

Revelation – Commentary, Part 2

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Introduction

We use a simplified punctuation of the text. The Bible Gateway early text presentations (1550 Stephanus, 1881 Westcott-Hort, 1894 Scrivener) are all unmarked. However, “correct” vocalization of Greek is nearly impossible for many Greek readers (ourselves included) so we added punctuation only as a reading and spelling aid. The customary Greek punctuations have no meaning for most readers; we’re not going to give a minimum of a year of silence in listening, just to apprentice as Greek cantors: so, in keeping with official Greek policy we have reduced punctuation to a single accent, the acute or oxia. Single syllable words are left unaccented; since, there is only one place to receive the emphasis: so, any accent on a single syllable word marks a special difference, distinguishing, “or”, from an article; or denoting an interrogative; and the like. With weakening vision, due to age, we also found breathing marks impossible to read: so, we simply eliminated smooth breathing, and replaced rough breathing marks with the (silent) English letter, h, which, we hope clarifies any spelling differences. We hope that this makes Greek easier for you to read, and we will continue to employ this simplified method, until a better one presents itself.

After many months, in some cases years of prayer (James 1:5), the Spirit of God is unveiling meanings from Revelation to us (John 16:13): an insight here, and understanding there; gradually and slowly many, but not all pictures come into focus; not all at once, over long periods of time and intensive study with prayer. Nothing good can be found in this paper unless it came from God.

Bibliography

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation%201&version=KJV>

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<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1&version=TR1550>

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1&version=WHNU>

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1&version=SBLGNT>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_New_Testament_papyri

A preliminary comparative text criticism study can be formed by aligning three of these sources side by side in parallel columns:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1&version=TR1550,WHNU,SBLGNT>

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1&version=WHNU;SBLGNT;THGNT>

A more rigorous study may be found at:

https://www.bibletranslation.ws/download/Robinson_Pierpont_GNT.pdf

All of the RP notations used in my paper were gleaned from this source, rather than directly from the RP New Testament. It is physically too hard for me at 86 to hold up a book of this weight and edit at the same time. The book was only consulted if questions arose.

For those who wish to delve more deeply into Revelation text criticism: this is the most helpful, very technical, resource I've found at this date:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345971916_Hernandez_The_Greek_Text_of_Revelation_Oxford_Handbook_on_Revelation

Hoskier, Herman Charles, *Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse*, two Volumes (Wipf & Stock, Eugene, 2015 reprint of the 1929 original; 751 and 649 pages). This is necessary essential reading in order to grasp some of the scope, complexity, and difficulty of textual criticism, especially in Revelation.

Perschbacher, Wesley J., ed., *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon* (Hendrickson, Peabody, MA, 2004; 449 pages). Newer editions of this work are poorly bound and easily fall apart after brief use.

Robinson, Maurice A., and Pierpont, William G. *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (Chilton, Southborough, MA, 2005; 587 pages). The Appendix, pages 533ff is necessarily essential reading in order to grasp the extent of modern (2000 plus) explorations.

Westcott, Brooke Foss, and Hort, Fenton John Anthony, *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (MacMillan, a reprint of the 1885 original, 620 pages). Hereafter referred to as 1885.

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_churches_of_Asia

Text

We, will as far as possible, attempt to recover the oldest text known. Revelation Criticism I and Revelation Criticism II were written in pursuit of this goal. We were unable to complete a deeper study of manuscripts in general, or Aleph/Sinaiticus in particular: so, we are working with WH as a practical, if temporary, Vorlage. We transcribed a Westcott-Hort New Testament (1881) copy of Revelation with added accents.

The Our Translation will be modified as we proceed: since, our studies have led us to WH for our best available temporary Vorlage, rather than SBL. Also, we have learned along the way how some words are better interpreted, while others no longer fit the context: so, Our Translation, must adapt and change: it is now Your Translation.

Revelation 4

“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up. His train filled the temple. Around Him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with two they covered their face, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. One cried to another, and said, ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole land (ἡ γῆ, Ha’Aretz) is full of his glory.’ ” — Isaiah 6:1-3

Rv. 4:1 - μετά ταῦτα εἶδον καὶ ἰδοὺ θύρα ἠνεωγμένη ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ ἡ φωνὴ ἡ πρώτη ἤν ἤκουσα ὡς σάλπιγγος λαλοῦσης μετ’ ἐμοῦ λέγων ἀνάβα ἠὼδε καὶ δείξω σοὶ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα

Rv. 4:1 - With these [things] I saw. Look! A door having been opened in the heaven. The first voice which I heard, as a trumpet talking with me, saying, “Come up here.” I will show you what is bound to be brought forth, with these [things].

“These”, requires a plural antecedent connection; the logical options are: either the seven Ekklesiae and their conditions; or the whole introductory structure of Chapters 1 through 3.

John appears to use the word, “heaven”, differently than we do: it does not appear to John to mean the atmosphere or sky surrounding the whole earth. John appears to be talking about a more specific locus: namely, the heaven above Ha’Aretz, the sky above Zion. This the way we speak of heaven on a day-to-day basis: the sky above or overhead.

“But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” — 1 Corinthians 2:9; Isaiah 64:4

It is unlikely that heaven has doors: this is symbolism, the use of visual pictures to display realities that are normally invisible or unseen. We don't normally have access to heaven in this life: for us, heaven's doors are closed and locked until death.

Trumpets never talk: this voice is a blast in the ears: impossible to avoid... loud to the point of pain. It grabs our attention: that's what it is supposed to do.

The ascension required in, "come up here", is humanly impossible, prior to death; even then, we are thought to be carried by angels (Luke 16:22; Psalms 91:11): but, John is to ascend under his own power.

"Bound", shows absolute necessity, predestination, if you will: but, not in any theological sense of the word; this is the open display of the unbreakable power and will of God; we have choice in Salvation, but not here. Our calling in Ekklesiae, once answered, is rigidly fixed, it doesn't just go away. This is, "brought forth", a kind of birthing from above. Once we choose to sign up, we are under orders: still, we chose to obey those orders, or not... yet, the content and source of those orders never changes.

Rv. 4:2 - ευθέως εγενόμην εν πνεύματι και ιδού θρόνος έκειτο εν τω ουρανώ και επί τον θρόνον καθήμενος

Rv. 4:2 - Immediately, I was brought forth in [the] Spirit. Look! A throne is now set up in [~~the~~] heaven. Upon the throne, [is] One Sitting.

John does not relinquish this word, γενέσθαι/εγενόμην, emphasizing creation, begetting, birth, being brought forth, born from above, born again. To represent this powerful word as, “do”, or even, “a blank”, is pusillanimous indeed. Lamé and limp words should not be used in translation, especially to present powerful words such as this.

“The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” —
Hebrews 4:12

We mark this word for future thematic analysis: since, John seems to use it frequently (Revelation 1:1, 9, 10, 18; 2:8; 4:1, 2; 6:12 (3x); 8:1, 5, 7, 8, 11; 11:13 (2x), 15 (2x), 19; 12:7, 10; 16:2, 3, 4, 10, 18 (4x), 19; 18:2; 22:6, 16).

“Look!”, see that which is normally invisible in this life.

Sitting indicates enthronement to declare authority. God speaks, “ex cathedra”, from the chair. While many leaders, inside and outside of the Church, claim such authority; none possess it fully: only a few have been delegated partial and temporary use, never infallibly¹. God alone truly speaks, “ex cathedra”, absolutely, inerrantly, and infallibly. Sitting displays authority, control, exposure, power, rule, and unveiling.

¹ For example, the twenty-four presbyters are enthroned: yet, mostly silent in this setting. Certainly, no known arch, head, or ranking bishop has such authority. We rest on Apostolic and Prophetic authority: yet, not even our copy of these is infallible or inerrant, because we have touched it. How much damage has been done just by our touch?

He is Creator. What He speaks comes into existence and is made. His piercing vision reveals every secret. What He says is done; where He says is achieved; who He commands, acts; when He determines, it is fulfilled.

The One Sitting upon the Throne, is one of John's favorite names/titles for the Father, it is, perhaps, his favorite name for the Father. This name indicates that the Father is the Godhead, not some sort of theologically contrived shared property: the Bible, nowhere, teaches such a shared Godhead. The Son and the Spirit, both proceed from the Father. The Son, having all authority, yields up that authority to the Father, when His work is complete. The Spirit, seemingly with all power, derives that power from the Father. The Three are always in perfect agreement (para, parity): as also the Ekklesiae must be. The Ekklesiae must learn to say, "Yes, Sir!" Then do! Father, not my will: but, Yours be done.

When the Son sits beside the Father, He still does not receive this name.

Rv. 4:3 - και ho καθημενος ἡμοιος ἰσπερ λιθω ἰασπειδι και σαρδιω και ἰρις κυκλόθεν του θρόνου ἡμοιος ἰσπερ σμαραγδίνω

Rv. 4:3 - The One Sitting [is] like a jasper or sardius stone in appearance. An iris around the throne [is] like emerald in appearance.

Beautiful beyond compare; beyond our wildest imaginations. We cannot even imagine such beauty: we can only strive and try to imagine it; it cannot be seen with the unaided human eye... specialized spiritual vision is required. John is experiencing a real and true miracle in these symbols.

Rv. 4:4 - και κυκλόθεν του θρόνου θρόνοι είκοσι τέσσαρες και επί τους θρόνους είκοσι τέσσαρας πρεσβυτέρους καθημένους περιβεβλημένους ηματίοις λευκοίς και επί τας κεφαλάς αυτών στεφάνους χρυσούς

Rv. 4:4 - Around the throne [are] twenty-four thrones. Upon the thrones, twenty-four presbyters are sitting, having been wrapped in white garments. Upon their heads [are] golden wreaths.

Maybe, dubiously, the first twelve possibly representing the leadership of the old Aretz; a second twelve might represent the leadership of the new Aretz: which together form one body; but we don't know this with any certainty. This does not mean that the sinfully corrupted Ha'Aretz which is being destroyed retains any honor or power; but their holy predecessors do retain all honor and power. They are presbyters, not bishops. In this context, we are unsure of what this means; are these the preeminent writing prophets and apostles: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Mica, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, plus the eight of the twelve Apostles, who are not the Evangelists? What about Noah, Shem, Heber, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, Miriam, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, and all of the others who qualify. We do not know. John doesn't give us the answer: he just says sitting presbyters, without naming them... many others serve without sitting. These sit: they rule and teach.

The white garments are the righteousness of Christ, indicating that they have been made righteous by Christ. The golden wreaths signify overcoming, showing that they have won the race, they are indeed, Saints.² They are enthroned, revealing that they have been delegated

² All believers who die are finally made righteous (theosed), without exception; all are Saints, without exception. They are even called Saints

authority; is this the authority of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone? We cannot accept, establish, or prove any sub-delegation or succession of this authority: these presbyters are alive with Jesus; they continue to reign. We believe it intellectually dishonest to claim succession of this authority, when all attempts to trace such authority have failed, ending in extreme corruption. We derive authority and power directly from God, by the Spirit, through Jesus Christ, and through these twenty-four presbyters, whoever they may be: they are agents of authority; they are bearers of this power.

Rv. 4:5 - και εκ του θρόνου εκπορεύονται αστραπαί και φωναί και βρονταί και ηεπτά λαμπάδες πυρός καιόμεναι ενώπιον του θρόνου ήά εισίν τα ηεπτά πνεύματα του θεού

Rv. 4:5 - From the throne, pour forth light beams, voices, and thunders. Seven lamps of fire are being burned before the throne, which are the Seven Spirits of God.

Possibly lightning: but, why some mere, normally-visible, earthly phenomena. We do not imitate Zeus casting lightning and thunderbolts, do we? This is not a graphic novel, is it? The light that pours from the throne is more likely to resemble the light pouring from a star or sun; normally silent to us: but, at closer proximity, the roar of its burning might be described as thunderous. It is voices! How is it voices? Again, the symbolism blows our minds: what kind of voices pour forth with light and thunder? No answers are given here.

in this life. Theosis is the work of God, not of man. “God became man, so that man could become god” — St. Athanasius.

Pour forth (εκπορεύονται) is another frequently under-translated word. One use in Jonah describes the rampaging of the sea in perfect storm; another suggests that Jonah better hurry. The English, “pouring”, has the same sound, with the same breadth of meaning, whether pouring from a teacup or from a huge multi-ton vessel.³

The Menorah is here too: this is possibly that Menorah from which all earthy Menorahs are named. We do not really know very much about the Holy Spirit⁴; elsewhere He is One; here He is Seven; at Pentecost (Acts 2), He is many, possibly hundreds or thousands. Let’s just leave the Holy Spirit as He is and not speak subjectively about mysteries we don’t fully understand.

Rv. 4:6 - και ενώπιον του θρόνου ἡὼς θάλασσα ἠυαλίνη ἡομοία
κρυστάλλῳ και εν μέσω του θρόνου και κύκλῳ του θρόνου τέσσαρα⁵
ζῶα γέμοντα οφθαλμῶν ἔμπροσθεν και ὀπισθεν

Rv. 4:6 - Before the throne, [is] as a sea of glass, like crystal. Amid the throne, around the throne, [are] four Zoa, being full of eyes before and behind.

³ How do you accustom people to the idea of an impotent and limp God? You sow tares among them. Then, as the wheat is dependent upon the tares for linguistic skills, the tares secretly substitute impotent, limp, pusillanimous, and weak words for strong ones. The weakened picture is a danger to our faith: it deceives us into seeing a God that is far too small. Visualize God pouring water down upon Jonah from a cup the size of the moon: any larger would be too large for the Mediterranean.

⁴ <https://www.swrktec.org/spirit>

⁵ 1885 has τέσσαρα.

Since, the sea elsewhere represents Rome, and this sea will be gone from the final representations of the Heavenly throne room; we suspect that this sea is Rome as well: its transparency indicates its utter inability to hide anything from those piercing, all-seeing, flaming eyes of God and of His Christ. Rome is naked before almighty God... as are all of us and everything else created.

The word, “Zoan/Zoa”, is unique: we decided to keep it to distinguish it in kind from other words John uses for beasts, creatures, or wild animals. “Zoan/Zoa”, means Life or Living in its most basic sense: these are, Life and/or Lives, which is what we might have said instead of, “Zoan/Zoa”. We chose “Zoan/Zoa”, over, “Life/Lives”. These Zoa are also all-seeing. The four Gospel Books bring us the story of life, indeed.

Rv. 4:7 - και το ζών το πρώτον ήμοιον λέοντι και το δεύτερον ζών ήμοιον μόσχω και το τρίτον ζών έχων το πρόσωπον ήως ανθρώπου και το τέταρτον ζών ήμοιον αετώ πετομένω

Rv. 4:7 - The first Zoan [is] like a lion. The second Zoan [is] like a calf. The third Zoan [is] having [~~the~~ a] face as⁶ a human. The fourth Zoan [is] like a soaring eagle.

These are symbols: the realities behind them are far more magnificent. The four Zoa are the four Evangelists or the Angels of the four

⁶ Possibly meaning in the role of.

Evangelists that Ezekiel 1:10 discloses. Rahlfs⁷ relegates Ezekiel 10:14 to a footnote marked as an asterisked notation from Origen. Since the very source of Ezekiel 10:14 is suspicious and it casts confusion upon the meaning of Ezekiel 1:10 and Revelation 4:6, we discard it as not part of Scripture. We take Ezekiel 1:10 to be authentic and Revelation 4:6 a specific reference to that verse: thus, they are the same thing, although the order of the Zoa is changed. Thus, the reference to a cherub in Ezekiel 10:14 is spurious in our view. The four Zoa in both Ezekiel and Revelation have always been the four Evangelists or each of their angels: Matthew, Mark (writing for Peter), Luke (writing for Paul), and John, The Great Eagle.

The Lion is Mark writing for Peter (or his or Peter's angel); The Calf is Luke writing for Paul (or his or Paul's angel); the as Human face is Matthew (or Matthew's angel); the Great Eagle is John (or John's angel). I have never been in an Orthodox Church where the four icons of these four Zoa were not featured, in this order, in a diamond shaped arrangement on the Royal Doors.

Rv. 4:8 - και τα τέσσαρα⁸ ζώα ηεν καθ ηεν αυτών έχων ανά πτέρυγας
hex κυκλόθεν και έσωθεν γέμουσιν οφθαλμών και ανάπαυσιν ουκ
έχουσιν η ημέρας και νυκτός λέγοντες ήάγιος, ήάγιος, ήάγιος κύριος ηο
θεός ηο παντοκράτωρ ηο ην και ηο ων και ηο ερχόμενος

Rv. 4:8 - The four Zoa, one by one, themselves each having six wings around them; are full of eyes within; have no rest day or night, singing,

⁷ Rahlfs, Alfred, ed., *Septuaginta*, 2 vols. (Württembergische Bibelanstalt Stuttgart, 1935, 1971 printing) Vol. II, page 783, footnote (14).

⁸ 1885 has τέσσαρα.

“Holy. Holy. Holy. Lord [~~the~~] God [~~the~~] Almighty; the Now Is; the One Being; the One Coming.”

The four Zoa have six wings each suggesting that these are Cherubim or Seraphim, the angels or messengers of the four Evangelists, and not merely the four Evangelists themselves. This is more than appearance. This is a strong declaration that God told each of the four Evangelists exactly what to write⁹: they did not simply record their nostalgic memories of Jesus. Their eyes are not only fore and aft, but also within: they see with a dimensionality far above and beyond any mere human scope; the Evangelists are given a view of an extraordinary depth. They do not sleep: humans find sleep a necessity¹⁰. They sing, as should we as well: we should be singing this very hymn, “*ἅγιος, ἅγιος, ἅγιος κύριος ὁ θεός ὁ παντοκράτωρ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος*”, it sounds so much more beautiful in Greek.

This is the Father. The Father is Coming Again, as He did at Creation.

Rv. 4:9 - *καὶ ἦσαν δώσουσιν τα ζῶα δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ εὐχαριστίαν τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου τῷ ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων*

⁹ This does not simply mean dictation: it means that the messages were sent in no uncertain terms. The Evangelists handled these messages according to their individual abilities and skills. They, evidently, also collaborated, even with others, like Mary.

¹⁰ Perhaps, our ability to watch and pray without ceasing is dependent upon the work of our guardian angels in our lives: more likely it is dependent upon the work of the Holy Spirit ... or both, the One working through the others.

Rv. 4:9 - Whenever the Zoa will give glory, honor, and thanks to the One Sitting upon the throne, to the One Living into the ages of the ages,

Rv. 4:10 - πεσούνται hoi είκοσι τέσσαρες πρεσβύτεροι ενώπιον του καθημένου επί του θρόνου και προσκυνήσουσιν τω ζώντι εις τους αιώνας των αιώνων και βαλούσιν τους στεφάνους αυτών ενώπιον του θρόνου λέγοντες

Rv. 4:10 - the twenty-four presbyters will fall [down] before the One Sitting upon the throne; they will prostrate before the One Living into the ages of the ages; they will throw their wreaths before the throne, singing,

A perfectly coordinated worship results from the voluntary participation of all present: this can only grow. Soli Deo Gloria.

Rv. 4:11 - άξιος ει ho κύριος και ho θεός ημών λαβείν την δόξαν και την τιμήν και την δύναμιν ή ότι συ έκτισας τα πάντα και διά το θέλημα σου ήσαν και εκτίσθησαν

Rv. 4:11 - “Worthy are You, [O] Lord, our God, to receive glory, honor, and power; since You created all [things]. Through Your will, they now are; and were created.”

Our worship is centered on the fact that our Loving Father is our Creator: we are all His children by creation.

We must not view this as simply a beautiful picture worthy of great applause. This is a set of visible symbols, indicating usually invisible realities: which, in this case represent the very command and staff

headquarters of Almighty God. The Ekklesiae are called out to soldier for Christ with only Spiritual weapons. This is their Commander in Chief: they need to know this. It is not unusual in such a command and staff headquarters for a large war map to be laid out in the center of the room: which, is exactly what we think the sea of glass, like crystal, represents. This is our command center. This is Whom we follow, with all His chief commanding officers (the four Evangelists), and His staff (the twenty-four presbyters). In the next Chapter, He will introduce His Grand and Great Field Marshal.

He made us to be a kingdom (1:6, 9; 5:10; 11:15; 12:10)

Prophecy

None. This is an eternal symbol. This is how heaven is: today, from eternity past, and forever into the ages of the ages.

Application

Ultimately, shall I look to this for leadership; or, shall I look to some pentagonal patriarchy? Does the Spirit rule The Church (Hebrews 12) from this headquarters; or, do patriarchs rule and dispense the Spirit?

There is no evidence of rank here. The presbyters appear to be equal, encircling the throne. There are no arch, head, or ranking bishops at all. Unless enthronement of presbyters makes them bishops, there are no bishops: even then, they are all of equal rank and status. There are no popes or human papas here either. The only papa present is Father God; the Spirit is also present; the humans are either presbyters or Evangelists. The Evangelists are writers of Scripture. The presbyters

study, teach, and apply Scripture. That there is no hierarchical structure here suggests that all hierarchical structure in earthly churches is wrong.

Again, this is an eternal symbol. It is inside the Oracle or Most Holy Place or Holy of Holies. John will return to this reference point at least twice more. This is where we look for guidance from the Father, Son, and Spirit. Here, we in our Ekklesia, will join the Asians in their Ekklesiae, so many centuries before us. The cubical shape of the Heavenly City, shows us that it, is also a symbol of the Oracle: we will live inside of this Oracle, after death, in our human spirits, and in our resurrected spiritual bodies into the ages of the ages. Soli Deo Gloria.

Revelation 5

Rv. 5:1 - και είδον επί την δεξιάν του καθημένου επί του θρόνου βιβλίον γεγραμμένον έσωθεν και όπισθεν κατεσφραγισμένον σφραγίσιν ηεπτά

Rv. 5:1 - I saw at the right [side] of the One Sitting upon the throne, a book having been written inside and out¹¹, having been sealed [with] seven seals.

John does not tell us what it means to be, “written inside and out (within and without)”; nor do we know: however, this may be a reference to Ezekiel 2, specifically verse 10, the last verse. Ezekiel 2 is a very detailed curse upon Israel for its disobedience, disrespect, and rebelliousness. In this context of Ezekiel 2, as the book is written inside and out; God knows their heart attitudes and behavior inside and out: so, this symbol may warn us what to expect in the verses and Chapters that lie ahead. God is judging Israel/Judah at this time, along with a small

¹¹ Within and without: the contemporary idiom is inside and out.

fraction of the nations involved in the first and second centuries. The opening of the seals exposes everything: inside and out.

The orders or words of the Father are sealed: so, that only His Field Marshal can see them and fulfill them. This is standard practice for military officials: where, strategic and tactical secrets are not to be disclosed to the enemy: here the sealing is sevenfold or perfect.

Rv. 5:2 - και είδον άγγελον ισχυρόν κηρύσσοντα εν φωνή μεγάλη τίς άξιος ανοίξει το βιβλίον και λύσαι τας σφραγίδας αυτού

Rv. 5:2 - I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a great voice, “Who [is] worthy to open the book and to loose its seals?”

No mere angel or man is worthy: only the Divine Field Marshal. Who is the Divine Field Marshal? Where is He? In the following verses, we will discover that the Son, the Lamb Slain, is worthy: He is the Divine Field Marshal; He will go forth leading the remainder of the war against evil.

Rv. 5:3 - και ουδείς εδύνατο εν τω ουρανώ ουδέ επί της γης ουδέ ηυποκάτω της γης ανοίξει το βιβλίον ούτε βλέπειν αυτό

Rv. 5:3 - None now have power in the heaven, nor upon the land (της γης, Ha’Aretz), nor under the land (της γης, Ha’Aretz), to open the book nor [even] to look at it.

The anticipated Divine Field Marshal will be both a heavenly and an earthly person: specifically, an Israelite, a Jew, coming both from life and from death. He comes from heaven, and from the land, and from

under the land. What an amazing description of the life and nature of Jesus Christ hidden in symbolic language.

Not Moses; not Samuel; not Daniel; not any other mere man; none of the false messiahs of Israel; not Josephus (100 AD); not Simon bar Kokhba (135 AD); not the Rambam (1138-1204 AD), nor the Ramban (1194-1270 AD); not Sabbatai Zevi (1626-1676 AD); not any of them is worthy to touch the book or open its seals.

Rv. 5:4 - και [εγώ] έκλαιον πολύ ήότι ουδείς άξιος ηευρέθη ανοίξαι το βιβλίον ούτε βλέπειν αυτό

Rv. 5:4 - I now weep profusely; since, no one worthy was found to open the book, nor to look at it.

Christ has died: all hope is gone. John weeps with Jesus' mother, Mary, at the foot of the Cross. Jesus was the One that all hoped was opening the Book; it certainly looked that way: now our hopes are dashed to the ground, dashed in pieces, shattered. Life no longer has meaning.

John's weeping is not excessive emotionalism. We should all be weeping at this point. We should all be terrified: for, without the Heavenly Field Marshall, the Son of God Himself, God's plan of salvation cannot and will not be executed; there is no hope for Israel or for mankind; all the promises to Abraham have fallen to dust; all of the eternal Covenants have been made temporal; all of history hangs on this split second of reality. John knows it. So should we. As far as our marching orders are concerned: we don't have any.

Rv. 5:5 - και heίς εκ των πρεσβυτέρων λέγει μοι μη κλαίει ιδού ενίκησεν ho λέων ho εκ της φυλής ιούδα η ηρίζα δαυίδ¹² ανοίξαι το βιβλίον και τας heπτά σφραγίδας αυτού

Rv. 5:5 - One of the presbyters tells me, “Do not weep! Look! The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David overcame to open the book and its seven seals.”

But, now is Christ risen from the dead; ascended; coming to be enthroned: He will finish the execution of the Covenants, and the Salvation Plan of God. He alone makes everything true: that the Father will make new. Who would have thought that God’s plan of Salvation included incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and now enthronement? Who would have thought....

This Book may not be, strictly speaking, a Bible: but, it applies exactly to the Bible insofar as a Bible is God’s Word and words. It is inerrant and infallible only as long as it remains in the hands of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Spirit. Human hands, even angelic hands, are unfit to touch it. As soon as human hands touch it, it is defiled and no longer either inerrant or infallible. The providence of God does not protect us from this. Our manuscripts and published Bibles are filled with errors: the only repair for this shortcoming is many hours seeking the teaching of the Holy Spirit in prayer. The errors and failures of a human Bible are not terminal: since, the Son fulfills all of Scripture, and He will return to correct every error, and provide for final human perfection (justification, sanctification, theosis). So, yes, the Word of God is inerrant. No, we don’t have it: we only have man-made copies. What

¹² 1885 has δαυείδ.

we cannot do, is given to us: which, we receive by grace, through faith. “God became man: so that man could become god.”

He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Back in Genesis, when Reuben was too weak to protect Benjamin; it was Judah who stepped forward with the guarantee of his own life to protect Benjamin against the perceived danger in Egypt, Pharaoh, and Joseph (the Chief Executive Officer of Egypt). They did not yet realize that Joseph (the Chief Executive Officer of Egypt) was their brother: they were afraid of him. Judah engineered the move of Jacob and his family to Egypt. Jesus engineers our flight and rescue from symbolical Egypt. “Out of Egypt have I called my son” (Matthew 2:13; Hosea 11:1).

“The Lion has roared, who will not fear? The LORD God has spoken, who can but prophesy?” — Amos 3:8

He is the root of David: the rightful heir and final fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant¹³. This seems reversed to us: for, surely David is the root of Jesus. But, no, “before Abraham [and David] were, I Am” (John 8:58). Jesus is the eternal and only-begotten Son of God.

Rv. 5:6 - και είδον εν μέσω του θρόνου και των τεσσάρων ζώων και εν μέσω των πρεσβυτέρων αρνίον ηεστηκός ηως εσφαγμένον έχων κέρατα ηεπτά και οφθαλμούς ηεπτά ηοί εισίν τα [ηεπτά] πνεύματα του θεού απεσταλμένοι εις πάσαν την γην

¹³ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Covenant_\(biblical\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Covenant_(biblical))
<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/davidic-covenant-unfolding-biblical-eschatology>

Rv. 5:6 - I saw amid [ἐξ] the throne, the four Zoa, and amid the presbyters, a Lamb having stood as having been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, having been sent into all the land (την γην, Ha' Aretz).

The Lamb having been slain is the true Pesach, the true Pascha, the true Passover, Who brings us all out of the idolatry and slavery of Egypt: the price is the death of the innocent Lamb. He has all authority (seven horns), and perfect vision (seven eyes).

Seven often symbolizes perfection. Horns symbolize kingship or reign. Together, we see a symbol of Christ's eternal reign into the ages of the ages.

He also has the perfection of the Spirit (seven eyes), the Great Menorah, which is to say that the Son and the Spirit are always working together in perfect harmony and unity in the service of the Father.

Jesus was sent specifically to Israel/Judea. He will reach the ends of the earth: but He first begins in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost ends of the land (της γης, Ha' Aretz) (Acts 1:8). "Judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17).

Rv. 5:7 - και ήλθεν και είληφεν εκ της δεξιάς του καθημένου επί του θρόνου

Rv. 5:7 - He came; He has received from the right [hand] of the One Sitting upon the throne.

The transfer of authority from the Father to the Son is complete. “All authority is given unto Me (Matthew 28:18)” has just taken place symbolically, before our very eyes.

Rv. 5:8 - και τότε έλαβεν το βιβλίον τα τέσσαρα¹⁴ ζώα και ηοι είκοσι τέσσαρες πρεσβύτεροι έπεσαν ενώπιον του αρνίου έχοντες ήέκαστος κιθάραν και φιάλας χρυσάς γεμούσας θυμιαμάτων ηαί εισίν ηαι προσευχαί των ηαγίων

Rv. 5:8 - When He received the book, the four Zoa, and the twenty-four presbyters fell down before the Lamb, each having zithers and golden bowls, filling with incenses, which are the prayers of the saints.

Jesus is worshiped, as is the Father. The prayers of all the ages have just been answered. Prayer, Revelation will show us, is far more important, powerful, and significant than we would ever have believed.

Rv. 5:9 - και άδουσιν ωδήν καινήν λέγοντες άξιος ει λαβείν το βιβλίον και ανοίξαι τας σφραγίδας αυτού ήότι εσφάγης και ηγόρασας τω θεώ εν τω ηαίματι' σου εκ πάσης φυλής και γλώσσης και λαού και έθνους

Rv. 5:9 - They sing a new song, singing, “Worthy are You to receive the book and to open its seals; since, You, were slain. You, ransomed [us] to God by your blood from every tribe, language, people, and nation.

They sing a new song: let us join in the choir with them.

¹⁴ 1885 has τέσσερα.

We are ransomed. This brings screams of protests from many theologians over what we are ransomed from. Certainly, both hypotheses of ransom paid to God, and of ransom paid to Satan, have been thoroughly disproved. John doesn't say what we are ransomed from. I suspect that the harsh reality is ourselves: we have sold ourselves into sin and slavery, we have no one else to blame. Even though Satan once blinded our eyes... (John 12:40; 2 Corinthians 4:4), "The Devil did not make me do it." We may not know exactly where we were ransomed from: but, John clearly states where we are ransomed to. We are ransomed to God. From the Exodus, we may conclude that we, in this symbol, were ransomed from Egypt, as we most certainly were: but, we chose to go down into Egypt, because life seemed better there.

Ultimately, the word, "nations", will apply to the entire world. However, at this point of time, John is primarily concerned with the Samaritans, as well as the surrounding nations that have been Israel's historic enemies: Egypt, Ammon, Moab, Edom, Syria, Philistia, Phoenicia, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, and the like (Amos 1 lists a few). Now, Asia is also in view. John's worldview is necessarily much smaller than ours. The UN lists 195¹⁵ countries worldwide today. John and his readers only knew a handful of these.

Rv. 5:10 - και εποίησας αυτούς τω θεώ ημών βασιλείαν και ιερείς και βασιλεύουσιν επί της γης

Rv. 5:10 - You made them a kingdom, priests to our God. They reign upon the land (της γης, Ha'Aretz)."

¹⁵ Other authorities claim 206, and 236: these numbers are not generally recognized.

All those who are blood bought, led by the Spirit, form a kingdom of priests. As Soldiers of the Cross, our first duty is to fulfill our priesthood, using only our Spiritual instruments, tools, and weapons. As a kingdom of priests our principal weapons are hymns, praises, prayers, and thanksgiving¹⁶: by these we reign over Israel/Judah, even when they kill us, or try to marginalize us and our message.

Rv. 5:11 - και είδον και ήκουσα φωνήν αγγέλων πολλών κύκλω του θρόνου και των ζώων και των πρεσβυτέρων και ην ηο αριθμός αυτών μυριάδες μυριάδων και χιλιάδες χιλιάδων

Rv. 5:11 - I saw. I heard a voice of many messengers around the throne: the Zoa, the presbyters... their number is now myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands,

The priestly work of evangelism is already blossoming, producing results: the Ekklesiae are growing into millions and hundreds of millions; today, 2.4 billion. John speaks in symbols, we are not allowed to see the actual census as God sees it: the point is that the Ekklesiae are very rapidly becoming very large as Jesus leads them to overcome. Hundreds of millions probably looks somewhat to the future: possibly 100 million as early as 150 AD. Reports of the Church census being 3 million by the end of the third century, probably include only Rome: they probably exclude Persia, the work of Thomas, the Copts, and other outreach venues. The number one million by the end of the first century, suggests a doubling time around eight years from the 5,000 mark at Peter's sermon: at that pace 100 million could be easily reached in the

¹⁶ Ephesians 6 and other verses suggest different items: but, the idea is not especially different.

middle of the second century. This raises the question: was 136 AD, in fact, the exact target date for 100 million? Many Christians were also killed: this would hide the actual census.

Rv. 5:12 - λέγοντες φωνή μεγάλη αξιόν εστίν το αρνίον το εσφαγμένον λαβείν την δύναμιν και πλούτον και σοφίαν και ισχύν και τιμήν και δόξαν και ευλογίαν

Rv. 5:12 - singing in a great voice, “Worthy is the Lamb, having been slain, to receive the power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing.”

Worthy indeed is the Lamb. It is important to see that He receives these things: not us. Jesus is certainly worthy of the love and loyalty of so many sinners.

“Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the LORD.” —
Romans 12:19; Isaiah 63:4; Ezekiel 25:14

Rv. 5:13 - και παν κτίσμα ho εν τω ουρανώ και επί της γης και ηυποκάτω της γης και επί της θαλάσσης [εστίν] και τα εν αυτοίς πάντα ήκουσα λέγοντας τω καθημένω επί του θρόνου και τω αρνίω η ευλογία και η τιμή και η δόξα και το κράτος εις τους αιώνας των αιώνων

Rv. 5:13 - I heard every creature, which [is] in the heaven, upon the land (της γης, Ha’Aretz), under the land (της γης, Ha’Aretz), upon the sea, and all the [things] in them, singing to the One Sitting upon the throne, and to the Lamb, “The blessing, the honor, the glory, the might into the ages of the ages.”

Under the land implies also the dead. The chorus includes the heavenly, earthly, buried, and now peoples from the sea: one gigantic kingdom of priests, whose first priority is singing hymns to God the Father and to God the Son.

Rv. 5:14 - και τα τέσσαρα¹⁷ ζώα ἔλεγον ἀμήν και οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ἔπεσαν και προσεκύνησαν

Rv. 5:14 - The four Zoa now sing, “Amen.” The presbyters fell down. They prostrated.

This is where we should be: flat on our faces; arms outstretched in the form of the Cross; praying. That’s what priests do. That’s what soldiers of the Cross do. The four Zoa and the twenty-four presbyters have led us in worship. Amen.

For me, Revelation 5 seems somewhat disjointed, as does another, later Chapter. I like to think of this as a gigantic collage: separate pictures of Christ, pasted together side-by-side. If you see lots of dynamic movement here, perhaps, it would be better described as gigantic choreography.

Prophecy

None. This is first century history set in eternal symbols. Christ is Crucified, Raised, Ascended, Enthroned (all in 33 AD) into the ages of the ages.

¹⁷ 1885 has τέσσερα.

Application

God knows us all inside and out: God unveils us all inside and out ... there is no hiding place. This is not a judgment of the whole world at this time: it will only become such as the rest of the world's nations become totally involved and duplicate the sins of Israel/Judah. Make no mistake, God knows us all inside and out. God does not change: every person is judged by the same standard.

Egypt became, for us, a deceptive trap from which we could not shake ourselves free. What is your deceptive trap? Mine was a series of secular employments, from which I could not escape, until God cut me loose. I had to repent of entrapment by the cares of this world (Matthew 13:7, 22). We all are most certainly ransomed by Christ's blood.

Political leadership is a deceptive trap. Before we judge world political leaders too harshly, we should remember that they may be caught in a trap from which they cannot free themselves.

“Father forgive them: for, they know not what they do.” —
Luke 23:34

We, of a more modern Ekklesiae join this eternal kingdom of priests. It is our first service as soldiers of the Cross. We reign today, by our priesthood over all the earth: which is to say that our primary task is gently leading others into the worship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We do this by humble example: occasionally, we talk to explain. This is definitely not a Theocracy: God does not dictate to man; He leads by love through hearts, not by politics.

Jesus is worthy of our love and loyalty.

The Church is comprised of the living and the dead in one holy communion (Hebrews 12). There are not really two churches: the church militant and the church triumphant. There are most certainly not 45,000 distinct denominations: this is offensive to God.

Revelation 6

Revelation 6 and 7 connect directly and immediately with Revelation 5, and these ought not be separated from each other. They flow together as the seamless garment of Christ.

God's Nature

However, before we continue, let us reconsider some aspects of the nature of God.

“God loved the world; so, He gave His only-begotten Son; that all believing in Him would not be destroyed; but, would have eternal life: for, God did not send the Son into the world that He would judge the world;¹⁸ but, that the world would be saved through Him. The one believing in Him is not judged; yet, the unbelieving one is already judged: because, he had not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

¹⁸ He would not judge at the time of this sending; this cannot mean that the Son would not judge at a later date. Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10

Now, this is the judgment: that light had come into the world. People loved the darkness rather than the light: for, their works have been evil: for, all practicing worthlessness hate the light. They do not come toward the light, that their works would not be exposed. Now, the one doing the truth comes toward the light, that his works would be showed forth openly, that they are working in God.”¹⁹ — John 3:16-21

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” — 2 Peter 3:9

“God is love.” — 1 John 4:8, 16

Human Nature

Now, let us consider part of the mechanism of sin. Satan did not have the authority to force Eve to sin: he only had authority to tempt. First Eve, then Adam opened the door to let Satan in. Sin fell upon them because they willed for it to fall upon them. Satan was welcomed into the human family....

God did not force Cain to murder Abel. Cain committed that murder of his own free will. God told Cain that he could overcome this evil. Cain

¹⁹ It is not merely the works which are under scrutiny: God searches and reveals the purity or impurity of the hidden chambers of the heart, the honesty and sincerity of motives. There is no place left to hide.

needed to make God the center of his life, not his selfish self. God is telling Cain that gratitude for God's gifts could overcome even this.

God did not force Lamech to become a war monger. Lamech did that of his own free will.

God did not force Nimrod to become a mighty hunter against the LORD. Nimrod did that all by himself. God did not coerce Asshur into forming a competing empire to resist servitude and slavery to Nimrod (Genesis 10:8-12). These are all evil, purely human methods, in which Satan gets a stronghold when we welcome him in. At first we are demon influenced; finally, we become demon possessed, then stark raving mad.

Even then, much of what we like to call demonism or demonic behavior is nothing more than a silly excuse for raging human sinfulness ("The Devil made me do it" mentality). Did you get this? Much of what we want to blame on demons, is actually nothing more than our own outrageous behavior. Where in the Bible can you find demons behaving this badly? But reprehensible human behavior is found on every page.

"Let no one say when they are tempted, 'I am tempted by God': for, God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts He any one: but, every one is tempted, when they are drawn away by their own lust, and enticed. Then, when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.

"Do not err, my beloved brothers and sisters. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of Lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of His own will begot He us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.

“Wherefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, let everyone be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for, the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God.

“Wherefore lay aside all moral pollution and floods of filth, and receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls. But, be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves: for, if anyone is a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, they are like a person looking at their real face in a mirror: for, they look at themselves, and go away, and immediately forget what they are. But whoever looks into the perfect Law of Liberty, and continues in it, not being a forgetful hearer, but a doer who works, these will be blessed in their deed.

“If anyone thinks they are religious, and does not bridle their tongues, but deceives their own hearts, these people’s religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep themselves unspotted from the world.”
— James 1:13-27

Note that there is not a breath about demonism in James’ argument. If anything, James accuses us, in our evil behavior, for acting like demons, not of being possessed by them (3:15).

“From where do wars and fighting among you come? Come they not here, even of your lusts that war in your members?”
— James 4:1

And again:

“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” — James 4:7

And from Jeremiah:

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his deeds. ... O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake You will be ashamed. Those who depart from Me will be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.” —
Jeremiah 17:9-10, 13

There is a common mechanism at play here. All of the spectators in Chapters 4 and 5 were focused on God in great gratitude, overwhelming love, and infinite trust. Eve, and all others that failed, took their eyes off of that trust, lost that love, and became ungrateful; they looked to something besides God for truth: namely, their own opinion. This opened the door of unforgiveness of others, demon influence, demon possession, and raging sinful madness: which, is always the ultimate outcome when we take our eyes off of God. The source of sin is man, not demons. Gratitude to God, forgiveness, and sanity are inextricably linked. We overcome evil by our gratitude to God and our forgiveness of others.

Three of the Horse Riders²⁰

God has now showed us that the means and methods of the Fire Horse Rider, the Black Horse Rider, Thanatos, and Hades are demonic: they do

²⁰ Zechariah 1:8; 6:2, 3, 6; 9:10; 10:3, 5; 12:4; 14:15, 20

not act as God acts. This does not mean that they are all in fact demons. They may be demons: but, the symbol of exaggeration may describe something else. The root causes are all human: human decisions bring this demonism down on our own heads. It is not possible, is it, that humanity is so evil that it must be described under the symbolism of demonism, is it? Demonic acts described elsewhere in the Bible are not nearly this violent.

Zechariah's picture, especially in Chapter 6 seems to favor the idea of angels, spirits, or demons (fallen angels). Some of the other ideas presented in the footnotes are absurd and fanciful to the point of being silly: they make a mockery of the Bible.

We leave the question unanswered. We have proved in the above analysis that this behavior is best described as demonic; whether this means actual demons (fallen angels), evil spirit beings; or whether this is a graphic picture of the nature of humanity: who can say with any certainty? We can say, with absolute certainty, that this is evil behavior: God does not participate in evil anywhere, ever.

The White Horse Rider

What about the White Horse and its rider? Many voices are now clamoring that this is not Christ.²¹ Is this true? It seems to us that the context and continuity of discussion in Revelation require the White Horse Rider to be Jesus Christ Himself: thus, in breaking the first seal,

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Horsemen_of_the_Apocalypse

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interpretatio_graeca

²¹ <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/revelation/6-2.htm>

He discloses something about Himself that we would not otherwise know.

Some of the other possibilities:

This is the Holy Spirit. Christ in His absence from earth has His Personal Vicar, The Vicar of Christ on Earth. We will accept this as a possibility. However, the Holy Spirit is presented to us in many other mysteries and symbols, the most dominant of which is the Water of Life. The Holy Spirit is not usually presented in such a spectacular way: nor does He claim such authority for Himself. Jesus is the holder of all authority. The Spirit is the power bringer. This is unlikely to be the Holy Spirit.

This is Alexander the Great (323 BC). Although Alexander the Great was long dead before this could ever take place: we believe that there is merit to the suggestion here. When Alexander rode through town on his white horse, it was symbolical of the idea that oppression had now ended, and peace had arrived, there was joy and dancing in the streets: the Greeks were fun; but, unfortunately, also lascivious. We suspect that John is using the imagery of the historic Alexander to symbolize the peace and freedom that Christ has brought by His Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement. However, Christ's Enthronement appears to be on a White Horse, rather than simply upon the Throne next to His Father.

This is Paul and/or Peter. Both Paul and Peter have appeared in their roles as Evangelists (Zoa): there is no logical reason for them to appear here. Neither do they have either authority or power to accomplish what lies ahead. Both are most likely included as allies of, or within the 144,000 about to come.

The Red, Black, and Pale Horses have been proved to be symbols of human evil masked in demonism: so, this must be another symbol of human evil masked in demonism. The idea that this could be anti-Christ fails to grasp what John means by anti-Christ (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7 are all of the references in the Bible). Why would anti-Christ, the Man of Sin, or any other such person appear in this office as an overcomer?

This is Constantine. Constantine (circa 313) is three centuries too late. He can hardly be taken in any sense as the overcomer of, or participant in, all evil.

This is the Papacy. The Papacy is legally created by Justinian (circa 538), five centuries out of position. It can hardly be taken in any sense as the overcomer of, or participant in, all evil: wildly speculative and bitter protestations notwithstanding. This is eisegesis: reading into Scripture what you want it to say. This is most certainly not exegesis: struggling with Scripture to discover what it really says.

This is not another demonic or evil force.

The Living Stone

“You watched until a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and broke them into pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, were broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.” — Daniel 2:34-35

This is Jesus Christ: but, Jesus Christ is God-man, not angel. Perhaps this is an indication that the other horses and riders are not really angelic either. There is no indication of demonism in Nebuchadnezzar's dream statue. Christ has already overcome by "trampling down death by death". He still has much work left to do. In Daniel 2:34-35, the Stone Cut Without Hands (Jesus) must finish demolishing all forms of Roman Imperialism; The Church (Hebrews 12) must grow into a great mountain: these works are not finished today. Perhaps Daniel 7 settles the whole matter:

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands²² ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand²³ stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spoke: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame."—
Daniel 7:9-11

"As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a

²² One million or more.

²³ One hundred million.

kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” — Daniel 7:12-14

Finally, John uses the symbol of the White Horse Rider again, in Revelation 19:11, 14. There He is almost universally seen to be Christ. It is unlikely that John would use the same symbol in two vastly different ways. If the White Horse Rider is Jesus Christ in Revelation 19:11: then, He is most certainly Jesus Christ here. You just can't have it two ways at once.

So, the first seal, the White Horse Rider is Christ. He has fulfilled all the righteous demands of the Law of God, also known as the Law of Liberty and the Law of Love. He has trampled down death by death: but, even though death can no longer harm us: Death itself still remains to be cast into the Lake of Fire. Death still terrorizes the unbelieving world. There are many other things that need to be set right. Jesus brings His authority to this work. The Spirit brings His power.

According to Matthew, one of our principal assigned tasks is to make disciples: Jesus with authority, and the Spirit with power, together lead us in that task and others.

Rv. 6:1 - και είδον ήότε ήνοιξεν το αρνίον μίαν εκ των ηεπτά σφραγίδων και ήκουσα ηενός εκ των τεσσάρων ζώων λέγοντος ηως φωνή βροντής έρχου

Rv. 6:1 - I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals. I heard one of the four Zoa saying as a voice of thunder, “Come!”

The lamb displays His total authority by opening the first seal: then, all the rest of the seals.

Rv. 6:2 - και είδον και ιδού ήίπος λευκός και ho καθήμενος επ αυτόν έχων τόξον και εδόθη αυτό στέφανος και εξήλθεν νικών και ήίνα νικήση²⁴

Rv. 6:2 - I saw. Look! A white horse! The one sitting upon it having a bow. A wreath was given to Him. He went out overcoming: so that, He would overcome:

The first seal reveals that the Lamb is indeed the Grand and Great Heavenly Field Marshall and not a headquarters chaplain; this is not to disparage headquarters chaplains: but, that is simply not Christ's office. We are not exactly sure of the significance of the bow: other than to signify His active presence in battle. He possibly directs the spiritual battle by pointing His bow. The wreath shows that He has already overcome, and won the prize. He continues in battle, to overcome, and to overcome, and to overcome... until the end.

“Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the LORD.” —
Romans 12:19; Isaiah 63:4; Ezekiel 25:14

This is His office, not ours; yet the spiritual weapons given to us are far superior to the weapons of flesh to which we are accustomed: we take Jericho by marching; we take Nineveh by preaching; we blind our

²⁴ νικήση: verb, 3PS, aorist active subjunctive of νικάω: He would overcome... what? Seemingly, no object is stated: or, is it?

enemies with dazzling light, leading them to a feast in heavenly Samaria, as did Elisha before us.

“... for, we walk around in the flesh: [but,] we do not soldier according to flesh: for, the weapons of our soldiering [are] not flesh, but powerful to God for demolishing strongholds [deceptions and schemes of error and vice]; pulling down [false] thoughts, and every high thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and capturing every thought into the obedience of Christ.” — 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

He would overcome what? The sentence is not finished, it lacks an object or objects. If we temporarily overlook John’s extensive explication, a different sentence structure is revealed before us. He would overcome: the Red Horse (demonic anger, hate, or war), the Black Horse (demonic greed, lust, or selfishness), Thanatos (demonic death), Hades (the demonic grave/underworld), and more. The breaking of the seal means more than control and rule: it indicates exposure to light, or unveiling as well. By simply removing the period at the end of verse 2, and replacing it with a colon, we are brought to see a completely different picture, more realistically attune with God’s nature and the mechanism of human sin. The colon lets us see a list of things that Christ brings to light, exposes, and overcomes. Yes, He will even one day conquer human war and human greed.

Rv. 6:3 - και ἰδοὺ ἔνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν δευτέραν ἠκούσα τοῦ δευτέρου ζώου λέγοντος ἔρχου

Rv. 6:3 - When He opened the second seal, I heard the second Zoan saying, “Come!”

Rv. 6:4 - και εξήλθεν άλλος ήπιπος πυρρός και τω καθημένω επ αυτόν εδόθη αυτώ²⁵ λαβείν την ειρήνην εκ²⁶ της γης και ήίνα αλλήλους σφάξουσιν και εδόθη αυτώ μάχαιρα μεγάλη

Rv. 6:4 - Another went out, a fire horse! To the one sitting upon it was given to it to take [~~the~~] peace from the land (της γης, Ha' Aretz); that they will slay one another. A great saber was given to him.

Jesus, for instance, controls, exposes, and limits even those who are not His allies, possibly other armies of great celestial or earthly beings: this, could be a demon, a Fallen Seraph, a burning or flaming one... terrifying to behold. On the other hand, this could simply be human rage: consider how deep and profound our guilt, if this is the case. We have no authority over demons: but, Jesus Christ does. Do we have authority over our own actions? The limited authority of this demonic behavior is to remove peace: which is another way to say, cause war. It will add fuel and oxidizer to the already smoldering Jewish-Roman wars in the land (της γης, Ha' Aretz): but, the root causes will be the rebellion and sins of the fallen Israel/Judean people.

The Israelites and Jews will slaughter one another in senseless battles with each other.²⁷ Is there any doubt that this Great and Grand Field

²⁵ The uncertainty brackets were removed because confirmation was found at RP, SBL & TH.

²⁶ The uncertainty brackets were removed because confirmation was found at RP, SBL & TH.

²⁷ Some of the competing first century Jewish sects include: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes (?), Zealots, Sicarii, as well as a wide variety of ethnicities, and other groups. Galileans and Samaritans could also be considered Israelite groups, partially or completely outcast. All of the

Marshall will leave such lapses unattended? He will overcome them: but, we are not yet told precisely how.

We distinguish ρομφαία from μάχαιρα, by noting that ρομφαία is double-edged, hence a sword, more suitable for piercing; while a μάχαιρα is single-edged, which we call saber, more suitable for hacking and slashing and cavalry work. The Romans also used an ax bundled with sticks to form the fasces (bundle).

Rv. 6:5 - και τότε ήνοιξεν²⁸ την σφραγίδα την τρίτην ήκουσα του τρίτου ζώου λέγοντος έρχου και είδον και ιδού ήπιπος μέλας και ho καθήμενος επ αυτόν έχων ζυγόν εν τη χειρί αυτού

Rv. 6:5 - When He opened the third seal, I heard the third Zoan saying, “Come!” I saw! Look! A black horse! The one sitting upon it having a scale in his hand.

Rv. 6:6 - και ήκουσα ηως φωνήν εν μέσω των τεσσάρων ζώων λέγουσαν χοίνιξ σίτου δηναρίου και τρεις χοίνικες κριθών δηναρίου και το έλαιον και τον οίνον μη αδικήσης

Rv. 6:6 - I heard as a voice amid the four Zoa saying, “a day’s-worth of wheat for a denarius; three day’s-worth of barley for a denarius. You should not harm the olive oil or the wine.”

Israelite tribes might be included. Christianity rapidly became one of these sects: then separated, developing its own competing factions later.

²⁸ 1885 has ήνοιξε.

This symbolic, demonic presentation: possibly simply an expression of ravenous human greed, possibly a fallen cherub, is no harmless looking baby-like person: cherub means destroyer. This symbol is certainly a destroyer: for, he brings great famine upon mankind. Although, famine naturally follows war as inexorably as night follows day: we do not believe that war is the root cause of famine. We believe that the root cause of famine is human greed; But, humans are the root; demons are only accelerants at most.

But, we are not helpless: because, our champion, the Grand and Great Heavenly Field Marshall, the Lamb of God, has provided a certain way of escape... provided that we will to take it... He holds out the cup of the Water of Life²⁹ to us... even in death we overcome.

Rv. 6:7 - και ήνοιξεν την σφραγίδα την τετάρτην ήκουσα φωνήν του τετάρτου ζώου λέγοντος έρχου

Rv. 6:7 - When He opened the fourth seal I heard a voice of the fourth Zoan saying, "Come!"

Rv. 6:8 - και είδον και ιδού ήπιπος χλωρός και ho καθήμενος επάνω αυτού³⁰ όνομα αυτώ ho³¹ θάνατος και ho háδης ηκολούθει μετ αυτού και εδόθη αυτοίς εξουσία επί το τέταρτον της γης αποκτείναι εν ρομφαία και εν λιμώ και εν θανάτω και ηυπό των θηρίων της γης

²⁹ John 4:10; Revelation 22:1, 17

³⁰ The uncertainty brackets were removed because confirmation was found at RP, SBL & TH.

³¹ The uncertainty brackets were removed because confirmation was found at RP, SBL & TH.

Rv. 6:8 - I saw! Look! A pale horse! The one sitting upon it, Thanatos [is] its name. Hades now follows with it. Authority was given to it over the fourth of the land (της γης, Ha'Aretz) to take life by sword, famine, death, and by the [wild] beasts of the land (της γης, Ha'Aretz).

John may simply be holding up the symbolism of Greek idolatry as a figure of speech that his Asian readers will certainly understand. If any Asians are emerging from a deep fixation on such demonism: they need to know that Christ protects them from every enemy, imagined or real.

Jesus Christ holds the keys to Thanatos, the demon of death; and Hades, the demonic keeper of the prison of the dead (Revelation 1:18). He has absolute authority and control over death and everything associated with death.

Thanatos and Hades appear to be other demons, idols: whether real or imagined, I cannot know or say. We retain the name to distinguish it from other expressions for death. There is nothing outside of Christ's authority (Matthew 28:18): authority (εξουσια); not ability or power (δυναμις), which is under the purview of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8), Who is the Vicar of Christ on Earth, during Christ's absence. Christ directs; the Spirit executes.

Thanatos has authority to take 25% of the lives in Israel/Judah. This is the beginning of an off repeated refrain: by the end of the first Jewish-Roman war, one third of those living in Ha'Aretz will be dead according to Josephus and John. By the end of the third Jewish-Roman war, all will be dead or driven out.

Each of these seals is introduced with the word, “Come”, as is Revelation 22:17 when the Spirit and the Bride reveal Christ’s final answer. He pours the Holy Spirit on these fires and all are put out.

Rv. 6:9 - και τότε ήνοιξεν την πέμπτην σφραγίδα είδον ηυποκάτω του θυσιαστηρίου τας ψυχάς των εσφαγμένων διά τον λόγον του θεού και διά την μαρτυρίαν ήήν είχον

Rv. 6:9 - When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those having been slain for the Word of God; for the testimony, which they now have.

Jesus also overcomes the fears of the Christian dead. The dead victims are protected by God: they are under the altar. Not everyone has such protection and shelter: but, those slain for the Word and for their testimony or witness are so protected... which is why we call them martyrs (μαρτυρίαν) today. If the census figures we explored earlier are accurate in their dating, the number of Christian martyrs could easily exceed 90 million by 136 AD.

Rv. 6:10 - και έκραξαν φωνή μεγάλη λέγοντες ήώς πότε ho δεσπότης ho ήάγιος και αληθινός ού κρίνεις και εκδικείς το हाίμα ηημών εκ των κατοικούντων επί της γης

Rv. 6:10 - They called out in a great voice, saying, “Until when, Holy and True Master? Will You not judge? Will You [not] avenge our blood on those inhabiting [ἡθῶν] the land (της γης, Ha’Aretz)?

It seems strange that they so cry out: since, we are to forgive even our enemies. Still, there is a subliminal reality expressed here.

“Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the LORD.” —
Romans 12:19; Isaiah 63:4; Ezekiel 25:14

These are not asking because they hold unforgiven bitterness and grudges against others. These are asking, when will the promises of God be fulfilled? When will all this war and greed and death and decay be brought to an end? Soon.... (2 Peter 3:8)

Rv. 6:11 - και εδόθη αυτοίς ηκάστω στολή λευκή και ερρέθη αυτοίς ήίνα αναπαύσονται έτι χρόνον μικρόν ήέως πληρωθώσιν και ηοι σύνδουλοι αυτών και ηοι αδελφοί αυτών ηοι μέλλοντες αποκτένεσθαι ηως και αυτοί

Rv. 6:11 - A white robe was given to each of them. It was told to them that they will rest yet a short time, until their fellow servants; their brothers and sisters; those about to have [their] lives taken away would be completed, as also they.

These are also clothed with the robes of Christ’s righteousness, signifying that they are sanctified.

We are avoiding the word justification here, because of its misplaced technical theological definition (justification, sanctification, and glorification). The word, justification, comes from the skilled trades, meaning perfect, square, straight, flat, symmetrical; it does not originate with juridical practice, meaning forgiven: it does mean forgiveness; but, it also means much, much more; it means to be made righteous, sanctified, theosed.

The Divine Potter is not merely concerned with forgiven pottery: His primary concern is perfectly recreated, remanufactured pottery (Isaiah 64:8).

They are to be joined by other martyrs: all enter via death. There is no provision for rapture here, in any sense of escape from tribulation: Christians go through all the same experiences of life as do the wicked tares with them (Matthew 5:45).

“Yes, all who will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” — 2 Timothy 3:12

Rv. 6:12 - και είδον ήότε ήνοιξεν την σφραγίδα την ήέκτην και σεισμός μέγας εγένετο και ho ήήλιος εγένετο μέλας ηως σάκκος τρίχινος και ηη σελήνη ήόλη εγένετο ηως ηαίμα

Rv. 6:12 - I saw when He opened the sixth seal; a great shaking was brought forth. The sun was brought forth black as sackcloth of hair. The whole moon was brought forth as blood.

Jesus overcomes His mortal enemies. John returns to the symbolism of Joseph’s dream (Genesis 37:9). The symbol indicates that whatever is about to happen will cause great harm and/or pain to Jacob and Rachael, or possibly Jacob and Leah, or even possibly to Jacob and all four of his wives. The ancestry of Israel/Judah will all mourn this egregious loss.

Rv. 6:13 - και ηοι αστέρες του ουρανού έπεσαν εις την γην ηως συκή βάλλει τους ολύνθους αυτής ηυπό ανέμου μεγάλου σειομένη

Rv. 6:13 - The stars of the heaven fell down into the land (την γην, Ha'Aretz) as a fig tree throws her unripe fruit [when] being shaken by a great wind.

The chief leadership of Israel/Judah in the first and second centuries will all fail, and most likely die. The ancestry of Israel/Judah down through the centuries will all mourn this egregious loss.

Rv. 6:14 - και ho ουρανός απεχωρίσθη ἡως βιβλίον ηελισσόμενον και παν ὄρος και νήσος εκ των τόπων αυτών εκινήθησαν

Rv. 6:14 - The heaven was swept away as a book being rolled up. Every mountain and island were removed from their places.

We are not exactly sure of the meaning of this symbol: it seems to say that Joseph's dream with all its implications will be swept away. Perhaps this shows how all Israel will be swept away in 136 AD: the fulfillment of Mark: for, Jesus does not doubt His own authority, and the Spirit lacks no power... an indication of the faith of the Ekklesiae.

“For verily I say to you, That whoever will say unto this mountain (Zion), Be removed, and be cast into the sea; and will not doubt in his heart, but will believe that those things which he says will come to pass; he will have whatever he says.” — Mark 11:23

On the other hand it may symbolize the way that the grief of the ancestry of Israel/Judah down through the centuries is soothed. Every tear is wiped away, and their grief is forgotten.

Rv. 6:15 - και hoi βασιλείς της γης και hoi μεγιστάνες και hoi χιλίαρχοι και hoi πλούσιοι και hoi ισχυροί και πας δούλος και ελεύθερος έκρυψαν ηεαυτούς εις τα σπήλαια και εις τας πέτρας των ορέων

Rv. 6:15 - The kings of the land (της γης, Ha' Aretz), the influential people, the military commanders, the wealthy, the mighty, all slaves, and free hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains;

Rv. 6:16 - και λέγουσιν τοις όρεσιν και ταις πέτραις πέσετε³² εφ ηημάς και κρύψατε ηημάς από προσώπου του καθημένου επί του θρόνου και από της οργής του αρνίου

Rv. 6:16 - these saying to the mountains, and to the rocks, "Fall upon us. Hide us from [the] face of the One Sitting upon the throne; from the wrath of the Lamb:

Those who promoted war following the Fire Horse, and those who promoted greed, following the Black Horse, including their victims: all who have refused to serve Christ, anti-Christ, seek refuge in their vain attempt to hide from the Father and from the Lamb. They would rather die than repent: even when they certainly know that they are wrong.

Rv. 6:17 - hότι ήλθεν ηη ημέρα ηη μεγάλη της οργής αυτών και τίς δύναται σταθήναι

Rv. 6:17 - since, the day of Their great wrath came. Who has power to be stationed [against Them]?

³² 1885 has πέσατε.

None of these adversaries of Christ or His Father is left standing. To oppose Christ is to oppose the Father: there is no middle ground here.

Prophecy

The fact that the world is still dominated by human war and greed shows that this passage is indeed prophetic. Still this is characteristic of the behavior of people throughout the ages since Cain: so, in the sense that this has no particular specific fulfillment, there is no specific prophecy here either. Nevertheless, the repeated use of the term, Ha'Aretz, shows us that a terminus ad quem of 136 AD is intended: all subsequent uses are really applicational, not prophetic. Perhaps, the fact that we know that Thanatos and Hades are destined for the Lake of Fire is prophetic: but, we did not learn that from these verses.

Application

Yet, we ourselves have been caught in endless wars for well over two thousand years; let us have no doubt that the root cause of these wars is our own rebellion and sinfulness: neither let us be mistaken that there is always divine retribution for our sins. This demonic behavior brings violent death.

This lust for fighting ever since Cain and Lamech is so strong among us that we might even say that there is no demon here at all: rather, warmongering and blood lust are so prevalent in the human race that John is forced to use the symbol of demonism to describe how bad it really is, to get our attention. Demons do not act this violently in the rest of the Bible: but people do! It should be very clear to all, that this

bloodlust or bloodthirst is still raging rampant among us. We don't need demons to become this violent.

Forgive me for eisegeting: but I cannot read this passage without seeing WW I, WW II, and the brink of WW III standing before us; together with all of the thousands of other wars fought during the last two-thousand years and more: so many of them, like the Crusades, wrongfully fought in the name of Christ. The guilt of these wars, all of them sinful, weighs heavily upon us all, especially us Christians.

Human war fought with weapons of flesh never solves anything. Spiritual war, led by Christ, fought with Spiritual weapons solves every problem, including massive human bloodshed (Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3).

This is divine judgment in action. God lets out-of-control sinners fight and kill one another.

When the nations repeat the rebellions and sins of the Israelites and Jews, the nations will also slaughter one another in senseless battles with each other. Factions are a real and terrifying judgment on rebellions and sins against Almighty God.

The same picture may be painted of the supposed demon of greed: maybe this is just human behavior mirrored to us as it really is. As selfishness closes off markets to many people in the world today; who die of starvation, malnutrition, and disease: simply because of the cold-blooded refusal to hold out a crust of bread or share and transport the world's more than ample food supply, equally with all. This is why this demon bears the symbolic scale: because he accelerates and aggravates

all the markets³³ of human greed and selfishness, while this world's helpless poor bear the brunt of such selfishness.

This will continue as long as markets are driven by the profit motive.

Human greed fought with weapons of selfishness never solves anything either. Spiritual war, led by Christ, fought with Spiritual weapons solves every problem, including massive human greed, and famine (Micah 4:4).

Since the Civil War we have seen war and greed feed each other and intensify exponentially. War is profitable. Business is a kind of war. This trend will continue as long as society is driven by domination and profit motives.

Domination, revenge, getting even are not wholesome motives. Neither is profiteering. Most disgusting of all is, "Well, even the church has to operate in the black." What Bible verse is that? We are called to lay down our lives for others, as Christ did before us: that is explicitly operating in the red, in the slavery zone. Most of us instinctively treat our spouses and children this way: there is no longer anything profitable about raising children. But, outside of the family it is bloodlust and greed. Today, the biggest warmonger on earth is the USA; the greediest controlling marketeer is the USA, especially its world dominating banking system.

The synchronism of the war-business greed system as seen in worldwide behavior today is especially terrifying. The cooperation between the WB, FRB, Wall Street, the Rothschilds, and many others, meshes with the War machines of world powers in very profitable cycles for the few.

³³ Including banking, education, insurance, and publishing.

For example, 50% of the USA budget is concerned with war: about 25% directly with the military, and another 25% with technology in direct support of the military. The guilt of this is overwhelming. We are the blood-lusting, bloodthirsting, greed dominating capital of the world.

These two horses (Red and Black) plumb the depths of human depravity. God is not very concerned about angelic/demonic depravity in the Bible, is He? Maybe the angels/demons have their own book that deals with angelic/demonic depravity.

Jesus doesn't sell food, clothing, shelter, education, health care, medications, love, forgiveness, eternal life. He gives these all away. We falsely claim ownership of them and sell them. We fight and war to take away property that God has given to others. The loving family relative does not sell these things either. They are given, shared because we are all family: it operates on the sacrificial motive, not the profit motive. We have 8 billion brothers and sisters in the world today, many of whom are in great need. As I write today, Argentina is sinking in deep debt.³⁴

Revelation 7

The emphasis changes away from the things that are overcome, onto details of how they are overcome. The winds will be restrained. The Saints are all sealed. An army of Evangelists will be revealed.

³⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/sep/27/poverty-rate-argentina-milei>

Rv. 7:1 - μετά τούτο είδον τέσσαρας αγγέλους ηεστώτας επί τας τέσσαρας γωνίας της γης κρατούντας τους τέσσαρας ανέμους της γης ήίνα μη πνήέ άνεμος επί της γης μήτε επί της θαλάσσης μήτε επί παν δένδρον

Rv. 7:1 - With this I saw four messengers having stood at the four corners of the land (της γης, Ha'Aretz), controlling the four winds of the land (της γης, Ha'Aretz), so that wind would not blow upon the land (της γης, Ha'Aretz), neither upon the sea, nor upon any tree.

The four corners of the land, not of the earth: even though both indicate east, north, south, and west. John's focus is on Israel/Judea and that is the specific interpretation. The point is that the messengers and/or winds (άνεμος/άνέμους, not spirits) of judgment, possibly Rome³⁵, were being restrained until all those living in Ha'Aretz who were repentant were made safe by sealing. This will not prevent them from suffering and dying: but, even in the worst circumstances, their human spirits will be carried safely to heaven. The application follows the principles learned here and extends them to every place and time.

The full force of the judgment of Israel/Judea is restrained until all of the faithful are gathered in. All who will ever repent are given time to do so.

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing

³⁵ The specific referent is unimportant: believers are protected by sealing from every evil force (Fire Horse Rider, Black Horse Rider, Pale Horse Rider, Rome, Dominators, lascivious temptations, and much, much more... all... every.

that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” — 2 Peter 3:9

Rv. 7:2 - και είδον άλλον άγγελον αναβαίνοντα από ανατολής ηηλίου έχοντα σφραγίδα θεού ζώντος και έκραξεν φωνή μεγάλη τοις τέσσαρσιν αγγέλοις hoίς εδόθη αυτοίς αδικήσαι την γην και την θάλασσαν

Rv. 7:2 - I saw another messenger ascending from [the] sun-rise having a seal of [the] Living God. He cried out with a great voice to the four messengers to whom it was given to them to destroy the land (την γην, Ha’Aretz) and the sea,

Restraint continues until the seal of God arrives, the seal of the Spirit (Ephesians 1:13, 17). This symbol may be a picture of Pentecost, 33 AD (Acts 1:8; 2:1ff), when the seals were first applied: but, these same seals continue to be applied all through the book of Acts; and, we believe until this very hour.

Rv. 7:3 - λέγων μη αδικήσητε την γην μήτε την θάλασσαν μήτε τα δένδρα άχρι σφραγίσωμεν τους δούλους του θεού ηημών επί των μετώπων αυτών

Rv. 7:3 - saying, “You should not destroy the land (την γην, Ha’Aretz), nor the sea, nor the trees until we could seal the servants of our God upon their foreheads.”

“Who has also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” — 2 Corinthians 1:22

“In whom you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after you believed, were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,” — Ephesians 1:13

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him:” — Ephesians 1:17

“But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now, if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they are none of His.” — Romans 8:9

These (land, sea, and trees) are symbols for people, so, all who believe are sealed by the Spirit.

This is the first indication that some sort of branding is in common use. The seal of the Spirit seems to be invisible. The Spirit of God writes the Law in/on our hearts: very probably this is the Seal of the Spirit. Covenants are not simply written with ink: they are carved or cut with a knife or chisel: hence, a kind of brand.

“But this will be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, says the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they will be my people.” — Jeremiah 31:33

“Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another” — Romans 2:15

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be their God, and they will be My people:” — Hebrews 8:10

Rv. 7:4 - και ήκουσα τον αριθμόν των εσφραγισμένων ηεκατόν τεσσεράκοντα τέσσαρες χιλιάδες εσφραγισμένοι εκ πάσης φυλής ηυιών ισραήλ

Rv. 7:4 - I heard the number of those having been sealed: one hundred forty-four thousand having been sealed from all [the] tribe[s] of [the] children of Israel:

These are the first-fruits of Evangelism. This specific sealing of the Ekklesiae forms a very specific Israel/Judah army unit, that we believe were called to be evangelists. If this means one hundred forty-four thousand from each tribe, we are just looking at the start. More likely, one hundred forty-four thousand is the sum of all the tribes.

Rv. 7:5 - εκ φυλής ιούδα δώδεκα χιλιάδες εσφραγισμένοι εκ φυλής ηρουβήν δώδεκα χιλιάδες εκ φυλής γαδ δώδεκα χιλιάδες

Rv. 7:5 - of [the] tribe of Judah, twelve thousand, having been sealed, of [the] tribe of Reuben, twelve thousand, of [the] tribe of Gad, twelve thousand,

Rv. 7:6 - εκ φυλής ασήρ δώδεκα χιλιάδες εκ φυλής νεφθαλίμ δώδεκα χιλιάδες εκ φυλής μανασσή δώδεκα χιλιάδες

Rv. 7:6 - of [the] tribe of Asher, twelve thousand,
of [the] tribe of Naphtali, twelve thousand,
of [the] tribe of Manasseh, twelve thousand,

Rv. 7:7 - εκ φυλής συμεών δώδεκα χιλιάδες εκ φυλής λευί³⁶ δώδεκα
χιλιάδες εκ φυλής ισσαχάρ δώδεκα χιλιάδες

Rv. 7:7 - of [the] tribe of Simeon, twelve thousand,
of [the] tribe of Levi, twelve thousand,
of [the] tribe of Issachar, twelve thousand,

Rv. 7:8 - εκ φυλής ζαβουλών δώδεκα χιλιάδες εκ φυλής ιωσηφ δώδεκα
χιλιάδες εκ φυλής βενιαμίν³⁷ δώδεκα χιλιάδες εσφραγισμένοι

Rv. 7:8 - of [the] tribe of Zebulun, twelve thousand,
of [the] tribe of Joseph, twelve thousand,
of [the] tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand, having been sealed.

The tribe of Dan is not named, possibly because they have lapsed into full apostasy: thus, the seal of the Spirit is withheld from them. The tribe of Ephraim is not listed either: Joseph takes its place. Early, during the reign of Jeroboam, Jeroboam built two idol cult centers at Bethel and Dan (1 Kings 12:29): so, that Israelites would not turn traitor to him and return to the Judean kingdom, because of the Temple, Arc, Sh^okinah, and worship center at Jerusalem. Bethel is thought to be located within the borders or on the border of Ephraim. Possibly, because of this apostasy, the names of both Dan and Ephraim, may have been removed: the name

³⁶ 1885 has λευεί.

³⁷ 1885 has βενιαμείν.

Joseph being added back in again, to complete the symbolism of twelve. John does not explain, and we cannot be sure.

Rv. 7:9 - μετά ταύτα είδον και ιδού όγλος πολύς ηον αριθμήσαι αυτόν ουδείς εδύνατο εκ παντός έθνους και φυλών και λαών και γλωσσών ηεστώτες ενώπιον του θρόνου και ενώπιον του αρνίου περιβεβλημένους στολάς λευκάς και φοίνικες εν ταις χερσίν αυτών

Rv. 7:9 - With these I saw. Look! A large crowd, which no one person now has power to count, of every nation: tribes, peoples, and languages; having stood before the throne, before the Lamb; having been wrapped [in] white robes; palm branches in their hands.

The one hundred forty-four thousand evangelists have an impact on other nationalities: many converts are coming to Christ other than from the tribe of Israel. These also are also clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness. They celebrate the real Palm Sunday. The association of these with the land (Ha' Aretz) casts considerable doubt on this evangelism explosion taking place in later times: we are almost certainly talking about a time prior to 136 AD

This is hymnology; repetition is common practice: this picks up the chorus or refrain of Revelation 5:11-13³⁸.

Rv. 7:10 - και κράζουσιν φωνή μεγάλη λέγοντες ηη σωτηρία τω θεώ ηημών τω καθημένω επί τω θρόνω και τω αρνίω

³⁸ “their number is now myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, singing in a great voice ... every creature ... singing....”

Rv. 7:10 - They cry out in a great voice, saying, “Salvation to our God, the One Sitting upon the throne, and to the Lamb.

A new hymn is born. A previous hymn is repeated.

Rv. 7:11 - και πάντες ἔκεισαν ἑαυτοὺς κύκλῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων καὶ ἔπεσαν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου ἐπὶ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θεῷ

Rv. 7:11 - All the messengers, the presbyters, and the four Zoa [who] had stood around the throne; fell down before the throne upon their faces; and prostrated before [the] God,

Again, worship is the appropriate response. These are the works that the Father and the Son have done: we should be overwhelmed with gratitude.

Rv. 7:12 - λέγοντες ἀμήν ἡ εὐλογία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ σοφία καὶ ἡ εὐχαριστία καὶ ἡ τιμὴ καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ ἰσχὺς τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων ἀμήν⁴⁰

Rv. 7:12 - singing, “Amen! Blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, and might [be] to our God into the ages of the ages. Amen.”

³⁹ 1885 has ἱσθήκεισαν.

⁴⁰ The uncertainty brackets were removed because confirmation was found at RP, SBL & TH.

Another hymn breaks forth.

Rv. 7:13 - και απεκρίθη ηεις εκ των πρεσβυτέρων λέγων μοι ηούτοι ηοι περιβεβλημένοι τας στολάς τας λευκάς τίνες εισίν και πόθεν ήλθον

Rv. 7:13 - One of the presbyters replied, saying to me, “Who are these having been wrapped in the white robes? From where did they come?”

One presbyter probes John’s understanding of the white robes of Christ’s righteousness, and to whom they may apply.

Rv. 7:14 - και είρηκα αυτό κύριε’ μου συ οίδας και είπεν’ μοι ηούτοι’ εισίν ηοι ερχόμενοι εκ της θλίψεως της μεγάλης και έπλυναν τας στολάς αυτών και ελεύκαναν αυτάς εν τω ηαίματι του αρνίου

Rv. 7:14 - I have blurted out to him, “My Lord, you have known.” He said to me, “These are those coming from the Great Tribulation. They washed their robes. They bleached them in the blood of the Lamb:

The answer is somewhat unexpected, “These are those coming from the Great Tribulation”. The Great Tribulation is now, in the first century (66-73 AD), not at some future date, thousands of years later.

Rv. 7:15 - διά τούτο’ εισίν ενώπιον του θρόνου του θεού και λατρεύουσιν αυτό ηημέρας και νυκτός εν τω ναώ αυτού και ηο καθήμενος επί του θρόνου σκηνώσει επ αυτούς

Rv. 7:15 - through this, they are before the throne of God. They sacrifice to Him day and night in His temple. The One Sitting upon the throne will camp among them.

The saints of the Great Tribulation are faithful in their service as members of Christ's kingdom of priests. The Father will camp or tent or tabernacle among them: in other words, they serve, as did Samuel and Mary, inside the Oracle itself.

The symbol of camping among them takes us back to the Exodus, and the forty years wandering in the wilderness. This is the new Exodus: an Exodus of the Ekklesiae being called out of the slave market of sin and into the heavenly new Ha'Aretz of God and the Lamb: this is like the Exodus of old.

Rv. 7:16 - ου πεινάσουσιν έτι ουδέ διψήσουσιν έτι ουδέ μη πέση επ αυτούς ho ήλιος ουδέ παν καύμα

Rv. 7:16 - They will not hunger [ever] again, neither thirst [ever] again, nor would the sun ever fall upon them, nor any blazing heat:

All the needs of their spiritual bodies (1 Corinthians 15:44) are fully met.

Rv. 7:17 - ήότι το αρνίον το ανά μέσον του θρόνου του ποιμανεί αυτούς και hoδηγήσει αυτούς επί ζωής πηγάς ηυδάτων και εξαλείψει ho θεός παν δάκρυον εκ των οφθαλμών αυτών

Rv. 7:17 - since, the Lamb, up amid the throne will shepherd them. He will lead them to springs of living⁴¹ waters. God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

These have succor, and more than succor, festal and festive abundance, because the Lamb leads them to the Spirit. Their fears and tears are all overcome. He went out overcoming: so that He would overcome....

Prophecy

None. This is first century history

Application

By the end of the third Chapter we had learned that we were members of an elite group, the Ekklesiae of God: not the enklesiae, or bench sitters. No, we are the Ekklesiae, called out to active duty in the heavenly army of God, a kingdom of priests. Along the way, we learned that the fundamental sin problem is ingratitude to God for all that He has done for us: some call this pride in that when we take our eyes off of God, we usually direct them to self. This fall is often accompanied by the lust to dominate others⁴² (the Nicolaitans); and/or various forms of lasciviousness (the followers of Balaam, Balac, and Jezebel). Some are near death, or even dead: so, the Ekklesiae for them is a calling to life:

⁴¹ Alive is replaced by living: though we had avoided the participial form, it fits English idiom better.

⁴² libido dominandi, St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei, The City of God*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_City_of_God
https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/libido_dominandi

these desperately need to be born from above. Others are already born from above.

In Chapter 4 we were shown a functional picture of the heavenly kingdom's organizational chart, a symbolization of it, as it existed in the first century, and as it exists today: by which we may judge the accuracy of all earthy organizational charts and organizations ... almost all fail. There is no point in our futile attempts to hide from what we have done: for, all are as transparent as a glassy sea to the penetrating flaming eyes of the Enthroned One; and, as we will discover in Chapter 5, from the flaming eyes of the Lamb.

Chapter 5 introduces the first century (mostly 33 AD) life of Christ in a series of pictures. Among other things, these pictures or symbols show in what sense the Bible is inerrant, and in what senses all of its manuscript copies and printed versions are errant. This also shows us how we must look to the Holy Spirit as the teacher of the Church, until Jesus Christ returns. Christ's absolute authority has been demonstrated to us in these symbols.

Chapter 6 symbolizes Christ's exercise of that authority as He opens those seals: where we discover that, He exposes and unveils everything including Himself. As the White Horse Rider, he goes forth to overcome and unveil: the Fire Horse Rider; the Black Horse Rider; the Pale Horse Rider, with his faithful pet, Hades; the Fears of the Christian Dead; His Mortal Enemies; and more. Two of these teach us a great deal more about our propensity for sin: the human lust for domination and greed ... these may be accelerated by demons; or possibly, humans are that evil all by themselves. In every case the Ekklesiae are protected: but, others are not.

Chapter 7 details Christ's restraint of the destructive winds, His protective seals, and the enumeration of His first army units. The holy martyrs sing hymns throughout. Along the way, as a kingdom of priests, we have added hymns, prayer, praise, and thanksgiving to our Ephesians 6 collection of spiritual weapons: far more powerful than weapons of flesh. The Church has grown to 100 million martyrs ... 2.4 billion today

Sing along. Evangelism continues. The Church is still growing and has much room to grow: she also has great need to grow. Can she set aside her differences and do that? Can the futile and silly walls of division be broken down without compromise of Truth, and the churches conform to the mandatory plan found in Chapter 4?

“*ἅγιος, ἅγιος, ἅγιος κύριος ὁ θεός ὁ παντοκράτωρ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος*”, it sounds so much more beautiful in Greek.

Soli Deo Gloria

⁴³ If you have been blessed or helped by any of these meditations, please repost, share, or use any of them as you wish. No rights are reserved. They are designed and intended for your free participation. They were freely received, and are freely given. No other permission is required for their use.