέγων·
Ἔγειρε καὶ μέτρησον τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ
θυσιαστήριον καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας ἐν
αὐτῷ.

ἐδόθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s δίδωμι
καλαμος, ου m reed, measuring rod

ὅμοιος, α, ον like

ῥάβδος, ου f stick, rod, sceptre

ἐγειρω raise

μετρεω measure

ναος, ου m temple, sanctuary

"The measuring of the temple is a symbolic way of declaring its preservation. The background is probably Ezekiel 40-42 where the prophet in a vision watches every part of the temple measured with painstaking care." Mounce. Mounce considers the temple to be a picture of the church and its measuring to be equivalent to the sealing of 7:1-8. "God will give spiritual sanctuary to the faithful believers against the demonic assault of the Antichrist." Witherington thinks that Joh's use of ναος, which means the inner sanctuary rather than the temple complex, also supports the idea of protection.

θυσιαστήριον, ου n altar

προσκυνεω worship

Revelation 11:2

καὶ τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν ἔξωθεν τοῦ ναοῦ ἔκβαλε
ἔξωθεν, καὶ μὴ αὐτὴν μετρήσης, ὅτι ἐδόθη τοῖς
ἔθνεσιν, καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν πατήσουσιν
μῆνας τεσσαράκοντα δύο.

αὐλή, ης f court, courtyard

ἔξωθεν adv & prep outside

ἔκβαλε Verb, aor act imperat, 2s ἐκβαλλω
throw out, cast out

ἐδόθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s δίδωμι

ἔθνεσιν Noun, dat pl ἔθνος, ους n nation; τα
ἔ. Gentiles

"The distinction between the sanctuary and the outer court is a way of pointing up the limitations placed upon pagan hostility (cf. Morris...). It may physically decimate the witnessing church (in 11:7 the two witnesses are killed), but it cannot touch the real source of life (the witnesses are raised and ascend to heaven; 11:11-12)." Mounce.

πολις, εως f city, town

ἅγιος, α, ον holy

Another designation for the church.

πατεω trans trample
 μην, μηνος m month
 τεσσερακοντα forty
 δυο gen & acc δυο dat δυσιν two

"The temporal designation of forty-two months (11:2; 13:5) is also given in Revelation as 1260 days (11:3; 12:6) and 'a time, and times, and half a time' (12:14). Its primary reference is to the period of Jewish suffering under the Syrian despot Antiochus Epiphanes in 167-164 BC. It became a conventional symbol for a limited period of time during which evil would be allowed free rein. In Luke 21:24 it is called 'the times of the Gentiles'." Mounce.

Witherington comments, "The reference to forty-two months comes from Daniel and is just another way of rendering the period of three and a half years, that final penultimate period before the end of history."

Revelation 11:3

καὶ δώσω τοῖς δυσὶν μάρτυσίν μου, καὶ προφητεύσουσιν ἡμέρας χιλίας διακοσίας ἐξήκοντα, περιβεβλημένοι σάκκουζ.

δώσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s διδωμι
 δυο gen & acc δυο dat δυσιν two
 μαρτυς, μαρτυρος dat pl μαρτυσιν m witness

The two witnesses are modelled upon Moses and Elijah (cf. 2 Kings 1:10ff; 1 Kings 17:1; Ex 7:14-18; 8:12). They are a symbol of the witnessing church. Witherington thinks that the reference may be to two specific churches that are undergoing persecution and even martyrdoms – for instance, Smyrna and Philadelphia.

χιλιάς Noun, nom s or Adjective, f acc pl
 χιλίας, αδος f a thousand
 διακοσιοι, αι, α two hundred
 ἐξηκοντα sixty
 περιβεβλημένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
 περιβαλλω put on, clothe, dress
 σακκος, ου m sackcloth, mourning dress

Cf. Zech 13:4. Their message is a call to repentance and is reflected in their dress.

Revelation 11:4

Οὗτοί εἰσιν αἱ δύο ἐλαῖαι καὶ αἱ δύο λυχνίαι αἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου τῆς γῆς ἐστῶτες.

ἐλαια, ας f olive tree
 λυχνια, ας f lampstand

A symbol of the church in chapter 1. Witherington adds, "The witnesses are called olive trees for they carry in them the fuel by which the candlestick could be lit."

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before
 ἐστῶτες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl ἵστημι

Cf. Zech 4. "By these two metaphors John is emphasizing a truth concerning the church which has always been true but is especially appropriate in times of persecution – that the power and authority for effective witness lie in the Spirit of God." Mounce. Cf. Zech 4:6.

Revelation 11:5

καὶ εἴ τις αὐτοὺς θέλει ἀδικῆσαι, πῦρ ἐκπορεύεται ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτῶν καὶ κατεσθίει τοὺς ἐχθροὺς αὐτῶν· καὶ εἴ τις θελήσῃ αὐτοὺς ἀδικῆσαι, οὕτως δεῖ αὐτὸν ἀποκτανθῆναι.

θελω wish, will
 ἀδικεω wrong, harm
 πυρ, ος n fire
 ἐκπορευομαι go or come out
 στομα, τος n mouth
 κατεσθιω eat up, devour

Cf. 2 Kings 1.

ἐχθρος, α, ον enemy
 οὕτως adv. thus, in this way
 δεῖ impersonal verb it is necessary
 ἀποκτεινω kill, put to death

Revelation 11:6

οὗτοι ἔχουσιν τὴν ἐξουσίαν κλεῖσαι τὸν οὐρανόν, ἵνα μὴ ὑέτος βρέχῃ τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς προφητείας αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχουσιν ἐπὶ τῶν ὑδάτων στρέφειν αὐτὰ εἰς αἷμα καὶ πατάξαι τὴν γῆν ἐν πάσῃ πληγῇ ὅσακις ἐὰν θελήσωσιν.

ἐξουσια, ας f authority, power
 κλειω shut, shut up, lock
 ὑετος, ου m rain
 βρεχω rain, send rain, wet

Cf 1 Kings 17:1; Jas 5:12-18.

στρεφω turn
 αἷμα, ατος f blood

Cf. Ex 7:20.

πατασσω strike
 πληγη, ης f plague, misfortune

Cf. Ex 8:12.

ὅσακις adv. as often as; ὅσακις ἐὰν whenever

"God's servants in the new dispensation have just as great resources as did Moses and Elijah in the old." Morris.

Revelation 11:7

Καὶ ὅταν τελέσωσιν τὴν μαρτυρίαν αὐτῶν, τὸ θηρίον τὸ ἀναβαῖνον ἐκ τῆς ἀβύσσου ποιήσει μετ' αὐτῶν πόλεμον καὶ νικήσει αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀποκτενεῖ αὐτούς.

ὅταν when
 τελεω complete, finish

μαρτυρια, ας f testimony, witness
θηριον, ου n animal, beast
ἀναβαινω come up, ascend

Mounce says this is "the major antagonist of the church in the last days ... the Antichrist."

πολεμος, ου m war, battle

Supports the view that the witnesses are not individuals but a picture of a large group.

νικαω conquer, overcome
ἀποκτενεῖ Verb, fut act indic, 3 s ἀποκτενω
kill, put to death

Revelation 11:8

καὶ τὸ πτώμα αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τῆς πλατείας τῆς πόλεως τῆς μεγάλης, ἣτις καλεῖται πνευματικῶς Σόδομα καὶ Αἴγυπτος, ὅπου καὶ ὁ κύριος αὐτῶν ἐσταυρώθη.

πτωμα, τος n body, corpse
πλατεια, ας f wide street
πολις, εως f city, town
ὅστις, ἣτις, ὁ τι who, which
πνευματικως spiritually, symbolically
Σοδομα, ων n Sodom
ὅπου adv. where
σταυρωω crucify

Mounce says that the reference is to Rome. "The witnesses meet their death at the hands of the Antichrist, whose universal dominion was in John's day epitomised by the power of Rome. The inclusion of a reference to the crucifixion is not to identify a geographical location but to illustrate the response of paganism to righteousness." Witherington, however, writes, "We must see the reference to Sodom and Egypt as a statement about the spiritual status of Jerusalem. It was a city occupied and, in fact, trampled underfoot in AD 95 by Gentiles. 'Sodom' was a prophetic title for Jerusalem that implied its judgment (Is 1:9-10; Jer 23:14; Lam 4:6). In other words it is a place of oppression, slavery and gross immorality." Morris thinks that the great city is "every city and no city. It is civilized man in organized community."

Revelation 11:9

καὶ βλέπουσιν ἐκ τῶν λαῶν καὶ φυλῶν καὶ γλωσσῶν καὶ ἐθνῶν τὸ πτώμα αὐτῶν ἡμέρας τρεῖς καὶ ἡμισυ, καὶ τὰ πτώματα αὐτῶν οὐκ ἀφίουσιν τεθῆναι εἰς μνήμα.

βλεπω see, look
λαος, ου m people
φυλη, ης f tribe, nation
γλωσσα, ης f tongue, language
ἔθνος, ους n nation
τρεις, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three
ἡμισυς, εια, υ gen ἡμισους half

The three and a half days of their public exposure corresponds to the three and a half years of their ministry.

πτωμα, τος n body, corpse
ἀφίουσιν Verb, fut act indic, 3 pl ἀφιημι
allow
τεθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin τιθημι place
μνημα, τος f tomb, grave

Witherington comments, "That the bodies of the witnesses were not allowed to be buried was considered in the ancient near east the ultimate way to disgrace or shame someone (see Isa 5:25; Ps Sol 2:30 ff.)."

Revelation 11:10

καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς χαίρουσιν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς καὶ εὐφραίνονται, καὶ δῶρα πέμψουσιν ἀλλήλοις, ὅτι οὗτοι οἱ δύο προφήται ἐβασάνισαν τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

κατοικεω live

The unbelieving world.

χαρω rejoice, be glad
εὐφραίνονται Verb, pres midd/pass indic, 3 pl
εὐφρανω make glad; pass be glad
δωρον, ου n gift
πεμπω send
ἀλλήλων, οισ, ους reciprocal pronoun one
another

Cf. Esth 9:19,22.

βασανιζω torment, disturb

"The world has always shown its hostility to the message of God – a truth which ought to give some concern to the contemporary church existing for the most part rather comfortably in a world of increasing wickedness." Mounce

Revelation 11:11

Καὶ μετὰ τὰς τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ ἡμισυ πνεῦμα ζωῆς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσηλθεν ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔστησαν ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας αὐτῶν, καὶ φόβος μέγας ἐπέπεσεν ἐπὶ τοὺς θεωροῦντας αὐτούς·

ζωη, ης f life
εἰσηλθεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s εἰσερχομαι
enter

Cf. Ezek 37.

ἔστησαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl ἱστημι
stand
πόδας Noun, acc pl πους, ποδος m foot
φοβος, ου m fear
ἐπέπεσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἐπιπιτω
fall upon, come upon
θεωρω see, watch, observe

"Since murder is the last resort of man, what can be done about those who rise from the dead! The resurrection of the church is a sure indication that God possesses the ultimate authority over life and death." Mounce.

Revelation 11:12

καὶ ἤκουσαν φωνῆς μεγάλης ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λεγούσης αὐτοῖς· Ἀνάβατε ὧδε, καὶ ἀνέβησαν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ, καὶ ἔθεώρησαν αὐτοὺς οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτῶν.

ἀνάβατε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl

ἀναβαινω come up, ascend

ὧδε adv here

νεφέλη, ης f cloud

Echoes of what is said of Elijah in 2 Kings 2:11. A sign of God's vindication of his witnesses.

ἐχθρος, α, ον enemy

Revelation 11:13

καὶ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐγένετο σεισμός μέγας, καὶ τὸ δέκατον τῆς πόλεως ἔπεσεν, καὶ ἀπεκτάνθησαν ἐν τῷ σεισμῷ ὀνόματα ἀνθρώπων χιλιάδες ἑπτὰ, καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἔμφοβοι ἐγένοντο καὶ ἔδωκαν δόξαν τῷ θεῷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that

ὥρα, ας f hour, moment

ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s γινομαι

σεισμός, ου m earthquake

Cf. Ezek 38:19-20; Zech 14:5.

δέκατος, η, ον tenth

ἔπεσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s πιπτω fall, fall down

ἀπεκτάνθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl

ἀποκτεινω see v.7

ὄνομα, τος n name, person

χιλιάς, αδος f a thousand

ἑπτα seven

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other

ἔμφοβος, ον full of fear

ἔδωκαν Verb, aor act indic, 3pl δίδωμι

δόξα, ης f glory

Some think that this is repentance and even conversion. Mounce says, "Kiddle is correct in his view that in that day 'the great mass of mankind will have committed the unpardonable crime of deifying evil.' They give glory to God 'when they are compelled by overriding terror to recognize that the true Lord is Christ and not Antichrist.'" On the other hand, Fiorenza writes, "It is crucial to recognize that Revelation's rhetoric of judgment expresses hope for the conversion of nine-tenths of the nations in response to Christian witness and preaching. Otherwise, one will not understand that the author advocates a theology of justice rather than a theology of hate and resentment." Similarly, Koester points out the contrast when one compares 1 Kings 19:18 to Rev 11:13. In the former, all but 7,000 embrace idolatry, in the latter all but 7,000 glorify God. "The conversion of the nations, rather than their destruction is God's will for the world."

Revelation 11:14

Ἡ οὐαὶ ἡ δευτέρα ἀπῆλθεν· ἰδοὺ ἡ οὐαὶ ἡ τρίτη ἔρχεται ταχύ.

οὐαὶ woe!

δευτερος, α, ον second

τρῖτος, η, ον third

ταχυ adv quickly, without delay, soon

Revelation 11:15-19

The remainder of chapter 11 is a "summary of all that is still to come" Barclay.

Revelation 11:15

Καὶ ὁ ἕβδομος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν· καὶ ἐγένοντο φωναὶ μεγάλαι ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ λέγοντες· Ἐγένετο ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ κόσμου τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ, καὶ βασιλεύσει εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

ἕβδομος, η, ον seventh

σαλπίζω sound a trumpet

κοσμος, ου m world

βασιλευω rule, reign

"Glasson refers to the common saying, 'It's all over bar the shouting,' and remarks that the only difference is that the shout of victory has already begun... During his earthly ministry Jesus had resisted the tempting offer of Satan to hand over the kingdoms of this world in exchange for worship (Mt 4:8-9). Now this sovereignty passes to him as a rightful possession in view of the successful completion of his messianic ministry." Mounce.

Revelation 11:16

Καὶ οἱ εἴκοσι τέσσαρες πρεσβύτεροι οἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενοι ἐπὶ τοὺς θρόνους αὐτῶν ἔπεσαν ἐπὶ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θεῷ,

εἴκοσι twenty

τέσσαρες neut τέσσαρα gen τεσσαρων four

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

καθῆμαι sit, sit down

θρόνος, ου m throne

ἔπεσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl πιπτω fall, fall down

προσωπον, ου n face

προσκυνεω worship

Cf. 4:10; 5:8,14; 19:4.

Revelation 11:17

λέγοντες· Εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι, κύριε, ὁ θεός, ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν, ὅτι εἴληφας τὴν δύναμίν σου τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ἐβασίλευσας.

εὐχαριστω thank, give thanks

παντοκράτωρ, ορος m Almighty

Cf. 1:8; 4:8. "In the same two passages, as well as in 1:4, he is the one who is, who was, and who is to come. In the present verse (and in 16:5) the third member is omitted because his coming is no longer seen as future. Already he has come and entered upon his reign." Mounce.

εἴληφας Verb, perf act indic, 2 s λαμβανω

The perfect indicates a permanent taking of power.

δυναμις, εως f power

βασίλευω see v.15.

Revelation 11:18

καὶ τὰ ἔθνη ὠργίσθησαν, καὶ ἦλθεν ἡ ὀργὴ σου καὶ ὁ καιρὸς τῶν νεκρῶν κριθῆναι καὶ δοῦναι τὸν μισθὸν τοῖς δούλοις σου τοῖς προφήταις καὶ τοῖς ἁγίοις καὶ τοῖς φοβουμένοις τὸ ὄνομά σου, τοὺς μικροὺς καὶ τοὺς μεγάλους, καὶ διαφθεῖραι τοὺς διαφθείροντας τὴν γῆν.

ἔθνη Noun, nom & acc pl ἔθνος, ους n nation, people; τα ἔ. Gentiles

ὠργίσθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl

ὀργίζομαι be furious, be angry

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

Cf. Ps 2:2,5,12.

καιρος, ου m time, appointed time

νεκρος, α, ον dead

κριθῆναι Verb, pres pass infin κρινω judge

The triumph of God's wrath is proclaimed in 14:10-11; 16:15-21 and 20:8-9.

δοῦναι verb, aor act infin διδωμι

μισθος, ου m pay, wages, reward

δουλος, ου m slave, servant

ἅγιος, α, ον holy

φοβεομαι fear, reverence

"A reasonable translation would be, 'To thy servants the prophets, and to the saints – those who fear thy name, both small and great.'

There are two groups (prophets and saints), who are further described as fearing the name of God. This arrangement holds intact the expression 'thy servants the prophets' (which occurs again at 10:7) and joins to it a second group (the saints) as in 16:6 ('the blood of the saints and prophets'), 18:24 (order reversed), and 22:9 ('the prophets and ... them that keep the words of this book' – that is, saints)." Mounce.

μικρος, α, ον little, small, insignificant

διαφθεῖραι Verb, aor act infin διαφθειρω destroy, ruin

Cf. 2 Thess 1:6-7. A reference here to the Roman empire of John's day. "The wrathful ones will receive wrath, and the destroyers will be destroyed." Witherington.

Revelation 11:19

Καὶ ἠνοίγη ὁ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ὄφθη ἡ κιβωτὸς τῆς διαθήκης αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ ναῷ αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἐγένοντο ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταὶ καὶ σεισμὸς καὶ χάλαζα μεγάλη.

"Verse 19 is a response to the hymn of praise in verses 17 and 18. The ark of the covenant corresponds to the rewarding of the faithful, and the cosmic disturbances to the outpouring of God's wrath." Mounce. Witherington adds, "The ark was the locus of God's Word and his presence, and, in apocalyptic vision, it is quite proper to stress the heavenly nature of these things. It is accompanied by the usual signs of theophany and of God coming down, which is the ultimate event."

ἠνοίγη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ἀνοιγω open

ναος, ου m temple, sanctuary

ὄφθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ὄραω trans

see; pass. appear

κιβωτος, ου f ark, box

διαθηκη, ης covenant

Both the blessing of his people and the judgement of rebels proceed from the covenant faithfulness of God (cf. 16:1). "This vision promises God will be faithful to his Word and maintain fellowship with his covenant people." Witherington.

ἀστραπη, ης f lightning, ray

βροντη, ης f thunder

σεισμος, ου m earthquake

χάλαζα, ης f hail

These events recall the giving of the law at Sinai.

Postscript

Witherington speaks of the book of Revelation, in common with all apocalyptic literature, as 'resistance literature.' He comments that it needs to be read as such. It is a call to active but nonviolent resistance to the oppressive powers that be, a resistance that involves witness to Jesus Christ as supreme Lord, witness which leads both to the extension of his kingdom but also to persecution, even to the point of death. Prayer also plays a vital part for it is a cry to God for justice, for him to vindicate his oppressed people.

Witherington comments, "Sometimes there has been an overreaction to this particular section of Revelation, and in some quarters judgment has been banished as a topic of Christian discourse or belief. In protest against the latter H. Richard Niebuhr once wrote that the essential message of liberal protestantism was, 'A God without wrath brought me without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without the cross.' ... It needs to be recognised that a God without judgment is also a God who does not care about justice, which is to say a God who is neither holy nor righteous nor fair. According to John and other NT writers, God's love is a holy love, and therefore it could not neglect the issues of justice and fairness. If one is a persecuted believer, one could easily say that for God to neglect justice or judgment would not be a loving thing to do. God must in the end vindicate not only his own people but the divine nature itself, or people will never recognise the full character of God, nor will God's plan for the rectification of a lost world come to fruition."

Revelation 12

"Before the seven last plagues of chapter 16, in which the wrath of God is finished (15:1), John turns aside to explain the underlying cause of the hostility about to break upon the church. During his earthly ministry Jesus had warned, 'If they persecuted me, they will persecute you' (Jn 15:20). It is the age-long conflict between God and Satan which accounts for the persecution the church is to experience. Although the crucial battle was won when Christ arose victorious over death and the grave, the adversary continues his struggle. Cast down from heaven and knowing that his time is short (12:12), Satan turns in rage against the faithful who 'keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus' (12:17). By laying bare the root cause of the persecution John would encourage believers to hold fast in the coming tribulation. The death struggle of a defeated foe will bring severe tribulation, but the outcome is certain – God will come in judgement to destroy his enemies (chapters 15-19) and reward his own (chaps. 20-22)." Mounce.

Mulholland describes the conflict between God and Satan using the imagery of chess: "At a certain point in many chess games, the one who ultimately wins makes a move that sets the mating net. That is, from that point on the outcome of the game is a foregone conclusion. There may be as many as ten or fifteen or even more moves left before the final checkmate move that seals the victory. During these endgame moves the loser is still playing the game, still capturing pieces from the winner. But inexorably, unavoidably, finally the winner makes the checkmate move and the loser is defeated... Often the move that sets the mating net is costly, a sacrificial move that lures the loser into a trap. The winner may sacrifice the most valuable piece in the game, appearing to insure defeat."

Witherington shows how the author draws on a range of conflict myths from Babylon, Egypt and Greece in chapter 12. He comments, "One gets the feeling that in apocalyptic prophecy all sources are fair game so long as they can be appropriately modified. Here, then, we have an example of 'plundering the Egyptians', so to speak." He also quotes Giblin who writes, "John produces a distinctively Christian perspective both from biblical and from pagan mythological language. Christianity reworks its biblical heritage and transforms pagan material in line with its own aim of communicating truth in its cultural context. Its tendency to inculcate the Gospel without adulterating it is as old as the NT itself."

Revelation 12:1

Καὶ σημεῖον μέγα ὄφθη ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, γυνὴ περιβεβλημένη τὸν ἥλιον, καὶ ἡ σελήνη ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτῆς στέφανος ἀστέρων δώδεκα,

σημεῖον, ου n miraculous sign, sign

ὄφθη see 11:19

γυνή, αικος f woman

"The woman is not Mary the mother of Jesus but the messianic community, the ideal Israel. Zion as the mother of the people of God is a common theme in Jewish writings (Isa 54:1... cf. Gal 4:26). It is out of faithful Israel that Messiah will come. It should cause no trouble that within the same chapter the woman comes to signify the church (v. 17). The people of God are one throughout all redemptive history. The early church did not view itself as discontinuous with faithful Israel." Mounce. Witherington draws attention to Isa 66:6-9 and argues that "mother Zion is in view or, as Paul would put it, the New Jerusalem, which is our mother (Gal 4:26)."

περιβεβλημένη Verb, perf pass ptc, f nom s
περιβαλλω put on, clothe, dress

ἥλιος, ου m the sun

σελήνη, ης f moon

ὑποκατω prep with gen under, beneath

πους, ποδος m foot

κεφαλή, ης f head

στεφανος, ου m wreath, crown

ἀστηρ, ερος m star

δώδεκα twelve

"As God covers himself 'with light as with a garment' (Ps 104:2), so the woman is arrayed with the sun. The world may despise the true Israel and hold it in lowest esteem, but from God's point of view she is a radiant bride (cf. Jer 2:2). She stands as an obvious contrast to the scarlet whore of chapter 17. The moon beneath her feet speaks of dominion, and the crown of twelve stars depicts royalty." Mounce.

Revelation 12:2

καὶ ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα· καὶ κράζει ὠδίνουσα καὶ βασανιζομένη τεκεῖν.

γαστρί Noun, dat s γαστήρ, τρος f womb;

ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχω be pregnant

κράζω cry out, call out

ὠδίνουσα Verb, pres act ptc, f nom s ὠδίνω suffer birth pangs

βασανίζω torment, disturb

Does not appear elsewhere in the NT in connection with labour, but is an entirely appropriate verb to describe the physical distress caused.

τεκεῖν Verb, aor act infin τικτω bear, give birth to, produce

Revelation 12:3

καὶ ὄφθη ἄλλο σημεῖον ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἰδοὺ δράκων μέγας πυρρός, ἔχων κεφαλὰς ἑπτὰ καὶ κέρατα δέκα καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτοῦ ἑπτὰ διαδήματα,

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

δρακων, οντος m dragon (figurative term for the Devil)

The 'old serpent', the Devil or Satan (cf. v.9 and 20:2). In the OT the picture is used of the enemies of God's people (Is 27:1; Ezek 29:3).

πυρρος, α, ον red, fiery red

Symbolising his murderous character.

κεφαλή, ης f head

ἑπτὰ seven

κερας, ατος n horn

δεκα ten

Cf. Dan 7-8 where it refers to the nations.

διαδήμα, τος n diadem, crown

"Crowns of arrogated authority" Hendriksen.

The numbers symbolise universal power.

Revelation 12:4

καὶ ἡ οὐρὰ αὐτοῦ σύρει τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀστέρων τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ ἔβαλεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν γῆν. καὶ ὁ δράκων ἔστηκεν ἐνώπιον τῆς γυναίκος τῆς μελλούσης τεκεῖν, ἵνα ὅταν τέκη τὸ τέκνον αὐτῆς καταφάγη.

οὐρά, ας f tail

συρω drag, drag away, sweep down

τρίτος, η, ον third

βαλλω throw, throw down

Cf. Dan 8:10. "emphasises the tremendous size and awesome power of the dragon." Mounce.

ἴστημι stand

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

μελλω (before an infin) be going, be about

τεκεῖν see v.2

ὅταν when

τέκη Verb, aor act subj, 3 s τικτω

τέκνον, ου n child

καταφάγη Verb, aor act subj, 3 s κατεσθιω eat up, devour

"As Nebuchadnezzar devoured Israel ('He has swallowed me like a monster; he has filled his belly with my delicacies,' Jer 51:34), so has Satan determined to devour the child. He has taken his position and awaits the victim." Mounce.

Revelation 12:5

καὶ ἔτεκεν υἱόν, ἄρσεν, ὃς μέλλει ποιμαίνειν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ· καὶ ἠρπάσθη τὸ τέκνον αὐτῆς πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ πρὸς τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ.

ἔτεκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s τικω
 ἄρσην, εν gen ενος male, man
 μέλλω be going, be destined
 ποιμαίνω tend as a shepherd, rule
 ῥάβδος, ου f stick, rod, sceptre
 σιδηροῦς, α, ουν made of iron

Cf. Ps 2. "As a shepherd defends his flock against the wild beasts of prey, so will Christ at his return strike the nations which oppress and persecute his church (cf. 19:15; ... 2:27)." Mounce.

ἠρπάσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ἄρπαζω
 take away, carry off
 θρόνος, ου m throne

The focus moves directly to Jesus' ascension. "The significant point is that the evil designs of Satan were foiled by the successful completion of Christ's messianic ministry, which culminated in his ascension and exaltation (cf. Phil 2:5-11)." Mounce.

Witherington comments, "John is drawing on the traditions in regard to the birth of Apollo, which were also appropriated by Domitian to suggest that he was a divine being and the conqueror of evil." He quotes Reddish who writes, "John's reuse of this ancient myth challenges the divine claims and arrogant assumptions of the imperial cult. Christ, not the emperor, is the real victor over the malevolent forces of chaos, darkness and wickedness. John unmask the Roman power for what it truly is – a tool of Satan."

Revelation 12:6

καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἔφυγεν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον, ὅπου ἔχει ἐκεῖ τόπον ἡτοιμασμένον ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα ἐκεῖ τρέφωσιν αὐτὴν ἡμέρας χιλίας διακοσίας ἑξήκοντα.

φευγῶ flee, run away (from)
 ἐρημος, ου f deserted place

"The flight of the woman may in part reflect the escape of the Palestinian church to Pella at the outbreak of the Jewish war in AD 66." Mounce.

ὅπου adv. where
 ἐκεῖ there, in that place, to that place
 τοπος, ου m place
 ἡτοιμασμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
 nom/acc s ἐτοιμαζῶ prepare
 τρέφω feed, provide with food, sustain

"The intent of the verse, however, is not so much the flight of the church as the provision of God for her sustenance. To the Jewish people the wilderness spoke of divine provision and intimate fellowship. It was in the wilderness that God had rained down bread from heaven (Ex 16:4ff) and nourished his people for forty years. Of Israel God said, 'I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her' (Hos 2:14; cf. 1 Kgs 17:2-3; 19:3-4)." Mounce. So Witherington writes, "Perhaps John is especially drawing on the prophetic recasting of the Exodus/Sinai events such as found in Isa 40:3 or Hos 2:14. There is a reference to a new exodus into the desert when Israel's future redemption arrives. John indicates in his vision that the people of God will be nourished (by God) just as the Israelites had been in the wilderness by manna and quail. The text does not say the people of God are raptured into heaven or any celestial place. The image is of protection on earth from the wrath of the dragon, something one does not need protection from if one is in heaven."

χιλίας Noun, nom s or Adjective, f acc pl
 χιλιας, αδος f a thousand
 διακοσιοι, αι, α two hundred
 ἑξήκοντα sixty

The period of three and a half years or 1260 days (cf. 11:2; 13:5) is commonly used in this part of Revelation as a symbol for the gospel age. It is of interest to note that James 5:17 also speaks of a period of three and a half years, referring back to 1 Kings 17 ff. This was a period during which God protected and provided for the prophet Elijah.

Revelation 12:7

Καὶ ἐγένετο πόλεμος ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ Μιχαὴλ καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ τοῦ πολεμῆσαι μετὰ τοῦ δράκοντος· καὶ ὁ δράκων ἐπολέμησεν καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ,

πολεμος, ου m war, battle
 πολεμεῶ wage war, fight

Satan seeking to depose God. On the archangel Michael, cf. Jude 9. John is adapting traditional material, Witherington writes, "In Test. of Dan. 6:2 Michael is the mediator between God and humanity, and the angel of the nation Israel fighting against the angelic leaders of the Gentile nations (cf. Dan 10:13ff.; 12:1). In 1 En. 54:6 he is one of four angels who casts the fallen angels into the fiery furnace on judgment day. In the Qumran literature, Michael is the Prince of Light who leads the children of light into battle against Belial (War Scroll 13:10-12; 17:6-8; Community Rule 3:20-4:1). Here his task is to take on the adversary of the people of God in general. Michael prevails, and the Devil and his minions are cast down to earth."

Revelation 12:8

καὶ οὐκ ἴσχυσεν, οὐδὲ τόπος εὐρέθη αὐτῶν ἔτι ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ.

ἰσχυω be strong, be able, be sufficient
τοπος, ου m place
εὐρέθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s εὐρισκω
find

ἔτι still, yet, any more

Mounce argues that these verses do not refer to Satan's original fall but to an eschatological event. Satan is depicted in Scripture as having access to heaven (Job 1:6-9; 2:1-6; Zech 3:1ff.). As a result of this attempted assault he will have no further access. "It is the ir retrievable loss of any further opportunity to fulfil his wicked plan that sends Satan out in such great anger against the church."

Witherington writes, "A threefold fall of Satan can be noted in Revelation: (1) from heaven to earth (12:9); (2) from earth to the abyss (20:2); and (3) from the abyss into the lake of fire (20:10). The first casting down of Satan, the text seems to imply, transpires as the result of the death/ascension of the Messiah. This is why tribulation comes on the earth after Jesus' ascension." He quotes Koester, "From a heavenly perspective ... evil rages on earth not because it is so powerful, but because it is vulnerable. Revelation likens Satan to a rogue animal that the forces of God have corralled, driving it off the expansive plains of heaven into the fenced-in area of earth. The beast rampages within its newly limited circumstances seeking to do as much damage as possible during the short time that remains until the company of heaven slips the noose around its head, binds its legs and chains it up so that it can do no further damage (12:11; 20:2)... those who recognise that Satan rages on earth because he has already lost heaven and is now desperate have no reason to resist him, confident that God will prevail."

Revelation 12:9

καὶ ἐβλήθη ὁ δράκων ὁ μέγας, ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ὁ καλούμενος Διάβολος καὶ ὁ Σατανᾶς, ὁ πλανῶν τὴν οἰκουμένην ὅλην – ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἐβλήθησαν.

ἐβλήθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s βαλλω
throw, throw down

Cf. Lk 10:18.

ὄφις, εως m snake, serpent

Cf. Gen 3:1ff.

ἀρχαῖος, α, ον old, ancient
διάβολος, ου m the devil
Σατανας, α the Adversary, Satan
πλαναω lead astray, mislead, deceive
οἰκουμένη, ης f world, inhabited earth
ὅλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire
ἐβλήθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl βαλλω

Revelation 12:10

Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ λέγουσαν· Ἄρτι ἐγένετο ἡ σωτηρία καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἐβλήθη ὁ κατήγορ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν, ὁ κατηγορῶν αὐτοὺς ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός.

ἄρτι now, at the present
σωτηρια, ας f salvation
δυναμις, εως f power
ἐξουσια, ας f authority, power
κατηγορ, ορος m accuser

κατηγορεω accuse, bring charges against
 νυξ, νυκτος f night

Cf. Job 1:6-12; 2:1-5. "By virtue of the death of Christ he is unable successfully to lodge a charge against God's elect (Rom 8:33-34)." Mounce.

Revelation 12:11

καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐνίκησαν αὐτὸν διὰ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ ἀρνίου καὶ διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν, καὶ οὐκ ἠγάπησαν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτῶν ἄχρι θανάτου·

νικαω conquer, overcome
 αἷμα, ατος f blood
 ἀρνιον, ου n lamb, sheep
 μαρτυρια, ας f testimony, witness
 ἀγαπαω love, show love for
 ψυχη, ης f self, life, 'soul'
 ἄχρι prep with gen until, as far as
 θανατος, ου m death

Revelation 12:12

διὰ τοῦτο εὐφραίνεσθε, οἱ σὺρανοὶ καὶ οἱ ἐν αὐτοῖς σκηνοῦντες. οὐαὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν, ὅτι κατέβη ὁ διάβολος πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἔχων θυμὸν μέγαν, εἰδὼς ὅτι ὀλίγον καιρὸν ἔχει.

εὐφραϊνω make glad; pass be glad, rejoice

Cf. Is 49:13; Ps 96:11. See also Lk 10:18.

σκηνοω live, dwell
 οὐαι interj. woe!

Mounce considers that this is not the 'third woe' (cf. 8:12; 9:12; 11:14) since this one relates to hostility towards believers rather than the judgement of the wicked.

θαλασσα, ης f sea
 καταβαινω come or go down
 θυμος, ου m anger, rage, fury
 εἰδως Verb, perf act ptc, m nom s οἶδα know
 ὀλιγος, η, ον little, small
 καιρος, ου m time, appointed time

"The troubles of the persecuted righteous arise not because Satan is too strong, but because he is beaten." Morris.

Revelation 12:13

Καὶ ὅτε εἶδεν ὁ δράκων ὅτι ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν γῆν, ἐδίωξεν τὴν γυναῖκα ἣτις ἔτεκεν τὸν ἄρσενά.

ὅτε conj when
 διωκω persecute, seek after, pursue

"Exodus typology is woven throughout this entire episode. The pursuit of the woman is similar to Pharaoh's pursuit of the children of Israel as they fled from Egypt (Ex 14:8)." Mounce.

ὅστις, ἣτις, ὅ τι who, which
 ἔτεκεν see v.5
 ἄρσην, εν gen ενος see v.5

Revelation 12:14

καὶ ἐδόθησαν τῇ γυναίκαὶ αἱ δύο πτέρυγες τοῦ ἀετοῦ τοῦ μεγάλου, ἵνα πέτηται εἰς τὴν ἔρημον εἰς τὸν τόπον αὐτῆς, ὅπου τρέφεται ἐκεῖ καιρὸν καὶ καιροὺς καὶ ἡμισυ καιροῦ ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ ὄφεως.

ἐδόθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl διδομι
 πτερυξ, υγος f wing
 ἄετος, ου m eagle

Cf. Deut 32:10-11; Isa 40:31.

πετομαι fly

ἐρημος, ου f For this and much of the immediately following vocabulary, see v.6.

ὅπου adv. where
 καιρος, ου m time, season
 ἡμισυς, εια, υ gen ἡμισους half

Once again the period of three and a half years.

προσωπον, ου n face, presence
 ὄφις, εως m snake, serpent

Revelation 12:15

καὶ ἔβαλεν ὁ ὄφις ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ ὀπίσω τῆς γυναίκος ὕδωρ ὡς ποταμὸν, ἵνα αὐτὴν ποταμοφόρητον ποιήσῃ.

βαλλω throw, throw down, pour
 στομα, τος n mouth
 ὀπισω prep with gen after, behind, follow
 ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water
 ποταμος, ου m river, stream
 ποταμοφορητος, ον swept away by a river

Cf. Ps 18:4. "Historically the episode could refer to the attempt on the part of the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem to stamp out the early church (Acts 8:1-3...). Or it could refer to the river of lies which will threaten even the elect (2 Thess 2:9-11; Rev 13:14; Mt 24:24) in the last days. This river of deceit (cf. 2:9; 3:9) has as its counterpart the 'rivers of water of life' which flows bright as crystal from the heavenly throne (21:1)." Mounce.

Witherington writes, "This may be an allusion to the Exodus/Sinai events. But since in the primal myth it is the sea monster who is the evil one, it is not surprising that water is his modus vivendi to do in the woman."

Revelation 12:16

καὶ ἐβοήθησεν ἡ γῆ τῇ γυναίκαί, καὶ ἤνοιξεν ἡ γῆ τὸ στόμα αὐτῆς καὶ κατέπιεν τὸν ποταμὸν ὃν ἔβαλεν ὁ δράκων ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ·

βοηθεω help
 ἀνοιγω open

κατέπιεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s καταπινω
swallow, swallow up

Revelation 12:17

καὶ ὠργίσθη ὁ δράκων ἐπὶ τῇ γυναικί, καὶ ἀπῆλθεν ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν λοιπῶν τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτῆς, τῶν τηρούντων τὰς ἐντολάς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἔχόντων τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ·

ὀργίζομαι be furious, be angry
ποιῆσαι Verb, aor act infin ποιεω
πολεμος, ου m war, battle, strife
λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other
σπερμα, τος n seed, offspring
τηρεω keep, observe
ἐντολή, ης f command
μαρτυρία, ας f testimony, witness

The reference is to believers generally. There may here be an echo of Gen 3:15.

Revelation 12:18

καὶ ἐστάθη ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμμον τῆς θαλάσσης.

This verse is sometimes left unnumbered and read as the beginning of 13:1.

ἐστάθη Verb, 2 aor act indic, 3 s ἵστημι
stand
ἄμμος, ου f sand, seashore
θαλασσα, ης f sea

Revelation 13

Witherington writes, "The structure of chapter 13 is clear. This is a tale of two Beasts, neither of which is to be identified with the dragon, but both of which serve his cause and purposes. The first of the two Beasts comes forth from the sea and, like Tiamat, is a seven-headed Beast with ten horns. As we shall see, a clear understanding of Dan 7ff is required to understand some of the material in this chapter. The second of the two Beasts comes forth from the earth and appears like a lamb with two horns. While the former creature has its parallels with the OT water monster Leviathan, the latter parallels Behemoth... The most reasonable guess as to what these symbols refer to is that the former is a figure of the Roman Empire itself and its emperors, alluded to by the ten heads, while the latter stands for the priests who propagated and maintained the emperor cult, or, since this was written to an audience in Asia Minor, for the provincial council in charge of enforcing emperor worship throughout Asia Minor. Though the former Beast is not called 'anti-Christ,' this is not an inappropriate designation for him..."

"Thus, in this and subsequent chapters, we have the introduction of the unholy trinity – the dragon, the water monster, and the land Beast (the devil, the anti-Christ and the false prophet – see 16:13). These three are striving for the religious allegiance of the world. The water monster can be seen as an anti-Christ figure for it has ten diadems just as Christ has many (cf. 13:1; 19:12). He has a blasphemous name (13:1) just as Christ has a holy name (19:11 ff.). He causes people to worship Satan (13:4) while Christ causes people to worship God (1:6). He has a mortal wound and possibly even dies but then revives or lives again (13:3, 12-14) just as Christ died and lives again. He has the power, throne, and authority of the Devil (13:2), and Christ shares the power, throne, and authority of God (12:5-10). In addition Beasley-Murray points out that the land Beast seems to function rather like an unholy spirit. It performs prophetic activity and is the instrument of revelation of Satanic authority, just as the Holy Spirit mediates God's revelation. One must also recognise that the Beast combines features of the four Beasts in Daniel and features of Nero as well to create a composite portrait of evil incarnate. It is also a sort of universal image indicating the kinds of threats God's people have endured in many different generations."

Revelation 13:1

Καὶ εἶδον ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον, ἔχον κέρατα δέκα καὶ κεφαλὰς ἑπτὰ, καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν κεράτων αὐτοῦ δέκα διαδήματα, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτοῦ ὀνόματα βλασφημίας.

Cf. Dan 7:3.

θηριον, ου n animal, beast, wild animal
ἀναβαινω go up, come up, ascend
κερας, ατος n horn
δεκα ten

"The ten horns are like those of Daniel's fourth beast (Dan 7:7). There they are the ten kings which rise out of the fourth kingdom. In Revelation 17 the ten horns are also ten kings (17:12), although in the present vision we learn only that they wear diadems, the insignia of royal authority (cf. 19:12). There are a number of suggestions as to why the diadems are placed on the horns rather than the heads of the beast. The most plausible is that the claim to authority rests on brute force." Mounce.

κεφαλή, ης f head
ἑπτα seven

"That the beast has seven heads stresses its relationship to the seven headed dragon of chapter 12 (vs. 3)." Mounce.

διαδημα, τος n diadem, crown

ὄνομα, τος n name

βλασφημία, ας f slander, blasphemy

Reflects "the increasing tendency of the Roman emperors to assume titles of deity." Mounce considers that for John "the beast was the Roman Empire as persecutor of the church... Yet the beast is more than the Roman Empire. John's vision grew out of the details of his own historical situation, but its complete fulfilment awaits the final denouement of human history. The beast has always been, and will be in a final intensified manifestation, the deification of secular authority."

Revelation 13:2

καὶ τὸ θηρίον ὃ εἶδον ἦν ὅμοιον παρδάλει, καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὡς ἄρκου, καὶ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ὡς στόμα λέοντος. καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ δράκων τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξουσίαν μεγάλην.

ὅμοιος, α, ον like, of the same kind as
παρδαλις, εως f leopard
πους, ποδος m foot
ἄρκος, ου m & f bear
λεων, οντος m lion

The beast out of the sea combines the characteristics of the four beasts of Dan 7. "In combining these beasts, which in Daniel represented four historic kingdoms hostile to the people of God (Dan 7:17, 23), John sets forth the Antichrist as the epitome of bestial opposition to the seed of the woman." Mounce.

ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s δίδωμι
δύναμις, εως f power
θρόνος, ου m throne
ἐξουσία, ας f authority

"This beast is the underling of the dragon and so bears his mark. Just as God bestowed on Christ his power, authority and throne, so it is with this Beast, and the parallels are deliberate." Witherington.

Revelation 13:3

καὶ μίαν ἐκ τῶν κεφαλῶν αὐτοῦ ὡς ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον, καὶ ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ ἐθεραπεύθη. καὶ ἐθαυμάσθη ὅλη ἡ γῆ ὀπίσω τοῦ θηρίου,

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one
ἐσφαγμένην Verb, perf pass ptc, f acc s
σφαζω slaughter, put to death;
ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον fatally wounded

Witherington comments, "The exact same phrase of 'like it had been slaughtered to death' is found in Rev 5:6, referring to the death of the Lamb, which then rose. We are meant to see a demonic imitation of Christ." He continues by pointing out that though Nero committed suicide in 68 AD there were many stories circulating that he was not dead. "The Neronian imposter of most recent memory to John's audience actually persuaded the Parthians to march on Rome in AD 88-89. The return of Nero was actually the nightmare of stable Romans' dreams, but it was also alluded to in Jewish prophetic sources."

πληγή, ης f plague

ἐθεραπεύθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s
θεραπεύω heal, cure

"Since the beast is the Roman Empire in its persecution of the church, its recovery from a mortal wound could refer to the re-establishment of order under Vespasian (AD 69-79) following the chaotic and bloody revolution which had begun less than two years before with the death of Nero and extended through the abortive reigns of Galba, Otho and Vitellius. Or perhaps no historical allusion is intended and the purpose of the figure is to underscore the tremendous vitality of the beast. Though wounded he returns in increased might. From the beginning of history the pagan state has set itself against the people of God. From the pharaohs of Egypt to the emperors of Rome it has moved steadily forward with determined purpose to devour all who refused it homage. It had survived every assault and recovered from every deadly blow. Little wonder that in the last days the whole world will be drawn after the beast in wonder and amazement." Mounce.

θαυμάζω wonder, be amazed
ὅλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire
ὀπίσω prep with gen after, follow

Cf. 1 Tim 5:15.

Revelation 13:4

καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ δράκοντι ὅτι ἔδωκεν τὴν ἐξουσίαν τῷ θηρίῳ, καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θηρίῳ λέγοντες· Τίς ὅμοιος τῷ θηρίῳ, καὶ τίς δύναται πολεμῆσαι μετ' αὐτοῦ;

προσκυνεῶ worship

"Deification of secular power is in fact the worship of Satan." Mounce.

ὅμοιος, α, ον see v.2

"The language imitates the language of the Psalms (see Ps 89:6ff.; Ex 15:11-12; Isa 40:25ff.; Mic 7:18ff.). Emperor worship is being discussed, and the hymns of the Bible are being parodied. John is speaking of a phenomenon of his day when the government became so totalitarian that it arrogated to itself all the attributes of deity and demanded absolute allegiance." Witherington.

δυναμαι can, be able to, be capable of
πολεμω wage war, fight

"The motivation of worship is not his moral greatness but the awesome power of his might." Mounce.

Revelation 13:5

Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ στόμα λαλοῦν μεγάλα καὶ βλασφημίας, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία ποιῆσαι μῆνας τεσσαράκοντα δύο.

λαλεω speak, talk

Cf. Dan 7:8,20,25; 11:36.

The primary reference of ἐδόθη in this and the following verses is to the dragon, but "John's readers would understand in these later verses a reference to God, the ultimate source of power. The reign of the beast is by divine permission. He operates within the limitations determined by God." Mounce.

ποιῆσαι Verb, aor act infin ποιεω

I.e. to do, or actively carry out, the will of the dragon.

μην, μηνος m month

τεσσαρακοντα forty

δυο gen & acc δυο dat δυσιν two

Cf. 11:2. The restricted time again stresses that it is God and not evil powers who are in control.

Revelation 13:6

καὶ ἤνοιξε τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ εἰς βλασφημίας πρὸς τὸν θεόν, βλασφημῆσαι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ, τοὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σκηνοῦντας.

ἀνοιγω open

Cf. 2 Thess 2:4.

σκηνη, ης f tent, tabernacle, dwelling place

Cf. 21:3.

σκηνω live, dwell

"Those who dwell in heaven are either angelic beings, or, possibly, the church viewed ideally as seated in heavenly places (cf. Eph 2:6; Col 3:1)." Mounce.

Revelation 13:7

καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ νικῆσαι αὐτούς, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν φυλὴν καὶ λαὸν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ ἔθνος.

πολεμος, ου m see 11:17

ἅγιος, α, ον holy; οἱ ἅγιοι God's people

νικαω conquer, overcome

Cf. 15:2. The true victory belongs to the 'saints'.

φυλη, ης f tribe, nation

λαος, ου m people

γλωσσα, ης f tongue, language

ἔθνος, ους n nation, people

"Such was the nature of the Roman Empire, which swallowed up most of the known Mediterranean world." Witherington.

Revelation 13:8

καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, οὗ οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἁρνίου τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου.

προσκυνεω worship

κατοικεω live, inhabit

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω write

βιβλιον, ου n book, scroll

ζωη, ης f life

ἄρνιον, ου n lamb

Cf. Ex 32:32-33; Phil 4:3; Rev 3:5; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:27; 22:19.

ἐσφαγμένου Verb, perf pass ptc, m & n gen s

σφαζω slaughter, put to death

καταβολη, ης f beginning, creation

κοσμος, ου m world, universe

The RSV joins this last phrase with the writing of names in the book of life rather than the death of Christ. Mounce thinks this unnatural. Christ's death was part of God's eternal plan.

Revelation 13:9

Εἴ τις ἔχει οὖς ἀκουσάτω.

οὖς, ὠτος n ear, hearing

Alerting the reader to the importance of what follows.

Revelation 13:10

εἴ τις εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν, εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπάγει· εἴ τις ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀποκτανθῆναι αὐτὸν ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀποκτανθῆναι. ὧδέ ἐστιν ἡ ὑπομονὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις τῶν ἁγίων.

αἰχμαλωσια, ας f captivity; group of captives

ὑπαγω go, go one's way, depart

μαχαира, ης f sword, war, violent death
 ἀποκτεινω kill, put to death

The difficulty of this double proverb has resulted in several scribal amendments. "The first couplet teaches that the believer must accept what God has ordained, and the second warns against any attempt on the part of the church to defend itself by the use of force. Barclay writes, 'It is an intolerable paradox to defend the gospel of the love of God by using the violence of man'... This attitude of humble submission is the patience and faith of the saints." Mounce. Witherington suggests that this is a partial quote from Jer 15:2 and comments, "probably what is in view is a call to Christians to endure whatever persecution comes and to remain faithful. They are not to take the sword against their oppressors but, rather like their master, simply suffer the wrath of evil and so stop the vicious cycle of killing and revenge. The church then is called to follow the *Via Dolorosa*. In such endurance lies the faithfulness and witness of the saints, who when mistreated did not retaliate."

ὧδε adv here

ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance
 πιστις, εως f faith

Revelation 13:11

Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλο θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον ἐκ τῆς γῆς, καὶ εἶχεν κέρατα δύο ὅμοια ἀρνίῳ, καὶ ἐλάλει ὡς δράκων.

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

θηριον, ου n see v.1

ἀναβαινω see v.1

εἶχεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s ἔχω

κερας, ατος n see v.1

δου gen & acc δου dat δυσιν two

ὅμοιος, α, ον like, of the same kind as

ἀρνιον, ου n lamb, sheep

"His two horns like a lamb represent his attempt to convey the impression of gentle harmlessness. It recalls the warning of Jesus, 'Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves' (Mt 7:15)." Mounce.

"This Beast is in a sense also a parody of Christ." Witherington.

Revelation 13:12

καὶ τὴν ἐξουσίαν τοῦ πρώτου θηρίου πᾶσαν ποιεῖ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ. καὶ ποιεῖ τὴν γῆν καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ κατοικοῦντας ἵνα προσκυνήσουσιν τὸ θηρίον τὸ πρῶτον, οὗ ἐθεραπεύθη ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ.

ἐξουσια, ας f authority

πρωτος, η, ον first, earlier

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

The second beast exercises the authority of the first.

κατοικεω see v.8

προσκυνεω see v.8

ἐθεραπεύθη see v.3

πληγη, ης f see v.3

θανατος, ου m death

Revelation 13:13

καὶ ποιεῖ σημεῖα μεγάλα, ἵνα καὶ πῦρ ποιῇ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβαίνειν εἰς τὴν γῆν ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

σημειον, ου n miraculous sign, sign

πυρ, ος n fire

καταβαινω come or go down

He is a false prophet who, in imitation of Elijah, calls down fire from heaven (1 Kings 18:38, cf. 2 Kings 1:10).

Revelation 13:14

καὶ πλανᾷ τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς διὰ τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θηρίου, λέγων τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ποιῆσαι εἰκόνα τῷ θηρίῳ, ὃς ἔχει τὴν πληγὴν τῆς μαχαίρης καὶ ἔζησεν.

πλαναω lead astray, mislead, deceive

Bruce refers to the beast as "Antichrist's minister of propaganda."

εἰκων, ονος f likeness, image, statue

μαχαира, ης f sword

ζαω live, be alive

"Statues of the Emperor were indeed erected all over Asia Minor, for the goddess Roma and her imperial offspring were worshiped together throughout the region." Witherington.

Revelation 13:15

καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ δοῦναι πνεῦμα τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ θηρίου, ἵνα καὶ λαλήσῃ ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ θηρίου καὶ ποιήσῃ ἵνα ὅσοι ἐὰν μὴ προσκυνήσωσιν τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ θηρίου ἀποκτανθῶσιν.

δοῦναι verb, aor act infin διδομι

πνευμα, ατος n breath, spirit

A power like that of the Spirit of God.

λαλήσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s λαλεω

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as;
 pl. as many as, all

ἀποκτανθῶσιν Verb, aor pass subj, 3 pl

ἀποκτεινω kill, put to death

I.e. the statue by speaking passed sentence of death on all who refused to worship it.

Revelation 13:16

καὶ ποιεῖ πάντας, τοὺς μικροὺς καὶ τοὺς μεγάλους, καὶ τοὺς πλουσίους καὶ τοὺς πτωχοὺς, καὶ τοὺς ἐλευθέρους καὶ τοὺς δούλους, ἵνα δῶσιν αὐτοῖς χάραγμα ἐπὶ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν τῆς δεξιᾶς ἢ ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον αὐτῶν,

μικρος, α, ον small, insignificant
 πλουσιος, α, ον rich, well-to-do
 πτωχος, η, ον poor, pitiful
 ἐλευθερος, α, ον free, free person
 δουλος, ου m slave, servant

I.e. the totality of society.

δῶσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3 pl δίδωμι
 χάραγμα, τος n mark, stamp, image

"This was a term used for the imperial stamp on commercial documents and for the impression of the Emperor's head on a coin. If this practice is in view here, the implication would be that individuals with this sign on them belong to the Emperor, being his slaves or devotees. Slaves and defeated soldiers were branded if they joined the Roman army." Witherington.

χειρ, χειρος f hand
 δεξιος, α, ον right
 ἢ οἱ
 μετωπον, ου n forehead

A parody of the sealing of the servants of God in ch. 7.

Revelation 13:17

καὶ ἵνα μὴ τις δύνηται ἀγοράσαι ἢ πωλῆσαι εἰ μὴ ὁ ἔχων τὸ χάραγμα, τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θηρίου ἢ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ.

ἀγοραζω buy
 ἢ οἱ
 πωλεω sell, barter
 ὄνομα, τος n name

The ἢ here is roughly equivalent to τοῦτο ἐστίν. It is not *either* the name *or* the number which is imprinted on people but the number of the name.

ἀριθμος, ου m number

Revelation 13:18

ὧδε ἡ σοφία ἐστίν· ὁ ἔχων νοῦν ψηφισάτω τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ θηρίου, ἀριθμὸς γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν· καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτοῦ ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ.

ὧδε adv here
 σοφια, ας f wisdom, insight, intelligence
 νους, νοος, νοι, νουν m mind, reason, understanding
 ψηφισάτω Verb, aor act imperat, 3 s ψηφίζω
 figure out, calculate
 ἑξακοσιοι, αι, α six hundred

ἑξήκοντα sixty
 ἕξ six

Many solutions are attempted to this puzzle of the number of the beast. Various attempts have been made to identify it with a particular Roman emperor or series of emperors. One such common suggestion is that 666 is the equivalent of Nero Caesar (so Beasley-Murray, Witherington) – but this requires calculation from a misspelt Hebrew transliteration of the Greek form of the Latin name! GA van den Berg van Eysinga suggests that 666 is the triangular number of 36 (1+2+3...+36), and 36 the triangular number of 8 which is the number of Anichrist (cf. 17:11).

Mounce writes that "Some writers take the number more as a symbol than a cryptogram. 666 is the number which falls short of perfection in each of its digits. For Hendriksen it represents 'failure upon failure upon failure'... It is symbolic of the beast's continuing failure to accomplish his purpose. It is the trinity of imperfection. Torrence writes, 'This evil trinity 666 apes the holy 777, but always falls short and fails.'" Mounce himself suggests that the problem is insoluble.

Revelation 14:1-5

Witherington writes that these verses "involve a complete contrast to what we have just heard. Here the real Lamb is standing on Mt Zion and with him the 144,000 who bear his name and that of the Father upon their foreheads. As I have argued, 144,000 is probably a symbol for the entire people of God, both Jew and Gentile in Christ. Caird's explanation of this text is as follows: (1) John is alluding to Ps 2; and (2) what is being envisioned is the preparation of the army of the Lord for the final battle."

Revelation 14:1

Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ τὸ ἀρνίον ἐστὸς ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος Σιών, καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἑκατὸν τεσσαράκοντα τέσσαρες χιλιάδες ἔχουσαι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ γεγραμμένον ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν.

ἀρνιον, ου n lamb
 ἐστὸς Verb, perf act ptc, m nom s ἵστημι
 stand
 ὄρος, ους n mountain
 ἑκατον one hundred
 τεσσαρακοντα forty
 τέσσαρες neut τέσσαρα gen τεσσαρων four
 χιλιας, αδος f (group of) a thousand
 ἔχουσαι Verb, pres act ptc, f nom pl ἔχω
 ὄνομα, τος n name
 γεγραμμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
 nom/acc s γράφω write
 μετωπον, ου n see 13:16

A picture of the heavenly Jerusalem. The 144,000, as in ch 7, is a picture of all of the saints. Mounce says that the repetition of the same number as ch 7 "is to point out that not one of them has been lost."

Revelation 14:2

καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὡς φωνὴν ὑδάτων πολλῶν καὶ ὡς φωνὴν βροντῆς μεγάλης, καὶ ἡ φωνὴ ἦν ἡκουσα ὡς καθαρωδῶν καθαριζόντων ἐν ταῖς κιθάραις αὐτῶν.

ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water

Cf. Ezek 1:24.

βροντη, ης f thunder

Cf. 1:15; 6:1; 19:6.

κιθαρῳδος, ου m harpist

κιθαρίζω play a harp

κιθαρα, ας f harp

Revelation 14:3

καὶ ᾄδουσιν ὡς ᾠδὴν καινὴν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου καὶ ἐνώπιον τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων· καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο μαθεῖν τὴν ᾠδὴν εἰ μὴ αἱ ἑκατὸν τεσσαράκοντα τέσσαρες χιλιάδες, οἱ ἠγορασμένοι ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς.

ᾄδω sing

ᾠδὴ, ης f song, song of praise

καινος, η, ον new

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

τέσσαρες neut τεσσαρα gen τεσσαρων four

ζῶον, ου n living creature

πρεσβυτερος, α, ον elder

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδεν no one

δυναμαι can, be able to

μαθεῖν Verb, aor act infin μαθῶ learn

ἠγορασμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl

ἀγοράζω buy, redeem

Cf. Rev 5:9. The theme is salvation, hence none but the redeemed are able to sing it.

Revelation 14:4

οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ μετὰ γυναικῶν οὐκ ἐμολύνθησαν, παρθένοι γάρ εἰσιν· οὗτοι οἱ ἀκολουθοῦντες τῷ ἀρνίῳ ὅπου ἂν ὑπάγῃ· οὗτοι ἠγοράσθησαν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπαρχὴ τῷ θεῷ καὶ τῷ ἀρνίῳ,

γυνή, αικος f woman

ἐμολύνθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl

μολυνω defile, make unclean

παρθενος, ου f virgin; m undefiled man

I.e. Those who have kept themselves from fornication and adultery – perhaps particularly that associated with pagan religion. On 'virgin' as an epithet for the people of God, cf. 2 Kings 19:21; Lam 2:13; Jer 8:13; Amos 5:2.

Witherington argues that this passage is about preparation for war (see above). He writes, that John "is drawing on the provisions in the Pentateuch for preparing for a holy war (Deut 20; 23:9-10; 1 Sam 21:5; 2 Sam 11:11). Those going to battle were expected to abstain from sexual intercourse. But in Revelation the issue is probably not physical but spiritual. Believers are not to give in to the great whore Babylon (i.e., Rome) and to the adultery (i.e., idolatry) that she requires."

ἀκολουθεω follow, accompany

ὅπου adv. where; ὅπου ἂν wherever

ὑπάγω go

I.e. in all his ways. Cf. Mk 8:34.

ἀπαρχή, ης f firstfruit, first portion (set apart to God)

As Christ himself is the firstfruits (1 Cor 15:20,23).

Witherington writes, "If these martyrs are only the first fruits, John had vision beyond his own immediate situation of the rest of the harvest to follow. What is to come after that will increasingly preoccupy the author as the book progresses."

Revelation 14:5

καὶ ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτῶν οὐχ εὐρέθη ψεῦδος· ἄμωμοί εἰσιν.

στομα, τος n mouth

εὐρέθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s εὐρισκω find, discover

ψεῦδος, ους n lie, untruth, falsehood

Cf. Zeph 3:13.

ἄμωμος, ον faultless; without blemish

Maybe a reference to the sacrifice which was acceptable to God. Christ himself is the ἄμωμος offering (1 Peter 1:19, cf. Heb 9:14).

Revelation 14:6

Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον πετόμενον ἐν μεσουρανήματι, ἔχοντα εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον εὐαγγελίσει ἐπὶ τοὺς καθημένους ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶν ἔθνος καὶ φυλὴν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ λαόν,

ἄλλος, η, ο another

πετομαι fly

μεσουρανημα, τος n mid-heaven, high in the sky

αἰώνιος, ον eternal, everlasting

εὐαγγελίζω act. and midd proclaim the good news

The final appeal before judgement.

καθημαι sit, live

ἔθνος etc. see on 5:9

Revelation 14:7

λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· Φοβήθητε τὸν θεὸν
καὶ δότε αὐτῷ δόξαν, ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα τῆς
κρίσεως αὐτοῦ, καὶ προσκυνήσατε τῷ
ποιήσαντι τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ
θάλασσαν καὶ πηγὰς ὑδάτων.

φοβεομαι fear, reverence

δότε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl διδωμι

δοξα, ης f glory

ὥρα, ας f hour, moment

κρισις, εως f judgement

προσκυνεω worship

ποιήσαντι Verb, aor act ptc, m dat s ποιεω

θαλασσα, ης f sea

πηγη, ης f spring, fountain; well

ὕδωρ, ὑδατος n water

This appeal to a pagan people is similar to Paul's appeal to the inhabitants of Lystra in Acts 14:15.

Revelation 14:8

Καὶ ἄλλος δεῦτερος ἄγγελος ἠκολούθησεν
λέγων· Ἔπεσεν, ἔπεσεν Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη, ἣ
ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς
πεπότικεν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.

δυετερος, α, ον second

ἀκολουθεω follow, accompany

ἔπεσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s πιπτω fall,

fall down, fall to one's ruin

Cf. Is 21:9. In the context of the early church 'Babylon' is a reference to Rome (cf. 16:19; 17:5; 18:2,10,21). For the phrase 'Babylon the great' cf. Dan 4:30.

"It is a symbol for the spirit of godlessness which in every age lures men away from the worship of the Creator. It is the final manifestation of secular humanism in its attempt to destroy the remaining vestiges of true religion. Society set free from God is its own worst enemy." Mounce .

οἶνος, ου m wine

θυμος, ου m anger, rage, fury

πορνεια, ας f sexual immorality

πεπότικεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s ποτιζω

give to drink

Cf. Jer 51:6-10. "The heady potion of Rome's seductive practices inevitably involves the wrath of God." Mounce.

Revelation 14:9

Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος τρίτος ἠκολούθησεν αὐτοῖς
λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· Εἴ τις προσκυνεῖ τὸ
θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ, καὶ λαμβάνει
χάραγμα ἐπὶ τοῦ μετώπου αὐτοῦ ἢ ἐπὶ τὴν
χεῖρα αὐτοῦ,

τρίτος, η, ον third

προσκυνεω see v.7

θηριον, ου n animal, beast

εἰκων, ονος f likeness, image

χαραγμα, τος n mark, stamp

μετωπον, ου n forehead

ἢ οἱ

χειρ, χειρος f hand

A counter proclamation to 13:15,17.

Revelation 14:10

καὶ αὐτὸς πίνεται ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ
θεοῦ τοῦ κεκρασμένου ἀκράτου ἐν τῷ
ποτηρίῳ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ, καὶ βασανισθήσεται
ἐν πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ ἐνώπιον ἀγγέλων ἁγίων καὶ
ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἀρνίου.

πίνεται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 s πινω

drink

Cf. Job 21:20; Ps 75:8; Is 51:17; Jer 25:15-38.

κεκρασμένου Verb, perf pass ptc, m & n gen

s κεραννυμι mix, pour

ἀκρατος, ον undiluted, full strength

ποτηριον, ου n cup

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

"The angel is saying that those who defect to emperor worship will drink of the wine of God's wrath poured out in full strength, untempered by the mercy and grace of God." Mounce.

βασανισθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s

βασανίζω torment

πυρ, ος n fire

θειον, ου n sulphur, brimstone

"A figure taken from God's judgement upon Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:24; 20:10; 21:8)." Mounce.

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

ἀρνιον, ου n lamb

"Christians had borne the shame of public derision and opposition; soon their antagonists will suffer before a more august gathering." Mounce.

Witherington comments, "Recall that this material began with a call to repentance. These horrific effects are not inevitable unless one refuses to repent and to cease following the dragon."

Revelation 14:11

καὶ ὁ καπνὸς τοῦ βασανισμοῦ αὐτῶν εἰς
αἰῶνας αἰῶνων ἀναβαίνει, καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν
ἀνάπαυσιν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός, οἱ
προσκυνούντες τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα
αὐτοῦ, καὶ εἴ τις λαμβάνει τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ
ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ.

καπνος, ου m smoke

βασανισμος, ου m torture, torment

αἰῶνας Noun, acc pl αἰων, αἰωνος m age,
eternity

ἀναβαινω go up, ascend

In awful comparison with the ceaseless worship of the four living creatures in 4:8.

ἀναπαυσις, εως f relief, rest
 νυξ, νυκτος f night

Mounce responds to those who are critical of such pictures of hell saying, "The teaching of the NT on the eternal consequences of wilfully rejecting the love of God as manifested in the death of Christ for the sin of man does not allow us to put the doctrine aside as sub-Christian or reinterpret it in such a way as to remove the abrasive truth of eternal punishment. It was Jesus more than anyone else who spoke of the fires of hell. Better to enter life maimed, he said, than having two hands 'go to hell, to the unquenchable fire' (Mk 9:43-44). The story of the rich man tormented in the fires of hell who begged to have Lazarus dip his finger in water to cool his tongue (Lk 16:19-31) was told by Jesus. After due allowance is made for the place of symbolism in apocalyptic, what remains in these verses is still the terrifying reality of divine wrath poured out upon all those who persist in following Antichrist. What the angel has proclaimed so vividly must not be undermined by euphemistic redefinition."

Revelation 14:12

Ὡδε ἡ ὑπομονὴ τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν, οἱ τηροῦντες τὰς ἐντολάς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ.

ὠδε adv here

ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance

Cf. 13:10.

τηρεω keep, observe

ἐντολη, ης f command, instruction

πιστις, εως f faith

"The implication is that this is the way to avoid the previously mentioned fate. Eternal issues are at stake when it comes to how one lives one's life and in whom one places one's ultimate faith." Witherington.

Revelation 14:13

Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λεγούσης· Γράψον· Μακάριοι οἱ νεκροὶ οἱ ἐν κυρίῳ ἀποθνήσκοντες ἀπ' ἄρτι. ναί, λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα, ἵνα ἀναπαύσονται ἐκ τῶν κόπων αὐτῶν, τὰ γὰρ ἔργα αὐτῶν ἀκολουθεῖ μετ' αὐτῶν.

γράψον Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s γραφω

μακαριος, α, ον blessed, happy

The second of seven beatitudes to be found in Revelation (cf. 1:3; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14).

νεκρος, α, ον dead

ἀποθνησκω die

ἄρτι now, at the present

The meaning must be that they are blessed from the moment of their death.

Witherington writes, "It is possible that these last two Greek words are one word – ἀπαρτι. If the latter is the case, as Beasley-Murray argues, then what is meant is assuredly rather than henceforth. Thus the saying would simply be emphatic and without time reference. It is equally plausible that here as in Rev 13, where the first fruits were mentioned, John is expressing his belief that he lives on the eve of a significant number of martyrdoms. He would be thinking of what their faithful witness unto death would accomplish from now on."

ναί yes, yes indeed, certainly

ἀναπαύσονται Verb, aor midd subj, 3 pl

ἀναπαυω give relief; midd relax, rest

κοπος, ου m work, labour, trouble

I.e. not simply from mundane labours but also from the troubles that have arisen from their steadfastness to the faith.

ἀκολουθεω follow, accompany

God will not forget what they have done and have endured (cf. Heb 6:10). "Their works follow them in the sense that there can be no separation between what a man is and what he does." Mounce.

Revelation 14:14

Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ νεφέλη λευκὴ, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν νεφέλην καθήμενον ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου, ἔχων ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ στέφανον χρυσοῦν καὶ ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ δρέπανον ὀξύ.

νεφέλη, ης f cloud

λευκος, η, ον white, shining

καθημαι sit

ὅμοιος, α, ον like

The description would seem to demand that this is the risen Christ (cf. 1:13). "The background is Daniel 7:13-14) in which 'one like unto a son of man' comes with the clouds of heaven to receive universal and everlasting dominion." Mounce.

Some, however, such as Morris, argue that this is an angel because of the way he is addressed and commanded by another angel in the following verse. Mounce replies that the angel of v.15 is simply a messenger who acts as herald of the command of God.

κεφαλη, ης f head

στεφανος, ου m wreath, crown

χρυσους, η, ουν made of gold, golden

χειρ, χειρος f hand

δρέπανον, ου n sickle

ὀξύς, εια, υ sharp

Revelation 14:15

καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ κρᾶζων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλη τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῆς νεφέλης· Πέμψον τὸ δρέπανόν σου καὶ θέρισον, ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα θερίσαι, ὅτι ἐξηράνθη ὁ θερισμὸς τῆς γῆς.

ἄλλος, η, ο another

ναος, ου m temple, sanctuary

The command comes from the very presence of God.

κρᾶζω cry out, call out

πέμψω send

δρέπανον, ου n sickle

θέρισον Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s θερίζω

reap, harvest

ὥρα, ας f hour, moment

θερίσαι Verb, aor act infin θερίζω

ἐξηράνθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ξηραίνω

dry up; pass be ripe

θερισμός, ου m harvest, crop

Witherington writes, "In the OT both harvest and vintage are regularly used as symbols of judgment either on God's people or on their foes (cf. Hos 6:11; Lam 1:15; Jer 51:33). Possibly the closest parallel is Joel 3:9-14, which refers to a double harvest of grain and grapes. Isa 63:1-6 speaks of God returning from the winepress with garments dyed with the blood of the heathen. These images are here combined with Dan 7:13, the familiar son of man image."

Revelation 14:16

καὶ ἔβαλεν ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῆς νεφέλης τὸ δρέπανον αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐθερίσθη ἡ γῆ.

βαλλω throw, cast

ἐθερίσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s θερίζω

The picture here is probably of judgment, not of a mixed harvest of wheat and tares.

Revelation 14:17

Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ἔχων καὶ αὐτὸς δρέπανον ὄξυ.

A second and more graphic picture of judgement is presented in vv 17-20. This second picture is of the fierceness of the wrath of God against the ungodly.

δρέπανον, ου n see v.14

ὄξυς, εια, υ see v.14

Revelation 14:18

καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἐκ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου, ὁ ἔχων ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τοῦ πυρός, καὶ ἐφώνησεν φωνῇ μεγάλη τῷ ἔχοντι τὸ δρέπανον τὸ ὄξυ λέγων· Πέμψον σου τὸ δρέπανον τὸ ὄξυ καὶ τρύγησον τοὺς βότρυας τῆς ἀμπέλου τῆς γῆς, ὅτι ἤκμασαν αἱ σταφυλαὶ αὐτῆς.

θυσιαστηριον, ου n altar

"As the altar is elsewhere connected with the prayers of the righteous (6:9-10; 8:3-5), we are probably to understand here that the prayers of the faithful play a definite part in bringing about God's judgement upon the wicked." Mounce.

ἐξουσία, ας f authority, power

πυρ, ος n fire

Cf. 8:3-5.

φωνεω call, call out

πέμψω send

τρυγαω gather, pick

βοτρυς, υος m bunch (of grapes)

ἀμπελος, ου f vine

ἄκμαζω become ripe, ripen

σταφυλη, ης f (bunch of) grapes

Revelation 14:19

καὶ ἔβαλεν ὁ ἄγγελος τὸ δρέπανον αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐτρύγησεν τὴν ἀμπελον τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν ληνὸν τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν μέγαν.

ληνός, ου f wine press

θυμός, ου m anger, rage, fury

μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great

For this picture of judgment elsewhere in Scripture, cf. Is 63:3; Lam 1:15; Joel 3:13; Rev 19:15ff.

Revelation 14:20

καὶ ἐπατήθη ἡ ληνὸς ἔξωθεν τῆς πόλεως, καὶ ἐξῆλθεν αἷμα ἐκ τῆς ληνοῦ ἄχρι τῶν χαλινῶν τῶν ἵππων ἀπὸ σταδίων χιλίων ἑξακοσίων.

πατεω trample

ἐξωθεν adv outside

πολις, εως f city, town

Probably meaning Jerusalem. "Judgement 'outside the city' ... must certainly be an allusion to the One who suffered for the sins of man 'outside the gate' (Heb 13:12; cf. Jn 19:20). Those who refuse the first judgement must take part in the second." Mounce.

αἷμα, ατος f blood

ἄχρι prep with gen until, as far as

χαλινός, ου m bit, bridle

ἵππος, ου f horse

σταδιοι, ων m (pl) stades, furlongs (about 200 metres)

χιλιοι, αι, α thousand

ἑξακοσιοι, αι, α six hundred

The number of stadia is the subject of several textual variants. "The distance, 1600 furlongs (some 184 miles), has been variously interpreted. Geographically it is the approximate length of Palestine. Symbolically it squares the number four (the number of the earth: 'four corners of the earth,' 7:1; 20:8; 'four winds of the earth,' 7:1) and multiplies it by the square of ten (the number of completeness; cf. 5:11; 20:6). The judgement of God, portrayed ideally as taking place outside of the holy city, extends to all men everywhere who find themselves beyond the pale of divine protection." Mounce.

Reddish comments, "God's wrath is part of his love. It is God's wrath, God's justice, that responds to the cries of the martyrs under the altar in 6:7-11. It is God's wrath that hears and responds to the prayers of God's people in 8:3-5. God's love for creation and the people of God created means that God cannot ignore the cries of his people on earth nor the whole creation that has been groaning for redemption (Rom. 8:18-25). For John, the wrath of God is the wrath of the Lamb – the Lamb, John never lets us forget, who was slain; the Lamb who has conquered by his own death. The self-sacrificial death is a part of God's response to a world that cries for justice."

Revelation 15:1-16:21 – The seven plagues

Witherington comments, "In view of the typology of this section, these seven plagues are but the beginning of the end, for the devil is yet to be thrown into the lake of fire and God's people have yet to experience the final redemption. The key to understanding this entire segment is found in the Exodus typology, for as Caird notes we not only have seven plagues in Revelation, we also have a sea that the faithful seem to cross, a song of Moses that is also said to be the song of the Lamb, the smoke of the theophany at Sinai, and the tent of testimony. John is trying to say that God's final deliverance will be like, though much greater than, that paradigmatic deliverance of the OT – the Exodus Sinai events."

Revelation 15:1

Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλο σημεῖον ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ μέγα καὶ θαυμαστόν, ἀγγέλους ἑπτὰ ἔχοντας πληγὰς ἑπτὰ τὰς ἑσχάτας, ὅτι ἐν αὐταῖς ἐτελέσθη ὁ θυμὸς τοῦ θεοῦ.

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other
σημειον, ου n miraculous sign, sign

θαυμαστος, η, ον marvellous, wonderful;
extraordinary, astonishing

ἑπτα seven

πληγη, ης f plague

Cf. Lev 26:21. "The seven bowls of judgement [vv 5-8] may be the third Woe announced in 11:14." Mounce.

ἑσχατος, η, ον adj last, final

ἐτελέσθη Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s τελεω

complete, finish

θυμος, ου m see 14:19

All that remains is the final judgement itself.

Revelation 15:2

Καὶ εἶδον ὡς θάλασσαν ὑαλίνην μεμιγμένην πυρὶ, καὶ τοὺς νικῶντας ἐκ τοῦ θηρίου καὶ ἐκ τῆς εἰκόνης αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ ἐστῶτας ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν τὴν ὑαλίνην, ἔχοντας κιθάρας τοῦ θεοῦ.

θαλασσα, ης f sea

ὑαλιнос, η, ον of glass, clear as glass

Cf. 4:6.

μεμιγμένην Verb, perf pass ptc, f acc s

μιγνυμι mix, mingle

νικαω conquer, overcome

"They are the overcomers to whom the seven letters hold out promise of eating of the tree of life (2:7), protection from the second death (2:11), hidden manna (2:17), authority over the nations (2:26), white garments (3:5), the honour of becoming a pillar in the temple of God (3:12), and the privilege of sitting with Christ on his throne (3:21). Little wonder they break out in song!" Mounce.

θηριον, ου n animal, beast

εικων, ονος f likeness, image

ἀριθμος, ου m number

ἐστῶτας Verb, perf act ptc, m acc pl ἵστημι

stand

κιθαρα, ας f harp

Revelation 15:3

καὶ ᾄδουσιν τὴν ᾠδὴν Μωϋσέως τοῦ δούλου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν ᾠδὴν τοῦ ἀρνίου λέγοντες· Μεγάλα καὶ θαυμαστὰ τὰ ἔργα σου, κύριε, ὁ θεός, ὁ παντοκράτωρ· δίκαιαι καὶ ἀληθιναι αἱ ὁδοί σου, ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν αἰώνων·

ᾄδω sing

ᾠδη, ης f song, song of praise

ἄρνιον, ου n lamb

"We are not to understand two songs, but one. The deliverance of which Moses and the people sang in Exodus 15:1-18 prefigured the greater deliverance wrought by the Lamb." Mounce.

θαυμαστος, η, ον see v.1

παντοκρατωρ, ορος m Almighty

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just
 ἀληθινος, η, ον real, genuine, true
 ὁδος, ου f way, path
 βασιλευς, εως m king

The textual evidence is fairly evenly divided between βασιλεὺς τῶν ἐθνῶν and βασιλεὺς τῶν αἰώνων. (The TR reading τῶν ἁγίων is clearly secondary.) The UBS editors prefer ἐθνῶν, arguing that αἰώνων may reflect scribal assimilation to 1 Tim 1:17.

Revelation 15:4

τίς οὐ μὴ φοβηθῆ, κύριε, καὶ δοξάσει τὸ ὄνομά σου, ὅτι μόνος ὁσίου; ὅτι πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἤξουσιν καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν ἐνώπιόν σου, ὅτι τὰ δικαιώματά σου ἐφανερώθησαν.

φοβηθῆ Verb, aor pass dep subj, 3 s
 φοβεομαι fear
 δοξάζω praise, honour, glorify, exalt
 μονος, η, ον adj only, alone
 ὁσιος, α, ον holy
 ἦκω come
 προσκυνεω worship
 ἐνώπιον prep with gen before
 δικαιωμα, τος n righteous deed
 φανερω make known, reveal

Witherington comments, "The Lamb's death and the prophetic and martyrological witness of believers are God's strategy for winning the nations. John envisions a great harvest of souls as the end of the ages come. But, as Bauckham says, 'this does not of course mean that Revelation expects the salvation of each and every human being. From 21:8, 27; 22:15 it is quite clear that unrepentant sinners will have no place in the new Jerusalem.' The material in Rev 15 means that John believes that God's chastisements are intended to lead the lost to salvation and that God takes no satisfaction that some of the lost will remain lost. Revelation is not a book about vindictiveness but about vindication, not about the glee of the few over the damnation of the many but about the great cloud of witnesses there will be one day from every tribe, tongue, and nation."

Revelation 15:5

Καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον, καὶ ἠνοίγη ὁ ναὸς τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ,

ἠνοίγη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ἀνοίγω
 open
 ναος, ου m temple, sanctuary
 σκηνη, ης f tent, tabernacle
 μαρτυριον, ου n testimony, witness

Cf. Num 17:7; 18:2. A reference to the tabernacle containing the two tables of testimony brought down from Mt Sinai by Moses (Ex 32:15; Deut 10:5).

Revelation 15:6

καὶ ἐξῆλθον οἱ ἑπτὰ ἄγγελοι οἱ ἔχοντες τὰς ἑπτὰ πληγὰς ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ, ἐνδεδυμένοι λίνον καθαρὸν λαμπρὸν καὶ περιεζωσμένοι περὶ τὰ στήθη ζώνας χρυσαῖς.

ἐνδεδυμένοι Verb, perf midd ptc, m nom pl
 ἐνδυω dress, clothe; midd wear
 λινον, ου n linen, flax
 καθαρος, α, ον pure, clean
 λαμπρος, α, ον bright, shining, fine
 περιεζωσμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
 περιζωννυμι wrap around
 στήθος, ους n chest, breast
 ζωνη, ης f belt
 χρυσοις, η, ουν made of gold, golden

Symbolic of royal and priestly functions. Witherington comments, "This is similar to the appearance of Jesus in Rev 1:13, but Dan 10:5 may also be echoed, as it describes an angelic figure clothed in linen with a belt of gold."

Revelation 15:7

καὶ ἐν ἑκ τῶν τεσσάρων ζῶων ἔδωκεν τοῖς ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλοις ἑπτὰ φιάλας χρυσαῖς γεμούσας τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

ζωον, ου n living creature
 ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s διδομι
 φιαλη, ης f bowl

Cf. 5:8. "Since the mention of the golden bowls in Revelation is limited to these two contexts, John may be calling attention to the relationship between prayer and divine retribution." Mounce. Cf. Isa 51:17,22.

γεμω be full
 θυμος, ου m see 14:19
 ζω live
 αἰων, αἰωνος m age, eternity

Revelation 15:8

καὶ ἐγεμίσθη ὁ ναὸς καπνοῦ ἐκ τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὸν ναὸν ἄχρι τελεσθῶσιν αἱ ἑπτὰ πληγαὶ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλων.

γεμιζω fill
 καπνος, ου m smoke

Cf. Ex 19:18; 40:34; Is 6:4.

δυναμις, εως f power
 οὐδεις, οὐδεμα, οὐδεν no one, nothing
 δυναμαι can, be able to
 εισερχομαι enter
 ἄχρι prep and conj until
 τελεσθῶσιν Verb, aor pass subj, 3 pl τελεω
 see v.1.

Witherington comments, "This is the signal not merely that God is coming but that God is about to act. No one can stand in the way or even in his presence when his wrath is executed or, in this case, until the seven plagues have been fulfilled."

Revelation 16

Chapter 16 describes the final series of plagues. "The parallels between this series of judgements and the trumpet plagues (chaps 8-11) are readily apparent. In each series the first four plagues are visited upon the earth, sea, inland waters, and heavenly bodies respectively. The fifth involves darkness and pain (cf. 16:10 with 9:2, 5-6), and the sixth, enemy hordes from the vicinity of the Euphrates (cf. 16:12 with 9:14 ff). Both series draw heavily for their symbolism from the ten Egyptian plagues. The turning of water into blood (8:8; 16:3,4) parallels the first Egyptian plague in which Moses struck the waters of the Nile, turning them to blood (Ex 7:20). The darkening of the sun (8:12; cf. 16:10) has as its counterpart the ninth Egyptian plague in which thick darkness prevailed over the land for three days (Ex 10:21-22)." Mounce. Here, however, the effect of the plagues is not limited but universal: it is no longer a call to repentance but a pouring out of wrath.

Revelation 16:1

Καὶ ἤκουσα μεγάλης φωνῆς ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ λεγούσης τοῖς ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλοις· Ὑπάγετε καὶ ἐκχέετε τὰς ἑπτὰ φιάλας τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν.

Cf. Is 66:6.

ὑπαγω go
ἐκχεω pour out

Revelation 16:2

Καὶ ἀπῆλθεν ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν· καὶ ἐγένετο ἕλκος κακὸν καὶ πονηρὸν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τοὺς ἔχοντας τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ θηρίου καὶ τοὺς προσκυνούντας τῇ εἰκόνι αὐτοῦ.

πρῶτος, η, ον first
ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s γινομαι
ἕλκος, ους n sore, boil
κακος, η, ον evil, bad, harm
πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

Cf. Ex 9:9-11.

χάραγμα, τος n mark
θηριον, ου n see 15:2
προσκυνεω see 15:4
εἰκων, ονος f see 15:2

Revelation 16:3

Καὶ ὁ δεῦτερος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν· καὶ ἐγένετο αἷμα ὡς νεκροῦ, καὶ πᾶσα ψυχή ζωῆς ἀπέθανεν τὰ ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ.

δευτερος, α, ον second
θαλασσα, ης f sea
αἷμα, ατος f blood

Cf Ex 7:20-21; Rev 8:8-9.

νεκρος, α, ον dead
ψυχη, ης f life, 'soul', living being
ζωη, ης f life
ἀπέθανεν Verb, aor act indic, 3s ἀποθνησκω
die

I.e. 'all sea life died'

Revelation 16:4

Καὶ ὁ τρίτος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ εἰς τοὺς ποταμοὺς καὶ τὰς πηγὰς τῶν ὑδάτων· καὶ ἐγένετο αἷμα.

τρίτος, η, ον third
ποταμος, ου m river, stream
πηγη, ης f spring, fountain; well
ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water

Cf 8:10-11. Witherington comments, "The turning of the seas and springs into blood divides a single Egyptian plague into two parts, thus showing the author is not attempting to follow slavishly the literary pattern."

Revelation 16:5

καὶ ἤκουσα τοῦ ἀγγέλου τῶν ὑδάτων λέγοντος· Δίκαιος εἶ, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν, ὁ ὄσιος, ὅτι ταῦτα ἔκρινας,

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just
όσιος, α, ον holy
κρινω judge

Cf 15:2-4. "The judgement of God is neither vengeful nor capricious. It is an expression of his just and righteous nature." Mounce.

Revelation 16:6

ὅτι αἷμα ἁγίων καὶ προφητῶν ἐξέχεαν, καὶ αἷμα αὐτοῖς δέδωκας πιεῖν· ἄξιοι εἰσιν.

ἅγιος, α, ον holy
προφητης, ου m prophet
δέδωκας Verb, perf act indic, 2 s δίδωμι
πιεῖν Verb, aor act infin πινω drink

The judgment fits the crime. The NRSV translates ἄξιοι εἰσιν 'It is what they deserve.'

ἄξιος, α, ον worthy, deserving, fitting

Revelation 16:7

καὶ ἤκουσα τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου λέγοντος· Naί, κύριε, ὁ θεός, ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ἀληθινὰ καὶ δίκαια αἱ κρίσεις σου.

θυσιαστηριον, ου n altar

The voice "represents the corporate testimony of the martyrs in 6:9 and the prayers of the saints in 8:3-5." Mounce.

ναί yes, yes indeed, certainly
παντοκρατωρ, ορος m Almighty
ἀληθινος, η, ον real, genuine, true
κρίσεις Noun, nom pl κρίσις, εως f
judgement, act of judgement

Cf. Ps 19:9.

Revelation 16:8

Καὶ ὁ τέταρτος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν ἥλιον· καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ καυματίσαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐν πυρὶ.

τεταρτος, η, ον fourth
ἥλιος, ου m the sun
ἐδόθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s δίδωμι
καυματιζω scorch, burn
πυρ, ος n fire

Witherington comments, "John seems to be drawing on some other intertestamental Jewish ideas such as those found in Wisd. of Sol. 5:7 – God makes the whole creation a weapon to repel his enemies."

Revelation 16:9

καὶ ἐκαυματίστησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι καῦμα μέγα· καὶ ἐβλασφήμησαν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἔχοντος τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τὰς πληγὰς ταύτας, καὶ οὐ μετενόησαν δοῦναι αὐτῷ δοῦσαν.

ἐκαυματίστησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
καυματιζω
καυμα, τος n heat
βλασφημεω slander, insult, blaspheme
ἔχοντος Verb, pres act ptc, m gen s ἔχω
ἐξουσία, ας f authority, power
πληγη, ης f plague
μετανοεω repent
δοῦναι verb, aor act infin δίδωμι
δοξα, ης f glory

"Following the great earthquake of 11:13 the nations were 'dazzled into homage and conversion' (Kiddle...) – a temporary condition at best – but now, knowing full well that it is God himself who controls the plagues, they refuse to repent but resort to blasphemy. Like Pharaoh, their hearts have become hardened and repentance is out of the question." Mounce.

Revelation 16:10

Καὶ ὁ πέμπτος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον τοῦ θηρίου· καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ ἔσκοτωμένη, καὶ ἔμασῶντο τὰς γλώσσας αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ πόνου,

πεμπτος, η, ον fifth
θρονος, ου m throne
θηριον, ου n animal, beast
ἐσκοτωμένη Verb, perf pass ptc, f nom s
σκοτοομαι be or become darkened
μασαομαι gnaw, bite
γλωσσα, ης f tongue, language, utterance
πονος, ου m pain, suffering; hard work

Revelation 16:11

καὶ ἐβλασφήμησαν τὸν θεὸν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐκ τῶν πόνων αὐτῶν καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐλκῶν αὐτῶν, καὶ οὐ μετενόησαν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῶν.

ἐλκος, ους n sore, boil

"Their blasphemy of God means that in their agony they clearly recognise the source of their punishments yet refuse to give up their idolatrous and rebellious ways." Reddish

Revelation 16:12

Καὶ ὁ ἕκτος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν ποταμὸν τὸν μέγαν τὸν Εὐφράτην· καὶ ἐξηράνθη τὸ ὕδωρ αὐτοῦ, ἵνα ἐτοιμασθῇ ἡ ὁδὸς τῶν βασιλέων τῶν ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου.

ἕκτος, η, ον sixth
ποταμος, ου m river
ἐξηράνθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ξηραينو
dry up
ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water

"The Euphrates was an enormous river, and it never dried up under normal circumstances. Thus the divine source of this drying up as a judgment is emphasised (cf. Isa 50:2; Hos 13:15; Nah 1:4)." Witherington.

ἐτοιμασθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s ἐτοιμαζω
prepare
ὁδος, ου f way, path, road
βασιλευς, εως m king
ἀνατολη, ης f rising sun, dawn, east
ἥλιος, ου m the sun

"The Euphrates marked the eastern boundary of the land given by covenant to Abraham and his seed (Gen 15:18; Deut 1:7-8; Josh 1:3-4). It also separated the Roman Empire on the east from the much feared Parthians whose expert cavalry bowmen had conquered the entire territory from the Euphrates to the Indus." Mounce.
Witherington comments, "At 17:16 we will learn that these kings from the rising sun have as their goal the destruction of Babylon."

Revelation 16:13

καὶ εἶδον ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ δράκοντος καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ θηρίου καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ ψευδοπροφήτου πνεύματα τρία ἀκάθαρτα ὡς βάτραχοι·

στομα, τος n mouth
δρακων, οντος m dragon
ψευδοπροφητης, ου m false prophet

"The unclean spirits proceed from the *mouths* of the unholy triumvirate, suggesting the persuasive and deceptive propaganda which in the last days will lead men to an unconditional commitment to the cause of evil." Mounce.

τρεις, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three
ἀκαθαρτος, ον unclean
βάτραχος, ου m frog

"The reference to the three spirits as frogs emphasizes their uncleanness and perhaps their endless croaking." Mounce.
In the ancient world, frogs were generally viewed as unclean, ugly and vicious.

Revelation 16:14

εἰσὶν γὰρ πνεύματα δαιμονίων ποιοῦντα σημεῖα, ἃ ἐκπορεύεται ἐπὶ τοὺς βασιλεῖς τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης, συναγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον τῆς ἡμέρας τῆς μεγάλης τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ παντοκράτορος –

δαιμονιον, ου n demon
σημειον, ου n miraculous sign
ἐκπορευομαι go or come out
βασιλευς, εως m king
οικουμενη, ης f world, inhabited earth
ὅλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire
συναγαγεῖν Verb, aor infin συναγω gather,
gather together
πολεμος, ου m war, battle
παντοκρατωρ, ορος m Almighty

Cf. Joel 3:2.

Revelation 16:15

Ἴδου ἔρχομαι ὡς κλέπτης. μακάριος ὁ γρηγορῶν καὶ τηρῶν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ, ἵνα μὴ γυμνὸς περιπατῇ καὶ βλέπωσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην αὐτοῦ –

κλεπτης, ου m thief
μακαριος, α, ον blessed, happy

The third of the seven beatitudes of Revelation.

γρηγορεω be or keep awake, be alert
τηρεω keep, maintain
ἱματιον, ου n garment, clothing
γυμνος, η, ον naked
περιπατεω walk, walk about, live
βλεπω see

"The faithful are admonished to be on the alert for this great event – not taken by surprise as a soldier who, when the alarm is sounded, must run away naked because he has misplaced his clothing." Mounce.

ἀσχημοσυνη, ης f shame of nakedness

Revelation 16:16

καὶ συνήγαγεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν τόπον τὸν καλούμενον Ἑβραῖστί Ἀρμαγεδών.

Witherington comments, "Though the evil trinity sends these spirits out, they serve God's purpose of bringing the nations together for God's final judgment. It is quite clear from Ezek 38-39; Zech 14 and 1 En 56, 90 that various early Jews believed that, in the last days, their enemies would gather to war against them but that God would intervene and save them. Here this tradition has been blended with the idea of hordes invading the Roman Empire."

συνήγαγεν Verb, aor act infin συναγω
τοπος, ου m place
Ἑβραῖστι in Hebrew or Aramaic

It is difficult to identify Ἀρμαγεδων, a difficulty which has given rise to a number of textual variants. "Magadon is normally connected with Megiddo, the ancient city lying on the north side of the Carmel ridge and commanding the strategic pass between the coastal plain and the valley of Esdraelon. It is one of history's famous battlefields, having witnessed major conflicts all the way 'from one fought by Tuthmosis III in 1468 B.C. to that of Lord Allenby of Megiddo in 1917' (NBD, p.505). 'By the waters of Megiddo' Barak and Deborah defeated the chariots of Sisera (Judg 4-5; cf. 5:19). Ahaziah, wounded by the arrows of Jehu, fled to Megiddo, and died there (II Kgs 9:27). Har-Magedon would mean 'the Mountain of Megiddo,' But here a difficulty arises: there is no Mt. Megiddo... Fortunately, geography is not the major concern. Wherever it takes place, Har-Magedon is symbolic of the final overthrow of all the forces of evil by the might and power of God. The great conflict between God and Satan, Christ and Antichrist, good and evil, which lies behind the perplexing course of history will in the end issue in a final struggle in which God will emerge victorious and take with him all who have placed their faith in him. This is Har-Magedon."

Revelation 16:17

Καὶ ὁ ἕβδομος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν ἀέρα – καὶ ἐξῆλθεν φωνὴ μεγάλη ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θρόνου λέγουσα· Γέγονεν –

ἕβδομος, η, ον seventh

ἀηρ, ερος m air

γέγονεν Verb, perf act indic, 3s γινομαι

Cf. 15:1. Moffatt translates "All is over!"

Revelation 16:18

καὶ ἐγένοντο ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταί, καὶ σεισμός ἐγένετο μέγας, οἷος οὐκ ἐγένετο ἀφ' οὗ ἄνθρωποι ἐγένοντο ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς τηλικούτος σεισμός οὕτω μέγας,

ἀστραπη, ης f lightning

βροντη, ης f thunder

σεισμος, ου m earthquake

οἷος, α, ον relative pronoun such as

τηλικουτος, αυτη, ουτο so great, so large

οὕτως and οὕτω adv. formed from οὗτος thus

Cf. 4:5; 8:5; 11:19.

Revelation 16:19

καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη εἰς τρία μέρη, καὶ αἱ πόλεις τῶν ἐθνῶν ἔπεσαν· καὶ Βαβυλῶν ἡ μεγάλη ἐμνήσθη ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ δοῦναι αὐτῇ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ·

πολις, εως f city, town

Some take the great city as Jerusalem (cf. 11:8). Others think the reference is to Rome. Morris thinks it is a general picture of the complete destruction of "civilised man ... ordering his affairs apart from God."

τρεις, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three

μερος, ους n part, piece

"Perhaps because it is ruled by the unholy trinity, so that the punishment fits the crime." Witherington.

ἔπεσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl πιπτω fall, fall down

ἐμνήσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s

μιμνησκομαι remember, call to mind

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

δοῦναι verb, aor act infin διδωμι

ποτηριον, ου n cup

οἶνος, ου m wine

θυμος, ου m anger, rage, fury

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

Revelation 16:20

καὶ πᾶσα νῆσος ἔφυγεν, καὶ ὄρη οὐχ εὐρέθησαν.

νησος, ου f island

φευγω flee

ὄρος, ους n mountain, hill

εὐρισκω find

Cf. 6:12-14. Witherington comments, "This is, of course, metaphorical, but it draws on the OT notion that all of creation quakes when God comes down to visit, especially when he comes in judgment."

Revelation 16:21

καὶ χάλιαζα μεγάλη ὡς ταλαντιαία καταβαίνει ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἄνθρώπους· καὶ ἐβλασφήμησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὸν θεὸν ἐκ τῆς πληγῆς τῆς χάλιαζης, ὅτι μεγάλη ἐστὶν ἡ πληγὴ αὐτῆς σφόδρα.

χάλιαζα, ης f hail

ταλαντιαιος, α, ον weighing a talent

(perhaps about 90 pounds)

καταβαινω come down, descend

βλασφημew cf. 16:9,11,21.

πληγη, ης f plague

σφοδρα very much, very, greatly

"This leads to no repentance, only a blasphemous scream complaining about the severe weather." Witherington.

Revelation 17:1-19:10 – A tale of two cities, two women

This section contrasts two cities, Babylon and the New Jerusalem. They are personified and contrasted as two women, a great whore and a bride.

Witherington comments, “Rev 17 should not be seen as the sequel to Rev 16. It is an expansion or close-up of the seventh cup or perhaps the sixth and seventh cups. The procedure of recounting a vision and then following it with an interpretation is common in apocalyptic literature, not least because such highly symbolic visions required interpretation, even to those who received them... Rev 17:1-19:10 demonstrates how Babylon is made to drain the cup of God’s wrath. The lamentation in Rev 18 and the worship in Rev 19:1-10 underscore that the fall is final. A good deal of the description of Babylon draws on Jer. 51.” Witherington includes an interesting excursus on the connection between a city and religion in the ancient world: cities were often believed to be the earthly seat of a god. Witherington concludes, “These things need to be kept in view as we evaluate what John says about both Babylon/Rome and the New Jerusalem. He understood quite well that such cities were profoundly religious in character, in design, in practice, and in belief structure. John does not oppose a secular to a sacred city in his visions. He opposes two categorically opposed visions of a holy city, one involving the deification of the human in the person of the Emperor and of the city, and of nature/creation in the form of a multitude of other gods and goddesses, and the other involving the deity of an only God who always maintains the creator/creature distinction and so makes relationships between the human and divine eternally possible.”

Revelation 17:1

Καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς ἐκ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλων τῶν ἔχόντων τὰς ἑπτὰ φιάλας, καὶ ἐλάλησεν μετ’ ἐμοῦ λέγων· Δεῦρο, δεῖξω σοὶ τὸ κρίμα τῆς πόρνῆς τῆς μεγάλης τῆς καθημένης ἐπὶ ὕδατων πολλῶν,

ἑπτὰ seven

δεῦρο adv. come, come here

Cf. 21:9.

δεῖξω Verb, fut act indic, 3 s δεικνυμι
show, reveal

κρίμα, τος n judgement

πορνη, ης f prostitute

Cf. Nahum 3:4; Isa 23:16,17.

καθημαι sit, sit down, live

ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water

Cf. v.15 and Jer 51:13. The picture from Jer. 51 of the various canals of the Euphrates which distributed water throughout the area around Babylon is now applied to Rome and its many peoples – "the influence of Rome flows throughout the entire world." Mounce.

Revelation 17:2

μεθ’ ἧς ἐπόρνευσαν οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἐμεθύσθησαν οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν γῆν ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς.

πορνεῦω commit sexual immorality

βασιλευς, εως m king

"They represent the apostate nations which Rome has enticed into idolatrous worship of herself and the beast." Mounce.

Witherington comments that “M. E. Boring has rightly noted that fornication here refers not only to idolatrous worship of the Emperor but likely also worship of the city of Rome in the form of the goddess Roma. This in effect involves ‘accepting Rome as the point of orientation for life in this world, that is, making Rome herself a god’.”

μεθῶ be drunk, drink freely

κατοικεω live, inhabit

οἶνος, ου m wine

πορνεια, ας f sexual immorality

Revelation 17:3

καὶ ἀπήνεγκέν με εἰς ἔρημον ἐν πνεύματι. καὶ εἶδον γυναῖκα καθημένην ἐπὶ θηρίον κόκκινον, γέμοντα ὀνόματα βλασφημίας, ἔχων κεφαλὰς ἑπτὰ καὶ κέρατα δέκα.

ἀπήνεγκέν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἀπαγω

lead away, lead, bring

ἐρημος, ου f deserted place

"In this context the wilderness is not a place of divine protection and nourishment (as in 12:6, 14), but an appropriate setting for a vision of judgement." Mounce.

γυνη, αικος f woman, wife

θηριον, ου n animal, beast

κοκκινος, η, ον scarlet, red

Witherington comments, “The colour of the Beast is probably intended to recall the colour of the dragon in 12:3. But Beasley-Murray may be correct that the colour is meant to suggest royalty. Scarlet and purple were colours much beloved by the wealthy and royalty of Rome. But it is also true that all purple outfits were worn by high-class prostitutes.”

γεμω be full, be covered with

ὄνομα, τος n name, title

βλασφημια, ας f slander, blasphemy

"The reference is to the blasphemous claims to deity made by the Roman emperors who employed such titles as *theios* (divine), *soter* (saviour), and *kyrios* (Lord). The blasphemies are not so much directly spoken against God by the beast as they are implied by his self-deification. The beast (like the dragon of chap. 12) has seven heads and ten horns (cf. 13:1). John supplies his own interpretation to these later in the chapter (vss. 9-14, 16-17)."

Mounce.

κεφαλή, ης f head

ἑπτα seven

κερας, ατος n horn

δεκα ten

Revelation 17:4

καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἣν περιβεβλημένη πορφυροῦν καὶ κόκκινον, καὶ κεχρυσωμένη χρυσίῳ καὶ λίθῳ τιμίῳ καὶ μαργαρίταις, ἔχουσα ποτήριον χρυσοῦν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτῆς γέμον βδελυγμάτων καὶ τὰ ἀκάθαρτα τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς,

περιβεβλημένη Verb, perf pass ptc, f nom s

περιβαλλω put on, clothe, dress

πορφυρους, α, ουν purple; purple garment

Signifying the luxury and splendour of ancient Rome. See also Witherington's comments in the previous verse.

κεχρυσωμένη Verb, perf pass ptc, f nom s

χρυσωω cover or adorn with gold

χρυσιον, ου n gold

λιθος, ου m stone

τιμιος, α, ον precious, valuable

μαργαριτης, ου m pearl

ποτηριον, ου n cup

χειρ, χειρος f hand

γεμω be full, be covered with

βδελυγμα, τος n something detestable

The και is probably expegetical, meaning 'even'.

ἀκαθαρτος, ον unclean

πορνεια, ας f see v.2

Cf. Jer 51:7 and Dan 9:27. "In view of Mark 13 and other texts, the reference to the abominations should probably be taken to mean idolatrous practices, since abomination was a common Jewish euphemism for 'idol'." Witherington.

Revelation 17:5

καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον αὐτῆς ὄνομα γεγραμμένον, μυστήριον, Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη, ἡ μήτηρ τῶν πορνῶν καὶ τῶν βδελυγμάτων τῆς γῆς.

μετωπον, ου n forehead

γεγραμμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n nom/acc s γραφω write

"John was probably also drawing on the practice of Roman harlots of wearing a headband with their name on it." Witherington.

μυστηριον, ου n secret, mystery

Opinions differ as to whether μυστηριον forms part of the name. The NEB thinks not and translates it "written on her forehead was a name with a secret meaning..."

πορνη, ης f see v.1

βδελυγμα, τος n see v.4

She is the "mother of whores and of every obscenity on earth." NEB.

Revelation 17:6

καὶ εἶδον τὴν γυναῖκα μεθύουσαν ἐκ τοῦ αἵματος τῶν ἁγίων καὶ ἐκ τοῦ αἵματος τῶν μαρτύρων Ἰησοῦ.

Καὶ ἐθαύμασα ἰδὼν αὐτὴν θαῦμα μέγα·

μεθυω be drunk

αἷμα, ατος f blood

μαρτυς, μαρτυρος dat pl μαρτυσιν m

witness, martyr

Probably not meant to imply two different groups but a double reference to believers who had given their lives as a result of their faithfulness to the gospel. Witherington, however, comments, "We have here two phrases following the preposition of ἐκ, which most naturally suggests two different groups. Before we have had the tandem of the prophets and martyrs/witnesses. The reference actually could be to the OT saints and the Christians (cf. Heb 12:1ff.)."

θαυμάζω wonder, be amazed

ἰδων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ὄραω see

θαυμα, τος n wonder

"The revolting and gory spectacle causes John to wonder 'with a great wonder.' Upon being taken to the wilderness he had expected to see the judgement of the harlot, but up to this point she appears triumphant. Ostentatiously attired and adorned in wealth, she sits upon the scarlet beast advertising her base trade and intoxicated with the blood of her victims. The true nature of the empire is at last fully revealed." Mounce.

Revelation 17:7

καὶ εἶπέν μοι ὁ ἄγγελος· Διὰ τί ἐθαύμασας; ἐγὼ ἐρῶ σοὶ τὸ μυστήριον τῆς γυναίκος καὶ τοῦ θηρίου τοῦ βαστάζοντος αὐτήν, τοῦ ἔχοντος τὰς ἑπτὰ κεφαλὰς καὶ τὰ δέκα κέρατα·

ἐρῶ Verb, fut act indic, 1 s λεγω

μυστηριον, ου n see v.5

βασταζω carry, bear

ἔχοντος Verb, pres act ptc, m gen s ἔχω

ἑπτὰ κεφαλὰς... see v.3.

Revelation 17:8

τὸ θηρίον ὃ εἶδες ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν, καὶ μέλλει ἀναβαίνειν ἐκ τῆς ἀβύσσου, καὶ εἰς ἀπώλειαν ὑπάγει· καὶ θαυμασθήσονται οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὧν οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα ἐπὶ τὸ βιβλίον τῆς ζωῆς ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, βλέπόντων τὸ θηρίον ὅτι ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν καὶ παρέσται.

εἶδες Verb, 2nd aor act indic, 2 s ὄραω see

ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν An obvious parody of the Lamb (cf. 1:18; 2:8). The description is an intentional antithesis to the One "who is and was and is to come" (1:4,8; 4:8).

μέλλω (before an infin) be going, be about
ἀναβαίνω come up, ascend
ἀβυσσος, ου f abyss, underworld
ἀπωλεια, ας f destruction, utter ruin

"In the broadest sense the beast is that satanically inspired power that, although having received the stroke of death, returns to hurl himself with renewed fury against the forces of God. It is this incredible power of resuscitation that causes those who dwell upon the earth to stand in awe. He is the beast of chapter 13 who had received a death-stroke and yet survived (12:3, 12, 14). Down through history he repeatedly 'comes up from the abyss' to harass and, if it were possible, to destroy the people of God.... The beast *was*; at the moment he *is not*. John wrote under the shadow of an impending persecution. The beast is about to come again. This coming will be his last, for now the King of kings and Lord of lords will cast him (along with the false prophet) alive into the lake of fire. This is what it means that he goes into perdition (see vs, 11 as well)." Mounce.

θαυμασθήσονται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 pl θαυμάζω

κατοικεω live, inhabit

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γράφω write

βιβλίον, ου n book, scroll

ζωῆ, ης f life

καταβολῆ, ης f beginning, creation

κοσμος, ου m world, universe

Cf. Ps 69:28; Is 4:3; Rev 3:5.

βλεπω see

παρειμι be present

"The verb used to describe the coming of the beast is closely related to the noun which regularly describes the parousia or second coming of Christ (1 Cor 15:23; 1 Thess 2:19; 1 Jn 2:28; etc.)." Mounce.

Witherington comments, "Caird points out that at 11:7 we hear of a beast that rises from the abyss. Rev 13:1ff. must be compared at this juncture. There the monster in question was the Roman Empire, and it seems likely that this is true here as well. But the idea of the second coming refers to the epitome of evil (i.e., Nero back from the dead). The figure apparently does not exist while the author is writing but is expected again, having lived once in the past. Did John really believe Nero would return? Probably not, but he is drawing on common notions to convey the idea of an anti-Christ figure. Evil takes many shapes, though ultimately it all goes back to the same source – the abyss and the Devil."

Revelation 17:9

Ἦδε ὁ νοῦς ὁ ἔχων σοφίαν. αἱ ἑπτὰ κεφαλαὶ ἑπτὰ ὄρη εἰσὶν, ὅπου ἡ γυνὴ κάθηται ἐπ' αὐτῶν. καὶ βασιλεῖς ἑπτὰ εἰσιν·

ὦδε adv here

νοῦς, νοος, νοι, νουν m mind, understanding

σοφια, ας f wisdom, insight

'Here *is needed* the understanding which is wisdom'. "John is saying that although the interpretation of the seven heads is not obvious, it may be understood by those who ponder the riddle with care and wisdom." Mounce.

ὄρος, οὺς n mountain, hill

An obvious reference to Rome, built on seven hills.

ὅπου adv. where

κάθημαι sit, live

βασιλευς, εως m king

The seven kings would appear to be symbolic of the universal power of Rome and beyond that the comprehensive reign of the beast.

Revelation 17:10

οἱ πέντε ἔπεσαν, ὁ εἷς ἔστιν, ὁ ἄλλος οὐπω ἦλθεν, καὶ ὅταν ἔλθῃ ὀλίγον αὐτὸν δεῖ μεῖναι,

πεντε (indeclinable) five

ἔπεσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl πιπτω fall

εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

οὐπω not yet

Attempts to identify the five and the other two as particular Roman emperors are fraught with difficulty. Others seek to identify each with historic world empires, Rome being the sixth and the seventh the 'Christian' empire established by Constantine. It is perhaps best to see the number as purely symbolic. "John is not interested in a careful tabulation of the past but is declaring the nearness of the end by the commonly accepted use of a numerical scheme. For John seven is the number of completeness. Five kings have fallen, one is, and the last remains only for a short time." Mounce.

όταν when

όλιγον adv. a little, only a little

δει impersonal verb it is necessary, must
μείναι Verb, aor act infin μένω trans
remain, stay

Revelation 17:11

καὶ τὸ θηρίον ὃ ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν. καὶ αὐτὸς ὄγδοός ἐστιν καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἐστιν, καὶ εἰς ἀπόλειαν ὑπάγει.

ὄγδοος, η, ον eighth
ἑπτα seven

Mounce suggests that the eighth who is part of the seven is the Antichrist. Witherington argues that it is Domitian.

ἀπωλεια, ας f see v.8

Revelation 17:12

καὶ τὰ δέκα κέρατα ἃ εἶδες δέκα βασιλεῖς εἰσιν, οἵτινες βασιλείαν οὐπω ἔλαβον, ἀλλὰ ἐξουσίαν ὡς βασιλεῖς μίαν ὥραν λαμβάνουσιν μετὰ τοῦ θηρίου.

βασιλευς, εως m king

οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅ τι
who, which

Mounce says that βασιλεια is here used to mean 'royal power', cf. Lk 19:12.

οὐπω not yet

ἐξουσια, ας f authority, power

ώρα, ας f hour, moment

Many identify the ten kings with the Parthian satraps who were viewed as a threat to Rome. Witherington writes, "We may be talking about provincial governors or local officials who ran the imperial cult in Asia." He quotes Friesen who writes, "The book of Revelation must be understood in its local setting as part of a clash of religious ideologies, for it represents an assault on fundamental issues of social organisation in later first-century Asia." Beckwith, however, says that they are "purely eschatological figures representing the totality of the powers of all nations on earth which are to be made subservient to Antichrist."

Revelation 17:13

οὔτοι μίαν γνώμην ἔχουσιν, καὶ τὴν δύναμιν καὶ ἐξουσίαν αὐτῶν τῷ θηρίῳ διδώσιν.

γνώμη, ης f purpose, intent

δυναμεις, εως f power

διδόασιν Verb, pres act indic, 3 pl δίδωμι

They are "willing collaborators" (Morris) who share in Antichrist's hostility to Christ and his followers.

Revelation 17:14

οὔτοι μετὰ τοῦ ἀρνίου πολεμήσουσιν, καὶ τὸ ἀρνίον νικήσει αὐτούς, ὅτι κύριος κυρίων ἐστὶν καὶ βασιλεὺς βασιλέων, καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ κλητοὶ καὶ ἐκλεκτοὶ καὶ πιστοί.

ἀρνιον, ου n lamb

πολεμεω wage war, fight

νικαω conquer, overcome

Cf. Ps 136:2,3; Dan 2:47; 4:37 LXX.

κλητος, η, ον called

ἐκλεκτος, η, ον chosen

πιστος, η, ον faithful

Cf. Rev 2:26,27.

Revelation 17:15

Καὶ λέγει μοι· Τὰ ὕδατα ἃ εἶδες, οὗ ἡ πόρνη κάθεται, λαοὶ καὶ ὄχλοι εἰσὶν καὶ ἔθνη καὶ γλώσσαι.

ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n see v.1

οὗ adv where

πορνη, ης f see v.1

καθημαι see v.1

"The harlot sits on them, which suggests heavy-handed ruling or squashing of local autonomy." Witherinton.

λαος, ου m people, a people

ὄχλος, ου m crowd, multitude

ἔθνη Noun, nom & acc pl ἔθνος, ους n
nation, people

γλωσσα, ης f tongue, language

The fourfold grouping stresses universality.

Revelation 17:16

καὶ τὰ δέκα κέρατα ἃ εἶδες καὶ τὸ θηρίον, οὔτοι μισήσουσι τὴν πόρνην, καὶ ἡρημωμένην ποιήσουσιν αὐτὴν καὶ γυμνὴν, καὶ τὰς σάρκας αὐτῆς φάγονται, καὶ αὐτὴν κατακαύσουσιν ἐν πυρὶ·

The fate of the harlot is described in phrases reminiscent of Ezekiel's allegory of Oholibar (Ezek 23:11-35).

κερας, ατος n see v.3.

θηριον, ου n see v.3.

μισεω hate, despise

ἡρημωμένην Verb, perf pass ptc, f acc s
 ἐρημοομαι be made waste or desolate
 γυμνος, η, ον naked
 σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh
 φάγονται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 pl
 ἐσθιω eat, consume

Cf. 2 Kings 9:30-37.

κατακάουσιν Verb, fut act indic, 3 pl
 κατακαιω burn
 πυρ, ος n fire

Cf. Lev 21:9.

"This turning of the beast upon the woman who sits upon him speaks of 'a terrible and mysterious law of political history, according to which every revolutionary power contains within itself the seed of self-destruction' (Lilje...). It describes the self-destroying power of evil. Morris notes that the wicked are not a happy band of brothers, but precisely because they are wicked they give way to jealousy and hatred, so that 'at the climax their mutual hatreds will result in mutual destruction'." Mounce.

Witherington asks, "Do the ten horns represent the Parthian straps invading Rome and led by the returned Nero? This certainly makes sense of what follows in Rev 19:16-18."

Revelation 17:17

ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἔδωκεν εἰς τὰς καρδίας αὐτῶν ποιῆσαι τὴν γνώμην αὐτοῦ, καὶ ποιῆσαι μίαν γνώμην καὶ δοῦναι τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτῶν τῷ θηρίῳ, ἄχρι τελεσθῆσονται οἱ λόγοι τοῦ θεοῦ.

ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s δίδωμι
 καρδια, ας f heart
 ποιῆσαι Verb, aor act infin ποιεω
 γνώμη, ης f purpose, intent

ποιῆσαι μίαν γνώμην They were of 'one mind.'

δοῦναι verb, aor act infin δίδωμι
 ἄχρι prep and conj until
 τελεσθῆσονται Verb, aor pass subj, 3 pl
 τελεω complete, finish, fulfill

"This verse denies the existence of any ultimate dualism in the world. In the final analysis the powers of evil serve the purpose of God. The coalition between the beast and his allies will continue until the words of God – the prophecies leading up to the overthrow of Antichrist – are fulfilled." Mounce.

Revelation 17:18

καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἣν εἶδες ἔστιν ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη ἡ ἔχουσα βασιλείαν ἐπὶ τῶν βασιλείων τῆς γῆς.
 πολις, εως f city, town
 βασιλευς, εως m king

Again, βασιλεια is used in the sense of 'royal power' (cf. v.12).

"For John, the city is Rome. She is the wicked seducer whose pernicious influence has permeated the whole of the Mediterranean world. Yet Babylon the Great, source of universal harlotry and abomination (vs. 5), is more than first century Rome. Every great centre of power which has prostituted its wealth and influence restores to life the spirit of ancient Babylon." Mounce.

Revelation 18

"In chapter 18 John lays before us a detailed account of the destruction of Rome, that centre of power, luxury, and fierce antagonism against the Christian faith. Drawing heavily upon prophetic oracles and taunt songs of Jewish scripture, the Apocalypticist composes an extended dirge over the accursed city." Mounce.

Witherington comments that "The OT texts being drawn on in this section are chiefly Isa 13; 34:8ff.; Jer 51; Ezek 26-28; and Nah 3, though there are small echoes from elsewhere in the OT. Rev 17:16-18 have warned of Rome's destruction. Rev 18 will lament its fall and aftermath. So sure is John of the outcome that he offers a funeral dirge before the city is even attacked."

Revelation 18:1

Μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον καταβαίνοντα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἔχοντα ἐξουσίαν μεγάλην, καὶ ἡ γῆ ἐφωτίσθη ἐκ τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other
 καταβαινω come down, descend
 ἐξουσια, ας f authority, power
 ἐφωτίσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s φωτιζω
 give light to, shine on
 δοξα, ης f glory

Reflecting the radiant glory of God.

Revelation 18:2

καὶ ἔκραξεν ἐν ἰσχυρᾷ φωνῇ λέγων· Ἔπεσεν, ἔπεσεν Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη, καὶ ἐγένετο κατοικητήριον δαιμονίων καὶ φυλακὴ παντὸς πνεύματος ἀκαθάρτου καὶ φυλακὴ παντὸς ὀρνέου ἀκαθάρτου καὶ φυλακὴ παντὸς θηρίου ἀκαθάρτου καὶ μεμισημένου,

κραζω cry out, call out
 ισχυρος, α, ον strong, mighty, powerful
 ἔπεσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s πιπτω fall

Cf. Is 21:9. The past tense expresses the certainty of the fall.

ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s γινομαι

κατοικητηριον, ου n house, home; haunt
φυλακη, ης f prison, imprisonment

Mounce suggests that φυλακη here means 'hold' rather than prison. "It is not a place of detention but a place where they dwell undisturbed." Mounce. I.e. 'haunt' (NRSV). Cf. Jer 51:37.; Is 34:11-15.

ἀκαθαρτος, ου unclean
ὄρνειον, ου n bird
θηριον, ου n animal, beast, wild animal

Cf. Is 13:20-22.

μεμισημένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m & n gen s
μισεω hate, despise

There are a number of variants affecting the order of the three και φυλακη ... ἀκαθάρτου clauses, omission in some mss of the third clause and positioning of και μεμισημένου after various of the clauses. These textual variants no doubt arose from errors of transcription due to the similarities between the beginnings and endings of the clauses.

Revelation 18:3

ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς πέπτωκαν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς μετ' αὐτῆς ἐπόρνευσαν, καὶ οἱ ἔμποροι τῆς γῆς ἐκ τῆς δυνάμεως τοῦ στρήνου αὐτῆς ἐπλούτησαν.

οἶνος, ου m wine
θυμος, ου m anger, rage, fury
πορνεία, ας f sexual immorality

The mixed picture of the wine of wrath and of fornication has resulted in several textual variants. For this phrase, see on 14:8.

πέπτωκαν Verb, perf act indic, 3 pl πινω
drink

πορνευω commit sexual immorality

"Fornication is a well-known figure in the OT for apostasy from God (Hos 4:10; Jer 3:2). It is used here to denote the unclean and illicit relationships between the capital of the empire and all the nations of the earth. In the last days it will be epitomised by worship of the beast." Mounce.

ἔμπορος, ου m merchant
δυναμις, εως f power
στρηνος, ους n sensuality, luxury
πλουτεω be rich, grow rich

Revelation 18:4

Καὶ ἤκουσα ἄλλην φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λέγουσαν· Ἐξέλθατε, ὁ λαός μου, ἐξ αὐτῆς, ἵνα μὴ συγκοινωνήσητε ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐκ τῶν πληγῶν αὐτῆς ἵνα μὴ λάβητε·

ἐξέλθατε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl
ἐξέρχομαι

Cf. Is 52:11; Jer 50:8; 51:6,45. "The summons in Revelation 18:4 suggests a literal flight from the doomed city (as Christian Jews fled to Pella at the fall of Jerusalem), but when projected on the larger screen of the consummation it becomes a call to the last generation of believers for 'spiritual withdrawal from Vanity Fair' (Kiddle...)." Mounce.

Witherington comments, "In our text it is a call for divorcing oneself from the materialistic orientation that characterised Rome."

λαος, ου m people
συγκοινωνεω take part in
πληγη, ης f plague
λάβητε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl λαμβανω

"To share in her sins is to reap her recompense." Mounce.

Revelation 18:5

ὅτι ἐκολλήθησαν αὐτῆς αἱ ἁμαρτίαι ἄχρι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ ἐμνημόνευσεν ὁ θεὸς τὰ ἀδικήματα αὐτῆς.

ἐκολλήθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
κολλαομαι unite oneself with

Here meaning joining one sin to another, heaping up sins.

ἄχρι prep with gen until, as far as

Cf. Jer 51:9.

μνημονεω remember, keep in mind
ἀδικημα, τος n crime, sin, wrong

Revelation 18:6

ἀπόδοτε αὐτῇ ὡς καὶ αὐτὴ ἀπέδωκεν, καὶ διπλώσατε τὰ διπλά κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῆς· ἐν τῷ ποτηρίῳ ᾧ ἐκέρασεν κεράσατε αὐτῇ διπλοῦν· ἀποδοῖμι give, render, give back, repay

"The voice from heaven ... now addresses itself to undesigned agents of divine vengeance." Mounce.

διπλω double
διπλους, η, ουν double

"double unto her double" is a "conventional expression for full requital" Beckwith. Cf. Jer 16:18; 17:18 and see also Is 40:2.

ποτηριον, ου n cup
ἐκέρασεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s κεραννυμι
mix, pour
κεράσατε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl
κεραννυμι

Revelation 18:7

ὅσα ἐδόξασεν αὐτὴν καὶ ἐστρηνίασεν,
τοσοῦτον δότε αὐτῇ βασανισμὸν καὶ πένθος.
ὅτι ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς λέγει ὅτι Κάθημαι
βασιλισσα, καὶ χήρα οὐκ εἰμί, καὶ πένθος οὐ
μὴ ἴδω.

ὅσος, η, ον as much as, how much
δοξαζω praise, glorify, exalt
στρηνιαω live in sensuality or luxury
τοσουτος, αυτη, ουτον / ουτο so much
δοτε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl διδωμι
βασανισμος, ου m torture, torment
πενθος, ους n mourning, sorrow
καρδια, ας f heart
καθημαι sit, sit down, live
βασιλισσα, ης f queen
χιρα, ας f widow

Cf. Is. 47:7,8. "Indicates that she has not experienced the debilitating effects of war and loss of life. Her men are victorious: they have not died on the field of battle." Mounce.

ἴδω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s ὄραω see

The sins highlighted are self-glorification and arrogance.

Revelation 18:8

διὰ τοῦτο ἐν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ ἤξουσιν αἱ πληγαὶ
αὐτῆς, θάνατος καὶ πένθος καὶ λιμός, καὶ ἐν
πυρὶ κατακαυθήσεται· ὅτι ἰσχυρὸς κύριος ὁ
θεὸς ὁ κρίνας αὐτήν.

ἤκω come, have come, be present
θανατος, ου m death
λιμος, ου m & f famine, hunger
πυρ, ος n fire

The fire of divine judgement. Cf. Jer. 51:25.

κατακαυθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s
κατακαιω burn, burn up, consume
ισχυρος, α, ον strong, mighty, powerful
κρινω judge

Pompei may still have been fresh in the memories of many during the reign of Domitian.

Revelation 18:9-19

Verses 9-19 are modelled after Ezekiel's lamentation over Tyre (Ezek 27).

Revelation 18:9

Καὶ κλαύσουσιν καὶ κόψονται ἐπ' αὐτήν οἱ
βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς οἱ μετ' αὐτῆς πορνεύσαντες
καὶ στρηνιάσαντες, ὅταν βλέπωσιν τὸν καπνὸν
τῆς πυρώσεως αὐτῆς,

κλαύσουσιν Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 pl
κλαιω weep, cry
κοπτω cut; midd mourn, wail, lament

Cf. Ezek 26:16-18.

πορνευω see v.3

στρηνιαω see v.7

ὅταν when

καπνὸν Noun, acc s καπνος, ου m smoke
πυρωσις, εως f burning

Witherington comments, "They are weeping over their own demise, for they do not rush to help. They think only of the implications for themselves, such is the fallen, selfish human nature. There is more involved though, for these rulers or officials also fear sharing in the same torment. This is why they stand at a distance and watch."

Revelation 18:10

ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἐστηκότες διὰ τὸν φόβον τοῦ
βασανισμοῦ αὐτῆς λέγοντες· Οὐαὶ οὐαὶ, ἡ
πόλις ἡ μεγάλη, Βαβυλὼν ἡ πόλις ἡ ἰσχυρά,
ὅτι μιᾷ ὥρᾳ ἦλθεν ἡ κρίσις σου.

μακροθεν adv far off, at a distance
ἐστηκότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl
ἰστημι stand

φοβος, ου m fear

βασανισμος, ου m torture, torment

They do not rush to her rescue.

οὐαὶ interj. woe!

ισχυρος, α, ον strong, mighty, powerful

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

ὥρα, ας f hour, moment

κρισις, εως f judgement

Revelation 18:11

Καὶ οἱ ἔμποροι τῆς γῆς κλαίουσιν καὶ
πενθοῦσιν ἐπ' αὐτήν, ὅτι τὸν γόμον αὐτῶν
οὐδεὶς ἀγοράζει οὐκέτι,

ἐμπορος, ου m merchant

πενθεω mourn, be sad

γομος, ου m cargo

οὐδεις, οὐδεμα, οὐδεν no one

ἀγοραζω buy

οὐκετι adv no longer, no more

Contemporary writers such as Pliny and Aristides testify to the tremendous volume of trade consumed by Rome. Witherington reports that "Vitellius, who was Emperor for less than a year, somehow managed to spend more than \$20 million, mostly on food." He adds, "Women in Rome in this period had a great passion for silver bathtubs, and Julius Caesar is said to have given a pearl worth \$18,000 to Servilia."

The following list should be compared to the one in Ezekiel 27:2-24 concerning Tyre.

Revelation 18:12

γόμον χρυσοῦ καὶ ἀργύρου καὶ λίθου τιμίου
καὶ μαργαριτῶν καὶ βυσσίνου καὶ πορφύρας
καὶ σιρικοῦ καὶ κοκκίνου, καὶ πᾶν ξύλον
θύϊνον καὶ πᾶν σκεῦος ἐλεφάντινον καὶ πᾶν
σκεῦος ἐκ ξύλου τιμιωτάτου καὶ χαλκοῦ καὶ
σιδήρου καὶ μαρμάρου,

γομος, ου m cargo
χρυσος, ου m gold
ἀργυρος, ου m silver
λιθος, ου m stone
τιμιος, α, ον precious, valuable
μαργαριτης, ου m pearl
βυσσινος, η, ον made of fine linen
πορφυρα, ας f purple cloth
σιρικον, ου n silk cloth
κοκκινος, η, ον scarlet, red
ξύλον, ου n wood, tree
θύϊνος, η, ον citron, scented (wood)
σκευος, ους n object, thing
ἐλεφαντινος, η, ον of ivory
τιμιωτατος, α, ον most precious, priceless,
rare (comparitive of τιμιος)
χαλκος, ου m copper, brass, bronze
σιδηρος, ου m iron
μαρμαρος, ου m marble

Revelation 18:13

καὶ κιννάμωμον καὶ ἄμωμον καὶ θυμιάματα
καὶ μύρον καὶ λίβανον καὶ οἶνον καὶ ἔλαιον
καὶ σεμίδαλιν καὶ σῖτον καὶ κτήνη καὶ
πρόβατα, καὶ ἵππων καὶ ῥεδῶν καὶ σωμάτων,
καὶ ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων.

κινναμωμον, ου n cinnamon
ἀμωμον, ου n spice (from India)
θυμιαμα, ατος n incense
μυρον, ου n ointment, perfume, oil
λιβανος, ου m frankincense; incense
οἶνος, ου m wine
ἐλαιον, ου n olive oil, oil
σεμίδαλις, εως f fine wheat flour
σιτος, ου m grain, wheat
κτηνος, ους n pack animal; pl. cattle
προβατον, ου n sheep
ἵππος, ου f horse
ῥεδη, ης f (four wheeled) carriage
σωμα, τος n body

I.e. slaves.

ψυχη, ης f life, 'soul', living being, person

Witherington comments, "There are two words used here for slaves. The first is simply bodies, as in English we might talk about hired hands. There were perhaps 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire at this time. The second term, lives/souls of humans, basically refers to human livestock. Slaves did the work for the wealthy, filled the brothels, and performed in the arena. Rome could not have existed without slavery."

The fabulous wealth of the empire was generated by exploitation and oppression. Witherington continues, "Slavery helped create the 1-2 percent leisure class of rulers, patricians, and others in Rome exempt from having to do any manual labour. Thus when Rome itself falls or is destroyed, this meant an end of a whole way of life for merchants and ship owners and others who depended on the wealthy on the one hand to buy their goods and slaves on the other hand to provide, transport, and deliver their goods. Since Asia was the richest of provinces, and in some ways the one most dependent on Rome, John's audience would know at once what the impact was on them if Rome fell."

Revelation 18:14

καὶ ἡ ὀπώρα σου τῆς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ψυχῆς
ἀπῆλθεν ἀπὸ σοῦ, καὶ πάντα τὰ λιπαρὰ καὶ τὰ
λαμπρὰ ἀπόλετο ἀπὸ σοῦ, καὶ οὐκέτι οὐ μὴ
αὐτὰ εὕρησουσιν.

ὀπωρα, ας f fruit
ἐπιθυμια, ας f desire, lust, passion
ψυχη, ης f self, 'soul', person
λιπαρος, α, ον costly, luxurious
λαμπρος, α, ον bright, fine, splendid
ἀπωλετο Verb, aor midd indic, 3 s ἀπολλυμι
destroy; midd be lost, perish
οὐκετι adv no longer, no more
εὕρισκω find, discover

Revelation 18:15

οἱ ἔμποροι τούτων, οἱ πλουτήσαντες ἀπ'
αὐτῆς, ἀπὸ μακρόθεν στήσονται διὰ τὸν φόβον
τοῦ βασανισμοῦ αὐτῆς κλαίοντες καὶ
πενθοῦντες,

ἐμπορος, ου m see v.3
πλουτεω see v.3
μακροθεν adv see v.10
στήσονται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 pl
ἵστημι see v.10
φοβος, ου m see v.10
βασανισμος, ου m see v.10
κλαιω see v.9
πενθεω see v.11

"The merchants' dirge resumes following the parenthetical listing of imports to Rome. They had profited richly from their lively trade with the great capital of the world-empire. Now, like the kings of the earth (vs. 10) they take their stand at a safe distance to weep and mourn." Mounce.

Revelation 18:16

λέγοντες· Οὐαὶ οὐαὶ, ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη, ἡ περιβεβλημένη βύσσινον καὶ πορφυροῦν καὶ κόκκινον καὶ κεχρυσωμένη χρυσίῳ καὶ λίθῳ τιμίῳ καὶ μαργαρίτῃ,

οὐαὶ see v.10

περιβεβλημένη Verb, perf pass ptc, f nom s
περιβαλλῶ put on, clothe, dress

βύσσινος, ἡ, ον see v.12

πορφυροῦς, α, ουν see v.12

κόκκινος, ἡ, ον see v.12

κεχρυσωμένη Verb, perf pass ptc, f nom s
χρυσῶ cover or adorn with gold

χρυσιον, ου n gold

λίθος, ου m see v.12

τιμιος, α, ον see v.12

μαργαριτης, ου m see v.12

Revelation 18:17

ὅτι μιᾶ ὥρᾳ ἠρημώθη ὁ τοσοῦτος πλοῦτος. Καὶ πᾶς κυβερνήτης καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἐπὶ τόπον πλέων, καὶ ναῦται καὶ ὅσοι τὴν θάλασσαν ἐργάζονται, ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἔστησαν

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος see v.10

ὥρα, ας f see v.10

ἠρημώθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ἐρημοομαι
be made waste or desolate

τοσοῦτος, αυτη, ουτον / ουτο correlative adj
so much, so great

πλοῦτος, ου m & n riches, wealth

"The dirge is now continued by a third group, those involved in and connected with the shipping industry." Mounce.

κυβερνήτης, ου m (uncertain meaning)
captain, navigator

τοπος, ου m place

πλεω sail

ναυτης, ου m sailor

Cf. Acts 27:27,30.

ὅσος, ἡ, ον correlative pronoun, as much as;
pl. as many as, all

θάλασσα, ἡς f sea

ἐργάζομαι work

μακρόθεν see vv.10,15

ἔστησαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl ἵστημι see
vv.10,15

Revelation 18:18

καὶ ἔκραζαν βλέποντες τὸν καπνὸν τῆς πυρώσεως αὐτῆς λέγοντες· Τίς ὁμοία τῇ πόλει τῇ μεγάλῃ;

κραζω cry out, call out

βλεπω see

καπνὸν see v.9

πυρωσις, εως f see v.9

ὁμοιος, α, ον like, of the same kind as

Cf. Ezek 27:32.

Revelation 18:19

καὶ ἔβαλον χοῦν ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν καὶ ἔκραξαν κλαίοντες καὶ πενθοῦντες λέγοντες· Οὐαὶ οὐαὶ, ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη, ἐν ἧ ἔπλούτησαν πάντες οἱ ἔχοντες τὰ πλοῖα ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ ἐκ τῆς τιμιότητος αὐτῆς, ὅτι μιᾶ ὥρᾳ ἠρημώθη.

βαλλω throw

χοῦν Noun, acc s χοῦς, χοος m dust

κεφαλη, ἡς f head

κλαιω see vv.9,15

πενθεω see vv.11,15

οὐαὶ see vv.10,16

πλουτεω be rich, grow rich

πλοιοι, ου n ship, boat

τιμιότης, ητος f wealth, abundance

"The phrase 'by reason of her costliness' is taken by Beckwith to mean that the sea-going merchants and maritime personnel were made rich through the greatness of her costly trade... Charles judges the text to be corrupt and restores the last line to read, 'For in one hour are her precious things laid waste.'" Mounce. There is no other evidence that the text is corrupt.

μιᾶ ὥρᾳ ἠρημώθη see vv. 10,17.

Revelation 18:20

Εὐφραίνου ἐπ' αὐτῇ, οὐρανέ, καὶ οἱ ἅγιοι καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ προφῆται, ὅτι ἔκρινεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ κρίμα ὑμῶν ἐξ αὐτῆς.

εὐφραίνου Verb, pres pass imperat, 2 s

εὐφραίνω make glad; pass be glad,
rejoice

ἔκρινεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s κρινω judge
κρίμα, τος n judgement, verdict

Caird understands this to mean "God has imposed on her the sentence she passed on you." This is followed by Mounce who says, "The church victorious is to rejoice that God the righteous judge has turned back the evidence laid against believers and in turn has served to bring judgement upon the accuser himself." Cf. 12:12.

Revelation 18:21

Καὶ ἦρεν εἷς ἄγγελος ἰσχυρὸς λίθον ὡς μύλινον μέγαν, καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν λέγων· Οὕτως ὁρμήματι βληθήσεται Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη πόλις, καὶ οὐ μὴ εὐρεθῆ ἔτι.

ἦρεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s αἶρω take,
take up

ἰσχυρος, α, ον strong, mighty, powerful

Cf. 5:2; 10:1.

λίθος, ου m stone

μυλινος, ἡ, ον pertaining to a mill,
millstone

Witherington comments, "This is comprehensible on the basis of the parallel in Jer 51:63-64, where Jeremiah tied his prophecies about the fall of Babylon to a stone and threw them in the Euphrates, symbolising the fall and sinking of the great city (cf. Luke 17:2)."

οὕτως and οὕτω adv. thus, in this way
ὄρμημα, τοσ n violence

"This word translated [by the ASV] 'with a mighty fall' appears in its cognate verb form in Mark 5:13 to describe the herd of swine that rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and in Acts 19:29 of the crowd of people who rushed into the great theatre in Ephesus." Mounce.

βληθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s βαλλω
εὐρέθῃ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s εὕρισκω find
ἔτι still, yet, any more

"Six times in verses 21-23 the phrase 'no more at all' tolls the collapse of the city... The double negative with the aorist subjunctive expresses emphatic denial for the future (Moule, *Idiom Book...*). The addition of ἔτι in each case strengthens the emphatic affirmation." Mounce.

Revelation 18:22

καὶ φωνὴ κιθαρωδῶν καὶ μουσικῶν καὶ αὐλητῶν καὶ σαλπιστῶν οὐ μὴ ἀκουσθῆ ἔν σοι ἔτι, καὶ πᾶς τεχνίτης πάσης τέχνης οὐ μὴ εὐρέθῃ ἔν σοι ἔτι, καὶ φωνὴ μύλου οὐ μὴ ἀκουσθῆ ἔν σοι ἔτι,

κιθαρωδός, ου m harpist
μουσικός, ου m musician
αὐλητής, ου m flute player
σαλπιστής, ου m trumpeter
ἀκουσθῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s ἀκουω

Cf. Isa 24:8; Ezek 26:13.

ἔτι still, yet, moreover
τεχνίτης, ου m craftsman, workman
τεχνη, ης f craft, trade
μύλος, ου m mill; millstone

Cf. Jer 25:10.

Revelation 18:23

καὶ ὡς λύχνου οὐ μὴ φάνη ἔν σοι ἔτι, καὶ φωνὴ νυμφίου καὶ νύμφης οὐ μὴ ἀκουσθῆ ἔν σοι ἔτι· ὅτι οἱ ἔμποροί σου ἦσαν οἱ μεγιστᾶνες τῆς γῆς, ὅτι ἐν τῇ φαρμακείᾳ σου ἐπλανήθησαν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη,

φως, φωτός n light
λύχνου Noun, gen s λυχνος, ου m lamp
φάνη Verb, aor act subj, 3 s φαινω shine

The city has become silent and dark.

νυμφίος, ου m bridegroom
νυμφη, ης f bride

"The exact connection between the two final clauses of verse 23 is not readily apparent. It is clear, however, that both supply reasons for the judgement that has fallen on Babylon." Mounce.

ἔμπορος, ου m merchant
μεγισταν, ανος m person of high status
φαρμακεια, ας f sorcery, witchcraft
ἐπλανήθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
πλαναω lead astray, mislead, deceive

"Rome had bewitched the nations into a false sense of security, leading them to believe that she was in fact the eternal city." Mounce.

Revelation 18:24

καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ αἷμα προφητῶν καὶ ἁγίων εὐρέθη καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐσφαγμένων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

αἷμα, ατος f blood
εὐρέθη see v.21
ἐσφαγμένων Verb, perf pass ptc, gen pl
σφαζω slaughter, put to death

"A third reason for judgement is added – the blood of Christian martyrs which ran red in the streets of Rome. In fact, Rome's guilt extends to all who have been slain upon the earth because she is the reigning sovereign of the entire world. Wherever life has been sacrificed, the responsibility lies at her door... The massacre under Nero in AD 64 as well as current troubles under Domitian would supply a realistic background for this stark reminder of imperial brutality." Mounce.

Revelation 19:1

Μετὰ ταῦτα ἤκουσα ὡς φωνὴν μεγάλην ὄχλου πολλοῦ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ λεγόντων· Ἀλληλουϊά· ἡ σωτηρία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν,

"The heavenly jubilation breaks out in marked contrast to the solemn dirges of the kings, merchants, and seafarers whose economic empires collapsed with the devastation of the imperial capital." Mounce.

ὄχλος, ου m crowd, multitude
πολύς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου much, great

'Hallelujah' occurs here 4 times but is not found elsewhere in the NT. Verses 1-6 are the Hallelujah chorus of Revelation. Witherington comments, "It has been suggested that this [vv. 1-8] is a sort of Christian Hallel psalm, rather like one finds in Pss. 113-118. The Hallel was sung in praise of God's deliverance at Exodus Sinai. It is thus appropriate here since we have just heard of the deliverance of God's people from their oppressors. Vv. 1-8 could then be taken as a liturgy of Hallelujahs. Salvation and judgment are juxtaposed in vv 1-2 because they are seen as two sides of the same coin. Not only has justice been done and the oppressor punished, but the blood of the martyrs has been avenged. Vengeance or justice is left to God, and rejoicing is not over some human actions but over the all-wise God's actions."

σωτηρια, ας f salvation

Here referring not primarily to personal experience but to God's redemptive purpose.

δοξα, ης f glory

δυναμις, εως f power

Revelation 19:2

ὅτι ἀληθινὰ καὶ δίκαια αἱ κρίσεις αὐτοῦ· ὅτι ἔκρινεν τὴν πόρνην τὴν μεγάλην ἣτις ἐφθίρειν τὴν γῆν ἐν τῇ πορνείᾳ αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐξεδίκησεν τὸ αἷμα τῶν δούλων αὐτοῦ ἐκ χειρὸς αὐτῆς.

ἀληθινος, η, ον real, genuine, true

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just

κρίσεις Noun, nom pl κρίσις, εως f judgement

ἔκρινεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s κρίνω judge

πορνη, ης f prostitute

ὅστις, ἣτις, ὅ τι who, which

φθίρω corrupt, ruin, destroy

πορνεία, ας f sexual immorality

ἐκδικέω avenge, punish

αἷμα, ατος f blood

δουλος, ου m slave, servant

χειρ, χειρος f hand, power

Cf. Deut 32:43.

Revelation 19:3

καὶ δευτερον εἶρηκαν· Ἀλληλουϊά· καὶ ὁ καπνὸς αὐτῆς ἀναβαίνει εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

δευτερος, α, ον second; δευτερον a second time

εἶρηκαν Verb, perf act indic, 3 pl λεγω

καπνός, ου m smoke

ἀναβαίνω go up, ascend

αἰών, αἰωνος m age, eternity

Cf. Is 34:8-10; Rev 14:11. "The multitude praises God because the destruction of the wicked city is absolutely final." Mounce.

Beale suggests that "eternal judgment may be a partial polemic against the mythical *Roma aeterna* ('eternal Rome') which was one of the names of the Roman Empire."

Revelation 19:4

καὶ ἔπεσαν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι οἱ εἴκοσι τέσσαρες καὶ τὰ τέσσαρα ζῶα, καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θεῷ τῷ καθήμενῷ ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ λέγοντες· Ἀμήν, Ἀλληλουϊά.

ἔπεσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl πιπτω fall, fall down

πρεσβυτερος, α, ον elder

εἴκοσι twenty

τέσσαρες neut τέσσαρα gen τεσσαρων four

ζῶον, ου n living creature

προσκυνέω worship

Cf. 5:6-10.

καθίμαι sit

θρόνος, ου m throne

"Their words, 'Amen; Hallelujah,' echo the close of the doxology which marks the end of Book IV of the Psalter (Ps 106:48)." Mounce.

Revelation 19:5

Καὶ φωνὴ ἀπὸ τοῦ θρόνου ἐξῆλθεν λέγουσα· Αἰνεῖτε τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν, πάντες οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ, καὶ οἱ φοβούμενοι αὐτόν, οἱ μικροὶ καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι.

αἰνέω praise

The evidence for or against the inclusion of καὶ is finely balanced. If it is included, the sense is 'even'.

φοβεομαι fear, reverence

μικρός, α, ον little, small

Cf. Ps 115:13. "...believers on earth from every socio-economic level, and represent[ing] every stage of spiritual maturity." Mounce.

Revelation 19:6

καὶ ἤκουσα ὡς φωνὴν ὄχλου πολλοῦ καὶ ὡς φωνὴν ὑδάτων πολλῶν καὶ ὡς φωνὴν βροντῶν ἰσχυρῶν, λεγόντων· Ἀλληλουϊά, ὅτι ἐβασίλευσεν κύριος, ὁ θεός, ὁ παντοκράτωρ.

ὄχλος, ου m see v.1

ὑδωρ, ὑδατος n water

βροντη, ης f thunder

ἰσχυρός, α, ον strong, mighty, powerful

βασίλευω rule, reign

παντοκράτωρ, ορος m Almighty

Used 9 times of God in Revelation, only once elsewhere in the NT (2 Cor 6:18).

Revelation 19:7

χαίρωμεν καὶ ἀγαλλιῶμεν, καὶ δώσομεν τὴν δόξαν αὐτῷ, ὅτι ἦλθεν ὁ γάμος τοῦ ἀρνίου, καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ ἠτοίμασεν ἑαυτήν,

χαίρω rejoice, be glad

ἀγαλλιαῶ be extremely joyful or glad

"The only other place in the NT where these two verbs are used together is Matthew 5:12 where the cause for rejoicing is given as the greatness of the heavenly reward awaiting those who were reviled and persecuted for the cause of Christ. That reward is now pictured as a great wedding feast in which the Lamb and his bride celebrate their union." Mounce.

δώσωμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl δίδωμι

δόξα, ης f glory

γάμος, ου m wedding, wedding feast

ἀρνιον, ου n lamb, sheep

γυνη, αικος f woman, wife

Cf. Hos 2:1, 19ff.; Isa 54:5-7; Matt 22:1ff.; 25:1ff.; Eph 5:32.

ἑτοιμάζω prepare, make ready

"In Biblical times a marriage involved two major events, the betrothal and the wedding. These were normally separated by a period of time during which the two individuals were considered husband and wife and as such under obligations of faithfulness. The wedding began with a procession to the bride's house, which was followed by a return to the house of the groom for the marriage feast. By analogy, the church, espoused to Christ by faith, now awaits the parousia when the heavenly groom will come for his bride and return to heaven for the marriage feast which lasts throughout eternity." Mounce.

Revelation 19:8

καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῇ ἵνα περιβάληται βύσσινον λαμπρὸν καθαρὸν, τὸ γὰρ βύσσινον τὰ δικαιώματα τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν.

ἐδόθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s δίδωμι

περιβάληται Verb, aor midd subj, 3 s

περιβαλλω put on, clothe, dress

βυσσινος, η, ον made of fine linen

λαμπρος, α, ον bright, shining, fine,

καθαρος, α, ον pure, clean

Contrast the clothing of the harlot in 17:4.

δικαιωμα, τος n righteous deed

"This does not deny the Pauline doctrine of justification based on the righteous obedience of Christ (Rom 5:18-19), but suggests that a transformed life is a proper response to the call of the heavenly bridegroom." Mounce.

Witherington comments, "This indicates that the process leading up to the marriage is synergistic, requiring action by God to make his people clean but also on the believer's part to be prepared through repentance and faith."

Revelation 19:9

Καὶ λέγει μοι· Γράψον· Μακάριοι οἱ εἰς τὸ δεῖπνον τοῦ γάμου τοῦ ἀρνίου κεκλημένοι. καὶ λέγει μοι· Οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι ἀληθινοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσιν.

Note the flexibility of the imagery as the people of God shift from being the bride to the guests at the feast.

γράψον Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s γραφω

write

μακαριος, α, ον blessed, fortunate, happy

The fourth of seven beatitudes in the Apocalypse (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14).

δειπνον, ου n feast, banquet, supper

Cf. Is 25:6-8; Lk 13:29; Mt 26:28-29. It is an invitation only affair.

ἀληθινος, η, ον real, genuine, true

Revelation 19:10

καὶ ἔπεσα ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ. καὶ λέγει μοι· Ὅρα μὴ· σύνδουλός σου εἰμι καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου τῶν ἐχόντων τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ· τῷ θεῷ προσκύνησον· ἡ γὰρ μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ ἐστὶν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας.

John mistakenly believes the speaker to be the Lord.

ἔπεσα Verb, aor act indic, 1 s πίπτω fall, fall down

ἔμπροσθεν prep with gen before, in front of

πους, ποδος m foot

προσκυνεω worship

ὄραω see; intrans make sure, see to

Cf. Acts 10:25-26. ὄρα μη understands a following ποιησης – 'Don't do that!' God and Jesus Christ are alone to receive worship.

συνδουλος, ου m fellow-servant

σος, ση, σον possessive adj. your, yours

μαρτυρια, ας f testimony, witness

Mounce is of the view that, "As in the previous occurrences of this phrase (1:2, 9; 12:17), the 'testimony of Jesus' is the witness which was borne by Jesus (subjective genitive). By his life and death Jesus has demonstrated to his followers what it means to bear faithful witness (1:5; 3:14) to the message revealed by God." The last clause he understands to mean "the message attested by Jesus is the essence of prophetic proclamation."

Revelation 19:11

Καὶ εἶδον τὸν οὐρανὸν ἠνεωγμένον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος λευκός, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπ' αὐτὸν πιστὸς καλούμενος καὶ ἀληθινός, καὶ ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ κρίνει καὶ πολεμεῖ.

εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὄρω see
ἠνεωγμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc s & n
nom/acc s ἀνοιγῶ open

ἵππος, ου f horse

λευκός, η, ον white

Cf. Ch. 6.

καθημαι sit, sit down

καλούμενος is variously positioned in the MSS. Metzger personally prefers the reading of 8, πιστος καλουμενος και ἀληθινος.

πιστος, η, ον faithful, trustworthy
ἀληθινός, η, ον real, genuine, true

Cf. 3:14.

δικαιοσύνη, ης f righteousness
κρινῶ judge, pass judgement on

Cf. Ps 96:13.

πολεμῶ wage war, fight

Witherington comments, "We must hark back to the material in 16:12ff., the judgment of the sixth cup. There we heard of the armies assembling for Armageddon (cf. 17:14). Rev 16:15 refers to the coming of the Son like a thief in the night. Here is the expansion of that comment, and the battle described should not be distinguished from the one mentioned in Rev 16 and 17:14."

Revelation 19:12

οἱ δὲ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ φλόξ πυρός, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ διαδήματα πολλά, ἔχων ὄνομα γεγραμμένον ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ αὐτός,

φλόξ, φλογος f flame

πυρ, ος n fire

Cf. 1:14; 2:18.

κεφαλή, ης f head

διαδήμα, τος n diadem, crown

"Here is an obvious contrast to the seven diadems of the dragon (12:3) and the ten diadems of the beast out of the sea (13:1). Many crowns indicate unlimited sovereignty." Mounce.

ὄνομα, τος n name

γεγραμμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
nom/acc s γραφῶ write

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδεν no one, nothing

Some think this a reference to the tetragrammon, YHWH, a name too holy to pronounce. Others think the name is 'Lord' cf. Phil 2:9-11, while some that it is 'Jesus'. The name may be symbolic, expressing the mystery of his person. Swete says that, apart from the Father, only the Son can understand the mystery of his own being (cf. Matt 11:27).

Revelation 19:13

καὶ περιβεβλημένος ἱμάτιον βεβαμμένον αἵματι, καὶ κέκληται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ὁ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ.

περιβεβλημένος Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom s
περιβαλλῶ put on, clothe, dress
ἱμάτιον, ου n garment, clothing, robe
βεβαμμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
nom/acc s βαπτῶ dip

Many MSS read ἐρραντισμενον ('sprinkled') rather than βεβαμμένον.

αἷμα, ατος f blood

Cf. Is 63:1-6. Reddish suggests that since the battle has not yet been fought, the blood is that of Christ himself. Witherington responds, "The combination of the warrior image that echoes Isaiah and the Word image, as we shall see, does not favour the interpretation of the blood being Christ's own." Mounce writes, "The blood-stained garments of the Messiah symbolise his victory in the coming conflict."

κέκληται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s καλεῶ

Cf. Jn. 1:1. The picture here is of one who executes God's decree, the one through whom the word of God proves living and active (cf. Heb 4:12). He is the one through whom judgment is declared upon the nations.

Revelation 19:14

καὶ τὰ στρατεύματα τὰ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἠκολούθει αὐτῷ ἐφ' ἵπποις λευκοῖς, ἐνδεδυμένοι βύσσινον λευκὸν καθαρὸν.

στρατευμα, τος n troops, soldiers, army
ἀκολουθεῶ follow, accompany

ἐνδεδυμένοι Verb, perf midd ptc, m nom pl
ἐνδύω dress, clothe; midd wear

βύσσινος, η, ον made of fine linen

καθαρός, α, ον pure, clean

"Normally one would think of a heavenly army as composed of angels (cf. Mt 26:53...), but the parallel in Revelation 17:14 in which those who battle on the Lamb's side are designated 'called and chosen and faithful' would indicate that the martyrs (those who have remained faithful unto death) should be included as well. Apparently, the armies had no part in the actual battle, although later (in vs. 19) the armies of Antichrist make war 'against him that sat upon the horse and against his army.' It is the sword of the Messiah that smites the enemy (vss. 15,21), and his garment alone is dipped in blood." Mounce.

Revelation 19:15

καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ ἐκπορεύεται
 ῥομφαία ὀξεῖα, ἵνα ἐν αὐτῇ πατάξῃ τὰ ἔθνη,
 καὶ αὐτὸς ποιμανεῖ αὐτοὺς ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ·
 καὶ αὐτὸς πατεῖ τὴν ληνὸν τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ
 θυμοῦ τῆς ὀργῆς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ παντοκράτορος.

στομα, τος n mouth

ἐκπορευομαι go or come out

ῥομφαία, ας f sword

ὀξυς, εια, υ sharp

Cf. 1:16; 2:12,16.

πατάξῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s πατασσω
 strike, strike down

Cf. Is.11:3-4; 2 Thess 2:8.

ποιμανεῖ Verb, fut act indic, 3 s ποιμαινω
 tend as a shepherd, rule

ῥάβδος, ου f stick, rod, sceptre

σιδηρους, α, ουν made of iron

Cf. Ps 2:8-9.

πατεω trample

ληνος, ου f wine press

οἶνος, ου m wine

θυμος, ου m anger, rage, fury

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

Cf. Is 63:1-4.

παντοκρατωρ, ορος m Almighty

Cf. 14:19-20. "Any view of God which eliminates judgement and his hatred of sin in the interest of an emasculated doctrine of sentimental affection finds no support in the strong and virile realism of the Apocalypse." Mounce.

Revelation 19:16

καὶ ἔχει ἐπὶ τὸ ἱμάτιον καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν μηρὸν αὐτοῦ
 ὄνομα γεγραμμένον· Βασιλεὺς βασιλέων καὶ
 κύριος κυρίων.

ἱματιον, ου n see v.13

μηρος, ου m thigh

Mounce suggests that the meaning is 'on his garment where it falls across his thigh'.

γεγραμμένον see v.12

βασιλευς, εως m king

"This name emphasises the universal sovereignty of the warrior Christ in his eschatological triumph over all the enemies of God. The title, as it occurs here and elsewhere in Scripture (Rev 17:14; 1 Tim 6:15; Dan 2:47), goes back to Moses' declaration to Israel, 'The Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords' (Deut 10:17)." Mounce.

Revelation 19:17

Καὶ εἶδον ἓνα ἄγγελον ἐστῶτα ἐν τῷ ἡλίῳ, καὶ
 ἔκραξεν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ λέγων πᾶσι τοῖς ὄρνεοις
 τοῖς πετομένοις ἐν μεσουρανήματι· Δεῦτε
 συνάχθητε εἰς τὸ δεῖπνον τὸ μέγα τοῦ θεοῦ,

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

ἐστῶτα Verb, perf act ptc, n nom/acc pl

ἵστημι stand

ἡλιος, ου m the sun

κραζω cry out, call out

ὄρνεον, ου n bird

πετομαι fly

μεσουρανημα, τος n mid-heaven, high in
 the sky

δευτε adv. come (of command or
 exhortation)

συνάχθητε Verb, pres pass imperat, 2 pl

συναγω gather, gather together,

assemble

δειπνον, ου n feast, banquet

Cf. Ezek 39:17-20. "The supper of God presents a grim contrast to the marriage feast of the Lamb." Mounce.

Revelation 19:18

ἵνα φάγητε σάρκας βασιλέων καὶ σάρκας
 χιλιάρχων καὶ σάρκας ἰσχυρῶν καὶ σάρκας
 ἵππων καὶ τῶν καθημένων ἐπ' αὐτῶν, καὶ
 σάρκας πάντων ἑλευθέρων τε καὶ δούλων καὶ
 μικρῶν καὶ μεγάλων.

φάγητε Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl ἐσθιω eat

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh

βασιλευς, εως m king

χιλιαρχος, ου m commander (a high

ranking military officer generally in charge

of 600-1000 men), high ranking officer

ἰσχυρος, α, ον strong, mighty, powerful

ἵππος, ου f horse

καθημαι sit

ἐλευθερος, α, ον free, free person

τε and, and so; τε και and also

δουλος, ου m slave, servant

μικρος, α, ον little, small, insignificant

Cf. Ezek 39:17-20. "In the final conflict no preference will be given to rank or station. The bodies will lie on the field of battle to be devoured by birds of prey. To remain unburied for the pleasure of the predators was considered by the ancients to be an ignominious fate. The scene is one of universal dishonour and destruction." Mounce.

Revelation 19:19

καὶ εἶδον τὸ θηρίον καὶ τοὺς βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς καὶ τὰ στρατεύματα αὐτῶν συνηγμένα ποιῆσαι τὸν πόλεμον μετὰ τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ ἵππου καὶ μετὰ τοῦ στρατεύματος αὐτοῦ.

θηριον, ου n animal, beast
στρατευμα, τος n troops, soldiers, army
συνηγμένα Verb, perf pass ptc, n nom/acc pl
συναγω see v.17

Cf. 16:13-16.

ποιῆσαι Verb, aor act infin ποιεω
πολεμος, ου m war, battle

Revelation 19:20

καὶ ἐπιάσθη τὸ θηρίον καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ ὁ ψευδοπροφήτης ὁ ποιήσας τὰ σημεῖα ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, ἐν οἷς ἐπλάνησεν τοὺς λαβόντας τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ θηρίου καὶ τοὺς προσκυνούντας τῇ εἰκόνι αὐτοῦ· ζῶντες ἐβλήθησαν οἱ δύο εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρὸς τῆς καιομένης ἐν θείῳ.

Witherington comments, "The great battle of Armageddon proves to be a one-sided affair. The rider simply seizes the Beast and the false prophet and casts them into the lake of fire. Though the armies had assembled for a battle, it turned out to be an execution... Christ merely speaks the judgment against these opponents. There is no real struggle here perhaps because the victory has already been won through the death and resurrection of Jesus, and perhaps also because John is emphasising the power and sovereignty of Christ."

ἐπιάσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s πιαζω
seize
ψευδοπροφητης, ου m false prophet

"The beast is the personification of secular power in its opposition to the church. The false prophet represents the role of false religion is persuading man to worship the antichristian power (cf. ... on 13:1,11)." Mounce.

σημειον, ου n miraculous sign, sign
ἐνώπιον prep with gen before
πλαναω lead astray, mislead, deceive
χαραγμα, τος n mark, stamp, image
προσκυνεω worship
εἰκων, ονος f likeness, image, statue
ζαω live, be alive
ἐβλήθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl βαλλω
throw

δυο gen & acc δυο dat δυοιν two
λιμνη, ης f lake
πυρ, ος n fire

"Although the actual word Gehenna (an abbreviation for 'valley of the son of Hinnom') was the name given to the valley lying to the south and west of Jerusalem (the modern *Wadi er Rababi*). As the site of a cultic shrine where human sacrifices were offered (2 Kings 16:3; 23:10; Jer 7:31), it acquired an unholy reputation. Because of prophetic denunciation of this place of terrible wickedness (Jer 7:32; 19:6), it came to be equated with the hell of final judgement in apocalyptic literature. In NT times Gehenna was a place of fire and the abode of the wicked dead (Mt 5:22; Mk 9:43)." Mounce.

καιω light, keep burning, burn
θειον, ου n sulphur, brimstone

"A lake of burning brimstone would not only be intensely hot, but malodorous and foetid as well. It is an appropriate place for all that is sinful and wicked in the world. The Antichrist and the false prophet are its first inhabitants. Later the devil (20:10), Death and Hades (20:14), and all evil men (21:8) will join them in this place of ceaseless torment." Mounce. Witherington adds, "Of course, this image cannot be taken literally, but it should be taken seriously. Hell is viewed as a place of torment, not of comfort for the lost. It is a place where one experiences the absence of the presence of God forever, with no remedy. No literal lake of fire could approximate that horror. It appears that John views hell as a place of eternal punishment, not annihilation."

Revelation 19:21

καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἀπεκτάνθησαν ἐν τῇ ῥομφαίᾳ τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ ἵππου τῇ ἐξελεύσει ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ, καὶ πάντα τὰ ὄρνεα ἐχορτάσθησαν ἐκ τῶν σαρκῶν αὐτῶν.

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other
ἀπεκτάνθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
ἀποκτεινω kill, put to death
ρομφαια, ας f sword
ἐξελεύσει Verb, aor act ptc, f dat s
ἐξερχομαι
στομα, τος n mouth

"The sword is the proclamation of divine retribution that slays all who have in the final alignment of loyalties arrayed themselves against God and the forces of righteousness." Mounce.

ὄρνεον, ου n see v.17
χορταζω feed, satisfy

Revelation 20

Witherington writes, “Certainly Rev 20 is the most controversial portion of the book of Revelation. Two contextual issues need to be considered before we look in depth at the first six verses. First, this material must be viewed in the light of its immediate context in Revelation itself. The sequence of preliminary judgment, millennium, final judgment, new heaven and new earth in Rev 19-22 must be taken seriously. Second, the larger context of Jewish literature, including intertestamental literature, which has to do with the fate of fallen angels and the Devil, needs to be kept in view.” Witherington cites and briefly considers Isa 24:21ff.; Dan 7 and Ezek 36-39. He comments, “It is important to keep the entire flow of Ezek 36-39 in view. Ezekiel’s vision of ‘death valley’ has to do with the corporate revival of a spiritually dead people, using the concept of bodily resurrection, and the hope is for a restoration of Israel to the holy land with a new David ruling over them. After an unspecified amount of time, the rebellion of Gog from Magog (apparently a region in Ezekiel) is followed by the promise of the New Jerusalem with a new temple under paradisaical-like conditions. There is little reason to doubt that the flow of events recounted in Ezek 36-39 is being followed to some degree in Rev 20-21, though the imagery and details are freely modified.”

Building on Witherington’s comments, but producing a rather different construction, it may be helpful to consider also the Babylon/Rome analogy in Revelation. May not John be picturing the fall of Rome, the great persecutor of the church in his day, along with the peace that might follow. The subsequent release of Satan followed by his final defeat is John’s method (patterned on Ezekiel) of asserting that whatever further powers arise they will at last finally and definitively be overthrown and destroyed before God brings in his new Jerusalem/ new creation.

Witherington also comments, “Since we know that John has earlier drawn on the Babylonian legends either directly or indirectly ... it is of some relevance that Tiamat, the chaos monster, was imprisoned and then released again at the end of time, where it is defeated once for all by Marduk, the god of light.”

Finally, it may be helpful to note the comment by Giblin, “In terms of clock-and-calendar time, of course, the end of Babylon and all other adversaries will take place simultaneously in an instant. Apocalyptic, however, requires sequences of particular visions in order adequately to present its theology. For it has no alternative to spelling out its relatively ‘pre-conceptual’ theology in images, especially such as will move its readers to religious awe and a keenly felt hope for salvation.”

Revelation 20:1-3

Witherington comments, “Rev 20:1-3 is transitional. In a sense 20:1-3 is the climax of the material in Rev 19, for here the third member of the unholy trinity, the Devil, is finally dealt with, as the false prophet and the Beast were in Rev 19. Like both of them, Satan is seized and cast somewhere.”

Revelation 20:1

Καὶ εἶδον ἄγγελον καταβαίνοντα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἔχοντα τὴν κλεῖν τῆς ἀβύσσου καὶ ἄλυσιν μεγάλην ἐπὶ τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ.

Probably the same angel as the one who, in Ch 9, released the demonic locusts by opening the shaft of the Abyss.

καταβαινω come or go down, descend
 κλεις, εἶδος f key
 ἀβυσσος, ου f abyss, underworld
 ἄλυσις, εως f chain
 χεῖρ, χεῖρος f hand

Revelation 20:2

καὶ ἐκράτησεν τὸν δράκοντα, ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ὃς ἐστὶν Διάβολος καὶ ὁ Σατανᾶς, καὶ ἔδησεν αὐτὸν χίλια ἔτη,

κρατεω hold, hold fast, seize
 δρακων, οντος m dragon
 ὄφις, εως m snake, serpent
 ἀρχαῖος, α, ον old, ancient
 διαβολος, ου m the devil
 Σατανας, α the Adversary, Satan

Witherington comments, “Beasley-Murray notes how the various names of Satan relate to his various roles. As the Dragon, he is the primeval foe of heaven (remember the echo of the Tiamat story). As the Serpent, he is the deceiver of humanity from the beginning. He is called Ha Satan or the Devil because he has been the accuser of believers ever since the fall.”

δεω bind, tie
 χιλιοι, αι, α thousand
 ἔτη Noun, nom & acc pl ἔτος, ους n year

Cf. vv 7-10. Amillennial writers such as Hendriksen view this as a picture of the current Gospel age in which Satan's powers are limited and he is unable to prevent the growth of the kingdom of God. Such verses as Mt 12:29; Lk 19:17-18; Jn 13:31; Col 2:15 are cited in support of this view. Millennial writers believe this refers to the millennium, the period of Christ's reign on earth during which Satan is completely inactive. Arguments over such interpretations tend often to be over-simplistic and fail to pay enough attention to the literary context and background (see the introductory comments to this chapter above).

Revelation 20:3

καὶ ἔβαλεν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον, καὶ ἔκλεισεν καὶ ἐσφράγισεν ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ, ἵνα μὴ πλανήσῃ ἔτι τὰ ἔθνη, ἄχρι τελεσθῇ τὰ χίλια ἔτη· μετὰ ταῦτα δεῖ λυθῆναι αὐτὸν μικρὸν χρόνον.

κλειω shut, shut up, lock
σφραγιζω seal, secure with a seal
ἐπάνω prep with gen. on, upon, over
πλαναω lead astray, mislead, deceive
ἔτι still, yet, any more
ἄχρι prep and conj until, as far as
τελεω complete, finish, fulfill
δει impersonal verb it is necessary, must
λυθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin λυω loose, untie, release, set free
μικρον adv a little while, a little further
χρονος, ου m time, period of time

Witherington comments, "As Caird says, we are hereby warned about the resiliency of evil in this world. It will never be entirely eliminated before the new heavens and the new earth."

Revelation 20:4

Καὶ εἶδον θρόνους, καὶ ἐκάθισαν ἐπ' αὐτούς, καὶ κρίμα ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς, καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν πεπελεκισμένων διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ καὶ διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ οἵτινες οὐ προσεκύνησαν τὸ θηρίον οὐδὲ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἔλαβον τὸ χάραγμα ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν χεῖρα αὐτῶν· καὶ ἔζησαν καὶ ἐβασίλευσαν μετὰ τοῦ χριστοῦ χίλια ἔτη.

Cf. Dan 7:9-14, which seems to shape the picture here.

θρονος, ου m throne
καθιζω sit down, sit
κριμα, τος n judgement

Cf. 1 Cor 6:2-3.

ἐδόθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s διδομι
ψυχη, ης f self, life, 'soul'
πεπελεκισμένων Verb, perf pass ptc, gen pl
πελεκιζω behead

The connection between those seated on the thrones, those beheaded for their witness to the gospel and those who resisted the worship of the beast is not clear. Comparison with 1 Cor 6:2-3 may suggest that *all* those who resisted worship of the beast are seated on thrones while at the same time the focus is particularly upon those who were martyred for their testimony – though put to death, they yet live and reign with Christ.

μαρτυρια, ας f testimony, witness
ὅστις, ἡτις, ὅ τι who, which
προσκυνεω worship
θηριον, ου n animal, beast
εικων, ονος f likeness, image, statue
χαραγμα, τος n mark, stamp, image
μετωπον, ου n forehead
ζωω live, be alive

Ladd says that the meaning given to this verb lies at the heart of the millennial question. Premillennialists translate it "they came back to life again" (cf. v.6), while Amillennialists "they lived". Witherington argues from the parallel with Rev 2:8 that the reference is to bodily resurrection. Cf. also v 5.

βασιλευω rule, reign

Supplementary Note

Though a millennialist himself, Mounce provides helpful insight into the origins of millennial views. "In earlier times the Jews pictured a messianic kingdom which would last on the present earth forever (Isa 11:10-16; 65:20-25; Dan 7:14,27). Under the influence of dualism there developed from about 100 BC onward an increasing pessimism about this earth as a proper place for such a glorious period... Charles says that the millennium is really 'a late and attenuated form of the old Jewish expectation of an eternal Messianic Kingdom on the present earth'."

Revelation 20:5

οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔζησαν ἄχρι τελεσθῇ τὰ χίλια ἔτη. αὕτη ἡ ἀνάστασις ἡ πρώτη.

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other
νεκρος, α, ον dead
ζωω live, be alive
ἄχρι see v.3
τελεω see v.3
ἀναστασις, εως f resurrection, raising up
πρωτος, η, ον first

This final phrase continues the thought of v.4.

Revelation 20:6

μακάριος καὶ ἅγιος ὁ ἔχων μέρος ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει τῇ πρώτῃ· ἐπὶ τούτων ὁ δεῦτερος θάνατος οὐκ ἔχει ἐξουσίαν, ἀλλ' ἔσονται ἱερεῖς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ χριστοῦ, καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν μετ' αὐτοῦ χίλια ἔτη.

μακαριος, α, ον blessed, fortunate, happy
 ἅγιος, α, ον holy
 μέρος, ους n part
 δευτερος, α, ον second
 θανατος, ου m death

"The second death is defined in 20:14 and 21:8 as being cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. It is to share the eternal fate of the devil, the beast, and the false prophet (19:20; 20:10, 14-15), which is to endure torment day and night for ever and ever (20:10)." Mounce.

ἐξουσια, ας f authority, power
 ἔσονται Verb, fut indic, 3 pl εἰμι
 ἱερευς, εως m priest
 βασιλευω rule, reign

Cf. Ex 19:6; 1 Peter 2:5,9; Rev 1:6; 5:10.

Revelation 20:7-10

Verses 7-10 echo the cataclysmic battle of Ezekiel 38-39. Mounce says, "It is worth noting that in Ezekiel and Revelation the assault *follows* the period of the messianic kingdom. In Ezekiel 36-37 Israel is restored to the land; then comes the warfare in chapters 38 and 39. This is followed by a portrayal of the eternal state under the figure of a rebuilt temple in the New Jerusalem (chaps. 40-48)."

Revelation 20:7

Καὶ ὅταν τελεσθῇ τὰ χίλια ἔτη, λυθήσεται ὁ Σατανᾶς ἐκ τῆς φυλακῆς αὐτοῦ,

ὅταν when
 τελεω see v.3
 λυω see v.3
 φυλακη, ης f prison, imprisonment

Revelation 20:8

καὶ ἐξελεύσεται πλανῆσαι τὰ ἔθνη τὰ ἐν ταῖς τέσσαρσι γωνίαις τῆς γῆς, τὸν Γῶγ καὶ Μαγῶγ, συναγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον, ὧν ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτῶν ὡς ἡ ἄμμος τῆς θαλάσσης.

ἐξελεύσεται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 s
 ἐξερχομαι
 πλαναω see v.3
 τεσσαρες neut τεσσαρα gen τεσσαρων four
 γωνια, ας f corner

"Gog and Magog are symbolic figures representing the nations of the world which band together for a final assault upon God and his people." Mounce. Witherington quotes Reddish who writes concerning Gog and Magog, "Clearly they do not represent two specific nations or peoples, for John locates them 'at the four corners of the earth' and says 'they are as numerous as the sands of the sea'."

συναγαγεῖν Verb, aor infin συναγω gather, gather together, assemble
 πολεμος, ου m war, battle
 ἀριθμος, ου m number, total
 ἄμμος, ου f sand
 θαλασσα, ης f sea

Revelation 20:9

καὶ ἀνέβησαν ἐπὶ τὸ πλάτος τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἐκύκλευσαν τὴν παρεμβολὴν τῶν ἁγίων καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἡγαπημένην. καὶ κατέβη πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ κατέφαγεν αὐτούς·

ἀναβαινω go up, come up
 πλατος, ους n breadth, width

Cf. Hab 1:6 where a similar expression is used of the invading Chaldeans.

ἐκύκλευσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl κυκλωω surround, gather round
 παρεμβολη, ης f barracks; camp; army

"The camp of the saints is to be understood in the OT sense of the Israelite encampments during their wilderness wanderings (Ex 14:19f; Num 2:2ff; Deut 23:14). It is a reminder that while on earth the people of God will always be pilgrims in a foreign land." Mounce.

πολις, εως f city, town
 ἡγαπημένην Verb, perf pass ptc, f acc s
 ἀγαπαω love, show love for

The pictures of a camp for pilgrim people and a beloved city seem incongruous. Witherington suggests that the latter "is another way of speaking of the society or the saints who are attacked." However, there may also be echoes of OT history concerning attacks on Jerusalem.

καταβαινω come or go down, descend
 πῦρ, ος n fire
 κατέφαγεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s κατεσθιω eat up, devour

Cf. 2 Kings 1; Ezek 38:22; 39:6. Witherington comments, "Just when things look bleak, God sends down fire from heaven to consume the evil ones (cf. Ezek 39:6). This amounts to taking the Devil and his minions and throwing them into the lake of fire to be tormented forever (vs 10)."

Revelation 20:10

καὶ ὁ διάβολος ὁ πλανῶν αὐτοὺς ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ θείου, ὅπου καὶ τὸ θηρίον καὶ ὁ ψευδοπροφήτης, καὶ βασανισθήσονται ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

διάβολος, ου m the devil
ἐβλήθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s βαλλω
throw, throw down
λίμνη, ης f see 19:20
θειον, ου n see 19:20
ὅπου adv. where
θηριον, ου n see 19:20
ψευδοπροφητης, ου m see 19:20
βασανισθήσονται Verb, aor pass subj, 3 pl
βασανίζω torment
νυξ, νυκτος f night
αἰων, αἰωνος m age, eternity

"Following the great white throne judgement, Death, Hades, and all whose names are not found in the book of life are to be cast into the same fiery grave (20:14-15; cf. 14:10)." Mounce.

Revelation 20:11

Καὶ εἶδον θρόνον μέγαν λευκὸν καὶ τὸν καθήμενον ἐπ' αὐτοῦ, οὗ ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου ἔφυγεν ἡ γῆ καὶ ὁ οὐρανός, καὶ τόπος οὐχ εὐρέθη αὐτοῖς.

θρονος, ου m throne
λευκος, η, ον white, shining
καθημαι sit, sit down
προσωπον, ου n face, appearance,
presence
φευγω flee, run away from
τοπος, ου m place
εὐρέθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s εὐρισκω
find, discover

Witherington comments, "The prospect of judgment causes the earth metaphorically to shrink or even flee in fear. But fleeing is of no use. There is nowhere to run and nowhere to hide."

Revelation 20:12

καὶ εἶδον τοὺς νεκρούς, τοὺς μεγάλους καὶ τοὺς μικρούς, ἐστῶτας ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου, καὶ βιβλία ἠνοιχθησαν· καὶ ἄλλο βιβλίον ἠνοιχθη, ὃ ἐστὶν τῆς ζωῆς· καὶ ἐκρίθησαν οἱ νεκροὶ ἐκ τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν.

νεκρος, α, ον dead
μικρος, α, ον little, small, insignificant
ἐστῶτας Verb, perf act ptc, m acc pl ἵστημι
stand
ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

No one is so important as to be immune from judgment, and no one is so unimportant as to make judgment inappropriate." Mounce.

βιβλιον, ου n book, scroll
ἠνοιχθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl ἀνοιγω
open
ἄλλος, η, ο another, other
ζωη, ης f life

Cf. Is 4:3; Dan 12:1; Mal 3:6; Rev 3:5; 17:18; 21:27.

ἐκρίθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl κρινω
judge, pass judgement on
γεγραμμένων Verb, perf pass ptc, gen pl
γραφω write

Cf. Rom 2:6; 1 Peter 1:17. Witherington comments, "There are two books that settle the issue – the book of deeds and the book of life. We have an image of God fairly reviewing all the deeds of a person's life. God will not be unjust in his judgment, for he will take everything into account."

Revelation 20:13

καὶ ἔδωκεν ἡ θάλασσα τοὺς νεκροὺς τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ, καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ ἄδης ἔδωκαν τοὺς νεκροὺς τοὺς ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἐκρίθησαν ἕκαστος κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν.

ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s δίδωμι
θαλασσα, ης f sea

Witherington comments, "The dead from the sea are likely to be mentioned separately because of ancient beliefs that those not properly buried did not make it to Sheol or the land of the dead called Hades (see Achilles Tatius 5.16.2)."

θανατος, ου m death
ἄδης, ου m Hades, the world of the dead
ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every

Emphasises the universal nature of the judgement – no-one can escape.

Revelation 20:14

καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ ἄδης ἐβλήθησαν εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρὸς. οὗτος ὁ θάνατος ὁ δευτερός ἐστίν, ἡ λίμνη τοῦ πυρὸς.

ἐβλήθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl βαλλω
throw

λίμνη, ης f see 19:20; 20:10
δευτερος, α, ον second

Cf. 20:6.

"Death is the last enemy to be destroyed (cf. 1 Cor 15:54-55). Coupled with Hades (that 'grim receptacle of death's prey'; Moffatt...), it symbolises the effects of sin and wickedness that entered the world through the sin of the first man (Rom 5:12). In a great psalm of thanksgiving the prophet Isaiah declares that God 'will swallow up death for ever' (Isa 25:8). The last vestige of sin's unlawful hegemony is cast into the lake of fire." Mounce.

Revelation 20:15

καὶ εἴ τις οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ τῆς ζωῆς γεγραμμένος, ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός.

εὐρέθη see v.11

Witherington comments, "Presumably the book of life is opened because believers are also present on this occasion, and though their deeds may fall short, they are not cast into the lake of fire because they have believed in the Lamb and the life he gives."

"In Matthew 25:41 Jesus indicated that the eternal fire was prepared for the devil and his angels. In the final judgement all whose names do not appear in the book of life will share their fate." Mounce.

Revelation 21:1

Καὶ εἶδον οὐρανὸν καινὸν καὶ γῆν καινὴν· ὁ γὰρ πρῶτος οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ πρώτη γῆ ἀπῆλθαν, καὶ ἡ θάλασσα οὐκ ἔστιν ἔτι.

καινος, η, ον new

Cf. Is 65:17; 2 Peter 3:10-13 also Rom 8:19-22. "Ladd emphasises that Biblical thought – in contrast to Greek dualism in which salvation consists of the flight of the soul from the earthly and transitory to the spiritual and eternal – 'always places man on a redeemed earth, not in a heavenly realm removed from earthly existence'." Mounce.

Witherington similarly quotes Boesak (*Comfort and Protest*) who writes on John's use of Isa 65-66, "Isaiah's imagery is profoundly earthly, and such also is John's intention. There is no reason for us to believe that John is intentionally transporting Isaiah's vision into another world to come. The concern of the Apocalypse is not so much the creation of another world (a 'next world') into which the church is called to escape. The whole point of John's writing is that it is this world, in this human history, that the power of the Lord will be seen. It is for this reason that the triumphant church is not transported into the new Jerusalem, transported into the next world, but that the new Jerusalem comes down *out of heaven*."

Boesak also writes "There must be a new earth. This earth – raped, robbed, torn, filled with anger and revenge, with hurt and pain – cannot and should not remain. This earth had been the dwelling place of the Beast, the false prophet of the Beast who came out of the sea. It was the throne of Babylon, the great harlot. This earth had given refuge to the murderers of the saints of God but became, by the same token, the arena of the suffering and death of God's children. It was never 'home' for them ... Indeed, in the experience of the little people of God, the earth belonged to the mighty and the powerful who claimed it for themselves, and they were the enemies, the killers of those who sought to remain faithful to Jesus Christ. So this earth should be no more... Normal is no longer hiding in the night, leaving loved ones behind and fighting with the wild beasts for the enjoyment of the Beast. What is normal now is walking in the light of God and living from the fruits of the tree of life."

Witherington sums up this point when he writes, "John would be frustrated with the way that Revelation has often been used, particularly his heavenly worship scenes, to inculcate a theology of Christian life and worship that justifies a dematerialised, dehistoricised spirituality. For John, salvation must happen in space and time or not at all, precisely because sin and evil are historical problems that plague human history. The atonement must be made on earth, and the resurrection must come forth from earth. Eternal life begins here and now, not then and later in heaven. Otherwise God's sovereignty, justice, and redemption are not demonstrated in the realm where they need to be demonstrated – on earth. No such demonstrations are required in heaven. John, with other early Christians, prayed, 'thy kingdom come on earth' and assured his audience that, at the end, 'the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ'."

πρῶτος, η, ον first, earlier

ἀπῆλθαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl ἀπερχομαι

θάλασσα, ης f sea

ἔτι still, yet, any more

Having surveyed various views concerning the disappearance of the sea, including mythical allusions, Mounce concludes, "Swete is closer to the truth when he says that the sea disappears because 'in the mind of the writer it is associated with ideas which are at variance with the character of the New Creation.' ... Isaiah compares the wicked to the tossing of the sea which cannot rest, whose waters toss up mire and dirt (Is 57:20). It was out of the sea that the beast who blasphemed God and made war on the saints had arisen (Rev 13:1, 6-7)."
Israel was not a seafaring nation.

Revelation 21:2

καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν Ἱερουσαλὴμ καινὴν εἶδον καταβαίνουσας ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἡτοιμασμένην ὡς νύμφην κεκοσμημένην τῷ ἀνδρὶ αὐτῆς.

πολις, εως f city

Cf. Gal 4:26; Heb 11:10; 12:22; 13:14; Phil 3:20; Rev 3:12. Beasley-Murray notes that "Revelation as a whole may be characterised as *A Tale of Two Cities*, with the sub-title, *The Harlot and the Bride*."

καταβαίνουσας Verb, pres act ptc, f acc s
καταβαινω come down, descend
ἐτοιμαζω prepare, make ready
νύμφη, ης f bride
κεκοσμημένην Verb, perf pass ptc, f acc s
κοσμεω adorn, decorate, put in order
ἄνθρωπος, ος m man, husband

The picture is of the redeemed community. It comes down from heaven because it is not the construction of man but the creation of God. "The consummation of the Christian hope is supremely social. It is no 'flight of the alone to the Alone' but life in the redeemed community of heaven." Hunter.

Revelation 21:3

καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς μεγάλης ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου λεγούσης· Ἴδου ἡ σκηνὴ τοῦ θεοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ σκηνώσει μετ' αὐτῶν, καὶ αὐτοὶ λαοὶ αὐτοῦ ἔσονται, καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς μετ' αὐτῶν ἔσται,

θρονος, ου m throne
σκηνη, ης f tabernacle, dwelling place
σκηνοω live, dwell

Cf. Jn 1:14.

λαος, ου m people

It is extremely difficult to decide between the readings λαοι and λαος – the evidence is finely balanced. The UBS Committee chose λαοι chiefly on the basis of "slightly superior manuscript evidence" (Metzger). Witherington also argues for the plural as John's representation of the many peoples redeemed by the Lamb "i.e. Jews and various Gentile ethnic groups as well." (cf. Jn 10:16). The singular is an attempt to conform the text to the imagery of the OT.

ἔσονται Verb, fut indic, 3 pl εἰμι

ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 2 s εἰμι

The consummation of Immanuel and the fulfilment of the covenant promise of Lev 26:11-12; cf. Jer 31:33; Ezek 37:27; Zech 8:8.

Revelation 21:4

καὶ ἐξαλείψει πᾶν δάκρυον ἐκ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν, καὶ ὁ θάνατος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι· οὔτε πένθος οὔτε κραυγὴ οὔτε πόνος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι. τὰ πρῶτα ἀπῆλθαν.

ἐξαλειφω wipe away or out,
δακρυον, ου n tear (as in weeping)
θανατος, ου m death

Sin and all its effects are banished.

ἔτι see v.1

οὔτε not, neither

πένθος, ους n mourning, sorrow

κραυγη, ης f shout, cry

πονος, ου m pain, suffering; hard work

Cf. Is 35:10; 65:19.

πρωτος, η, ον first, earlier

ἀπῆλθαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl ἀπερχομαι

Witherington comments, "All the things that were the result of the fall will be wiped out. These conditions were promised to the martyrs in Rev 7:17, and here they are seen as realised. The new order will be a place for endless life, joy, celebration, and love."

Revelation 21:5

Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ· Ἴδου καινὰ ποιῶ πάντα. καὶ λέγει· Γράψον, ὅτι οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι πιστοὶ καὶ ἀληθινοὶ εἰσιν.

καθημαι sit

θρονος, ου m throne

Cf. Is 65:17. "The transformation which Paul saw taking place in the lives of believers (2 Cor 3:18; 4:16-18; 5:16-17) will have its counterpart on a cosmic scale when a totally new order will replace the old order marred by sin." Mounce.

γράφω Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s γραφω
write

πιστος, η, ον faithful, trustworthy

ἀληθινος, η, ον real, genuine, true

Revelation 21:6

καὶ εἶπέν μοι· Γέγοναν. ἐγὼ τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος. ἐγὼ τῷ διψῶντι δώσω ἐκ τῆς πηγῆς τοῦ ὕδατος τῆς ζωῆς δωρεάν.

γέγοναν Verb, perf act indic, 3 pl γινομαι

'It is done', 'it has come to pass' – maybe even 'it is finished'. "Not merely the completed work of Christ on the cross is in view, as in John 19, but the completion of the entire historical and redemptive process. Yet this ending is but a new beginning. It is only the old order of things that has passed away." Witherington.

ἀρχη, ης f beginning, origin
τελος, ους n end, conclusion

"That God is the beginning refers not only to the fact that he was first in point of time ... but also that he is the source and origin of all things. He is the end in the sense that he constitutes their goal and aim (as in 1 Tim 1:5; Rom 10:4)." Mounce. As Witherington puts it, "He is the beginner and ender of things."

διψῶω be thirsty, thirst for

Cf. Ps 42:1; 36:9; 63:1; Is 55:1.

δῶσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s διδωμι
πηγη, ης f spring, fountain; well
ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water
ζωη, ης f life
δωρεαν without cost, freely

Cf. Jer 2:13; Ps 36:9; Jn 4:14; 7:37.

Revelation 21:7

ὁ νικῶν κληρονομήσει ταῦτα, καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτῷ θεὸς καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι υἱός.

νικῶω conquer, overcome

Cf. 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21.

κληρονομῶω receive, inherit
ἔσομαι see v.3

Cf. Gen 17:7; 2 Sam 7:14; Gal 3:26,29; 4:7.

Revelation 21:8

τοῖς δὲ δειλοῖς καὶ ἀπίστοις καὶ ἐβδελυγμένοις καὶ φονεῦσι καὶ πόρνοις καὶ φαρμάκοις καὶ εἰδωλολάτραις καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ψευδέσιν τὸ μέρος αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ λίμνῃ τῇ καιομένῃ πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ, ὃ ἐστὶν ὁ θάνατος ὁ δεύτερος.

δειλος, η, ον cowardly, afraid

Those who "fear the threats of the beast more than they trust the love of Christ." Beasley-Murray.

ἀπιστος, ον unfaithful, unbelieving

Mounce says these are believers who have denied the faith rather than those who have never professed faith.

ἐβδελυγμένοις Verb, perf pass ptc, m & n dat
πλ βδελυσσομαι detest; perf pass ptc
vile, corrupt

"Those who have joined in the detestable and unholy ritual of emperor worship." Mounce.

φονευσ, εως m murderer

πορνος, ου m man who practices sexual immorality

φαρμακος, ου m sorcerer, one who practices magic

Cf. Acts 19:19.

εἰδωλολατρης, ου m idolater

ψευδης, ες false, lying

μερος, ους n part

λιμνη, ης f lake

καιω burn; pass be lit, burn

πυρ, ος n fire

θειον, ου n sulphur, brimstone

θανατος, ου m death

δευτερος, α, ον second

Cf. 20:15. The intent is to warn waverers of the consequences of apostasy. "The warning does not mean that anyone who has ever committed one of these sins will be excluded from the New Jerusalem. God's city is not reserved for those who have never sinned, but for those who are cleansed by the blood of Christ (7:14; 22:14)." Koester.

Revelation 21:9-22:5

In introducing this section Witherington comments, "For our purposes, it is important to remember that John's vision is not merely about salvation from the world and its injustices. It is also about salvation of the world, including the redemption of the earth and the material cosmos itself. John, like other early Christians such as Paul, was not interested in propagating an otherworldly or world-negating religion. To the contrary, John believes this is still God's world, and God intends to remedy the human dilemma, ultimately within space and time."

Revelation 21:9

Καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς ἐκ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλων τῶν ἐχόντων τὰς ἑπτὰ φιάλας, τῶν γεμόντων τῶν ἑπτὰ πληγῶν τῶν ἐσχάτων, καὶ ἐλάλησεν μετ' ἐμοῦ λέγων· Δεῦρο, δεῖξω σοὶ τὴν νύμφην τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ ἀρνίου.

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἐνος, μιας, ἐνος one

ἑπτα seven

φιαλη, ης f bowl

γεμω be full

πληγη, ης f plague

ἐσχατος, η, ον adj last, final

Cf. ch.16. "The angel is undoubtedly the one who in 17:1 summoned John to witness the judgement of the great harlot. This seems to be the purpose of the identical introductions. It also draws attention to the contrast between the great harlot (the wicked city Babylon) and the bride of the Lamb (the holy city Jerusalem)." Mounce.

λαλεω speak, talk

δευρο adv. come, come here

δείξω Verb, fut act indic, 3 s δεικνυμι
show, point out, reveal

νυμφη, ης f bride

γυνη, αικος f wife

ἀρνιον, ου n lamb

Witherington comments, "Basically the material in v. 9ff. is an expansion of what was first mentioned in 21:2. John is using his interlocking rhetorical technique, first introducing a subject, then concluding the former subject, then continuing with the new subject."

Revelation 21:10

καὶ ἀπήνεγκέν με ἐν πνεύματι ἐπὶ ὄρος μέγα καὶ ὑψηλόν, καὶ ἔδειξέν μοι τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν Ἰερουσαλὴμ καταβαίνουσαν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ,

ἀπήνεγκέν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἀπαγω
lead away, lead

ὄρος, ους n mountain, hill

ὑψηλος, η, ον high

Cf. Ezek 40:2. Witherington writes, "Caird carefully points out the parallels to the descriptions of great cities in Ezek 28:12-14 of Tyre and in Isa 14:12-14 of Babylon. The Ezek 28 passage is crucial as there too we have the holy mountain identified with the garden of Eden."

ἔδειξέν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s δεικνυμι
καταβαίνουσαν see v.2

Revelation 21:11

ἔχουσαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ· ὁ φωστὴρ αὐτῆς ὅμοιος λίθῳ τιμιωτάτῳ, ὡς λίθῳ ἰάσπιδι κρυσταλλίζοντι·

δοξα, ης f glory

Cf. Is 60:1,2,19; Ezek 43:5. "The city is said to radiate or reflect the very glory of God. Just as God's Shekinah glory rested on the Tabernacle in the wilderness, here it permeates the whole city. Therefore there is no more division of secular and sacred. The whole city is a holy temple, for God is with his people throughout the city and they are his temple." Witherington.

φωστὴρ, ηρος m light; radiance, brilliance
ὅμοιος, α, ον like, of the same kind as

λίθος, ου m stone

τιμιωτατος, α, ον most precious

ἰασπις, ιδος f jasper (a semi-precious stone of varying colours, but the jasper of the NT was probably green)

κρυσταλλίζω be clear or bright as crystal

Cf. 4:3.

Revelation 21:12

ἔχουσα τεῖχος μέγα καὶ ὑψηλόν, ἔχουσα πυλῶνας δώδεκα, καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς πυλῶσιν ἄγγέλους δώδεκα, καὶ ὀνόματα ἐπιγεγραμμένα ἃ ἔστιν τῶν δώδεκα φυλῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ·

τειχος, ους n wall

ὑψηλος, η, ον see v.10

πυλων, ωνος m gate, gateway, entrance

δωδεκα twelve

"The twelve angels are celestial gatekeepers and may reflect the Isaianic picture of watchmen upon the walls of Jerusalem (Isa 62:6). They belong to the concept of an ideal city." Mounce. Witherington suggests they may be like the angel guarding the gate to the Garden of Eden.

ὄνομα, τος n name

ἐπιγεγραμμένα Verb, perf pass ptc, n nom/acc
pl ἐπιγραφω write on or in

φυλη, ης f tribe

Cf. Ezek 48:30-34.

Revelation 21:13

ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς πυλῶνες τρεῖς, καὶ ἀπὸ βορρᾶ πυλῶνες τρεῖς, καὶ ἀπὸ νότου πυλῶνες τρεῖς, καὶ ἀπὸ δυσμῶν πυλῶνες τρεῖς·

ἀνατολη, ης f rising sun, east

τρεῖς, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three

βορρας, α m the north

νοτος, ου m south wind, south

δυσμη, ης f west (always pl.)

Revelation 21:14

καὶ τὸ τεῖχος τῆς πόλεως ἔχων θεμελίους δώδεκα, καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῶν δώδεκα ὀνόματα τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων τοῦ ἀρνίου.

θεμελιος, ου m (also θεμελιον, ου n)

foundation, foundation stone

ἀρνιον, ου n see v.19

Cf. Eph 2:20. "The church in a historical sense rests upon the apostles and prophets, that is upon the faith and labours of those who first proclaimed the gospel message. The juxtaposition of the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles shows the unity of ancient Israel and the NT church." Mounce.

Revelation 21:15

Καὶ ὁ λαλῶν μετ' ἐμοῦ εἶχεν μέτρον κάλαμον χρυσοῦν, ἵνα μετρήσῃ τὴν πόλιν καὶ τοὺς πυλῶνας αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ τεῖχος αὐτῆς.

εἶχεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s ἐχω
μέτρον, ου n measure
κάλαμος, ου m reed, rod, cane
χρυσους, η, ουν made of gold, golden
μετρεω measure
πυλων, ωνος m see v.12
τειχος, ους n see v.12

Cf. Ezek 40-41; Zech 2:1-5. Witherington comments, "In contrast to Ezekiel, here the city is being measured to show its magnitude. In Ezekiel the measuring is for the sake of showing how much needs protection."

Revelation 21:16

καὶ ἡ πόλις τετράγωνος κεῖται, καὶ τὸ μήκος αὐτῆς ὅσον τὸ πλάτος, καὶ ἐμέτρησεν τὴν πόλιν τῷ καλάμῳ ἐπὶ σταδίους δώδεκα χιλιάδων· τὸ μήκος καὶ τὸ πλάτος καὶ τὸ ὕψος αὐτῆς ἴσα ἐστίν.

τετραγωνος, ου in a square

Here probably meaning a cube.

κειμαι lie, be laid
μήκος, ους n length
ὅσος, η, ου correlative pronoun, as much as
πλατος, ους n breadth, width
σταδιοι, ων m (pl) stades, furlongs (about 200 metres)
δωδεκα twelve
χιλιας, αδος f a thousand

Witherington comments, "The dimensions of the city are 12,000 stadia on each side, a number that corresponds to the numbers of people brought into the redeemed community (7:4-8...). In other words, the city is just the right size."

ὑψος, ους n height, heaven, high position
ἴσος, η, ου equal, the same

"This particular shape would immediately remind the Jewish readers of the inner sanctuary of the temple (a perfect cube, each dimension being twenty cubits; 1 Kings 6:20), the place of divine presence." Mounce. Witherington, having pointed out that 12,000 stadia is about 1,500 miles, comments, "Since the city is a cube, we might envision it as taking up the whole space from London to Athens, or more approximately the whole of the Mediterranean crescent from Jerusalem to Spain. John perhaps may see it as coterminous with his known or extant world. John then would be suggesting that the new creation is coterminous with the new people of God or their new community."

Revelation 21:17

καὶ ἐμέτρησεν τὸ τεῖχος αὐτῆς ἑκατὸν τεσσαράκοντα τεσσάρων πηχῶν, μέτρον ἀνθρώπου, ὃ ἐστὶν ἀγγέλου.

ἑκατον one hundred
τεσσερακοντα forty
τεσσαρες neut τεσσαρα gen τεσσαρων four
πηχυς, εως m cubit

Not clear whether the reference is to the height or the thickness of the wall.

μέτρον, ου n see v.15

Revelation 21:18

καὶ ἡ ἐνδύμησις τοῦ τείχους αὐτῆς ἴασπις, καὶ ἡ πόλις χρυσίον καθαρὸν ὅμοιον ὑάλῳ καθαρῷ·

ἐνδυμησις, εως f foundation

Mounce suggests the meaning is an inlay.

ἴασπις, ἰδος f see v.11
χρυσιον, ου n gold
καθαρος, α, ον pure
ὁμοιος, α, ον like, of the same kind as
ὑαλος, ου f glass, crystal

Walvoord says "the constant mention of transparency indicates that the city is designed to transmit the glory of God in the form of light without hindrance."

Revelation 21:19

οἱ θεμέλιοι τοῦ τείχους τῆς πόλεως παντὶ λίθῳ τιμίῳ κεκοσμημένοι· ὁ θεμέλιος ὁ πρῶτος ἴασπις, ὁ δεῦτερος σάπφειρος, ὁ τρίτος χαλκηδών, ὁ τέταρτος σμάρραδος,

θεμελιος, ου m see v.14

λιθος, ου m see v.11

τιμιος, α, ον precious, valuable

κεκοσμημένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
κοσμεω adorn, decorate

"The twelve stones correspond generally to the twelve gems set into the breastplate of the high priest." Mounce. Cf. Exod 28:17 ff.; 39:10 ff. Witherington adds, "The main thing to be said about the precious stones, other than that there are as many conjectures as commentaries about their symbolic significance, is that Ezek 28:13 is in the background, where the precious stones are linked to God's own dwelling in Paradise... It appears that John has derived his stone list in part from Exod 28:17-20 and in part from Ezek 28:13, including nine stones that appear in both lists. No one stone list corresponds with John's."

πρῶτος, η, ον first

ἴασπις, ἰδος f jasper (a semi-precious stone of varying colours, but the jasper of the NT was probably green)

δευτερος, α, ον second

σαπφίρος, ου f sapphire
 τρίτος, η, ον third
 χαλκηδών, ονος m chalcedony, agate
 τέταρτος, η, ον fourth
 σμαραγδός, ου m emerald

Revelation 21:20

ὁ πέμπτος σαρδόνυξ, ὁ ἕκτος σάρδιον, ὁ ἕβδομος χρυσόλιθος, ὁ ὄγδοος βήρυλλος, ὁ ἕνατος τοπάζιον, ὁ δέκατος χρυσόπρασος, ὁ ἑνδέκατος ὑάκινθος, ὁ δωδέκατος ἀμέθυστος·
 πέμπτος, η, ον fifth
 σαρδόνυξ, υχος m sardonyx (a variety of agate)
 ἕκτος, η, ον sixth
 σάρδιον, ου n carnelian or cornelian (a semi-precious stone, usually red in colour)
 ἕβδομος, η, ον seventh
 χρυσόλιθος, ου m chrysolite, yellow agate
 ὄγδοος, η, ον eighth
 βήρυλλος, ου m and f beryl (a semi-precious stone, usually green or blue-green in colour)
 ἕνατος, η, ον ninth
 τοπάζιον, ου n topaz (a semi-precious stone, usually yellow in colour)
 δεκατος, η, ον tenth
 χρυσοπρασος, ου m chrysoprase, green quartz
 ἑνδέκατος, η, ον eleventh
 ὑάκινθος, ου m jacinth, hyacinth (a precious stone, perhaps blue in colour)
 δωδεκατος, υ, ον twelfth
 ἀμέθυστος, ου f amethyst (a semi-precious stone, usually purple or violet in colour)

Revelation 21:21

καὶ οἱ δώδεκα πυλῶνες δώδεκα μαργαρίται, ἀνά εἰς ἕκαστος τῶν πυλῶνων ἦν ἐξ ἑνὸς μαργαρίτου· καὶ ἡ πλατεῖα τῆς πόλεως χρυσίον καθαρὸν ὡς ὕαλος διαυγῆς

δωδεκα see v.12

μαργαριτης, ου m pearl

Witherington comments, “The idea of pure pearl gates may come from Isa 54:11-12, if the author thought carbuncle is the same as pearl.”

ἀνα prep used distributively with acc. each, each one

πλατυς, εια, υ wide; πλατεια, ας f wide street

χρυσιον, ου n see v.18

καθαρος, α, ον see v.18

ὑαλος, ου f see v.18

διαυγης, ες transparent, translucent

Revelation 21:22

Καὶ ναὸν οὐκ εἶδον ἐν αὐτῇ, ὁ γὰρ κύριος, ὁ θεός, ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ναὸς αὐτῆς ἐστίν, καὶ τὸ ἄρνιον.

ναος, ου m temple, sanctuary

εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὄραω see

Witherington comments, “In the New Jerusalem there is no temple, which proves that John did not feel obligated to follow Ezekiel’s blueprint jot and tittle, but rather picked and chose what he would adopt and adapt. This also makes it clear that John knew he was dealing with symbols and metaphors, not a literal blueprint in the OT prophecies. Thus he could use images flexibly and freely... There is no more separation of secular and sacred zones, no more separation between God and God’s people. This contrasts strongly with OT and early Jewish expectations about the eschatological Jerusalem.”

παντοκράτωρ, ορος m Almighty

ἄρνιον, ου n lamb

Cf. Jn 4:21; 2 Cor 6:16. Note the way in which the Lamb and God are juxtaposed, implying their unity.

Revelation 21:23

καὶ ἡ πόλις οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχει τοῦ ἡλίου οὐδὲ τῆς σελήνης, ἵνα φαίνωσιν αὐτῇ, ἡ γὰρ δόξα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφώτισεν αὐτήν, καὶ ὁ λύχνος αὐτῆς τὸ ἄρνιον.

χρεια, ας f need, want

ἡλιος, ου m the sun

σεληνη, ης f moon

φαινω shine, give light

δοξα, ης f glory

φωτιζω give light to, light, shine on

λυχνος, ου m lamp

Cf. Is 60:19-20; Jn 1:9; 8:12.

Revelation 21:24

καὶ περιπατήσουσιν τὰ ἔθνη διὰ τοῦ φωτὸς αὐτῆς· καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς φέρουσιν τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν εἰς αὐτήν

περιπατεω walk

ἔθνη Noun, nom & acc pl ἔθνος, ους n nation

φως, φωτος n light

βασιλευς, εως m king

φερω bring, carry, bear, lead

δοξα, ης f glory

Cf. Is 60:1-5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 17. To interpret this literalistically raises all kinds of problems – how is it that the nations and their kings are present in this final state? Glasson says "The prophets were thinking mainly of a future under the historical conditions of our present life. John makes use of their sublime visions, lifting them up to the eternal plane; and at times he retains words not entirely appropriate to their new settings." Mounce adds, "This is certainly the answer to the presence of the nations 'outside the new Jerusalem' throughout eternity. The imagery of the Apocalypse must of necessity be concrete and spacial, but its significance is inevitably spiritual." Keener writes, "In Revelation the gifts that the nations bring are not simply wealth but 'glory' (21:24 ... 26); they offer their glory to God in light of God's greater glory (21:23), forsaking idolatry."

Revelation 21:25

καὶ οἱ πυλῶνες αὐτῆς οὐ μὴ κλεισθῶσιν
ἡμέρας, νύξ γὰρ οὐκ ἔσται ἐκεῖ,

πυλῶν, ὄνος m see v.12

κλεισθῶσιν Verb, aor pass subj, 3 pl κλειω
shut, shut up, lock

νύξ, νυκτος f night

ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 3 s εἶμι

ἐκεῖ there, in that place

There is no darkness and no threat which demands the protection of locked gates. Cf. Is 60:11.

Revelation 21:26

καὶ οἴσουσιν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν τῶν
ἐθνῶν εἰς αὐτήν.

οἴσουσιν Verb, fut act indic, 3 pl φερω
bring, carry, bear

τιμή, ης f honour, respect, price

Revelation 21:27

καὶ οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθῃ εἰς αὐτήν πᾶν κοινὸν καὶ
ποιῶν βδέλυγμα καὶ ψεῦδος, εἰ μὴ οἱ
γεγραμμένοι ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ
ἁρνίου.

εἰσερχομαι enter, go in, come in

κοινος, α, ον common, profane, unclean

βδέλυγμα, τος n something detestable

ψεῦδος, ους n lie, that which is false

γεγραμμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl

γραφω write

βιβλίον, ου n book, scroll

ζωή, ης f life

Cf. Is 52:1; Ezek 44:9; 1 Cor 6:9-10; 2 Peter 3:13. Witherington writes that v27 "served to reassure the audience that the coming in of the pagan nations did not mean the entrance of uncleanness or sin into the holy city."

Revelation 22:1

Καὶ ἔδειξέν μοι ποταμὸν ὕδατος ζωῆς λαμπρὸν
ὡς κρύσταλλον, ἐκπορευόμενον ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου
τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁρνίου

ἔδειξέν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s δεικνυμι

show, point out, reveal

ποταμος, ου m river, stream

ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water

ζωή, ης f life

Cf. Gen 2:10; Ps 46:4; Ezek 47:1-12; Jn 4:14;
Rev 7:17; 21:6; 22:17.

λαμπρος, α, ον bright, shining, clear

κρυσταλλος, ου m crystal

ἐκπορευομαι go or come out

"The faithful and true will live at the source of the life-giving stream which proceeds from the very presence of God. In the hot and arid climate of Palestine this figure would hold special appeal." Mounce. Witherington comments, "A combination of Ezekiel and Genesis 1-2 is in the background. The river being crystal clear and pure is a perfect symbol of life flowing from God to God's people."

Revelation 22:2

ἐν μέσῳ τῆς πλατείας αὐτῆς· καὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ
ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ξύλον ζωῆς ποιοῦν
καρποὺς δώδεκα, κατὰ μῆνα ἕκαστον
ἀποδιδόν τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὰ φύλλα
τοῦ ξύλου εἰς θεραπείαν τῶν ἐθνῶν.

μεσος, η, ον middle

πλατεια, ας f wide street

ἐντευθεν from here, on this side

ἐκειθεν from there, on that side

ξύλον, ου n wood, tree

"The exact placement of river, street, and trees is less than clear. If the initial phrase ('in the midst of the street thereof') goes with the preceding verse, then the river would flow down the centre of a wide avenue. If it is taken with what follows, then the street and river probably run side by side, with the trees in between. Other possibilities have been suggested, but the specific geographical layout is of no particular importance in understanding the symbolism of the verse." Mounce.

ποιοῦν Verb, pres act ptc, n nom/acc s ποιω

καρπος, ου m fruit

δωδεκα twelve

μην, μηνος m month

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every

ἀποδιδούν Verb, pres act ptc, n nom/acc s
 ἀποδίδωμι give, render
 φύλλον, ου n leaf
 θεραπεία, ας f healing

The picture brings together both the tree of life in Eden (Gen 2:9; 3:22) and the trees with fruit and healing leaves of Ezek 47:12.

"The glory of the age to come is necessarily portrayed by means of imagery belonging to the present age. The healing leaves indicate the complete absence of physical and spiritual want. The life to come will be a life of abundance and perfection." Mounce.

Revelation 22:3

καὶ πᾶν κατάθεμα οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι. καὶ ὁ θρόνος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁρνίου ἐν αὐτῇ ἔσται, καὶ οἱ δούλοι αὐτοῦ λατρεύσουσιν αὐτῷ,

κατάθεμα, τος n something under God's curse

ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 2 s εἶμι

ἔτι still, yet, any more

Cf. Zech 14:3-11; Gen 3:14,17.

δoulos, ου m slave, servant

λατρεύω serve, worship

Revelation 22:4

καὶ ὄψονται τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν.

ὄψονται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 pl ὄρω see

προσωπον, ου n face

"Perhaps the greatest of all eternity's blessings is reflected in the one phrase, 'and they shall see his face.' Moses, the great lawgiver of the old dispensation, was not allowed to see the face of God because God had declared, 'Man shall not see me and live' (Ex 33:20; cf. 33:23 where Moses is allowed to see only the back of God)... Jesus taught that only the pure in heart shall see God (Mt 5:8), and John in his first epistle speaks of the great transformation to take place at the return of Christ when 'we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is' (1 Jn 3:2)." Mounce. Cf. Ps 17:15.

ὄνομα, τος n name

μετωπον, ου n forehead

"His name stands for his character. The faces of those who have experienced the beatific vision will reflect the unmistakable likeness of their heavenly Father. The process of transformation now under way in the life of the believer (2 Cor 3:18) will be brought to completion when the church enters its ultimate and ideal state. As the followers of the beast bore his mark upon their foreheads (Rev 13:16), so will the faithful bear the name of God upon theirs (cf. Rev 3:12). The metaphor stresses ownership and likeness." Mounce. Witherington adds, "We may contrast this with the brand of the Beast on those who serve him (13:6; 14:9; 17:5; 20:4)."

Revelation 22:5

καὶ νῦξ οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι, καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν χρείαν φωτὸς λύχνου καὶ φῶς ἡλίου, ὅτι κύριος ὁ θεὸς φωτίσει ἐπ' αὐτούς, καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

νῦξ, νυκτος f see 21:25

Everything that causes fear is banished, cf. 'no more sea' 21:1.

χρεία, ας f see 21:23

φως, φωτος n see 21:24

λύχνου see 21:23

ἡλιος, ου m see 21:23

φωτιζω see 21:23

βασιλευω rule, reign

αἰων, αιωνος m age, eternity

Revelation 22:6-21

Verse 6 marks the beginning of the Epilogue of the book of Revelation. "The similarities between the Prologue and Epilogue of Revelation have often been noted. The book is genuine prophecy (1:3; 22:6, 9-10, 18-19) by a duly commissioned prophet (1:1, 9-10; 22:8-10) to be read in the churches (1:3; 22:7, 12,14). These and other similarities support the view that the Prologue may have been the last part of the book to be written and thus reflects the influence of the Epilogue." Mounce. Witherington comments, "It appears to most, however, to be a bit more disjointed than the Prologue. Perhaps the major difficulty is determining who is speaking at what juncture. Most scholars argue vv. 6-7 have Jesus speaking, vv 8-9 an angel, vv 10-16 again Jesus. Beasley-Murray urges that the angel is certainly the speaker in vs 6, and that the sayings that follow are all from Jesus but mediated through the angel. He argues that all of vv 6-15, which make up the Epilogue proper, are mediated through the angel, whoever they are from."

Revelation 22:6

Καὶ εἶπέν μοι· Οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι πιστοὶ καὶ ἀληθινοί, καὶ ὁ κύριος, ὁ θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων τῶν προφητῶν, ἀπέστειλεν τὸν ἄγγελον αὐτοῦ δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει·

πιστος, η, ον faithful, trustworthy, reliable
ἀληθινος, η, ον real, genuine, true

Mounce suggests that the plural πνευμάτων indicates that it is the human spirits of the prophets that are spoken of here rather than the Holy Spirit. I.e. God is the source of the prophets' inspiration.

ἀπέστειλεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s

ἀποστελλω send, send out

δεικνυμι see v.1

δει impersonal verb it is necessary, must

ταχος, ους n speed, quickness; ἐν τ.

speedily, quickly, soon

Witherington says that ἐν τάχει means 'soon' but then, considering also the opening sentence of v7 he asks "On whose clock? Cf. 2:16; 3:11...; 22:7, 12, 20... The question is, in part, how such language is meant to function in a work of apocalyptic prophecy. Does it function so as to dictate that the thief in the night must appear within a certain time frame or to warn that He *could* be coming soon and thus one must always be prepared? The latter seems more probable as John is not interested in date setting, unlike some writers of apocalyptic material, and as the hortatory and rhetorical function of the work as a whole points in this direction."

Revelation 22:7

καὶ ἰδοὺ ἔρχομαι ταχύ· μακάριος ὁ τηρῶν τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου.

ταχυ adv quickly, without delay, soon
μακαριος, α, ον blessed, fortunate, happy

The penultimate of the seven beatitudes of the book of Revelation.

τηρεω keep, observe

βιβλιον, ου n book, scroll

This book is not written for speculative purposes but as a guide for life!

Revelation 22:8

Κἀγὼ Ἰωάννης ὁ ἀκούων καὶ βλέπων ταῦτα. καὶ ὅτε ἤκουσα καὶ ἔβλεπα, ἔπεσα προσκυνῆσαι ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ποδῶν τοῦ ἀγγέλου τοῦ δεικνύοντός μοι ταῦτα.

κἀγω a compound word = καὶ ἐγω

βλεπω see

ὅτε conj when

ἔπεσα Verb, aor act indic, 1 s πιτω fall, fall down

προσκυνεω worship

ἔμπροσθεν prep with gen before

πους, ποδος m foot

δεικνύοντός Verb, pres act ptc, m gen s

δεικνυμι show, point out, reveal

Cf. 19:10.

Revelation 22:9

καὶ λέγει μοι· Ὅρα μὴ· σύνδουλός σου εἰμι καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου τῶν προφητῶν καὶ τῶν τηρούντων τοὺς λόγους τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου· τῷ θεῷ προσκύνησον.

ὄραω see; make sure, see to it

συνδουλος, ου m fellow-servant

σος, ση, σον possessive adj. your, yours

τηρεω see v.7

God's people are raised to the same status as angels, while none are to be offered worship save God and Jesus.

Revelation 22:10

Καὶ λέγει μοι· Μὴ σφραγίσῃς τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου, ὁ καιρὸς γὰρ ἐγγύς ἐστιν.

σφραγιζω seal, secure with a seal

καιρος, ου m time

ἐγγυς adv near

Cf. Dan 12:4, 9-10. Mounce outlines the discussion caused by this final statement. Some have suggested that John mistakenly supposed that the return of Christ would occur in the lifetime of many of his readers. Mounce favours the explanation of Ladd "who holds that the Apocalypse has a twofold perspective: it is primarily concerned with the struggle between Christ and Antichrist which comes to a climax at the end of the age, but this struggle also existed between church and state in the first century and has surfaced in history whenever the state has made totalitarian demands... Thus the time has always been at hand. The tension of imminence is endemic to that span of redemptive history lying between the cross and the parousia."

Revelation 22:11

ὁ ἀδικῶν ἀδικησάτω ἔτι, καὶ ὁ ῥυπαρὸς ῥυπαρευθήτω ἔτι, καὶ ὁ δίκαιος δικαιοσύνην ποιησάτω ἔτι, καὶ ὁ ἅγιος ἁγιασθήτω ἔτι.

ἀδικεω wrong, treat unjustly, harm

ἔτι still

ῥυπαρος, α, ον impure, filthy (of persons)

ῥυπανθήτω Verb, aor pass imperat, 3 s

ῥυπαινομαι be filthy or impure

δικαιος, α, ον righteous

δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness

ἅγιος, α, ον holy

ἀγιασθήτω Verb, aor pass imperat, 3 s
ἀγιαζω sanctify, make holy

"The major thrust of the verse is that since the end time is now at hand men are certain to reap the consequences of the kinds of lives they have led. The time arrives when change is impossible because character has already been determined by a lifetime of habitual action. The arrival of the end forecloses any possibility of alteration. 'The deliberate choice of each man has fixed his unalterable fate' (Erdman...)." Mounce.

Revelation 22:12

Ἴδου ἔρχομαι ταχύ, καὶ ὁ μισθός μου μετ' ἐμοῦ, ἀποδοῦναι ἐκάστῳ ὡς τὸ ἔργον ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ.

ταχυ adv quickly, without delay, soon
μισθος, ου m wages, reward, retribution
ἀποδοῦναι Verb, aor act infin ἀποδιδωμι
give, pay, render, give back, repay
ἐκαστος, η, ου each, every

Cf. Isa 40:10; 62:11; Jer 31:16; Rom 2:6; Gal 6:7-8; 1 Pet 1:17. "The reward will be spiritual blessedness to the righteous but judgement for those who are evil. It is the quality of a man's life which provides the ultimate indication of what he really believes." Mounce.

Revelation 22:13

ἐγὼ τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ, ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος.

πρωτος, η, ου first
ἐσχατος, η, ου adj last
ἀρχη, ης f beginning
τελος, ους n end

Cf. Isa 41:4; 44:6; 48:12. "In 1:8 and 21:6 it was God who identified himself as the Alpha and the Omega. The risen Christ now applies the title to himself. Its meaning is essentially the same as that of the two following designations – 'the first and the last, the beginning and the end' – the first of which Christ has already applied to himself in 1:17 and 2:8. The names set him apart from the entire created order." Mounce.

Revelation 22:14

Μακάριοι οἱ πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν, ἵνα ἔσται ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τοῖς πυλῶσιν εἰσέλθωσιν εἰς τὴν πόλιν.

This is the last of the seven beatitudes in Revelation.

μακαριος, α, ου see v.7
πλυνω wash
στολη, ης f robe, long robe; pl clothes

Cf. 7:14 – though note here that the verb is a present participle rather than aorist; the emphasis is upon present activity and benefit, in particular the righteous life, in contrast with those mentioned in the following verse.

ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 2 s εἰμι
ἐξουσια, ας f authority, right, power
ξύλον, ου n see v.2
πυλων, ωνος m see 21:12
εἰσερχομαι enter, go in, come in

Revelation 22:15

ἔξω οἱ κύνες καὶ οἱ φάρμακοι καὶ οἱ πόρνοι καὶ οἱ φονεῖς καὶ οἱ εἰδωλολάτραι καὶ πᾶς φιλῶν καὶ ποιῶν ψεῦδος.

ἔξω adv. & prep out, outside
κυων, κυνος m dog

Witherington suggests that, "Dogs in the Greco-Roman world were viewed as sexually immoral." The reference would have been to pariah dogs around cities of that day which would have scavenged on carcasses and waste.

φαρμακος, ου m one who practices magic
πονηρος, α, ου evil, bad, wicked
φονευς, εως m murderer
εἰδωλολατρης, ου m idolater
φιλεω love
ψευδος, ους n lie, untruth

Cf. 1 Cor 6:9-10; Rev 21:8, 27.

Revelation 22:16

Ἐγὼ Ἰησοῦς ἐπέμψα τὸν ἄγγελόν μου μαρτυρῆσαι ὑμῖν ταῦτα ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ῥίζα καὶ τὸ γένος Δαυὶδ, ὁ ἀστὴρ ὁ λαμπρός, ὁ πρωῖνός.

πεμπω send
μαρτυρεω bear witness, testify
ἐκκλησια, ας f congregation, church

"The plural 'you' indicates that it was intended for others besides John. It stresses that the revelation is not a private affair but for the entire church." Mounce.

ρίζα, ης f root, source
γενος, ους n family, offspring

Cf. Isa 11:1,10; Rom 1:3.

ἀστηρ, ερος m star
λαμπρος, α, ου bright, shining
πρωῖνος, η, ου morning

Cf. Num 24:17. "The morning star is a promise that the long night of tribulation is all but over and that the new eschatological day is about to dawn." Mounce.

Witherington comments, "Martial, a contemporary of John's, wrote a poem for Domitian, praying for his return from the northern part of the Empire, that included the lines,

'Thou morning star
Bring on the day!
Come and expel our fears,
Rome begs that Caesar may soon appear.'
It is thus quite possible that we have more anti-imperial rhetoric from John here."

Revelation 22:17

καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ νύμφη λέγουσιν· Ἔρχου· καὶ ὁ ἀκούων εἰπάτω· Ἔρχου· καὶ ὁ διψῶν ἐρχέσθω, ὁ θέλων λαβέτω ὕδωρ ζωῆς δωρεάν.

"Verse 17 consists of four invitations. It is possible to take the first two as requests directed to Christ for his return and the second two as invitations to the world to come and take of the water of life. It is more likely, as Ladd indicates, that the first half of the verse should be interpreted by the second, and [that we should read] the entire invitation as addressed to the world." Mounce.

Witherington however, prefers to read the first sentence as addressed to Christ, the Spirit joining with and energising the intercessory prayers of God's people (cf. Rom 8:26-27).

νύμφη, ης f bride
ἐρχου Verb, pres midd/pass dep imperat, 2 s
ἐρχομαι
εἰπάτω Verb, aor act imperat, 3 s λεγω
διψαω be thirsty, thirst for
θελω wish, will
λαβέτω Verb, aor act imperat, 3 s λαμβανω
ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water
δωρεαν without cost, freely

Cf. Is 55:1; Jn 7:37.

Revelation 22:18

Μαρτυροῦ ἐγὼ παντὶ τῷ ἀκούοντι τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου· ἐάν τις ἐπιθῇ ἐπ' αὐτά, ἐπιθήσει ὁ θεὸς ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὰς πληγὰς τὰς γεγραμμένας ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ·

βιβλίον, ου n book, scroll

John refers to his work as 'prophecy' – it is the Word of God, inspired and authoritative.

ἐάν if
τις, τὶ acc τινά, τὶ gen τινός dat τινί anyone, anything
ἐπιθῇ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ἐπιτιθημι
place on, add
ἐπιθήσει Verb, fut act indic, 3 s ἐπιτιθημι
πληγῆ, ης f plague
γεγραμμένας Verb, perf pass ptc, f acc pl
γραφω write

Cf. Deut 4:2. "The warning is against wilful distortion of the message. It is not unlike Paul's stern words in Galatians 1:6,7 to those who would pervert the gospel." Mounce.

Revelation 22:19

καὶ ἐάν τις ἀφέλῃ ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων τοῦ βιβλίου τῆς προφητείας ταύτης, ἀφελεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς καὶ ἐκ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἁγίας, τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ.

ἀφέλῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ἀφαιρω take away

ἀφελεῖ Verb, fut act indic, 3 s ἀφαιρω μέρος, ους n part

Revelation 22:20

Λέγει ὁ μαρτυρῶν ταῦτα· Ναί· ἔρχομαι ταχύ. Ἀμήν· ἔρχου, κύριε Ἰησοῦ.

ναί yes, yes indeed

ταχυ adv quickly, without delay, soon

ἔρχου Verb, pres midd/pass dep imperat, 2 s ἐρχομαι

"'Come, Lord Jesus' is the equivalent of the transliterated Aramaic in 1 Corinthians 16:22, *maranatha*." Mounce.

Revelation 22:21

Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων.

χαρις, ιτος f grace

Witherington suggests that these last two verses, amount to "two more pieces of evidence that our author knew Paul's letters, or at least some of them. Of course, the benediction is also understandable as an epistolary closing element. The book ends as it began – as a letter to the churches. But note that it also ends as it began (1:4), with the word grace. In fact, these are the only two places in the book where the word occurs, but the theology of grace undergirds John's whole understanding of God in Christ's work of redemption. The work ends not so much on a Pauline note as on a Christian note."

Postscript

I close with a reflection on the book as a whole from Witherington, who writes, "One of the major emphases in homiletics these days is on storytelling. John is most certainly a storyteller par excellence. But he does not make up the story as he goes along. As many sources as he uses and as flexibly as he uses various OT, early Jewish, early Christian, and even pagan images, he still recognisably believes in and bases what he says on the common story he shares with other Christians that focuses particularly on the role of Christ in history. There is a lot to be said for a dramatic reading of the book of Revelation. Such a way of dealing with the text is by no means a recent phenomenon. One of the famous circuit riders of the early nineteenth century who helped generate the camp meeting movement, James McGready, was a compelling storyteller. He 'would so describe Heaven, that you would almost see its glories.' In an age of TVs, computers, and the cinema, that is, in an age of increasingly visual learners, it makes good sense that a work like Revelation could and should be used to reach a postmodern audience. Just as retelling the parables has become a popular homiletical move, so also Revelation's retelling could be profitable. But this presupposes that the proclaimer understands at least a good deal of what is proclaimed, for he or she will be called upon to explain things."