

Rev 19:11–21:8, Final Judgment of Satan’s System

Overview

The heart of the Revelation is a series of four visions that John receives “in the Spirit” (Figure 1, chart). These visions form a chiasm. The outer two, the letters to the churches and the vision of the Bride of Christ, show us God’s people in their presently earthly struggle (ch. 2-3) and ultimate exaltation (ch. 21-22). The center two deal with God’s judgments. First we have

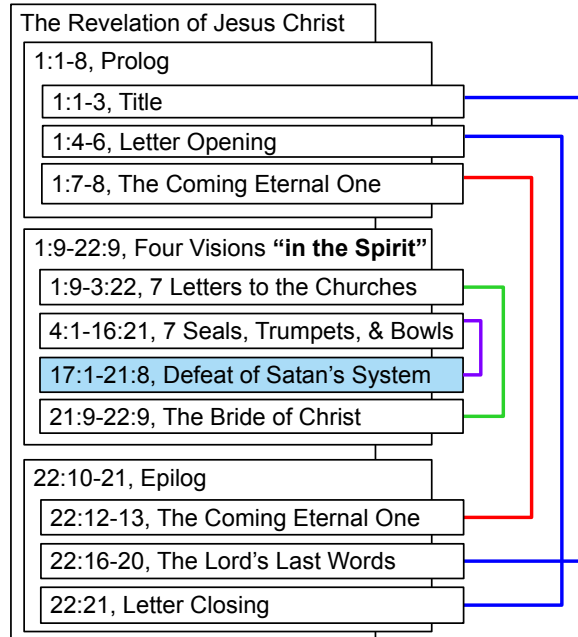


Figure 1: Structure of the Revelation

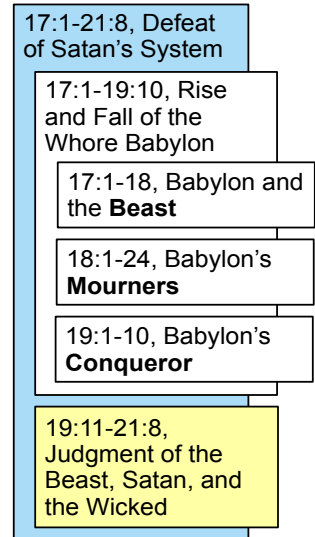


Figure 2: Structure of Revelation 17-21

three series of seven world-wide judgments, the seals, trumpets, and bowls. Then chapters 17-21 describe the defeat of the satanic system that opposes God’s kingdom.

A change in scene in literature can be marked with a change in characters, location, or time. We have here a change in characters, and a new location. Satan’s defeat (Figure 2) began with the destruction of Babylon the great. As she exits the stage, Christ enters in judgment. In addition, this section introduces a new location, the lake of fire. The great whore was burned with fire (17:16; 18:8), and fire awaits Satan’s other allies, before the present order ends and the new heavens and new earth begin (Figure 3). First the kings who gave their power to the beast are slain, and the beast and false prophet are cast into the lake of fire (19:20). Next, after a brief delay, Satan joins them (20:10), and finally the unbelieving dead take their place there (20:14-15; 21:8).



Figure 3: Structure of the Final Judgment

Most of us, if asked about the subject of Revelation 20, would probably say, “the millennium” or “the kingdom of God on earth.” The chapter does describe a thousand year rule of Christ on

earth, but that discussion is constrained to three verses, vv. 4-6. The overarching theme of this chapter, as of all of 19:10-20:15, is the single extended war¹ between Satan and the Lord. The millennium is a pause in this war, between two major battles, one in which the beast and false prophet are defeated, and another in which Satan is defeated personally.

The situation is analogous to the history of the French Republic under Napoleon. He became emperor of the French in 1804, and launched a series of wars to conquer most of Europe. After his disastrous attempt to invade Russia in 1812, the European allies were able to overpower him, forcing his abdication in 1814 and his exile to the Mediterranean island of Elba, between Corsica and Italy. France returned to the monarchy under Louis 18. But after less than a year, Napoleon escaped to France in 1815. His charismatic appeal enabled him to raise an army, and he threatened once again to subdue Europe until he was defeated by Wellington at Waterloo later in 1815. This time he was exiled to St. Helena in the South Atlantic, where he eventually died.

Napoleon’s history shows the depth of personal support for him, even after his first defeat. Similarly, the history of the Lord’s war with Satan shows the popularity of Satan and his principles to the natural man. Even after the defeat of his armies in Revelation 19 and a thousand years of the perfect, peaceful rule of Messiah, when Satan is loosed, he is able to assemble an army “as the sand of the sea” (20:8) to attack the holy city. This inherent rebelliousness of the human spirit vindicates the severe judgment at the great white throne in 20:11-15.

The theme of war pervades the book (chart). When the Lord first appears to John, we read,

Rev 1:16 **out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword:**

The Lord threatens to use this sword in the letter to Pergamos:

Rev 2:12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the **sharp sword** with two edges; ... 14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. 16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will **fight [make war]** against them with **the sword of my mouth.**²

2:16 introduces the verb “to fight, to make war” (πολεμέω *polemeō* G4170) that appears (along with the related noun “war” πόλεμος *polemos* G4171) repeatedly in the Revelation (Figure 4). The colors indicate who is fighting whom. After the Lord’s initial warning that he would fight, most of the references (red dots) describe Satan and his emissaries at war with people. But in the midst of this section, the noun and verb occur three times in one verse to remind us that God is not neutral in this conflict:

Rev. 12:7 And there was **war** in heaven: Michael and his angels **fought** against the dragon; and the dragon **fought** and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

1 πόλεμος strictly means “war,” Trench §86. The translation “battle” misleadingly suggests that some of these references describe a single atomic encounter. Of the 18 instances in the NT, 12 are translated “war,” one (Heb 11:34) “fight,” and five “battle” (including four of the nine instances in the Revelation). The instances in the Revelation are all singular, describing a single great war. The proper Greek word for “battle,” μάχη *machē* G3163, does not appear in the Revelation.

2 Note the object of the attack in 2:16. “I will come unto thee” (the church) “and fight against them” (the teachers spreading false doctrine).

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After being cast out of heaven, Satan’s wrath against people intensifies, and through the beast, extends over three and a half years, according to the majority reading:

Rev. 13:4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to **make war** with him? 5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue [MT **make war**] forty and two months.

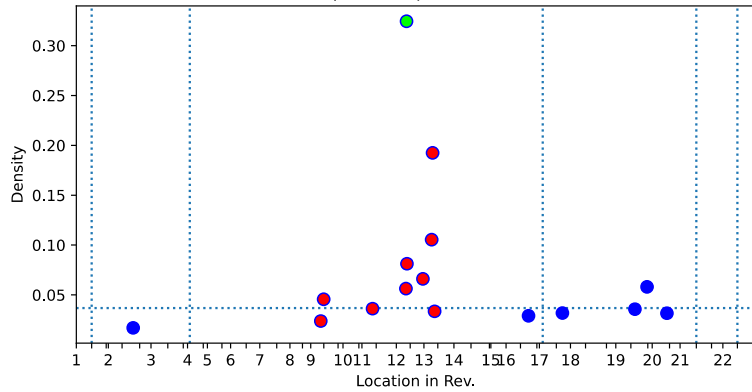


Figure 4: War (πόλεμος polemos G4171) and make war (πολεμέω polemeō G4170) in Revelation. Blue: the Lord. Red: satanic forces against men. Green: Michael and Satan fighting in heaven (3x)

But in chapter 16, the nature of this combat shifts. No longer is Satan bullying the Lord’s people. The sixth bowl anticipates that the Lord will enter the war (chart):

Rev 16:12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to **the battle [war]** of that great day of God Almighty. ... 16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

And in the description of the alliance of the harlot with the beast, we learn of the ten kings represented by the horns of the beast:

Rev 17:12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. 13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. 14 These shall **make war** with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

The final cluster of references to war marks our present section, and continues to emphasize that the Lord is fulfilling his warning from 2:16. The sword from his mouth reappears for the first time since 2:16,

Rev 19:15 And **out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword**, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Rev 19:21 And the remnant were slain with the **sword** of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded **out of his mouth**: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

The whole book chronicles war between Satan and God’s people. God does not overlook this outrage against his subjects. He warns at the outset that he will come with invincible might. With

great longsuffering, he delays his wrath, but finally the time has come for him to bring judgment, and this section records those events.

The story is told of a small country church that was experiencing disagreements over the correct interpretation of the Revelation. Someone asked an old farmer, one of the most respected saints, what he thought the book was saying, and his response was, “Jesus wins.” That is exactly the point of this section. We will see the victory of the Lord Jesus over all his foes.

19:11-21, Judgment of the Beast and his Kings

We saw that the sixth bowl, 16:12-16, calls earth’s kings to “the battle [war] of that great day of God Almighty” (16:14). That war, already evident in Michael’s combat with Satan in 12:7, continues to unfold until the defeat of Satan in 20:7-10.³

John divides the account into three scenes with the repeated expression “and I saw.” Each paragraph focuses our attention on a different set of characters in the drama.

11-16, The Lord and his Armies

First John sees the arrival of the conqueror and his forces.

19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him ...— We saw a rider on a white horse earlier in the book, as the Lord opened the first seal (chart):

Rev 6:2 And I saw, and behold **a white horse: and he that sat on him** had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

Some (e.g., Hendricksen) suggest this is the coming of Christ, but the rider in Revelation 6 introduces a line of natural disasters, not the defeat of Satan. When we studied the seals,⁴ we found that they correspond to the events of this present age, presented our Lord in Matthew 24 (Error: Reference source not found), and the first rider on a white horse represents those who come saying “I am Christ” (Matt 24:5), the “many antichrists” whom John was already experiencing during his lifetime:

1Jn 2:18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, **even now are there many antichrists**; whereby we know that it is the last time.

The rider in Rev 6:2 carries a bow and wears a crown. The rider here fights with a sword from his mouth, and wears many crowns. The rest of the verse identifies him:

and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True πιστός καὶ ἀληθινός, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.—The two titles of our Lord “faithful and true” and the description of his judgment as “in righteousness” reflects other verses in the Revelation, and elsewhere, that illuminate them.

First, he is faithful πιστός *pistos* G4102, carrying out the task given to him. This is how he is introduced at the start of the book (chart):

3 R.F. White *WTJ* 51 (1989) 319-344, argues for the identity of the conflict in 20:7-10 with 19:19, seeing 20:7-10 a recapitulation of 19:19 and doing away with a literal millennium. The structural parallels support understanding πόλεμος, per Trench §86, as a single war with multiple engagements, vitiating his argument.

4 https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/rev2/notes/Rev_6-8a.pdf

Matthew 24: Beginning of Sorrows (v. 8)	Revelation 6: Seals
5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.	<i>First seal:</i> 2 And I saw, and behold a white horse : and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.
6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars : see that ye be not troubled: for all <i>these things</i> must come to pass, but the end is not yet.	<i>Second seal:</i> 4 And there went out another horse <i>that was red</i> : and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth , and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.
7 ...there shall be famines ...	<i>Third seal:</i> 5 ... And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. ...
7 For nation shall rise against nation , and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines , and pestilences , and earthquakes , in divers places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.	<i>Fourth seal:</i> 8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword , and with hunger , and with death , and with the beasts of the earth.
9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you : and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.	<i>Fifth seal:</i> 9 ... I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held : 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

Table 1: The Seal Judgments in Matthew 24

Rev 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, **which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants** things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: 2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the **testimony of Jesus Christ**, and of all things that he saw. ... 4 ... Grace be unto you, and peace, ... 5 ... from Jesus Christ, who is **the faithful witness**, ...

God gave his son a revelation to give us. His son bore testimony of that revelation to John, and so is *faithful*, carrying out the work his Father gave him to do. The title “faithful” reminds us that he does not act on his own authority, but as the representative of his Father. From this perspective, the Revelation is the delayed answer to the question of the disciples in Acts 1.

Act 1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

Even the Son, during his earthly ministry, did not know when the final conquest would come:

Mrk 13:32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

In this book, the Father gives him information about that day, and he faithfully delivers it to John.

Second, he is true ἀληθινός *alēthinos* G228, a title that first appears in the letter to Philadelphia,

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Rev. 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is **true**, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

The Greek word emphasizes genuineness rather than just propositional truth, as we might say, “a true diamond” rather than an imitation. The saints in Philadelphia faced a counterfeit:

Rev 3:9 ... them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie;

Rev 3:7 explains “true” in terms of “the key of David.” This key refers to Isa 22:15-25, which describes the replacement of one steward over the house of David by another.

Isa 22:15 Thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, which is over the house, and say, ... 17 Behold, the LORD will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee. ... 19 And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down. 20 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah: 21 And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. 22 **And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.**

The Jews of Philadelphia, like those who persecuted Paul throughout Asia Minor, deny that Jesus is the Messiah, and insist that they are the appropriate stewards of the promises to David. But, like Shebna in Isa 22:15, they are false, and the Lord Jesus claims to be the true, the genuine steward over the house of David.

These terms, “faithful [to his divine mission] and true [genuine],” are applied together to the Lord in the letter to the Laodiceans (chart):

Rev 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the **faithful and true** witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

As a faithful witness, he delivers accurately the message God gave him for the saints (1:1), and he is the genuine witness, whose words must be accepted over counterfeits. This emphasis on witness explains the ascription of the two adjectives directly to a message, rather than the messenger, toward the end of the book:

Rev. 21:5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for **these words are true and faithful.**

Rev. 22:6 And he said unto me, **These sayings are faithful and true:** and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

In his gospel, John introduces the Lord as “the word of God,” so it is appropriate that he and the message he brings from God should be described by the same terms, “faithful and genuine.”

In addition to “faithful” and “true,” 19:11 emphasizes a third characteristic of our Lord: “in **righteousness** he doth judge and make war.” Earlier verses in Revelation also illustrate this attribute of his judgment, coupled again with “true” (genuine):

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

Rev 19:2 For **true and righteous** are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

God’s judgments are true, genuine judgments, not just placeholders, and they are righteous, conforming completely to his character and law. So our Lord, coming as his Father’s faithful representative, brings righteous judgment.

All three terms appear together only once in the LXX of the canonical books, describing God in Moses’ valedictory song:

Deut. 32:4 He is the Rock, his work is **perfect ἀληθινός**: for all his ways are judgment: a God of **truth πιστός** and without iniquity, **just** and right is he.

John’s application of this triple description to the Lord Jesus in 19:11 identifies our Lord with the God of Israel. It also reminds us that God’s judgment is not arbitrary, but follows his faithful revelation. He has revealed

- the behavior he requires of his creatures,
- the remedy if we stumble into sin,
- his longsuffering in the face of our deliberate rebellion,
- the consequences if at length we reject.

Only against this background of faithful and genuine revelation of mercy and steadfast warning does the judgment finally come.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire,—His piercing gaze is recalled from 1:14.

and on his head were many crowns;—The rider on the white horse has one crown (6:2), the dragon has seven crowns (12:3) and the beast has ten (13:1), but the Lord has “many,” anticipating the title in v. 16, king over all kings and lord over all lords.

and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.—Our Lord is given many names throughout the Revelation: the Lamb of God, the King of Kings, the Word of God. But in addition to these, he has a secret name.

Throughout the Scripture, the one with the secret name is God. When Jacob wrestled with the angel of the Lord at the fords of the Jabbock (chart),

Gen 32:29 ... Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?

Lesser angels do not hesitate to identify themselves, as Gabriel did to Zacharias in the temple:

Luke 1:19 I am Gabriel ...

Manoah got a similar response when he asked about the one who foretold Samson’s birth:

Judg 3:17 And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour? 18 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?

And Agur poses the riddle:

Prov 30:4 Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? **what is his name, and what is his son’s name**, if thou canst tell?

The description of the Rider in 19:11 as the faithful, true, righteous judge identifies him with the Jehovah of Deut 32:4. During his earthly ministry our Lord laid aside his heavenly prerogatives, and was known as “Jesus,” but now he has received the name that is above every name, the ineffable name of God himself. And he promises to mark us with this new name, as a sign of our relation with him:

Rev 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him **my new name**.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood:—The description recalls Isaiah’s vision of the approach of one with bloody garments:

Isa 63:1 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. 2 Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? 3 **I have trodden the winepress alone**; and of the people there was none with me: for **I will tread them in mine anger**, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. 4 For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. 5 And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. 6 And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.

Isa 63:3 contrasts the past solitary treading of the winepress, and the future treading in wrath. The first reflects his own suffering to “bring salvation” (v. 5, see note), while the second anticipates the day of his judgment on sinners. In Rev 19:13, the first treading is past, for his garments are already dipped in blood, though he does not smite his enemies until 19:21.

The order is important. No one’s blood will be shed at his hands who has not first rejected the shedding of the Judge’s own blood for their redemption.

and his name is called The Word of God.—“The Word [of God]” is John’s particular title for the Lord Jesus (chart):

John 1:1 In the beginning was the **Word**, and the **Word** was with God, and the **Word** was God.

John 1:14 And the **Word** was made flesh, and dwelt among us, ...

1Jn 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the **Word** of life;

John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared (ἐξήγγεομαι *exēgeomai* G1834) him.

Because he is the Word of God, it is appropriate to describe both him (19:11; 3:14) and the message that he brings (21:5; 22:6) as “Faithful and True.”

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses,—The parallel with Revelation 6 and its antecedents in Zech 1:8; 6:1-3 lead us to expect the rider on the white horse to be accompanied by horses of other colors, reflecting war, famine, and pestilence.

Rev 6:2 And I saw, and behold a **white horse**: ... 4 And there went out **another horse that was red**: ... 5 ... And I beheld, and lo a **black horse**; ... 8 And I looked, and behold a **pale horse**: ... And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

Here there are indeed other horses, but they are all white. The earlier judgments were by the conventional means predicted in Leviticus 26 and summarized in Ezek 14:21. But this victory is achieved solely by the supernatural power of the Word of God.

clothed in fine linen, white and clean.—We learned the significance of these garments earlier:

Rev 7:13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and **have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb**.

Miraculously, his blood stains his own garments, while purging ours. He, the righteous one, rides to judgment in blood-stained garments. We, guilty sinners who deserve death, appear in white linen. God “hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor 5:21).

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron:—His armament recalls a series of OT prophecies.

The Psalmist predicted that the Davidic king would rule⁵ with a rod of iron (chart):

Psa 2:8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, ... 9 **Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron**; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Isaiah applies this prophecy to his vision of the Messiah, associating the weapon with his mouth:

Isa 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: ... 4 ... **he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth**, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

Then, in the second servant song, the rod changes into a sword:

Isa 49:1 Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. 2 And **he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword**; ...

19:15 shows us the ultimate fulfillment of this prophetic chain.

and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.—Once more, we return to the image of Isaiah 63:1-6. In 19:13, before the slaughter begins, he wears the badge of the redemption he offers. But now the judgment must fall.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.—The application of this title to the Lord Jesus, is extremely significant.

“King of kings” was a favorite title of the Mesopotamian and Persian kings, emphasizing their ability to subdue multiple kingdoms and unite them in a larger empire:

Ezek. 26:7 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus **Nebuchadrezzar** king of Babylon, a **king of kings**, ... [cf. Dan 2:37]

5 MT points the verb as though from רעע H7489 “to break, shatter,” but LXX reads a different vocalization, which would imply the root רעה H7462 “to shepherd.”

Ezra 7:12 **Artaxerxes, king of kings**, unto Ezra the priest, ...

“King of kings” is certainly appropriate to the Messiah, to whom God has promised dominion over all nations:

Psa 2:8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

But “Lord of lords” is a divine title. In both OT occurrences, it is parallel to “God of gods,”⁶

Deut. 10:17 For the LORD your God is **God of gods**, and **Lord of lords**, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, ...

Psa 136:2 O give thanks unto the **God of gods**: for his mercy endureth for ever. 3 O give thanks to the **Lord of lords**: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Paul combines the two to describe God the Father, in his position as the one who will send back the Lord Jesus at the day of the Lord.

1Ti 6:14 That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: 15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; 16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

Paul applies this title to the Father. The Father is in control of the time of the Lord’s return:

Act 1:7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

When that time comes, he (the Father) will show the appearing of our Lord Jesus.⁷

The one who does this showing is then described with seven phrases:

1. the blessed and only Potentate,
2. the King of kings,
3. and Lord of lords;
4. Who only hath immortality,
5. dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto;
6. whom no man hath seen, nor can see:
7. to whom be honour and power everlasting.

The last two clearly describe the Father. Thus in Timothy, “king of kings and Lord of Lords” is a title of the Father, as distinct from the Son.

Remarkably, the Revelation applies this title, not to the Father, but to the Son. The first instance is in describing the opposition to the Lord’s return led by the Beast:

6 Dan 2:47 suggests that “lord” here may have the sense of human ruler: ‘Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of **kings מְלָכִין**.’” The Targum on Deut 10:17 humanizes both of the second terms: “וְיִמְרֵי מְלָכִין אֲתֵּיבֹנֵן הוּא אֱלֹהֵי דְיִמְרֵי וְיִמְרֵי מְלָכִין.” But the Targum follows MT exactly in Psa 136. 1 Tim 6:15 supports the Hebrew. Jouon-Muraoka §1411 explains this as a generic superlative construction: “A group of two substantives, the first of which is constructed on the same substantive in the plural, expresses a superlative idea.” Also Waltke-O’Connell §9.5.3j.

7 Recall that the whole book is the faithful testimony of the Lord Jesus to the Father’s revelation of details concerning his return.

Rev. 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: **for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings:**

And now, as he rides from heaven to assert his rule, the Son bears this same title.

We have already seen in the description of our Lord as faithful, genuine, and the righteous judge, an echo of the divine description in Deut 32:4, and his possession of a secret name as a mark of deity. This title is a third blurring of the distinction between the Father and the Son.

The mystery of the relation between the Father and the Son is a major theme of the Revelation. Recall our discussion of the four titles of divine eternity in Revelation 1⁸ (Table 2, chart).

Ref	The One who is, and who was, and who is to come ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος	Alpha and Omega τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ	The First and the Last ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος	The Beginning and the Ending ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος	Who is in View?	Evidence
1:4	X				Father	“God”; Trinitarian greeting
1:8	X	X		(x)	Father	The eternal Lord, 1:4 Almighty = (LORD of Hosts)
1:11		(x)	(x)		Son	Stands in the midst of the candlesticks, 1:12
1:17			X		Son	Was dead, is alive, 1:18
2:8			X		Son	Writer to Smyrna
4:8	X				Father	Vision from Isaiah 6
21:6		X		X	Father	He that sat upon the throne (21:5); father (21:7)
22:13		X	X	X	Son	The one who comes quickly (22:12)

Table 2: Titles of Divine Eternity in the Revelation. (x) indicates an occurrence of the title in the Textus Receptus (and thus the AV) but not in the Majority Text. X is the first occurrence.

Following the Majority Text, throughout the Revelation before 22:13, the only one of these titles applied to the Son is “the first and the last,” and that is never applied to the Father. Perhaps the reference is to Paul’s words (chart),

1Cor. 15:45 And so it is written, The **first** man Adam was made a living soul; the **last** Adam was made a quickening spirit.

As the one by whom all things were made (John 1:3), he brought the first man into being, and he is himself the last man. The other titles are reserved for the Father ... until we reach 22:13.

There, the distinctive title of the Son joins with those of the Father,

Rev 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. 13 I am **Alpha and Omega**, the **beginning and the end**, the **first and the last**.

8 https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/rev2/notes/Rev_Overview.pdf

In the same way, prior to the Lord’s return in glory, the title “king of kings and Lord of Lords,” in Timothy is a title of the Father, but now the Son assumes it as well. This return of the Son to the full glory of his deity may illustrate the eternal state that Paul anticipates in 1 Corinthians 15,

1Co 15:27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. 28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, **that God may be all in all.**

Paul tells us that at the beginning of his redemptive work,

Php 2:5 ... Christ Jesus: 6 ... being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But **made himself of no reputation**, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

“Made himself of no reputation” is literally “emptied himself.” He laid aside the glory, the titles, the prerogatives that were his as the creator, in order to suffer and die in our place. This humiliation has led to some confusion by those who do not recognize the full deity of the Lord Jesus, but it was necessary in order for him to become our kinsman in order to be our redeemer, our priest, and our king.

Paul goes on to promise that this humiliation is only temporary:

Php 2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Now, at the conclusion of the Revelation, we see the fulfillment of that promise. He is revealed as the faithful, true, righteous judge of Deut 32:4, the “king and kings and Lord of Lords” of 1 Tim 6:15, the Alpha and Omega of Rev 1:8 and the Beginning and the Ending of 21:6.

17-18, The Scavengers

The next “I saw” introduces the scavenging birds, anticipating the slaughter about to take place.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.—This description comes from Ezekiel 39, describing the humiliating defeat of Gog and Magog (chart).

Ezek 39:17 And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and **come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you**, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. 18 **Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth**, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. 19 And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. 20 **Thus ye shall be filled**

at my table **with horses** and chariots, **with mighty men**, and with all men of war, saith the Lord GOD.

That final battle does not take place until the end of the Millennium (Rev 20:7-8),⁹ but an angel borrows the language of Ezekiel 39 to describe the consequences of the Lord’s initial attack.

Burial is a mark of respect, and it is a disgrace for a dead body to lie exposed. Recall the actions of Rizpah, Saul’s concubine, when her sons and those of Michal were slain by the Gibeonites:

2Sa 21:9 And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the LORD: ... 10 And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, **and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.**

Jeremiah describes unburied bodies as one of the terrors of Nebuchadnezzar’s conquest of Jerusalem:

Jer 16:3 For thus saith the LORD concerning the sons and concerning the daughters that are born in this place, and concerning their mothers that bare them, and concerning their fathers that begat them in this land; 4 They shall die of grievous deaths; **they shall not be lamented; neither shall they be buried; but they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth:** and they shall be consumed by the sword, and by famine; and **their carcasses shall be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.**

And looking further ahead to the end time war, he predicts,

Jer 25:33 And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: **they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.**

Now we see the preparation for the fulfillment of the prophecies of Ezekiel 39 and Jeremiah 25.

19-21, The Defeat of the Kings

The third scene notes the leadership of the beast in the conflict, and describes its outcome.

19 And I saw the beast,—“The beast” is the Antichrist, whom we last saw in Revelation 17 where the harlot Babylon sought to ride him. He first appears in opposing the two witnesses in Revelation 11 (chart):

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

Rev 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw **a beast rise up out of the sea**,¹⁰ having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

9 While the summons to the birds comes from the description of the battle with Gog and Magog, those forces are not named until after the Millennium. According to Ezek 38:11, Gog and Magog attack only after Israel is “at rest, dwell[ing] safely,” without defenses (cf. 38:14), a description that fits the end of the Millennium but not the end of the reign of Antichrist. The reference to the birds of prey in Revelation 19 is an instance of manifold fulfillment, a link in the chain beginning with the prophecy of Ezekiel 38-39 and finally satisfied in 20:8-10.

10 On the identity of “the bottomless pit” and “the sea,” see discussion in note on Revelation 9, https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/rev2/notes/Rev_8b-11.pdf, and comments below on 20:1.

and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.—“The kings” are his political allies:

Rev 17:12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are **ten kings**, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. 13 These have one mind, and shall **give their power and strength unto the beast**. ... 17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and **to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast**, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

They have already overthrown the great whore, who sought to control their joint rule over the earth (17:16). Now they see the Lord returning from heaven, and they resolve to defend their hegemony against him. That destruction has two parts: the leaders and their armies.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him,—The “false prophet” is the beast from the earth, who promotes the first beast:

Rev 13:11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and **causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast**, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 And he **doeth great wonders**, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image.—The action of the false prophet is described with the verb “deceive” *πλανᾶω planaō* G4105, the noun “lie” *ψεῦδος pseudos* G5579, or their cognates¹¹ (Figure 5, chart). The colors of the dots show who is doing the deceiving in each verse.

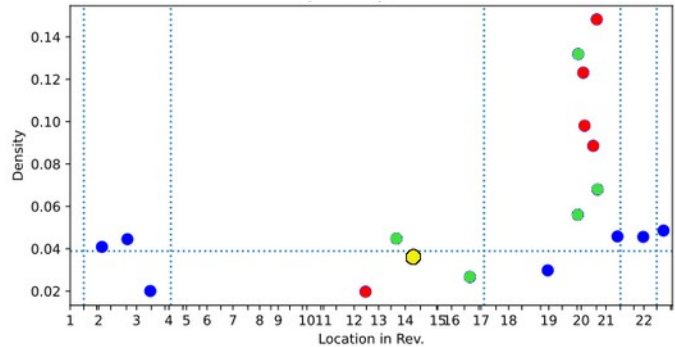


Figure 5: *πλανᾶω planaō* G4105 “to deceive” or *ψεῦδος pseudos* G5579 “lie” and cognates in the Revelation. **Red** = Satan; **Green** = False Prophet; **Blue** = their allies; **Yellow** = believers

The red dots describe Satan:

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

Our Savior characterized him as the father of lies:

John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for **he is a liar, and the father of it**.

The very first time we see him in Scripture, he is contradicting the word of God:

Gen 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, **Yea, hath God said**, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the

11 With Matthew, the Revelation dominates the use of these words. See note.

12 In the majority text, this attribute is repeated in 20:8.

garden: 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, **Ye shall not surely die:**

He employs helpers in his deceptive work (blue dots) (chart). We see them already active in the churches of Asia: false apostles in Ephesus (2:2), the false teacher in Thyatira called “Jezebel” (2:20, “deceive my servants ...”), the false synagogue in Philadelphia (3:9). 18:23 puts the harlot Babylon in this category:

Rev. 18:23 by thy sorceries were all nations **deceived**.

This is particularly the work of the false prophet, the beast out of the earth (green dots):

Rev. 13:13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14 And **deceiveth** them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; ...

The peak in Figure 5 highlights these deceptive actions when the false prophet meets his doom. The only use of these words for deception with reference to believers is a denial, concerning the 144,000 who stand on Mount Zion with the Lamb,

Rev 14:5 And in their mouth was found no guile [ψεῦδος lie]:

The last three references to deception in the book describe the exclusion and destruction of the deceitful:

Rev. 21:7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and **all** liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Rev. 21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or **maketh a lie**: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Rev 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. 15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and **whosoever loveth and maketh a lie**.

Deception is a serious sin, grouped with idolatry, sexual impurity, murder, and abominations. These warnings against Satan’s deception are particularly prominent in this book that is labeled as “the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:1). Throughout the Bible, we must choose between Satan’s lies and God’s true revelation.

Truth is one of God’s greatest attributes. He is so truthful that when he speaks, reality leaps into conformance with it. He spoke creation into being, and he tells Isaiah (chart),

Isa 55:10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: 11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but **it shall accomplish** that which I please, and **it shall prosper** in the thing whereto I sent it.

We face many temptations in today’s world to fudge the truth. Remember the source of these temptations. As children of God, we must be truthful, without deception. The Lord revealed through David that those who would dwell with God must be truthful:

Psa 15:1 LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? 2 He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and **speakech the truth in his heart**. ... 4 ... He that **swaereth to his own hurt, and changeth not**.

Psa 24:3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? 4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, **nor sworn deceitfully**.

The beast and the false prophet are the first to enter the lake of fire:

These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.—The beast and the false prophet become the first inmates of the lake of fire.

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.—The kings who follow them do not join them at this point, but are left unburied, as Ezekiel and Jeremiah predict. They will ultimately enter the lake of fire, but only after the defeat of Satan’s final uprising, at the Great White Throne judgment in 20:15.

20:1-10, Judgment of Satan

Many believers characterize this chapter as the coming rule of Christ on earth, but that rule occupies only three verses (20:4-6). As Figure 3 shows, 20:1-10 is parallel to 19:11-21 and 20:11-15 in describing how different opponents of the Lord enter the lake of fire—first the beast and the false prophet, then Satan (this section), and finally the unbelieving dead.

This section is a classic example of an external inclusio. The first three verses end with a reference to Satan’s deception, the thousand year duration, the need for that period to be fulfilled, and the subsequent loosing,

20:3 that he should **deceive the nations** no more, till the **thousand years** should be **fulfilled** [τελέω *teleō* G5055], and after that he must be **loosed** a little season.”

Then 20:7-10 begin with the same four elements,

20:7 And when the **thousand years** are **expired** [τελέω *teleō* G5055], Satan shall be **loosed** out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to **deceive the nations** ...

You could leave out 20:4-6 without changing the flow of the narrative.

The three verses in between do describe the righteous rule of the Messiah and his followers for a thousand years, fulfilling the OT promises of the Messianic kingdom (e.g., Isaiah 60; Psalm 72). But we must understand them as a footnote to the overall theme of Satan’s judgment. As a footnote, it highlights the wickedness of the unregenerate human heart. In spite of a thousand years of perfect, righteous rule, when Satan is loosed, he is able to assemble “the nations ... the number of whom is as the sand of the sea” (20:8).

1-3, Binding of Satan

20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.—In Revelation 9, the bottomless pit ἄβυσσος *abussos* G12 is the abode of the demonic locusts, under the control of an angel named “Destruction” (Abaddon), whom we identified with Satan.

Rev. 9:1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the **bottomless pit**. 2 And he opened the **bottomless pit**; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, ... 3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: ... 11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the **bottomless pit**, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, ...

The chain indicates that Satan is bound, not simply imprisoned. Compare Jude’s description of the fallen angels,

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

This is the place from which the Beast, the Antichrist, came:¹³

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

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

Apparently, he is not just a man, but a powerful demon.

Up to this point, Satan is the king of the abyss, but is not confined there. Now this changes.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan,—The description recalls chapter 12, where the serpent seeks to destroy Israel and her Chkld (chart):

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

Satan is active in the lives of God’s people even today:

Rev 2:9 (Smyrna) I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of **Satan**.

Rev 2:13 (Pergamos) I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where **Satan's** seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where **Satan** dwelleth.

Rev 2:24 (Thyatira) But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

Rev 3:9 (Philadelphia) Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

When he is cast out to the earth, the reign of Antichrist begins, and persecution against believers intensifies. But now God’s longsuffering has reached its limit, and he is confined to the pit.

13 In 13:1, the Beast comes from the sea. “Sea” and “abyss” are common parallels in the OT (Psa. 32:7; 105:9; 134:6; Job 28:14; 38:16; 41:31; Is. 51:10); see discussion in note on Revelation 9, https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/rev2/notes/Rev_8b-11.pdf

and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled:—The pit is like the penalty box in hockey. Satan is unable to participate in affairs on earth for a specified period of time. But the penalty box does not end the game:

and after that he must be loosed a little season.—This clause marks the first part of the external inclusio with 20:7. We could immediately pick up the story there, but the Lord shows John a footnote that will make the conclusion even more striking.

4-6, The Millennial Kingdom

Table 3 (chart) shows how our Lord and Paul describe both the resurrection of the righteous dead and the rapture of living believers at his return, and where Revelation 19 aligns with them.

Matthew 24	1 Thessalonians 4	1 Corinthians 15	Revelation 19
9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you : 13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved .	15 ... we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep .	51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep , but we shall all be changed,	
30 ... and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.	16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout,	22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming .	11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, ...
31 And he shall send his angels ...	with the voice of the archangel, ...		
... with a great sound of a trumpet,	... and with the trump of God:	52 ... at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound,	
and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.	and the dead in Christ shall rise first:	and the dead shall be raised incorruptible,	4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, ... and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded ... and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.
	17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: ...	and we shall be changed.	

Table 3: Resurrection, Rapture, and the Lord’s Return

- All four associate the resurrection of the dead with Christ’s return.
- Matthew and the epistles recognize that some believers will remain alive until the Lord’s return, something that is not clear in the Revelation.
- Matthew and 1 Thessalonians mention the role of the angels in gathering the saints, and 1 Corinthians joins them in mentioning the trumpet call. Revelation mentions neither, but is

full of angels and trumpets elsewhere, and it may be that the seventh trumpet (11:15) is the one to which the Lord and Paul refer.

Though Revelation 19 does not distinguish the living and dead as do Matthew and the epistles, verse 4 probably refers to them (chart). John sees two groups of people, both ruling the earth (Table 4).

4 and I saw ...	
thrones, and they sat upon them,	and the souls of them that were beheaded ... and which had not worshipped ... and they lived
and judgment was given unto them	and reigned with Christ ...

Table 4: Viceroy's of the King

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them:—

The first group is called only “they.” It is reasonable to associate these with “the armies in heaven” in 19:18 who follow the Lord at his return (Thomas). We know from Matthew and the epistles that this army includes both raised and raptured saints.

Next our attention is called to those who have been raised from the dead.

and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which¹⁴ had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; —“I saw” is in italics. The Greek grammar here (καὶ ... καὶ ...) is consistent with understanding this group as a special subgroup within the first group. We might paraphrase, “I saw thrones, and they sat upon them. The ones I saw included those that were beheaded”¹⁵

The Revelation has emphasized the Beast’s intent to destroy all that do not worship him:

Rev 13:15 And [the false prophet] had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast **should be killed.**

But we know from Matthew and the epistles that some do “endure unto the end” (Matt 24:13), and the grammar of Rev 20:4 allows this. Table 5 summarizes the various groups.

	Believers	Unbelievers
Living	1Th 4:17 we which are alive and remain ...	???
Dead	1Th 4:16 the dead in Christ ... Rv 20:4b them that were beheaded ...	Rv 20:4a they sat upon them Rv 20:5 the rest of the dead ...

Table 5: Demographics of the Millennium

The upper-right quadrant, “Living Unbelievers,” represents people who were not in the armies of the kings in the great battle at 19:21. They are the population over whom the Lord and his disciples rule. Some of them no doubt receive him, but the others, with their children born during the Millennium, form the population from which Satan gathers his final army in 20:8.

and they lived—Even the martyrs now live, raised according to 1 Thes 4:16 and 1 Cor 15:52.

and reigned with Christ a the thousand years.—Do not miss the article, “the thousand years,” the same period previously identified as marking the bondage of Satan. The Lord has come as king of kings, but his people rule under his supervision, as promised in earlier scriptures (chart).

Dan 7:18 But **the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom**, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

14 See notes on the relation of these two clauses

15 See note on the use of ψυχή in this verse.

Mat 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall **sit upon twelve thrones**, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

The Revelation itself emphasizes this coming role:

Revelation 2:26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, **to him will I give power ἐξουσία exousia G1849¹⁶ over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them** with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

Rev 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to **sit with me in my throne**, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Rev 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and **we shall reign on the earth**.

The OT frequently speaks about Israel’s restoration to dominance in the world. Solomon wrote Psalm 72, which the Jews understand to describe the rule of “King Messiah” (chart):

Psa 72:7 In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. 8 He shall have dominion also **from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth**.

The description of this kingdom goes far beyond anything that Solomon ever achieved. Later, Isaiah promises,

Isa 59:20 And the Redeemer shall come to **Zion**, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. . . . 60:2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. 3 And **the Gentiles shall come to thy light**, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

And Ezekiel sees it as part of the new covenant:

Ezk 36:24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. 25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. 28 **And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers;** and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Ezk 37:12 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, **I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves**, and bring you into the land of Israel.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.—These are the unbelieving dead of all ages, including the kings defeated in 19:21.¹⁷

16 See notes

17 The repetition of the verb “lived” here and in v. 4 makes it very awkward to maintain, as the amillennial position requires (Hendricksen), that v. 4 refers to spiritual regeneration, but v. 5 to physical resurrection (Alford).

This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power,—20:14 defines the second death as the lake of fire.

The parenthesis ends describing the two functions that believers will fill during this time.

but they shall be priests of God and of Christ,—As priests, we offer the sacrifice of praise (Heb 13:15). Throughout the book, we have heard the believers leading in praise to the Lord. Of the 11 doxologies that we have so frequently considered (most recently at 19:1), people offer seven, anticipating our eternal service of worship to him.

and shall reign with him a thousand years.—As viceroys of the king, we rule with him.

7-10, Conclusion of the War

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth,—These words echo the opening of the inclusio in 20:3. We are returning to the main line of the history.

Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle:—These names for the coalition that comes against the Lord in the last days are drawn from Ezekiel 38.

In the overall structure of Ezekiel (see note), chapters 36-39 predict the restoration of Israel. The last two chapters describe the attack of Gog and Magog, and their defeat. Chapter 36 promises the new covenant and restoration of Israel, while 37 predicts resurrection in the vision of the dry bones. Table 6 shows how Ezekiel’s prophecies align with Revelation 20 (chart). Note in particular the condition of Israel at the time Gog attacks, according to Ezekiel 38:

Ezk 38:8 After many days thou shalt be visited: **in the latter years** thou shalt come into the land that is **brought back from the sword**, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and **they shall dwell safely all of them.**

Ezk 38:11 And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of **unwalled villages**; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, 12 To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land.

Revelation 20	Ezekiel 36-39
4-6, Resurrection, Righteous government	36 New Covenant, Israel prospering in the land
	37 Resurrection
7-8, Attack of Gog and Magog	38, Attack of Gog and Magog
9-10, Final defeat of Satan	39, Defeat of Gog and Magog

Table 6: Gog and Magog in Revelation and Ezekiel

Israel is secure because she is dwelling under the peaceful rule of her Messiah, during the 1000 years. Clearly, Ezekiel is seeing the same events that now appear to John.

the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.—In spite of the peace and prosperity under Messiah’s rule, a great multitude is willing to follow Satan in a final attempt to overthrow God’s kingdom. This rebellion shows the tenacity of the sinful nature on those whom God’s spirit has

not enlightened. Those who would oppose Christ after experiencing a thousand years of his perfect rule deserve the judgment of the Great White Throne in 20:11-15.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.—The imagery is drawn from 2 Kings 1. Ahaziah, the ailing king of the northern kingdom, sends a company of soldiers to arrest Elijah, to learn whether his illness is fatal.

2Ki 1:9 Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. 10 And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And **there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.**

A second company fares no better. The captain of a third company begs for his life, reversing the entire power structure, and Elijah goes to the king, not as a captive, but as God’s messenger predicting Ahaziah’s death.

Now the same divine power that protected Elijah upon his hill defends God’s people on Mount Zion, and anticipates the death of the great rebel king, Satan.

10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.—At this point, Satan is finished. He appeared in the third chapter of the Bible, successfully deceiving our first parents. Now, in the third chapter from the end of the Bible, his deceptions are over, and he enters the lake of fire.

It may be helpful to trace the trajectory of Satan’s career (chart).

- Ezekiel 28 describes him before his fall, under the title of the king of Tyre behind the human prince of Tyre, as the anointed cherub that covereth
- In Genesis 3, he tempts our first parents to sin.
- In the book of Job, he is a member of the heavenly court, accusing God’s people.
- In Rev 12:9, his access to heaven ends, and Antichrist emerges:
- He is bound in the bottomless pit for a thousand years,
- and eventually enters the lake of fire.

20:11-15, Judgment of Men: The Great White Throne

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it,—The scene recalls Daniel 7. First Daniel sees the world empires and the “little horn,” the Syrian king Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who anticipates the Antichrist, recalling the sequence in Revelation. Then we read (chart),

Dan 7:9 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. 10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: **the judgment was set, and the books were opened.** ... 13 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. 14 **And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a 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.

The various elements that Daniel sees—a shining throne, judgment according to books, the coming of the Son of Man with clouds and his dominion over the earth—are all reflected in the NT prophecies (Matthew 24, 1 Thessalonians 4, Revelation 19-20) of the Lord’s return. The one who sits on the throne in Daniel is the Ancient of Days, and distinguished from the Son of Man. Throughout the Revelation, the one who sits on the throne is the Father. Is he in view in 20:11?¹⁸

John 5:19-30 presents the Son as the one who performs judgment, as does Paul in Acts 17:31. But we should recall the increased blurring of the distinction between the Father and the Son in Revelation 19, which culminates in a joint “throne of God and of the Lamb” in 22:3 and in the Savior’s statement in 22:13, “I am Alpha and Omega,” a title previously reserved for the Father. We are reading of the time in which “God” is “all in all” (1 Cor 15:28). Here we confront the secret things of God (Deut 29:29), and we do not well to inquire too deeply about the details.

from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.—Some think that this verse is describing the destruction of the old heaven and earth, in preparation for the new heaven and new earth in 21:1. But the fleeing here is unsuccessful: “there was found no place for them.” They seek to flee, but cannot.

It’s better to see the terms “earth” and “heaven” as figurative, representing those who inhabit them.¹⁹ We see the same figure of speech frequently in the Psalms (chart):

Psa 82:8 Arise, O God, **judge the earth:** for thou shalt inherit all nations.

Psa 94:2 Lift up thyself, thou **judge of the earth:** render a reward to the proud.

Psa 96:13 the LORD ... cometh, for he cometh to **judge the earth:** he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

Psa 98:9 the LORD ... cometh to **judge the earth:** with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.

These verses are not representing the planet as a moral actor, but rather mean that the Lord will judge those who dwell on the earth. Similarly, the futile attempt of the earth and heaven to flee reflects the terror of men and angels at the appearance of God in judgment. Like the kings of 6:15-17, they seek to hide themselves “from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,” but find no hiding place (Beasley-Murray).

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life:—This judgment is based on records in a number of books, among them the book of life.

The book of life first appears in the Lord’s letter to Sardis (3:5). When we studied this passage,²⁰ we described the other books in God’s library, summarized in Table 7.²¹ The books in this library are organized systematically. The columns distinguish books that record established facts from those that contain God’s decrees of what will happen. The rows distinguish books that describe people’s *actions* and the resulting history of the world, from their *state* as living or dead.

18 Thomas has an excellent discussion on the identification of this judgment and the One sitting on the throne.

19 Technically, this is metonymy of the container for the contents.

20 https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/rev2/notes/Rev_1_10ff.pdf

21 For more details, see <https://www.cyber-chapel.org/GodsLibrary.pdf>

The book of life, in the lower right corner, records those whom God has chosen to eternal life:

Rev 17:8 ... they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written [do not stand written]²² in the book of life from the foundation of the world

This is the fourth time we have heard of this book, out of six references in all.²³ It is named elsewhere only in Philippians,

Php 4:3 And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.

Lk 10:20 and Heb 12:23 refer to the book but do not name it.

and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.—The other books used at the judgment record the works of those being judged, in the upper left quadrant of Table 7. These include bad works:

Isa 65:3 A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick; ... 6 Behold, **it is written before me:** I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom,

and good works:

Mal 3:16 Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a **book of remembrance was written before him** for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them:—“Death and hell” always appear together in the Revelation, and reflect the common use of these two terms as a stereotyped pair of synonyms in OT poetry.²⁴ The expression is a hendiadys, describing not two locations, but one, and emphasizing that those who occupy hades are dead. “Death” is their condition (absent from the body), “hell” (Sheol, Hades) is their location (distinct from Gehenna, the lake of fire).

The reference to “the sea” probably reflects an ancient belief that people drowned in the ocean did not enter Hades, which was thought to be under the land, but wandered about or drifted in the ocean.²⁵ “Death and hell” hold people with marked graves, but the resurrection will claim even those who have no known resting place.

This resurrection focuses on unbelievers, and follows by a thousand years the resurrection of deceased believers. That delay, like the delay between the Lord’s first and second advents, was not clearly visible to OT saints (Figure 6, chart). For example, Daniel knows that the resurrection

	Accomplished Facts (Past)	Decreed Purposes (Future)
People’s Actions	1. Record Book (OT, NT)	2. Book of Decrees (OT, NT)
People’s States	3. Book of the Living (OT)	4. Book of Life (NT, maybe OT)

Table 7: Organization of God’s Library

22 Perfect, “stand written,” as also in 13:8. If it were aorist or imperfect, we might understand “from the foundation of the world” as denoting a period during which people are written, but with the perfect, the time reference must indicate that time at which the writing took place: their names have been there since the world was created.

23 The others are 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:15; and 21:7. 22:19 in the MT is “tree of life,” not “book of life.”

24 2 Sam. 22:6; Is. 28:15, 18; 38:18; Hos. 13:14; Hab. 2:5; Psa. 6:5; 18:5; 49:14; 55:15; 89:48; 116:3; Prov. 5:5; 7:27; Song 8:6

25 Achilles Tatius v. 313, cited by Moffatt and others.

Rev 19:11–21:8, Final Judgment of Satan’s System

follows the rule of Antichrist, but does not see the delay between the resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous:

Dan 12:1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, ... and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. 2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

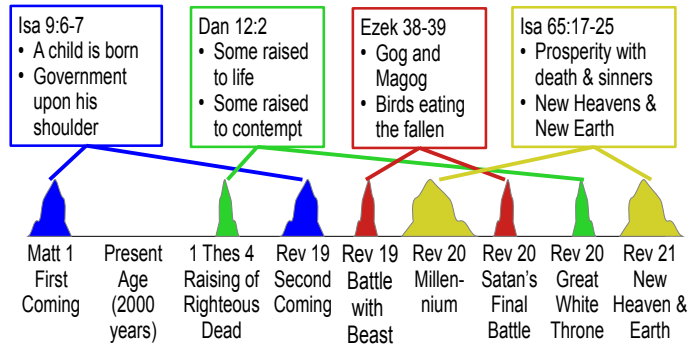


Figure 6: Examples of Prophetic Foreshortening

This prophetic foreshortening recalls the delay between the two advents of our Lord, now over 2000 years, which was invisible to Isaiah,

Isa 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.

The birth of the child and giving of God’s Son happened two millennia ago. We have yet to see “his government and peace.” Like two mountain peaks, the space between them may not be visible until we reach the first. We saw similar foreshortening in the application of Ezekiel 38-39 to both the battle with Antichrist at the Lord’s return, and the battle with Satan after the millennium, and we will see another in the OT description of the new heavens and new earth.

and they were judged every man according to their works.—While we are *justified* by grace through faith apart from works, we are *judged* according to our works. Our Savior taught (chart),

Matthew 16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man **according to his works**.

Similarly, Paul says:

Rom 2:6 [God] will render to every man **according to his deeds**: 7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: 8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, 9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; 10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

True salvation changes one’s life. 1 John gives three tests of a genuine faith, and the first is:²⁶

1Jn 2:3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.—Like earth and heaven in v. 11, “death and hell” refer to those whom they contain.²⁷

26 The second is confessing that our Lord is truly human (4:2-3), and the third is love for other believers 4:7-8). See R. Law, *The Tests of Life*. Edinburgh: T. Clark, 1909 (digitized by Ted Hildebrandt)

27 Again, metonymy of the container for the contents. This may imply that all those who remain dead at this point are unbelievers, which would imply that believers who die during the Millennium would immediately be raised

This is the second death.—The first death was the end of physical life. That death is only temporary, for all must rise again to be judged.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.—The Lord has systematically cleaned out his adversaries: the beast and false prophet in 19:20, Satan in 20:10, and now people who followed them. God is longsuffering, but when people who have experienced the gracious rule of the Lord Jesus at first-hand refuse to turn to him, they have no excuse, and are condemned to suffer with those they preferred to follow.

21:1-8, The New Jerusalem

This section is transitional (Figure 7, chart). It stands at the end of the third of John’s visions “in the Spirit” (17:1-21:8), and summarizes the judgments of the Lake of Fire (21:8), but it introduces the New Jerusalem as the Lamb’s bride, which is really the subject of the fourth vision (21:9-22:9).

21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away;—Peter tells us that this change will be by fire:

2Pe 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Peter compares this event with Noah’s flood:

2Pet. 3:6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

At that time, subterranean waters and incessant rain washed away the old world:

Gen 7:11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the **fountains of the great deep** broken up, and the **windows of heaven** were opened.

God promised (Gen 9:11) never again to destroy the earth with a flood. But we have already seen (20:9) that fire as well as rain can fall from heaven, and volcanoes show that fire as well as water can surge from within the earth. The parallel with the flood suggests that the world will not be replaced, but rather purged and refurbished.

and there was no more sea.—The absence of the sea in the new earth completes a sequence that began in Genesis 1. Originally, water covered the whole earth (chart),

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

—or perhaps, receive resurrection bodies the moment they believe.

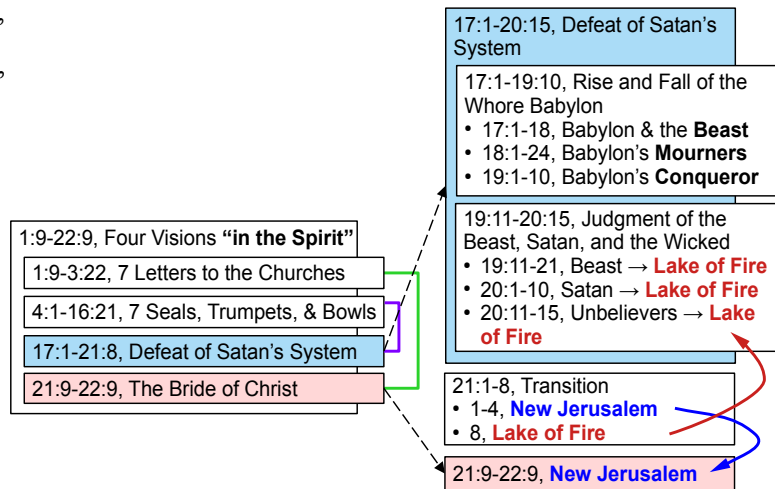


Figure 7: 21:1-8 as Hinge Transition

On the third day, God bounded the waters with dry land.

Gen 1:9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

During Israel’s history, God shows his power over the water, in dividing the Red Sea and parting the Jordan.

Rev 13:1 describes the sea as the home of the beast. Recall that “sea” and “abyss” are interchangeable, and that the abyss is the place of evil spirits. When we studied the beast from the sea, we compared the dragon (Satan) with Leviathan, the great sea monster whom God describes in Job 41. Isaiah identifies Leviathan as one whom the Lord will defeat “in that day,” at the end of time. As in Ezekiel 36-38 (Table 6), the sequence of events matches the Revelation. First, we read of the suffering under Antichrist (chart):

Isa 26:16 LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them. 17 Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O LORD. 18 We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen. ... 20²⁸ Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

Then the Lord promises to return, punish the wicked, and raise the dead:

Isa 26:19 Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. ... 21 For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

The climax is the destruction of “the dragon that is in the sea,”

Isa 27:1 In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish **leviathan** the piercing serpent, even **leviathan** that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the **dragon** that is in the sea.

Now he removes the sea entirely.²⁹ Evil has been banished from the world, and its last refuge is destroyed.

The phrase “a new heaven and a new earth” comes from Isa 65:17 and 66:22.³⁰ Revelation 20 clearly makes this state of the world subsequent to the Millennium, the final battle with Satan, and the great white throne. Yet some of its features fit better with the Millennium (chart).

Isa 65:17 For, behold, I create **new heavens and a new earth**: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19 And I will rejoice

28 The transition from tribulation (A) to victory (B) is through an alternation in 19-20, so we have A-BA-B.

29 These historical events (bounding and dividing the sea) rebuke ancient near eastern idolatry. Their deities included the deep (Babylonian Marduk conquers Tiamat, and Canaanite El defeats Yam, both representing the sea), as well as the rivers. Israel’s God overwhelms these primeval forces.

30 The plural “heavens” in Isaiah reflects the plural form of the Hebrew word שָׁמַיִם, but LXX, which the Revelation follows, translates with the singular οὐρανός in both places.

in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. 20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: **for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.** 21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. ... 25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

Death and sin (v. 20) seem incompatible with a new creation after all opposition to the Lord has been removed. Probably, this is another example of prophetic foreshadowing (Figure 6). The Millennium anticipates some conditions of the recreated world, and the two blend together in Isaiah’s vision, not to be clearly distinguished until the Lord gives the Revelation to John.³¹

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.—Scripture repeatedly describes God’s people as his bride (chart):

Isa 62:4 ... but thou shalt be called Hephzibah [my delight is in her], and thy land Beulah [married]: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. 5 For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and **as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.**

Hos 1:2 And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: **for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD.**

Jer 3:1 They say, **If a man put away his wife**, and she go from him, and become another man's, **shall he return unto her again?** shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; **yet return again to me**, saith the LORD.

Ezk 16:8 Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, **thy time was the time of love;** and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, **I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee**, saith the Lord GOD, and **thou becamest mine.**

Eph 5:31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but **I speak concerning Christ and the church.**

But if God’s bride is his people, how can it also be a city?

This is the second of only two references in the Revelation to the “new Jerusalem.” The first is in the promise to overcomers in the church of Philadelphia (chart):

Rev 3:12 Him that overcometh will I **make a pillar** in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and **I will write upon him** the name of my God, and **the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem**, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

This verse identifies believers with the city in two ways: as architectural components, and as members of a society.

31 Alternatively, the NHNE recapitulates the Millennium, (J. Smith, NRSK on 2 Pet 3:13. The sin and death in Isa 65 embarrass the Amillennial position, which must assign this description to the eternal state.

First, “I will make [him] a pillar” recalls Eph 2:20 and 1 Pet 2:4-5, making believers parts of a spiritual structure.

Eph 2:21 In whom [Christ] all the building fitly framed together groweth unto **an holy temple** in the Lord: 22 In whom **ye also are builded together** for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

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

The description of the New Jerusalem later in the chapter uses this imagery, with gates named after the tribes of Israel and foundation stones named after the Lord’s apostles.

Second, they are marked with the name of the city. The False Prophet marked the citizens of the Beast’s dominion in their foreheads and upon their hands (13:16), showing their membership in the society so that they could buy and sell (13:17). We bear the name of the New Jerusalem, marking us as the citizens of that commonwealth.

Php 3:20 For **our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven**; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Compare Psalm 87,

Psa 87:5 And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. 6 The LORD shall count, **when he writeth up the people**, that this man was born there. Selah.

In fact, Isaiah’s prophecy of the new heaven and new earth twice makes “Jerusalem” parallel with “people,” another example of metonymy of the container for the contents:

Isa 65:18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create **Jerusalem** a rejoicing, and her **people** a joy. 19 And I will rejoice in **Jerusalem**, and joy in my **people**:

Our city is in heaven, and we are “strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb 11:13; cf. 1 Pet 2:11). In Revelation 21, this society comes down to earth. In calling the city a bride, John focuses our attention on its citizens, much as we might say, “the whole city turned out to welcome the home-town hero.” These citizens are the bride, as throughout Scripture.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying,—This is the last of 19 references to “a great voice” φωνή μεγάλη in the Revelation. The first of these utterances is by the Lord Jesus, accosting John on Patmos in 1:10. Others are by angels (14:7), or by believers (the martyrs in 6:10; the heavenly redeemed in 7:10 and 19:1), or by God himself (“from the [heavenly] temple,” 16:1, 17, declaring the bowl judgments). Of particular interest are the cases where a “[great] voice” comes from heaven. In most cases,³² this is the voice of God’s people (chart):

Rev. 11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were **great voices in heaven**, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of **our** Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

Rev. 12:10 And I heard a **loud voice saying in heaven**, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of **our** God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of **our brethren** is cast down, which accused them before **our** God day and night.

32 11:2 appears to be God

Rev. 14:2 And I heard a **voice from heaven**, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were **redeemed from the earth**.

Rev. 19:1 And after these things I heard a **great voice of much people in heaven**, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord **our God**:

So here, we are probably hearing the redeemed declaring God’s great blessings upon his people. We should be excited about the salvation that the Lord has provided for us, and sing out his praises with great joy.

This verse summarizes four facets of God’s relation with his people that merit our close attention. Each of these originates in an OT event that illustrates its meaning, but these OT events do not come in the same order as this list.³³ The order here rather recalls the earthly work of our Lord Jesus (Table 8, chart). Now the redeemed celebrate the full realization of this work.

Rev 21:3	First OT Revelation	NT Fulfillment
Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them,	c) Exo 25:8 And let them make me a sanctuary ; that I may dwell among them.	<i>Incarnation:</i> Jhn 1:14 And the Word was made flesh , and dwelt among us,
and they shall be his people ,	b) Exo 6:7 And I will take you to me for a people , and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.	<i>Redemption:</i> Act 20:28 ... the church of God , which he hath purchased with his own blood.
and God himself shall be with them,	d) Isa 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel .	<i>Ascension:</i> Matt 28:20 lo, I am with you always , even unto the end of the world.
and be their God.	a) Gen 17:1 Walk before me, and be thou perfect ... 7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee , and to thy seed after thee.	<i>Our Response:</i> 1Th 1:9 how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God ;

Table 8: Our Relation with God in 21:3

Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell [tabernacle] with them,—God revealed this relation to his people after he brought them out of Egypt, while they encamped at Mount Sinai. The verb “dwell” σκηνώω *skēnō* G4637 literally means “to live in a tent.” It describes someone who is away from their native element. When God told Israel to make him a tent, it emphasized that he was a visitor there (chart).³⁴

Ecc 5:2 God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

This OT figure was fulfilled at the incarnation, when God himself took on human flesh to tabernacle among his people.

33 J. Smith, *NTSK*, notes the first three of these steps. Another appears in v. 7, “he shall be my son.”

34 See note on “Dwellers on earth and in heaven”)

and they shall be his people,—Historically, God does not claim a people for himself until the Exodus. God promised Abraham that his seed would include many kings and peoples (Gen 17:6, 16). At the Exodus, God narrows his focus to a single people, and through Moses, he announces that he considers the nation his peculiar people (compare Lev 26:12; Deut 29:13; Zech 13:19).³⁵ The OT associates this title with God’s redemptive work, purchasing the nation at the Exodus.

2Sa 7:23 And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to **redeem for a people to himself**, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou **redeemedst to thee** from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? 24 For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel **to be a people unto thee for ever**: and thou, LORD, art become their God. [compare Ps 74:2; Isa 43:1]

The sequence in 21:3 reflects our Lord’s ministry. After his incarnation, he laid down his life to purchase unto himself a people.

and God himself shall be with them—The promise of the Lord’s presence with his people recalls his promise through Isaiah of Immanuel. He fulfilled this promise at the birth of the Savior (Matt 1:23), and for 33 years God was with his people. But then came ascension. What has become of Immanuel since then?

The sequence in 21:3, with God’s presence following the redemption of his people, probably reflects his promise at the ascension to be with his people spiritually until his physical return.

God himself shall ... be their God.³⁶—The last aspect of the relationship in 21:3 is actually the first one that God revealed historically. It was his promise to Abraham, on the condition that Abraham “walk before me,” and accept the covenant that God offers him. We become God’s people through the redemptive work of Christ on the cross. But he becomes our God when we, like Abraham, accept the covenant he has provided for us.

God initiated this sequence of incarnation, redemption, spiritual presence, and individual response in the first century, though Satan and his forces have sought to frustrate every step of the process. Now the redeemed in heaven celebrate the completion of this process.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.—The end of sorrow is a characteristic of the New Heaven and New Earth (chart):

Isa 65:17 For, behold, I create **new heavens and a new earth**: ... 18 But **be ye glad and rejoice for ever** in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and **the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.**

Like the destruction of Leviathan, the expression in 21:4 comes from the great eschatological cantata in Isaiah 25-27,

Isa 25:6 And in this mountain [Zion] shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well

35 A sizable part of the mss tradition (Hodges-Farstadt M^{de}) reads “peoples” instead of “people,” reflecting the international nature of the body of Christ. But historically, the next step was narrowing to Israel.

36 This fifth facet is not represented by a separate verb, and is the subject of considerable textual variation. Hodges-Farstadt report it in M^{d, e, pt}. NA28 records it in brackets. Its presence would fit very well with the other facets of the relationship outlined in the OT.

refined. 7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. 8 **He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces;** and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.

God responds to this praise with three statements, each introduced by “he said.” Who is speaking? As we saw in Revelation 19, the distinction between the Father and the Son is becoming less clear.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said,—Until now, the one sitting on the throne is the Father. **Behold, I make all things new.**—This claim echoes Psalm 102,

Psa 102:25 Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. 26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; **as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:**

Based on the LXX rendering,³⁷ Heb 1:10-12 cites this verse as describing the Son.

And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.—Recall our study of the Lord’ Jesus’ title “faithful and true” in 19:11. Throughout the Revelation it is applied to the Son, but it carries us back to the LXX of Deut 32:4, which describes the LORD.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am—I have become the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.—Until now, “Alpha and Omega” has been exclusively the title of the Father, this is the first use in the MT of “beginning and end.” But how can the Father “become” anything (Majority reading)?

I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.—This description directly recalls the words of the Lord Jesus in John’s gospel:

Jhn 4:14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of **water springing up into everlasting life.**

Jhn 7:37 In the last day, that great day of the feast [of Tabernacles], Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow **rivers of living water.**

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things;—This is the last instance of the verb νικάω *nikaō* G3528, which dominated the epistles to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3 (Figure 8, chart). This promise echoes the close to each of the letters to the seven churches, suggesting that it is a promise to believers. But the next two clauses add a twist.

and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.—The promise we expect is “I will be your God, and you shall be my **people**,” as in 21:3, based on Exod 6:7; Lev 26:12; Deut 29:13; Zech 13:19. The relation “his God ... my **son**” comes from the Davidic covenant,

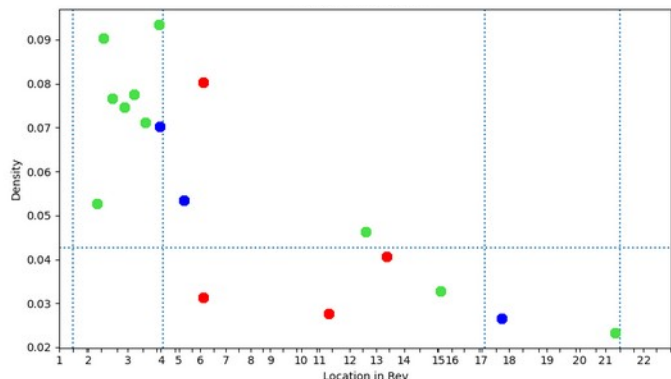


Figure 8: νικάω *nikaō* G3528 in Revelation (**Green** saints, **Blue** Christ, **Red** evil)

37 B. W. Bacon, “Heb 1, 10–12 and the Septuagint Rendering of Ps 102, 23,” *ZNW* 3 [1902] 280–285.

2Sa 7:12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. 14 **I will be his father, and he shall be my son.**

So “he that overcometh” points to believers, but “my son” points to the Lord Jesus! What’s going on?

Recall the promise to the Laodiceans, the last “overcomer” promise in Revelation 2-3.

Rev 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, **even as I also overcame**, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

The Lord Jesus is the original overcomer, not only in 3:21, but also in 5:5,

Rev. 5:5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath **prevailed [overcome]** to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

At this point in the history, the promise of 2 Samuel 7 has been fulfilled. The Son’s throne is established forever, and he inherits all things. But we, who overcome by his Spirit, share that throne, and that inheritance. Just as the distinction between the Son and the Father becomes blurred, our union with the Lord Jesus becomes closer and more intimate.

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.—We are judged according to our works, and this is one of a number of NT passages that list specific works that lead to condemnation.³⁸ We will see another in 22:15.

Six of these eight follow the order of the ten commandments (Table 9, chart). Two details are helpful in establishing the correspondence.

The first sin in the list is fear. We think of fear as something that happens to us, not something that we do. But recall God’s condemnation of the northern kingdom when Assyria defeated them:

2Ki 17:34 Unto this day they do after the former manners: **they fear not the LORD**, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel; 35 With whom the LORD had made a covenant, and charged them, saying, **Ye shall not fear other gods**, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them: 36 But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, **him shall ye fear**, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice. 37 And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore; and **ye shall not fear other gods**. 38 And the covenant that I have made with you ye shall not forget; **neither shall ye fear other**

Exodus 20	Rev 21:8
1. No other gods	Fearful, unbelieving
2. No graven image	Abominable (sorcerers, idolaters)
6. No murder	Murderers
7. No adultery	Whoremongers
8. No false witness	Liars

Table 9: Alignment of 21:8 with the Ten Commandments

38 Rev 21:8; 22:15; 1 Cor 5:11; 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:3-5; Col 3:5-6; 1 Tim 1:9-10

gods. 39 But **the LORD your God ye shall fear**; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies. 40 Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former manner.

Fear is a form of worship. The Lord deserves our fear, because he is worthy of our worship. Thus fear of anything else violates the first commandment by recognizing other gods besides the Lord. “Unbelieving” is a natural expansion of “fearful” in rejecting the first commandment.

“Abominable” also requires clarification. This term is the perfect participle of a verb that appears only one other time in the NT, referring to idols:

Rom 2:22 thou that **abhorrest** idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

The associated noun, “abomination” βδέλυγμα bdelugma G946, is widely used in the LXX of idols and their worship.³⁹ For example,

Deut 29:16 And ye have seen their **abominations**, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them:

In Rev 21:8, the verb describes people who make themselves abominable by worshipping idols. The addition of sorcerers and idolaters emphasizes this sin. As we saw in the errors of Balaam in Pergamos (2:14) and Jezebel in Thyatira (2:20), fornication and idolatry were frequently associated, and idolatry is spiritual adultery (perhaps explaining why sorcerers and idolaters are grouped with whoremongers). The prominence of idolatry is also seen when we consider the other lists. Out of eight, seven explicitly mention idolatry, more than any other offense.

With this final glance back at the lake of fire and those who are consigned there, we are ready, in the final vision, to focus on the New Jerusalem.

³⁹ See Beale’s discussion on Rev 17:4-5.

Notes

War (πόλεμος G4171, πολεμέω G4170) in the Revelation

With the Lord

2:16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will **fight** against them with the sword of my mouth.

16:14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the **battle** of that great day of God Almighty.

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

19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make **war**.

19:19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make **war** against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20:8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to **battle**: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

Satanic Forces against Men

9:7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto **battle**; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

9:9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to **battle**.

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

12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make **war** with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

13:4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make **war** with him?

13:5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue [MT make **war**] forty and two months.

13:7 And it was given unto him to make **war** with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

War in Heaven

12:7 And there was **war** in heaven: Michael and his angels **fought** against the dragon; and the dragon **fought** and his angels,

Verb Tenses in Isa 63:3-6

As observed in <https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/isaiah/notes/Isaiah63a.pdf>, the alternation between past (3a, 5) and future (3b, 6) in these verses generally distinguishes a solo work of salvation, and judgment brought upon many. But in the last clause in 63:5, “my fury, it upheld me” הַחֲמָתִי הִיא סִמְכָתִי, the reference to his wrath חמה H2534 appears to indicate judgment, even though it is singular.

63:5 has a parallel in Isa 59,

Isa 59:16 And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.

Note the parallels (Table 10), in particular between “his righteousness” צְדִיקָתוֹ H6666 and “my fury.” When God’s righteousness is confronted with rebellion, it stirs his fury. Putting it the other way around, God’s fury against sin is a reflection of his perfect righteousness.

63:5 can be understood of the Savior’s solitary redemptive work if we envision him motivated by a hatred of sin so deep that it motivated him to destroy it by his sacrifice.

John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

Thus understood, it joins some other emotions that motivated him to his sacrifice:

Heb 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the **joy** that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who **loved me**, and gave himself for me.

Our Savior was motivated in his redemptive work by

- his love for his people ([Gal 2:20](#))
- his joy at the Father’s response to his obedience ([Heb 12:2](#))
- his fury against sin ([Isa 63:5](#))

19:4 καὶ ὅστις

We have the same construction in 1:7, indicating a subset of the first group:

Rev. 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, **and they also** καὶ οἱ πάντες which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

In the OT, this expression is epexegetical:

59:16, Isaiah's Description	63:5, The Redeemer Speaks
And he saw אָרָא that there was no man,	And I looked בִּיט, and there was none to help;
and wondered שָׁמַע that there was no intercessor:	and I wondered שָׁמַע that there was none to uphold:
therefore his arm brought salvation unto him;	therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me;
and his righteousness, it sustained סָמַךְ him.	and my fury, it upheld סָמַךְ me.

Table 10: Parallels between Isa 59:16 and 63:6

Num. 27:16 Let the Lord God of spirits and of all flesh look out for a man over this congregation, 17 who shall go out before them, **and who** shall come in before them, **and who** shall lead them out, **and who** shall bring them in; so the congregation of the Lord shall not be as sheep without a shepherd.

Deut. 21:3 and it shall be that the city which is nearest to the slain man the elders of that city shall take a heifer of the herd, which has not laboured, **and which** has not borne a yoke.

Josh. 1:18 And whosoever shall disobey thee, **and whosoever** shall not hearken to thy words as thou shalt command him, let him die; but be thou strong and courageous.

Is. 13:15 For whosoever shall be taken shall be overcome; **and they** that are gathered together shall fall by the sword.

It is most consistent to take the two clauses in 19:4 as referring to the same people, but those who reign are a broader group, including all those who returned with the Lord in ch. 19.

The “souls” who “lived” in 20:4

The description of the martyrs in this verse has been invoked in support both of amillennialism and of a pre-tribulation rapture.

Amillennialists (e.g., Barnes) emphasize that John sees souls ψυχή *psuxē* G5590, not bodies. If John had described what he saw as πνεῦμα *pneuma* G4151, the distinction would be valid. But ψυχή can refer to an embodied person (1 Pet 3:20, eight *souls* saved on the ark) as well as the immaterial part of a person. Here, the qualification as “them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God” suggests that John is referring to the same group he saw in 6:9, “the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony... .”

In 6:9, the martyrs certainly were not yet raised. What is their state here? Thomas, agreeing with the amillennial position that ψυχή describes an immaterial being, insists that they are tribulation martyrs, not raised until after the Lord’s return, in contrast with those raptured (1 Thessalonians 4), Thomas thinks before the tribulation, who return with him in Revelation 19. He takes ἐξήσων as an ingressive aorist. Thus he sees three resurrections: one at the rapture, a second at the establishment of the kingdom, and a third at the great white throne. But the close parallel with 6:9 is embarrassing for seeing these as tribulation martyrs, for 6:9, in its parallel with Matt 24:9, surely includes the martyrs of all ages, who would be raised even at a pretribulation rapture. In fact, the second clause of 20:4, “and which had not worshipped ... ,” may be intended to distinguish the tribulation martyrs from the earlier ones described in 6:9.

It seems more natural to recognize the clear parallel with 6:9, and allow the broader sense of ψυχή as “person.” “I saw the people whom I previously described as “the souls of them ...”, who are now alive [constative aorist], as well as those who had not worshipped the beast ... and they were alive”

πλανάω *planaō* G4105 “to deceive” or ψεῦδος *pseudos* G5579 “lie” and cognates

Figure 9 shows the clear dominance of Revelation and Matthew.

This figure plots the number of hits per thousand words (Y-axis) against the absolute number of hits (X-axis). By itself, each of these measures is misleading. Absolute hits doesn’t take into account the overall length of a book, while hits/1000 words explodes for very short books. This plot lets us visualize both at the same time, and identify those points that are on the Pareto boundary.

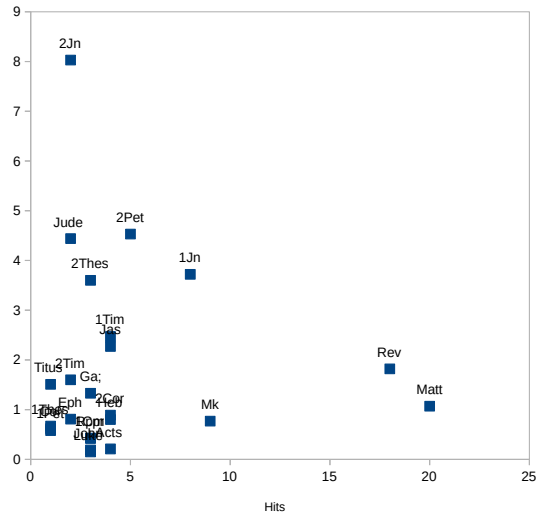


Figure 9: Hits vs. Prominence of deception and lying in the NT

ἐξουσία *exousia* G1849

This is a favorite word in Revelation (Figure 10). Figure 11 shows the density distribution. Note the three peaks, in ch. 9 (the demon locusts), 13 (the beasts), and 17 (kings allied with the Antichrist).

Nine times, the word is the object of δίδωμι *didōmi* G1325, emphasizing that the authority is not absolute, but derived from someone else.

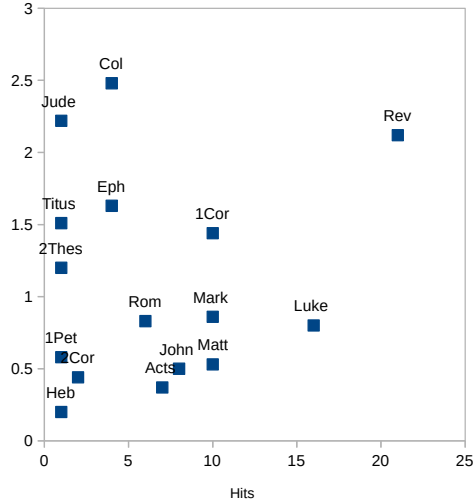


Figure 10: Hits vs. Prominence (Hits/1k Words) of ἐξουσία in NT books

Who is the grantor?

Christ or the Father

2:26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him **will I give power** over the nations:

Unspecified

6:8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And **power was given** unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

9:3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them **was given power**, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

13:5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and **power was given unto him** to continue forty and two months.

13:7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and **power was given him** over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

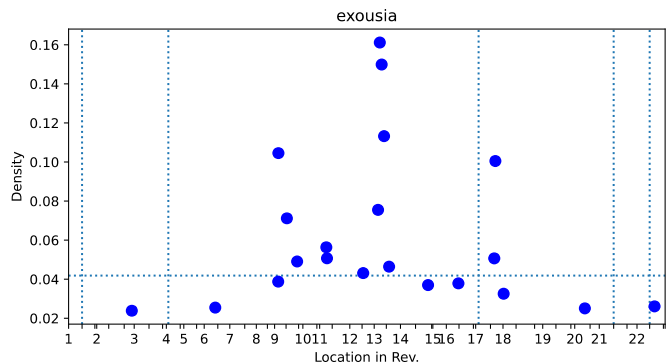


Figure 11: Density of ἐξουσία in Revelation

Satan

13:2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and **the dragon gave him** his power, and his seat, and great **authority**.

ev. 13:4 And they worshipped **the dragon which gave power** unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

Kings supporting the beast

17:13 These have one mind, and shall **give their power** and strength unto the beast.

Thoughts on Granting Authority

Only once is the Lord Jesus said to grant power, in the first instance. But recall:

Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is given unto me** in heaven and in earth.

Derives from Daniel

Dan. 7:14 And there was given him **dominion**, and glory, and a 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.

Against this background, we should see the Lord as the implied subject of the passive grants of authority throughout the book. In fact, he is the one opening the seals, which is what sets loose each series of disasters.

Believers are the first ones granted authority in the book (2:26), and they are the last ones said to have authority:

Rev. 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have **right** to [authority over] the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

We will have authority over the tree of life. This was Adam’s place in the garden, originally, and he abused it. Now we will have that responsibility in the new heavens and new earth.

Notes on the Structure of Ezekiel

Error: Reference source not found shows the major sections of Ezekiel, and justifies the identification of ch. 36-39 as a unit focusing on restoration. See fuller discussion at <https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/ezek/EzekielOverview.pdf>.

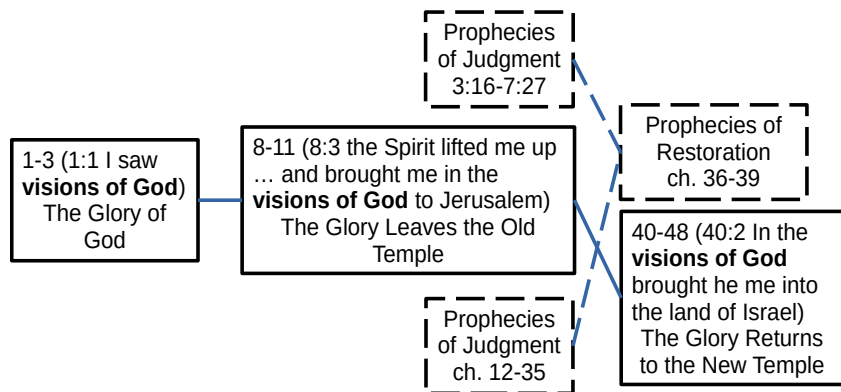


Figure 12: Structure of the book of Ezekiel

New καινός G2537 in the Revelation

Trench distinguishes καινός “new in condition, unused” from νέος G3501 “young in time, newly created.” The Revelation uses only καινός, and its nine instances (out of 44 in the NT) are more than any other book. They are concentrated in the letters to the churches and in ch. 21.

- 2:17 promises overcomers a “new name,” and 3:12 a share in the “new Jerusalem” and the Lord’s “new name”
- In 5:9 and 14:3, the redeemed sing a “new song”
- In 21:1, 2, 5, all creation is renewed.

	שדח	קטן	*צעיר	אביב	Total
καινός	42	0	0	0	55
νέος	4	25	13	7	118
μικρός	0	62	1	0	161
Total	53	108	25	9	

Table 11: καινός and νέος in the LXX

Table 11 shows a clear distinction between the two in the LXX, in keeping with Trench’s insight.

Dwellers on Earth and in Heaven

Throughout the Revelation, we read of those who dwell on the earth⁴⁰ and those who dwell in heaven.⁴¹ Though the English verbs are usually the same, the underlying Greek verbs are very different. Those who dwell on the earth are described with the verb κατοικέω *katoikeō* G2730, indicating a settled residence, while people who dwell in heaven are described with σκηνοῶ *skēnoō* G4637.

Lists of Spiritually Fatal Activities

At least eight times, the NT gives us lists of sins that are fatal spiritually. The following table groups them according to the specific commandment that they violate. Three observations emerge:

1. Every commandment is represented, except taking God’s name in vain and remembering the Sabbath day.
2. An additional category, “disorderly behavior,” doesn’t fit neatly with the ten commandments.
3. These offenses all deal with actions rather than specific doctrines. “Heresies” in Gal 5:20 is grouped with other offenses against order, and probably emphasizes party spirit rather than a specific doctrinal shortcoming.

40 Rev. 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 17:2, 8. See notes on 8:13, https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/rev2/notes/Rev_8b-11.pdf.

41 Rev 12:12; 13:6. 12:12 mentions both groups, though it departs from the rendering “dwell” for κατοικέω.

Rev 19:11–21:8, Final Judgment of Satan’s System

	Rv 21:8	Rv 22:15	1Cr 5:11	1Cr 6:9-10	Ga 5:19-21	Ep 5:3-5	Cl 3:5-6	1Tm 1:9-10
Penalty	Lake of Fire	Excluded	Excluded	Not inherit	Not inherit	Not inherit	Wrath	The Law
# items	8	6	5	10	17	9	6	8
1 No Other Gods								
Fearful	1							
Unbelieving	2							
2 No Idols								
Abominable 948 (cf Rm 2:22)	3							
Idolaters	7	5	3	2	5	10	6	
Sorcerers 5331	6	2			6			
3 Name in Vain								
4 Sabbath Day								
5 Father & Mother								
Murderers of Fathers and Mothers								1, 2
6 Murder								
Murderers	4	4			15			1, 2, 3
7 Adultery								
Whoremongers 4205	5	3				7		4
Dogs		1						
Fornicators			1	1	2	1	1	
Adulterers				3	1			
Effeminate 3120				4				
Homosexuals 733				5				5
Uncleanness 167					3	2, 8	2	
Lasciviousness 766					4			
Inordinate Affection 3806							3	
Evil Concupiscence							4	

Rev 19:11–21:8, Final Judgment of Satan’s System

	Rv 21:8	Rv 22:15	1Cr 5:11	1Cr 6:9-10	Ga 5:19-21	Ep 5:3-5	Cl 3:5-6	1Tm 1:9-10
1939								
Filthiness 151						4		
8 Steal								
Thieves				6				
Menstealers 405								6
Extortioners 727			6	10				
9 False Witness								
Liars	8	6						7, 8
10 Covetous								
Covetous			2	7		3, 9	5	
Disorderly								
Drunkards			5	8	16			
Railer 3060			4	9				
Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings					7-14	5-6	cf. 3:8-9	
Revellings					17			