



THE REVELATION OF JOHN

Bible Study 36

Text: Rev. 14:6-13

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1 Αποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ ἀποστόλου ἡμετέρου Ἰωάννου τοῦ ἀποστόλου ἡμετέρου. ὁ ἴσως ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς δεῖξαι τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει, καὶ ἐσήμανεν ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι, καὶ εὐλόγησεν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὅσα εἶδεν. 3 Μακάριος ὁ ποιῶν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ, ἵνα ἔσται ἡ γέγραμμένα

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2. What the text means.

Three Angels

Greek NT
 6 Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον πετόμενον ἐν μεσουρανήματι, ἔχοντα εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον εὐαγγελίαι ἐπὶ τοὺς καθημένους ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶν ἔθνος καὶ φυλὴν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ λαόν, 7 λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· φοβήθητε τὸν θεὸν καὶ δότε αὐτῷ δόξαν, ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα τῆς κρίσεως αὐτοῦ, καὶ προσκυνήσατε τῷ ποιήσαντι τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν καὶ πηγὰς ὑδάτων.
 8 Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος δεύτερος ἠκολούθησεν λέγων· ἔπεσεν ἔπεσεν Βαβυλῶν ἡ μεγάλη ἢ ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς πεπότικεν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.
 9 Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος τρίτος ἠκολούθησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· εἴ τις προσκυνεῖ τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ καὶ λαμβάνει χάραγμα ἐπὶ τοῦ μετώπου αὐτοῦ ἢ ἐπὶ τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ, 10 καὶ αὐτὸς πίεται ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ κεκερασμένου ἀκράτου ἐν τῷ ποτηρίῳ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ

Gute Nachricht Bibel
 6 Dann sah ich einen anderen Engel hoch am Himmel fliegen. Er hatte eine Botschaft, die niemals ihre Gültigkeit verlieren wird. Die sollte er allen Bewohnern der Erde verkünden, allen Völkern und Nationen, den Menschen aller Sprachen. 7 Er rief mit lauter Stimme: »Fürchtet euch vor Gott und gebt ihm die Ehre! Die Zeit ist gekommen: Jetzt hält er Gericht! Betet ihn an, der den Himmel, die Erde, das Meer und die Quellen geschaffen hat!«
 8 Dem ersten Engel folgte ein zweiter und sagte: »Gefallen! Gefallen ist das mächtige Babylon, das alle Völker gezwungen hatte, den todbringenden Wein seiner Unzucht zu trinken!«
 9 Ein dritter Engel folgte ihnen. Er rief mit lauter Stimme: »Wer das Tier und sein Standbild verehrt und das Zeichen des Tieres auf seiner Stirn oder seiner Hand anbringen lässt, 10 wird den Wein Gottes trinken müssen. Es ist der Wein seiner Entrüstung, den er unverdünnt in den

NRSV
 6 Then I saw another angel flying in midheaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation and tribe and language and people. 7 He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.”
 8 Then another angel, a second, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”
 9 Then another angel, a third, followed them, crying with a loud voice, “Those who worship the beast and its image, and receive a mark on their foreheads or on their hands, 10 they will also drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and they will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torment

NLT
 6 And I saw another angel flying through the heavens, carrying the everlasting Good News to preach to the people who belong to this world -- to every nation, tribe, language, and people.
 7 “Fear God,” he shouted. “Give glory to him. For the time has come when he will sit as judge. Worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all the springs of water.”
 8 Then another angel followed him through the skies, shouting, “Babylon is fallen -- that great city is fallen -- because she seduced the nations of the world and made them drink the wine of her passionate immorality.”
 9 Then a third angel followed them, shouting, “Anyone who worships the beast and his statue or who accepts his mark on the forehead or the hand 10 must drink the wine of God’s wrath. It is poured out undiluted into God’s cup of wrath. And they will be tormented with fire and burning

βασανισθήσεται ἐν πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ ἐνώπιον ἀγγέλων ἁγίων καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἀρνίου. 11 καὶ ὁ καπνὸς τοῦ βασανισμοῦ αὐτῶν εἰς αἰῶνας αἰώνων ἀναβαίνει, καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἀνάπαυσιν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς οἱ προσκυνοῦντες τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ καὶ εἴ τις λαμβάνει τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ.

12 Ὡδε ἡ ὑπομονὴ τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν, οἱ τηροῦντες τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ.

13 Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λεγούσης· γράψον·

μακάριοι οἱ νεκροὶ οἱ ἐν κυρίῳ ἀποθνήσκοντες ἀπ' ἄρτι. ναί, λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα, ἵνα ἀναπαήσονται ἐκ τῶν κόπων αὐτῶν, τὰ γὰρ ἔργα αὐτῶν ἀκολουθεῖ μετ' αὐτῶν.

Becher seines Zornes gegossen hat. Wer das Tier verehrt, wird vor den Augen des Lammes und der heiligen Engel mit Feuer und Schwefel gequält. 11 Der Rauch von diesem quälenden Feuer steigt in alle Ewigkeit zum Himmel. Alle, die das Tier und sein Standbild verehren und das Kennzeichen seines Namens tragen, werden Tag und Nacht keine Ruhe finden.

12 Hier muss Gottes heiliges Volk Standhaftigkeit beweisen, alle, die Gottes Gebote befolgen und den Glauben an Jesus bewahren.«

13 Dann hörte ich eine Stimme vom Himmel, die sagte:

»Schreib auf: Freuen dürfen sich alle, die für ihr Bekenntnis zum Herrn sterben müssen – von jetzt an!« »So ist es«, antwortet der Geist, »sie werden sich von ihrer Mühe ausruhen; denn ihre Taten gehen mit ihnen und sprechen für sie.«

goes up forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image and for anyone who receives the mark of its name.”

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

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

sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. 11 The smoke of their torment rises forever and ever, and they will have no relief day or night, for they have worshiped the beast and his statue and have accepted the mark of his name.

12 Let this encourage God’s holy people to endure persecution patiently and remain firm to the end, obeying his commands and trusting in Jesus.”

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying,

“Write this down: Blessed are those who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, they are blessed indeed, for they will rest from all their toils and trials; for their good deeds follow them!”

INTRODUCTION

In this continuing series of pericopes building off the introductory theme of celebration in heaven as encouragement to the persecuted saints on earth (14:1-5), John continues to use the standard (for Revelation) of Καὶ εἶδον, I saw (v. 6) and Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς, I heard a voice (v. 13) as topic signals. John saw angels and heard the voice of God. Both were in heaven, although the angels move from heaven to the earth. John’s narrative vantage point is on earth, observing the succession of prophetic events as they take place. The heavenly voice reminds John to write down what he has seen in a summarizing beatitude expression, which becomes a foundational spiritual principle of Christian hope.

But before the command to write, there comes the third instance in verse 12 in which John steps out of his apocalyptic vision and makes an application of this part of the vision to his first century readers -- and ultimately to us today as believers in Christ. He repeats here much of what was said in the first such application in

13:10b

13.10b. Ὡδε ἐστίν ἡ ὑπομονὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις τῶν ἁγίων.

[Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints.](#)

14:12. Ὡδε ἡ ὑπομονὴ τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν, οἱ τηροῦντες τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ.

[Here is the endurance of the saints, those keeping the commandments of God and faith in Jesus.](#)

John never loses sight of what it means to be a Christian all through his vision. To be an authentic follower of Christ means to be one in a faith commitment to Jesus that is lived out in obedience to God’s commandments. Anything different is pseudo Christianity and reflects the deception of Satan himself.

What John sees are three angels delivering a one-two-three point message of the Gospel call to repentance with the warning of impending doom upon those refusing to turn to God. These angelic messages are not for the believers upon the earth. Instead they are for the evil people who are worshiping and following the evil beast. They constitute a last call to repentance

before the unleashing of the overwhelming bowls of divine wrath upon the earth described in chapters fifteen and sixteen. God in His justice gives evil humanity one final opportunity to repent before the coming of judgment.

These will be the final temporal judgments on the evil world prior to the very end of time and the great day of final judgment. Interestingly -- and typically apocalyptic -- the final segment of chapter fourteen in vv. 14-20 skip over the bowls of wrath judgments and focuses on the final day of judgment described in greater detail in 19:1-21 which is then continued in 20:11-15. Chapters seventeen and eighteen are devoted to a depiction of the fall of Babylon as a part of the pouring out of the bowls of wrath in temporal judgment.

In this rather intriguing way of weaving end time events together John repeatedly drives home the point that the evil empire of this world set up by Satan through manipulation of evil people by the two beasts is doomed. And in two ways. It will come crashing down as a doomed Babylon through the pouring out of the bowls of divine wrath in temporal judgment. But more importantly, Satan and all of his cohorts, along with the evil people of this world in league with him, will be totally defeated at the end and condemned into the eternal lake of fire. In this, God's people can rejoice and celebrate God's total and final victory over evil, for never again will they be tormented by evil. John will then conclude in chapters twenty-one and twenty-two in a multifaceted depiction of the victory of God's people in their eternal heavenly home.

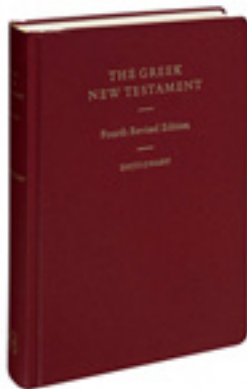
1. What did the text mean to the first readers?

As is the pattern for all our biblical studies, the background concerns of both historical and literary aspects will be treated prior to the detailed exegesis of the passage of scripture.

Historical Aspects:

Even though the events depicted in vv. 6-13 happen on earth, they represent an apocalyptic depiction rather than an historical description. Some of the place markers, e.g., Babylon, are best treated as exegetical concerns rather than background concerns due to the symbolic nature of most of them.

External History. In the history of the hand copying of this passage several places surface where different readings of the text occur. In *The Greek New Testament* (UBS 4th rev. ed), three places¹ are listed which in the



¹I am including here an additional aspect contained in the Text

evaluation of the editors merit inclusion in the Text Apparatus of this printed Greek text.

14.6, ἄλλον ἄγγελον, another angel.² The core issue here is whether the adjective ἄλλον was in the original or not. The evidence favors it although not decisively.³

Apparatus of the UBS Greek text. Because the process of copying text through the first six or so centuries was the copying of capital letters with no word, sentence, or clause spacing breaks, modern printed Greek texts utilize the punctuation and spacing breaks of either contemporary English or German. Sometimes in the Greek text it is not entirely clear where those punctuation marks and spacing breaks between clauses and sentences should be placed.

Such is the case here with ἀπ' ἄρτι in verse thirteen. Should a period be placed before or after this prepositional phrase? In the current technical language of this discipline, these are called issues of Segmentation. Below is a discussion of this particular matter in verse thirteen. Occasionally such matters have some impact on both translation and interpretation of the biblical text, as is true here.

If a break is made after ἀπ' ἄρτι (from now on), the sense is " 'Write this: Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord.' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'they will rest from their labors' " (NRSV). That is, "this could imply a certain group of suffering believers who will begin receiving the blessing in distinction from other saints who have died previously but will not be so blessed" (Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, p. 769). But if a break is made after ἀποθνήσκοντες (who die) and not after ἀπ' ἄρτι, then the sense is " 'Write down: Blessed are those who die in the Lord! Blessed indeed, the Spirit says; now they can rest for ever after their work' " (NJB). That is, "it is at the moment of death when blessed rest begins for believers" (Beale, p. 769).

Some interpreters follow the variant reading which omits ναί (yes) and take ἀπ' ἄρτι as the adverb ἀπαρτί (certainly; so Tischendorf⁸ and NA24, 25). Aune (*Revelation 6–16*, p. 783), for example, translates "How fortunate are the dead who die in the Lord. Truly [ἀπαρτί], says the Spirit, that they might rest from their labors."

[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), 541.

²{B} ἄλλον ἄγγελον P¹¹⁵ vid s² A C P 051 1006 1611 1841 2053 2329 it^{sr}, sig. t vg syr^{ph, h} cop^{bo} arm Cyprian Maternus Varimadum Primasius Cassiodorus Beatus // ἦλθεν (for εἶδον) ἄλλος ἄγγελος eth // ἄγγελον P⁴⁷ s* 205 209 1854 Byz [046] cop^{sa} Origen Andrew; Victorinus-Pettau Ambrose

[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).]

³“The reading in the text is the more difficult one, and it also has excellent manuscript support. The absence of ἄλλον is either an accidental omission (due to the similarity of the first letters, ἄλλον and ἄγγελον) or, more probably, a deliberate omission, since no individual angel has been mentioned since 11:15. The reading in the text is followed by nearly all translations. NRSV, for example, translates, ‘Then I saw another angel [ἄλλον ἄγγελον] flying in midheaven.’ The variant reading, however, is apparently followed by REB: ‘Then I saw an angel flying in mid-heaven.’” [Roger L. Page 735

14.8, ἄλλος ἄγγελος δεύτερος, another angel, a second.⁴ The issue here is over inclusion or omission of the adjective δεύτερος, *second*. No real impact on meaning surfaces with any of the readings, since the listing is in a series in v. 6, 8, 9.⁵

14.13, ναί, λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα, yes, says the Spirit.⁶ Here the issue is the issue of inclusion or omission of ναί, *yes*.⁷ The external manuscript evidence is divided, and thus the decision is made on internal evidence principles which slightly favors its inclusion.

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), 540.]

⁴{B} ἄγγελος δεύτερος κ² (C δεύτερον) P 051 205 209 1611 2053 2344 (it^{gig}) syr^h, with* cop^{sa, bo} arm Andrew; (Beatus) // δεύτερος ἄγγελος A 2329 Byz [046] Primasius Cassiodorus // δεύτερος P⁴⁷ κ* 1006 1841 1854 syr^{ph} // ἄγγελος 61 69 it^{ar} vg eth Victorinus-Pet-
tau

[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).]

^{5c}The variant readings are not very significant for translation. The reading that seems to explain best the origin of the others is ἄλλος ἄγγελος δεύτερος, which has good manuscript support and which agrees with the sequence of ἄλλος ἄγγελος τρίτος (another angel, a third) in ver. 9. This sequence, in which an adjective used in addition to ἄλλος is placed after the noun, agrees with the author's style (6:4; 10:1; 15:1). Many manuscripts read ἄλλος δεύτερος ἄγγελος, with no change in meaning. Other witnesses, including the Textus Receptus, eliminate the word δεύτερος as unnecessary, since in this context 'another angel' is equivalent to 'a second angel.' Likewise the reading ἄλλος δεύτερος appears to presuppose the reading ἄλλος ἄγγελος δεύτερος, from which ἄγγελος was accidentally omitted in copying because of the similarity of letters in ἄλλος and ἄγγελος. (See also the comments on 14:6.)" [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), 540–541.]

⁶{A} ναί, λέγει κ² A C P 051 209 1006 1611 1854 2344 it^{ar}, (gig) vg syr^{ph, h} cop^{sa} Andrew; Augustine Speculum Primasius Beatus // λέγει ναί 2329 Byz [046] // και λέγει 205 2053 // λέγει P⁴⁷ κ* cop^{bo} (arm) (eth) Varimadum

[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).]

^{7c}Although the shorter reading λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα may be thought to be original, and the other readings expansions by copyists, it is perhaps more probable that ναί, λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα is original, because it has strong manuscript support and is in the style of the Apocalypse (1:7; 16:7; 22:20). The readings λέγει ναί τὸ πνεῦμα ναί, και λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα and λέγει και τὸ πνεῦμα are obviously secondary. The particle ναί indicates affirmation, agreement, or emphasis; and may be translated 'Yes, it's true!' or, in this context, 'Blessed indeed' (NJB)." [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), 541.]

The above listings, however, only reference the more significant places of variation. The Text Apparatus of the Novum Testamentum Graece (N-A 27th rev. ed) contains a more complete listing of all those that surface in the now existing manuscript copies of this passage. Some 29 places are listed in this apparatus where variations in wording surface.⁸



⁸Offenbarung 14,6

* P⁴⁷ κ* m sa; Or Vic (some mss omit ἄλλον)
| txt P^{115vid} κ² A C P 051. 1006. 1611. 1841. 2053. 2329 al
latt sy bo; Cyp
* -ισασθαι P⁴⁷ κ 1854. 2329 al; Or (alternative spelling for εὐαγγελίσαι)
*¹ 051 M sy^h (some mss. omit ἐπι before τοῦς)
| txt P⁴⁷ κ A C P 1611. 1854. 2053. 2329 pc sy^{ph}; Or
* κατοικουντας P^{115vid} A 051 pc ar bo; Bea (καθημένους is replace with one of these two alternative readings)
| καθ. τους κατοικ. M^A
*² M^A (ἐπι is omitted before πᾶν)

Offenbarung 14,7

* λεγοντα P⁴⁷ 051. 1611. 2053 pc (λέγων is either replaced or omitted)
| – κ
* κυριον M^K gig (t) vg^{cl} sy^{hmg}; Bea (θεὸν is replaced)
* δοξασατε αυτον P⁴⁷ (δότε αὐτῷ is replaced)
* τω θεω τω π. 2329 gig (τῷ ποιήσαντι is replaced)
| αυτον (–Or) τον ποιησαντα M^K; Or
* την P⁴⁷ κ 051. 1854. 2053. 2329 M^K; Or (τήν is inserted before θάλασσαν)

Offenbarung 14,8

* 2 1 A 1. 2329 M^K (the sequence of ἄγγελος δεύτερος is either reverses or δεύτερος is dropped)
| 2 P⁴⁷ κ* 1006. 1841. 1854 pc sy^{ph}
| 1 69 pc ar vg; Vic
| txt κ² (C) 051. 1611. 2053. 2344 M^A (gig) sy^{h**}; Prim
* –θει P⁴⁷ (ἠκολούθησεν is replaced with alternative spelling)
* κ(* h.t.) C 1854. 2053 M^K; bo^{pt} (the 2nd ἔπεσεν is omitted)
*¹ P⁴⁷ κ² 051 M gig; Spec Prim (ἦ is omitted)
| txt A C 1006. 1841. 2053 al lat sy
* πεπωκαν P⁴⁷ κ² (1854) pc; Prim (the 3rd S πεπότικεν is replaced by the 3rd Pl)

Offenbarung 14,9

* αυτω A bo^{pt}; Prim (the pl αὐτοῖς is replaced by the sing.)
* το θυσιαστηριον A (τὸ θηρίον is replaced)
* της –ρος P⁴⁷ 1611. 2329 pc (the acc. τὴν χεῖρα is replaced by the gen. spelling)

Offenbarung 14,10

* εκ του –ιου την –γην A (pc) (ἐν τῷ ποτηρίῳ τῆς ὀργῆς is replaced)
* –σονται A 1006. 1841 pc vg^{ms} co; Tyc (βασανισθήσεται is replaced with alternative spelling)
* των αγγ. A pc bo; Spec (ἀγγέλων ἁγίων is replaced)
| των αγ. αγγ. M^K

Offenbarung 14,11

* –να –νον (–νος C pc) C P 051 al (αἰῶνας αἰῶνων is replaced)

Careful analysis of these reveals a few instances of careless copying and several instances of stylistic improvements by changing the tense or the case of some words. But none of the variations either show up in significant manuscripts or in significant numbers of manuscripts in order to merit serious consideration. The basic meaning is not altered by any of the variations.

Thus we can exegete the adopted reading of the text of the passage in full confidence that it reflects the original reading.

Internal History. Some minimal background treatment here can be helpful to the later exegesis.

The flying in mid-heaven image. Two observations emerge from this. First, this is the first time and the earliest time in either ancient Jewish or Christian literature that an angel is pictured as flying, πετόμενον.⁹ Nothing is said, however, about needing wings in order to fly, since he is a creature out of heaven and not from the earth. The heavenly creatures of cherubim and seraphim have sets of wings and one pair can be used for flying, but these creatures never leave heaven to come to the earth. Not until the late second century in Tertullian (Apologetics 22:8) do angels acquire wings for use

in flying. Although 1 Enoch 61:1 speaks of angels flying the section of chapters 37-71, the Parables of Enoch, is a much later addition to 1 Enoch from around 270 AD.

A second assumption in this phrase is a flat earth viewpoint. The flying around ἐν μεσουρανήματι, in mid heaven, presupposes a flat earth so that the angel can be heard by all the earth as he speaks. The modern view of a spherical earth existed in the ancient world with Aristotle, but most other philosophers of his time rejected his view, as well as the general populace. Where variations existed they focused on whether the flat earth was circular or rectangular, with the far more accepted circular view dominating.¹⁰ All the near eastern cultures maintained a circular flat earth view, including the Hebrew / Jewish traditions.¹¹ Some debate exists on whether the disk or rectangular flat earth dominated the Jewish thinking in relation to the dominate rectangular view in both Egyptian and Babylonian circles.¹²



Imago Mundi Babylonian map, the oldest known world map, 6th century BC Babylonia.

Offenbarung 14,12

* ὠδε 051 M^A (ὠδε is inserted again before οἱ τηροῦντες)

* τῶν -ντων κ 1006. 1611. 1841 pc (alternative spelling of οἱ τηροῦντες)

Offenbarung 14,13

* μοι 051. 2053. 2329 M^A ar gig vgcl; Spec Prim (μοι is inserted after λεγούσης)

* Χριστῶ C P 1854 pc; Bea (κυρίῳ is replaced)

| θεῶ 1611 sy^h

* 2 1 2329 M^K (ναί, λέγει is re-sequenced or replaced)

| 2 P⁴⁷ κ* pc

| και λεγ. 2053 pc (*pc)

* οτι P⁴⁷ (ἵνα is replaced)

¹ -παυσωνται (-σονται 046. 051. 2329 al) 051^c M (ἀναπαήσονται is replaced with alternative spellings)

| txt P47 κ A C

*² δε 051 M (γὰρ is replaced)

| txt P⁴⁷ κ A C P 1006. 1611. 1841. 1854. 2053. 2329 pc latt sy^h sa

[Eberhard Nestle et al., Universität Münster. Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27. Aufl., rev. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1993), 659–661.]

⁹“It is of interest that this is the earliest reference in Jewish or Christian literature to an angel (apart from cherubim and seraphim) flying. While cherubim and seraphim are described as having wings and as flying, angels in general are not (1 Chr 21:16 merely states that the angel of the Lord was seen standing between heaven and earth, not that he had wings or was flying). Even in Rev 14:6, however, the flying angel is not necessarily described as winged. The first clear reference to angels (and demons) with wings is found in Tertullian Apol. 22.8. 1 Enoch 61:1 mentions angels who “acquired wings for themselves, and flew” (Knibb, Enoch 2:148), though the Parables of Enoch (1 Enoch 37–71) should probably be dated after A.D. 70 (according to Milik, Enoch, 95–96, as late as A.D. 270).” [[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 824.]

¹⁰“The phrase πετόμενον ἐν μεσουρανήματι, [flying in mid-heaven] (Comment on 8:13), means that the angel appeared in the place where he could be seen and heard by everyone on earth (Masson, “L’Evangile,” 63–64), since his message was directed to all human beings. This of course presupposes a world shaped like a flat disk rather than a sphere. While Aristotle thought the earth was spherical (Cael. 2.14; 298a), it was more commonly thought to be flat and circular with Delphi at the center and surrounded by Ocean (Herodotus 5.49) or flat and rectangular (Ephorus of Cyme according to Strabo 1.2.28). This conception of a flat, circular earth survived into Hellenistic and Roman times (Anth. Graec. 9.778 [Gow-Page, Greek Anthology 1:300–301]).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 824.]

¹¹“Like the Midrash and the Talmud, the Targum does not think of a globe of the spherical earth, around which the sun revolves in 24 hours, but of a flat disk of the earth, above which the sun completes its semicircle in an average of 12 hours.” [“The Distribution of Land and Sea on the Earth’s Surface According to Hebrew Sources,” Solomon Gandz, *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, Vol. 22 (1953), pp. 23-53, published by American Academy for Jewish Research.]

¹²“The Egyptian universe was substantially similar to the Babylonian universe; it was pictured as a rectangular box with a north-south orientation and with a slightly concave surface, with Egypt in the center. A good idea of the similarly primitive state of Hebrew astronomy can be gained from Biblical writings, such as the Genesis creation story and the various Psalms that extol the firmament, the stars, the sun, and the earth. The Hebrews saw the earth as an almost flat surface consisting of a solid and a liquid part, and the sky as the realm of light in which heavenly bodies move. The earth rested on cornerstones and could not be moved except by Jehovah (as in an earthquake). According to the Hebrews, the sun and the

The symbol of Babylon. Βαβυλῶν, Babylon, is here spoken of for the first of six times in Revelation: 14:8; 16:19; 17:6; 18:2, 10, 21. That Babylon in Revelation is a code word referencing Rome is unquestionable. The prediction of the fall of the *urbs aeterna*, *eternal city*, of Rome would have been unthinkable by the vast majority of people in John's day. In fact not until the sack of Rome by the Goths in 410 AD, did the idea of the destruction of Rome become acceptable. It was in fact this event that prompted the Christian theologian Augustine to write *The City of God*, a commentary on Revelation, reminding Romans of the destructibility of their capital city. This meaning of 'Babylon' was not unique to John. Jewish apocalyptic literature dating after 70 AD often equates the two, since only Babylon and Rome succeeded in destroying Jerusalem.¹³ To be

moon were only a short distance from one another.” [“Cosmology.” *Encyclopedia Americana. Grolier Online*, 2012. Author: Giorgio Abetti, Astrophysical Observatory of Arcetri-Firenze. Volume 8, p.39]

¹³“Babylon, a symbolic name for Rome, occurs here as the first of six occurrences in Revelation (see Rev 16:19; 17:6; 18:2, 10, 21). Babylon and Rome are comparable because both were centers for world empires and both captured Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. The fall of the *urbs aeterna*, the ‘eternal city,’ as Rome was designated, would have been virtually unthinkable for Romans (the sack of Rome by the Goths in A.D. 410 spurred Augustine to write *The City of God* in A.D. 413–26 to answer pagans who credited the disaster to the replacement of the old cult with the Christian religion). As a cipher for Rome, the term ‘Babylon’ occurs occasionally in Jewish apocalyptic literature, though the fact that all the references occur in literature that postdates A.D. 70, the year when Jerusalem fell to Titus, has suggested to many scholars that the equation Babylon = Rome was not made until after that date and suggests that Revelation must have been written after that date (Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 57–58). 1 Pet 5:13, written ca. A.D. 80, may be the earliest application of the cover name ‘Babylon’ for Rome, an equation made by Clement Alex. in Eusebius (Hist. eccl. 2.15.2) and also reflected in the substitution of Ῥώμη for Βαβυλῶν in the minuscule 2138 and the addition of ἐν Ῥώμῃ in two other minuscules. ‘Babylon’ is the location of the author in 1 Pet 5:13 and corresponds to the location of the addressees in the ‘dispersion’ (1 Pet 1:1). Since no opposition to ‘Babylon’ is expressed in 1 Peter, ‘Babylon’ primarily means ‘those in exile’ and is not a pejorative code name for Rome (Souza Nogueira, “Widerstand,” 154–55). The models for the use of ‘Babylon’ in 1 Peter are the letters of Jeremiah purportedly sent to the exiles in Babylon in Jer 29:1–23 (LXX 36:1–23) and 2 Apoc. Bar. 78–87. The fictional setting of 4 Ezra and 2 Apocalypse of Baruch is Babylon, which the authors equate with Rome, though writing in the late first and early second century A.D., respectively (4 Ezra 3:1–2, 28–31; 16:44, 46; 2 Apoc. Bar. 10:2; 11:1; 67:7).

“The comparison between Babylon and Rome is based implicitly on the parallels between the conquest of Jerusalem by Babylon in 587 B.C. and the conquest of Jerusalem by Rome in A.D. 70. The same fictional perspective with its implicit comparison of the two tragedies is found in *Paraleipomena Jeremioi* (4 BARUCH is *Pseudepigraphal. Don't tag it!* 4 BARUCH is *Pseudepigraphal. Don't tag it!* 4 Baruch), which was probably composed early in the second century A.D. (Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 315). The

sure, 1 Peter 5:13 at least in the early 60s used Babylon as a code term for Rome but without the intense negative associations found in Revelation. For John the image of Babylon and its subsequent destruction due to what it had done to the people of God in Jerusalem and the temple there was a natural association for his Christian readers at the end of the first century. God punished Babylon and thus He would surely punish Rome for what they were doing to the people of God now.

Literary Aspects:

Consideration of the literary aspects of the passage becomes very important due to the enormous complexity of the literary structure of chapter fourteen.

Genre: In the midst of analyzing the five subunits of vv. 6–13 (6–7, 8, 9–11, 12, 13), one must not overlook the broader issue of the apocalyptic vision character of the entire passage. We are dealing not with standard history here, but with a spiritual view of

use of ‘Babylon’ as a code name for Rome is also found in Sib. Or. 5.143, 159 (written ca. A.D. 90); while Babylon is also mentioned in Sib. Or. 5.434 and the Babylonians in 5.440, these citations appear to refer to the historical Babylon. Yet in the Jewish sources and 1 Pet 5:13, the term ‘Babylon’ is not used with the hostility found in Revelation. John has read the OT prophets, has probably made the equation himself, and has transferred the prophetic hostility toward the historical Babylon to his own attitudes toward Rome (there are five oracles against Babylon in the OT; see Isa 13:1–22; 14:22–23; 21:1–10; Jer 25:12–14; 50:1–51:64). There were other symbolic names for Rome in use by early Judaism, including Edom, Kittim (Aramaic כִּיִּתִּים *kittim*, in Dan 11:30 is translated Ῥωμαῖοι in LXX Dan 11:30), and Egypt. The Kittim are frequently mentioned in 1QpHab and 1QM (see H. Ringgren, *The Faith of Qumran: Theology of the Dead Sea Scrolls* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963] 26–31).

“Josephus claimed that Jeremiah predicted the recent (A.D. 70) destruction of Jerusalem (Ant. 10.79), as Daniel had (Ant. 10.276–77); Josephus therefore probably understood Babylon as a code word for the Romans who had destroyed Jerusalem most recently (Wolff, *Jeremia*, 11). In Aune, *Revelation*, WBC 52A, lxi, lxix, I accepted the view of A. Yarbro Collins that the use of the name ‘Babylon’ as a code word for Rome pointed to a date after A.D. 70 for the composition of Revelation. However, that argument for dating is vulnerable, since the name ‘Babylon’ is used to interpret ‘Assyria’ in Isa 10:13–19 (part of an oracle against Assyria in Isa 10:5–19) in the pesher commentary 4QpIsac 6–7 ii 4 (see Horgan, *Pesharim*, 97, though she does not comment on this feature of the text), which is certainly to be dated some years before A.D. 70. Although D. G. Meade has claimed that the name ‘Babylon’ is used as an eschatological symbol of a world power in Dan 1:1–8; 3:8–12; 6:2–24, he is certainly not correct, for ‘Babylon’ only occurs once with reference to the first regnal year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon (7:1), and not elsewhere in Dan 7–12, the apocalyptic section of Daniel (*Pseudonymity and Canon*, WUNT 39 [Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1986] 165)”

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 829–830.]

divine principles working in the fleshing out of God's intention for humanity on earth. These principles are presented in apocalyptic story form as heavenly oriented events taking place in interaction between heaven and earth. To reduce these events either into human history or visionary fiction is to grossly miss the point being made by John. Through this communication vehicle, even as complex and sometimes confusing as it is, John wants his readers to see how God is working in their lives in late first century Asia. They look especially at the horrible events of evil happening all around them and wonder whether God reigns or not. Revelation pushes them to look deeper -- under the hood, to use my analogy from the class study -- and see God at work in all of their lives. The images therefore are built not around chronological progression, but around the heaven / earth vertical dynamic where repetition of story events repeated drives home the reality of God working powerfully in every believer's life daily.

Regarding literary genres at the subunit level some patterns emerge here that need to be considered.

Angelic actions / speeches. Verses 6-11 are presented as a single visionary unit in the form of three successive angelic speeches. They follow a recognizable pattern, also found in several other such instances in Revelation.¹⁴ The two elements of *Angelic Action* and

¹⁴“The first three subunits are presented as a single vision, beginning with the phrase καὶ εἶδον, ‘then I saw’ (v 6); each of the three angelic speeches mentions yet another angelic revealer, referred to as ‘another angel’ (v 6), ‘another angel, a second’ (v 8), and ‘another angel, a third’ (v 9); the second and third angels are described as ‘following’ (ἠκολούθησεν) the previous one. There is yet a fourth formal link between these three units in that each conforms to the literary form that I have earlier designated the angelic speech (see Rev 7:1–17, Form/Structure/Setting, II. Literary Forms).

“The first form, the *angelic action*, occurs four times (7:1; 8:2; 15:1; 20:1–3) and exhibits the following structural features: (1) introductory phrase: καὶ εἶδον, ‘then I saw’ (μετὰ τοῦτο εἶδον, ‘after this I saw’: 7:1; 8:2; 15:1); (2) object of vision: ἄγγελον, ‘angel,’ or ἄγγελοι, ‘angels’ (7:1; 8:2; 15:1; 20:1); (3) brief description of the action performed by or to the angel or angels (7:1; 8:2; 15:1; 20:1–3); and (4) an abrupt change of subject (7:2; 8:3; 15:2; 20:4). In addition, the author presents these brief *angelophanies* strictly as an observer; the angel or angels he sees and whose action he describes neither interact with him nor he with them.

“The second form, the *angelic speech*, occurs nine times in Revelation (7:2–3; 10:1–7; 14:6–7, 8, 9–11, 14–16, 18–20; 18:1–3; 19:17–18) and is once inserted immediately following an angelic action (7:2–3). The *angelic speech* in Revelation exhibits the following structural features: (1) introductory phrase: καὶ εἶδον (7:2; 10:1; 14:6; 18:1; 19:17); (2) object of vision: ἄλλον ἄγγελον (7:2; 10:1; 14:6, 8, 9; 18:1; 19:17); (3) movement of the angel (ascension, descending, flight, emergence, following) to the center of the action (7:2; 10:1; 14:6, 8, 9, 15, 18; 18:1; 19:17); (4) a statement that the angel ‘cries with a loud voice’ (7:2; 10:3; 14:7, 9, 15, 18; 18:2a; 19:17); and (5) a brief statement from the angel (7:3; 10:3 [what he says is not made explicit, only that ‘he cried with a loud voice as a lion roars’]; 14:7, 8, 9b–11, 15b, 18b; 18:2b–3; 19:17b–

Angelic Speech may be combined or presented separately. But most of the time they are presented as a pair -- action followed by speech. John's standard καὶ εἶδον, and I saw, is used to introduce them. But mostly John is a passive observer who does not interact with the angels. Their speeches are generally not specifically directed to him, but for his readers through the written account of what he saw. Mostly the speeches pronounce divine judgments being poured out upon evil people on the earth. These angels function in their traditional role as divine messengers.

The three speeches given in vv. 7, 8b, 9b-11 follow a successive pattern of call to repentance followed by pronouncement of divine judgment first upon ‘Babylon’ and then upon those worshiping the beast. The longer speech in vv. 9-11 displays some unique traits that set it apart from the first two speeches. These will be treated in the exegesis below.

Verse 12 follows the previous two patterns in 13:10, 18, as well as the later pattern in 17:9. The adverb ὅδε signals that John is stepping out of his apocalyptic vision in order to make an application of this vision directly to his readers. Typically the ὅδε introduces a paraenetic saying that calls for obedience to Christ in the midst of suffering and hardship.

In verse 13, the καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, *And I heard a voice out of heaven...*, signals the giving of a divine beatitude that summarizes in climax the essential point of what John has seen in the above vision.¹⁵ This is the second of seven beatitudes in Revelation: 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14. By definition, a beatitude invokes the blessing of God upon His people in some circumstance as specified by the expanded subject of the predicate adjective μακάριοι, *blessed are*

Literary Setting: The literary context of vv. 6-13 is both simple and complex. On the simple side, the passage stands in the middle of chapter fourteen and builds on vv. 1-5 and provides the way for vv. 14-20. Chapter fourteen is the third aspect of the long ‘interlude’ of chapters twelve through fourteen. This stands between the announcement of the seventh trumpet in 11:14-19 and the blowing of this trumpet to activate the seven bowls of wrath in 15:1-8. This interlude comes as a pause in the logical progression of the three series of sevens (6:1-16:21). This kind of ‘interlude’ John has inserted first between the sixth and seventh seal (7:1-17), then between the sixth and seventh trumpet

18). This brief statement is the focus of this literary form.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 796–797.]

¹⁵For a detailed study on the literary structure and functions of beatitudes in the New Testament see my “Literary Forms of Beatitudes,” cranfordville.com.

14.8

And

436 another angel second followed

saying:

D
E

Fallen
fallen is Babylon

the great
out of the wine
| of wrath
of her evil
which...all the nations have drunk.

14.9

And

437 another angel third followed them

saying:

in a loud voice

If one worships the beast
| and
| his image
| and
-- --- receives the mark
| upon his forehead
| or
| upon his hand,
also

14.10

F

he will personally drink

| out of the wine
| of God's wrath
| which is poured out
| /-----|
| unmixed
| in the cup
| out His wrath
| and

G

he will be tormented

| in fire and sulphur
| before holy angels
| and
| before the Lamb.

14.11

H

the smoke of their torments...will rise up

| and

I

they will not have rest

day and night
these w|ho worship the beast
| and
| his image
| and
if anyone receives the mark
of his name.

438 ^{14.12} Here is the endurance of the saints

those keeping the commandments of God
and
their faith in Jesus.

And

439 **I heard a voice**
out of heaven
saying:

J Write:

a Blessed are the dead
who in the Lord are dying
from now on.

440 **Says the Spirit**

K **Yes ---,**
so that they will rest
from their labors,
for
L **their works follow**
with them.

Summary of Rhetorical Structure:

Careful observation of the diagram reveals a clearly defined three fold structure: 1) #s 435-437; 2) 438; and 3) 439-440.

In #s 435-437, **John sees** the three angels who present their individual messages: a) 435; b) 436; and c) 437. These messages are stacked on top of each other leading the climatic third message that is considerably longer.

In # 438, John again for the third time steps out of the apocalyptic vision to **make an application** of the vision of the three angels to his readers. He repeats most of what was contained in the first instance of this in 13:10.

In #s 439-440, **John hears** the heavenly voice instructing him to write down a beatitude that summarizes what he has seen.

Exegesis of the Text:

The natural divisions from within the text therefore emerge as summarized above. They are clearly defined internally in the scripture passage. Thus they provide the best way to understand the text.

A. John sees three angels, vv. 6-11

The dominant part of this entire passage is the emphasis upon the three angels. Some introductory issues are important to the detailed exegesis of this text.

Note carefully the past tense (aorist verbs) that dominate both the narrative introduction and the speeches. The perspective is presented as though all of this has already taken place. This will be critical to proper understanding. The aorist tense in Greek has the capacity to state something as a completed event, even though the time frame may be past, present, or future time. This makes it easier to understand how some of the messages actually allude to subsequent events that are described in greater detail later in Revelation.

Also important is John's use of a pair of literary genres¹⁷ that he develops inside Revelation.¹⁸ The *angelic action* form surfaces four times inside Revelation: 7:1; 8:2; 15:1; 20:1-3. Here the angelic action form shows up with the first angel (v. 6), and then through the formulaic angelic speech pattern is assumed for the subsequent two angels. The second, the *angelic speech*, surfaces nine times in Revelation including chapter fourteen. In the first form, the activity of the an-

¹⁷The use of already existing literary forms -- and the creation of new ones inside a longer writing -- is helpful to the composer of a document in that it signals an interpretive framework of meaning that the writer assumes when presenting the contents. From the reader's perspective, identifying such forms in the process of reading the document helps the reader correctly understand the meaning being presented within a genre framework which establishes general limits on possible meaning of the content of the text..

¹⁸"The first form, the *angelic action*, occurs four times (7:1; 8:2; 15:1; 20:1-3) and exhibits the following structural features: (1) introductory phrase: καὶ εἶδον, 'then I saw' (μετὰ τοῦτο εἶδον, 'after this I saw': 7:1; 8:2; 15:1); (2) object of vision: ἄγγελον, 'angel,' or ἄγγελους, 'angels' (7:1; 8:2; 15:1; 20:1); (3) brief description of the action performed by or to the angel or angels (7:1; 8:2; 15:1; 20:1-3); and (4) an abrupt change of subject (7:2; 8:3; 15:2; 20:4). In addition, the author presents these brief angelophanies strictly as an observer; the angel or angels he sees and whose action he describes neither interact with him nor he with them. The second form, the *angelic speech*, occurs nine times in Revelation (7:2-3; 10:1-7; 14:6-7, 8, 9-11, 14-16, 18-20; 18:1-3; 19:17-18) and is once inserted immediately following an angelic action (7:2-3). The angelic speech in Revelation exhibits the following structural features: (1) introductory phrase: καὶ εἶδον (7:2; 10:1; 14:6; 18:1; 19:17); (2) object of vision: ἄλλον ἄγγελον (7:2; 10:1; 14:6, 8, 9; 18:1; 19:17); (3) movement of the angel (ascension, descending, flight, emergence, following) to the center of the action (7:2; 10:1; 14:6, 8, 9, 15, 18; 18:1; 19:17); (4) a statement that the angel 'cries with a loud voice' (7:2; 10:3; 14:7, 9, 15, 18; 18:2a; 19:17); and (5) a brief statement from the angel (7:3; 10:3 [what he says is not made explicit, only that 'he cried with a loud voice as a lion roars']; 14:7, 8, 9b-11, 15b, 18b; 18:2b-3; 19:17b-18). This brief statement is the focus of this literary form." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 797.]

gel becomes central, whereas in the second one what he says is central. This provides John's readers with a set pattern of description which enables easier comprehension and easier identification of what John is trying to communicate.

The narrative introduction to each of the three speeches in vv. 6-11 follows a formulaic pattern as a part of the angelic speech genre.

- a) Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον... λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ, and I saw another angel...speaking in a loud voice (v. 6)
- b) Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος δεύτερος ἠκολούθησεν λέγων, and another angel second followed saying (v. 8).
- c) Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος τρίτος ἠκολούθησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ, and another angel third followed them saying in a loud voice (v. 9).

The standard apocalyptic vision signal Καὶ εἶδον, and I saw, is only used at the beginning (v. 6) to introduce all three angels.¹⁹ The dative of direct object αὐτοῖς, them, is used with the third angel as a terminus signal (v. 9). Also the manner functioning prepositional phrase ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ, in a loud voice, is used with the first and third angels (vv. 7, 11) as a modifier of the participle λέγων, speaking, as termini signals as well that in turn signal a unified literary unit for the three angels.

Each of the three angels is introduced as ἄλλον ἄγγελον, another angel, with δεύτερος and τρίτος added to the second and third angels.²⁰ This is a stylistic device used by John in chapter fourteen with three more instances in vv. 15, 17, 18. After introducing the first

¹⁹“καὶ εἶδον functions in three ways: (1) It introduces a new vision narrative (8:2; 10:1; 13:1; 14:1, 6, 14; 15:1; 19:11, 17; 20:1, 4, 12; 21:1; cf. Acts 11:5; Dan 8:2; 10:5; 12:5; Ezek 1:4; 3:13; 8:2; 13:1). (2) It introduces a major scene within a continuing vision narrative (5:1; 6:1; 8:13; 13:11; 15:2; 19:19; 21:2; 21:22; cf. Ezek 2:9). (3) It is used to focus on a new or significant figure or action that occurs within a continuing vision narrative (5:2, 6, 11; 6:2, 5, 8, 12; 7:2; 9:1; 16:13; 17:3, 6; cf. Acts 11:6; Dan 12:5; Ezek 37:8; 44:4).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, vol. 52A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 338.]

²⁰“The phrase ἄλλος ἄγγελος, ‘another angel,’ which occurs five times in Rev 14 (vv 6, 8, 15, 17, 18), is a stylistic device that requires explanation, particularly since no previous angel has been mentioned to which the adjective ἄλλος can reasonably be thought to refer (see van Schaik, “Ἄλλος ἄγγελος,” 217–28). Further, in v 8 the phrase ἄλλος ἄγγελος δεύτερος, “another angel, a second,” indicates that the ἄλλος ἄγγελος here in v 6 is the first of the series. When “another angel” is mentioned elsewhere in Revelation (e.g., 7:2; 8:3), a previous angel has already been mentioned (e.g., 7:1; 8:2). J. Weiss suggested that the phrase be emended to ἄλλον ἄετον, “another eagle,” which could then be understood as referring back to the eagle mentioned in 8:13, similarly described as πετομένου ἐν μεσουρανήματι, “flying in midheaven” (Offenbarung, 96). Charles (2:12) deals with the problem unsatisfactorily by translating the phrase ἄλλον ἄγγελον, as “another, an angel?” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 823–824.]

angel, the use of ἄλλος ἄγγελος would naturally be understood to imply the next angel after the previous one. Of the 18 uses ἄλλος, another, in Revelation with 9 of them modifying ἄγγελος (7:2; 8:3; 10:1; 14:6, 8, 9, 15, 17, 18; 18:1), this is the natural meaning for all, except for the instance in v. 6. The next previous mentioning of an angel is of Michael in 12:7, and before that the seven angel in 11:15. Assuming the meaning of ἄλλος in verse six to be consistent with the other uses, then the first ἄλλος ἄγγελος here in verse six is distinguished from either Michael (12:7) or the seventh angel (11:15). the addition of δεύτερος and τρίτος to the second and third angels serves to group the three angels together as a single group of three.

The simplest understanding is that the threefold use of ἄλλος, especially with combined with δεύτερος and τρίτος, is to clearly group these three angels together as a unified group. The dropping of δεύτερος and τρίτος beginning with v. 15 clearly indicates the next angel but not one as a part of the previous group of three.

1) *The first angel, vv. 6-7*

6 Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον πετόμενον ἐν μεσουρανήματι, ἔχοντα εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον εὐαγγελίσει ἐπὶ τοὺς καθημένους ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶν ἔθνος καὶ φυλὴν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ λαόν, 7 λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· φοβήθητε τὸν θεὸν καὶ δότε αὐτῷ δόξαν, ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα τῆς κρίσεως αὐτοῦ, καὶ προσκυνήσατε τῷ ποιήσαντι τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν καὶ πηγὰς ὑδάτων.

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

The brief *angelic action* motif in verse six sets up the speech in v. 7. It is composed of two main elements:

- a) **πετόμενον ἐν μεσουρανήματι, flying in mid-heaven.** As discussed in the above *Internal History* section, not only is this the only reference inside Revelation to an angel flying, it is the earliest such reference in both the Bible and the Jewish literature outside the Bible. John in 8:13 has mentioned an eagle flying in mid-heaven: Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἤκουσα ἑνὸς ἄετοῦ πετομένου ἐν μεσουρανήματι λέγοντος φωνῇ μεγάλῃ, and I saw and I heard one eagle flying in mid-heaven saying in a loud voice. The mentioning of πετόμενον, flying, further associates 14:6 with 8:13. The verb πέτομαι is used only five times in the NT and all five are in Reve-

lation: an eagle flying (4:7; 8:13); birds (19:17); the woman (12:14); an angel (14:6). Also μεσουράνημα, *mid-heaven*, is used here and in 8:13, plus elsewhere only in 19:17 in reference to where the birds fly. These are the only references inside the NT. Additionally linking 14:6 to 8:13 is the reference to the audience of the message of the eagle, as discussed below. Thus one can only conclude that the message of at least this first angel, if not all three angels, is closely linked to the message of the flying eagle linked the fourth trumpet of 8:12-13.

b) ἔχοντα εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον εὐαγγελίσει ἐπὶ τοὺς καθημένους ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶν ἔθνος καὶ φυλὴν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ λαόν, possessing an eternal gospel for those dwelling upon the earth, and for every nation and tribe and tongue and people. The message of this first angel is detailed with somewhat repetitive expression.

First, it is εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον, *an eternal gospel*. The noun εὐαγγέλιον is found in Revelation only here, although it is very frequent (76x) throughout the remainder of the NT. In this unique use in Revelation in which the content of the εὐαγγέλιον is described in verse seven, the term could possibly be better translated as ‘message’ rather than as ‘gospel.’²¹

²¹“The noun εὐαγγέλιον, ‘message,’ occurs only here in Revelation, though it occurs frequently in the NT. This usage is distinctive, however, for unlike the regular articular use of εὐαγγέλιον (to designate a well-known reality, the proclamation of the good news of the saving death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah), this is the only occurrence in the NT where the definite article is not used. The active verb εὐαγγελίζεω, ‘proclaim,’ occurs just twice in Revelation, here and in 10:7. These are the only places where the active verb εὐαγγελίζεω occurs in the NT. The active verb is rare, occurring only twice in the LXX (1 Kgdms 13:9 and 2 Kgdms 18:19), in a var. lect. in Acts 16:17 (Codex Bezae), and in profane Greek, making its first appearance at the beginning of the second century A.D. The middle form εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, on the other hand, is used fifty-two times in the NT. No εὐαγγελ- words are found in the rest of the Johannine corpus. The content of this εὐαγγέλιον is given in v 7; it is an appeal for repentance and conversion to the God who created heaven and earth in the context of impending judgment (v 8). It is striking that this use of the phrase εὐαγγελίζεω εὐαγγέλιον, ‘to make a proclamation,’ has little in common with the technical Christian use of the term (found earliest in the Pauline letters), referring to the message of good news about the death and resurrection of Jesus.

“An important lexicographical problem is whether εὐαγγελίζεω means ‘to tell the good news’ (Louw-Nida, § 33.215) and its derivative εὐαγγέλιον means ‘good news’ (Louw-Nida, § 33.17) or these two words (like the Hebrew words בָּשָׂר *bāšār* and בְּשׂוּרָה *bēšōrā*, consistently translated with εὐαγγελ- cognates in the LXX) are ‘neutral’ (i.e., the verb means ‘to proclaim a [positive or negative] message,’ while the noun means ‘a [positive or negative] message’ [KB, 1:165; TDOT 2:313–15]). Not surprisingly, recent lexical surveys of εὐαγγελ- words suggest that they tend to be positive, i.e., to refer to good news (Horsley, *New Docs* 3:11–15).

“A. P. van Schaik (“Ἄλλος ἄγγελος,” 219–21) has suggested that the two scenes in Isa 40:9–10 and 52:7–9 served as models for Rev 14:1–5 and that the occurrence of the term εὐαγγελίζεω in

The phrase εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον, *eternal message*, stresses the eternal nature of the message. It is not something created recently or a message valid only for a short period of time. Both noun and adjective are only used here in Revelation, and are not found together elsewhere in the NT.

The next unusual aspect of this phrase is with the infinitive εὐαγγελίσει. This is the aorist active voice infinitive form of εὐαγγελίζω. This verb is used universally inside the NT as a deponent verb except for Rev. 10:7 (εὐηγγέλισεν) and 14:6 (εὐαγγελίσει) with the aorist active voice form surfaces. These are the only two uses 14:6 was derived from the occurrences of εὐαγγελίζεσθαι in LXX Isa 40:9(2x) and 52:7(2x), thereby linking 14:1–5 to 14:6–7. The noun εὐαγγέλιον is anarthrous and therefore refers to ‘a message’ rather than to ‘the gospel’ (Bousset [1906] 383; Lohse, 85). The same is true of the use of the verb εὐαγγελίζεω in 10:7 (see Comment on 10:7).

“Stuhlmacher has argued for the pre-Pauline Christian usage of εὐαγγέλιον and εὐαγγελίζεω traceable to the early Palestinian Jewish Christian community.

“Examples of this usage occur in Rev 10:7; 14:6 (Evangelium, 1:210–18; Zondervan, TT 43 [1914] 200–201), as well as in several other passages in the NT, i.e., Matt 4:23; 9:35; 11:5 = Luke 7:22; Matt 16:13; 24:14; Mark 1:14 (Evangelium, 209–44). This is doubtful, however, for several reasons: (1) the meanings of εὐαγγελίζεω and εὐαγγέλιον in Rev 10:7; 14:6 are fully explicable from the perspective of Jewish apocalyptic; (2) the terms have no semantic connections to Pauline usage; and (3) the terms belong to the later strata of Revelation and do not constitute evidence for early Christian tradition (Strecker, “Evangelium,” 515–17; id., “εὐαγγέλιον,” EDNT 2:74; followed by Frankmölle, *Evangelium*, 122–23, 130).

“The LXX exclusively used εὐαγγελ- words to translate terms based on the trilateral stem בָּשָׂר *bšr*. The term בְּשׂוּרָה *bēšōrā*, ‘message,’ occurs six times in the OT (2 Sam 4:10; 18:20, 22, 25, 27; 2 Kgs 7:9), always translated in the LXX as εὐαγγέλιον. The use of εὐαγγελίζεω with a cognate accusative in the phrase εὐαγγελίζεω εὐαγγέλιον, ‘to proclaim a message,’ would correspond to the Hebrew phrase בָּשָׂר בְּשׂוּרָה *bēšār bēšōrā* (unattested in the OT), which Stuhlmacher designated ‘translation Greek’ (*Evangelium*, 213–14). In 14:6b, an angel is the proclaimer, and the εὐαγγέλιον is characterized as eternal; i.e., the message always has been and always will be valid.

“In several passages in early Christian and early Jewish literature the verb εὐαγγελίσασθαι is used with angelic messengers as proclaimers (Ant. 5.282; Luke 1:19; 2:10; Gal 1:8–9; see Stuhlmacher, *Evangelium*, 212–13). With reference to the angelic proclamation in Rev 14:6–7, Jeremias has argued that an angelic messenger is also presupposed in the originally independent logia attributed to Jesus in Matt 24:14 = Mark 13:10 (‘The gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations’ [RSV]). Originally Matt 24:14 = Mark 13:10 envisaged not a gentile mission (as they do in their present context), he argues, but rather the angelic proclamation of the victory of God in the last days (Joachim Jeremias, *Jesus’ Promise*, 22–23, 69). However, since the proclaimers in these texts are not explicitly identified, it is hardly credible to suggest that they are angels.

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 825–826.]

of εὐαγγελίζω in Revelation. In 10:7 εὐηγγέλισεν specifies God's prior announcement to the prophets of τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ and is to be realized in the blowing of the seventh trumpet. Further mudding up the pie is the combination usage of the cognant forms εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον εὐαγγελίσει, *an eternal message to proclaim*, together, This never happens elsewhere in the NT with these two forms.²²

In the rest of the NT both εὐαγγελίζομαι and εὐαγγέλιον represent positive messages of salvation being offered through Jesus Christ. But the context here, and in particular the close linkage to 8:13, suggest a negative message in the usage in 14:6-7. The very limited LXX use of the εὐαγγελ- stem, especially for the Hebrew words בָּשַׂר *bāšar* (to announce; 23x) and בְּשׂוּרָה *bēšōrā* (message from εὐαγγέλια; 1x), reflect a neutral understanding as to the positive or negative nature of the announcement; it all depends on the content.

All of this evidence strongly suggests cumulatively that John is not using the εὐαγγελ- stem here with the same meaning as found elsewhere in the NT. Rather, he is reaching out to the LXX background where an εὐαγγέλιον message can be negative, and this is the likelihood here. When linked to 8:13,²³ the eagle's message of οὐαὶ οὐαὶ οὐαὶ, *woe! woe! woe!*, defines the tone of the demand of repentance in verse seven, not as a call to repentance but rather a declaration of coming doom based upon the evil world's refusal to repent and turn to God.²⁴ This first message of the three sets the stage for the clearly negative thrusts of the second and third messages. When doom comes, the evil world will know why it is happening to them: they did not repent and turn to God!

The targets of this message are defined in a two-fold manner in order to be completely clear about whom the message comes to:²⁵

²²The more natural pattern is κηρύσσω τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, proclaiming the Gospel, as in Mt. 4:23; 9:35; 11:5 (// Lk. 7:22); Mt. 16:23; 24:14; Mk. 1:14.

²³Rev. 8:13b. 8:13b. οὐαὶ οὐαὶ οὐαὶ τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐκ τῶν λοιπῶν φωνῶν τῆς σάλπιγγος τῶν τριῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν μελλόντων σαλπίζειν, *Woe, woe, woe to those dwelling upon the earth at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are going to blow.*

²⁴This usage is consistent with the Jewish apocalyptic writings in Greek during this same period of time, where angelic messengers deliver messages of doom with the LXX εὐαγγελ- stem language..

²⁵“The universal audience addressed by the angel is expressed in two parallel phrases. The first phrase, οἱ καθήμενοι ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ‘those who dwell on the earth,’ is found in LXX Jer 32:29, 30 [MT 25:29, 30]; cf. 51:13, 26 [MT 44:13, 26], alongside the expression οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν γῆν (LXX Jer 1:14; 4:7 [var. lect.]; 6:12; 10:18; 13:13; 29:2[MT 47:2]), indicating that they are virtually equivalent. The second phrase, πᾶν ἔθνος καὶ φυλὴν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ λαόν, ‘every nation and tribe and language and people,’ occurs

a) ἐπὶ τοὺς καθήμενους ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, *to those dwelling upon the earth*. This phrase is relatively common in the LXX as a universal designation of all people on the earth.²⁶ But it is the only time that John uses it in Revelation. His use of κάθημαι (33x) is focused on a person ‘sitting’ (32 of 33x) rather than ‘living.’ Therefore, the parallel phrase that follows helped define clearly what John meant by this first phrase.

The use of this unusual LXX oriented phrase was evidently intended by John to stress the OT source of his reference. In order to make a strong inclusive statement, a standard Hebrew synonymous parallelism strophe is used, with the second stanza renaming and clarifying the meaning of the first stanza. Together they amounted to what would be achieved by **bold face** print in today's world.

b) καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶν ἔθνος καὶ φυλὴν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ λαόν, *and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people*. This second stanza in the parallelism is relatively common inside Revelation and draws upon Daniel for its terminology.²⁷ Here the angelic message is delivered

frequently with variations in Revelation (see Comment on 5:9). In view of this universal audience for the proclamation of the gospel, a frequently cited parallel to Rev 14:6–7 is Matt 24:14, ‘This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come’ (cf. Mark 13:10). The uncompromising universality of the proclamation of the message appealing to people to repent in view of the impending eschatological judgment of God is contrary to the normal parochialism inherent in Jewish apocalyptic literature, in which only a specific ethnic group, usually a Jewish remnant, is the object of God's saving activity in the world (Pss. Sol. 17–18; 2 Apoc. Bar. 53–57; 4 Ezra 10–13; Apoc. Abr. 21–32). The author refuses to espouse religious nationalism, whether Jewish or pagan, and instead categorizes people only in terms of their faithfulness to the Lamb (Rev 7:9–10, 14, 17; 12:11; 13:16–17; 14:1, 4–5; 19:6–8) or their failure to repent and their adherence to the beast (9:20–21; 13:3–4, 8, 16–17; 14:9–11; 20:15).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 826–827.]

²⁶“The first phrase, οἱ καθήμενοι ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ‘those who dwell on the earth,’ is found in LXX Jer 32:29, 30[MT 25:29, 30]; cf. 51:13, 26[MT 44:13, 26], alongside the expression οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν γῆν (LXX Jer 1:14; 4:7 [var. lect.]; 6:12; 10:18; 13:13; 29:2[MT 47:2]), indicating that they are virtually equivalent.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 826–827.]

²⁷“This polysyndetic list of four ethnic units, which cumulatively emphasize universality, is probably based on the frequent mention of the three ethnic groups of ‘peoples, nations, and languages’ in Daniel (3:4 [LXX has four ethnic units], 7, 29[LXX v 96]; 5:19; 6:25[LXX v 26]; 7:14; cf. Jdt 3:8, ‘nations, languages, and tribes’). The LXX expands the threefold Danielic phrase into a fourfold phrase in Dan 3:4, ἔθνη καὶ χῶραι, λαοὶ καὶ γλώσσαι, ‘nations and lands, peoples and languages.’ The Tg. Esth I. 1:1 has a similar enumeration of four synonymous nouns: עמיה אומיה כל רלישניה ואפרכיה, ‘all peoples, nations, languages, and provinces’ (see Grossfeld, Esther, 5, 40; id., Two Targums, 28), while the Tg.

to all people on the earth, particularly those outside of Christ. The believing community has already heard and heeded the call to repentance. Thus for them it constitutes a positive message. But for evil people persisting in their ungodly ways the message will become one of impending doom, in that it asserts universal accountability of all people to repent if they are to find eternal life.

The *angelic speech* is presented in verse seven. It consists of three demands upon all people: φοβήθητε, **fear**, δότε, **give**, and προσκυνήσατε, **worship**.²⁸ All three

Neb. Joel 2:25 has ‘you were pillaged by peoples, tongues, governments, and kingdoms’ (tr. Cathcart-Gordon, Targum). Bauckham points out that Gen 10:5, 20, 31, in the context of the table of nations, contains the only list of four ethnic units in the OT, e.g., v 31, ‘These are the sons of Shem, by their families, their languages, their lands, and their nations,’ while another fourfold phrase is used in 4 Ezra 3:7 to describe the descendants of Adam: ‘nations and tribes, peoples and clans’ (‘Conversion,’ 328). The number seventy, used in Judaism for the total number of nations of the world, is derived from the total number of nations mentioned in the Table of Nations in Gen 10. Similar lists of three or (more frequently) four ethnic groups are found in six other passages in Revelation, always in a polysyndetic list, but always in a different order (see Bauckham, ‘Conversion,’ 326–37): (1) Rev 7:9, nations, tribes, peoples, tongues; (2) Rev 10:11, peoples, nations, tongues, kings; (3) Rev 11:9, peoples, tribes, tongues, nations; (4) Rev 13:7, tribe, people, language, nation; (5) Rev 14:6, nation, tribe, tongue, people; (6) Rev 17:15, peoples, crowds, nations, tongues. The terms ‘people,’ ‘nation,’ and ‘tribe’ are used in Josephus Ant. 7.356 as synonyms for Israel or parts of Israel. Isa 66:18 predicts the gathering of ‘all nations and languages,’ while Zech 8:22 expects ‘many peoples and strong nations ... to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem.’ Shorter lists are more frequent, e.g., ‘peoples and nations’ (Pss. Sol. 17:29). These lists are meant to emphasize universality. The fact that Christians were drawn from many ethnic groups in the Roman empire but did not (unlike most Hellenistic religions) constitute an ethnic group themselves led early Christian authors to refer to Christianity as a new people or a *tertium genus*, ‘third race,’ in contrast to Jews and Greeks (Origen Contra Cels. 8.2; Justin Dial. 119; Diogn. 5–6; Tertullian Ad nat.M 1.8). Paul referred to ‘Jews, Greeks, and the Church of God’ (1 Cor 10:32), and Christians also regarded themselves as aliens whose true citizenship was in heaven (Phil 3:20; 1 Pet 1:17; 2:11; see Elliott, 1 Peter, 21–58). Ignatius claimed that Christianity (Χριστιανισμός, the first use of that term) was made up of people from *πᾶσα γλῶσσα*, ‘every language’ (Magn. 10:3). A similar series of two social groups is found in a decree of the koinon of Asia from the first century B.C. (Reynolds, Aphrodisias, document 5, line 24, τοῖς ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ πᾶσι δῆμοις τε καὶ ἔθνεσιν, ‘to every people and nation in Asia’).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, vol. 52A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 361–362.]

²⁸“This invitation to worship the true God because he created the heavens and the earth (v 7) is a theme found in Deut 10:12–15 and can be construed as a positive formulation of the third commandment (Exod 20:4–6). This describes the content of the message (εὐαγγέλιον) proclaimed by the angel; i.e., it is a call to repentance in view of God’s judgment, which has arrived (v 7b). The conversion of the inhabitants of the city who escaped destruction in 11:13 is described with similar language: καὶ ἔδωκαν δόξαν τῷ θεῷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ‘and they gave glory to the God of heaven’ (see

are aorist imperative verbs, which intensified the demand to a high level of urgency. This message grows out of the language of the OT, rather than the Christian preaching of the Gospel in the first century. It strongly depends upon 1 Chron. 16:8–13 (LXX) and Psalm 96. Presented in the strongest terms is God’s demand upon all humanity for commitment and loyalty to Him.

The motivation behind these urgent demands is ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα τῆς κρίσεως αὐτοῦ, **for the hour of His judgment has come**. John will go on to describe this in terms of both temporal judgments (vv. 8–11) and eternal judgment (chapters 19–20).²⁹ The eschatological judgment of God is a major theme in Revelation.³⁰

Comment on 11:13). This is not the gospel of early Christianity but the message proclaimed by Hellenistic Judaism and taken over by early Christianity, reflections of which are found in the NT (1 Thess 1:9–10; Acts 14:15–17; 17:22–31).

“This verse contains four key words: φοβεῖν, ‘fear,’ δόξα, ‘glory,’ κρίσις, ‘judgment,’ and προσκυνεῖν, ‘worship.’ Their use in tandem suggests that the author is drawing on LXX 1 Chr 16:8–36, in addition to Ps 96 (Altink, AUSS 24 [1986] 187–96). The notion of the ‘fear of God’ (φόβος τοῦ θεοῦ), more accurately rendered ‘reverence for God’ or ‘respect for God,’ is a conception found frequently in the OT and refers to the awe and reverence that people should have toward God’s authority and that enables them to obey his commands (Gen 22:12; Jer 32:40; Ps 111:10; Prov 8:13; T. Reub. 4:1; T. Levi 13:1; T. Sim. 3:4; Acts 9:31). The phrase ‘the fear of God’ or ‘the fear of the Lord’ is often used in a way synonymous with true faith (Ps 34:11). The phrase φοβούμενοι τὸν θεὸν or σεβόμενοι τὸν θεὸν, ‘God-fearers,’ is a technical term used in Luke-Acts of pagans who have become adherents to Judaism (Acts 10:2, 22; 13:16, 26).”

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 827.]

²⁹“The urgency of the call for conversion in v 7a implies that the day of God’s judgment of the world has already arrived, though an aorist verb ἦλθεν, ‘has come,’ is obviously used in a proleptic or anticipatory sense. The primary interpretive problem centers on how repentance or conversion remains a real possibility if the eschatological judgment of God has in fact arrived. No other exhortation to repent in the OT or NT suggests that the eschatological judgment has already arrived, though in Mark 1:15 Jesus demands repentance because the Kingdom of God ἤγγικεν, either ‘has arrived’ or ‘has come near’ (survey of interpretations in Guelich, Mark, 43–44). While the aorist verb ἦλθεν could be used here as a perfectum confidentiae, ‘perfect of assurance,’ i.e., a prophetic perfect (see Comment on 14:8a), that does not really solve the problem. The aorist verb ἦλθεν is probably used here with perfective value (Mussies, Morphology, 339; cf. Turner, Syntax, 72); i.e., the emphasis is on the continuing implications of the arrival of the eschatological judgment.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 827–828.]

³⁰“ἦλθεν is used in the context of eschatological judgment several times elsewhere in Revelation: (1) 6:17, ‘the great day of wrath has come [ἦλθεν]’ (part of a collective cry of anguish uttered by those experiencing the plagues unleashed at the opening of the sixth seal); (2) 11:18, καὶ ἦλθεν ἡ ὀργὴ σου, ‘your wrath has come’ (part of a hymn chanted by the twenty-four elders following the sounding of the seventh trumpet); (3) 18:10, μὰ ὥρα ἦλθεν ἡ

The God demanding our loyalty is τῷ ποιήσαντι τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν καὶ πηγὰς ὑδάτων, *the One who made the heaven and the earth, sea, and springs of water.*³¹ As divine Creator of everything He justifiably makes demands upon us as a part of His creation. And he will hold us completely accountable to heed His demands.

2) *The second angel, v. 8*

8 Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος δεύτερος ἠκολούθησεν λέγων· ἔπεσεν ἔπεσεν Βαβυλῶν ἡ μεγάλη ἢ ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς πεπότικεν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.

8 Then another angel, a second, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

The second angel (ἄγγελος δεύτερος) is presented as following the first one (ἠκολούθησεν). No *angelic action* form is used here. Instead, this close linking of κρίσις σου, ‘in one hour your judgment came’ (part of a collective speech of the kings of the earth who expressed shock at the sudden fall of Babylon); and (4) 14:15, ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα θερίσαι, ‘the hour for harvesting has come’ (part of an angelic speech providing the reason for harvesting the earth).

“The noun κρίσις, ‘judgment,’ occurs here in the first of four occurrences in Revelation (see also 16:7; 18:10; 19:2). That it is articular means that it refers to the final day of judgment, which was a centrally important part of early Jewish and early Christian eschatological expectation (see the texts listed below). In Jewish and Christian eschatological traditions, the phrase ‘the hour of [his] judgment’ is rare, though the synonymous phrase ἡ ἡμέρα τῆς κρίσεως, ‘day of judgment,’ which refers to the final eschatological judgment, occurs frequently (the Hebrew equivalent, *yōm hammišpāt*, occurs in the Dead Sea Scrolls): 1QpHab 12:14; 13:2; 1QpMic 10:6–7; Jdt 16:17; Frag. Jub. 3:9; 10:7 (Denis, *Fragmenta*, 77, 86); Jub. 24:30; Apoc. Adam 12:2; 26:4; T. Levi 1:1; 1 Enoch 10:12; 16:1; 19:1; 22:4, 13; 27:3, 4; 100:4; 104:5; cf. 97:3; 98:8; 4 Ezra 7:38 (die iudicii), 102, 104, 113; 12:34; Gk Ap. Ezra 2:27, 29; 3 Apoc. Bar. 1:7; cf. ‘day of great judgment’ or ‘the great day of judgment’ in 1 Enoch 10:6; 19:1; 22:11; 84:4; 94:9; 98:10; 99:15; Matt 10:15; 11:22, 24; 12:36; 2 Pet 2:9; 3:7; 1 John 4:17; ‘the day of his judgment’ in Gk Ap. Ezra 7:11 (see Volz, *Eschatologie*, 272–309).”

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 828.]

³¹“The ‘sea and the springs’ constitute one sector of the cosmos, since the ancients thought that the sea, rivers, and springs were all fed by the subterranean ocean (Job 38:16; Stadelmann, *World*, 154–64). The phrase πηγὰς ὑδάτων, literally ‘springs of water’ or ‘springs’ (the same phrase occurs in 8:3), refers to sources of water flowing from below ground level into pools and should be distinguished from fountains and wells, which are constructed by people (see Louw-Nida, § 1.79). Reliable sources of water were important for any urban area, so much so that the travel guide Pausanias (second century A.D.) defined a πόλις (city-state) as consisting of government offices, a gymnasium, a theater, a market, and water descending to a fountain, as through an aqueduct (10.4.1).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 828–829.]

the two angels suggests rather clearly this his message is an immediate continuation of that of the first angel.

The message of doom is the heart of his message. The earlier message of doom by the flying eagle in 8:13 now takes on more detail in a “one-two” punch in the messages of the second and third angels.³²

The short declaration, ἔπεσεν ἔπεσεν Βαβυλῶν ἡ μεγάλη ἢ ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς πεπότικεν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, “*Fallen, fallen is the great Babylon, which out of the wine of the wrath of her evil have all nations drunk,*” summarizes what is described in much greater detail in 17:1–18:24. In 17:1, one of the seven trumpet angels (εἷς ἐκ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλων τῶν ἐχόντων τὰς ἑπτὰ φιάλας) describes her as τῆς πόρνῆς τῆς μεγάλης, *the great whore*. Then in 18:1–2, another angel (ἄλλον ἄγγελον; perhaps the second angel here in 14:8) descends from heaven with a victory chant that begins with ἔπεσεν ἔπεσεν Βαβυλῶν ἡ μεγάλη, *Fallen, fallen is the great Babylon*. In great detail he predicts the destruction of Babylon (18:2–24). This is followed by a great celebration of her destruction by the multitude of saints in heaven (19:1–8). Then Christ riding the white horse of victory precedes to destroy Babylon and the nations loyal to her (19:11–21).

One should note that the declarations in 14:8 and 18:1–19:8 only anticipate the destruction of Babylon. But in the use of the past tense aorist verbs her destruction is so certain as to already be an accomplished fact. Thus celebrations occur in anticipation of this destruction, rather than after it happens. Of course, the heavenly celebrations in 19:1–8 occur as apocalyptic vision in which there is no time limitation preventing the heavenly saints from seeing the entire perspective of events from beginning to end. Finally, God’s people will be done with this source of great evil and harm to them.

The use of Babylon as a symbol of an evil empire by John comes out of Jeremiah 51:7–8 (LXX).

Jer. 51:6–8. 6 καὶ ἔσταξεν ἡ ὀργή μου καὶ ὁ θυμὸς μου καὶ ἐξεκαύθη ἐν πόλεσιν Ιουδα καὶ ἐξωθεν Ιερουσαλημ, καὶ ἐγενήθησαν εἰς ἐρήμωσιν καὶ εἰς ἄβατον ὡς ἡ ἡμέρα αὕτη.† 7 καὶ νῦν οὕτως εἶπεν κύριος παντοκράτωρ “Ἰνα τί ὑμεῖς ποιεῖτε κακὰ μεγάλα ἐπὶ ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν ἐκκόψαι ὑμῶν ἄνθρωπον καὶ γυναῖκα, νήπιον καὶ θηλάζοντα ἐκ μέσου Ιουδα πρὸς τὸ μὴ καταλειφθῆναι ὑμῶν μηδένα,† 8 παραπικρᾶναί με ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τῶν χειρῶν ὑμῶν θυμιᾶν θεοῖς ἑτέροις ἐν γῆ Αἰγύπτῳ, εἰς ἣν εἰσήλθατε ἐνοικεῖν”³²**Rev. 8:13.** 13 Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἤκουσα ἐνὸς ἀετοῦ πετομένου ἐν μεσουρανήματι λέγοντος φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· οὐαὶ οὐαὶ οὐαὶ τοῖς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐκ τῶν λοιπῶν φωνῶν τῆς σάλπιγγος τῶν τριῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν μελλόντων σαλπίζειν.

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

ἐκεῖ, ἵνα ἐκκοπῆτε καὶ ἵνα γένησθε εἰς κατάραν καὶ εἰς ὀνειδισμόν ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν τῆς γῆς;†

6 Flee from the midst of Babylon, save your lives, each of you! Do not perish because of her guilt, for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; he is repaying her what is due. 7 Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord's hand, making all the earth drunken; the nations drank of her wine, and so the nations went mad. 8 Suddenly Babylon has fallen and is shattered; wail for her! Bring balm for her wound; perhaps she may be healed

Additionally the double verb ἔπεσεν ἔπεσεν, *fallen, fallen*, reflects influence from Isa. 21:9 LXX, Πέπτωκεν Βαβυλῶν, καὶ πάντα τὰ ἀγάλματα αὐτῆς καὶ τὰ χειροποίητα αὐτῆς συνετριβήσαν εἰς τὴν γῆν, *Fallen, fallen is Babylon; and all the images of her gods lie shattered on the ground.* (= Heb., בָּבֶל נָפְלָה נָפְלָה נָפְלָה, *fallen fallen is Babylon*) Clearly John is influenced by the Hebrew text here.

But clearly he is not referring to the Babylon of his day, that was little more than a dusty outpost in the middle of the desert. As the above discussion underscores in the [Internal History](#) section, Babylon at the end of the first century was a commonly used code word for Rome both inside the NT and mostly in the contemporary literature of the time, both Jewish and Greco-Roman.³³ The depiction of “Babylon” especially in 17:9-12

³³“Babylon, a symbolic name for Rome, occurs here as the first of six occurrences in Revelation (see Rev 16:19; 17:6; 18:2, 10, 21). Babylon and Rome are comparable because both were centers for world empires and both captured Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. The fall of the urbs aeterna, the ‘eternal city,’ as Rome was designated, would have been virtually unthinkable for Romans (the sack of Rome by the Goths in A.D. 410 spurred Augustine to write *The City of God* in A.D. 413–26 to answer pagans who credited the disaster to the replacement of the old cult with the Christian religion). As a cipher for Rome, the term ‘Babylon’ occurs occasionally in Jewish apocalyptic literature, though the fact that all the references occur in literature that postdates A.D. 70, the year when Jerusalem fell to Titus, has suggested to many scholars that the equation Babylon = Rome was not made until after that date and suggests that Revelation must have been written after that date (Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 57–58). 1 Pet 5:13, written ca. A.D. 80, may be the earliest application of the cover name ‘Babylon’ for Rome, an equation made by Clement Alex. in Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 2.15.2) and also reflected in the substitution of Ῥώμη for Βαβυλῶν in the minuscule 2138 and the addition of ἐν Ῥώμῃ in two other minuscules. ‘Babylon’ is the location of the author in 1 Pet 5:13 and corresponds to the location of the addressees in the ‘dispersion’ (1 Pet 1:1). Since no opposition to ‘Babylon’ is expressed in 1 Peter, ‘Babylon’ primarily means ‘those in exile’ and is not a pejorative code name for Rome (Souza Nogueira, “Widerstand,” 154–55). The models for the use of ‘Babylon’ in 1 Peter are the letters of Jeremiah purportedly sent to the exiles in Babylon in Jer 29:1–23 (LXX 36:1–23) and 2 Apoc. Bar. 78–87. The fictional setting of 4 Ezra and 2 Apocalypse of Baruch is Babylon, which the authors equate with Rome, though writing in the late first and early second century A.D., respectively (4 Ezra 3:1–2, 28–31; 16:44, 46; 2 Apoc. Bar. 10:2; 11:1; 67:7).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas:

leaves no doubt that John is describing the Rome of his day. The destruction of Rome is asserted here by John as well as in 16:19; 17:16-17; and 18:1-24. For John and his initial readers Rome as the center of the empire stood as a symbol of opposition to God and all that God stood for. Thus it was doomed for destruction and would face the severest of divine judgments at the end of time. The term Βαβυλῶν ἡ μεγάλη, *Babylon the great*, surfaces four times in Revelation: 14:8; 16:19; 17:7; 18:2 and could well have been taken from the Aramaic בַּבֶּל רַבְתָּא *bābel rabtā* in Dan. 4:27.

All the nations (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) are said to πεπότικεν, *have drunk*, ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς, *from the wine of the wrath of her evil*. The parallel in 18:3, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς πέπτωκαν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, *for out of the wrath of her evil have all nations drunk*, is somewhat helpful. The *wine*, τοῦ οἴνου, here equals her τοῦ θυμοῦ, *her wrath / passion*.³⁴ This is in turn defined via an objective genitive τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς, *for her evil / immorality*. Babylon is pictured in chapter seventeen as a giant whore who manages to get rulers and wealthy people drunk on her wine of passion for immorality.³⁵ Thus she stands as the very epitome of evil and corruption, whom God as a just God is obligated to destroy.

The use of *wine*, τοῦ οἴνου, as a symbol of how Babylon succeeded in corrupting the world, also comes out of the OT, in particular Jer. 28:7, ποτήριον χρυσοῦν Βαβυλῶν ἐν χειρὶ κυρίου μεθύσκον πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν· ἀπὸ τοῦ οἴνου αὐτῆς ἐπίοσαν ἔθνη, διὰ τοῦτο ἐσαλεύθησαν, *Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord's hand, making all the earth drunken; the nations drank of her wine, and so the nations went mad* (MT 51:7). This very effective metaphor uses drunkenness as the vehicle of deception and manipulative control. The rest of the world became dependent upon her for their livelihood and existence.

The second angel pronounces her coming doom. But this is just cutting off of the snake's head. The rest

Word, Incorporated, 1998), 829–830.]

³⁴Behind τοῦ θυμοῦ is literally ‘her heat.’ The English word ‘thermal’ is derived from this Greek word. This literal meaning can in turn refer figuratively either anger or passion, or both at the same time. The use of the verb ἐπόρνευσαν from the same stem as πορνείας in 18:3b, καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς μετ’ αὐτῆς ἐπόρνευσαν, *and the kings of the earth committed immorality with her*, suggests that passion is the dominant idea in τοῦ θυμοῦ. Additionally, the image of Babylon as a whore in 17:1-18, in which the phrase μεθ’ ἧς ἐπόρνευσαν οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐμεθύσθησαν οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν γῆν ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς, *with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and with the wine of whose fornication the inhabitants of the earth have become drunk* (v. 2), confirm this meaning as the intended one.

³⁵Numerous aspects of this evil immorality are described in chapters seventeen and eighteen, and these go well beyond sexual activity. The sexual image of whore is an umbrella label covering all forms of corruption and evil.

of the snake must be destroyed as well, and this is the message of the third angel.

3) *The third angel, vv. 9-11*

9 Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος τρίτος ἠκολούθησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· εἴ τις προσκυνεῖ τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ καὶ λαμβάνει χάραγμα ἐπὶ τοῦ μετώπου αὐτοῦ ἢ ἐπὶ τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ, 10 καὶ αὐτὸς πίεται ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ κεκρασμένου ἀκράτου ἐν τῷ ποτηρίῳ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ βασανισθήσεται ἐν πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ ἐνώπιον ἁγγέλων ἁγίων καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἀρνίου. 11 καὶ ὁ καπνὸς τοῦ βασανισμοῦ αὐτῶν εἰς αἰῶνας αἰώνων ἀναβαίνει, καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἀνάπαυσιν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς οἱ προσκυνοῦντες τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ καὶ εἴ τις λαμβάνει τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ.

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

Not just Rome and her inhabitants are doomed for destruction, but also all those in the world who are loyal to her are headed for destruction as well.

The introduction of the third angel does not make use of the *angelic angel* form, but does add some qualifiers signaling a terminus point grouping the three angels and their messages together as one unit with one basic message. The signals include ἄγγελος τρίτος, *third angel*, thus linking this one back to the preceding two angels. This is further stressed by the repeating of ἠκολούθησεν, *he followed*, and this time with the dative of direct object αὐτοῖς, *them*, implying the two previous angels. Finally, the phrase λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ, *saying in a loud voice*, duplicates the same phrase in v. 6 for the first angel. These serve something as literary 'book ends' pulling vv. 6-11 together as a unified expression.

The *angelic speech* surfaces in vv. 9b-11 in the form of two Greek sentences: 9b-10 and 11 (statement #s F - I in the above *diagram*). First he identifies the targets of the 'wine of God's wrath,' τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ. In the second sentence he stresses the impact of the torments of God upon these evil people.

a) εἴ τις προσκυνεῖ τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ καὶ λαμβάνει χάραγμα ἐπὶ τοῦ μετώπου αὐτοῦ ἢ ἐπὶ τὴν

χεῖρα αὐτοῦ, καὶ αὐτὸς πίεται ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ κεκρασμένου ἀκράτου ἐν τῷ ποτηρίῳ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ βασανισθήσεται ἐν πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ ἐνώπιον ἁγγέλων ἁγίων καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἀρνίου, *Those who worship the beast and its image, and receive a mark on their foreheads or on their hands, they will also drink the wine of God's wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and they will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.*

First the targets of judgment are identified in this lengthy first class conditional Greek sentence. The if-clause εἴ τις προσκυνεῖ τὸ θηρίον... (v. 9) assumes that some are guilty of the specified actions. These actions are προσκυνεῖ τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ καὶ λαμβάνει χάραγμα ἐπὶ τοῦ μετώπου αὐτοῦ ἢ ἐπὶ τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ, *worships the beast and his image and receives the mark upon his forehead or upon his hand*. These two actions -- worship and receives the mark -- are described as actions promoted by the second beast in 13:11-18. Thus covered by this are all the non-believing people of the earth who have rejected the ways of God as defined in the message of the first angel (14:7). These same two categories will be repeated in the second sentence (v. 11) in a participle phrase, οἱ προσκυνοῦντες τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ καὶ εἴ τις λαμβάνει τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, *those worshipping the beast and his image, and if any receives the mark of his name*. Altogether this double reference will be used several times in Revelation to identify the evil people of this world: 13:11-18; 14:9-11; 16:2; 19:20, 20:4.

The guilty ones identified in the sentence protasis are now made to experience something totally unexpected (sentence apodosis in v. 10). Just as they 'worshiped' and 'received the mark' they now must 'drink' (πίεται) and 'be tormented' (βασανισθήσεται). The compound if-clause is matched by the compound main clause. The two if-clause potential present tense verbs προσκυνεῖ and λαμβάνει stress ongoing actions of worshipping and receiving the mark. But the then-clause contains two future tense verbs πίεται and βασανισθήσεται stressing the certain outcomes of the present tense verb actions. In the divine judgment they will drink and be tormented.

With clear irony these who (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) drank the wine of the passion for the immorality of Babylon (ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς πεπότικεν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, v. 8), now will be made to drink the wine of God's wrath: καὶ αὐτὸς πίεται ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ. In a clear play off the double meaning of τοῦ θυμοῦ between *passion for* and *anger of*, John indicates through the angel's message that the evil world will have the tables turned on them in divine judgment. But even more so, John defines this judgment further as

having been poured out into the cup which is God's wrath, τοῦ κεκρασμένου ἀκράτου ἐν τῷ ποτηρίῳ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ. The cup of God's wrath is a common image across the OT.³⁶ The image of unmixed, ἀκράτου, means undiluted in the sense of the full fury of God's wrath.³⁷ Also important is the imagery of cup, τῷ ποτηρίῳ, in expressions like this one, which signals either destiny or violent death. The frequent occurrence of τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ [τῆς ὀργῆς] τοῦ θεοῦ in Revelation should also be noted.³⁸ This is not a minor theme in Revelation. The

³⁶“The metaphor of the ‘cup of wrath’ is found with some frequency in the OT: Pss 11:6; 75:9; Isa 51:17, 22; Jer 49:12; 51:7; Lam 4:21; Ezek 23:31–33; Hab 2:15–16; Obad 16; Zech 12:2 (Ringgren, SEÅ 17 [1953] 19–30; A. T. Hanson, *Wrath*, 27–36; Brongers, OTS 15 [1969] 177–92; McKane, VT 3 [1980] 474–92). The common element in these OT passages is that Yahweh is presented as compelling his enemies to drink a cup resulting in their drunkenness, which is considered a judgment (Holladay, *Jeremiah* 1, 673).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 833.]

³⁷“That the wine is ἀκρατος, ‘unmixed,’ emphasizes the potency of the mixture, since Greeks customarily diluted wine with water in a special vessel called a κρατήρ, ‘crater,’ ‘mixing bowl,’ with equal parts of water and wine or three parts water to two parts wine (Blümner, *Greeks*, 209–10) or even one part wine to three parts water (Seltman, *Wine*, 91). Applied to wine, the adjective ἀκρατος means ‘pure,’ ‘unmixed,’ ‘undiluted,’ and hence ‘extremely strong’ (Herodotus 1.207; Xenophon *Anab.* 4.5.27; Theocritus *Idylls* 2.152; 3 *Macc* 5:2); the adjective ἄμικτος is used in the same way (Plutarch *De garrul.* 6.504e). The phrase ἀκρατος ὀργή, ‘untempered rage,’ occurs in several ancient writers (Aeschylus *Prom.* 678; Aristotle *Rhet.* 3.3 [1406A.9–10]); *Ant.* 5.150; 17.148). There are two close parallels in the LXX: Jer 32:15 [MT 25:15], Λαβὲ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ ἀκράτου τοῦτου ἐκ χειρὸς μου καὶ ποτιεῖς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, ‘Take the unmixed cup of wine from my hand and make all the nations drink,’ and Ps 74:9, ὅτι ποτήριον ἐν χειρὶ κυρίου οἴνου ἀκράτου πλήρες κεράσματα, ‘because the cup poured full of unmixed wine is in the hand of the Lord.’ In both passages the ἀκρατος οἶνος is a metaphor for severe judgment.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 833.]

³⁸The phrase τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ [τῆς ὀργῆς] τοῦ θεοῦ occurs several times in Revelation:

14:10a:	ἐκ [some]	τοῦ οἴνου of wine	τοῦ θυμοῦ of fury	τοῦ θεοῦ of God	
14:10b:	τῷ ποτηρίῳ the cup		τῆς ὀργῆς of anger	αὐτοῦ his	
14:19:	τὴν ληνὸν the press		τοῦ θυμοῦ of fury	τοῦ θεοῦ of God	
15:7:	φιάλας bowls		τοῦ θυμοῦ of fury	τοῦ θεοῦ of God	
16:1:	τὰς ... φιάλας the bowls		τοῦ θυμοῦ of fury	τοῦ θεοῦ of God	
16:19:	τὸ ποτήριον the cup	τοῦ οἴνου of wine	τοῦ θυμοῦ of fury	τῆς ὀργῆς of anger	αὐτοῦ his

occasional play on θυμός and ὀργή, especially in does not seem to follow the classical Greek pattern where θυμός is the inner emotion and ὀργή is the outward expression. Instead, John follows the LXX where they are virtually interchangeable.³⁹

Additionally the close link between θυμός / ὀργή on the one hand and δίκαιος / δικαιοσύνη (just / righteousness) must be noted in scripture, particularly when it comes to God. A just and holy God is deeply offended and angered by injustice, ἀδικία, and He holds the offender full accountable for such actions.⁴⁰ This is

19:15: τὴν ληνὸν τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς ὀργῆς τοῦ θεοῦ
the press of wine of fury of wrath of God

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 834.]

³⁹“In classical Greek θυμός is used of the inner emotion of anger, while ὀργή is used for its external expression, though these terms are used interchangeably in the LXX as they are in Revelation (14:10; 16:19; 19:15; see S. H. Travis, ABD 6:996). The emphasis on the wrath of God, provoked by wicked behavior, which results in the judgment of the offenders, is a biblical motif found frequently in Revelation (14:10; 19; 15:7; 16:1, 19; 19:15). The passion of anger and the justice of appropriate retaliation was much discussed in Greek thought. A widespread assumption about human anger was that, if justified, the angry person should seek to harm his or her enemy (Pindar *Pyth.* 2.83–85; Euripides *Medea* 807–10; Ion 1046–47; Plato *Meno* 71E; Isocrates *Ad Dem.* 26), a sentiment echoed in the OT (Exod 21:24–25; Lev 24:19–20; Deut 19:21). Socrates, if the report in Plato *Critias* 48B is historical, was the first Greek thinker to argue that ‘we should never return an injustice [οὐδαμῶς δεῖ ἀνταδικεῖν]’ and that ‘we should never return evil for evil [ἀντικακουργεῖν]’ (cf. Vlastos, *Socrates*, 179–99). Following this line, the Epicureans regarded anger as an expression of weakness, not in accord with a condition of blessedness for either humans or gods (Nussbaum, *Desire*, 239–79). They were particularly insistent that the gods, who dwell in unperturbed peace and tranquillity, are never angry and do not punish people (Diogenes Laertius 10.76–77; Lucretius *De rerum nat.* 6.71–79). In the first of his *Kyriai Doxai* or *Principal Opinions* (Diogenes Laertius 10.139; preserved also in Diogenes *Oen. Frag.* 24 [C. W. Chilton, ed., *Diogenis Oenoandensis fragmenta* [Leipzig: Teubner, 1967]]), Epicurus insists that ‘a blessed and eternal being has no trouble himself and brings no trouble upon any other being; hence he is exempt from movements of anger and partiality, for every such movement implies weakness.’ Injunctions against retaliation are reflected in the teaching of Jesus (Matt 5:38–42 = Luke 6:27–31) and elsewhere in the NT (Rom 12:17; 1 Cor 6:7; 1 Pet 2:19–20; 3:9).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 834–835.]

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a major theme in Revelation that God comes to defend His people who have been abused by evil people.

The second consequence of worshiping the beast and receiving his mark is βασανισθήσεται ἐν πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ ἐνώπιον ἀγγέλων ἁγίων καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἁρνίου, and they will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. The future passive βασανισθήσεται comes from βασανίζω with the meaning to torture.⁴¹ The word group is hardly used in the LXX due to a lack of Hebrew equivalents. The secular Greek background to ‘testing by the proving stone,’ a rack for torturing slaves, provides the background for this word group mostly in reference to eschatological Hell and the torments associated with it. Four of the five NT uses of βασανίζω occur in Revelation in this regard: 9:5; 11:10; 14:10; 20:10. The exception is 12:2 where βασανίζω defines the agony of a mother giving birth.

Here the modifiers of βασανισθήσεται add vividness to the image of torments. First, ἐν πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ, in fire and sulfur. The point here is to intensify the image of suffering with the verb action.⁴² Second, ἐνώπιον

never return an injustice [οὐδαμῶς δεῖ ἀνταδικεῖν]’ and that ‘we should never return evil for evil [ἀντικακουργεῖν]’ (cf. Vlastos, Socrates, 179–99). Following this line, the Epicureans regarded anger as an expression of weakness, not in accord with a condition of blessedness for either humans or gods (Nussbaum, *Desire*, 239–79). They were particularly insistent that the gods, who dwell in unperturbed peace and tranquillity, are never angry and do not punish people (Diogenes Laertius 10.76–77; Lucretius *De rerum nat.* 6.71–79). In the first of his *Kyriai Doxai* or *Principal Opinions* (Diogenes Laertius 10.139; preserved also in Diogenes Oen. Frag. 24 [C. W. Chilton, ed., *Diogenis Oenoandensis fragmenta* [Leipzig: Teubner, 1967]]), Epicurus insists that ‘a blessed and eternal being has no trouble himself and brings no trouble upon any other being; hence he is exempt from movements of anger and partiality, for every such movement implies weakness.’ Injunctions against retaliation are reflected in the teaching of Jesus (Matt 5:38–42 = Luke 6:27–31) and elsewhere in the NT (Rom 12:17; 1 Cor 6:7; 1 Pet 2:19–20; 3:9).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 834–835.]

⁴¹It is a part of the word group βάσανος, βασανίζω, βασανισμός, βασανιστής. Originally the idea was of testing metal to determine its purity. But in secular Greek the meaning shifted when applied to humans and referred to the ‘rack’ as a means to inflicting severe pain to uncover defects as punishments for wrong conduct. .

⁴²“The combination of ‘fire and sulfur’ as a means of torment occurs four times in Revelation (14:10; 19:20; 20:10; 21:8), three times in the fixed expression ‘the lake of fire and sulfur’ (19:20; 20:10; 21:8), and twice more in the expression ‘fire, smoke, and sulfur’ (9:17, 18). According to Gen 19:24 (alluded to in Luke 17:29; 1 Clem. 11:1; PGM XXXVI.302), fire and brimstone rained on Sodom (see Sib. Or. 3.690–92; Philo Mos. 2.56). Sulfur or brimstone is frequently mentioned in the OT in connection with divine punishment (Deut 29:23; Job 18:15; Isa 30:33; 34:9–10), and the phrase ‘fire and sulfur’ is used to indicate divine punishment in Ps 11:6 and Ezek 38:22. In Greek, τὸ θεῖον, ‘sulfur,’ may be derived

ἀγγέλων ἁγίων καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἁρνίου, in the presence of holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. This parallel adverbial prepositional phrase is unusual and found only here in Revelation. Here the torments upon the wicked are visible to the angels and to the Lamb.⁴³ Perhaps this expansion is influenced by the picture of divine judgment in Dan. 7:10, but this is not certain.

from θεῖος, ‘divine,’ perhaps meaning ‘[divine] incense.’ Sulfur was found in relatively pure form in volcanic areas, where it could be mined (Jos. J. W. 7.189; Ulpian Digest 47.2.57.8; 48.19.9.10), and the ancients were aware of the connection between sulfur and volcanic activity. Further, sulfur burns at a low temperature and could be used ritually as an incense or a fumigant (PGM VII.490; XXXVI.295–96; Odyssey 22.481, 493; see Parker, *Miasma*, 227–28) or (sometimes combined with pitch and bitumen) as a defensive weapon in siege warfare, horribly effective because it stuck to the body (Herodian 8.4.9–10).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 835.]

⁴³“There is no parallel in early Jewish or early Christian eschatological scenarios for the eternal punishment of the wicked in the presence of the angels and the Lamb, understood to represent the Messiah (v 10c). The phrase ‘and before the Lamb’ is very probably a gloss added to the text since the Lamb is in effect subordinated to the angels (Spitta, 149; Müller, *Messias*, 166). However, as commentators frequently point out, the notion that the wicked will be forever judged and tormented before the righteous occurs in 1 Enoch 27:2–3 and perhaps 90:26–27. A related view is found in 1 Enoch 48:9 and 62:12–13, in which the wicked are temporarily tormented before the righteous and then vanish forever; thus it is said in 1 Enoch 48:9 (tr. Knibb), ‘so they will burn before the righteous, and sink before the holy, and no trace will be found of them.’ According to 4 Ezra 7:36, the pit of torment and the place of rest are in close proximity, though it is not explicitly stated that the wicked are tormented in the presence of the righteous. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31), the rich man, tormented in Hades, could see Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham (v 23).

“One might well ask what kind of cosmography is presupposed by this verse. It seems unlikely that Hades, understood as the underground region of the dead, is the place of eternal punishment described here. By the first century A.D., the older conception of Hades or Sheol as a subterranean region had given way to the tendency to locate it in a supraterrrestrial region. In Dan 7:10, where the Ancient of Days sits in judgment, it is said that ‘a stream of fire [נְהַר דִּי-נִוּר nēhar dī nūr issued and came forth from before him.’ The setting of judgment and the presence of a ‘stream of fire’ make punishment in the presence of God and his angelic court possible, though that conclusion is not made explicit in Daniel. In Plato *Republica* 10.13 (6:14c–d), the judgment of souls reportedly takes place somewhere between the ‘gates of heaven’ and the ‘gates of earth,’ i.e., in a place that is certainly above the earth (Culianu, *Psychanodia*, 41). Plutarch has transferred the underground rivers of Plato’s Hades to the sky, for in *De genio Socratis* 509d–f, Timarchus saw a sea or lake far above the earth into which two rivers of fire flowed (probably the Pyriphlegeton and the Cocytus; see Plato *Phaedo* 111d; cf. Culianu, *Psychanodia*, 45). The Styx is described as ‘the path to Hades’ and flows up from Hades to a point just below the moon (*De genio Socratis* 591a–c).”

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 835–836.]

b) και ὁ καπνὸς τοῦ βασανισμοῦ αὐτῶν εἰς αἰῶνας αἰώνων ἀναβαίνει, καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἀνάπαυσιν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς οἱ προσκυνοῦντες τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ καὶ εἴ τις λαμβάνει τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, *And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image and for anyone who receives the mark of its name.*

The impact of this divine judgment upon the evil of this world is described in vivid terms in verse 11. It is twofold in the depiction.

First, καὶ ὁ καπνὸς τοῦ βασανισμοῦ αὐτῶν εἰς αἰῶνας αἰώνων ἀναβαίνει, and the smoke of their torments rises up for ever and ever. In the background evidently is the image of a burning city going up in smoke.⁴⁴ In 19:3, the smoke of destroyed Babylon rises up forever: καὶ ὁ καπνὸς αὐτῆς ἀναβαίνει εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, *and her smoke rises up forever and ever.* In 20:10, the eternal torments of the devil and the second beast, the false prophet, will last forever: καὶ ὁ διάβολος ὁ πλανῶν αὐτοὺς ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ θείου ὄππου καὶ τὸ θηρίον καὶ ὁ ψευδοπροφήτης, καὶ βασανισθήσονται ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, *And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.* The point of this image is of never ending torments being inflicted upon the evil people in divine judgment. The torments never annihilate the individuals; instead, they inflict eternal pain upon the individuals who cannot die in their eternal state.⁴⁵

⁴⁴“The image here is based on the sight of a conquered city burning in the distance (Josh 8:20; Judg 20:40; Rev 18:9–10, 18). More specifically, there may be an allusion here to Isa 34:10, where it is said of Edom ‘its smoke shall go up for ever’ (see Fekkes, Isaiah, 206–8). If so, the Hebrew text is probably in view, for the LXX lacks the Greek phrase ‘forever’ corresponding to the Hebrew לְעֹלָם *lē.ōlām*. In 20:10, it is said of the devil, the beast, and the false prophet that ‘they will be tormented day and night forever.’ There is a close verbal parallel in 19:3, where the destruction of Babylon is in view: καὶ ὁ καπνὸς αὐτῆς ἀναβαίνει εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ‘her smoke ascends forever.’ Note that while the phrase εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ‘forever,’ occurs twelve times in Revelation (1:6 [var. lect.], 18; 4:9, 10; 5:13; 7:12; 10:6; 11:15; 15:7; 19:3; 20:10; 22:5) and seven times elsewhere in the NT (Gal 1:5; Eph 3:21; Phil 4:20; 1 Tim 1:17; 2 Tim 4:18; Heb 13:21 [var. lect.]; 1 Pet 4:11), the anarthrous phrase εἰς αἰῶνας αἰώνων, ‘forever,’ occurs only here in the NT.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 836.]

⁴⁵John in Revelation stands in stark rejection of the idea of the annihilation of the wicked as suggested in 1 Enoch 48:9 and 62:12–13. “A related view is found in 1 Enoch 48:9 and 62:12–13, in which the wicked are temporarily tormented before the righteous and then vanish forever; thus it is said in 1 Enoch 48:9 (tr. Knibb), ‘so they will burn before the righteous, and sink before the holy, and no trace will be found of them.’” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 835.]

Second, καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἀνάπαυσιν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς οἱ προσκυνοῦντες τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ καὶ εἴ τις λαμβάνει τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, *and they have no rest day and night, these worshipping the beast and his image, and if any receives the mark of his name.* This statement is very close to 4:8c in depicting the chanting of the four living creatures around the throne of God. A close parallel to 14:11 is in 20:10, in reference to Satan and the beast: βασανισθήσονται ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, *they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.* The perpetual smoke of their torments in the first statement means absolutely no rest or relief from these torments in the second statement.

B. John applies this vision, v. 12

12 Ὡδε ἡ ὑπομονὴ τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν, οἱ τηροῦντες τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ.

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

At this point John steps out of his apocalyptic vision and makes an application of the angelic vision in vv. 6–11 to his initial readers. This is the third of four times where John will take this step out of his vision to make an application: 13:10, 18; 14:12; 17:9. The use of the adverb Ὡδε, *here*, in a formulaic expression Ὡδε ἡ ὑπομονὴ τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν, *here is the endurance of the saints*, clearly signals this literary action. The other two instances of Ὡδε in 4:1 and 11:12 are a part of a divine command given to John, ἀνάβα Ὡδε, *come up here*. The wording in 14:12 is very similar to that in 13:10, Ὡδέ ἐστίν ἡ ὑπομονὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις τῶν ἁγίων. In this earlier passage the Ὡδέ alludes back to v. 10a with the dual axiom, εἴ τις εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν, εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπάγει· εἴ τις ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀποκτανθῆναι αὐτὸν ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀποκτανθῆναι, *if anyone is taken into captivity, into captivity he goes; if anyone is killed by the sword, by the sword he is killed.* Therefore, ἡ ὑπομονὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις τῶν ἁγίων, *the endurance and the faith of the saints*, is to accept this inevitability of persecution and possible martyrdom as a reality of the Christian life. Here in 14:12, ἡ ὑπομονὴ τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν, *the endurance of the saints*, is to be οἱ τηροῦντες τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ, *those keeping God’s commandments and faith in Jesus.*

The sense is of preserving in one’s commitment to Christ as reflected in obedience to God and an unwavering refusal to deny one’s commitment to Jesus. The sense of τηροῦντες . . . τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ, *keeping one’s faith in Jesus*, follows the similar expression in 2 Tim. 4:7, with the sense of not wavering in one’s commitment. Keeping the commandments of God by believers is commonly used in the NT: Matt 19:17; John 14:15, 21; 15:10; 1 John 2:3; 3:22, 24; 5:3. This phrase οἱ τηροῦντες

τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ θεοῦ is parallel to one in Rev. 12:17, τῶν τηρούντων τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ θεοῦ. These are the only two uses inside Revelation.⁴⁶

The contextual motivation for John stepping out of his angelic vision to make this application is to encourage his readers to persevere in their faith in light of the coming doom of Babylon and the evil people on earth. Realizing the inevitability of God's judgment provides encouragement to steadfastness to God and His ways for His people.

C. John hears the voice of God, v. 13

13 Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λεγούσης· γράψον· μακάριοι οἱ νεκροὶ οἱ ἐν κυρίῳ ἀποθνήσκοντες ἀπ' ἄρτι.

ναί, λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα, ἵνα ἀναπαήσονται ἐκ τῶν κόπων αὐτῶν, τὰ γὰρ ἔργα αὐτῶν ἀκολουθεῖ μετ' αὐτῶν.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord."

"Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them."

A signal of a shift in emphasis comes with the standard Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λεγούσης, And I heard a voice out of heaven saying. The unidentified voice normally is that of God's.

Inside Revelation, John is often told specifically to write down something: 1:11, 19; 14:13; 21:5; cf. 10:4. In all but two instances, 21:5, John is to write down what he has seen. Thus his task is to find appropriate images from everyday life and the OT traditions which can adequately communicate in understandable written form what he has seen in apocalyptic vision. Not an easy task!

In this instance, however, John's task is to summarize what he has seen in the angelic vision and put it into the form of a beatitude.⁴⁷ This literary form was used to invoke divine blessing upon those who met God's requirements.

What is the beatitude? μακάριοι οἱ νεκροὶ οἱ ἐν κυρίῳ ἀποθνήσκοντες ἀπ' ἄρτι,⁴⁸ Blessed are the dead

⁴⁶τηρέω is used by John some 11 times in Revelation with the general sense of obeying what God says.

⁴⁷The other instance in 21:5 is somewhat similar: Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ· ἰδοὺ καινὰ ποιῶ πάντα καὶ λέγει· γράψον, ὅτι οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι πιστοὶ καὶ ἀληθινοὶ εἰσιν, And the one sitting on the throne said, "Behold I am making all things new," and he says, "Write, because these words are dependable and true." What God was making is described in 21:1-4 as a new heaven and a new earth. Thus the message depicting this divine action is dependable and true.

⁴⁸Some uncertainty exists over whether the prepositional phrase ἀπ' ἄρτι modifies the previous participle ἀποθνήσκοντες. Or whether it should go with λέγει that follows it. For a detailed explanation of this see the "Segmentation" footnote in the [External History](#) section above. I have adopted the reading of the N-A 28th edition in distinction to the position of Aune in WBC, p. 839.

who from now on die in the Lord. This is one of seven beatitudes found in Revelation: 1:3; 14:3; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14. This one, along with 19:9; 20:6; 22:14, are composed in the plural form, while the others, 1:3; 16:15; 22:7, are in the singular μακάριος ὁ τηρῶν etc. Interestingly 1:3 and 20:6 have both singular and plural elements in the subject designation.

The invoking of divine blessing is upon those who die in the Lord. The phrase ἐν κυρίῳ, in the Lord, is found only elsewhere in Revelation in 14:13, but is frequent in Paul's writings. For the Christian death become victory rather than defeat, for it brings the believer immediately into the presence of God in heaven.

In the larger context of chapters twelve through fourteen, this beatitude could be understood to especially highlight Christian martyrs. But in either case, death remains the same experience of those commitment to Jesus. In the immediate context of the three angelic messages of coming doom upon the wicked on earth, such a divine blessing underscores the dramatic difference for believers than for the evil people on earth.

The addition of the validating affirmation from the Spirit of God in 13:b serves to affirm the trustworthiness of the beatitude even more: ναί, λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα, ἵνα ἀναπαήσονται ἐκ τῶν κόπων αὐτῶν, "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they will rest from their labors." The mentioning of labors here links this statement up with chapters two and three of Revelation where works are strongly emphasized: 2:2, 19; 3:2, 15. Also the validating role of the Holy Spirit in the command to listen formula in each of the seven messages is echoed here: Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις, the one having an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

In the Spirit's words of validation, the basis for their being able to rest in heaven is given as τὰ γὰρ ἔργα αὐτῶν ἀκολουθεῖ μετ' αὐτῶν, for their works follow with them. That is, God remembers what they did in obedience to demonstrate a genuine commitment of faith to Christ. Thus when the two books are opened on judgment day (20:11-15) the book of works will validate the insertion of the names in the book of life.

2. What does the text mean to us today?

How do vv. 6-13 relate to us today? Mostly at the point of reminder of what is ahead for the evil people of the earth outside of Christ. They seem to be reigning in today's world. But just around the corner is absolute doom for them. Eternal torments await them in eternal condemnation. No rest, no relief from pain for all eternity is their fate. But for the people of God death means the gateway into the bliss of God for all eternity. God asserts and His Spirit validates it.

