



THE REVELATION OF JOHN

Bible Study 33

Text: Rev. 13:1-10

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1 Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ ἀποστόλου ἡμετέρου Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἣν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς δεῖξαι τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει, καὶ ἐσήμανεν ἃ οὐκ ἀρτύρησεν τὸν λόγον τοῦ βιβλίου καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὅσα εἶδεν. 2 Μακάριος ὁ ἀκούσκων καὶ οἱ ἄκουοντες τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας καὶ τηροῦντες τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ γεγραμμένα, ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς.

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2. What the text means.

Greek NT

13.1 Καὶ εἶδον ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον, ἔχον κέρατα δέκα καὶ κεφαλὰς ἑπτὰ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν κεράτων αὐτοῦ δέκα διαδήματα καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτοῦ ὄνομα[τα] βλασφημίας. 2 καὶ τὸ θηρίον ὃ εἶδον ἦν ὅμοιον παρδάλει καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὡς ἄρκου καὶ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ὡς στόμα λέοντος, καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ δράκων τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξουσίαν μεγάλην. 3 καὶ μίαν ἐκ τῶν κεφαλῶν αὐτοῦ ὡς ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον, καὶ ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ ἔθεραπεύθη.

Καὶ ἔθαυμάσθη ὅλη ἡ γῆ ὀπίσω τοῦ θηρίου 4 καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ δράκοντι, ὅτι ἔδωκεν τὴν ἐξουσίαν τῷ θηρίῳ, καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θηρίῳ λέγοντες· τίς ὅμοιος τῷ θηρίῳ καὶ τίς δύναται πολεμήσαι μετ' αὐτοῦ;

5 Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ στόμα λαλοῦν μεγάλα καὶ βλασφημίας καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία ποιῆσαι μῆνας τεσσαεράκοντα [καὶ] δύο. 6 καὶ ἤνοιξεν τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ εἰς βλασφημίας πρὸς τὸν θεὸν βλασφημῆσαι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ, τοὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σκηνοῦντας. 7 καὶ ἐδόθη

La Biblia de las Américas

13.1 El dragón se paró sobre la arena del mar. Y vi que subía del mar una bestia que tenía diez cuernos y siete cabezas; en sus cuernos había diez diademas, y en sus cabezas había nombres blasfemos. 2 La bestia que vi era semejante a un leopardo, sus pies eran como los de un oso y su boca como la boca de un león. Y el dragón le dio su poder, su trono y gran autoridad. 3 Y vi una de sus cabezas como herida de muerte, pero su herida mortal fue sanada.

Y la tierra entera se maravilló y seguía tras la bestia; 4 y adoraron al dragón, porque había dado autoridad a la bestia; y adoraron a la bestia, diciendo: ¿Quién es semejante a la bestia, y quién puede luchar contra ella?

5 Se le dio una boca que hablaba palabras arrogantes y blasfemias, y se le dio autoridad para actuar durante cuarenta y dos meses. 6 Y abrió su boca en blasfemias contra Dios, para blasfemar su nombre y su tabernáculo, es decir, contra los que moran en el cielo. 7 Se le concedió hacer guerra contra los santos y vencerlos; y se le dio autoridad sobre toda tribu,

NRSV

1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads; and on its horns were ten diadems, and on its heads were blasphemous names. 2 And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And the dragon gave it his power and his throne and great authority. 3 One of its heads seemed to have received a death-blow, but its mortal wound had been healed.

In amazement the whole earth followed the beast. 4 They worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

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

NLT

1 And now in my vision I saw a beast rising up out of the sea. It had seven heads and ten horns, with ten crowns on its horns. And written on each head were names that blasphemed God. 2 This beast looked like a leopard, but it had bear's feet and a lion's mouth! And the dragon gave him his own power and throne and great authority. 3 I saw that one of the heads of the beast seemed wounded beyond recovery -- but the fatal wound was healed!

All the world marveled at this miracle and followed the beast in awe. 4 They worshiped the dragon for giving the beast such power, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Is there anyone as great as the beast?" they exclaimed. "Who is able to fight against him?"

5 Then the beast was allowed to speak great blasphemies against God. And he was given authority to do what he wanted for forty-two months. 6 And he spoke terrible words of blasphemy against God, slandering his name and all who live in heaven, who are his temple. 7 And the beast was allowed

αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ νικῆσαι αὐτούς, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν φυλὴν καὶ λαὸν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ ἔθνος. 8 καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, οὗ οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου.

9 Εἴ τις ἔχει οὖς ἀκουσάτω.

10 εἴ τις εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν, εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπάγει·

εἴ τις ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀποκτανθῆναι.

Ἔσθ' ἔστιν ἡ ὑπόμονη καὶ ἡ πίστις τῶν ἁγίων.

pueblo, lengua y nación. 8 Y la adorarán todos los que moran en la tierra, cuyos nombres no han sido escritos, desde la fundación del mundo, en el libro de la vida del Cordero que fue inmolado .

9 Si alguno tiene oído, que oiga.

10 Si alguno es destinado a la cautividad, a la cautividad va;

si alguno ha de morir a espada, a espada ha de morir.

Aquí está la perseverancia y la fe de los santos.

guage and nation, 8 and all the inhabitants of the earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered.

9 Let anyone who has an ear listen:

10 If you are to be taken captive, into captivity you go;

if you kill with the sword, with the sword you must be killed.

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

to wage war against God's holy people and to overcome them. And he was given authority to rule over every tribe and people and language and nation. 8 And all the people who belong to this world worshiped the beast. They are the ones whose names were not written in the Book of Life, which belongs to the Lamb who was killed before the world was made.

9 Anyone who is willing to hear should listen and understand.

10 The people who are destined for prison will be arrested and taken away.

Those who are destined for death will be killed. But do not be dismayed, for here is your opportunity to have endurance and faith.

INTRODUCTION

When Satan realizes that he has been out matched by God in his efforts to get at the 'man child' (υἰὸν ἄρσεν, 12:5) and his mother (γυνή, 12:1), he then turns to the 'other children' (τῶν λοιπῶν τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτῆς, 12:17) of the mother as targets of his wrath. But first he "loads his guns" to the limit with the help of a couple of sea monsters (ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης θηρίων ἀναβαῖνον, 13:1) before launching his attacks. This is his final, most concerted effort to get at God through those connected to Him. To be sure, we know that these efforts will be doomed to failure, but chapter thirteen does detail horrific suffering by the people of God on the earth before Satan's final defeat.

The work of each of the two sea monsters (13:5-10 and 13:13-17) follows a description of each (13:1-4 and 13:11-12). Their appearance is hideous but they have powerful skills at deceiving the people of the world not a part of the family of God. They possess supra human powers to inflict harm and injury on the people of God to the point of martyrdom.

Once we have studied both beasts we will compare and contrast each of them to the dragon, Satan.

In this closing persecution of believers at the very end of human history, being faithful to Christ will become especially tough with Satan and his cohorts marshaling the unbelieving world against the people of God on earth. But the promises of God hold true that He will stand with His people through their trials and



sufferings.

But this will bring to an end the suffering of God's people at the hands of evil beings and evil people. And in that we can rejoice. Because after this comes Satan's defeat (Rev. 14:1-13) and the judgment on all unbelieving humanity on the earth (Rev. 16:1-18:24) and the celebration of victory by the people of God (Rev. 14:14-15:8). What a time of celebration that will be! No longer can Satan inflict pain and injury upon the people of God. He is doomed; his defeat is final and complete. God reigns supremely.

1. What did the text mean to the first readers?

John as narrator now is located on the earth and

tells his story from that vantage point, rather than from heaven where he often is located. But while from an “earthly” view point, he narrates from “above looking down” on the creatures and events taking place on the earth. He adopts a standard ancient angle in telling the story of the two beasts in chapter thirteen.

Historical Aspects:

Again the apocalyptic vision nature of the text does not focus upon historical individuals and the described events are told from an apocalyptic vision perspective meaning that they are not describing specific historical events comprised of human actions that could be dated on a calendar. People and historical events may be assumed to lay deep in the background, but remain unnamed and unidentified.

External History. In the centuries old history of the hand copying of this text variations in the wording inevitably surface over time. In the Text Apparatus of the United Bible Societies *The Greek Testament* (UBS 4th rev. ed.), the editors list five places where this variation of wording can potentially impact the translation of the scripture text.



13.1, the issue of the singular or the plural form of ὀνόμα[τα] surfaces in the different manuscripts.¹ It is the difference between ‘the names of blasphemy’ and ‘the name of blasphemy.’² Although a slight difference in idea is present in the variations, the essential meaning remains the same with both the singular and plural forms. The textual evidence is split between the two

¹{C} ὀνόματα A 051 205 209 1611 1854 2053 2344 2351 Byz [046] it^{ar} vg syr^h Priscillian // ὀνόμα P⁴⁷ & C P 1006 1841 2329 it^{gig} vg^{mss} syr^{ph} cop^{sa,bo} arm eth Andrew; Primasius Beatus

[Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

²“On the one hand, the reading ὄνομα may have arisen from the plural ὀνόματα through the accidental omission of τα after μα. On the other hand, however, after the plural κεφαλᾶς (heads), copyists may have tended to change ὄνομα to ὀνόματα. The two most important witnesses (A 2053) read the plural. However, the last two letters of the plural have been put in brackets in the UBS4 text to indicate uncertainty regarding the original text. The sense of the plural noun may be that one blasphemous name was on each head. REB (similarly NIV and TEV) translates, ‘It had ten horns and seven heads; on the horns were ten diadems, and on each head was a blasphemous name.’ Or the sense may be that more than one blasphemous name was on each head.”

[Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 536.]

readings.

13.6, in the phrase τοὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σκηνοῦντας, the primary issue revolves around the adding of καὶ before the article τοὺς, which would signal a distinct reference from τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ. The adopted reading assumes an appositional role for τοὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σκηνοῦντας that is then understood to define more specifically τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ.³ The text evidence generally favors the omission of the conjunction καὶ.⁴

13.7, the omission of the first main clause καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ νικῆσαι αὐτούς reflects an unintentional oversight by numerous copyists in the process of copying the text.⁵ But the evidence overwhelmingly supports its inclusion.⁶

³{B} τοὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σκηνοῦντας (κ* σκηνοῦντες) A C 051^c (1006 omit τῷ) 1611 1841 (1854 omit τοὺς) 2329 2344 2351 Byz [046c] vg^{mss} syr^h (syr^{ph} τῶν ... σκηνοῦντων) (Irenaeus^{arm}) // καὶ τοὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σκηνοῦντας (κ² τοῦ for τοὺς and σκηνοῦντες) P 046* 051 205 209 2053 it^{ar} vg cop^{sa,bo} eth^{mss} Irenaeus^{lat} Andrew; Beatus // ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ P⁴⁷ it^{gig} eth Primasius

[Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

⁴“Among the several readings, the reading in the text has superior manuscript support and is the more difficult reading. The presence of καὶ before τοὺς (in a few uncials, most minuscules, and early versions) appears to be due to copyists who wished to improve the difficult syntax. In view of occasional omissions in P⁴⁷, its reading ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ appears to be a secondary change, introduced probably because of the syntactical difficulty. The reading found only in syr^{ph} is probably due to the freedom of the translator.

“Following the reading in the text, the words τοὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σκηνοῦντας should probably be taken in apposition to τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ (his dwelling). Compare NRSV: ‘blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven.’ If the variant reading with καὶ is followed, τοὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σκηνοῦντας will be understood as an additional object of the verb. Compare NJB, which translates ‘and it mouthed its blasphemies against God, against his name, his heavenly Tent and [καὶ] all those who are sheltered there.’”

[Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 536–537.]

⁵{A} καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ νικῆσαι αὐτούς & 051 205 209 1006 (1611 1854 πόλεμον ποιῆσαι) 1841 2329 2344 2351 Byz [046] it^(ar), ^{gig} (vg) syr^{ph}, (h) cop^{bo} eth Beatus // καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ νικῆσαι αὐτούς 1859 arm^{mss} (Quodvultdeus) Primasius // omit (by homoioarcton?) P47 A C P 2053 cop^{sa} arm^{mss} Irenaeus^{lat} Andrew

[Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

⁶“The absence of the clause καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ νικῆσαι αὐτούς in a variety of witnesses is no

13.10a, the highly puzzling nature of εἴ τις εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν, εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπάγει as a maxim was confusing to many copyists who sought to alter the wording so that it would be easier to understand.⁷ But again the adopted text reading is favored by the existing evidence.⁸

13.10b, even more confusing was the phrase ἀποκτανθῆναι αὐτόν, which is grammatically incomprehensible in its present form. This produced a wide variety of alternative readings in the effort to make sense out of it.⁹ The irregular Greek expression seems to be a literalistic attempt at translating a Hebrew idiom.¹⁰ Doubt due to an oversight in copying, the eye of the copyist passing from the first to the second occurrence of καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ. Several minuscules introduce ἐξουσία (authority) from the following clause (‘and authority was given to him to make war’), while other secondary witnesses modify the order of words.”

[Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 537.]

⁷{B} εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν, εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπάγει A vg^{ww, st} // εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπάγει, εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπάγει 2351 it^(ar), sig⁹⁸ vg^{cl} syr^{ph}, ^h Irenaeus^{lat}, Beatus // εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν, ὑπάγει P⁴⁷ x C P 046 051^{v.t.} 205 209 1006 1611 1841 (1854 ὑπάγει) 2053 2329 cop^{bo} Irenaeus^{arm} Andrew // ἔχει αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπάγει 051^{txt} Byz // αἰχμαλωτίζει, εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπάγει 104 (cop^{sa}) (Primasius)

[Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini, et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

⁸“The brief style of the saying has puzzled the copyists (and interpreters!). The reading εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν, εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπάγει best accounts for the origin of the others. The absence of one of the two instances of εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν, although rather widespread, appears to be the result of accidental oversight in copying. The absence of a verb with the first clause led various copyists to attempt to improve the text by adding appropriate verbs, either ἀπάγει (he goes) or συνάγει (he gathers together), or by changing the construction to αἰχμαλωτίζει (he takes captive). The reading ἔχει αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπάγει, which can hardly be translated, must be regarded as a copyist’s mistake (ἔχει being written instead of εἰς). It is thus a further development of the secondary reading mentioned above. A literal translation of the reading in the text may not be the best translation. Compare TEV: ‘Whoever is meant to be captured will surely be captured.’”

[Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 537–538.]

⁹{B} ἀποκτανθῆναι αὐτόν A // ἀποκτενεῖ 1828 it^{sig} syr^{ph} Pacian Beatus // ἀποκτείνει (ἀποκτέννει, ἀποκτένει), δεῖ αὐτόν x 046 1006 1611 1841 1854 2344 2351 eth Irenaeus^{arm} // ἀποκτενεῖ, δεῖ αὐτόν C P 051^{txt} 205 209 (2053 ἀποκτενεῖν) 2329 it^{ar} vg (cop^{sa}) Irenaeus^{lat} Andrew; Primasius // δεῖ αὐτόν ἀποκτανθῆναι (and omit following ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀποκτανθῆναι) 051^{v.t.} Byz

[Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini, et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

¹⁰“Among a dozen variant readings, none is satisfactory; but

dex A (Alexandrinus) seems to be the original reading and becomes the adopted reading, in spite of the grammar difficulty.

Of course the above variations represent on a small number to the variations known to exist in a comparison of the several thousand manuscripts that continue to exist in our day. The Text Apparatus of the Nestle Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27th rev. ed.) contains some 28 places where variations surface in these manuscripts.¹¹ Careful analy-



the best seems to be ἀποκτανθῆναι αὐτόν, read by Codex Alexandrinus (A). As in the first two lines of the verse, the third and fourth lines teach the fulfillment of the will of God. The Greek construction seems to be a literal rendering of a distinctively Hebrew idiom, ‘if anyone is to be slain with the sword, he is to be slain with the sword.’ The reading in the text is followed by TEV, which translates ‘whoever is meant to be killed by the sword will surely be killed by the sword.’

“Perhaps under the influence of such sayings as Matt 26:52 (πάντες γὰρ οἱ λαβόντες μάχαιραν ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀπολοῦνται [for all who take the sword by the sword will perish]), copyists changed in various ways the difficult Greek construction and introduced the idea of retribution (persecutors will be repaid in strict accord with the *lex talionis*, that is, the law of retaliation). NRSV (similarly Seg) is based on a variant reading: ‘if you kill with the sword, with the sword you must be killed.’ But this idea is contrary to the reading of Codex A, where the subject throughout the verse remains the Christians themselves.”

[Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 538.]

¹¹Offenbarung 13,1

* ονομα P⁴⁷ x C 1006. 1841. 2329 M^A gig vg^{mss} syr^h co; Prim Bea (plural form replaced by singular form)

| txt A 051. 1611. 1854. 2053. 2344. 2351 M^K ar vg sy^h

Offenbarung 13,2

* P⁴⁷ M^A (ἦν is omitted)

* –των x 1611. 2351 pc sy^h; Vic (alternative spelling of λέοντος)

Offenbarung 13,3

* P^{115*} 046*. 1854. 2053 M^A (ἐκ is omitted)

* –μασεν ο. η γη x P 1006. 1611. 1841. 1854. 2329. (2344). 2351 M^K (alternative spellings for ἔθουμάσθη)

| –μασθη εν ο. τη γη 051 M^A

| txt P⁴⁷ A (C, 2053) pc sy^h

Offenbarung 13,4

* –σεν P⁴⁷ 2344 pc syr^h (alternative spelling for προσεκύνησαν)

* τω δεδωκοτι M^K gig vg^{cl} (ὅτι ἔδωκεν is replaced)

* 2351 pc (τήν is omitted)

* το –ιον A 2344 pc (P⁴⁷, 051 al: h.t.) (alternative spelling for τῷ θηρίῳ)

*¹ M^K (καὶ before τίς is omitted)

* δυνατος 2351 M^K (δύναται is replaced)

sis of these variations mostly reflect efforts at stylistic improvement, and a few instances of carelessness in copying that resulted in unintentional errors.

Thus the adopted reading of the text can be exegeted in the confidence that it represents the most like-

Offenbarung 13,5

* τα (v1 λαλουντα Ir^{lat}) P⁴⁷ (these words inserted before μεγάλη)

* -μιαν (2053) M vg^{mss} syp^{h.hmg}; Ir^{lat} (alternative spellings for βλασφημίας)

| -μα A 2329 al

| txt P⁴⁷ & C 1611. 1841. 2344 al ar vg^{cl} sy^h (bo)

* & 2344. 2351 pc sa^{mss} (ἐξουσία is omitted)

* π. ο θελει & (ποιησαι is replaced)

| πολεμον π. 051. 2329 M^K

| πολεμησαι 2351 pc

| - Ir^{lat}

*¹ & C M ([καί] is omitted)

| txt A 1841. 1854 pc (P⁴⁷ 046. 051 al: μβ')

Offenbarung 13,6

* εις -ιαν 051 m g1g; Ir^{lat} Bea (εις βλασφημίας is replaced)

| βλασφημησαι P⁴⁷ syp^h co

| txt & A C 1006. 1841. 1854. 2344 al lat

* C (καί την σκηνήν αὐτοῦ is omitted)

* και & 046*. 051. 2053^{ext} M^A lat co; Ir^{lat} Bea (καί is inserted before τοῦς)

* bis P⁴⁷ (σκηνουοντας is omitted)

Offenbarung 13,7

* P⁴⁷ A C 2053 M^A sa; Ir^{lat} (καί ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιησαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων καί νικησαι αὐτούς is omitted)

| txt P^{115vid} & 051. 1006. (1611). 1841. (1854). 2329. 2344.

2351 (M^K) lat syp^h.(h) bo

*¹ P⁴⁷ 051. 1006 M^A bo (καί λαὸν is omitted)

Offenbarung 13,8

* αυτω & 051. 1006. 1611. 1841. 2053. 2344 M^A (alternative spelling for αὐτόν)

* ὦν ου (-&*) γεγ. τα ον-τα αυτων (-& P 051 al) P⁴⁷ & P 051. 1006. 1841. 2329 al lat (οὗ οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ is replaced by one of these alternative expressions)

| ὦν ου (ουτε 046 pc) γεγ. το ονομα (+ αυτων 1611 pc sy^h) P^{115vid} M (co); Bea

| ουαι γεγ. το ονομα αυτου A

| txt C 1854. 2053 pc; (Ir^{lat}) Prim

* τη (τω &²; -&* 1611. 1854 pc) βιβλω P⁴⁷ & 1611. 1854. 2344 al (alternative spellings for τῷ βιβλίῳ)

| βιβλιω C

| txt A 051 M

Offenbarung 13,10

* εις αιχ. απαγει 2351 pc g1g vg^{cl} sy; Ir^{lat} Prim (εις αιχμαλωσίαν is replaced)

| εχει αιχ. 051* M^K

| αιχμαλωτιζει 104 pc

* P⁴⁷ & C 051 M bo; Ir^{arm} Bea (ἐν μαχαίρη is omitted)

| txt A 2351 pc lat sy sa; Irlat

* † αποκτενεῖ, δει C 051*. (2053). 2329. 2351 M^A lat; Ir^{lat} (ἀποκτανθῆναι αὐτόν ἐν μαχαίρη is replaced)

| -κτεινει (v1 -κτεινει), δει & 1006. 1611*. 1841. 1854 al syh; Irlat

| δει et [□] 051 v.l. M^K

| txt A

[Eberhard Nestle et al., Universität Münster. Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27. Aufl., rev. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1993), 656–658.]

ly original reading of the passage.

Internal History. Even though place references surface in these verses, they are presented inside the framework of apocalyptic vision and thus do not intend to identify specific historical events within the limits of human history. The two primary markers are θαλάσση, *sea*, and γῆ, *earth*. Some indirect referencing of οὐρανός, *heaven*, is made also.

Literary Aspects:

The literary aspects continue to dominate the nature of this passage as well as what we have studied thus far inside Revelation. Grasping these dimensions becomes essential to proper interpretation of the passage.

Genre: The general literary form continues to be apocalyptic vision. As a reminder, this form presents theological truth in terms of the spiritual dynamics standing behind representative events in this life, especially for the people of God. It moves toward answering the why question behind experiences of suffering and encountering evil in this world. The perspective is broad and covers the timeless values and intentions in the mind of God throughout all of human history. Special emphasis is given to how God moves through such experiences in life to bring us closer to Him as His people. Regarding evil the foundational principle is that God is in control of our world and is moving it ever closer to the grand climax of the return of His Son and the ushering in of the eternal order of heaven and hell.

The specific genre of 13:1-10 is unidentifiable, since only one other ancient source even comes close to developing the figure of a sea monster under the authority of the dragon: Lactantius¹² in *Divine Institutes 7.17.1–3*. Both seem to utilize a common unnamed source primarily at a broad literary level of common sequencing of narrative in describing the end of human history.¹³ But while some similarities exist, many dissim-

¹²Lactantius was a church father living from about 240 to 320 AD and became a spiritual advisor to Constantine, the first Christian Roman emperor. He shaped much of the emperor's religious policies both toward Christianity and paganism. ["Lactantius," wikipedia.org]

¹³Chapter 17. Of the False Prophet, and the Hardships of the Righteous, and His Destruction.

"But I will more plainly set forth the manner in which this happens. When the close of the times draws near, a great prophet shall be sent from God to turn men to the knowledge of God, and he shall receive the power of doing wonderful things. Wherever men shall not hear him, he will shut up the heaven, and cause it to withhold its rains; he will turn their water into blood, and torment them with thirst and hunger; and if any one shall endeavour to injure him, fire shall come forth out of his mouth, and shall burn that man. By these prodigies and powers he shall turn many to the worship of God; and when his works shall be accomplished, another king shall arise out of Syria, born from an evil spirit, the

ilarities are also present between the two texts. Strictly speaking such evidence does not constitute grounds for identifying a genre pattern, despite Aune's assertions.¹⁴ Perhaps a common source, although even this

overthrower and destroyer of the human race, who shall destroy that which is left by the former evil, together with himself. He shall fight against the prophet of God, and shall overcome, and slay him, and shall suffer him to lie unburied; but after the third day he shall come to life again; and while all look on and wonder, he shall be caught up into heaven. But that king will not only be most disgraceful in himself, but he will also be a prophet of lies; and he will constitute and call himself God, and will order himself to be worshipped as the Son of God; and power will be given him to do signs and wonders, by the sight of which he may entice men to adore him. He will command fire to come down from heaven, and the sun to stand and leave his course, and an image to speak; and these things shall be done at his word—by which miracles many even of the wise shall be enticed by him. Then he will attempt to destroy the temple of God, and persecute the righteous people; and there will be distress and tribulation, such as there never has been from the beginning of the world.

“As many as shall believe him and unite themselves to him, shall be marked by him as sheep; but they who shall refuse his mark will either flee to the mountains, or, being seized, will be slain with studied tortures. He will also enwrap righteous men with the books of the prophets, and thus burn them; and power will be given him to desolate the whole earth for forty-two months. That will be the time in which righteousness shall be cast out, and innocence be hated; in which the wicked shall prey upon the good as enemies; neither law, nor order, nor military discipline shall be preserved; no one shall reverence hoary locks, nor recognise the duty of piety, nor pity sex or infancy; all things shall be confounded and mixed together against right, and against the laws of nature. Thus the earth shall be laid waste, as though by one common robbery. When these things shall so happen, then the righteous and the followers of truth shall separate themselves from the wicked, and flee into solitudes. And when he hears of this, the impious king, inflamed with anger, will come with a great army, and bringing up all his forces, will surround all the mountain in which the righteous shall be situated, that he may seize them. But they, when they shall see themselves to be shut in on all sides and besieged, will call upon God with a loud voice, and implore the aid of heaven; and God shall hear them, and send from heaven a great king to rescue and free them, and destroy all the wicked with fire and sword.”

[“Divine Institutes: Book VII,” NewAdvent.org]

^{14c}“In the discussion of Rev 11:1–13 above under Form/Structure/Setting, I presented evidence for a source underlying Rev 11:1–13 based on a consideration of the striking similarities and differences between that passage and a source used by Lactanti-

^{12.18} And

388 he stood
upon the sand of the seashore.

^{13.1} And

389 I saw . . . a beast
out of the sea
coming up
having ten horns
and
seven heads

evidence is not very strong.

Literary Setting: Clearly the context for 13:1-10 is relatively easy to determine. This is a part of the material following the announcement of the blowing of the seventh trumpet signaling the seven bowls of wrath (11:14-19) to the activation of these bowls of wrath (15:1-16:21). In this material in chapters twelve through fourteen John prepares his readers for the severity of these final divine punishments on earth depicted in the seven bowls of wrath. In covering the gamut of human history from an apocalyptic visionary perspective John depicts the efforts of Satan to destroy the mother of Jesus, and Jesus Himself at birth. Defeated on both accounts, Satan then turns to “the other children” of the woman, who are believers in Christ, in his rage and determine to get at God through His people. Chapter thirteen describes this stage in two stages. He solicits the help of two ‘sea monsters’ (vv. 1-10 and 11-18) to take out his wrath on God’s people on earth. But he faces battle with the Lamb who thoroughly defeats him once for all (14:1-20). This ushers in the great day of final judgment (chapter fifteen et als.).

The material in chapter twelve is linked clearly to that in chapter thirteen by the transitional statement in 12:18, *Καὶ ἐστάθη ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμμον τῆς θαλάσσης*, *Then the dragon took his stand on the sand of the seashore*. Rev. 13:1-10 then proceeds to describe both in appearance and actions the first of the two ‘sea monsters’ who come to the aid of the old dragon in his efforts to harm the people of God.

Literary Structure: The block diagram below represents a visual presentation of the internal connections of primary and secondary ideas within the text itself.

us in *Div. Inst.* 7.17.1–3. That argument receives further support from the number of sequential parallels between Rev 13:11–16 and *Div. Inst.* 7.17.4–8, which Lactantius seems to derive from the same source. The hypothesis of a common source underlying Rev 11:1–13 and 13:11–16 is strengthened by the fact that while the eschatological narrative in Revelation is interrupted by 11:14–12:18, Lactantius *Div. Inst.* 7.17.1–8 presents a continuous narrative, which is parallel to Rev 11:1–13 and 13:11–16.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 726.]

and
upon his horns
ten crowns
and
upon his heads
names of blasphemy.

13.2
And
390 **the beast...was like a leopard**
which I saw
and
391 **his feet (were)**
as a bear's
and
392 **his mouth (was)**
as a mouth of a lion.

And
393 **the dragon gave him his power**
and
his throne
and
great authority.

13.3
And
394 **one . . . (was)**
of his heads
as having been slaughtered
unto death
and
395 **the wound of his death had been healed.**

And
396 **the entire earth was caused to marvel**
before his throne

13.4
And
397 **they worshipped the dragon**
because he gave his authority to the beast,
and
398 **they worshipped the beast**
saying:
Who (is) like the beast
and
who is able to make ware
with him?

13.5
And
399 **was given to him a mouth**
saying great things
and
blasphemies
and
400 **was given to him authority**
to work 42 months.

13.6
And
401 **he opened his mouth**
for blasphemies
against God
in order to blaspheme His name

and
His dwelling
those dwelling in heaven.

13.7 And
402 **was given to him**
 to make war
 with the saints
 and
 to conquer them
 and
403 **was given to him authority**
 over every tribe
 and
 people
 and
 tongue
 and
 nation.

13.8 And
404 **all those dwelling will worship him**
 upon the earth
 regarding whom their name is not written
 in the book
 of life
 /-----|
 of the Lamb
 who was slaughtered
 from the foundation of the world.

13.9 If one has an ear
405 **let him listen.**

13.10 If one (is) for captivity
 for captivity
406 **he goes;**

 by a sword
 if one...to be killed himself
 by a sword
407 **(he is) to be killed.**

408 **Here is the endurance and faith of the saints.**

Summary of Rhetorical Structure

Quite clearly the passage subdivides naturally into three units of expression: #s 388-398; 399-404; 405-408. The distinctive and repeated ἔδοθη αὐτῷ in 399-404 sets off the mid section as a clearly defined unit to text material. In the first two sections (388-398; 399-404) a parallel structure surfaces with a depiction of the beast (388-395; 399-403) and the response of the peoples of the world (396-398; 404). The distinction between the first (388-398) and second (399-404) sections the descriptive appearance of the beast in the first section, and his limited authority to function in the second. The third section (405-408) serves as a warn-

ing to the readers of Revelation to take heed to what is said about coming persecution.

Exegesis of the Text:

Thus the most natural structure for exegeting the passage grows out of the above internal arrangement if ideas.

A. The appearance of the first beast, (12:18-13:4)

12.18 Καὶ ἐστάθη ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμμον τῆς θαλάσσης.

13.1 Καὶ εἶδον ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον, ἔχον κέρατα δέκα καὶ κεφαλὰς ἑπτὰ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν

κεράτων αὐτοῦ δέκα διαδήματα καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτοῦ ὀνόμα[τα] βλασφημίας. 2 καὶ τὸ θηρίον ὃ εἶδον ἦν ὅμοιον παρδάλει καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὡς ἄρκου καὶ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ὡς στόμα λέοντος. καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ δράκων τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξουσίαν μεγάλην. 3 καὶ μίαν ἐκ τῶν κεφαλῶν αὐτοῦ ὡς ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον, καὶ ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ ἔθεραπεύθη.

13.3b Καὶ ἐθαυμάσθη ὅλη ἡ γῆ ὀπίσω τοῦ θηρίου 4 καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ δράκοντι, ὅτι ἔδωκεν τὴν ἐξουσίαν τῷ θηρίῳ, καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θηρίῳ λέγοντες· τίς ὅμοιος τῷ θηρίῳ καὶ τίς δύναται πολεμῆσαι μετ' αὐτοῦ;

12.18 Then the dragon took his stand on the sand of the seashore.

13.1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads; and on its horns were ten diadems, and on its heads were blasphemous names. 2 And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And the dragon gave it his power and his throne and great authority. 3 One of its heads seemed to have received a death-blow, but its mortal wound had been healed.

13.3b In amazement the whole earth followed the beast. 4 They worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

In this beginning section, the first declaration in 12:18 stands both as a climax to 12:13-17 and an introduction to 13:1-10.¹⁵ It asserts Satan's defeat in his efforts to harm the man child and his mother which then

¹⁵"This sentence is structurally problematic, for it is unclear whether it belongs with the previous text unit (11:19–12:17) or it introduces the next unit of text (13:1–18). In Oecumenius *Comm. in Apoc.*, the pericope he quotes for comment is 12:18–13:4, indicating that he understood 12:18 as the beginning of the unit in 13:1–4. However, ἐστάθη, 'he stood,' follows two other third-person singular verbs in v 17, ὠργίσθη, 'was angry,' and ἀπῆλθεν, 'left.' The subject of both is explicitly the dragon, and the sentence appears to mean that he has come to a standstill on the shore of the sea to await, or perhaps even to summon, the emergence of the beast from the sea described in 13:1–10 (B. Weiss, *Johannes-Apokalypse*, 193; Charles, 1:344; Lohse, 76). As an introduction to 13:1–18, however, the passage is awkward (reflected in the textual variants) since one would expect more details to be given regarding how the dragon summoned forth the beast (Bousset [1906] 358). This verse is therefore, in all probability, a redactional suture that links 12:1–17 with 13:1–18 (Bousset [1906] 357). On analogy with 17:1 and 21:9, Bergmeier (ANRW II, 25/5:3908) has reconstructed 12:18a to read '[And he carried me in the Spirit] to the beach of the sea.' However, this reconstruction is unlikely since 17:1–3a and possibly 21:9–10a are themselves redactional introductions to 17:3b–19:10 and 21:10b–22:7, respectively (though it is probable that 17:1–3a was formulated on the basis of 21:9–10a; see Comments on both passages)." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 731–732.]

forced him to turn to her 'other children' on the earth as targets of persecution. In its introductory role, it signals Satan's turning to the sea for assistance from the two sea monsters in his determination to take captive the non-believing peoples of the earth to enable him to more successfully get at God's people on earth in order to do them harm.

One interesting perspective is whether 13:1-18 represents a subsequent action by Satan, or whether it re-describes the efforts of chapter twelve.¹⁶ The logical progression signals in the text argue strongly for chapter thirteen being a subsequent action upon the heels of a twofold defeat of Satan in chapter twelve. Trying to plug this sequence into a human history time table becomes impossible and leads to endless speculation about what time frame is intended. Chapters twelve and thirteen cover the entire scope of human history and the work of Satan to get at God through harming His people. The theological principle of evil in our world underlies the presentation. Included in chapter fourteen will be how God will ultimately defeat the influence and power of evil upon His people in the end.

The stance of Satan on the seashore reflects a general fear of the sea in the first century world as a source of great evil. Interestingly, in the creation of a 'new heaven and a new earth' in 21:1 the sea does not exist any more: Καὶ εἶδον οὐρανὸν καινὸν καὶ γῆν καινὴν. ὁ γὰρ πρῶτος οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ πρώτη γῆ ἀπῆλθαν καὶ ἡ θάλασσα οὐκ ἔστιν ἔτι. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. But God's ultimate power over the sea is asserted in several ways in Revelation. Most interestingly by an angel who plants one foot on the land and the other foot in the sea in asserting the full authority of God in this world (cf. 10:2, 5).

Thus Satan looks to the sea in order to secure the help of two monsters in his strategy to do harm to the people of God: Καὶ ἐστάθη ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμμον τῆς θαλάσσης, Then the dragon took his stand on the sand of the seashore. This in part because Satan as ὁ δράκων, the dragon, was himself a serpent like sea creature in the ancient

¹⁶"The dragon standing on the seashore is the beginning of what John saw in the vision in ch. 13 and not the end of the preceding vision in ch. 12. The καὶ introduces, not a narration of events taking place after the events of 12:13–17, but a vision occurring after the vision in ch. 12. The analysis of ch. 13 will reveal that the historical time scope is parallel with ch. 12, especially 12:6, 13–17. The dragon positions himself "on the sand of the seashore" to call up his helpers who will carry out his will on earth. He summons them from the same hellish waters that he presumably came from. What the dragon was described as doing in ch. 12 he actually does through his servants portrayed in ch. 13." [G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 681.]

world, and especially in middle eastern conceptualizations.¹⁷

Depiction of the beast, vv. 1-3a. Then the formal beginning of the vision regarding the first sea monster comes in 13:1 with Καὶ εἶδον, **And I saw...** Notice the parallel introduction to the second beast in 13:11, Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλο θηρίον..., **And I saw another beast....** This repeated phrase clearly marks off the two pericope units.¹⁸ This phrase positions John in an earth bound perspective rather than being located in heaven as is often the narrative stance of the text.

What John saw is described in graphic language in vv. 1-3. The creature is defined as a θηρίον, **a beast.** In ancient secular Greek θηρίον was a diminutive of θήρ which designated a wild animal of some kind.¹⁹ That it

¹⁷“**Dragon**, a reptilian monster well known in the mythology and iconography of the ancient Near East. In the Babylonian creation myth, *Enuma elish*, the dragon Tiamat is slain by the god Marduk and her supporters taken captive. In a Hattic myth, the dragon Illuyankas defeated the storm god and later was slain by him. The Ugaritic myths from Ras-Shamra refer to various monsters defeated by the storm god Baal or his sister Anat. In the Bible the dragon appears as the primeval enemy of God, killed or subjected in conjunction with creation (Pss. 74:13-14; 89:10; Isa. 51:9; Job 26:12-13), but appearing again at the end of the world, when God will finally dispose of it (Isa. 27:1, using traditional language attested in the Baal myths of Ras-Shamra). The book of Revelation takes up the latter theme. The dragon (identified now with the Devil) and its agents campaign against God and his forces but are finally defeated (Rev. 12:13; 16:13-14; 20:2-3, 7-10). For now, however, it is kept under guard (Job 7:12), its supporters lying prostrate beneath God (Job 9:13). *Referred to variously as Tannin, Rahab, or Leviathan, it is usually conceived of as a sea monster, as in the Enuma elish and sometimes at Ras-Shamra.* As a great opponent of God’s people, Egypt was known as Rahab. The oracle of Isa. 30:7 gives Egypt the name ‘Rahab [is] put down,’ alluding to the dragon’s defeat by God, and Ps. 87:4 simply assumes Rahab as an accepted name for Egypt. The king of Egypt was portrayed as a sea monster lurking in the Nile, whom God would catch and kill (Ezek. 29:3; 32:2). There may be no mythological allusion here, and there is certainly none when the words *tannin* and *leviathan* are used to refer to the monsters of the deep created by God (Gen. 1:21; Ps. 104:26), summoned to praise God (Ps. 148:7), and beyond human capture (Job 41:1). The apocryphal Bel and the Dragon (23-27) relates Daniel’s unorthodox disposal of a dragon worshipped by the Babylonians.” [Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper’s Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 225–226.]

¹⁸This is the proper understanding despite some copyists (051 M vg^{ms} syp^h co) of the text who changed Καὶ ἐστάθη, **And he took his stand**, to read Καὶ ἐστάθην, **I took my stand.** This shifts the verb subject to John rather than to Satan in order to strengthen the introductory role of 12:18. But ἐστάθη comes as the climax of three verbs with Satan as subject: ὠργίσθη ὁ δράκων, **the dragon was angry**; ἀπῆλθεν, **he left**; ἐστάθη, **he took his stand.** Thus the introductory role of 12:18 is set up as a transition from 12:13-17 to 13:1-10.

¹⁹“θηρίον, as a diminutive of θήρ, originally means a ‘wild animal,’ or in pre-Hell. Gk. an ‘animal living wild’ (Plat. Menex., 237d: θηρία along with βοτά [a ‘pastured beast’]), occasion-

can easily be applied to humans considered to be evil and cruel is seen in the numerous Roman emperors who were labeled as beasts in the secular literature.

Here θηρίον specifies a supernatural beast under the control of Satan as the dragon. Several outward traits give him a hideous appearance:

ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον. This monster emerged out of the sea, rather than from underneath the earth as will be the case for the second beast: ἀναβαῖνον ἐκ τῆς γῆς (13:11). But the distinction is not that great in the thinking of ancient Jews, since the sea was a quicker access to the underworld than caves on the earth. The emergence from the sea is clearly John’s depiction of the traditional Jewish Leviathan.²⁰ This sea monster is closely linked to Satan as ὁ δράκων, the dragon, in 12:13-17. This is consistent with the Jewish apocalyptic writings that preceded Revelation: 1 Enoch 60:7–11, 24; 4 Ezra 6:47–52; 2 Apoc. Bar. 29:4; b. B. Bat. 74b–75a. Clearly from the unfolding narrative this sea monster functions as a subordinate ally including insects and birds (Xenoph. Cyrop., I, 6, 39), and later any ‘animal’: Plat. Resp., IX, 1 (571d): ἄνθρωποι καὶ θεοὶ καὶ θηρία. So Ac. 28:4 f. of a snake. In the LXX it is restricted to land animals, usually those living wild, and it is distinguished from ἰχθύες, πετεινά, ἔρπετά and κτήνη Gn. 7:14, 21; 8:1, 17, 19; 9:2; Hos. 4:3. So Ac. 11:6; Jm. 3:7; Tt. 1:12; Rev. 6:8. If in Tt. the adj. κακός gives the clear sense of ‘beasts of prey,’ and if the addition of the OT τῆς γῆς gives the same sense in Rev., the original sense of θηρίον maintains such vitality that even in the Hell. period no addition is needed to convey the sense of a wild animal to readers. When Apollonius of Tyana (Philostr. Vit. Ap., IV, 38) calls Nero a θηρίον, the context shows that he is thinking of a beast of prey with claws and teeth, a carnivorous animal, like a lion or panther. There is an exact equivalent in the Heb. חיה. Cant. r. on 2:15 compares the חיה, which represent world powers, with the fox, which stands for the less dangerous Egypt, and on a mosaic in the synagogue at Gerasa the birds which go out of the ark (Gn. 8:17b), tame animals (בְּהֵמָה) and beasts of burden are surrounded by wild animals (חיה),¹ How easily θηρίον as a wild animal can be used figur. may be seen from Sib., 8, 157, where Nero is θῆρ μέγας, and from Plin. (the younger) Panegyricus (ed. M. Schuster, 1933), 48, 3, where Domitian is called *immanissima belua*, cf. also the above-mentioned passage from Philostr.²² [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:133–134.]*

²⁰“This beast from the sea is, at least in part, an allusion to the Jewish tradition of Leviathan, a female monster who was separated from Behemoth on the fifth day of creation and assigned to the sea (1 Enoch 60:7–11, 24; 4 Ezra 6:47–52; 2 Apoc. Bar. 29:4; b. B. Bat. 74b–75a); for ‘Behemoth,’ see Comment on 13:12. The only previous mention of such a beast is in 11:7 in the phrase ‘the beast who ascends from the abyss.’ There τὸ θηρίον is articular, suggesting that the author assumed that his readers were already familiar with this creature. Here θηρίον is anarthrous, suggesting either that this is a different beast from the one mentioned in 11:7 or (more likely) that the clause in 11:7 quoted above is an interpolation.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 732.]

of Satan encouraging loyal to the Devil from the people on the earth.

This leader - subordinate relationship between Satan and this sea monster has fostered endless speculation about whom he symbolizes historically. This is based in part because of ancient tendencies to attach such negative labels to human rulers.²¹

Quite frequently this monster down through the centuries of interpretive history has been seen as symbolizing the Roman governor of Asia. As a senatorial providence, the governorship was an annual appointment by the senate and not by the emperor. He would arrive by boat (coming out of the sea) at Ephesus the provincial capital.²² The problem here is the failure to recognize the essential nature of apocalyptic visionary depiction. This monster could symbolize such a governor of Asia, but just as easily he could symbolize any evil presence that fostered worship of an evil leader. To be sure, John's initial readers may very well have associated this monster with the provincial governor in power at the time of the first reading of Revelation among the churches. This would have found greater

²¹“According to Artemidorus (Oneirocritica 2.16), when a person dreams of any sea creature, no one will be benefited. In Judaism the sea monster could represent oppressive foreign nations (Dan 7:1–8). Occasionally, the chaos monster Rahab or Leviathan could be used to represent a particular foreign oppressor like Egypt (Pss 74:14; 87:4; Isa 30:7; Ezek 29:3; 32:2–3). In Jer 51:34, for example, Nebuchadrezzar is compared to a monster who will devour Israel. The figure of Leviathan as a symbol of evil was derived by Israel from Canaanite mythology (Gordon, “Leviathan,” 1–9). In early Jewish literature the term δράκων, ‘dragon,’ is used as a symbol of chaos (Sib. Or. 8.85) and as a term for Satan (Apoc. Abr. 23:7). In CD 8:10 the תַּנִּינִים *tannînim*, ‘dragons,’ of Deut 32:33 (the same word occurs in Gen 1:21; Job 7:12; Ps 74:13; Ezek 29:3; 32:2) are interpreted as ‘the kings of the peoples.’ The term תַּנִּינִים *tannînim* is used of foreigners who invade Palestine and capture Jerusalem (G. R. Driver, “The Number of the Beast,” 80). The first such invader is Nebuchadrezzar (described as a תַּנִּין *tannîn*, ‘monster,’ in MT Jer 51:34[LXX 28:34], translated δράκων, ‘dragon, monster,’ in the LXX). In Pss. Sol. 2:25, Pompey, who conquered Jerusalem in 63 B.C., is designated a δράκων, ‘dragon, monster.’” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 732–733.]

²²“The beast from the sea has frequently been understood in historical terms as the Roman governor; i.e., the proconsul representing the Roman emperor, who arrived each year in the Roman province of Asia, was bound to set foot first in Ephesus (CAH 11:581). Since he necessarily arrived by boat, it could be said that he came ‘from the sea’ (Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 431–32). The proconsuls of the two most important Roman provinces, Asia and Africa, were always ex-consuls (Magie, *Roman Rule* 1:446). The fact that from the time of Augustus on there were also imperial procurators in the senatorial province of Asia suggests the presence of extensive property belonging to the emperor in this province (Magie, *Roman Rule*, 1:679). It is also possible that the beast from the sea represents the Roman state.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 733.]

credence for them if this governor was promoting the efforts of Domitian to renew emperor worship toward the end of his reign in the late 90s. But the point of the text must not be limited to a single historical figure, since it describes a spiritual principle rather than any one historical situation.

The remaining details of appearance are taken by John from Daniel 7 in Daniel's depiction of four separate sea monsters.

7.1 Ἐτους πρώτου βασιλεύοντος Βαλτασαρ χώρας Βαβυλωνίας Δανιηλ ὄραμα εἶδε παρά κεφαλὴν ἐπὶ τῆς κοίτης αὐτοῦ· τότε Δανιηλ τὸ ὄραμα, ὃ εἶδεν, ἔγραψεν εἰς κεφάλαια λόγων· 2 Ἐπὶ τῆς κοίτης μου ἐθεώρουν καθ' ὑπνους νυκτὸς καὶ ἰδοὺ τέσσαρες ἄνεμοι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐνέπεσον εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν τὴν μεγάλην· 3 καὶ τέσσαρα θηρία ἀνέβαινον ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης διαφέροντα ἕν παρά τὸ ἕν· 4 τὸ πρῶτον ὡσεὶ λέαινα ἔχουσα πτερὰ ὡσεὶ ἀετοῦ· ἐθεώρουν ἕως ὅτου ἐτίλη τὰ πτερὰ αὐτῆς, καὶ ἦρθη ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπὶ ποδῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἐστάθη, καὶ ἀνθρωπίνη καρδιά ἐδόθη αὐτῇ· 5 καὶ ἰδοὺ μετ' αὐτὴν ἄλλο θηρίον ὁμοίωσιν ἔχον ἄρκου, καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐνὸς πλευροῦ ἐστάθη, καὶ τρία πλευρὰ ἦν ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτῆς, καὶ οὕτως εἶπεν Ἀνάστα κατάφαγε σάρκα πολλὰς· 6 καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐθεώρουν θηρίον ἄλλο ὡσεὶ πάρδαλιν, καὶ πτερὰ τέσσαρα ἐπέτεινον ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ, καὶ τέσσαρες κεφαλαὶ τῷ θηρίῳ, καὶ γλῶσσα ἐδόθη αὐτῷ· 7 μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἐθεώρουν ἐν ὄραματι τῆς νυκτὸς θηρίον τέταρτον φοβερὸν, καὶ ὁ φόβος αὐτοῦ ὑπερφέρων ἰσχύι, ἔχον ὀδόντας σιδηροῦς μεγάλους, ἐσθίον καὶ κοπανίζον, κύκλω τοῖς ποσὶ καταπατοῦν, διαφόρως χρώμενον παρά πάντα τὰ πρὸ αὐτοῦ θηρία· εἶχε δὲ κέρατα δέκα, 8 καὶ βουλαὶ πολλαὶ ἐν τοῖς κέρασιν αὐτοῦ. καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄλλο ἐν κέρασιν ἀνεφύη ἀνά μέσον αὐτῶν μικρὸν ἐν τοῖς κέρασιν αὐτοῦ, καὶ τρία τῶν κεράτων τῶν πρώτων ἐξηράνθησαν δι' αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἰδοὺ ὀφθαλμοὶ ὡσπερ ὀφθαλμοὶ ἀνθρώπινοι ἐν τῷ κέρατι τούτῳ καὶ στόμα λαλοῦν μέγала, καὶ ἐποίει πόλεμον πρὸς τοὺς ἁγίους· †

7.1 In the first year of King Belshazzar of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head as he lay in bed. Then he wrote down the dream: 2 I, Daniel, saw in my vision by night the four winds of heaven stirring up the great sea, 3 and four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. 4 The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then, as I watched, its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a human being; and a human mind was given to it. 5 Another beast appeared, a second one, that looked like a bear. It was raised up on one side, had three tusks in its mouth among its teeth and was told, “Arise, devour many bodies!” 6 After this, as I watched, another appeared, like a leopard. The beast had four wings of a bird on its

back and four heads; and dominion was given to it. 7 After this I saw in the visions by night a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth and was devouring, breaking in pieces, and stamping what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that preceded it, and it had ten horns. 8 I was considering the horns, when another horn appeared, a little one coming up among them; to make room for it, three of the earlier horns were plucked up by the roots. There were eyes like human eyes in this horn, and a mouth speaking arrogantly.

John borrows bits and pieces of description of Daniel's four sea monsters and combines them into a depiction of a single sea monster.²³ Interestingly, an inscription on an incantation bowl contains a lengthy description of the demon Bagdana with similarities to those of this sea monster here.²⁴

ἔχον κέρατα δέκα καὶ κεφαλὰς ἑπτὰ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν κεράτων αὐτοῦ δέκα διαδήματα καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτοῦ ὄνομα[τα] βλασφημίας, *having ten horns and seven heads; and on its horns were ten diadems, and on its*

²³“Dan 7:1–8 was interpreted in various ways in early Christian texts. Barn. 4:4–5 quotes Dan 7:24 and then 7:7–8, both of which deal with the ten horns and the small horn of the fourth beast, in an enigmatical passage referring to a series of Roman emperors. Similarly, in 4 Ezra 11:1–12:39, Ezra dreams of an eagle who emerged from the sea (*et ecce ascendebat de mari aquila*) with twelve wings and three heads (11:1). This eagle is the fourth beast, representing the fourth kingdom that was part of the vision of Daniel (4 Ezra 11:36–46; 12:11). Though nothing in the description of the fourth beast in Dan 7:7–8, 19–27 suggests identifying it with an eagle, the eagle was probably chosen because it clearly represents Rome (Myers, *Esdra*, 295–96). There are no demonstrable literary or exegetical traditions that link Rev 13:1–18 with 4 Ezra 11:1–12:39, though it is significant that both authors reinterpret the vision in Dan 7:1–9, both are concerned with a single beast, and both use the beast to symbolize Rome. 2 Apoc. Bar. 39:5–7 and some early Christian authors express the view that the fourth beast of Dan 7 represents Rome (Hippolytus de Ant. 25.1–3; 28.1; see Irenaeus Adv. Haer. 5.25.3). The *os leoni*, ‘mouth of a lion,’ image may allude to Roman imperial power, since the lion was a symbol used for the Roman emperor (Ant. 18.228). The Paul of 2 Tim 4:17 was rescued ἐκ στόματος λέοντος, ‘from the mouth of the lion’ (a phrase used in Ps 22:21 [cf. Heb 11:33] for rescue from great danger), referring to Roman imperial authority, which early Christian tradition equated with Nero (Eusebius Hist. eccl. 2.22.4).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 734–735.]

²⁴“A lengthy inscription in an Aramaic incantation bowl contains a description of the demon Bagdana, literally from head to toe (Naveh-Shaked, *Amulets*, bowl 13, lines 4–5), and has some analogies to the description of the beast from the sea:

His head is the head of a lion, his molar teeth of a she-wolf, his teeth are the teeth of a tiger, the draughts of his mouth are furnaces of fire, his eyes are flowing lightnings, his shoulders are the spheres of a cloud, his temples are an anvil of iron, his arms are two hammers, his chest is the chest of an evil man . . .

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 735.]

heads were blasphemous names.

This initial set focuses on the heads of the sea monster. He has seven heads with ten horns on them. And each head has a crown of authority on it. The



dragon also has seven heads and ten horns with seven crowns on his head (12:3). Later in chapter seventeen the great whore Babylon is pictured as a woman riding a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns (17:3). The ten horns are then identified as ten kings who not yet ascended to power (17:12) but when they do they and the beast they are riding will destroy the woman (17:16). Interestingly, the second beast in chapter thirteen only possessed two horns (13:11). These symbols -- heads, horns, crowns -- suggest power and authority and point to rulers on earth who exercise evil power against the people of God.

The names inscribed on the seven heads -- ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτοῦ ὄνομα[τα] βλασφημίας -- represented labels considered as blasphemous against God and His sacred name. The immediate significance to John's first readers most likely would have been the Roman rulers claiming titles such *κύριος*, “lord,” *σωτήρ*, “savior,” and *divi filius*, “son of god.” In the emperor cults et als. further claims to deity were made for the rulers and those closely related to them.²⁵

καὶ τὸ θηρίον ὃ εἶδον ἦν ὁμοιον παρδάλει καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὡς ἄρκου καὶ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ὡς στόμα λέοντος, *And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth.*

The second set of depictions focus on the body of the sea monster using relevant parts of the bodies of a leopard, a bear, and a lion. Once more the influence of Dan. 7 is seen as John picks up the animal symbols of power and viciousness as depictions of this single monster, rather than the four that are found in Daniel. The lion symbol due to the Roman emperor's use of

²⁵“By ‘blasphemous names,’ the author could mean the titles and epithets used by Roman emperors, including *κύριος*, ‘lord,’ *σωτήρ*, ‘savior,’ and *divi filius*, ‘son of god’; cf. Cuss, *Imperial Cult*, 53–74. In various Hellenistic ruler cults, part of the characteristic paraphernalia for priestly colleges charged with overseeing various ruler cults was a crown bearing the image of particular divine rulers. Antiochus II, in 193 B.C., proclaimed the formation of a new group of priestesses for the purpose of superintending the worship of Laodice his wife. They were to bear ‘crowns of gold decorated with portraits of the queen’ (C. B. Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Age* [New Haven: Yale UP, 1934] nos. 36–37).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 734.]

it may have triggered this historical association in the minds of John's initial readers.

The composite picture of the heads and the body of the beast come together to present evil coming from Satan in the most hideous manner imaginable. But it also asserts clearly the tremendous power of this evil to do harm and injury to God's people. Thus any point of human history where the evil of Satan has been focused on harming God's people becomes relevant to John's picture here. Of course, it had particular significance at the end of the first century with the persecutions of Domitian upon Christians, and the tendencies of the rulers in the province of Asia to especially promote the revitalization of emperor worship. But what these believers experienced was hardly comparable to that later believers would experience in the second and third centuries, until God finally brought relief with the emergence of Constantine as the first Christian emperor of the Roman empire. Yet, over the following centuries God's people have suffered unmercifully at the hands of evil rulers in the grip of Satan's power. And amazingly even in our day this persecution continues and in some places as severe as it ever was previously.

The value of this text is to remind us as believers that suffering evil is to be expected. Although it usually comes through the hands of evil people in places of power, Revelation reminds us that standing behind them is Satan and his subordinates using human agents to inflict harm and injury upon God's people. Thus chapter fourteen with its emphasis upon God's victory over Satan comes as welcomed relief.

In verse 2b, John summarizes the point of the hideous images as transferring Satan's power to the beast: καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ δράκων τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξουσίαν μεγάλην, [and the dragon gave to him his power and his throne and great authority.](#)²⁶ To some extent this statement constitutes an "enthronement scene" where the sea monster is lifted to a status comparable to that of Satan himself.²⁷ The

²⁶Note the unique grammar construction used by John here, which is virtually impossible to reproduce in translation.

τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξουσίαν μεγάλην. This is grouped as per the following into two categories:

1) τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ, his power

2) καὶ τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξουσίαν μεγάλην, and his throne and great authority. The emphasis of ἐξουσίαν μεγάλην is upon the extensive authority contained in τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ. Satan's throne represents extensive authority.

²⁷"On Satan's ability to bestow power and glory on those who subordinate themselves to him, see the Lukan version of the temptation story found in Q (Luke 4:1–13 = Matt 4:1–11). After the devil showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world (οἰκουμένη, a term Luke uses for the Roman empire in Luke 2:1 and Acts 17:6; Matt 4:8 has κόσμος), he then makes this promise in Luke 4:6: "And the devil said to him, 'To you I will give [δώσω] all this authority [ἐξουσίαν] and their glory; for it has been delivered to me [παραδέδοται], and I give [δίδωμι] it to whom I will.'" Satan is in

mentioning of a throne here recalls the earlier reference to Rev. 2:13 where Pergamon is specified as where Satan's throne is located (ὅπου ὁ θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ). In 16:10, the fifth angel will pour out his bowl of wrath on the throne of the beast thus plunging it into complete darkness:

10 καὶ ὁ πέμπτος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον τοῦ θηρίου, καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ ἔσκοτωμένη, καὶ ἔμασῶντο τὰς γλώσσας αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ πόνου, 11 καὶ ἐβλασφήμησαν τὸν θεὸν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐκ τῶν πόνων αὐτῶν καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐλκῶν αὐτῶν καὶ οὐ μετενόησαν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῶν.

[10 The fifth angel poured his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness; people gnawed their tongues in agony, 11 and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and sores, and they did not repent of their deeds.](#)

Even though Satan shares his power with his cohort it ultimately is futile because God will throw his kingdom into utter chaos before Christ totally defeats Satan at the very end. That Satan possesses a kingdom with supernatural power is a given inside the New Testament. Jesus' experience in His temptation, as described in Matt. 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13, make this clear. Although Jesus turned down Satan's offer to share his power over the kingdoms of this world, the sea monster will gladly accept it.

The final observation in verse three is interesting: καὶ μίαν ἐκ τῶν κεφαλῶν αὐτοῦ ὡς ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον, καὶ ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ ἔθεραπεύθη, [One of its heads received a death-blow, but its mortal wound had been healed.](#)²⁸ Additional references come in the de-

possession of the Roman empire and can transfer this sovereignty to whomever he will; in Rev 13:2 this sovereignty is transferred to the Roman emperors, while in Luke 4:5–8 Satan offers the same sovereignty to Jesus (see Morgenthaler, TZ 12 [1956] 289–304). According to Theissen (Gospels, 212–15), the emperor Gaius (like Augustus before him) is the type of ruler with power over the kingdoms of the earth who could bestow these kingdoms to whomever he wished. A similar relationship exists between the lawless one and Satan in the eschatological scenario in 2 Thess 2:9, where it is claimed that "the coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan [κατ' ἐνέργειαν τοῦ σατανᾶ], will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders" (RSV). In the cosmic myth of the Gnostic Justin, Edem gives great authority (καὶ δίδωσιν ἐξουσίαν ἢ Ἐδέμ μεγάλην) to her third angel Naas (Hippolytus Ref. 5.26.21; ed. Marcovich, Hippolytus)." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 735–736.]

²⁸"The wound appeared to be fatal, and, indeed, it really was. Nevertheless, the devil's continued activity through his agents makes it appear to John as though he has overcome the mortal blow dealt him at Christ's death and resurrection. Despite defeat, the devil and his forces continue to exist. 'One of the heads' of the beast appeared 'slain unto death,' but 'his death wound was healed' (θανάτου in ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου being a descriptive genitive). The conditional translation of ὡς ἐσφαγμένην in virtually all En-

piction of the second beast concerning this wound in the first beast: τὸ θηρίον τὸ πρῶτον, οὗ ἔθεραπεύθη ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, *the first beast who had been healed of the plague of his death* (v. 12b); τῷ θηρίῳ, ὃς ἔχει τὴν πληγὴν τῆς μαχαίρης καὶ ἔζησεν, *for the beast who has the plague of the sword and lived* (v. 14b).

Way too much speculation on identifying which Roman emperor this may reference surfaces in the commentaries. Consequently the fundamental point of the statement is missed.

The point is that this first beast was cursed by a divine judgment that wounded him greatly. Earlier God struck him down but he managed to survive and continue to serve Satan. This “cat with ten lives” used up one of them in an earlier encounter with God. The point of the image is to assert first of all the judgment of God had already fallen on the sea monster but was not fatal. One would think this would be a ‘wake up call,’ but all it accomplished was to make him a more determined servant of Satan. Is this an allusion to the cross? Perhaps so. Clearly it plays off Genesis 3:15,

καὶ ἔχθραν θήσω ἀνὰ μέσον σου καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τῆς γυναικὸς καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ σπέρματός σου καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτῆς· αὐτός σου τηρήσει κεφαλὴν, καὶ σὺ τηρήσεις αὐτοῦ πτέρναν.†

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.

Now he has an opportunity -- as he sees it -- to take on even greater power -- that of Satan himself -- in order to do harm to God’s people.

One must never assume that one victory of Satan means that he won’t keep on trying again. Luke’s depiction of Jesus’ temptation has a profoundly insightful climatic statement at the end: Καὶ συντελέσας πάντα πειρασμὸν ὁ διάβολος ἀπέστη ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ ἄχρι καιροῦ, *When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.*

Response of the people, vv. 3b-4. The reaction of the people of the world to this sea monster is predict-

glish versions (e.g., NASB and Moffatt: ‘as if it had been slain’; KJV and Douay: ‘as it were wounded’; RSV and NIV: ‘seemed to have a mortal wound’; likewise NEB, NRSV, and JB) is misleading and makes it appear as if the beast only looked slain but was not. “As slain” is a much better translation. The phrase is an intended parody of the Lamb in 5:6, where the almost identical ἐστηκός ὡς ἐσφαγμένην is to be translated as ‘standing as slain’ (see on 5:6). Both there and here a real death or defeat is portrayed. ὡς, as elsewhere throughout the Apocalypse, is part of John’s visionary style in introducing something that he has seen (4:6; 8:8; 9:7; 15:2; 19:6);²⁰⁰ it is John’s attempt to give an approximate description in earthly terms of what he has seen in a heavenly vision.” [G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 688–689.]

able, given their evil nature. The initial statement, Καὶ ἐθαυμάσθη ὅλη ἡ γῆ ὀπίσω τοῦ θηρίου, is highly idiomatic Aramaic written in Greek, with the literal meaning of “and the entire earth marveled after the beast.”²⁹ Just bees drawn to honey, the people of the earth were drawn to the beast in a stupored amazement over his supposed power. For those old enough to remember, think Woodstock and the self destructive attraction to the rock musicians by a drugged out audience.

This ‘fatal attraction’ to the beast led to worshipping Satan: καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ δράκοντι, ὅτι ἔδωκεν τὴν ἐξουσίαν τῷ θηρίῳ. Thus they ‘bowed their knees’ in commitment to Satan because he had shared his authority with the beast.³⁰

²⁹“The phrase καὶ ἐθαυμάσθη ὅλη ἡ γῆ ὀπίσω τοῦ θηρίου is a difficult, elliptical construction. BDR § 196.3 suggests that ἐθαύμασεν ὀπίσω τοῦ θηρίου, ‘it marvelled after the beast,’ is a pregnant construction for ἐθαύμασεν ἐπὶ τῷ θηρίῳ καὶ ἐπορεύθη ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ, ‘it marvelled at the beast and went after it’ (θαυμάζειν, ‘marvel,’ is usually used with ἐπὶ + dative or περὶ + accusative). A verb, ἦλθε, ‘went,’ or ἠκολούθη, ‘followed,’ or ἐπορεύθη, ‘went,’ must certainly be supplied with ὀπίσω, ‘after.’ BDR § 196.3 also suggests a relatively close parallel in LXX Deut 31:16, ὁ λαὸς οὗτος ἐκπορνεύσει ὀπίσω [ῚῚα ἁḥārē] θεῶν ἄλλοτριῶν, ‘this people played the harlot [and followed] after strange gods.’ Torrey (Apocalypse, 124) understands ὀπίσω as an overly literal translation of the Aramaic ῚῚα ἁḥārē, which, like לַע *al*, can mean ‘concerning,’ so that this passage should be translated ‘the whole earth was in amazement concerning the beast.’ As an improper preposition with the genitive, ὀπίσω can mean ‘after’ and is used with ἔρχεσθαι and ἀκολουθεῖν meaning ‘to go after’ or ‘to follow after,’ i.e., ‘to become an adherent of’ (BAGD, 575; Bauer-Aland, 1166).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 737.]

³⁰“The worship of Satan is referred to in Mart. Isa. 2:7 in connection with Manasseh’s heretical practices. In Jewish tradition God alone deserves worship (LXX Esth 4:17e [13:14], οὐ προσκυνήσω οὐδένα πλὴν σοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου, ‘I will not worship anyone but you my Lord’). One of the striking features of the eschatological antagonist presented as the beast from the sea in 13:1–10 is that he is never explicitly made to claim that he is God and demand worship on that basis; nor does he take residence in the temple and broadcast his claim from there. The absence of these features, which figure prominently in many Jewish versions of the eschatological-antagonist myth, probably results from the author’s reshaping of the myth in light of the historical realities that he wishes the myth to reflect. The author may fail to mention the temple because this narrative was formulated in the Diaspora or because it was formulated after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in A.D. 70. In the eschatological-antagonist myth, the antagonist’s claim to be God (2 Thess 2:4) in part reflects the remembered divine pretensions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (Dan 11:36–37; the epithet ‘epiphanes’ means ‘[god] manifest,’ and he used the title θεός, ‘god,’ on coins), Gaius (Philo Leg. 197–337; Jos. J. W. 2.184–203; Ant. 18.256–309), and Nero (Sib. Or. 5.33–34), as well as the understanding that the cause of Satan’s fall was his hubris in claiming to be the equal of God (said of the king of Babylon in Isa 14:13–14 and of the king of Tyre in Ezek 28:2). This motif became part of the myth of Satan’s fall in early Judaism (Asc. Isa. 4:6; Page 685

But they also worshiped the beast as well: και προσεκύνησαν τῷ θηρίῳ λέγοντες· τίς ὅμοιος τῷ θηρίῳ και τίς δύναται πολεμῆσαι μετ' αὐτοῦ; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?" For John's initial readers this probably triggered associations with the emperor worship cult which was especially strong in the province of Asia at the end of the first century. But upon careful reflection, every tyrant down through human history has insisted upon being worshiped by the people he conquered. While not always assuming overtly the posture of a god, he nonetheless has taken on divine postures in claiming supreme powers over the people he rules. And usually the people of God who refuse to bow their knees to such demigods, are usually the primary targets of severe persecution. These dynamics have remained essentially the same across all of human history. John's readers in the late 90s were experiencing this reality as well.³¹ Thus came John's words here to them reminding them that behind the injury and harm being done to them by the rulers of Rome stood Satan and his cohorts as the driving force. Therefore only in the arms of God Himself could they find victory and perseverance to withstand such attacks.

B. The actions of the first beast. (13:5-8)

5 Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ στόμα λαλοῦν μεγάλα και βλασφημίας και ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία ποιῆσαι μῆνας τεσσεράκοντα [και] δύο. 6 και ἤνοιξεν τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ εἰς βλασφημίας πρὸς τὸν θεὸν βλασφημῆσαι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ και τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ, τοὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σκηνοῦντας. 7 και ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων και νικῆσαι αὐτούς, και ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν φυλὴν και λαὸν και γλῶσσαν και ἔθνος. 8 και προσκυνήσουσιν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, οἳ οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου.

Lactantius Div. Inst. 7.17.4; 2 Apoc. Enoch [Rec. J] 29:4)." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 740.]

³¹"The worship of the beast from the sea (representing the Roman imperial cult), or its image, is mentioned here and several more times from this point on in Revelation (13:8, 12, 15; 14:9, 11; 16:2; 20:4), though nothing is explicitly stated about the mode of this worship. The verb προσκυνεῖν, 'worship,' is used of the Roman senators who were compelled to worship an empty chair representing the emperor Gaius in the Capitol (Dio 59.24.4; cf. Philo Leg. 116). Prayer and sacrifice are two important modes of worship of the imperial cult, and while personal prayers were made to both living and dead emperors (Price, JHS 104 [1984] 91), sacrifice in the imperial cult was normally made on behalf of, not to, the emperor, though the distinction between these two types of sacrifice was occasionally blurred in the provincial imperial cult (Price, JRS 70 [1980] 30)." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 741.]

5 The beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. 6 It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. 7 Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. It was given authority over every tribe and people and language and nation, 8 and all the inhabitants of the earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered.

After giving this rather chilling depiction of the appearance and power of the sea monster, John moves to describe actions that emerge from this assumed power by the beast. Again bits and pieces of Daniel 7 are used by John to compile his description here. But this general description differs considerably from that given by Daniel.

Once more a twofold substructure provides the framework for these verses, and it matches that in the previous pericope of vv. 1-4: the actions of the beast (vv. 5-7) and the response of the people (v. 8).

The Actions of the beast, vv. 5-7. As highlighted in the above Greek text, two pairs of the same phrase are repeated in order to provide the structural framework here: ἐδόθη αὐτῷ, was given to him.... The specified subjects of this aorist passive voice verb from δίδωμι define the actions of the beast, and sometimes then with elaboration. Notice how the second segment of each of the two pairs (#s 2 and 4) are the same and reinforce the preceding declaration, thus forming two sets of assertions.

1) ἐδόθη αὐτῷ στόμα, was given to him a mouth....
2) ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία, was given to him authorization....

3) ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι πόλεμον, was given to him to make war....

4) ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία, was given to him authority....

The dependency upon Daniel 7 is clear although cast in a different image of a horn speaking and making war: και ἰδοὺ ὀφθαλμοὶ ὡσπερ ὀφθαλμοὶ ἀνθρώπινοι ἐν τῷ κέρατι τούτῳ και στόμα λαλοῦν μεγάλα, και ἐποίει πόλεμον πρὸς τοὺς ἁγίους. And behold eyes like human eyes were in the this horn, and a mouth speaking great things and it was making war against the saints (v. 8).

In the first set, the emphasis is upon deceptive speech possessed by the sea monster. The Semitic idiom διδόναι στόμα, lit., to give a mouth, defines having something to say. Thus the idiomatic nature of the use of ἐδόθη diminishes any sense of the divine passive voice in these expressions -- this contra Aune, who as-

serts the idiomatic nature of the phrase ἐδόθη αὐτῷ στόμα and then ignores his own statements.³²

And λαλοῦν μεγάλα καὶ βλασφημίας continues on as a modal participle modifying στόμα in defining what is spoken as arrogant, haughty words (μεγάλα) and as blasphemies (βλασφημίας). Hubris and vaunting pride characterize this beast and are reflected in what he says. Thus his mouth flows like a full to capacity sewer. The reinforcing second assertion signals that he only has a short time (μῆνας τεσσεράκοντα [καὶ] δύο, 42 months) in which to speak like this.³³ This projects the same short, limited time period as found in 11:2, 3, 12:6, 14.

Further definition of μεγάλα καὶ βλασφημίας is provided in the expansion statement in verse 6: καὶ ἤνοιξεν τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ εἰς βλασφημίας πρὸς τὸν θεὸν βλασφημῆσαι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ, τοὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σκηνοῦντας, *It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven.* Thus the primary objective of the haughty and blasphemous words (μεγάλα καὶ βλασφημίας) is made clear: to slander God, His presence and all those in heaven with him. Demigod tyrants over the centuries have always sought to misrepresent God and everything He stands

³²In vv 5–7, the singular aorist passive verb ἐδόθη, ‘was given,’ occurs four times in the identical phrase καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ, ‘and it was given’; in each instance the passive voice of the verb can be construed as a passive of divine activity, i.e., as a circumlocution for the direct mention of God as subject of the action of the verb. This makes it clear that John does not see the conflict between God and Satan (historically manifested in the conflict between Christians and the state) in terms of a cosmic dualism; rather he emphasizes the ultimate sovereignty and control of God over events that occur in the world. Essentially the same view is expressed by Paul in Rom 13:1–2, when he asserts that all political authority has been instituted by God (Venetz, BK 43 [1988] 160). The phrase καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ also occurs in v 15 as an introduction to vv 15–17 (cf. the closely related phrase τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι, ‘the miracles which it was given to perform,’ in v 14 and the use of the active voice in v 2, καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ δράκων, ‘the dragon gave him’).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 743.]

³³“A period of forty-two months was referred to earlier in Rev 11:2 as the period of time when the nations would hold the holy city under subjection. The two witnesses are also said to be granted 1,260 days to prophesy, i.e., 42 months of 30 days each (11:3). The woman in 12:6 was protected in the wilderness for 1,260 days, referred to in 12:14 as ‘a time, times, and half a time’ (an allusion to Dan 7:25; 12:7). It is clear that the author intends the reader to understand that the period during which the first beast is active coincides with the period during which the holy city will be trampled on by the nations and the period during which the two witnesses will prophesy. Their death must therefore coincide with the end of this predestined period of time.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 743.]

for. This was no different in the ancient world.³⁴ And will not change until the very end of human history.

The second set of declarations (#s 3 & 4 above) in v. 7 reasserts the authorization given to ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ νικῆσαι αὐτούς, *make war with the saints and to conquer them.* This is then supported by the fourth expression: καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν φυλὴν καὶ λαὸν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ ἔθνος. *It was given authority over every tribe and people and language and nation.* The initial declaration borrows the language of Dan. 7:21 and recasts it into John’s own words: καὶ κατενόουν τὸ κέρας ἐκεῖνο πόλεμον συνιστάμενον πρὸς τοὺς ἁγίους καὶ τροπούμενον αὐτούς† *As I looked, this horn made war with the holy ones and was prevailing over them.* Recalling 11:7,³⁵ John indicates a temporary victory of the beast over the people of God which will lead to martyrdom for them. But this is a repeating of the same scenario begun earlier in chapter six with the fifth seal (6:9-11). Believers will always suffer when evil rears its ugly head in our world. And such suffering will gradually intensify as we move closer to the end of human history, although it will be spasmodic rather than sustained.

The Response of the people, v. 8. The same climax is reached here as is found in vv. 3b-4. καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, οὗ οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου. *and all the inhabitants of the earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered.* A couple of differences should be noted. In the first response the people προσεκύνησαν

³⁴“The blasphemy motif, based in part on Dan 7:25, is found in Justin Dial. 32.4, where he refers to the Man of Sin (probably an allusion to 2 Thess 2:3, though Peerbolte, Antichrist, 91–93, argues against dependence), who is about to appear and is prepared to speak bold and blasphemous things against the Most High (καὶ τοῦ βλάσφημα καὶ τολμηρὰ εἰς τὸν ὑψιστον μέλλοντος λαλεῖν); see also Justin Dial. 110. The emperor Gaius reportedly addressed the Jewish embassy from Alexandria with a blasphemous speech (Philo Leg. 352). The hybris motif, based on the descriptions of Antioches Epiphanes in Dan 8:10–11 and Lucifer in Isa 14:13–14, is found in 2 Apoc. Bar. 67:7 (Charlesworth, OTP 1:644), ‘But the king of Babylon will arise, the one who now has destroyed Zion, and he will boast over the people and speak haughtily in his heart before the Most High’ (see also 4 Ezra 11:43; Apoc. El. 4:8–12; Hippolytus de Ant. 16.2; 17.6–7 [quoting parts of Isa 14]; Cyprian Ep. 59.3 [quoting Isa 14:13]).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 742.]

³⁵**Rev. 11:7.** Καὶ ὅταν τελέσωσιν τὴν μαρτυρίαν αὐτῶν, τὸ θηρίον τὸ ἀναβαῖνον ἐκ τῆς ἀβύσσου ποιήσει μετ’ αὐτῶν πόλεμον καὶ νικήσει αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀποκτενεῖ αὐτούς.

When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the bottomless pit will *make war on them and conquer them* and kill them,

τῷ δράκοντι, *worshiped the dragon*. Here they *καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν αὐτὸν, worshiped him*, i.e., the beast. But in the sharing of power etc. by Satan with his cohort the beast, little difference exists between worshiping the devil and his cohort.

In the first response, the people of this world are defined as ὅλη ἡ γῆ, *the entire earth*, while in the second they are defined as πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, *all those dwelling upon the earth*. In this latter reference, a clarification becomes necessary in order to exclude the people of God from those worshiping Satan and the beast: οὐ οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, *everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered*. In verse 7, they are defined as ἐξουσία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν φυλὴν καὶ λαὸν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ ἔθνος, *authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation*.

This NRSV translation in v. 8 adopts a minority view about the position of ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου by connecting it to the verb γέγραπται. More natural to the grammar is to connect it to the participle τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου, *who was slaughtered from the foundation of the world*.³⁶ God knew before Genesis one that Christ would be slaughtered and thus He stood as a slaugh-

³⁶“The syntax of this passage is ambiguous, and there are two quite different ways of understanding the meaning of this text. At first glance, it seems more natural, given the existing word order of the text, to connect the phrase ἀπὸ τῆς καταβολῆς κόσμου, ‘since the creation of the world,’ with ἐσφαγμένου, ‘slain,’ and to translate the passage so: ‘whose name has not been written in the book of life of the Lamb slaughtered from the foundation of the world’ (AV; NIV; REB; Caird, 168; Mounce, 256; Sweet, 212; Harrington, 139). It is also grammatically possible to link the prepositional phrase ἀπὸ τῆς καταβολῆς κόσμου to γέγραπται, ‘written,’ as it must be understood in the parallel passage in 17:8 (Beckwith, 638), and therefore to translate the passage ‘whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered’ (RSV; NRSV; B. Weiss, Johannes-Apokalypse, 194). This interpretation is preferable since it is logically and theologically impossible to make sense of the statement that the Lamb ‘was slaughtered before the foundation of the world.’ According to Acts 2:23, Jesus was ‘delivered up according to the deliberate plan and foreknowledge [τῆ ὀρισμένη βουλῇ καὶ προγνώσει] of God,’ and there is even a closer parallel in 1 Pet 1:19–20, which refers to ‘the precious blood of Christ, like a blameless and spotless lamb, known already before the world was made [προεγνωσμένου μὲν πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου].’ While it is possible to think of Christ as destined to die for the sins of the world, it is quite another thing to say that that he was slain before the creation of the world.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 746–747.]

Aune’s reasoning here is completely mixed up. The evidence he offers supports linking ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου with ἐσφαγμένου rather than with γέγραπται. But his comments go the opposite direction. Suggestion: adopt his evidence and ignore his comments.

tered Lamb from eternity past. This is not predestination but advance knowledge! To be sure Rev. 17:8 uses the same phrase ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου and links it to γέγραπται in the expression θαυμασθήσονται οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὧν οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα ἐπὶ τὸ βιβλίον τῆς ζωῆς ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, *And the inhabitants of the earth, whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will be amazed when they see the beast*. But this later reference does not -- and should not be taken to -- override the normal grammar patterns of Greek in 13:8 which link ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου to the participle τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου. This phrase ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, *from the foundation of the world*, is found only in Rev. 13:8 and 17:8, along with Matt. 25:34; Luke 11:50; Heb. 4:3; 9:26.³⁷ It is a virtual synonym of πρὸ καταβολῆς

³⁷“The formula ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, ‘from/before the beginning of the world,’ occurs four times (five including Matt 13:35) in the NT outside Revelation (Matt 13:35 [var. lect.]; 25:34; Luke 11:50; Heb 4:3; 9:26), twice in Revelation (here and 17:8), and once in the Apostolic Fathers, in Barn. 5:5, where God says to the Lord from the foundation of the world ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, ‘Let us make man in our image and likeness.’ The very similar formula πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, ‘before the creation of the world,’ occurs three times in the NT (John 17:24; Eph 1:4; 1 Pet 1:20). This formula, which uses the act of creation as a protological reference point in a variety of ways, was apparently widespread in early Judaism in view of its broad distribution and usage in the NT and early Christian literature; see H.-F. Weiss, *Kosmologie*, 139–45. A relatively close parallel formula is πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων, ‘before the ages’ (1 Cor 2:7), or πρὸ παντὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος, ‘before all ages’ (Jude 25); cf. τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων, ‘hidden for ages’ (= Eph 3:9). In the Coptic-Gnostic tractate *Treat. Seth* 65.33–37, the Assembly of Aeons in the Ogdoad is set ‘before the foundation of the world.’ A complementary formula with an eschatological reference point that occurs several times in Matthew is συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος, ‘the consummation of the age/world’ (Matt 13:39, 40, 49; 24:3; 28:20; cf. 1 Cor 10:11).

“The formula in either form is not really distinctively Judeo-Christian since the view was widespread in the Greco-Roman world that the kosmos had a beginning but would have no end (Hesiod, Pythagoras, Plato, the Stoics; cf. Arnim, *SVF* 2:574–78; Plato *Timaeus* 29d–30c). Aristotle (and a very few other ancient philosophers) held the unusual view that the kosmos was eternal, without beginning or end (Aristotle *De caelo* 1.10; Philo *Op.* 7). καταβολή can mean ‘beginning’ or ‘foundation’ (1 Clem. 57:1; cf. Polybius 1.36.8; 24.8.9; 13.6.2; Diodorus Siculus 12.32.2; Ant. 2.409, 417) and, more specifically, ‘creation’ (Ep. Arist. 129). While neither phrase occurs in the LXX, the former occurs twice in T. Mos. 1:13, 14, though very rarely in rabbinic literature (Str-B, 1:982). In Barn. 5:5, Gen 1:26 is quoted as an utterance made ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, ‘just after the beginning of the world,’ connecting the formula with the creative events narrated in Gen 1:3–25. In the NT, however, the formula is used (1) of the relationship between the Father and the Son before creation (John 17:24), (2) of the election of God’s people from the outset of God’s creative activity (Matt 25:34; Eph 1:4; Rev 17:8; cf. O. Hofius, “Erwählt vor Grundlegung der Welt [Eph 1:4],” *ZNW* 62 [1971] 123–28), (3) of events occurring since the beginning of history (Luke 11:50;

κόσμου, [before the creation of the world](#), in John 17:24; Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:20. Of course, both are alluding to Genesis 1-2 and the creation of the world by God.

The people of God are here defined in a reversal of John's statement as those whose names are written in the book of life (οὗ οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς). This phrase τὸ βιβλίον τῆς ζωῆς is found in Revelation at 13:8; 17:8; 21:27. In 20:12 the parallel expression ἄλλο βιβλίον ἠνοιχθη, ὃ ἐστὶν τῆς ζωῆς, [another book was opened, which is of life](#), is given to distinguish it from the books of works (ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν). Also in 3:5 and 20:15 the parallel phrase ὁ βίβλος τῆς ζωῆς also occurs with the same meaning. This formed the heavenly citizens' register as the counter part to the typical city register containing a listing of all those officially deemed a citizen of the city. To not be included on such a register meant no privileges, no legal rights, no ability to own property, no access to any decision making process. And this was the status of the vast majority of those living in the cities of the Roman empire. The negative connotations of such a status were enormous. An ironic contrast is made here by John. To be a part of the evil world with the privileges granted by the beast meant exclusion of the book of life that brought the eternal blessings of God throughout eternity.

C. Warnings of coming persecutions. (13:9-10)

9 Εἴ τις ἔχει οὖς ἀκουσάτω.

10 εἴ τις εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν, εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπάγει·
εἴ τις ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀποκτανθῆναι αὐτὸν ἐν μαχαίρῃ
ἀποκτανθῆναι.

ᾧ Ὡδέ ἐστὶν ἡ ὑπομονὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις τῶν ἁγίων.

9 Let anyone who has an ear listen:

10 If you are to be taken captive, into captivity you go;
if you kill with the sword, with the sword you must be killed.

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

Here we encounter a dramatically different grammar and vocabulary pattern that reflects John's commentary insertion into his vision of the first beast. In several places the grammar was so atypical of Greek

Heb 9:26; cf. T. Mos. 1:13), (4) of the creation of the universe (Heb 4:3; Barn. 5:5), and (5) of the mission of Christ foreordained before the creation of the world (1 Pet 1:20; Rev 13:8; cf. T. Mos. 1:14 on the foreordained mission of Moses: καὶ προεθεάσατό με ὁ θεὸς πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου εἶναι με τῆς διαθήκης αὐτοῦ μεσίτην, 'God foresaw before the foundation of the world that I would be a mediator of his covenant'; Greek text in Denis, *Fragmenta*, 63). In Judaism there is an emphasis on the selection of Israel at creation (Jub. 2:19–20); Jos. As. 8:9 refers to 'your people that you have chosen before all (things) came into being.'" [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 748–749.]

that it hardly makes any sense, and doesn't make any if translated literally. This led to a large number of efforts to 'correct' the text by many copyists, as discussed above under the [External History](#). It draws heavily from Jeremiah 15 in the Hebrew text where the LXX adopts a literal translation:

Τάδε λέγει κύριος

Ὅσοι εἰς θάνατον, εἰς θάνατον·
καὶ ὅσοι εἰς μάχαιραν, εἰς μάχαιραν·
καὶ ὅσοι εἰς λιμόν, εἰς λιμόν·
καὶ ὅσοι εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν, εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν.†

Thus says the Lord:

Those destined for pestilence, to pestilence,
and those destined for the sword, to the sword;
those destined for famine, to famine,
and those destined for captivity, to captivity.

Compared to

9 Εἴ τις ἔχει οὖς ἀκουσάτω.

10 εἴ τις εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν, εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπάγει·
εἴ τις ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀποκτανθῆναι αὐτὸν ἐν μαχαίρῃ
ἀποκτανθῆναι.

In literary genre what is presented here is a series of established literary forms from the Hebrew prophets:

- 1) Introductory proclamation formula (v. 9)
- 2) Prophetic oracle in two stiches in the form of a maxim (v. 10ab)
- 3) Concluding parenetic saying (v. 10c)

Proclamation formula, v. 9. For the first time since chapters two and three, the formula of a command to listen re-surfaces: Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις, [the one having an ear, let him listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches](#). But here only the core formula is reproduced with some variation in wording: Εἴ τις ἔχει οὖς ἀκουσάτω, [if anyone has an ear, let him listen](#).³⁸

Only slight differences are present and they are mainly due to the way the saying is used. In the seven messages of chapters two and three it becomes a part of the conclusion of each message. But here it introduces the oracle materials and is modified accordingly to fit the context. This also suggests that it is oracle in nature as well.

Jesus made use of this prophetic formula in His

³⁸“This formula calls attention to the allusion to Jer 15:2 that follows and suggests that 13:1–8 should be understood in the light of v 10a; i.e., it indicates how Christians should face the threat of the beast from the sea. Further, the allusion to Jer 15:2 in v 10a is followed in v 10b by an explanatory phrase that indicates how the allusion to Jer 15:2 must be understood. This address to the reader has functional parallels in 13:18, 14:12, and 17:9 (cf. Mark 13:14, and the discussion in J. Weiss, *Das älteste Evangelium* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1903] 71–80), as well as at the conclusion of each of the proclamations to the seven churches (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 749.]

public teachings: ὁ ἔχων ὦτα ἀκούετω (Mt. 11:15; 13:43); ὃς ἔχει ὦτα ἀκούειν ἀκούετω (Mk. 4:9, 23); ὁ ἔχων ὦτα ἀκούειν ἀκούετω (Lk. 14:35).

The formula is a call to the readers to pay very close attention to what follows, since it will have a direct bearing upon their lives. Thus John issues a warning to his initial readers to prepare themselves for some very hard days in front of them.

Prophetic oracle, v. 10ab. The doublet expression makes limited use of Jeremiah 15:2 and also 50:11 (=Mt 43:11).

Note John's structure:

εἴ τις εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν,
εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπάγει·
εἴ τις ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀποκτανθῆναι
αὐτὸν ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀποκτανθῆναι.

In Jeremiah 15:2 we find in the LXX:³⁹

ὅσοι εἰς θάνατον,
εἰς θάνατον,
καὶ ὅσοι εἰς μάχαιραν,
εἰς μάχαιραν,
καὶ ὅσοι εἰς λιμόν,
εἰς λιμόν,
καὶ ὅσοι εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν,
εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν.

John only uses references to αἰχμαλωσία (captive) and μάχαιρα (sword) probably for the following reasons. First, in Jeremiah these pronouncements were leveled at the Israelites in the southern kingdom as expressions of divine punishment for their sins. John has an entirely different objective in mind than that of Jeremiah. Additionally, pestilence (θάνατον) and famine (λιμόν) were not on the horizon in John's understanding of what lay ahead in the near future for his readers.

The meaning of the core structure in both Jeremiah and in John's modified use is not that of *lex talionis*. Rather both simply assert that if being taken captive is in your future, it will happen with certainty. But this is not a fatalism either, since the projection of what is coming lays under the control of God and often becomes the inevitable consequences of faithful commitment to God through Christ.⁴⁰ If Revelation was written at the be-

³⁹A similar formulation is found in LXX Jer 50:11 (MT 43:11):

ὃς εἰς θάνατον, εἰς θάνατον,
καὶ οὗς εἰς ἀποικισμόν, εἰς ἀποικισμόν,
καὶ οὗς εἰς ῥομφαίαν, εἰς ῥομφαίαν.

Those who are destined for pestilence, to pestilence,
and those who are destined for exile, to exile,
and those who are destined for the sword, to the sword.

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 749.]

⁴⁰John alludes selectively to these texts since he does not want to include either pestilence or famine in the scenario of that which faithful Christians must face in the very near future. These texts in Jeremiah do not involve the principle of *lex talionis* (i.e.,

gunning or shortly before the systematic persecution of Christians by Domitian in 96–98 AD, then John had an impending sense of what lay just about the corner for believers in Asia. And he wanted to alert his readers on what to expect.

Sometimes God allows us to anticipate the near future in terms of challenges to our Christian faith. But in Jesus' words we must always be watchful and alert to what lies ahead, in particular with the return of Christ: Mt. 24 - 25 (// Mark 13 - 14). When that sense of God is getting ready to do something unusual comes we are obligated to share it with fellow Christians.

Parentic saying, v. 10c. Ὡδέ ἐστὶν ἡ ὑπομονὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις τῶν ἀγίων is an interpretative application of v. 10 to John's readers. What John has warned that is coming just around the corner stands as a challenge to the perseverance (ἡ ὑπομονὴ) and the faith commitment (ἡ πίστις) to the saints of God (τῶν ἀγίων). Thus John has bracketed the prophetic oracle of verse 10 with the command to listen formula (v. 9) and the application expression (v. 10c). The article with each noun stresses both qualities as essential to successfully facing the coming hardships. This way of defining God's people not only picks up on Daniel's expression τοὺς ἀγίους in 7:21, but stresses that such people have been set apart for commitment to God through Christ and thus are expected to endure these coming hardships -- perhaps as a test of their faith in the pattern of 1 Peter 1:6–7.⁴¹

2. What does the text mean to us today?

By this point I hope the lessons of Rev. 13:1–10

the law of retribution in kind); rather they indicate that those whose lot is death or the sword or famine or captivity will have to endure those fates. In Jeremiah, such punishments are the consequences of the sins of the people, whereas in Revelation the fates of captivity and the sword (i.e., death) are the fated consequences of those who practice the qualities of faith and endurance. That can be seen in 13:7, where the beast from the land is permitted to make war on God's people and conquer them. There is a close parallel in Esth 4:16, where Esther, before she goes unbidden into the presence of King Ahasuerus, fatefully says "If I perish, I perish" (MT אֲבָדְתִּי אֲבָדְתִּי וְכֹאֲשֶׁר וְעַתָּה *wēka ·āšer ·ābadtī ·ābadtī*). The difficulties in this text have spawned a large number of textual variants (see above under Notes 10.a-a.*, 10.b-b.*, and 10.c.*). [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 749–750.]

⁴¹**1 Peter 1:6–7.** 6 ἐν ᾧ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε, ὀλίγον ἄρτι εἰ δέον [ἐστὶν] λυπηθέντας ἐν ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς, 7 ἵνα τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως πολυτιμότερον χρυσοῦ τοῦ ἀπολλυμένου διὰ πυρὸς δὲ δοκιμαζομένου, εὔρεθῆ εἰς ἔπαινον καὶ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ·

6 In this you rejoice, a even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, 7 so that the genuineness of your faith — being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire — may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

have become rather clear. The world we live in today seems to be steadily coming apart at the seams. For millions of Christians in our world who live under intense persecution this text speaks volumes.

First, we need to be reminded that persecution of God's people who are in genuine commitment to Him is virtually inevitable. Not all will experience the physical injury and harm described in our text at one time. But many will, and this text alerts all of us to such possibility. No one is safe from the attacks of evil people, especially those in places of power and authority.

When those attacks come our text calls upon us to look beyond the surface level harm being done. There is a cosmic battle going on in which Satan and his cohorts are manipulating evil people to do harm to God's people.

Second, we need to remember that such attacks will not last forever. Satan and his henchmen have but a short time to do their damage. And then utter defeat comes to them and leads to eternal damnation as chapter fourteen in Revelation will assert.

Third, we must understand that people outside the kingdom of God are spiritually blind and can be easily deceived into following leaders with excellent communication skills into a disastrous loyalties. They will applaud those castigating God and His people out of their spiritual blindness to who stands behind these leaders. Their depraved nature comes to completely dominate their lives and produces eventually the same eternal damnation as will be the fate of Satan and his cohorts.

Yes, this text says much to us in today's world! And John's admonition to his initial readers remains just as important today as it was when he first wrote it:

Εἴ τις ἔχει οὖς ἀκουσάτω.

If anyone has an ear, let him listen!