

THE NEW OXFORD ANNOTATED BIBLE

THIRD EDITION



with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books

MICHAEL D. COOGAN

EDITOR

Marc Z. Brettler, Carol A. Newsom, PHEME PERKINS

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

New Revised Standard Version

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

THE REVELATION

to John



The book of Revelation, also known as the Apocalypse (from the Greek word meaning “disclosure,” “unveiling,” or “revelation”) brings the canon of the New Testament to a close, appropriately so in view of its vivid visions of the consummation of God’s plan of judgment and salvation. While the book presents itself as a work of prophecy (1.3; 22.10), it has given its name to a literary genre, the “apocalypse,” found in a range of Jewish and Christian writings that first appeared about 250 BCE. Like other apocalyptic literature, the book of Revelation presents God’s revelation to a human recipient. Unlike other apocalypses, which are pseudonymous, with their authors writing in the name of some revered figure from antiquity, the author of the book of Revelation identifies himself by his own name as John (1.1,4,9; 22.8). Although some ancient authorities (e.g., Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 81.4) have suggested that this is the apostle John, the son of Zebedee (see Mk 3.17), the internal evidence of the book itself is inconclusive. The author’s acquaintance with the Jerusalem Temple and the rites conducted there, the depth of his knowledge of the Hebrew Bible (of the 404 verses in Revelation, some 275 include one or more allusions to passages in the Hebrew Bible, or to its Greek version, the Septuagint), as well as his adoption of a literary genre that was familiar in Palestinian Judaism, combine to suggest that John might have been a Palestinian Jewish Christian who fled to the Diaspora as a consequence of the First Jewish Revolt against the Romans (66–73 CE). His self-identification to the seven churches as “your brother who share with you in Jesus the persecution and the kingdom and the patient endurance” (1.9) suggests that he was well known to his audience, probably because he exercised a prophetic ministry among them (see 22.9). But he mentions the twelve apostles as figures from the past (21.14) and does not refer to himself as one of them. The traditional identification of the John of the book of Revelation with the apostle of the same name is thus questionable.

While it is likely that the book of Revelation draws on traditional material and on sources that were set in writing before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE (e.g., chs 11 and 12), it is probable that the book was composed toward the end of the reign of the emperor Domitian (81–96 CE). The book is addressed to “the seven churches that are in Asia” (1.4), Christian communities in the Roman provincial province of Asia, located in the western portion of present-day Turkey. The book demonstrates its author’s familiarity with the specific situation of each of the seven churches, beginning with Ephesus, the city that was the administrative capital of the province. The seven cities were complex and diverse in economic, social, political, and religious terms. Whether or not Christians faced organized and widespread persecutions sanctioned by Roman imperial authorities at the time the book was written, Christians in Asia were suffering serious oppression, facing the danger of being “slaughtered for the word of God and the testimony they had given” (6.9). One such martyr is Antipas, identified by name in the message to the church at Pergamum (2.13). John himself endured exile on the island of Patmos “because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus” (1.9), and he reports that his visions took place there. A variety of voices and viewpoints competed for the attention of the late first-century Christians to whom the book of Revelation was originally addressed.

[Introduction to Revelation]

John exhorts them to stand firm in their convictions, to resist "with patient endurance" (2.2,19; 3.10) and at any cost the overwhelming pressures to yield to accommodation and compromise. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE gave John ample cause to identify Rome as Babylon, recalling the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE. The breadth and depth of Rome's political and economic power found expression in the widespread worship of the emperor in the province of Asia, with temples to the emperor and to Rome personified as the goddess Roma. The book of Revelation takes sides in a battle over sovereignty, where the Roman emperor competes with God and Christ in a contest for the allegiance of the faithful. Warning that those who worship the emperor, symbolized by "the beast" (13.1-10), will suffer ultimate defeat, the book urges believers to "hold fast to the faith of Jesus" (14.12) and to share in the paradoxical victory of his death and resurrection.

The book of Revelation is a work of extremes, ranging from soaring heights of hymnody inspired by Hebrew psalms and canticles to the gruesome language of plagues, warfare, and bloodshed. It uses the dualistic language characteristic of the apocalyptic genre to paint vivid portraits of the opposing sides in the eschatological conflict that will culminate in the victory of God and the final defeat of all evil. With its symbolic numbers and colors, animals, and angelic and demonic beings, and replete with echoes and images drawn from the literature of the ancient Near East, the Hebrew Bible, Greece, and Rome, the book of Revelation is so notoriously complex that the church father Jerome (345-420 CE) was led to remark that it contains as many mysteries as it contains words. Origen (185-254 CE) exclaimed, "Who can read the revelations granted to John without being amazed at the hidden depth of the ineffable mysteries, a depth apparent even to the person who does not understand what the text says?" (*On First Principles* 4.2.4). Many centuries later, the modern writer D.H. Lawrence wrote, "When we read Revelation, we feel at once there are meanings behind meanings." The symbolic visions of the book are by no means self-explanatory, and even John reports the need for the intervention of an angelic mediator to explain the meaning of the mystery disclosed to him (17.7). This characteristic, common in other works of the same genre, serves to emphasize that there are transcendent levels of meaning that must be discerned. The significance of events on earth is to be sought above and beyond what is immediately apparent, and it is ultimately to God that believers must turn to receive the meaning and guidance that strengthen their perseverance in the face of adversity. Over the centuries, the book of Revelation has been considered from a wide variety of interpretive strategies and approaches, ranging from literal readings of the book as predictive prophecy to readings that recognize in its utopian language the promise of hope in the midst of contemporary situations of suffering and oppression.

Although the structure of the book of Revelation is widely debated among scholars, there is general agreement that it involves a series of parallel, interconnected, and yet ever progressing sections. It begins with a prologue (1.1-3), an epistolary salutation (1.4-8) and an inaugural vision (1.9-20), which are followed by messages to each of the seven churches (2.1-3.22). Next (4.1-5.14) we find a vision of God enthroned and of Jesus depicted as a Lamb, who receives the seven sealed scrolls from the hand of God. A series of sevenfold visions commences at 6.1, beginning with the opening of each of the seven seals (6.1-8.5), followed by the sounding of each of seven trumpets (8.6-11.19). The sounding of the seventh trumpet is followed by the vision of the woman, the child, and the dragon (12.1-17), the vision of the two beasts (13.1-18), and a threefold vision of the victory and vindication of the faithful (14.1-20). These are followed by a final sevenfold series, the outpouring of the bowls of divine wrath (16.1-21). 17.1-18.24 presents the vision of the fall of Babylon, followed by the great doxology of 19.1-10 that also looks forward to the eschatological victory (19.11-21), the defeat of Satan (20.1-10), the last judgment (20.11-15), and the vision of the new Jerusalem (21.1-22.5). The book concludes with an epilogue (22.6-21).

REVELATION 1.1-1.10

1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants^a what must soon take place; he made^b it known by sending his angel to his servant^c John, **2** who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

3 Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near.^d

4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, **5** and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and freed^e us from our sins by his blood, **6** and made^f us to be

a kingdom, priests serving^g his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

7 Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail.

So it is to be. Amen.

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

9 I, John, your brother who share with you in Jesus the persecution and the kingdom and the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.^f **10** I was

a Gk slaves b Gk and he made c Gk slave

d Other ancient authorities read washed

e Gk priests to f Or testimony to Jesus

1.1-3: The prologue. This revelation came from God through Jesus Christ and was communicated to John by an angel (referred to again in 22.16). **1: Revelation** (Gk "apokalypsis"; see Dan 2.28-30,45), a literary form in which a vision from God, often under the guidance of an angel or other heavenly messenger, communicates in symbolic language God's hidden plan for the concluding period of history. Apocalypses also include visions of the heavenly world. **3: Blessed is . . .**, the first of seven beatitudes in Revelation (cf. 14.13; 16.15; 19.9; 20.6; 22.7, 14) is pronounced on the reader of this prophetic book and on those who hear it being read and who heed its message. In antiquity, texts were nearly always read aloud. The words *the time is near* (repeated in 22.10) provide a motive for obedience by announcing the imminence of the end-time.

1.4-8: Epistolary salutation to seven representative churches in the Roman province of Asia (in western Asia Minor). *Seven*, a number associated with heavenly realities, suggests the divine authority of the message delivered by John. **4: Grace . . . and peace** (2 Thess 1.2) combine the conventional Greek and Hebrew salutations, though John offers not his own greetings but those of God; *is . . . was . . . to come*, lit. "the being . . . the was . . . the coming." The *seven spirits* are either a symbolic reference to the manifold energies of the spirit of God (Isa 11.2), or a reference to the seven principal angels of God (Tob 12.15; 1 Enoch 20.1-8). Seven, the number of completion (of a ritual in Lev 4.6; of divine punishment in Lev 26.27-28) or wholeness, is the most important symbolic number in Revelation. **5: Faithful witness**, Jesus testifies to the truth (Jn 18.37) and is the model for Christians who died as "witnesses" (2.13; 11.7; 17.6). *Firstborn . . . ruler of the kings*, Ps 89.27. He *loves* continually; he *freed us* once for all by his death as a sacrifice (Rom 6.10; Heb 7.27). **6: Kingdom, priests**, the vocation promised to Israel (Ex 19.6; Isa 61.6) is extended to the church (1 Pet 2.9). *Glory and dominion*, Dan 7.14. **7: Dan 7.13; Zech 12.10-12. So it is to be. Amen**, a formal affirmation of this prophetic oracle announcing the coming of Christ. **8: Alpha and Omega**, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet (like "A to Z" in English); hence, the beginning and end of all things (Isa 44.6; 48.12).

1.9-20: Inaugural vision and commission on Patmos (present-day Patino), a small island in the Aegean Sea where John had been exiled (see Introduction), ca. 90 km (55 mi) southwest of Ephesus (see Map on p. 424 NT). **10: In the spirit**, in a state of prophetic ecstasy, a state of altered consciousness (also 4.2; Ezek

REVELATION 1.11-2.4

in the spirit^a on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet¹¹ saying, "Write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamum, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

12 Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,¹³ and in the midst of the lampstands I saw one like the Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest.¹⁴ His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire,¹⁵ his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters.¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, and from his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining with full force.

17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he placed his right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the

first and the last,¹⁸ and the living one. I was dead, and see, I am alive forever and ever; and I have the keys of Death and of Hades.¹⁹ Now write what you have seen, what is, and what is to take place after this.²⁰ As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

2 "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands:
2 "I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance. I know that you cannot tolerate evildoers; you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them to be false.³ I also know that you are enduring patiently and bearing up for the sake of my name, and that you have not grown weary.⁴ But I have

^a Or in the Spirit

2.2). *The Lord's day*, the weekly day of Christian worship, Sunday. 11: *The seven churches*, see 2.1-3.22. 12-16: In the midst of the churches (see v. 20) stands the exalted Christ, whose royalty, eternity, wisdom, and immutability are suggested by means of symbols; the effect is that of terrifying majesty (compare v. 17 with Isa 6.5). *Seven golden lampstands*, reminiscent of those that stood in the wilderness tabernacle and in the Jerusalem Temple (cf. Zech 4.1-14). *Son of Man* (cf. 14.14; Mk 2.10), a title Jesus used of himself, had two meanings: (1) a typical human being in accordance with a common extended meaning of "son of" (see Mt 5.45); (2) a reference to the heavenly figure of Dan 7.13-14 who was to embody God's rule over the nations. 13-15: *Golden sash*, Dan 10.5; *white . . . snow*, Dan 7.10; *eyes . . . fire*, Dan 10.6; *feet . . . bronze*, Dan 10.6; *sound of many waters*, a frequent accompaniment of divine appearance; see Ps 29.3; 93.4; Ezek 1.24; 43.2; cf. Dan 10.6. The figure is a combination of attributes of the heavenly messenger from Dan 10 and the Ancient One from Dan 7. *From his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword* (cf. 19.15,21), the word of God (Isa 49.2; cf. Heb 4.12). 18: *Hades*, used here with its synonym *Death*, is the abode of the dead; Christ has *the keys* to release those confined within its gates (Mt 16.18; Jn 5.25-29). 20: *Mystery*, hidden meanings that human beings cannot grasp without the assistance of divine revelation (Dan 2.29,45). Angel guardians are assigned to *the seven churches*, as also to nations (Dan 10.20-21; 12.1) and individuals (Dan 11.1).

2.1-3.22: The messages to the seven churches, each containing an address, a descriptive phrase referring to the risen Christ, a commendation or condemnation of the church addressed, an admonition, and a concluding promise and exhortation to the faithful. For the locations of the seven churches, see Map on p. 424 NT.

2.1-7: The first message is appropriately sent to *Ephesus*, a seaport city that was the administrative and commercial hub of the Roman province of Asia; Paul had labored here (Acts 19.8-10; 1 Cor 15.32; 16.8; cf. Eph 1.1). 1: Christ *walks among* the churches (1.20). 2: *Evildoers*, compare the warning to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20.29-30; cf. 2 Cor 11.13. 6: To *hate* evil is the counterpart of the love of what

REVELATION 2.5-2.9

this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. ⁵Remember then from what you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place; unless you repent. ⁶Yet this is to your credit: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ⁷Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers, I will give permission to eat from

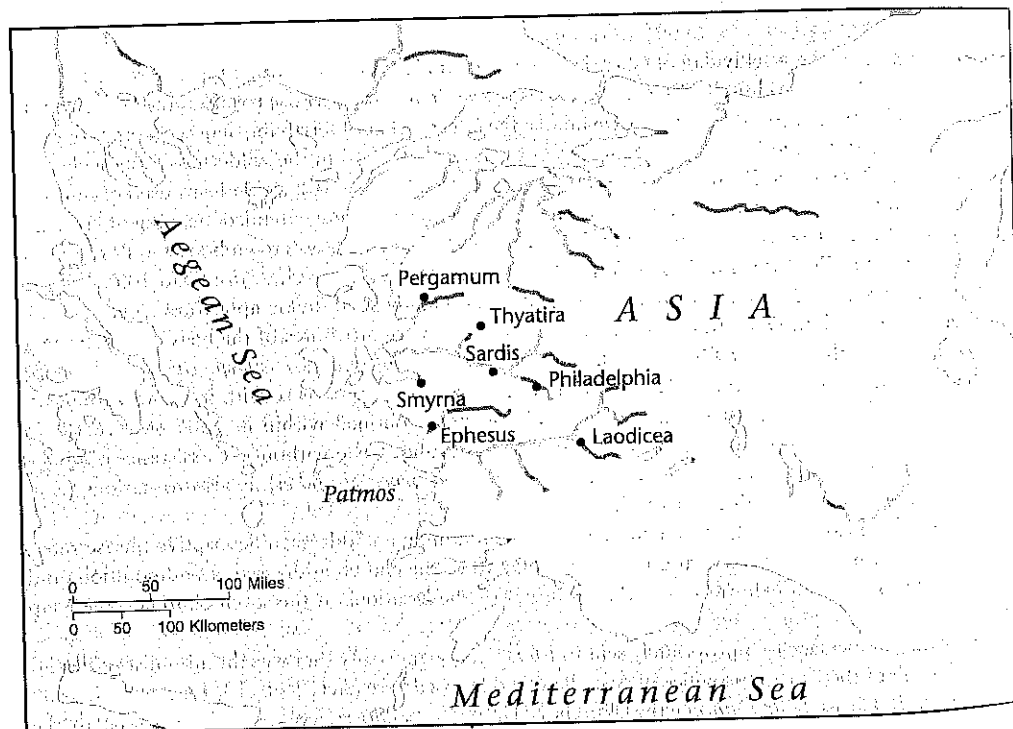
the tree of life that is in the paradise of God.

8 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of the first and the last, who was dead and came to life:

9 "I know your affliction and your poverty, even though you are rich. I know the slander on the part of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a syna-

God approves (Isa 61.8; Zech 8.17; 1QS 1.4). The *Nicolaitans* (probably not connected with the Nicolaus of Acts 6.5, contrary to Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 1.26.3) are also mentioned in the message to the church in Pergamum. It is not known what their *works* were, or what doctrines they taught, though they must have permitted some accommodation to pagan religious cults. **7:** *What the Spirit is saying*, speaking through Christ to John. *Conquers*, a military term, suggesting continuous vigilance. *Tree of life*, Gen 2.9; 3.24; cf. Rev 22.2,14.

2.8-11: The second message, sent to *Smyrna*, commends the church for its perseverance amid *affliction* and *poverty*. Smyrna (the modern Izmir) was a port city 50 km (30 mi) north of Ephesus. **8:** Isa 44.6; 48.12. **9:** *Rich*, in spiritual things. *Those who say that they are Jews and are not*, i.e., Jews whose anti-Christian arguments are causing suffering in the church. *Synagogue of Satan* reflects the tension between Jews and Jewish Christians (cf. Jn 8.44; 1QH 2.22, which refers to apostate Jews as "a



Chs 2-3: The seven churches.

REVELATION 2.10-2.22

gogue of Satan.¹⁰ Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Beware, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison so that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have affliction. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.¹¹ Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Whoever conquers will not be harmed by the second death.

12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword:

13 "I know where you are living, where Satan's throne is. Yet you are holding fast to my name, and you did not deny your faith in me^a even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan lives. 14 But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the people of Israel, so that they would eat food sacrificed to idols and practice fornication. 15 So you also have some who hold to the teaching of the Nicolai-

tans. 16 Repent then. If not, I will come to you soon and make war against them with the sword of my mouth. 17 Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give a white stone, and on the white stone is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it.

18 "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze:

19 "I know your works—your love, faith, service, and patient endurance. I know that your last works are greater than the first. 20 But I have this against you: you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet and is teaching and beguiling my servants^b to practice fornication and to eat food sacrificed to idols. 21 I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her fornication. 22 Beware, I am throwing

a Or deny my faith. *b* Gk slaves

congregation of Belial"). 10: *Ten days*, a limited period of trial (Dan 1:12); *Crown of life*, the reward of eternal life (Jas 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4). 11: *The second death*, the final condemnation of the unfaithful (20:14).

2.12-17: The third message is sent to Pergamum, a noted center of the Roman imperial cult ca. 80 km (60 mi) north of Smyrna. 12: *Sharp two-edged sword*, 1:16n. 13: *Where Satan's throne is*, in contrast to the throne of God in ch 4, this may be a reference either to the temple of the emperor Augustus or to the monumental altar of Zeus, both at Pergamum. *Antipas* is otherwise unknown; he is the only martyr named in the book. 14-15: *The teaching of Balaam*, here the author vilifies an opponent by comparing him to the diviner Balaam of Num 22.5-24.25. After Balaam's oracles, the Israelites engaged in both sexual relations with outsiders and idolatry (see Num 25; 31:16). To *eat food sacrificed to idols* meant either to participate in ritual banquets or to purchase and consume meat that had been sacrificed in the temples of Pergamum (1 Cor 8; 10). *Practice fornication* here is meant metaphorically, with sexual misconduct symbolizing religious infidelity. 15: *Nicolaitans*, see v. 6n. 17: *Hidden manna*, eschatological nourishment from heaven (Ex 16.33-34; Ps 78.24). *White*, the color symbolizing victory and joy. A *new name*, Isa 62.2.

2.18-29: The fourth message is sent to Thyatira, a commercial center renowned for its many trade guilds, ca. 110 km (70 mi) north-northeast of Ephesus. Lydia, one of Paul's converts, was a dealer in purple cloth from Thyatira (Acts 16.14-15). 18: Dan 10.6. 20: *That woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet*, John's characterization of a female opponent at Thyatira, here identified contemptuously with the Phoenician wife of King Ahab, the queen who worshiped Baal and who opposed the prophet Elijah (1 Kings 16.31; 19.1-2). 22: *I am throwing her on a bed*, punishment with serious sickness is threatened for the Thyatiran Jezebel. *Those who commit adultery with her* are those who are complicit in her idolatry. In the Hebrew Bible idolatry is often called *adultery*, with marital infidelity used as a metaphor for worship of other gods than the LORD (Deut 31.16; Judg 2.17; 1 Chr 5.25); see also vv. 14-15n.

REVELATION 2.23-3.10

her on a bed, and those who commit adultery with her I am throwing into great distress, unless they repent of her doings; ²³and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am the one who searches minds and hearts, and I will give to each of you as your works deserve. ²⁴But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call 'the deep things of Satan,' to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden; ²⁵only hold fast to what you have until I come. ²⁶To everyone who conquers and continues to do my works to the end,

I will give authority over the nations; ²⁷to rule^a them with an iron rod, as when clay pots are shattered— ²⁸even as I also received authority from my Father. To the one who conquers I will also give the morning star. ²⁹Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

3 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars:

"I know your works; you have a name of being alive, but you are dead. ²Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death, for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God. ³Remember then what you received and heard; obey it, and repent. If you do not wake up,

I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you. ⁴Yet you have still a few persons in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes; they will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. ⁵If you conquer, you will be clothed like them in white robes, and I will not blot your name out of the book of life; I will confess your name before my Father and before his angels. ⁶Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens:

8. "I know your works. Look, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. ⁹I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but are lying—I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. ¹⁰Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to test the inhabi-

^a Or to shepherd

23: *Her children*, those who follow her teachings. **24:** *Deep things of Satan*, a sarcastic reference to heretical teachings (contrast 1 Cor 2.10). **26-27:** The conquerors will share in Christ's rule (Ps 2.8-9). **28:** *The morning star* is Christ himself (22.16). **29:** *Is saying*, in this revelation.

3.1-6: The fifth message is sent to *Sardis*, a prosperous city ca. 85 km (55 mi) northeast of Ephesus that had been the capital of the kingdom of Lydia. **1:** *Seven spirits*, see 1.4n. *Seven stars*, 1.20. *You have a name*, its Christianity was only nominal. **3:** *Received*, the gospel. *Like a thief*, just when unexpected (16.15; Mt 24.42-44; 1 Thess 5.2). **4-5:** *Soiled . . . white*, not impurity/purity, but surrender/conquest (see 2.17n.). *White robes* are a frequent image; see 3.18; 4.4; 6.11; 7.9; 19.14; cf. Zech 3.3-5. **5:** *Book of life*, the register of God containing the names of the redeemed (13.8; 17.8; 20.12,15; Ex 32.32; Ps 69.28; Dan 12.1; Mal 3.16; Lk 10.20).

3:7-13: The sixth message is sent to *Philadelphia*, a small town 50 km (80 mi) southeast of Sardis. **7:** *Key of David*, a symbol of authority (Isa 22.22). **8:** *An open door*, of opportunity (1 Cor 16.9; 2 Cor 2.12). **9:** *Synagogue of Satan*, see 2.9n. On conflict between Christians and Jews in Philadelphia see Ignatius, *Philad.* 6.1. *Bow down before your feet*, Isa 43.4; 60.14. **10:** Despite its weakness (v. 8), the Philadelphian church will be safeguarded during the eschatological tribulation. **11:** *I am coming soon*,

REVELATION 3.11-4.5

tants of the earth. ¹¹I am coming soon; hold fast to what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. ¹²If you conquer, I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God; you will never go out of it. I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. ¹³Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

¹⁴ "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the origin^a of God's creation:

¹⁵ "I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot. ¹⁶So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷For you say, 'I am rich; I have prospered, and I need nothing.' You do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. ¹⁸Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich; and white robes to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen; and salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. ¹⁹I reprove and discipline

those whom I love. Be earnest, therefore, and repent. ²⁰Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me. ²¹To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne, just as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. ²²Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches."

4 After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." ²At once I was in the spirit,^b and there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne! ³And the one seated there looks like jasper and carnelian, and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald. ⁴Around the throne are twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones are twenty-four elders, dressed in white robes, with golden crowns on their heads. ⁵Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne burn seven flaming

a Or beginning *b* Or in the Spirit

22.7,12,20. **12:** A pillar, steadfast and permanent (Gal 2.9). *New Jerusalem*, 21.2. *The name of my God*, marking the one inscribed as God's possession and as specially dedicated to God. *The name of the city of my God*, signifying citizenship in the new Jerusalem; see 21.2,10.

3.14-22: The seventh message is sent to *Laodicea*, a wealthy city near Colossae (Col 2.1; 4.13-16), 155 km (95 mi) east of Ephesus. **14:** *The Amen* is Jesus Christ (2 Cor 1.20). *The faithful and true witness*, 1.5. The list of titles may derive from a Greek translation of Isa 65.16. *The origin of God's creation*, Christ is the principle and source of all creation (Jn 1.3; Col 1.15,18). **15-16:** Their *lukewarm* Christianity is nauseating like the tepid water for which the city was known. **17:** Complacent and self-satisfied, they are spiritually poverty-stricken (Hos 12.8). **18:** *Buy from me gold refined by fire*, an idiom for removing sin from one's life (Job 13.10; Prov 27.21). A commercial transaction is here used as a metaphor for grasping salvation. *Eyes*, Laodicea was noted for its manufacture of a medication for ophthalmic disorders. **19:** God's chastening has beneficent motives (Prov 3.12; Heb 12.5-11). **20:** An invitation to participate in the messianic banquet in the coming age (cf. Mt 26.29). **21:** *A place with me*, a promise of reigning with Christ in glory (22.5; Lk 22.30).

4.1-5.14: Vision of God enthroned and of the Lamb. **4.1:** *A door stood open*, Gen 28.17. *The first voice*, the voice of the exalted Christ mentioned in 1.10. *Come up*, John is invited to ascend to heaven, to behold visions of God (Ezek 3.12; 8.3; 11.1). **2:** *A throne*, Ezek 1.26-28; Dan 7.9. **3:** The glory of the divine presence is described in terms of precious gems; cf. Ex 24.10. **4:** *Twenty-four elders*, heavenly attendants around God's throne, probably symbolizing the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles. **5:** *Flashes of lightning*, expressive of the majesty of the Most High (Ex 19.16; Ezek 1.13; Rev 11.19). *Seven flaming*

REVELATION 4.6-5.9

torches, which are the seven spirits of God;⁶ and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal.

Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: ⁷the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with a face like a human face, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. ⁸And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing,

"Holy, holy, holy,
the Lord God the Almighty,
who was and is and is to come."

⁹And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰the twenty-four elders fall before the one who is seated on the throne and worship the one who lives forever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing,

¹¹"You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor
and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they existed and
were created."

5 Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed^a with seven seals; ²and I saw a mighty angel pro-

claiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?"

³And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. ⁴And I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. ⁵Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered; so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."

⁶ Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne. ⁸When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb; each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹They sing a new song:

"You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slaughtered and by your
blood you ransomed for God
saints from every tribe and
language and people
and nation;

^a Or written on the inside, and sealed on the back

^b Gk ransomed for God from

torches, Zech 4.2-3. *Seven spirits*, 1.4. **6**: *A sea of glass*, Ezek. 1.22. *Four living creatures*, heavenly beings representing humankind and all animals (Ezek 1.5,10). *Full of eyes*, symbolizing unceasing watchfulness (Ezek 1.18). **8**: *Six wings* . . . *Holy, holy, holy*, Isa 6.2-3. **10**: *Cast their crowns*, an act of homage and submission, acknowledging that all power comes from God. **11**: *Our Lord and God*, titles that were also attributed to the Roman emperor (Suetonius, *Domitian* 13). **5:1**: *A scroll*, containing the divine plan of judgment and salvation (Ezek 2.9-10). *Sealed*, therefore both unalterable and unknown to others (Dan 12.4). **3-5**: No created being is worthy to carry out God's plan; only the messiah can do so. *Lion of . . . Judah*, Gen 49.9-10. *Root of David*, Isa 11.1,10. *Has conquered*, the paradoxical victory of the cross and resurrection (Jn 16.33). **6-9**: The *Lamb . . . slaughtered*, the crucified messiah; a reference to Christ's sacrificial death; by which God's purposes contained in the scroll are accomplished (Isa 53.7; Jn 1.29,36; 1 Pet 1.19); *Seven horns*, fullness of power (Deut 33.17; Ps 89.17; Dan 7.7-8.24; 1 Enoch 80.6-12,37); *Seven eyes*, Zech 3.9; 4.10; 2 Chr 16.9. *Seven spirits*, 1.4. **8**: *Harp and golden bowls*, objects used in worship. *The prayers of the saints* on earth are joined with the worship rendered to the *Lamb* by the heavenly creatures. **9-10**: *A new song* is sung because Christ by his sacrifice has inaugurated a new era (14.3). New hymns of praise mark and celebrate special occasions (Ps 33.3; 40.3; 96.1; 98.1; 144.9; 149.1; Isa 42.10).

REVELATION 5.10-6.9

10: you have made them to be a kingdom
of priests serving our God,
and they will reign on earth.”

11: Then I looked, and I heard the voice
of many angels surrounding the throne and
the living creatures and the elders; they
numbered myriads of myriads and thou-
sands of thousands; 12 singing with full
voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb that was
slain to receive power and wealth and
wisdom and might
and honor and glory and blessing!”

13: Then I heard every creature in heaven
and on earth and under the earth and in the
sea, and all that is in them, singing,

“To the one seated on the throne and
to the Lamb
be blessing and honor and glory and
might
forever and ever!”

14: And the four living creatures said,
“Amen!” And the elders fell down and
worshiped.

6: Then I saw the Lamb open one of the
seven seals, and I heard one of the four
living creatures call out, as with a voice of
thunder, “Come!”^b 2: I looked, and there
was a white horse! Its rider had a bow; a

crown was given to him, and he came out
conquering and to conquer.

3: When he opened the second seal, I
heard the second living creature call out,
“Come!”^b 4: And out came another
horse, bright red; its rider was permitted to
take peace from the earth, so that people
would slaughter one another; and he was
given a great sword.

5: When he opened the third seal, I heard
the third living creature call out,
“Come!”^b I looked, and there was a black
horse! Its rider held a pair of scales in his
hand, 6 and I heard what seemed to be a
voice in the midst of the four living crea-
tures saying, “A quart of wheat for a day’s
pay,^d and three quarts of barley for a day’s
pay,^d but do not damage the olive oil and
the wine!”

7: When he opened the fourth seal, I
heard the voice of the fourth living creature
call out, “Come!”^b 8: I looked and there
was a pale green horse! Its rider’s name was
Death, and Hades followed with him; they
were given authority over a fourth of the
earth, to kill with sword, famine, and pesti-
lence, and by the wild animals of the earth.

9: When he opened the fifth seal, I saw

^a Gk priests to ^b Or “Go!” ^c Or went ^d Gk a
denarius

The Lamb is adored in terms similar to the adoration rendered to God (4.11). A kingdom and priests, see 1.6n. 11-12: The sevenfold praise of *myriads* (Dan. 7.10) in heaven honoring the sacrificial Lamb. 13: Universal praise to God and to the Lamb as equal in majesty.

6.1-17: The opening of the first six seals of the scroll, and the enactment of what is written therein.

6.1-8: Four seals of destruction. 1: *Come!* Addressed successively to each of the four riders (Zech 6:1-8) who accomplish God’s purposes. 2: The *white horse* symbolizes a conquering power that none can resist (in 19:11-13 the reference is to Christ). The *crown* given to the rider as he is sent forth suggests a guarantee of victory. 4: The *red horse* symbolizes war and bloodshed. *Permitted to take peace from the earth*, effectively annulling the “pax Romana,” the self-congratulatory designation of Roman imperial rule as “the Roman peace.” 5: The *black horse* symbolizes famine, which follows upon war. 6: A *quart of wheat* . . . *three quarts of barley*, sold at exorbitant prices because of war and famine. The prohibition against harming the *olive oil* and the *wine* (neither olive trees nor grape vines are newly planted each year) suggests that the famine is limited. 8: The *pale green horse* symbolizes pestilence and death. *Hades*, the Greek god of the underworld; cf. 1.18. A *fourth* part indicates wide but not total devastation. *Pestilence*, Ex 9.3; 2 Sam 24.13; Ezek 5.12. *Wild animals*, Ezek 6.17; 29.5; 33.27.

6.9-8.1: Three seals of judgment.

6.9-11: The fifth seal describes the appeal for divine justice and retribution by the martyrs (v. 10), and the heavenly response to their plea (v. 11). 9: The souls of the martyrs are said to be *under the altar* because they had been martyred for the sake of Christ (2.10; Mt 24.9; Phil 2.17; 2 Tim 4.6). 10: *How*

REVELATION 6.10-7.8

under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered for the word of God and for the testimony they had given; ¹⁰they cried out with a loud voice, "Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be before you judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?" ¹¹They were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number would be complete both of their fellow servants^a and of their brothers and sisters,^b who were soon to be killed as they themselves had been killed.

¹² When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and there came a great earthquake; the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, ¹³and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree drops its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. ¹⁴The sky vanished like a scroll rolling itself up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. ¹⁵Then the kings of the earth and the magnates and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; ¹⁶calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; ¹⁷for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

⁷ After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth so that no wind could blow on earth or sea or against

any tree. ²¹I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to damage earth and sea, ³saying, "Do not damage the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have marked the servants^a of our God with a seal on their foreheads."

⁴ And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred forty-four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the people of Israel:

- ⁵ From the tribe of Judah twelve thousand sealed,
- from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand,
- from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand,
- ⁶ from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand,
- from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand,
- from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand,
- ⁷ from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand,
- from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand,
- from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand,
- ⁸ from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand,
- from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand,

^a Gk slaves ^b Gk brothers

long? is a cry for divine vindication uttered by those who have suffered unbearable oppression (e.g., Ps 6.3; 13.2; 90.13; Zech 1:12-16). *Avenge our blood*, God is the one who takes up the cause of those killed for the sake of justice (Ps 78.1-10 [LXX]). ¹¹: *White robe*; see 2.17n.; 3.4-5n.; 7.9n.

^{6.12-17}: The opening of the sixth seal unleashes a great earthquake, and its catastrophic effects on the cosmos and on human society are described. ¹²: *Black as sackcloth . . .*, Joel 2.30-31. ¹³⁻¹⁴: *The stars . . . fell to the earth . . .*, Isa 34.4; Mk 13.25. ¹⁵⁻¹⁷: All classes of society seek to escape from the wrath of God (Isa 2.10,19). ¹⁶: *Fall on us*, Hos 10.8; Lk 23.30. ¹⁷: *The great day of their wrath*, the time of judgment (Joel 2.11).

^{7.1-17}: An interlude between the sixth and seventh seals: two visions which provide the promise of divine protection for the faithful during the time of tribulation (vv. 1-8) and assurance of ultimate salvation (vv. 9-17). ¹: *The four winds* are destructive forces to be unleashed by God (Jer 49.36). They correspond to the four horsemen in 6.1-8 (see Zech 6.5). ³: A seal (Ezek 9.4-6) marks those under God's protection. Seals were used to signify ownership or authorship. ⁴: The symbolic number 144,000, which is the square of 12 multiplied by 1000, has been interpreted variously as a reference to: the faithful remnant of Israel; the church; the martyrs; the remnant of Christians who survive the eschatological

REVELATION 7.9-8.6

from the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand sealed.

9 After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands.

10 They cried out in a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

11 And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, singing,

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

13 Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" 14 I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 For this reason they are before the throne of God,

and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.

16 They will hunger no more, and thirst no more;

the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat;

17 for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

8 When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

3 Another angel with a golden censer came and stood at the altar; he was given a great quantity of incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar that is before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. 5 Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth; and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

6 Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets made ready to blow them.

turmoil; all the redeemed (14.1,3). *Every tribe*, but the tribes of Dan and Ephraim are not mentioned. 9: A *great multitude*, in contrast with the 144,000 in v. 4 (5.9). *White robes* and *palm branches* symbolize righteousness and victory (see 3.4-5n.; Dan 11.35). 12: A sevenfold ascription of praise to God. 14: *The blood of the Lamb* cleanses from sin (Jn 1.29; 1 Jn 1.7); in the symbolism of the book, *blood* (sacrifice) can make robes . . . *white* (lead to victory). 15: *Before the throne of God*, in God's presence because of their faithfulness. Their ceaseless *worship* takes place in God's temple in heaven. *Shelter them*, lit. "spread his tabernacle over them." 16: Isa 49.10; Ps 121.6. 17: A paradox: The *Lamb* is a *shepherd* (Ps 23.1-2; Ezek 34.23-24; Jn 10.11). *Springs of . . . life*, 21.6; 22.1,17; Jn 4.10; 7.37. *Wipe away every tear*; 21.4; Isa 25.8.

8.1-5: The seventh seal is opened. The opening of the last of the seven seals (5.1; 6.1) leads to an awesome and reverent *silence*, as response to divine judgment (Hab 3.3-6; Zech 2.13-3.2). A return to "primeval silence" prior to the judgment appears in 2 Esd 7.30. 2: The seven angels *stand before God* ready to do God's will (Tob 12.15). 3: *Incense . . . prayers*, Ps 141.2. 5: Ezek 10.2. The *earthquake* announces the divine judgment about to be executed.

8.6-9.21: The first six trumpets unleash new convulsions of nature, patterned after the plagues inflicted on Egypt in the book of Exodus (Ex 7.14-10.23).

8.6-13: Four trumpets of destruction. 7: *Hail and fire*, Ex 9.23-25; both destroyers of crops. A *third*,

REVELATION 8.7-9.11

7 The first angel blew his trumpet, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were hurled to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

8 The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea. 9 A third of the sea became blood; a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

10 The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. 11 The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many died from the water, because it was made bitter.

12 The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light was darkened; a third of the day was kept from shining, and likewise the night.

13 Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew in mid-heaven, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!"

9 And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from

heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit; 2 he opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft. 3 Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given authority like the authority of scorpions of the earth. 4 They were told not to damage the grass of the earth or any green growth or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 They were allowed to torture them for five months, but not to kill them; and their torture was like the torture of a scorpion when it stings someone. 6 And in those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will flee from them.

7 In appearance the locusts were like horses equipped for battle. On their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, 8 their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth; 9 they had scales like iron breastplates, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. 10 They have tails like scorpions, with stingers, and in their tails is their power to harm people for five months. 11 They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit; his name in

the devastation wrought by the trumpet plagues is not total. 9: Ex 7.20. 11: *Wormwood*, a bitter herb, poisons the waters into which it falls (Jer 9.15; 23.15). It is associated with the constellation Scorpio. 12: Ex 10.21-22; cf. Joel 3.15; Am 8.9. 13: *An eagle* announces impending judgment. The threefold *woe* refers to the plagues unleashed at the sounding of the next three trumpets.

9.1-11.19: Three trumpets of woe.

9.1-12: The plague of monstrous locusts, which combine the terrors of evil spirits and of invading cavalry (probably Parthians). 1: *A star . . . fallen from heaven*, a heavenly being, possibly an angel, identified by name in v. 11 (cf. Isa 14.12; Lk 10.18). The *bottomless pit* is the abyss, the underworld, from which the beast arises (11.7; 17.8). 3: *Locusts*, Ex 10.12-15; cf. Joel 1.4. 4: God's servants are not to be harmed (7.3). 5: *Five months*, although this may be a reference to the life cycle of locusts, which are hatched in spring and live until the end of summer, the likely significance of this time period is symbolic, indicating the limited time span of this plague. 6: *Will seek death*, in utter despair because of the torments (cf. Job 3.21). 7-10: These are monstrous locusts, described in anthropomorphic terms (as in Joel 1 and 2), combining human features with the features of other creatures into a terrifying composite appearance. 11: The name *Abaddon*, which means "Destruction," denotes the depths of Sheol (Job 26.6; see Prov 15.11; Sheol and *Abaddon* are the abode and state—destruction—of the dead).

REVELATION 9.12-10.8

Hebrew is Abaddon,^a and in Greek he is called Apollyon.^b

12. The first woe has passed. There are still two woes to come.

13 Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."¹⁴ So the four angels were released, who had been held ready for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, to kill a third of humankind. ¹⁵ The number of the troops of cavalry was two hundred million; I heard their number. ¹⁶ And this was how I saw the horses in my vision: the riders wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire^c and of sulfur; the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths. ¹⁷ By these three plagues a third of humankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. ¹⁸ For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they inflict harm.

20. The rest of humankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands or give up worshipping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk. ²¹ And they did

not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their fornication or their thefts.

10 And I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. ² He held a little scroll open in his hand. Setting his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, ³ he gave a great shout, like a lion roaring. And when he shouted, the seven thunders sounded. ⁴ And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down." ⁵ Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and the land

raised his right hand to heaven and swore by him who lives forever and ever,

who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it: "There will be no more delay, ⁷ but in the days when the seventh angel is to blow his trumpet, the mystery of God will be fulfilled, as he announced to his servants the prophets."

8 Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go,

^a That is, Destruction ^b That is, Destroyer
^c Other ancient authorities lack four ^d Gk hyacinth
^e Gk slaves

9.13-21: The plague of monstrous cavalry. 14: The Euphrates marked the eastern border of the Roman Empire, where invasion by its enemies the Parthians was feared. 16-19: These fire-breathing, lion-headed, serpent-tailed monsters are composite creatures, like the Chimera of Greek and Roman mythology. Also see the description of conquering soldiers in Jer 46.2-23. 20-21: The trumpet plagues fail to provoke the repentance that is their purpose. Compare the hardness of Pharaoh's heart despite the plagues (Ex 8.15,19). 20: Idols, Dan 5.23. 21: Murders . . . thefts, sins associated with idolatry, Wis 12.3-6.

10.1-11.13: An interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets; two visions (10:1-11 and 11:1-13) present a renewal of John's prophetic commission (10:1-11) and describe what becomes of the two prophetic witnesses in the holy city (11:1-13).

10.1-11: The commission renewed. 1: Another mighty angel, in addition to the mighty angel in 5.2. 2: The little scroll is distinct from the seven-sealed scroll in the right hand of God in 5.1. This scroll is in the angel's left hand, since in 10.5 he raises his right hand to heaven to swear an oath (Dan 12.7). Sea and land indicate the scope of the angel's authority. 4: John is prohibited from disclosing what the seven thunders have said, but he "must prophesy again" (v. 11) after eating the little scroll. 6: There will be no more delay in the accomplishment of God's will—the sounding of the seventh trumpet is imminent. 7: The mystery of God, Rom 16.25-26; Eph 1.9; 3.3-9; Col 1.26-27. His servants the prophets, Am 3.7. 8-10: Sweet, because it contains God's words; bitter because it involves God's terrible

REVELATION 10.9-11.11

take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." ⁹So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll; and he said to me, "Take it, and eat; it will be bitter to your stomach, but sweet as honey in your mouth." ¹⁰So I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it; it was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.

11 Then they said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples and nations and languages and kings."

11 Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Come and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there; ²but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample over the holy city for forty-two months. ³And I will grant my two witnesses authority to prophesy for one thousand two hundred sixty days, wearing sackcloth."

⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. ⁵ And if anyone wants to harm

them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes; anyone who wants to harm them must be killed in this manner. ⁶ They have authority to shut the sky, so that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have authority over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.

⁷ When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, ⁸ and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that is prophetically^a called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. ⁹ For three and a half days members of the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb; ¹⁰ and the inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and celebrate and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to the inhabitants of the earth.

¹¹ But after the three and a half days, the breath^b of life from God entered them,

a Or allegorically; Gk spiritually b Or the spirit

judgments (Ezek 2.10). **11:** *You must*, an inescapable obligation, in accord with the divine will, *prophesy again*; the second part of the book (chs 12-22) contains these prophecies. *Peoples and nations and languages and kings* (Dan 3.4,7 [LXX]; Rev 5.9; 7.9) suggests the broad range of John's prophetic activity.

11.1-13: The measuring of the temple and the two witnesses. **1:** The symbolic act of the measurement of the sanctuary *and those who worship there* emphasizes the protection and preservation of the faithful who are within (as in Zech 2.1-5; cf. Ezek 40.3-42.20). **2:** *The court outside*, the court of the Gentiles. *The holy city*, Jerusalem (Mt 4.5; 27.53). *Forty-two months* = 1,260 days (v. 3) = 3½ years, a number that symbolizes the period of eschatological tribulation (Dan 7.25; 9.27; 12.7,11-12). As half of seven, the number of completeness, it also symbolizes radical incompleteness. **3:** While the *two witnesses* are unnamed here, it has been suggested that they represent prophetic figures who were expected to return in the end-time, possibly Enoch (Gen 5.24) and Elijah (2 Kings 2.1-11; Mal 4.5) or Moses (Deut 18.15,18) and Elijah. They are clothed in *sackcloth*, a sign that their prophecy called for repentance. **4:** *Two olive trees*, supplying the lamps in the temple (Zech 4.3-14). **6:** *Shut the sky*, cause a drought, as did Elijah (1 Kings 17.1). *Authority over the waters . . .*; as did Moses and Aaron (Ex 7.17-21). **7:** *The beast*, 13.1; 17.8. *The bottomless pit*, see 9.1n. *Will make war on them*, Dan 7.21. **8:** *The great city* is identified here *prophetically*, i.e., allegorically or spiritually rather than literally by its proper name. While the majority of scholars understand the city as Jerusalem, others suggest that the city is Rome, as is Babylon in 17.1-6. The name *Sodom*, applied to Jerusalem in Isa 1.10; Jer 23.14; Ezek 16.46-56, alludes to that city's legendary wickedness (Gen 18.16-19.29). *Egypt* is associated with idolatry and is the land from which God delivered the enslaved people of Israel. *Where also their Lord was crucified*, Jerusalem. **10:** The *prophets had been a torment*, preaching an unpopular message of repentance. **11-12:** The

REVELATION 11.12-12.3

and they stood on their feet, and those who saw them were terrified. ¹²Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies watched them. ¹³At that moment there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

¹⁴The second woe has passed. The third woe is coming very soon.

¹⁵Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying,

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah,^b and he will reign forever and ever."

¹⁶Then the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷singing,

"We give you thanks, Lord God Almighty, who are and who were, for you have taken your great power

and begun to reign.
¹⁸The nations raged, but your wrath has come, and the time for judging the dead, for rewarding your servants,^c the prophets and saints and all who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying those who destroy the earth."

¹⁹Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

12 A great portent appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. ²She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pangs, in the agony of giving birth. ³Then another portent appeared in heaven: a great red drag-

a Other ancient authorities read *I* *b* Gk *Christ*
c Gk *slaves*

witnesses are resuscitated (cf. Ezek 37.5,10) and taken to heaven (2 Kings 2.11). **12:** *Come up here*, 4.1. **13:** *Gave glory to the God of heaven*, a positive outcome of the *great earthquake*.

11.14-19: The seventh trumpet announces (v. 15) the consummation of God's reign (10.7). **16:** *Elders*, 4.4n. **17-18:** A song of triumph. **19:** Divine self-revelation concludes the vision of the seven trumpets and introduces the vision of ch 12. *The ark of [the] covenant* was constructed according to divine instruction at Mount Sinai (Ex 25.10-16) and eventually installed in the innermost room of the Temple by Solomon (1 Kings 8.1-12). It was presumably destroyed when the Babylonians captured Jerusalem in 586 BCE (but see 2 Macc 2.4-8).

12.1-17: The vision of the woman, the child, and the dragon is rich in symbolism drawn from mythological traditions found in ancient Babylonia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, as well as in the Hebrew Bible. One well-known version of the story tells of the goddess Leto, pregnant with Apollo, who is menaced by the dragon Python, who pursues her because he knows that Apollo is destined to kill him (Hyginus, *Fabulae* 140). Here this material is reinterpreted in terms of Jewish traditions and expectations as the story of the birth of the messiah. **1:** A *great portent*, a sign or omen *in heaven* that points to a momentous event on earth; see v. 3; 15.1; cf. Lk 21.11; *Didache* 16.6. The *woman* is unnamed, and her precise identity is uncertain. Many scholars understand her as the symbolic representation of Israel, from whom the messiah is born (v. 5); the *twelve stars* thus refer to the twelve tribes. Patristic and medieval Christian interpreters most often take her to be Mary, or sometimes to be the church. Elements of her description are characteristic of several ancient goddesses. **3:** The *dragon*, identified in v. 9 as "the Devil" and "Satan," is Leviathan, the great sea monster of Canaanite tradition and of the Hebrew Bible (Job 40.25; Isa 27.1), one specification of the primeval watery chaos. *Seven heads and ten horns*, 13.1; 17.3; cf. Ps 74.13-14. These details are probably drawn from Dan 7.1-8, where they represent various empires and rulers; it is unclear what they symbolize here; cf. 17.9-10. **4:** A *third of the stars*, a proportion analogous

REVELATION 12:4-12:16

on, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. ⁴His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born. ⁵And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule^a all the nations with a rod of iron. But her child was snatched away and taken to God and to his throne; ⁶and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, so that there she can be nourished for one thousand two hundred sixty days.

⁷ And war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸but they were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. ⁹The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, proclaiming,

“Now have come the salvation and
the power
and the kingdom of our God
and the authority of his Messiah,^b

for the accuser of our comrades^c has
been thrown down,
who accuses them day and night
before our God.

¹¹ But they have conquered him by the
blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony,
for they did not cling to life even in
the face of death.

¹² Rejoice then, you heavens
and those who dwell in them!
But woe to the earth and the sea,
for the devil has come down to you
with great wrath,
because he knows that his time
is short!”

¹³ So when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued^d the woman who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle, so that she could fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to her place where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. ¹⁵Then from his mouth the serpent poured water like a river after the woman, to sweep her away with the flood. ¹⁶But the earth came to the help of the woman; it opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the

^a Or to shepherd. ^b Gk Christ. ^c Gk brothers.
^d Or persecuted.

to the destruction caused by the trumpet plagues (8.7-9.19; Dan 8.10). *Threw them to the earth*, Dan 8.20. ⁵: *Rule . . . with a rod of iron*, an allusion to Ps 2.9, originally concerning the king of Israel, and interpreted as referring to a future anointed ruler or messiah (*Psalms of Solomon* 17.23-24). The messianic child is *snatched away and taken to God*: The resurrection and exaltation of Christ denies the demonic dragon victory over its prey. ⁶: *The wilderness* is a place where God provides refuge and sustenance amidst adversity (e.g., Gen 21.14-21; Deut 8.15-16; 29.5; 32.10; 1 Kings 17.1-2). *One thousand, two hundred sixty days*, the equivalent of “a time, and times, and half a time” (v. 14), “forty-two months” (11.2; 13.5), amounts to three and a half years. This symbolic number suggests a period of time limited by divine design. ⁷⁻¹²: The *war in heaven* and its outcome offers, in symbolic language, the reason for the persecution and oppression of believers (v. 17). ⁷: *Michael*, an archangel and the champion of Israel (Dan 10.13,21; 12.1; Jude 9) engages in combat against *the dragon and his angels* (Dan 10.20). ⁸: *Defeated . . . in heaven*, see 9.1-2. Both passages may allude to Isa 14.12-20. ⁹: Lk 10.18. *That ancient serpent*; see 9.3n.; Gen 3.1-7; Isa 27.1. *Satan* means adversary, accuser (see Job 1.6-12; 2.1-7; Zech 3.1-2). The *deceiver*, 20.10. ¹⁰: *The accuser*, Job 1.9-11. ¹¹: *They have conquered*, the paradoxical victory of the crucified Christ (see 5.6n.) and of the martyrs, who were faithful unto death. ¹²: *Rejoice*; Ps 96.11; Isa 49.13. ¹⁴: *Eagle*, Ex 19.4; Deut 32.11. ¹⁵: *Water . . . flood*, the chaos of the primeval sea monster (Isa 27.1; Ps 74.13; see 12.3n.). ¹⁶: *Earth* helps the woman, as in Ex 15.12 the earth swallows up the pursuing Egyptian armies. ¹⁷: The frustrated *dragon* redirects its anger toward *the rest of the woman's children*, namely, those who *keep the commandments . . . and hold the testimony of Jesus* (14.12).

REVELATION 12:17-13:15

dragon had poured from his mouth. 17 Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her children, those who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus.

18 Then the dragon^a took his stand on the sand of the seashore. 1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads; and on its horns were ten diadems, and on its heads were blasphemous names. 2 And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And the dragon gave it his power and his throne and great authority. 3 One of its heads seemed to have received a death-blow, but its mortal wound^b had been healed. In amazement the whole earth followed the beast. 4 They worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

5 The beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words; and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. 6 It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. 7 Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them.^c It was given authority over every tribe and people and language and nation, and all the inhabitants of the earth will

worship it; everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered.^d

9 Let anyone who has an ear listen:

10 If you are to be taken captive,

into captivity you go;

if you kill with the sword,

with the sword you must be killed.

Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

11 Then I saw another beast that rose out of the earth; it had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. 12 It exercises all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and it makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound^e had been healed. 13 It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of all; 14 and by the signs that it is allowed to perform on behalf of the beast, it deceives the inhabitants of earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that had been wounded by the sword^f and yet lived; 15 and it was allowed to give breath^g to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast could even speak and cause those

^a Gk *Then he*; other ancient authorities read *Then I stood*. ^b Gk *the plague of its death*. ^c Other ancient authorities lack this sentence. ^d Or *written in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered from the foundation of the world*. ^e Gk *whose plague of its death*. ^f Or *that had received the plague of the sword*. ^g Or *spirit*.

12:18-13:18: The two beasts. 13:1-10: The *beast* from the sea combines the powers of the four beasts of Dan 7 and represents the Roman Empire, incited by the *dragon* (v. 2) to oppress the *saints* (v. 7). 1-2: Based on Dan 7:1-7. *The sea*, primeval chaos. *Blasphemous names*, Roman emperors were worshiped as gods. 3: *Death-blow*, perhaps an allusion to the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BCE, or to the belief that the emperor Nero, who committed suicide in 68 CE, would be restored to life and rule (see 17:8n.). The *mortal wound* (to the beast as a whole) did not destroy the empire. *Amazement*, as of one astonished by a remarkable victory or portent (Jdt 11.16; 2 Esd 12.3, the destruction of Rome). 5: The sovereignty of God, even amid the oppression of the faithful, is implied by the use of passive verbs here and in vv. 7, 10, 14, 15 (cf. 6.4; see 17.17n.). *Forty-two months*, see 11.2n. 8: *From the foundation of the world*, this phrase would most naturally qualify *slaughtered* (see note d). A name can be removed from the *book of life* (3.5n.); later, judgment seems to depend on one's conduct of life (20.12). The translation here is a harmonization with 17.8. 10: Jer 15.2; 43.11; Mt 26.52. 11-18: The *beast* from the earth; associated with the false prophet (16.13; 19.20), enforces emperor worship (v. 12) and produces *great signs* (v. 13) or portents to deceive the people (v. 14); cf. Mt 24.24; 2 Thess 2.9-10. 14: The *image*; a statue of the deified emperor.

REVELATION 13.16–14.8

who would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.¹⁶ Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead;¹⁷ so that no one can buy or sell who does not have the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.¹⁸ This calls for wisdom: let anyone with understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a person. Its number is six hundred sixty-six.^a

14 Then I looked, and there was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion! And with him were one hundred forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.² And I heard a voice from heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; the voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps,³ and they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures

and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the one hundred forty-four thousand who have been redeemed from the earth.⁴ It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins; these follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They have been redeemed from humankind as first fruits for God and the Lamb,⁵ and in their mouth no lie was found; they are blameless.

⁶ Then I saw another angel flying in midheaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live^b on the earth—to every nation and tribe and language and people.⁷ He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."

⁸ Then another angel, a second, fol-

a Other ancient authorities read *six hundred sixteen*
b *Gk sit*

16–17: *Marked* in imitation of the sealing of God's servants (7.2–4). The *mark* of the beast (also 14.9,11; 16.2; 19.20; 20.4) is different from the seal of God with which the faithful are identified (7.3; 9.4). Those who do not bear the mark of the beast suffer economic oppression. *Right hand . . . forehead*, phylacteries or "tephillin" were worn on the left arm and forehead (*Ep. Arist.* 1.59; Josephus, *Ant.* 4.213). Egyptian Jews were branded by Ptolemy IV (3 Mace 2.28–29). **18:** *This calls for wisdom*, Dan 12.10. *The number of a person* can be understood either as a number that stands for a specific person, or as a number that can be calculated by human beings, not a hidden number known only to God (cf. 21.17). In the ancient practice of gematria, the numerical equivalents of the letters of the Hebrew or Greek alphabets were added together, and the resulting sum was seen as giving a clue to the nature of the name. Thus *the number of the beast* (666) is the sum of the separate letters of its name. Of countless explanations, the most probable is "Neron Caesar" (in Hebrew letters), which, if spelled without the final "n", also accounts for the variant reading, 616 (see note *a*). The number six represents what falls short of the number of completeness, seven.

14.1–20: A series of three visions intended to reassure the faithful of ultimate victory and vindication. **1–5:** *The Lamb* and those redeemed from the earth; as in 7.4, the *one hundred forty-four thousand* is a symbolic expression. **1:** *Mount Zion*, Jerusalem, the center of God's eschatological reign (Heb 12.22). *Written on their foreheads*, 7.3n.; 22.4. **2:** *Many waters*, see 1.15n. **3:** *They*, the one hundred forty-four thousand. *New song*, 5.8–10. *Throne*; 4.2n. *Four living creatures*, 4.6n. **4:** *They are virgins*, a characterization of the 144,000 that should be understood metaphorically in terms of the sexual abstinence required before contact with the divine (Ex 19.15; Deut 23.10–14) and of warriors before battle (1 Sam 21.5; 2 Sam 11.9–13). *These follow the Lamb*, who is their shepherd (7.17). *First fruits*, Ex 23.19. *No lie*, cf. Zeph 3.13. **6–13:** Three angels announce the coming judgment. **6:** *Flying in midheaven*, 8.13. *Eternal gospel*, the message or proclamation that follows in v. 7, an announcement that God's judgment is imminent. **7:** *Fear God*, 15.4; Deut 10.12–15. *Judgment*, 16.7; 18.10; 19.2. *Worship* acknowledges God's cosmic sovereignty as Creator. **8:** *Fallen, fallen is Babylon* (Isa 21.9) *the great* (Dan 4.30), an anticipation of 18.2: *Babylon* is a symbolic name for Rome (2 Esd 3.1–2). The association of the two is

REVELATION 14.9-15.2

lowed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

9 Then another angel, a third, followed them, crying with a loud voice, "Those who worship the beast and its image, and receive a mark on their foreheads or on their hands, ¹⁰they will also drink the wine of God's wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and they will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image and for anyone who receives the mark of its name."

12 Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and hold fast to the faith of Jesus.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them."

14 Then I looked, and there was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like the Son of Man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand! ¹⁵Another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to the one who sat on the cloud, "Use your sickle and reap, for the

hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is fully ripe." ¹⁶So the one who sat on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

17 Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸Then another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over fire, and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Use your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe." ¹⁹So the angel swung his sickle over the earth and gathered the vintage of the earth, and he threw it into the great wine press of the wrath of God. ²⁰And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the wine press, as high as a horse's bridle, for a distance of about two hundred miles.^b

15 Then I saw another portent in heaven, great and amazing: seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is ended.

2 And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands.

a Or to their faith in b Gk one thousand six hundred stadia

based on the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon in 586 BCE and by Rome in 70 CE. *The wine of the wrath*, 18.3; Jer 51.7. **9-11**: The sentence pronounced against those who *worship the beast* will be worse than what is suffered by those who do not worship it or bear its *mark* (13.15-17). **10**: *Wine of God's wrath*, Jer 25.15-16; 51.7. *Unmixed*, not diluted and therefore more potent (see 3 Macc 5.2). Wine was mixed with water before being drunk. *Fire and sulfur* (19.20; 20.10; 21.8) are instruments of divine punishment (Gen 19.24; Ps 11.6; Ezek 38.22). *Holy angels*, Mk 8.38 **11**: *Smoke*, 18.9,18; 19.3. **12**: An exhortation to perseverance addressed to those against whom the dragon goes to make war in 12.17. **13**: *Blessed*, see 1.3n. A promise assured by *the Spirit*. *Their deeds*, 2.2,19; 3.1-2.15. **14-20**: The eschatological harvest, the final judgment of God (Joel 3.13), involves the ingathering of the saints by *one like the Son of Man* (vv. 14-16) and the assembling of the wicked for destruction (vv. 17-20; Isa 63.1-6). **14**: *White cloud* . . . *Son of Man*, Dan 7.13; Mt 24.30; Mk 14.62. **15-16**: A grain harvest. **18-20**: A vintage scene. **20**: Metaphorically, *wine* is frequently associated with *blood* (Gen 49.11; Deut 32.14; Sir 39.26; 1 Macc 6.34). Here the enormous quantity of blood suggests the vast extent of the divine judgment (cf. Isa 63.3-6). Mention of the *horse's bridle* here foreshadows the combat in 19.11-21.

15.1-16.21: The seven bowls of the wrath of God.

15.1-8: The preparation for judgment. **1**: *Portent*, a third heavenly sign (see 12.1n.,3). *The wrath of God*, 14.10,19; 15.1,7; 16.1; 19.15. *Is ended*, accomplished or come to its fulfillment. **15.2-4**: Vision of the victorious martyrs in heaven (8.3-5). **2**: *Sea of glass*, see 4.6n. **3**: *Song of Moses*, Ex 15.1-18; Deut

REVELATION 15.3-16.13

³And they sing the song of Moses, the servant^c of God, and the song of the Lamb:

“Great and amazing are your deeds,
Lord God the Almighty!

Just and true are your ways,
King of the nations!^b

⁴ Lord, who will not fear
and glorify your name?

For you alone are holy.
All nations will come

and worship before you,
for your judgments have been
revealed.”

⁵ After this I looked, and the temple of
the tent^c of witness in heaven was opened;

⁶ and out of the temple came the seven angels
with the seven plagues, robed in pure
bright linen,^d with golden sashes across
their chests.

⁷ Then one of the four living
creatures gave the seven angels seven golden
bowls full of the wrath of God, who
lives forever and ever;

⁸ and the temple was
filled with smoke from the glory of God
and from his power, and no one could enter
the temple until the seven plagues of the
seven angels were ended.

16 Then I heard a loud voice from the
temple telling the seven angels, “Go
and pour out on the earth the seven bowls
of the wrath of God.”

² So the first angel went and poured his
bowl on the earth, and a foul and painful
sore came on those who had the mark of
the beast and who worshiped its image.

³ The second angel poured his bowl into
the sea, and it became like the blood of a

corpse, and every living thing in the sea
died.

⁴ The third angel poured his bowl into
the rivers and the springs of water, and they
became blood.

⁵ And I heard the angel of
the waters say,

“You are just, O Holy One, who are
and were,

for you have judged these things;
⁶ because they shed the blood of saints
and prophets,

you have given them blood to
drink.

It is what they deserve!”

⁷ And I heard the altar respond,
“Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty,
your judgments are true and just!”

⁸ The fourth angel poured his bowl on
the sun; and it was allowed to scorch people
with fire;

⁹ they were scorched by the
fierce heat, but they cursed the name of
God, who had authority over these plagues,
and they did not repent and give him glory.

¹⁰ The fifth angel poured his bowl on
the throne of the beast, and its kingdom
was plunged into darkness; people gnawed
their tongues in agony,

¹¹ and cursed the
God of heaven because of their pains and
sores, and they did not repent of their
deeds.

¹² The sixth angel poured his bowl on
the great river Euphrates, and its water was
dried up in order to prepare the way for the
kings from the east.

¹³ And I saw three foul

spirits like frogs, coming out of the mouth
of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.

They will go out to deceive the kings of
the earth.

These three spirits will be cast into the
lake of fire.

¹⁴ And the kings who were deceived will
go to war with the Lamb.

¹⁵ The Lamb will slay them, and he will
eat their flesh and drink their blood, and he
will trample them like grapes under his
foot.

¹⁶ And he will tread the winepress of
the wrath of God, and blood will flow out
up to the horses' knees, and the wine will
be red as blood.

¹⁷ And I saw the slain of the saints
and the prophets, and they were standing
with the Lamb, and they were wearing
white robes.

And he said to them, “Do not grieve,
for the hour of their trial is about to
end, and they will rest with their
Lamb, and they will be with him
forever and ever.”

And I saw the dead, the great and the
small, standing before the throne, and
they were given white robes.

And he said to them, “Do not grieve,
for the hour of their trial is about to
end, and they will rest with their
Lamb, and they will be with him
forever and ever.”

And I saw the dead, the great and the
small, standing before the throne, and
they were given white robes.

And he said to them, “Do not grieve,
for the hour of their trial is about to
end, and they will rest with their
Lamb, and they will be with him
forever and ever.”

And I saw the dead, the great and the
small, standing before the throne, and
they were given white robes.

And he said to them, “Do not grieve,
for the hour of their trial is about to
end, and they will rest with their
Lamb, and they will be with him
forever and ever.”

And I saw the dead, the great and the
small, standing before the throne, and
they were given white robes.

And he said to them, “Do not grieve,
for the hour of their trial is about to
end, and they will rest with their
Lamb, and they will be with him
forever and ever.”

And I saw the dead, the great and the
small, standing before the throne, and
they were given white robes.

And he said to them, “Do not grieve,
for the hour of their trial is about to
end, and they will rest with their
Lamb, and they will be with him
forever and ever.”

32. **5:** *The temple . . . was opened*, cf. 11.19. On opening the heavenly gates as a prelude to judgment, see 3 Macc 6.18-19. In Rome, the “Temple of Janus” was opened as a prelude to war (Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.294). The heavenly counterpart of the tent of witness that accompanied Israel’s journey through the desert (Num 9.15). **7:** *Golden bowls*, libation vessels used in religious rituals. **8:** *Smoke*, Ex 19.18; 40.34-35; Isa 6:1-4; cf. 1 Kings 8.10-11.

16.1-21: The pouring of the bowls (cf. chs 8-9, and the plagues inflicted on Egypt, Ex 7-12). **2:** *A foul and painful sore*, Ex 9.8-12; 3-4: 8.8-9; Ex 7.14-24. **5-6:** A judgment doxology. **5:** *The angel that has control of the waters*; implying a worldview in which different angels preside over different elements of the cosmos (1 Enoch 60.10-22; Rev 7.1-2, winds; Rev 14.18, fire). **6:** Divine retribution (Isa 49.26). *Blood to drink*, cf. 17.6. **7:** *The altar*, 6.9-11. **10:** 8.12; Ex 10.21. *Throne of the beast*, 13.2. **12:** *Euphrates*, see 9.14n. *Kings from the east*, perhaps a reference to the Parthians, who would be led by Nero, restored to life; see 13.3n.; Sib. Or. 4.120,139. **13-14:** *Foul spirits like frogs*, Ex 8.1-15. **14:**

^a Gk *slave* ^b Other ancient authorities read *the ages*
^c Or *tabernacle* ^d Other ancient authorities read
stone

REVELATION 16.14-17.8

spirits like frogs coming from the mouth of the dragon, from the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴These are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. ¹⁵("See, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and is clothed," not going about naked and exposed to shame.") ¹⁶And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Harmagedon.

¹⁷ The seventh angel poured his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" ¹⁸And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a violent earthquake, such as had not occurred since people were upon the earth, so violent was that earthquake. ¹⁹The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. God remembered great Babylon and gave her the wine-cup of the fury of his wrath. ²⁰And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found; ²¹and huge hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds,^b dropped from heaven on people, until they cursed God for the plague of the hail, so fearful was that plague.

17 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great whore who is seated on many waters; ²with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and with the wine of whose fornication the inhabitants of the earth have become drunk." ³So he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. ⁴The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication; ⁵and on her forehead was written a name, a mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of whores and of earth's abominations." ⁶And I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the witnesses to Jesus.

When I saw her, I was greatly amazed. ⁷But the angel said to me, "Why are you so amazed? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. ⁸The beast

a Gk and keeps his robes b Gk weighing about a talent c Or in the Spirit

Performing signs, 13.13. 15: Like a thief, see 3.3n. Blessed, see 1.3n. 16: They, the frog-like spirits, emissaries of the demonic trio, that is, the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, Harmagedon, spelled variously in the manuscripts with "gg" and / or "dd"; also "Armagedon." This is perhaps an allusion to Megiddo, the site of several decisive battles in Israel's history. (Judg 5.19; 2 Kings 9.27; 2 Chr 35.22); in Hebrew, "har Megiddo" means "the mountain of Megiddo." Here it is the symbolic assembly point of the forces hostile to God as they prepare for the eschatological battle. 19: The great city, Rome. Great Babylon, 14.8. Wine-cup, 14.10. 21: Hail, 8.7; Ex.9.13-35; Wis 5.22.

17.1-18.24: The fall of Babylon, which is Rome, the city on seven hills (17.9,18) and the archpersecutor of the saints (17.6).

17.1-18: The vision of the woman. 1: The great whore, a symbol that builds both on the fact that cities were grammatically constructed as feminine and on the Hebrew prophets' metaphorical references to cities and nations as brides, wives, or harlots (e.g., Tyre in Isa 23.17-18). 2: Jer 51.7. Fornication, sexual misconduct applied metaphorically to the city's international commercial and political dealings, which are judged illicit and unjust. 3: In the spirit, 1.10; 4.2; 21.10 (Ezek 2.2; 3.12,14,24). Into a wilderness, Isa 21.1-20. Scarlet beast, the Roman Empire (see 13.1n.). Blasphemous names, divine titles given to Roman emperors (see 13.1). 4: Gold and jewels and pearls, 18.16. 5: On her forehead, 13.16; 14.1; 20.4; 22.4. A mystery, indicating that the name is symbolic and that it requires interpretation, which the angel offers in vv. 7-18. Mother of whores, Hos 2.2-5. 6: Drunk with . . . blood, Ezek 39.19. Persecution took the form of exile (1.9), jail (2.10), or death (2.10,13; 11.3). 8: The beast now represents the Emperor Nero,

REVELATION 17.9-18.4

that you saw was, and is not, and is about to ascend from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the inhabitants of the earth, whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will be amazed when they see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.

9 "This calls for a mind that has wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; also, they are seven kings,¹⁰ of whom five have fallen, one is living, and the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain only a little while.¹¹ As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction.¹² And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast.¹³ These are united in yielding their power and authority to the beast; ¹⁴they will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful."

15 And he said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the whore is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. ¹⁶And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the whore; they will make her desolate and naked; they will devour her flesh and burn her up with fire. ¹⁷For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by agreeing to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words

of God will be fulfilled. ¹⁸The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth."

18 After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was made bright with his splendor. ²He called out with a mighty voice,

"Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!
It has become a dwelling place
of demons,

a haunt of every foul spirit,
a haunt of every foul bird,
a haunt of every foul and
hateful beast."^a

³ For all the nations have drunk^b
of the wine of the wrath of her
fornication,
and the kings of the earth have
committed fornication
with her,

and the merchants of the earth have
grown rich from the power^c
of her luxury."

⁴ Then I heard another voice from heaven saying,

"Come out of her, my people,
so that you do not take part in her
sins,
and so that you do not share in her
plagues;

^a Other ancient authorities lack the words *a haunt of every foul beast* and attach the words *and hateful* to the previous line so as to read *a haunt of every foul and hateful bird*. ^b Other ancient authorities read *She has made all nations drink*. ^c Or *resources*

commonly expected to return to life and power (v. 11). *Was and is not and is to come*, a parody of the designation of God in 1.4,8. *Book of life*, see 3.5n. ⁹: *This calls for a mind that has wisdom*, like the formula in 13.18, this expression introduces the interpretation of the symbolism of the preceding verses. The *seven mountains* are the seven hills of Rome. The *seven kings* are Roman emperors (cf. Dan 11.2; 2 Esd 12.22-26), which interpreters have sought to identify with emperors from Julius Caesar to Domitian. ¹²: *Ten horns* represent subordinate or client rulers (Dan 7.7-8). ¹⁴: The eschatological victory of Christ. *Lord of lords and king of kings*; 19.16. ¹⁶: Ezek 23.26-29. ¹⁷: The ten kings are unwitting instruments of God's will, fulfilling the divine plan (compare the passive verbs in 6.4; see 13.5n.). ¹⁸: An explicit identification of the woman of v. 1 as *the great city*, i.e., Rome.

18.1-24: Dirge over the fallen city (Rome), with echoes from the taunt songs in Isa 23-24; 47; Jer 50-51; Ezek 26-27. **1-3**: Angelic announcement of judgment (14.8; Isa 21.9; Jer 50.39; 51.8). **1**: *The earth was made bright*, Ezek 43.2. **2**: *A dwelling place . . . a haunt*, Isa 13.21-22. **4-8**: Summons to God's people to leave the doomed city; cf. Jer 51.45; Mt 24.16. **5**: *High as heaven*, Jer 51.9. **6**: Jer 50.29; cf. Isa

REVELATION 18:5-18:22

5 for her sins are heaped high
as heaven,
and God has remembered
her iniquities.

6 Render to her as she herself
has rendered,
and repay her double for her deeds;
mix a double draught for her in the
cup she mixed.

7 As she glorified herself and lived
luxuriously,
so give her a like measure of
torment and grief.

Since in her heart she says,
'I rule as a queen;

I am no widow,
and I will never see grief,'

8 therefore her plagues will come in a
single day—
pestilence and mourning
and famine—

and she will be burned with fire;
for mighty is the Lord God who
judges her."

9 And the kings of the earth, who com-
mitted fornication and lived in luxury with
her, will weep and wail over her when they
see the smoke of her burning; ¹⁰they will
stand far off, in fear of her torment, and
say,

"Alas, alas, the great city,
Babylon, the mighty city!

For in one hour your judgment
has come."

11 And the merchants of the earth weep
and mourn for her, since no one buys their
cargo anymore; ¹²cargo of gold, silver, jew-
els and pearls, fine linen, purple, silk and
scarlet, all kinds of scented wood, all arti-
cles of ivory, all articles of costly wood,
bronze, iron, and marble, ¹³cinnamon,
spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine,
olive oil, choice flour and wheat, cattle and
sheep, horses and chariots, slaves—and hu-
man lives."

14 "The fruit for which your soul longed

has gone from you,
and all your dainties and
your splendor
are lost to you,
never to be found again!"

¹⁵The merchants of these wares, who
gained wealth from her, will stand far off,
in fear of her torment, weeping and mourn-
ing aloud,

16 "Alas, alas, the great city,
clothed in fine linen,
in purple and scarlet,
adorned with gold,
with jewels, and with pearls!

17 For in one hour all this wealth has
been laid waste!"

And all shipmasters and seafarers, sailors
and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far
off ¹⁸and cried out as they saw the smoke
of her burning,

"What city was like the great city?"

¹⁹And they threw dust on their heads, as
they wept and mourned, crying out,

"Alas, alas, the great city,
where all who had ships at sea
grew rich by her wealth!

For in one hour she has been
laid waste."

20 Rejoice over her, O heaven, you
saints and apostles and prophets! For God
has given judgment for you against her.

21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone
like a great millstone and threw it into the
sea, saying,

"With such violence Babylon the
great city

will be thrown down,
and will be found no more;

22 and the sound of harpists and
minstrels and of flutists and
trumpeters

will be heard in you no more;
and an artisan of any trade
will be found in you no more;

a Or chariots, and human bodies and souls

40.2. 9-20: Lamentation of those who have been enriched through their dealings with the corrupt city:
kings (vv. 9-10), merchants (vv. 11-16), and mariners (vv. 17-20; cf. Ezek 27.29-36). 20: Rejoice over
her, Jer 51.48. 21-24: Symbolic action representing the total destruction of the city (Jer 51.63-64). 22:
Sound of harpists; Jer 25.10; Ezek 26.13. 24: Blood of prophets, Mt 23.34-35; Lk 11.49-51; 13.33-34.

REVELATION 18.23-19.12

and the sound of the millstone
will be heard in you no more;
23 and the light of a lamp
will shine in you no more;
and the voice of bridegroom
and bride
will be heard in you no more;
for your merchants were the magnates
of the earth,
and all nations were deceived by
your sorcery.
24 And in you^a was found the blood of
prophets and of saints,
and of all who have been
slaughtered on earth.”

19 After this I heard what seemed to be
the loud voice of a great multitude
in heaven, saying,
“Hallelujah!
Salvation and glory and power
to our God,
2 for his judgments are true and just;
he has judged the great whore
who corrupted the earth with her
fornication,
and he has avenged on her the blood
of his servants.”^b
3 Once more they said,
“Hallelujah!
The smoke goes up from her forever
and ever.”
4 And the twenty-four elders and the four
living creatures fell down and worshiped
God who is seated on the throne, saying,
“Amen. Hallelujah!”
5 And from the throne came a voice say-
ing,
“Praise our God,
all you his servants,^b

and all who fear him,
small and great.”
6 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice
of a great multitude, like the sound of many
waters and like the sound of mighty thun-
derpeals, crying out,
“Hallelujah!
For the Lord our God
the Almighty reigns.
7 Let us rejoice and exult
and give him the glory,
for the marriage of the Lamb
has come,
and his bride has made
herself ready;
8 to her it has been granted to
be clothed
with fine linen, bright and pure”—
for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of
the saints.
9 And the angel said^c to me, “Write
this: Blessed are those who are invited to
the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he
said to me, “These are true words of God.”
10 Then I fell down at his feet to worship
him, but he said to me, “You must not do
that! I am a fellow servant^d with you and
your comrades^e who hold the testimony of
Jesus.^f Worship God! For the testimony of
Jesus^f is the spirit of prophecy.”

11 Then I saw heaven opened, and there
was a white horse! Its rider is called Faith-
ful and True, and in righteousness he
judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like a
flame of fire, and on his head are many
diadems; and he has a name inscribed that

^a Gk *her* ^b Gk *slaves* ^c Gk *he said* ^d Gk *slave*
^e Gk *brothers* ^f Or *to Jesus*

19.1-10: Doxology giving praise to God for the destruction of Rome (vv. 1-5) and for the marriage of the Lamb (vv. 6-9). 3: *Smoke . . . forever*, i.e., destruction never to be rebuilt. 4: See 4.4,6. 5: Ps 115.13. 7: *His bride*, the new Jerusalem (21.2,9). 8: *Fine linen*; in contrast to the attire of Babylon (17.4). 9: *Blessed*, the fourth of seven beatitudes in the book; see 1.3n. 10: God alone is the appropriate object of worship (cf. 22.8-9).

19.11-21: The victory of Christ and the heavenly armies over the beast and its cohorts. 11: *Heaven opened*, Ezek 1.1: *In righteousness he judges*, Isa 11.4. 12: *Many diadems*, in contrast to the diadems of the dragon (12.3). *A name . . . that no one knows*, because the name stands for a person; knowledge of a name confers power over the person. That his name is known only to himself implies that Christ's power is sovereign and unlimited (cf. 2.17). 13: As revealer of God he is called *The Word of God* (Jn 1.1,14).

REVELATION 19.13-20.5

no one knows but himself. ¹³He is clothed in a robe dipped in^a blood, and his name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴And the armies of heaven, wearing fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule^b them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, "King of kings and Lord of lords."

¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly in midheaven, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, ¹⁸to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of the mighty, the flesh of horses and their riders—flesh of all, both free and slave, both small and great." ¹⁹Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against the rider on the horse and against his army. ²⁰And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed in its presence the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. ²¹And the

rest were killed by the sword of the rider on the horse, the sword that came from his mouth; and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

20 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. ²He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ³and threw him into the pit, and locked and sealed it over him, so that he would deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be let out for a little while.

⁴ Then I saw thrones, and those seated on them were given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus^c and for the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. ⁵(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrec-

^a Other ancient authorities read *sprinkled with*
^b Or *will shepherd* ^c Or *for the testimony of Jesus*

14: *Armies*, the angelic host (see Lk 2.13 note b). *Fine linen*, 19.8. **15:** 1.16; 2.12,16; 19.21; Ps 2.9. **16:** 17.14; Deut 10.17. **17-18:** *An angel* summons the birds of prey (Ezek 39.4,17-20). **17:** *The great supper of God*, in gruesome contrast to the "marriage feast of the Lamb" (v. 9). **19-21:** The final battle between Christ and the beast (anticipated in 16.13-16). **20:** *The beast*, the first beast, introduced in 13.1-8. *The false prophet* is the second beast of 13.11-15. *The lake of fire*, see 14.10n.; 20.10,14-15; 21.8; Dan 7.11. *Sulfur* was well known in the ancient world as a noxious poison; it was used to render land infertile (Deut 19.23; Job 18.15), and burning sulfur symbolized God's judgment (Gen 19.24; Ps 11.6; Ezek 38.22). See 8.17; 14.10; 20.10; 21.8. **21:** *The sword of the rider . . . the sword that came from his mouth*, suggesting that the victory is won not by violence but by The Word of God (19.13).
20.1-10: The defeat of Satan.
20.1-6: The temporary imprisonment of Satan and the reign of Christ and the martyrs. **1:** *Chain*, 2 Pet 2.4; Jude 6. **2-3:** The period of a *thousand years* is symbolic both here and in vv. 4-7, suggesting a temporary time of righteousness and tranquility before the final eschatological consummation. Cf. Ps 90.4. **2:** *The dragon . . . serpent . . . Devil . . . Satan*, 12.9n. **3:** Satan is locked into the pit to prevent him from carrying out his demonic work as "the deceiver of the whole world" (12.9). After the *thousand years*, though, *he must be let out for a little while*, but even this limited period is under God's control (Dan 12.5). **4:** *Thrones of judgment* (Dan 7.9,22,27; Mt. 19.28; Lk 22.30). *Those . . . beheaded for their testimony, martyrs* (in 6.9-10 the souls of the martyrs, under the altar, cry for vengeance). *Its mark*, 3.16-17; 14.9. *Reigned with Christ a thousand years*, this passage, which gave rise to Christian millenni-

REVELATION 20.6–21.5

tion. ⁶Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. Over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him a thousand years.

⁷When the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸and will come out to deceive the nations at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, in order to gather them for battle; they are as numerous as the sands of the sea. ⁹They marched up over the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from heaven^a and consumed them. ¹⁰And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

¹¹Then I saw a great white throne and the one who sat on it; the earth and the heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their works, as recorded in the books. ¹³And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and all were judged according to what they had done. ¹⁴Then Death and Hades were

thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; ¹⁵and anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home^b of God is among mortals.

He will dwell^c with them;

they will be his peoples,^d

and God himself will be with them;^e

⁴ he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more;

for the first things have passed away.”

⁵And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things

a Other ancient authorities read *from God, out of heaven, or out of heaven from God* *b* Gk *the tabernacle* *c* Gk *will tabernacle* *d* Other ancient authorities read *people* *e* Other ancient authorities add *and be their God*

alism; suggests an interim messianic kingdom. **6:** *Blessed*, see 1.3n. *Priests*, 1.6; 5.10; Ex 19.6. *Second death*, see 2.11n.; 20.14; 21.8.

20.7–10: The release of Satan and the final conflict. *Gog and Magog*, Ezek 38–39. **9:** *The beloved city*, Jerusalem (Sir 24.11). *Fire*, Ezek 38.22; 39.6; 2 Kings 1.9–12. **10:** *Was thrown into the lake of fire*, the final overthrow of Satan.

20.11–15: The last judgment. **11:** *The great white throne*, 4.2; 20.4. **12:** *Books of deeds*, ledgers that record what everyone has done (Dan 7.10). The *book of life* is distinguished from the books of deeds just opened (see 3.5n). *Judged according to their works*, Mt 16.27; Rom 2.6; 2 Cor 5.10. **13–14:** Personified *Death and Hades* (see 1.18n.; 6.8n.) are the last enemies to be defeated. **14:** *The second death*, see 2.11n.; Mt 25.41.

21.1–22.5: Vision of the new Jerusalem.

21.1–8: The renewal of creation: **1:** *A new heaven and a new earth*, Isa 65.17; 66.22. All creation will be renewed, freed from imperfections, and transformed by God (Rom 8.19–21). *The sea*, the primeval force of turbulence and unrest (Gen 1.2; Ps 29.3,10); **2:** *New Jerusalem*; 21.9–10. *Coming down out of heaven*, 3.12. *Prepared as a bride*, 19.7–9; Isa 61.10. The image of the eschatological Jerusalem as a bride contrasts with the image of Rome as the whore Babylon in chs 17–18. **3:** Ezek 37.27. **4:** 7.16; Isa 25.8; 35.10. **5:** The speaker is God (1.8). **6:** *Alpha and Omega*, see 1.8n. *Water of life*, Isa 55.1; Jn 4.13; 7.37.

REVELATION 21.6-21.27

new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. ⁷Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children. ⁸But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

⁹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

¹⁰ And in the spirit^b he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹It has the glory of God and a radiance like a very rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal. ¹²It has a great, high wall with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates are inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of the Israelites; ¹³ on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. ¹⁴And the wall of the city has twelve foundations, and on them are the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

¹⁵ The angel^c who talked to me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. ¹⁶The city lies four-

square, its length the same as its width; and he measured the city with his rod, fifteen hundred miles;^d its length and width and height are equal. ¹⁷He also measured its wall, one hundred forty-four cubits^e by human measurement, which the angel was using. ¹⁸The wall is built of jasper, while the city is pure gold, clear as glass. ¹⁹The foundations of the wall of the city are adorned with every jewel; the first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ²⁰the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. ²¹And the twelve gates are twelve pearls, each of the gates is a single pearl, and the street of the city is pure gold, transparent as glass.

²² I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. ²⁵Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ²⁷But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

a Or the unbelieving *b* Or in the Spirit *c* Gk He
d Gk twelve thousand stadia *e* That is, almost seventy-five yards

7: *Those who conquer*, compare the concluding words of each of the seven letters in chs 2 and 3. **8:** A list of vices. *The second death*, contrasted to the water of life in v. 6 (see 2.11n.).

21.9-27: *The measuring of the city*. Cf. Ezek 40-42. Both the city and its measurements (which are multiples of 12) are symbolic. **9:** *The seven bowls*, see ch 16. *The bride, the wife of the Lamb*, 19.7; 21.2. Israel is the bride of God in Isa 54.5; Hos 2.19-20. **10:** *In the spirit*, see 1.10n. *High mountain*, Ezek 40.2. *Jerusalem . . . out of heaven*, cf. Gal 4.26; Heb 11.10; 2 Esd 13.35-36. **11:** *Jasper*, 4.3. **12:** Ezek 48.30-34. **14:** *Apostles*, Eph 2.20. **15-18:** *The city that lies foursquare*, i.e., with streets that intersect at right angles, unlike the irregular walls of Palestinian cities (Ezek 42.20). The cube is a perfect square. The precious stones adorned the high priest's breastplate (Ex 28.17-21). **19:** Isa 54.11-12. **21:** *The street*, the paving of the streets enables them to reflect God's glory. **22-23:** *No temple . . . no . . . sun* are needed because the presence and glory of God pervade the entire community (Isa 24.23; 60.1,19; 2 Esd 7.39-42). *Its lamp is the Lamb*, Ps 132.17. **25:** City gates are closed at night and at the approach of enemies; perpetually open gates symbolize safety; see Isa 60.11; Zech 14.7; 1QM 12.13-15. **27:** *Book of life*, see 3.5n.

REVELATION 22.1-22.18

22 Then the angel^a showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb² through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life^b with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants^c will worship him; ⁴they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

⁶ And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true, for the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants^c what must soon take place."

⁷ "See, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me; ⁹but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant^d with you and your comrades^e the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!"

¹⁰ And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. ¹¹Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy."

¹² "See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone's work. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

¹⁴ Blessed are those who wash their robes,^f so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates. ¹⁵Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

¹⁶ "It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let everyone who hears say, "Come."

And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.

¹⁸ I warn everyone who hears the words

^a Gk he ^b Or the Lamb. ²In the middle of the street of the city, and on either side of the river, is the tree of life. ^c Gk slaves. ^d Gk slave. ^e Gk brothers. ^f Other ancient authorities read *do his commandments*.

22.1-5: The river and the tree of life. **1:** *The river*, cf. Gen 2.10; Ps 46.4; Ezek 47.1; Zech 14.8. **2:** *The tree*, a collective reference to many trees on either side of the river (Ezek 47.12; cf. 2.7n.). **3:** *The throne of God and of the Lamb* is one throne, 3.21. **4:** To *see God's face*, full awareness of God's immediate presence (Job 33.26; Ps 10.11; 42.2), an eschatological blessing (Ps 84.7; Mt 5.8; 1 Jn 3.2). *On their foreheads*, see 7.3n.; 14.1; contrast 13.16; 17.5. **5:** Those who *worship* God (v. 3) *will reign* with God in eternal triumph (Dan 7.18,27).

22.6-21: Epilogue, consisting of warnings and exhortations. **6:** *He said*, an angel (v. 8), perhaps the one referred to in 1.1. *These words*, the contents of this book. *The God of the spirits of the prophets*, the one who inspired the spirits of the prophets (1 QH 20.11-13). **7:** A parenthesis, reporting the words of Christ (cf. 16.15). *Blessed*, the seventh beatitude of the book; see 1.3n. **8-9:** 19.10. **10:** *Do not seal*, cf. Isa 8.16; Dan 12.4. This book is to remain unsealed because the end is imminent. **12:** *My reward is with me*, Isa 40.10; Jer 17.10. **13:** Christ applies God's title to himself (see 1.8n.). **14:** *Blessed*, see 1.3n. *Wash*, 7.14. *The city*, the heavenly Jerusalem. **15:** A list of those who are not permitted to enter the city, characterized generally as *everyone who loves and practices falsehood*. **16:** *Root . . . of David*, Isa 11.1,10; Mt 1.1. *Morning star*, see 2.28n. **17:** *The bride*, 21.2,9. *Come*, singular in Greek, is addressed to Jesus, as in v. 20.

REVELATION 22.19-22.21

of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book; ¹⁹if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away that person's share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

20 The one who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon."
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.^a

^a Other ancient authorities lack *all*; others lack *the saints*; others lack *Amen*

18-19: A solemn warning against altering the teachings of *this book* (cf. Deut 4.2; 12.21). 20: *The one who testifies*, Jesus Christ; see 1.2. *Amen. Come, Lord Jesus*, a response, with liturgical echoes, to *surely I am coming soon*. 21: An epistolary postscript.