

Notes on the Greek New Testament Week 248 – Revelation 19:1-20:6

Day 1236: Revelation 19:1-5

Verse 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
πολυσ, 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

Verse 2

ὅτι ἀληθινὰ καὶ δίκαια αἱ κρίσεις αὐτοῦ· ὅτι ἔκρινεν τὴν πόρνην τὴν μεγάλην ἣτις ἔφθειρεν τὴν γῆν ἐν τῇ πορνείᾳ αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐξεδίκησεν τὸ αἷμα τῶν δούλων αὐτοῦ ἐκ χειρὸς αὐτῆς.

ἀληθινος, η, ου real, genuine, true
δικαιος, α, ου righteous, just
κρίσεις Noun, nom pl κρισις, εως f judgement

ἔκρινεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s κρινω judge

πορνη, ης f prostitute
ὅστις, ἣτις, ὅ τι who, which
φθειρω corrupt, ruin, destroy
πορνεια, ας f sexual immorality
ἐκδικεω avenge, punish
αἷμα, ατος f blood
δουλος, ου m slave, servant
χειρ, χειρος f hand, power

Cf. Deut 32:43.

Verse 3

καὶ δεύτερον 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
καπνος, ου m smoke
ἀναβαινω go up, ascend
αἶων, 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."

Verse 4

καὶ ἔπεσαν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι οἱ εἴκοσι τέσσαρες καὶ τὰ τέσσαρα ζῶα, καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θεῷ τῷ καθήμενῳ 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 τεσσαρα gen τεσσαρων four

ζων, ου n living creature

προσκυνεω worship

Cf. 5:6-10.

καθημαι sit

θρονος, 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.

Verse 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.

αἰνεω **praise**

The evidence for or against the inclusion of καὶ is finely balanced. If it is included, the sense is 'even'.

φοβεομαι **fear, reverence**
μικρος, 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.

Day 1237: Revelation 19:6-10**Verse 6**

καὶ ἤκουσα ὡς φωνὴν ὄχλου πολλοῦ καὶ ὡς φωνὴν ὑδάτων πολλῶν καὶ ὡς φωνὴν βροντῶν ἰσχυρῶν λεγόντων, Ἀλληλουϊά, ὅτι ἐβασίλευσεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς [ἡμῶν] ὁ παντοκράτωρ.

ὄχλος, ου m **see v.1**
ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n **water**
βροντη, ης f **thunder**
ἰσχυρος, α, ον **strong, mighty, powerful**
βασιλευω **rule, reign**
παντοκρατωρ, ορος m **Almighty**

Used 9 times of God in Revelation, only once elsewhere in the NT (2 Cor 6:18).

Verse 7

χαίρωμεν καὶ ἀγαλλιῶμεν, καὶ δωσωμεν τὴν δόξαν αὐτῷ, ὅτι ἦλθεν ὁ γάμος τοῦ ἀρνίου, καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ ἠτοίμασεν ἑαυτήν·

χαίρω **rejoice, be glad**
ἀγαλλιαω **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.

δωσωμεν **Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl διδωμι**
δοξα, ης f **glory**
γαμος, 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.

ἑτοιμαζω **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.

Verse 8

καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῇ ἵνα περιβάληται βύσσινον λαμπρὸν καθαρὸν, τὸ γὰρ βύσσινον τὰ δικαιώματα τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν.

ἐδόθη **Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s διδωμι**
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."

Verse 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.

ἀληθινός, η, ον **real, genuine, true**

Verse 10

καὶ ἔπεσα ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ. καὶ λέγει μοι, Ὁρα μὴ· σύνδουλός σου εἰμι καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου τῶν ἔχόντων 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 πιπτω **fall, fall down**

ἔμπροσθεν prep with gen **before, in front of**
πους, ποδος m **foot**

προσκυνηω **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.

σύνδουλος, ου m **fellow-servant**
σος, ση, στον 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."

Day 1238: Revelation 19:11-16

Verse 11

Καὶ εἶδον τὸν οὐρανὸν ἠνεωγμένον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος λευκός, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπ' αὐτὸν [καλούμενος] πιστός καὶ ἀληθινός, καὶ ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ κρίνει καὶ πολεμεῖ.

εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὄραω **see**
ἠνεωγμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc s & n nom/acc s **άνοιγω 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 **Ν**, πιστος καλουμενος και ἀληθινος.

πιστός, η, ον **faithful, trustworthy**
ἀληθινός, η, ον **real, genuine, true**

Cf. 3:14.

δικαιοσύνη, ης f **righteousness**
κρινω **judge, pass judgement on**

Cf. Ps 96:13.

πολεμεω **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."

Verse 12

οἱ δὲ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ [ὡς] φλόξ πυρός, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ διαδήματα πολλά, ἔχων ὄνομα γεγραμμένον ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ αὐτός,

φλοξ, 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 **γραφω 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).

Verse 13

καὶ περιβεβλημένος ἱμάτιον βεβαμμένον αἵματι, καὶ κέκληται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ.

περιβεβλημένος Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom s περιβαλλω **put on, clothe, dress**

ἱματιον, ου n **garment, clothing, robe**

βεβαμμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n nom/acc s **βαπτω 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 καλεω

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.

Verse 14

καὶ τὰ στρατεύματα [τὰ] ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἠκολούθει αὐτῷ ἐφ' ἵπποις λευκοῖς, ἐνδεδυμένοι βύσσινον λευκὸν καθαρόν.

στρατευμα, τος n troops, soldiers, army
ἀκολουθεω follow, accompany
ἐνδεδυμένοι Verb, perf midd ptc, m nom pl
ἐνδυω dress, clothe; midd wear
βυσσινος, η, ον made of fine linen
καθαρος, 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.

Verse 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.

Verse 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.

Day 1239: Revelation 19:17-21

Verse 17

Καὶ εἶδον ἓνα ἄγγελον ἐστῶτα ἐν τῷ ἡλίῳ, καὶ ἔκραξεν [ἐν] φωνῇ μεγάλῃ λέγων πᾶσιν τοῖς ὀρνέοις τοῖς πετομένοις ἐν μεσουρανήματι, Δεῦτε συνάχθητε εἰς τὸ δεῖπνον τὸ μέγα τοῦ θεοῦ,

εἷς, 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
ὀρνεον, 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.

Verse 18

ἵνα φάγητε σάρκας βασιλέων καὶ σάρκας χιλιάρχων καὶ σάρκας ἰσχυρῶν καὶ σάρκας ἵππων καὶ τῶν καθημένων ἐπ' αὐτῶν καὶ σάρκας πάντων ἐλευθέρων τε καὶ δούλων καὶ μικρῶν καὶ μεγάλων.

φάγητε Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl ἔσθιω **eat**
 σαρξ, σαρκος f **flesh**
 βασιλευς, εως m **king**
 χιλιάρχος, 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.

Verse 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**

Verse 20

καὶ ἐπιάσθη τὸ θηρίον καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ ὁ ψευδοπροφήτης ὁ ποιήσας τὰ σημεῖα ἐνωπιον 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
 ψευδοπροφήτης, 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**
 ἐνωπιον prep with gen **before**
 πλαναω **lead astray, mislead, deceive**
 χαραγμα, τος n **mark, stamp, image**
 προσκυνεω **worship**
 εἰκων, ονος f **likeness, image, statue**
 ζωω **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."

Verse 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
 ἀποκτείνω kill, put to death
 ῥομφαία, 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, ον n see v.17
 χορτάζω feed, satisfy

Day 1240: Revelation 20:1-6

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.”

Verses 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.”

Verse 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

Verse 2

καὶ ἐκράτησεν τὸν δράκοντα, ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ὅς ἐστιν 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
 Σατανᾶς, 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
 χίλιοι, 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).

Verse 3

καὶ ἔβαλεν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον καὶ ἔκλεισεν καὶ ἐσφράγισεν ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ ἵνα μὴ πλανήσῃ ἔτι τὰ ἔθνη ἄχρι τελεσθῆ 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
 δεῖ 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.”

Verse 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 ἔβασίλευσαν 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
 ζω 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'."

Verse 5

οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔζησαν ἄχρι τελεσθῆ τὰ χίλια ἔτη. αὕτη ἡ ἀνάστασις ἡ πρώτη.

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other
 νεκρος, α, ον dead
 ζω 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.

Verse 6

μακάριος καὶ ἅγιος ὁ ἔχων μέρος ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει τῆ πρώτης· ἐπὶ τούτων ὁ δεύτερος θάνατος οὐκ ἔχει ἐξουσίαν, ἀλλ' ἔσσονται ἱερεῖς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν μετ' αὐτοῦ [τὰ] χίλια ἔτη.

μακαριος, α, ον blessed, fortunate,
 happy
 ἅγιος, α, ον holy
 μερος, ους n part
 δυετερος, 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
 ἔσσονται Verb, fut indic, 3 pl εἶμι
 ἱερευς, εως m priest
 βασιλευω rule, reign

Cf. Ex 19:6; 1 Peter 2:5,9; Rev 1:6; 5:10.