

# The Revelation to St. John (The Apocalypse)

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## Catechism of the Catholic Church

**1066** In the Symbol of the faith the Church confesses the mystery of the Holy Trinity and of the plan of God's "good pleasure" for all creation: *the Father accomplishes the "mystery of his will" by giving his beloved Son and his Holy Spirit for the salvation of the world and for the glory of his name.* Such is the mystery of Christ, revealed and fulfilled in history according to the wisely ordered plan that St. Paul calls the "**plan of the mystery**" and the patristic tradition will call the "economy of the Word incarnate" or the "economy of salvation."

**1067** "The wonderful works of God among the people of the Old Testament were but a prelude to the work of Christ the Lord in redeeming mankind and giving perfect glory to God. *He accomplished this work principally by the Paschal mystery of his blessed Passion, Resurrection from the dead, and glorious Ascension, whereby 'dying he destroyed our death, rising he restored our life.'* For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth 'the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church.'" *For this reason, the Church celebrates in the liturgy above all the Paschal mystery by which Christ accomplished the work of our salvation.*

**1090** *"In the earthly liturgy we share in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the Holy City of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle. With all the warriors of the heavenly army we sing a hymn of glory to the Lord; venerating the memory of the saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them; we eagerly await the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, until he, our life, shall appear and we too will appear with him in glory."*

## Basic Questions:

### Authorship:

*Some evidence which supports St. John the Evangelist as the author of the Apocalypse:*

1) Similar language and imagery

John 7:37, 38, 39 - "living water"

2) Synoptic Gospels all have a "little apocalypse:"

Matthew 24

Mark 13

Luke 21

John does not

3) Fathers of the Church who confirmed St. John the Evangelist as author:

2<sup>nd</sup> Century: St. Justin

St. Melito, Bishop of Sardis

Eusebius of Caesarea

Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis

St. Irenaeus

Muratorian Fragment

3<sup>rd</sup> Century: Origen of Alexandria

Tertullian

4<sup>th</sup> Century: St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria

Sts. Basil and St. Gregory of Nyssa

Fathers of the Church who hold Revelation not written by St. John the Evangelist:

Caius of Rome

Dionysius of Alexandria

St. Cyril of Jerusalem

Authenticity of the Book proclaimed at the Council of Hippo (393), Carthage (397), Toledo (633)

**Dating:**

**A.** Majority hold it was written by St. John near the end of his life (App. 96 AD) during the reign of the emperor Domitian and his persecution.

**B.** Minority hold the book was written shortly before 70 AD during Caesar Nero's persecution (most horrible). Keep in mind, there was no persecution from Rome in the New Testament, but Jews persecuted the Christians extensively.

**Chapter One**

**1:1** *"The revelation of Jesus Christ" – apocalypse (gk)*

**APOCALYPSIS:**

The apocalypse was associated in Jewish life with 7 day celebrations before marriage. The bride and groom would enter the bridal chamber for the "unveiling" -- she would take off her veil... and probably more: the climax of the marriage ceremony.

**REVELATION:**

The unveiling of Jesus Christ: The Revelation that cannot be known by human reason, and much more! Revelation is the invitation by Christ to enter into an unimaginable intimate relationship with himself (like the bride and groom)! (Hahn)

**1:3** *"Blessed are those..."*

"Sacred Scripture is of the greatest importance in the celebration of the liturgy. For it is from it that lessons are read and explained in the homily, and psalms are sung. It is from the scriptures that prayers, collects, and hymns draw their inspiration and their force, and that actions and signs derive their meaning" (Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 24).

**1:4** Primasius: "He writes to the seven churches, that is, to the one and only Church symbolized by the seven churches." (Commentariorum super Apoc., 1,1) (seven: "totality")

**1:6** *"Kingdom of priests"* i.e. Spiritual Power

**1:7** Daniel 7: Son of Man & Zechariah 12:10:

First born who is pierced and whom people weep and wail because of him. Jesus calls himself Son of Man more than any other title... and yet nobody else uses the title for Jesus. It is a title of divinity. (Hahn)

**1:10** Of course, the Lord's Day is the first day of the week (Sunday); the day Christ appears to the apostles (Acts 20:7) and the day Christians gathered. Hahn: John cannot make it to Mass so he is transported to Mass in heaven "in the spirit." Corsini: "...may have even been Easter Day" (84).

*"I heard behind me a loud trumpet"* (10) / *"Then I turned to see the voice"* (12): This could refer to the two moments in the revelation of Jesus – the indirect revelation of the Old Testament, and the direct revelation of the personal preaching and works of Jesus Christ.

Trumpet: Call to prayer and call to battle.

**1:11** All cities are in a 50 mile radius -- possibly a Roman postal route where letters could be delivered.

**1:12-17** Lamp stands (Menorah) God's spirit provides oil: *ever flowing and never ending*.

(Oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit)

- Robe and golden girdle: vestments of Old Testament priesthood (Exod.28:4). This is the clothing of the Hebrew High Priest (Exod 29:5, 39:27-29, Lev 8:7). It is also the prerogative of kings, and their dignitaries. "...by the garment we are told that he has already performed his sacrifice." (Corsini 91)
- Gold: contact with divinity.
- hair as white as wool – Daniel 10:6
- flaming eyes – role as judge (piercing eyes)
- feet like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace – absolute transcendence (Dan10:6)
- voice like the sound of many waters – the universality of his revelation (Ezek 43:2)
- stars: angels
- two edged sword – again, role as judge

**1:17** John: a righteous and holy apostle, friend and cousin of Jesus, *falls at Jesus' feet as though dead*.

## **Chapters 2 & 3**

Background: Various interpretations.

- Simply the condition of the Church in Asia Minor.
- Churches allegorically represent various stages of Church history. For example, the seven letters represents the seven ages of the Church. (Problem: where do ages begin/end).
- Seven Letters: *Recapitulation of Salvation History (Covenant)*.
- **Historical Summary:**

Early World:	Creation	-	2000 B.C.
Patriarchs:	2000	–	1700 B.C.
Egypt & Exodus	1700	–	1280 B.C.
Desert Wanderings	1280	–	1240 B.C.
Conquest & Judges	1240	–	1050 B.C.
Royal Kingdom	1050	–	930 B.C.
Divided Kingdom	930	–	722 B.C.
Exile	722	–	540 B.C.
Return from Exile	538	-	167 B.C.
Maccabean Revolt	167	–	0 B.C.
Messianic Fulfillment	0	–	33 A.D.
The Church	33	-	???

(“The Great Adventure; A Journey through the Bible,” © 2004 Ascension Press)

Why these seven Churches? “Some would suggest that emperor worship was there, while some see that there was an imperial road that linked them all” (Corsini 102).

**2:7** Ephesus: First Age – Genesis & Reference to the Fall of Man

- “You have abandoned the love you had at first” (4)
- “...your works, your toil and your patient endurance” (2)
- “Remember then from what you have fallen” (5)
- “... I will grant to eat of the TREE OF LIFE which is in the paradise of God” (7)
- Not many problems with this Church.

**2:10** Symrna: Age of the Patriarchs & the Slavery of the Hebrews in Egypt

- “...about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested.” (Joseph imprisoned in Egypt.)
- “ten days” – reference to a period of testing (also ten plagues which preceded liberation)

- St. John describes hostility and persecution from the Jews who have become a “synagogue of Satan” (2:9). Note also in 11:8 Israel is described as “Sodom and Egypt.”
- 2:12** Pergamum: The Age of Israel in the Wilderness After Liberation from Egypt
  - The desert: “where Satan’s throne is” (13).
  - Reference to “hidden manna” is obvious. The “white stone” may be an illusion to Exodus 28:9ff.
  - Balak hired the prophet Balaam to curse the Israelites... but as a prophet, he was unable to do so (Numbers 24). Thus, Jesus says, repent, if not (v. 15) “...I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.”
  - The desert was a time of testing – testing the fidelity of Israel. Can Pergamum be as faithful as Antipas, not denying the faith?
- 2:18** Thyatira: The Israelite Monarchy and the Covenant with David
  - “But I have this against you, you tolerate the woman Jezebel...”
  - Who is Jezebel? See I Kings 16:31; II Kings 9:7. She attempted to defile the Kingdom of David.
  - Punishment threatened against Jezebel recalls condemnation spoken by Elijah against Ahab and Jezebel after slaying of Naboth in I Kings 21:21ff.
  - Verse 26: “He who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, I will give him power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron...” Language from Psalm 2:8.
  - As for the Church in Thyatira, it is described positively, a church of “love and faith and service.”
- 3:8** Sardis: The Age of the Prophets and the Destruction of Israel and Judah
  - Much language reflecting the message and era of the prophets.
  - The infamous “faithful remnant (Is 1:9, 6:13, 65:8ff):” “strengthen what remains.”
  - Call to repentance in verse 3.
  - “...for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God” (2).
  - “Yet you have... people who have *not* soiled their garments...” (another reference to the faithful remnant of Israel.)
  - “He who has an ear, let him hear...”
  - Beautiful words of encouragement are given to the Church in Sardis.
- 3:7** Philadelphia: The Return from the Exile; Ezra-Nehemiah - Rebuilding of the Temple.
  - A promise is made, “I am coming soon.” (Same expectation of Haggai and Ezra-Nehemiah?)
  - Even though they rebuild the Temple, the elders wept because the glory of the new Temple was not that of the glory of Solomon’s Temple. Nevertheless, through Haggai and the other prophets, the Lord tells the people that the new Temple is greater because it was not built with money and earthly power, but rather with *faith*.
  - The new Temple will not be made as a building, but upon the new man, “I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God...” (12)
  - Community at Philadelphia is small and weak; yet under the watchful eye of Christ Jesus.
- 3:14** Laodicea: The Judgment and Condemnation of Judaism
  - The most significant letter of the seven.
  - The people described in Laodicea most closely resemble the people of Jesus’ time: the lukewarm, apathetic and indifferent. “Would that you were cold or hot!” (15).
  - “For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not knowing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked” (17). This is the greatest offense: these people do not need God. They live “as though God did not exist.”
  - “I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, that you may be rich, and white garments to clothe you... and salve to anoint you...” Recall gold is a symbol of divinity. Christ, who is divine, offers us a share in his life... to make us “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4).
  - “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me” (20). An illusion to the Eucharist?

- “...I will grant him to sit with me on my throne” (21). Another statement by Christ that he has come to make us divine.

**3:22** “*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*” This message is for the universal church, not one particular church.

**Coming soon:** “It appears to me that the destruction of Babylon [in the Book of Revelation] will not be about the material destruction of Rome, but about the spiritual destruction and end to Judaism: the earthly Jerusalem will disappear to leave place for the heavenly Jerusalem” (Corsini 109).

## **Chapter 4**

Chapters 4 & 5 are a prelude to the opening of the seven seals which represents the fall of mankind (the first four seals) and the salvific intervention of God (the remaining three seals) (Corsini 120).

History: “The name of Jesus never appears [Chapters 4 & 5]. It is the Lamb, however, who opens the seven seals. For John, this means that the whole of history is a salvation history which can be seen and properly understood only in light of its culmination in the sacrifice of Christ” (Corsini 121).

**4:1** “*Come up hither...*” The Sursum Corda of the Sacred Liturgy. “Lift up your hearts...” an invitation to join the heavenly liturgy.

**4:2** “*At once I was in the Spirit...*” meaning: the objective reality of encountering God in his grandeur, his majesty, his greatness and his sovereignty. “...and lo, a throne stood in heaven with one seated on the throne!” This is the same vision which began in chapter 1 on “the Lord’s day.”

**4:3** “*Jasper and carnelian:*”

- the stones used to decorate the breastplate of the High Priest.
- Reminiscent of the precious stones found in the Garden of Eden.
- “Rainbow” is found in an Ezekiel 1 vision... [symbolic of creation].
- The focus of Revelation 4 is the Liturgy of Creation, the liturgy of the cosmos: the world as God made it.

**4:4** Who are the twenty-four elders seated on the thrones?

- I Chronicles 24 & 25: description of how the Jerusalem temple was organized for worship which included representatives from every tribe, particularly the Levites.

In I Chronicles 24:5, we see the assignment by lots for the various Temple offices, concluding with “...the *twenty-fourth* to Maaziah” in verse 18. This was their appointed order of ministering as they entered the Temple of the Lord according to the regulations appointed by Aaron and as commanded by God.

- In I Chronicles 25, we also see *twenty-four* singers.
- Notice that there are 24 elders + 4 living creatures: equals 28. Twenty-eight is considered to be the perfect number because it is the only number whose sum of its divisors equals itself. ( $1 + 2 + 4 + 7 + 14 = 28$ ; meaning: all of creation present?) “The general idea is of God as lord of the heavens (the 24) and the earth (the 4)” (Corsini 127).
- These twenty-four men are priests... indicated by the fact that they are wearing white linen. These men are also kings (thrones and golden crowns): “a royal priesthood.” See Rev. 5:6.

**4:6** “...and before the throne there is as it where a Sea of glass, like crystal.”

Some see the Temple as a microcosm of all the universe.

### **Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews**

“The three parts of the Temple, the courtyard, the holy place, and the Holy of Holies, are made to correspond to the three parts of the world; namely, the sea, the land and the highest heaven. Likewise, the twelve loaves of Shewbread on the table represent the twelve months of the year.”

### **4:6b The Four Living Creatures (Cherubim).**

-The number four is the number of the earth: the four elements of the earth, the four corners, the four winds of the earth.

-The four living creatures: lion, ox, man, flying eagle all with six wings (having to do with the earth [God’s organization of the earth on the sixth day]), eyes all around (symbol of the ability to see everything (i.e. creation “having been present”). See Ezekiel 1 and Isaiah 6.

Significance of the four living creatures:

[David Chilton, The Days of Vengeance.]: They correspond to the signs of the Zodiac... John would have been familiar with the same constellations we are.

Thus:

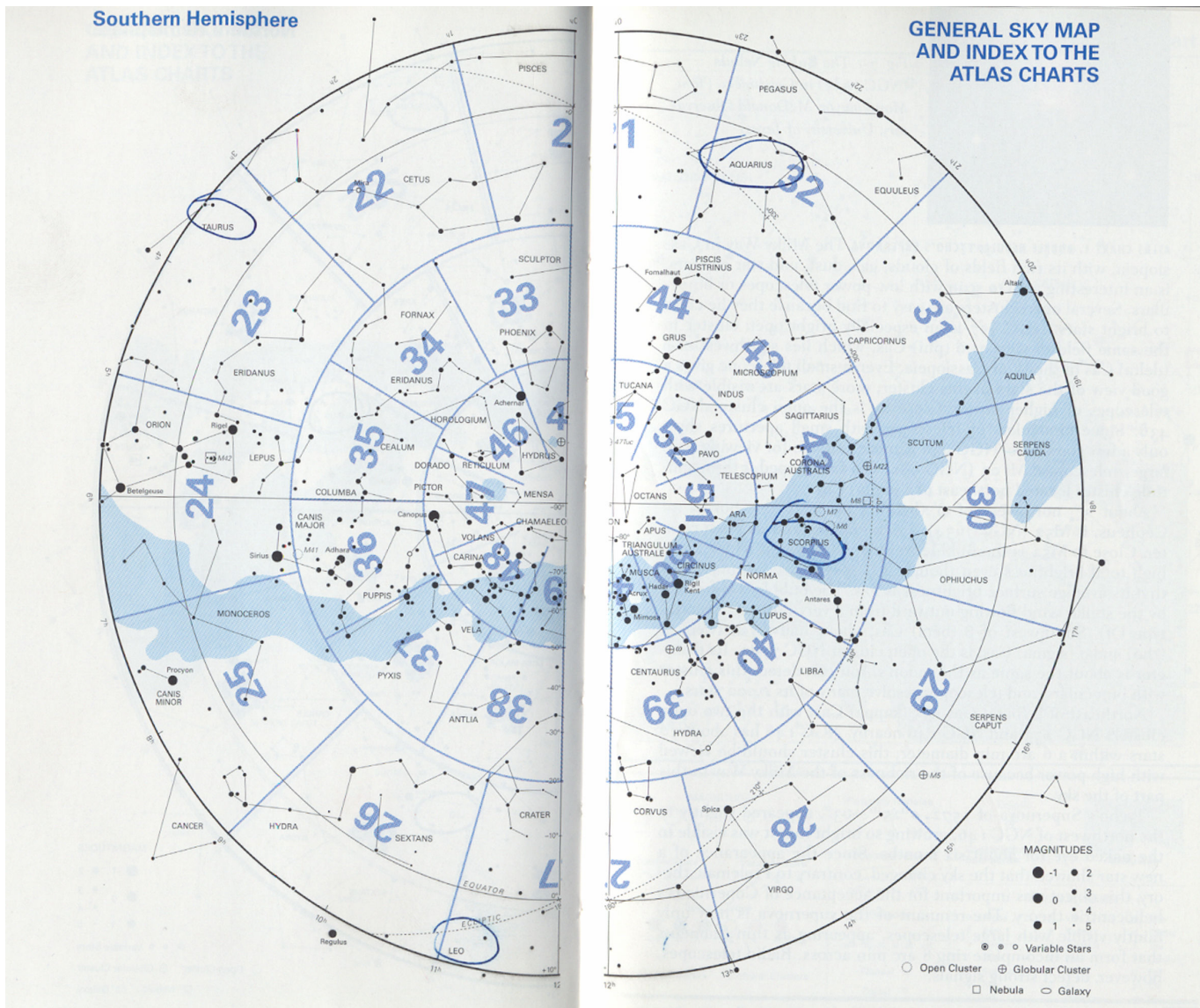
Ox	-	Taurus
Lion	-	Leo
Man	-	Aquarius
Flying eagle	-	Scorpio

(Perhaps substitution for the creepy crawly. Ancient Biblical writers would have seen too close of a similarity between the scorpion and the snake.)

These are the middle signs of the FOUR corners of the Zodiac in counter-clockwise direction. Note: these symbols are not evil, i.e. Ps 19:1-6. The constellations were created by God and were used to measure time. They are not random groups of stars: nothing in creation is random.

Another interpretation which is found frequently with the Church Fathers:

Ox	-	Luke (Gospel begins with reference to the sacrifices of the bulls in the temple)
Lion	-	Mark (Gospel begins with a voice crying out in the desert.)
Man	-	Matthew (His Gospel begins with human genealogy of Christ.)
Flying eagle	-	John (Who soars to the heights to contemplate the divinity of the Word.)



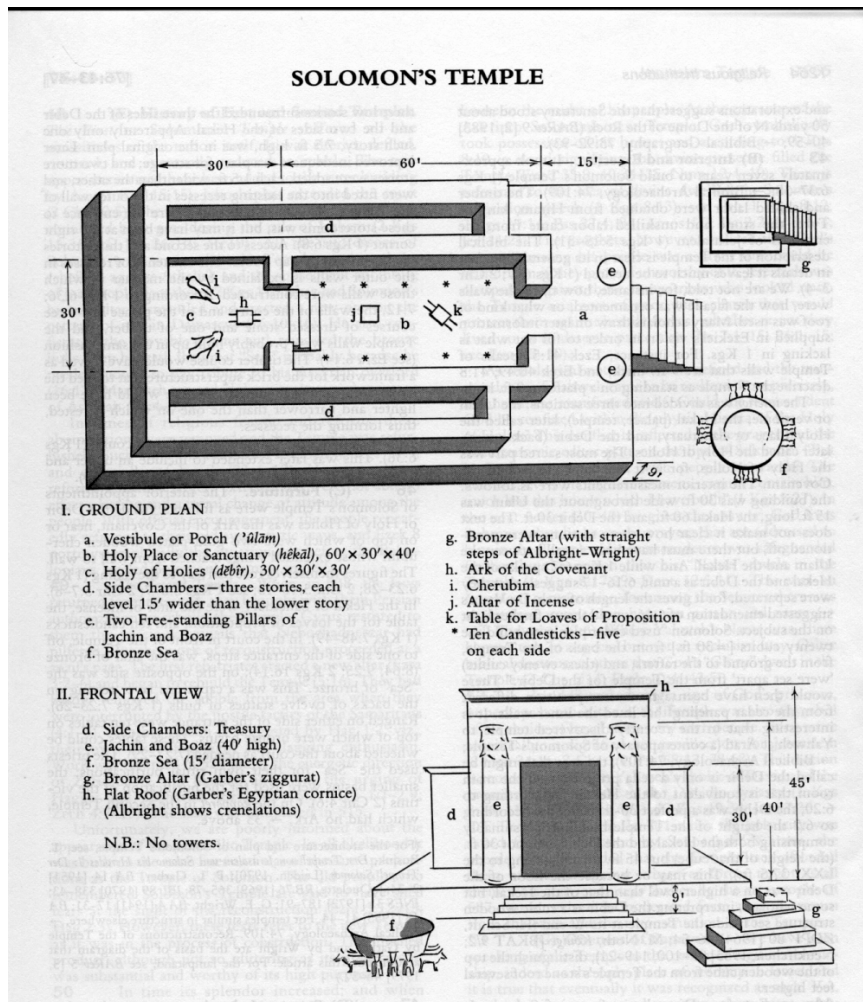
Pasachoff, Jay M., *Stars and Planets*, Peterson Field Guides, Copyright © 2000

Q. Why do the cherubim “look like” animals to John? A. the Early Church Fathers gave this explanation: these angels represent the “power” behind physical creation... the lion depicts power and authority; the ox depicts strength; the man signifies wisdom, and the eagle represents speed. The view of the Early Church was that the angels were guiding and directing the forces of nature... for example, there would be angels assigned to each of the planets and stars, etc... (Hahn).

Summary:

“In this way, “heaven” indicates the whole universe, created by God, governed by him through angels, redeemed by him through the sacrifice of Christ, the Lamb. Little wonder then, if in this universal reality, John sees an immense temple, in which there is a perfect and true reproduction. Thus, for John, the heavenly and perfect liturgy has its continuation and pale copy in the historical and earthly cult of Judaism” (Corsini 129).





Brown/Fitzmyer/Murphy, THE NEW JEROME BIBLICAL COMMENTARY © 1990, P. 1263

## Chapter 5

**5:1** “...a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals...” Note that the scroll was inscribed on both sides, much like the 10 Commandments. Documents which are written on both sides are considered covenants.

Seven seals: Typical of Roman testimony? “They are clearly the reality of sin...” (Corsini 133). See also Ezekiel 2:9 for the Covenant curses of an earlier time in Israel’s history.

**5:2** “Who is worthy to break open its seals?” When man, who was placed over all creation, sinned, all creation then fell into ruin. Chaos resulted. The fallen state. The old creation was unable to be fulfilled, or consummated. All creation is **unable to achieve its ultimate purpose**.

**5:3** John understands that the contents of this scroll (its revelation) is absolutely essential and is necessary for the world to achieve its end. “The author of the Book of Revelation, and everyone in fact, really does need to know what is written on the scroll; for, if he knows God’s plans he will be able to discover the meaning of life and cease to be anxious about events past, present and future. Yet no one is able to open the scroll: that is why the author weeps so bitterly” (Navarre 64).



“The scroll, [is] the gift of life between God and man which only the Lamb is able to reveal through his sacrificial death...” (Corsini 133)

**5:5** *“Weep not; lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered...”*

Q. The lion is Jesus, but where do we get this idea? A. In Genesis 49, Jacob is giving his blessings to his 12 sons and also gives them an oracle of their future. Note during the first three sons, Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, are not really blessed, but chastised. The fourth son, Judah, is blessed in verse 8. Thus, the tribe of Judah would always produce the Kings of Israel. Verse 10; “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet until he comes to whom it belongs.” (Hahn)

**5:6** *“...I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain...”* His sacrifice is PERPETUAL before the Father. He always presents himself before the Father, the heavens, and us, not just as priest, or king, but as victim... as the sacrificial victim offered for our salvation. He is an eternal sacrifice for the covenant of creation the sacrifice needed to transform the old order into the new order (Hahn).

*Standing*: symbol of the resurrection.

*As though slain*: symbol of the wounds of the cross.

*Seven horns*: symbol of power (total).

*Seven eyes*: symbol of wisdom (total).

**5:7-8** This whole scene is a model of the Mass. Hebrews 8 indicates that “every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices...” and Hebrews 7:27 says Christ’s sacrifice was “once and for all.” And so it was. In Revelation 5, Jesus is the Lamb who still looks slain; this does not mean he is suffering, bleeding or dying, but he is still offering himself as priest and victim: the Pascal victim (Hahn).

Paragraph 8; The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *“In the earthly liturgy we take part in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, a minister of the Holies and of the true tabernacle (22); we sing a hymn to the Lord’s glory with all the warriors of the heavenly army; venerating the memory of the saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them; we eagerly await the Savior, Our Lord Jesus Christ, until He, our life, shall appear and we too will appear with Him in glory(23).”*

Notice that the most powerful creatures in the universe all bow down before the Lamb!

**5:9** *“...and they sang a new song, saying...”* New song? A new song was sung whenever a new deliverance was wrought by the Lord. (For example: Moses after the Red Sea, David after he was delivered from his foes...)

**5:10 Important Note on v. 10:** *“...and they shall reign on earth.”* It means we resist the temptation to withdraw, it means holy aggression... it means we reign on earth. Don’t be fooled: the way to conquer is to imitate the Lamb. To embrace our suffering. St. Paul told Timothy, “if you suffer, you will reign.”

St. Ignatius of Loyola: “To fight heedless of wounds, to labor without seeking rest, to sacrifice myself without thought of any reward.”

*“If creation set the stage for redemption, and now we are part of those redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, God spent thousands and thousands of years preparing the world for the coming of Christ... now that Christ has come, less than 2,000 years ago, do you think God the Father is anxious to bring redemption to a close? I suggest that the Catholic Church might be around on earth for tens of thousands of years... God has prepared a house and has been building it for thousands of years and now, less than 2,000 years into this, we imagine that it is almost over. Maybe it is, but I suspect it is not (Hahn).”*

**5:12** This is exactly what we owe Christ: “power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” It all belongs to Christ... and to have true peace in this world, all of this belongs to him.

## **Chapter 6**

The seven seals are the seven seals that bind the book that no one could open in Rev. 5:3.

Old Testament background for the Book of Revelation: The “three fold” curse in Leviticus 26:25ff: “*And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall execute vengeance for the covenant; and if you gather within your cities I will send pestilence among you, and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. When I break your staff of bread, then women shall bake your bread in one oven, and shall deliver your bread again by weight; and you shall eat, and not be satisfied (famine).*” Key to Chapter six: “God has NOT canceled his covenant with Israel. As a matter of fact, they probably wished that he had (Hahn).”

**Chapter Six** summarizes the realization of the curses found in the 26th chapter of Leviticus: conquest, the sword, famine, and death.

- The same sequence is seen in Ezekiel 14 which describes the half-hearted repentance of Jerusalem. In v. 21 we read, “For thus says the Lord God: How much more when I send on Jerusalem my four acts of Judgment, sword, famine, evil beasts, and pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast!”
- JERUSALEM is under judgment. Importance: Revelation and Ezekiel are structured very similarly and, most importantly, they both deal with the curse of the Covenant upon Jerusalem! Note Ezekiel 2:9.
- Important: John knows that the images he is witnessing are taken from Old Testament contexts (Zechariah 1, 6; Ezekiel 2,3,4,14,16) and that God has turned his face in judgment against Jerusalem!

### **Note the historical chronology:**

1. Jerusalem was to repent, yet it did not. The Babylonians were sent to destroy the city in 587 and rule for 70 years during which time they were suppose to repent... but, again, they did not.
2. God decrees through Daniel 7 X 70 (490) more years of repentance--the second instance of a seven fold curse... all in an attempt to inspire repentance.
3. Third and final curse: Revelation 6 & 7 Titus conquered the city and said, “*Their God delivered the city in to my hands, far more than I had ever planned or even desired.*” (Tacitus)

Note the parallel of the first four seals of Revelation 6 with: Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 2.

*Revelation 6:1-17* -- presents a sequence of images and events that follow exactly Matthew 24

**Rev 6:1-2** The white horse/went out conquering and to conquer **Mt 24:6** Rumors of Wars

**Rev 6:3-4** The red horse/International strife **Mt 24:7** Nation will rise against nation

**Rev 6:5-6** The black horse/famine **Mt 24:7b-8** ...famine and earthquakes in various places

**Rev 6:7-8** The pale horse/sword, famine and pestilence **Mt 24:9** Persecutions

**Rev 6:9-11** Description of those who have been persecuted **Mt. 24:9-28** Note the persecution.

**Rev 6:12-17** “Natural destruction” (heavenly signs) **Mt 24:29-31** Cosmic signs and earthquakes.

### **Symbol of the Horses (Corsini):**

- usually connected with warfare or human nature
- Horsemen = an “evil power” as an incarnation within human nature which comes from another outside power.
- Colors represent different moments in human history.
- Substances that come from mouths: fire, smoke, sulfur... the corruption of humanity.
- Zechariah uses the symbol of the horse as four empires and the fruit and violence of war. John: wider, refers to the experience of humanity in the light of the history of salvation.

- Total horse story: “an allegory of the spiritual history of man before the coming of Christ...”
- “This is the war which John, both here and elsewhere, presents to us as the consequence of **original sin**.”
- “The four colored horses and their horsemen, therefore, symbolize the story of the creation of man and his fall.

#### **White Horse:**

- Symbol of Christ, Symbol of Anti-Christ, Symbol of war (conqueror)?
- Symbol of Man before the fall...”humanity in its ideal perfection,” “not absurd to see in the white horse a symbol of human nature which Jesus takes to its original condition of innocence (indicated by the color white (Corsini p. 139)). See Rev. 19:11.

#### **Red of fire (bright red):**

- Symbol of violence and destruction (The distinctive color of the dragon).
- Given a “great sword.”
- First among the consequences of original sin.

#### **Blue of sapphire (black):**

- Symbol refers to the lack of what were [in the ancient world] staples of food: bread, wine, and oil.

#### **Greenish color of sulfur (pale):**

- Difficult to interpret the color green; commonly interpreted to be the color of death.
- Much worse than physical death: spiritual death. For example, the inability to communicate with God.
- Death and Hades: SATAN. See 20:14 and 20:10

#### **CONCLUSION:**

“What John has at heart is not to identify in these symbols and particular historical-political empire [ZECHARIAH]...He wishes to show first of all that all the empires, are the result of original sin, a consequence which, like everything connected with the divine punishment, is not evil *in itself*, but forms a part of the period of trial and suffering before the final liberation.”

**6:9**“...*I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God.*” This can be used as a proof text for the Communion of the Saints. In this episode, the saints are praying for justice (white robes indicate justice and sanctity). They are under the altar probably because that is where the blood for the sacrifice in the Temple would drain... the blood => life => the soul. White robes; an illusion to the robes of a priest (for their life was sacrificed). Corsini holds, however, that these are “ancient witnesses” of the old economy. Their life and death is not only “an announcing of Christ, but in some way a prefiguration and an anticipation of the death of Christ (152).”

**6:12ff** The Crucifixion of Christ.

## **Chapter 7**

**Basic theme: Revelation 6:9ff – those of the “Old Economy” (Seals one through four)**

**Revelation 7:13ff – those of the “New Economy” (Seals five through seven)**

**7:1** The notion of angels guarding and guiding “elemental forces” is common in the ancient world. Four winds: diabolical consequences or the four empires (On the banks of the Euphrates “ancient historians normally placed the rising of the first of the great conquering empires” (Corsini p. 185).

**Mt. 24:31** “They will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

**NOTE:** John “is far more interested in conveying to his readers the spiritual meaning of history than history itself (p.185).” It is clear, however, that the scourge is presented in a theological key, as the first and gravest consequences of original sin, the fall of man under the diabolic instigation described in the fifth trumpet” (Corsini 185).

**7:2** “*I saw another angel ascend from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice...*” Note: Ezekiel 8:16 “with their backs to the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east, worshiping the sun toward the east.”

**7:4** “*...till we have sealed the servants of our God upon their foreheads.*” The Significance of the seal: Exodus 28 describes Aaron’s ordination rite. In verse 36, the Jews are directed to engrave a signet which reads “Holy to the Lord” and place it on Aaron’s forehead.

Ezekiel 8 and 9. In the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month (the day before 666) (8:1), Ezekiel has a vision of the abominations of Israel which includes her idols (8:10). Chapter 9 begins with a description of the destruction by the Babylonian Empire of the first Temple in 587 BC. [The final destruction of the Temple is in 70 AD (actually on the same day of the year as in 587 BC: on the Day of Atonement.)]

Ezekiel 9:4, in preparation for the destruction of the first Temple in 587 BC, God instructs a “man in linen” with a writing case at his side to put a mark on the foreheads of those to be spared. This “mark” or “sign” in Hebrew is the Tau: or a “T.” Literally, especially as it is interpreted by the Church Fathers, *it is a sign of the cross*. This is how the just are to be saved. Thus, it is appropriate that John would be instructed to do the same thing in Revelation 7 (Hahn).

**7:5-8** “*the 144,000 sealed*” This signifies the remnant (a faithful few) of the 12 tribes. Could be easy: twelve tribes multiplied by twelve apostles multiplied by 1,000 (a number signifying a great multitude (Harrington 98). Note that Judah is first (the tribe from which the messiah would come) and Joseph is mentioned, not “Ephraim and Manasseh.” In addition, Dan is omitted and replaced by Levi. Speculation: In Hebrew tradition, Dan was known to be a source of evil. There is speculation that Dan would even produce the anti-Christ. Genesis 49:17 reads, “Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a viper by the path... (Hahn)”

**7:9-10** First, white robed people from every nation signify the Gentile nations. Second, these verses seem to describe the Hebrew Feast of Tabernacles when the Hebrew families would enter Jerusalem and “live with” and celebrate the Lord’s presence for a week. Palm branches played a very important role in this feast. [The palms [are] primarily a symbol of victory *not* martyrdom (Corsini 160).]

Leviticus 23 is a summary of the Hebrew calendar. The feast of Tabernacles falls in the seventh month, the most (obviously) sacred month of the year. The seventh month also begins with the first day, a day of solemn rest which is proclaimed with a ***blast of trumpets***. On the 10th day of the seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Then from the 15 day to the 21st day is the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths followed on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day by the solemn feast of the sacred assembly.

**7:11-12** Now the Jews and the Gentiles are joined by the heavenly court: all fall in worship of God. Do not overlook that verse 12 includes seven features.

**7:13** “*Who are these, clothed in white robes... washed their robes [in the Lamb’s Blood]...*” Note the irony: that things are not always as they seem... as a matter of fact, in the spiritual realm, things are seldom what they seem (Hahn). “Theirs is not a merely passive role: by the shedding of their blood they have joined their sacrifice to that of the Lamb; ultimately, it is their association with his death that has won their victory. [“*Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne...*” Rev. 7:10]. Only those who have washed their robes have a place in the New Jerusalem” (Harrington 101).

**7:14** “*the great tribulation*” A persecution? Corsini hold there is only ONE “great” tribulation” “the tribulation of the Lamb (160).”

**7:15** “...*serve him day and night within his temple...*” The word “temple” which is used here in the Greek is more correctly defined as the “Holy of Holies.” First, note that the tribal remnants (the 144,000) who were sealed as well as the multitude who washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb are now all present... Second, the new Temple does not include the “outer-courts” which were designated areas for women, and the Gentile visitors. They are not longer needed. The mystery of God **is nothing less than the unity of the Gentile and the Jew as one family before God.** See Romans 16:25 and Ephesians 3:1-3 (note word “revelation”) and that the Gentiles also will receive God’s inheritance -- very central -- very important!!

## **Chapter 8**

“In fact, the whole of the trumpets is a development of the sixth seal which is dedicated to the description of the divine salvific intervention (Corsini 165).”

**8:1** “...*about half an hour...*” The high priest required approximately a half an hour to enter the Holy of Holies and offer prayers and incense (St. John’s heavenly liturgy continues). Corsini also advances the theory that the half hour is the period between the death of and Resurrection of Jesus. “The ancient cult administered by the angels has come to an end; all creation waits for the new cult that will begin with the resurrection of Christ (163). (Conclusion: the end of angelic mediation.)

**8:2** “*seven angles*” These are the “angels of presence” (Isaiah 63:9), the seven archangels of 1 Enoch 20:1-8, of Jewish tradition who serve in the immediate presence of God, namely, Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Raguel, Sariel, and Remiel. (Luke 1:19, “I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God.” (Harrington 103)

**8:3** “*And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer...*” There were two altars in the Temple: 1) the bronze altar in the outer court where the animals were sacrificed 2) the golden altar (altar of incense) directly in front of the Holy of Holies. This half hour seems to be a ritual silence (see Luke 1:10 for example) during which time the prayers are offered before the altar of incense.

**8:5** “*the angel took the censer [filled with fire]... threw it on the earth.*” Prelude to the destruction of the temple... “And he said to the man clothed in linen, ‘Go in... fill your hands with burning coals from between the cherubim and scatter them over the city’ (Ezekiel 10).” “The judgment of God is not only punishment. It is always accompanied by the divine will to draw from it salvation and life for mankind. Could this pouring out of fire, symbolizing the judgment of God upon the earth and the end of the Jewish cult, also signify the spreading over the earth of a new cult, the adoration of the Father in spirit and in truth? (Corsini 173).”

**8:6** “*Now the seven angels [with] seven trumpets made ready to blow them...*” In the Old Testament, trumpets were used for limited reasons: prayer, to announce the king, and warfare. Important trumpet protocol is found in Numbers 10. Other references to Trumpets: Ezekiel 33:11-16; Joel 2 (also quoted in Acts 2 with regard to the “day of the Lord”); Jeremiah 4:5-9; Hosea 8:1.

### **Key to the interpretation of Revelation in the thought of Dr. Scott Hahn:**

In Joshua **chapter six**, Joshua is leading the people of Israel against the first and strongest city which stands between them and the Promised Land: Jericho. It is written, “...***And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams horns before the ark; and on the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, the priests blowing the trumpets*** (6:4).” Note also in 5:13ff, the story of the angelic “army commander.” **THE THEORY: Revelation 8-11 addresses the fall of the NEW JERICO which is JERUSALEM. The old**

**city (Jericho), which stood between God's chosen people and the Promised Land, and the new city (Jerusalem) which now stands between Christ's church and its mission, must be destroyed.**

For support, see Rev 11:8; "this great city which is allegorically called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified." The Lord was crucified in Jerusalem. Thus, Jerusalem is being compared to Sodom and Egypt. "That great city," is the title of Babylon, Sodom, Egypt, and now Jerusalem. All of these cities share one thing in common: they stand in opposition to the plan of God! **Sodom** interfered with God's covenant plan for Abraham. **Egypt** interfered with God's covenant plan for Moses and Israel. **Babylon** interfered with God's covenant plan for Jerusalem. And **Jericho** interfered with Joshua and the chosen people's destiny to possess the Promised Land and fulfill the covenantal promise.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 (1 Thessalonians 2:14ff as background) note verse 15, *until the coming of the Lord...* This passage has perplexed many scholars. In Greek, the coming of the Lord is translated *PAROUSIA*. In ancient times, when a general would conquer a city which had surrendered, he would typically allow the city government/religion/culture to remain unmolested. Yet, he would return unannounced as a sort of surprise inspection. This would be considered the Parousia. (Gk. Parousia, "presence" or "arrival") Note also verses 16-18 where there is mentioned a "cry of command," "an Archangel's call," and the SOUND OF THE TRUMPET OF GOD and then the Parousia.

The Trumpets: The first five trumpets will witness the fall of mankind, while the sixth trumpet represents the corruption of political authority (first beast of chapter 13) and the seventh trumpet the corruption of religious authority (the second beast of chapter 13) (Corsini 229).

**8:7** The first trumpet is blown. Hail is reminiscent of Egypt... many of the following passages with regard to the trumpets will borrow heavily from the Exodus story.

**8:8** The second trumpet is blown. Great mountain thrown into the sea? See Matthew 21:18-22; the withered fig tree saga. Jesus curses the fig tree because it does not produce fruit (a symbol of Jerusalem) and it withers. He goes on to tell the Apostles, "If you had faith and never doubt... even if you say to *this* mountain, be taken up and cast into the sea, it will be done." [The mountain is Zion, or Jerusalem - a request to God to take away the old and replace it with the new.]

**8:10** The third trumpet is blown. Almost the reverse of what happens in Exodus 15 when the waters of Mara are made sweet when Moses cast the tree into the water. The Fathers see this as the cross being cast into the pool of the sin of man.

**8:12** The fourth trumpet is blown Ezekiel 5 has the prophetic relevance of the symbolism of 1/3.

### **Key to the interpretation of Revelation in the thought of Father Eugenio Corsini:**

The first four trumpets represent heavenly bodies "falling" or being "thrown" down (by God) effecting earth (v. 7), sea (v. 8 & 10) and sky (v. 12). Thus, these "four scenes are about the fall of Satan (first three trumpets) and his followers (fourth trumpet). Confirmation can be found in the fifth trumpet, "I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth... (9:1)" Also, see 12:3-4, "his tail swept down a third of the stars from heaven, and cast them to the earth."

"The effect of the fall of the angels is that a third of creation is corrupted (Corsini 176)."

In addition, the fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpet will show Satan's corruption spreading among men.

**8:13** "*Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on earth...*"

First woe is the temptation and fall of man.

Second woe is the corruption of human history.

Third woe is the death of Christ.

## **Chapter 9**

*“The whole of the trumpets is a development of the sixth seal which is dedicated to the description of the divine salvific intervention (p. 165).”*

➤ **First woe (fifth trumpet) (9:1-12)** – temptation and fall of man.

- Satan is driven from his place of origin (Isaiah 14:12)
- “...seen as the spiritual attack against mankind which has been going on from all time from the world of the fallen angels, with Satan as their head.”
- “The diabolic temptation is directed to man, and not to the rest of creation.”
- Man falls because of pride: “the instruments of the punishment are the very ones who created pride, the demons.” (Corsini 179)

**9:1 The fifth trumpet is blown**

“I saw a *star fallen*...” the star is a symbol of Satan.

*“...the key of the shaft of the bottomless pit...”*

The mystery: Ancient tradition tells us that the rock upon which the Temple was built is the rock upon which Abraham was told to sacrifice Isaac and upon which Solomon built the first Temple (2 Chronicles 3). All three major religions - Muslims, Christians and Jews - believe that there is a shaft beneath the rock which is mysteriously deep. According to Dr. Hahn, Jews and Muslims believe that this is a shaft to the Underworld. Hence, it is a place to pray for their dead. It is the gate of Hades. In addition, Peter, the Rock, [who, by the way, holds the “other” set of keys!), would now build a new Temple. In Revelation 20, the devil comes forth from the shaft or abyss.

**9:2-4** The locust and smoke are only reminiscent of the 8th plague in Egypt. Christ Jesus brings light into the world, but the great furnace brings smoke and darkness. Notice that these locust do not do what we know locust do: eat vegetation. There is more here.

**9:5** *“They were allowed to torture them for five months, but not to kill them...”* “the spiritual attack against mankind which has been going on from all time from the world of the fallen angels, with Satan as their head” (Corsini 179).

**9:6** *“...they will seek death and they will not find it...”* A simple riddle:

- **Luke 14:33** “In the same way, everyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple.”
- **Luke 9:23** “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”
- **Mark 8:35-36** “He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?”
- **Col 3:3** “For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”
- **Romans 4:4** “We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.”



- **Hebrews 2:14** “Now since the children share in blood and flesh, he likewise shared in them, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who through fear of death had been subject to slavery all their life.”
- **Romans 6:7** “For he who has died is freed from sin.”

**9:7-10** The background required for an understanding of this passage is found in Joel 2:1-11.

- Crowns – conquerors/invincibility
- Human faces – the creatures possess intelligence
- Woman’s hair – earthly glory? (1 Cor 11:14)
- Lion’s teeth – ferocity

**9:11** *Abaddon*: A Hebrew word meaning ruin, destruction, perdition. The word is named together with death in Job 28:22 and Sheol in Proverbs 15:11 (McKenzie 1).

*Apollyon*: A Greek word “the one who destroys, who sends things to ruination.” Corsini calls Apollyon the “Exterminator” (180).

- **Second woe (sixth trumpet) (9:13-10:14)** – corruption of human history in its most devastating manifestations: political and religious ruin (invasion of the cavalry, wars, profanation of the temple and the holy city, the killing of the two witnesses.) In the sixth seal, the four winds represent the diabolical attempt to take possession of the whole earth through violence. Keep in mind that John “*is far more interested in conveying to his readers the spiritual meaning of history rather than history itself*” (Corsini 185).

**9:13** We begin a marked difference from the preceding passages. No longer is the metaphor spiritual, it is now physical (“to kill a third of mankind” 9:15). The theme: war is a consequence of original sin.

**9:14** Euphrates “on the banks of this river the ancient historians normally placed the rising of the first of the great conquering empires” (Corsini 185).

**9:17** Note the color white does not appear here. Red (fire) is violence. Smoke is pride. Sulphur is spiritual death. “Pride leads to injustice and violence and has death as a result” (187).

**9:20-21** Remember that God allows these tribulations in order to move us toward repentance. He always offers us hope of salvation. Alas, there is no sign of repentance on the part of the Hebrew people.

## Chapter 10

**10:1-3** Who is the mighty angel?

- **Hahn** holds it is Jesus himself (the Lion), see Psalm 104 for a similar description, “...*like a lion roaring*...” See Revelation 5 and Amos 1:2-3
- **Corsini** believes the angel to be a manifestation of the Old Covenant prophecies. Recall one of Corsini’s major themes: angels mediated the Old Covenant. “A great deal is summed up in the mighty angel: wrapped in a cloud (as the cloud over the Ark of the Covenant) the rainbow (as at the end of the flood), the legs which are like “pillars of fire” (as those pillars which lead Israel in the desert), his face is like the sun (as Moses descends with a glowing face) especially the promise that the “good news” is about to be given “to his servant, the prophets.” (188)

**10:2** “... *a little scroll open is his hand.*” The contrast is evident: this “little” (vv.2, 9, 10) scroll is symbolic of the salvific intervention of the Old Covenant, whereas the scroll in Chapter 5 is symbolic of the work of

redemption which only Jesus was capable of performing. Here is the theme of this chapter: the Old Economy has limitations.

**10:3** “*the seven thunders*” are the voice of God. “The voice of the Lord is upon the waters, the God of glory thunders.” (Jeremiah 25:30) “The Lord will roar from on high...” (John 12:28)

**10:4** “*seal up that the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down...*” This represents the only words in Revelation that are not to be revealed (See Revelation 22:10). Suggests that there may be fulfillment which will occur after the visionary’s death or that this is pre-Christian revelation. “...the voice, a cry like a roaring lion, and claps of thunder. These are traditional images of the Old Testament to indicate the presence of the divinity. They also stress his terrible, inaccessible, impenetrable and incomprehensible majesty.” (Corsini 190)

The word of God in the Old Testament is not only incomplete (a pre-announcing) and indirect (under seal).

**10:5** “...*angel whom I saw standing on sea and land... lifted... right hand swearing a covenant....*” The sea represents the Gentiles because Romans arrived in the Holy Land via the sea, while the land represents the Hebrews (the Land of Israel). This is a triumphant scene when Jesus brings all of mankind into his family – thus bringing redemption to fulfillment!

### **10:7 Mystery of God**

Hahn holds that the Mystery of God is His judgment on Israel and the establishment, through Abraham’s seed, of the Catholic Church.

- Mark 4:11 – Jesus announces the Kingdom of God.
- Romans 16:25 – obedience of faith of all the nations is proclaimed (no longer limited to Israel alone)
- Ephesians 1:9-10 – “set up all things in Christ.”
- Ephesians 3:1-11 – the fullest definition of this fulfillment: “Gentiles are co-heirs” and that “through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.”

*More support:* Colossians 1:25-27; Colossians 2:1-3; Colossians 4:3

“That mystery coincides with the death and resurrection of Jesus; an end to time, certainly, but in the sense of a history of salvation where all historical events converge upon the promise made by God in the very moment that punishment was inflicted as a result of the original fall. Seen from the point of view of the history of mankind, this does not mean an ‘end’ in the normal sense of that expression, but a complete change in the spiritual order, where the old is cancelled and substituted by a new order, a ‘new heaven’ and a ‘new earth,’ a ‘new Jerusalem,’ as John will illustrate in the final chapters (21:1ff).” (Corsini 169)

**10:6-7** “*and swore by him...*” Daniel 12:1 – “At that time shall arise Michael...” [then a description of a future time]. “But you Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end...” This is similar to Revelation 10. Daniel 5 describes a man in linen who raises his hands in oath swearing... and the “shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end,” after “a time, two times, and half a time...” or three and a half times. May be relevant as the Jewish war with Rome lasted three and a half years.

**10:8** “*Take it and eat*” Old Testament background found in Ezekiel 2:8ff (Setting: Ezekiel 2:3-4, God sends Ezekiel to testify to his rebellious people.) Verse 8 and following Ezekiel indicates that, because of Israel’s infidelity, they will be banished and exiled. Note that Ezekiel is to prophesy only to the people of Israel and John is to prophesy to “many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.” (11)

**10:9** “...*it will be bitter to your stomach, but sweet as honey in your mouth.*” The Hebrew people have often proclaimed that the word, the Law of God, is sweet and is to be meditated upon and observed. To follow the

Law is to have wisdom and blessing. Nevertheless, the Law of God could not save. As St. Paul says, “Law came in to increase the trespass (Romans 5:20).” The Law only demonstrates the need for grace; the law shows man that he has sinned. Even if one were to fulfill the Law perfectly, it would still lead to death. Thus, the need for Jesus as our Lord and our true Savior is demonstrated to mankind.

## **Chapter 11**

**11:1ff - The measuring of the Temple.** Much more simplified than the measuring of the Temple in the Old Testament (See Ezek 40:3ff). “The order to measure the Temple indicates, as in the Old Testament models, that the place is the object of a particular divine affection, chosen by the divinity as his own dwelling, where he receives the cult of his adorers (191).” Note this is strong evidence that the book was written before 70 AD, there is still a Temple that can be measured.

**11:2** *“but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out...”* This command indicates the limitations of the Old Economy and that it is reserved only to Israel. The outer court was for pagans. The Temple is “destined to pass away and to be absorbed into a higher and truer form which is spiritual and universal” (Corsini 193).

*“...for forty-two months”* **11:3** *“for one thousand two hundred and sixty days...”* The book of Daniel describes the persecution of Israel by Antiochus IV as lasting for a “week of years.” Subdivided into “two half-weeks,” the second half was the most severe as it entailed a spiritual persecution. The Temple was profaned and the liturgical cult was prohibited. Thus, this segment of time indicates “a period” of persecution.

**11:3** *“And I will grant my two witnesses power to prophesy...”*

**Moses** · two olive trees · Law · *“power to turn [water] into blood”* · *“smite...with every plague”*

**Elijah** · two lamp stands · Prophets · *“power to shut the sky”*

Q. To whom do they give witness? A. “They symbolize the witness to Jesus given by the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah) before his coming” (Corsini 195).

- Elijah had the power to create a drought in Israel for 3 1/2 years!
- Fire comes from mouth.

**11:7** The beast represents both the corruption of political authority and religious authority, both of which will be responsible for slaying Jesus Christ.

**11:8** *“...the great city...”* Jerusalem (NOT ROME). Jerusalem is where the Temple is built, where the prophets are sent to be martyred and where the Lord was crucified. What? Jerusalem is Sodom and Egypt? See:

Isaiah 1:10 - “Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom, and become like Gomorra.”

Isaiah 3:9 - “...they proclaim their sin like Sodom, they do not hide it.”

Deuteronomy 29:23 & Deuteronomy 32:32 - Moses describes unfaithful Israel like Sodom twice.

Jeremiah 23:14

Ezekiel 16:46ff & Ezekiel 16:53ff - Jerusalem and Samaria are compared to Sodom.

Note that the only evil city which Jerusalem has not been compared to is Babylon.

Gaston, Loyd. No Stone Upon Another.

*“For a Christian living in the sixties of the first century... all the signs seemed to point to an imminent end. The end had been expected within a generation. And the first generation was coming to an end. The hope for the nearness of the end was stimulated by persecution which the Church had been experiencing. According to the calculations of the best minds in Israel, the 490 years of Daniel 9 were at last coming to an end. And according*

*to the independent tradition, the messianic age was suppose to last 40 years - it had just about been that long since the beginning of the Christian Messianic age.”(4)*

**Hahn:** Three ages of the Rabbinic tradition - Present Age: the Old Covenant Age; the Messianic Age: to last 40 years (According to the Rabbis); the Age to Come: unlimited duration of great blessing.

**11:13** “...*there was a great earthquake...*” “Earthquake is a sign which accompanies the judging intervention of God” [Sixth seal (6:12), sixth trumpet (destruction of Jerusalem), the destruction of Babylon (16:18ff), the death of Jesus (Matt. 27:51).] (Corsini 198).

“...*and a tenth of the city fell...*” Some estimate that the population of Jerusalem in 70 AD was 70,000. Yet, at the time it was destroyed it had swollen to 1.2 million pilgrims who were celebrating the festival. Historians estimate that between 600,000 and 1.2 million Jews were killed in the siege of the city.

**11:14** “*The second woe has passed...*” “Even though the old economy was an intervention of God, Satan still appears to be victorious. After having tempted man and caused him to fall from his position of privilege and friendship with God (fifth trumpet, first “woe”), he continues to persecute him during the whole of his history on earth, corrupting political authority and making it his instrument for the oppression and death of mankind (the invasion of the cavalry) and finally destroy the “holy city,” a symbol of God’s first intervention in Judaism (the slaying of the two “witnesses”)” (Corsini 200).

“...*the third woe is soon to come*” because the seventh trumpet was about to be blown.

The third woe (seventh trumpet) is the death of Christ. “...the death of Christ is a “woe” which strikes the earth, both because it brings to a pitch the wicked activity of Satan and because, in this apparent victory of the forces of evil, they are definitively destroyed” (205).”

**11:15-18** “*The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ...*” Hahn: “The one thing which stood between the transformation of the kingdom of the world into the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and the element which prevented the work of the Apostles to bear fruit was Jerusalem.”

**11:19** “*Then God’s Temple...*” Irony: with the blast of the seventh trumpet, we have a great announcement of the triumph of “the Christ” over the great city and her Temple which we presume has been destroyed. Yet, from Rabbinic tradition, we know that there were always two Jerusalem cities: the earthly city with her Temple and the heavenly city with her Temple. The earthly Temple was modeled after the heavenly one... as if the heavenly Jerusalem was the blue-print for the earthly Jerusalem.

“...*and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple...*” THIS IS A VISION WITH UNTHINKABLE CONSEQUENCES. When the Jewish Christians hear that John sees the Ark of the Covenant which was said to have been hidden in 587 B.C. by Jeremiah (2 Maccabees 2:4-8), they would have been extremely anxious to have a description of it... and here comes that description through peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail: (But do not look here... the answer is in Chapter 12!)

## **Chapter 12**

"The so-called second part of the Apocalypse, which runs from chapter 12 almost to the end of the book, develops one theme only: the death of Christ as the judgment of God on the world and on history and the two consequences of this, the destruction of the forces of evil and the gathering of those chosen to become part of the new people of God, founded by Christ" (Corsini 206).

### ***12:1 – 22:5***

- When reading, always keep in mind the *historical* death of Jesus.
- The action of Satan is seen as the wicked collusion between two human agents: political and religious authority.

- The three “signs” [PORTENTS] of the seven bowls:
  - the “sign” of the woman,
  - the “sign” of the dragon (12:13),
  - the angels who have the bowls (15:1)
- In this section, the “revelation of Jesus Christ” reaches its highest moment, the death of Christ.
- The series of “sevens” are best seen not as a chain of events but as a series in succession, progressively carrying the same argument further and deeper.

**12:1-2** “*a woman clothed with the sun...*” Q. Is this the reality of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Church of Jesus Christ, the ancient people of Israel, the Ark of the Covenant, or humanity? A. Yes. She is the personification of all five! So called “intellectuals” bend over backward trying to prove that the “woman” is not the Blessed Virgin Mary. I disagree. I believe that the woman personifies the **Church** (St. Gregory: “The sun stands for the light of truth, and the moon for the transitoriness of temporal things; the holy Church is clothed like the sun because she is protected by the splendor of supernatural truth, and she has the moon under her feet because she is above all earthly things” (*Moralia* 34,12)), the **Jews** (Isaiah compares Israel to “a woman with child, who writhes and cries out in her pangs, when she is near her time” (Is 26:17)), **humanity** (\*\*St. Boniface: “God could have made none greater. He could have made a greater world and a greater heaven; but not a woman greater than his own mother” (*Speculum*, 8)), and the **Blessed Virgin Mary** as the **Ark of the Covenant** (Compare 2 Samuel 6 with Luke 1).

Old Testament background: Genesis 3:15 -- the protoevangelium. Note the unusual statement in verse 15, “*and between your seed and her seed...*” We never refer to the seed as coming from the woman... This woman is described as the New Eve and her seed will crush the head of Satan. See also Romans 16:20, “then the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet” (Hahn).

The **Ark of the Covenant**, by Hebrew tradition was hidden from the Babylonian invaders over 500 years prior by Jeremiah the prophet (See 2 Maccabees 2:4-8). Recall that it is the Ark of the Covenant dwelling in the inner sanctum which sanctified the Holy of Holies. The ark contained the Decalogue (Word of God), the manna (Food from God), and Aaron’s priestly rod (the Authority of God). The Ark was made with acacia wood (a wood noted for its incorruptible properties) and covered in gold (gold as associated with purity and divinity) which was overshadowed by the Cherubim and supported a *mercy seat*. Rather than carry symbols of the Messiah, Mary, conceived without original sin and perfect, carries the Christ in her womb. There was nothing as holy as the Ark.

[It is important to note that the Ark was associated more with Jesus than Mary by the Early Church Fathers; for example, the wood represents his humanity and the gold his divinity.

Is the woman clothed with the sun really the Blessed Virgin Mary? (Lefrois, Bernard. American Ecclesiastical Review: The Woman Clothed with the Sun, 1952.)

The woman does represent a person, yet is symbolic of a collective people. In fact, the four mentioned in this chapter represent individuals as well as collective bodies. The collective bodies are secondary.

- 1) The dragon is Satan [and, of course, the Herodian Dynasty or anyone/thing which would oppress the Gospel].
- 2) The “Lord of the World” is the Messiah. Psalm 2:9; Rev 19:11-16. In addition, this individual also represents a collective body: the Davidic Empire.
- 3) One cannot hold that the Woman is exclusively the Church, because the Church did not give birth to Christ, Christ gave birth to the Church.
- 4) Michael and his angels.

“*her pangs of birth...*” Church tradition holds that Mary did not suffer birth pangs. See St. Paul (Galatians 4:19): he claims he is in the “pangs of birth” until Christ be formed in them. In Romans 8:22, Paul remarks

that all creation “wails in pain” as if like a woman about to give birth. Thus, Our Lady’s pain may be her desire to bring forth the Messiah for the World or to bring the Messiah into the hearts of men (i.e., a spiritual suffering).

**12:3 [SEE ALSO CHAPTER 13]** “...And another portent appeared in heaven; behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems upon his heads...” This dragon is Satan and is described as a collective power. Horns, from the Old Testament, represent dynastic power. Satan is identifying himself with an earthly power.

- Herod the Great. Herod was an Edomite. Edom is the Hebrew word for *red* (See Numbers 24:17). Hahn holds that the Herodian Dynasty has been neglected as an historical power. Herod the Great was a non-Jew appointed to rule Judea in 40 B.C. by Rome; he ruled from 37 B.C. to around 4 B.C. as king of Judea and of Galilee. He destroyed the Hasmoean Dynasty to safeguard his own dynasty because he knew that, because he was not Jew, the people would not accept him. Note: 1) the Dynasty was based in Jerusalem, 2) Herod was claiming to be King in Jerusalem, 3) He was laying claim to the Davidic Dynasty! 4) Herod, a non-Jew, rebuilt the Temple!! It is called the Herodian Temple!! 5) Herod murdered his wife, her three sons, his mother-in-law, his brother-in-law, his uncle... and many others including the Holy Innocents. 6) He consulted the temple priests in order to figure out when the Messiah was to be born!

There was an unholy alliance. HEROD IS THE SATANIC COUNTERFEIT!

- Upon his death, Herod’s four sons formed a Tetrachy (they divided up the dynasty into four parts). The four sons of the tetrarch were Herod Philip II, Archelaus, Herod Antipas (who put John the Baptist to death and to whom Pilate sent Jesus ), Aristobulus (not mentioned in the Bible).
- Herod Agrippa I (Son of Aristobulus) [reigned 37 AD to 44AD] executed St. James and imprisoned St. Peter with the intention of killing him. Herod Agrippa is declared divine in Acts 12:1-24 when he collapses and worms are seen eating his innards. (Josephus calls it a ruptured appendix.) Herod Agrippa II, Herod Agrippa I’s son, is the king before whom Paul made his appeal in Acts. This man, ruling until the early 60s AD is probably most responsible for rousing the Jews to revolt against the Romans.

**“...and seven heads...”** Herod the Great + Herod Philip II + Archelaus + Herod Antipas + Aristobulus + Herod Agrippa I + Herod Agrippa II = SEVEN.

**“...and ten horns...”** The authority (power) There was Julius Caesar + Augustus Caesar + Tiberius + Gaius (Caligula) + Claudius + Nero Caesar + Servius Sulpicius Galba + Marcus Salvius Otho + Vespasian + Titus = TEN

\*\* “according to the Jewish tradition which John is following (an echo of it is also found in Gen 3:1) he was the most noble, intelligent, and perfect of all creatures” (Corsini 217)

**12:5** The Exodus -- “Thus says the Lord, Israel is my first-born son, and I say to you, “Let my son go that he may serve me (Exodus 4:22).” Note: Israel is in Egypt and God delivers him and sends him into the desert where he is kept for a while.

**12:6** “*fled into the wilderness (desert)*” “It is a place of refuge, but also of difficult trials, of encounter with God, but also of diabolic temptation.” “The desert was for them a place of refuge against aggression, a place of privileged encounter with God (Sinai), but also a place of difficult physical and moral trials, of temptation and sin.”

For one thousand two hundred and sixty days... as we said in the last chapter, a “period” of persecution.

**12:13ff** Very mysterious passage upon which nobody readily agrees. It has obvious allusions to the Exodus.

**12:14** “*the woman was given two wings of the great eagle...*” “Law and the Prophets”

*“for a time, and times and a half time:”* = three and a half weeks (Same as above.)

**12:17** *“and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring...”* Mary is said not to have had any other children. Yet offspring (the Church) can easily be considered to a spiritual maternity or paternity. *“...on those who keep the commandments of God [THE LAW] and bear testimony to Jesus [THE PROPHETS]...”*

## **Chapter 13**

Notice that this is a BEAST and not the DRAGON of chapter twelve. This is important: the dragon is the *source* of the beast and its authority. The evil influence of the dragon spreads in two directions: the sea and the earth. Corsini (228) sees this symbolized in the “position which he took up at the end of Chapter 12: ‘And he stood on the sand of the sea,’ i.e., the line of demarcation between the two elements.” Note also that the Beast is standing... in opposition to the Lamb who stands as though it had been slain (Chapter 5). Important: “Chapter 12 expresses the community’s faith and theological vision; chapter 13 expresses what actually happens in history” (Richard 107).

**13:1** *“And I saw a beast rising out of the sea...”* Most commentators hold that “out of the sea” indicates Rome. Recall that the Gentiles receive their power from the sea (Daniel 7:2 - as the wind stirs up the great sea, the four Gentile powers emerge) and that, one way for Rome to invade Israel was to cross the Mediterranean Sea. The beast would also represent, collectively, the corruption of political authority throughout history. *“Blasphemous name upon its head...”* this is a satire on the High Priest who had “Holy to the Lord” inscribed on his head band. This can also represent world leaders who have attempted to place themselves on the level of God. The “blasphemous (denial of God) names” would represent the “temptation to divinization” (Corsini 233).

**13:2** From Daniel Chapter 7: 1) Lion (Babylon), 2) Bear (Meddo-Pursia), 3) Leopard (Greece), 4) Described in Daniel as “terrible and dreadful and exceedingly strong...” No animal symbol as it is too frightening (Rome and/or the culmination of all the previous evil empires). John’s chief motivation here is to “denounce the demonic character of political domination... expressed in the self-glorification of man” (Corsini 235).

**13:3** *“One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but...”* This is possibly an allusion to Nero who was the first Caesar to persecute Christians as well as the most despicable Roman leader. Corsini believes it to be the recurrence of political corruption... which “brings the resurrection of Satan into history” (Corsini 231). This may also indicate the Dragon who, having fallen from heaven, now seems to have regained his power.

**13:4** *“Men worshipped the dragon, for he had given authority to the beast...”* We know men worshipped the Roman emperors and considered them divine. When St. Peter states that there is “no other name” by which men can be saved he is directly assaulting Augustus Caesar’s statement that it was by *his* name that all were saved. *“Who is like the beast?”* is a verbal assault on St. Michael whose name means “Who is like God?” See, also, Exodus 15:11 and Isaiah 44:6-7.

**13:5** *“...allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months...”* Could be the Neronian Persecution which lasted from November 64 AD to June 68 AD almost exactly forty-two months (Hahn). Same duration of time as in Revelation 11:2, 11:3, 12:6, 12:14 as well as Daniel 7:25, 12:7. “In Jewish apocalyptic, this second “half week” had come to symbolize the period of persecution which would precede the coming of the messianic kingdom” (Corsini 234).

**13:6** *“...blaspheming against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling.*

**13:7** *“Also, it was allowed to make war...”* insinuating that the ultimate authority and power belong to God, but for a time has been granted to the beast. In other words, the beast and the dragon’s power is not absolute.



**13:8** “...everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain” Lamb, a symbol of non-violence, a meekness, the divine triumph.

**13:9-10** “...let him hear: If any one is to be taken...” Perhaps this is a loose quotation of Jeremiah 15:2 which reads “Thus says the Lord: ‘Those who are for pestilence, to pestilence, and those who are for the sword, to the sword...’” This is an oracle directed against the people of Jerusalem because of their King, Manasseh, who offered child sacrifices etc... (Hahn)

“It is exactly the corruption of these two fundamental prerogatives of man, *kingship and priesthood*, that John is describing the through the allegory of the two beasts in Chapter 13” (Corsini 241).<sup>111</sup>

**13:11** “Then I saw another beast which rose out of the earth...” Clearly, since the Gentiles arose from the sea, this second beast connected with Israel or Judaism (Hahn). “...it had two horns like a lamb...” (Perhaps this is the sacrificial lamb of the covenant; close in essence to Jesus, but corrupt.) “...but it spoke like a dragon.” Its power is also from Satan. “He looks like something, yet behaves differently” (Corsini 250). “From here to the end of the Book of Revelation, this beast will be called the false prophet [and “the prostitute,” and “the whore”] (16:13, 19:20, 20:10” (Richard 107).

**13:12** “It exercises all the authority of the first beast...” i.e., it derives its power from Rome, the first beast. Recall the Passion when the chief priests declare, “We have no King but Caesar!” Apostasy! The priests are allied with Rome and have abandoned their faith. “...in his presence” is a “biblical expression meaning ‘to obtain the recognition or favor of someone.’ ... because he fears the former... He is afraid of its anger, and he seeks to please it, yet another sign of duplicity” (Corsini 215).

**13:13** “It works great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth...” While the activity of the beast from the sea is described by John through images of brute force and violence, the beast from the land acts more subtly, through the temptation to error...” (Corsini 248).

**13:14-15** “...worship the image of the beast...” Again, in the book of Daniel, we recall the three young men (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) who refused to worship the image that Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3 had set up (presumably of himself) and were thrown into the furnace (See also, Daniel 9:27).

**13:16-18** *The mark of the beast. Three interpretations by Dr. Hahn:*

First interpretation: most scholars agree this is a reference to Nero. His full name, in Hebrew, has a numerical value of 666 or in some ancient manuscripts, it is rendered 616 which is his more popular name of Nero. He was bi-sexual, a terrorist, pervert, he enjoyed watching the torture of prisoners, he would dress as an animal and rape men and women, and kicked his pregnant wife to death. He persecuted the Christians, at the instigation of the Jews, for three and a half years. There was a legend that Nero would rise from the dead and re-ascend the throne. Likewise, it is the Roman power which authorizes trade.

Second interpretation: the Gospel of John reports that it was on the *sixth* day (Friday) of the week, at the *six* hour, the kingdoms of the Christ and the anti-Christ looked each other in the face in Pilate’s court. Caiaphas, the false prophet, makes his claim that “we have no king but Caesar.” This may be the supreme manifestation of the antichrist. Jesus has “on” his forehead: INRI, which the Jews wanted taken down.

Third interpretation: The number is applied to King Solomon. The Book of Kings records Solomon receiving the throne (Chapter 1), his enthronement as king (Chapter 2), his request for wisdom (Chapter 3), the establishment of his royal court (Chapter 4), and his use of wisdom to build and dedicate the famous Temple of Solomon as a house of prayer *for all the nations* (Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9). In 1 Kings 10:14, we read: “Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold...” In 2

Chronicles 9:13, we see the high point as well as the beginning of the great decline of Solomon. Solomon breaks all three laws of godly kingship recorded in Deuteronomy 17:16-17. He breaks 1) the law against multiplying gold [wealth], 2) the law against multiplying horses (see 1 Kings 10:26-29) [military power], the law against multiplying wives [political power] which he violates in 1 Kings 11:1-8. ***Thus, for the Hebrews, the number 666 was a fearful sign of apostasy and a sign of a King and a Kingdom under the control of the Dragon.***

“Why is 666 the beast’s number?”

- Recall that man and beasts were made on the sixth day, but man was made for God. He was made to give worship to God. Thus, he *was made* for the *seventh* day. The seventh day was for man to live his covenant relationship with God. When he forgets this vocation... when he lapses from the covenant and the worship of God, man becomes beast-like. God is no longer worshipped; man is worshipped in God’s place.
- Recall Goliath: he was 6 cubits high and his spearhead weighed 6 shekels.
- Recall Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, when he established the image of the beast to be worshipped in Daniel, it stood 60 cubits high and 6 cubits wide.

One must conclude from all this evidence that the beast is ***not*** a modern figure. ***The beast of the land is none other than the Davidic dynasty in the earthly Jerusalem which has been harnessed by Satan to destroy the true Son of David.*** Herod, Pilate, Caiaphas are all in league with the Dragon to destroy the male child destined to rule the nations (Hahn).

## **Chapter 14**

Note the structure of this chapter: the appearance of seven angelic beings: three angels, the appearance of “one like a Son of man,” followed by three more angelic beings. “The victory of Christ over death, which marks simultaneously the destruction of the forces of evil and the foundation of the New Jerusalem, at once judgment and redemption, is represented by another symbol, the Son of man” (Corsini 259).

**14:1** “...and lo, on **Mount Zion** stood the Lamb...”

- Note that this is the real lamb, the heir to the Davidic Dynasty, which stands in contrast to the false lamb of chapter 13: the impostor, the Herodian dynasty.
- To understand Mount Zion consider Hebrews 12:22: “*But you have come to **Mount Zion** and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly [Ecclesia] of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel...*”
- Note the Lamb is “standing” and is on Mount Zion. Corsini believes this to be the same mount that in 16:16 is called in Hebrew Armageddon.

“*the hundred and forty-four thousand...*” are the same hundred and forty-four thousand in Rev. 7:4. “They represent the elect, gifted with a special perfection and therefore having a position exceptionally superior to all others” (Corsini 262). Yet, Corsini holds to his belief that these are the martyrs of the Old Economy (they come from the 12 tribes, they are chosen (sealed), and that John wishes to identify the Lamb with the 144,000. Because the Son of man is identified as the Lamb, there is an expectation of reversal. “It [the immolation of chapter 5] is followed a reversal: death becomes life, defeat becomes victory. The sacrifice, therefore, becomes redemption” (Corsini 263).

“The one hundred and forty-four thousand are, therefore, ‘martyrs’ in the first sense of the word, ‘witnesses’ of the Lamb, shown by the name they have on their foreheads... They are witnesses of God and of Jesus Christ... because it cost them their lives. They have, in fact, in dying for witness to the Law and the messianic promise,

prefigured and already put into action, the death of Jesus Christ himself” (Corsini 263). (See 6:9; 12:7; 14:12; and 20:4)

**14:2-5** “...as first fruits for God and the Lamb...”

The Martyrs and the Virgins are always considered among the Church Fathers to be the most glorified in the Heavenly Jerusalem. Danilou’s book The Angels and their Mission includes a discussion of how the angels greatly anticipate the death of martyrs and virgins because they glow with a heavenly brilliance, a glory from God, and the angels are always ecstatic for the privilege of escorting them to the Heavenly Jerusalem. Note that in the Greek, the word for CHASTE is virgin. Does that make sex sinful? By no means. Just as Jesus uses Eunuchs to refer to the Celibates, John uses Virgins to refer to the pure (Hahn).

Alternative theory: these may be the “first-fruits” of the Pre-Christian era (See 14:1). This stands to reason. The first century Christians would have seen the coming and victory of Jesus as vindication of all who had witnessed to Christ before the Christ event. The sacrifice of these ‘witnesses’ is not simply an anticipation of Jesus’ death, but in every sense a part of it, as, in John’s view, the slaying of the Lamb can be understood as already being effective ‘from the foundation of the world’ (13:8) (Corsini 278).

**14:4** “*follow the Lamb wherever he goes...*” indicates that the hundred and forty-four thousand are definitely martyrs.

“*It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are chaste...*” “takes up the Old Testament expression of impurity of cult and idolatry in terms of prostitution and unchastity of the nation” (Corsini 264)! Continence was required by both priests and soldiers before the performance of their duties. “Their ‘warfare’ is precisely in resisting the ‘*fornication*’ of idolatry, through the unshakable fidelity to the Lamb” (Harrington 148). (Church is the bride of the Lamb (21:9) and St. Paul calls the church the ‘pure bride’ betrothed to Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2).

“Look upon all unchastity and avarice as the worship of false gods; for ‘no man can serve two masters.’ A man can become so immersed in these unchaste behaviors that they become the major activity he desires, i.e. become false gods. As such he can do harm to his body, destroy his will, cloud his mind, and lose his soul.” – Diaconate Ordination Instruction.

**14:9-11** “...and the smoke of their torment goes up for ever and ever...” This passage seems to indicate that there is a hell.

**14:12-13** “*call for endurance of the saints...*” This is the message of the entire book. In the Old Testament, God’s faithful, upon death, dwelt in Sheol (a shadowy underworld) even though they were destined for God’s presence. There is no need for the saints of the Old Testament to dwell in Sheol. Because of the Blood of the Lamb, the Saints may enter directly into God’s presence... “They rest from their labors!” Mark this passage for those who do not believe in works of charity for sanctification!

“...who die in the Lord henceforth.” “John simply affirms that the just ones (the dead who die in the Lord) obtain immediately after death (from now), blessedness, eternal life” (Corsini 277).

**14:14** “*Then I looked, and lo, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like a son of man...*” This is a reflection of the Book of Daniel, chapter 7, with revisions.

- This Son of man is more fully revealed as the white rider in 19:11ff.

- The Son of man in Chapter 14 is a re-creation of the Lamb in Chapter 5 (Thus, chapter 14 becomes a “bridge” in the structure of the Book of Revelation (Corsini 262)).
- Golden crown indicates that he is already established as King.
- The figure is sitting: indicates he is the supreme judge.
- Sickle: a symbol of death of Christ’s death (not future carnage). (See Joel 3:13)

**14:19** “*the great winepress of the wrath of God...*” is the idea of judgment (Is 63:1ff). Note that it is not new wine that flows forth, but blood.

“*Six hundred stadia...*” indicates the face of the earth and probably is a reference to Christ’s passion (see 19:13). “The ambiguity lies in the fact that the blood could be read as that of the evil people crushed by the divine anger, but it refers, in fact, to the blood of Christ and its spreading over all the earth” (Corsini 271).

**14:20** “*...and the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the wine press...*” These are images of the great Hebrew exodus from Egypt (recall Luke 9, when Jesus talks about his own Exodus) when Pharaoh’s horsemen went into the Red Sea (Hahn). “*Outside the city*” is most probably a reference to Jerusalem whence Jesus was crucified.

“*as high as a horse’s bridle...*” Wild theory... the “horses” are the horses of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> trumpets. The spreading of their diabolical influence is now stopped as “The blood which reaches their nostrils stops their advance” (Corsini 271).

Hahn uses chapter 9 of the Letter to the Hebrews as evidence that the passing of the old and the beginning of the new covenant is the end of the old world and the beginning of a new age. Hebrews should also be read as if it were written just before 70 A.D. (See also: Hebrews 10:1-14)

The death of Christ, therefore, appears as the judgment of God on the world in its dual aspect: the gathering of the elect (reaping) and the condemnation and destruction of the evil forces (the vintage and the pressing of the grapes).

## **Chapter 15**

### ***Outline:***

<b>Chapters 15-16</b>	Crucifixion and judgment of God, the condemnation of sin and sinners
<b>Chapters 17-20</b>	Judgment of God as the destruction of wicked forces
<b>Chapters 21-22</b>	The coming of the messianic kingdom (more positive aspects of God’s judgment)

*Portent:* something amazing; marvel.

**First: Mary; the Church; the Jews; the woman [the creation and fall of man - fifth trumpet – first woe]**

- *The creature man, giving in to the temptation which arises from the bottomless pit, falls into a condition of material and spiritual misery.*

**Second: “Satanic rebellion which spreads among men” [Law/prophecy – six trumpet – second woe]**

- *The witness of the Law and the Prophets is stamped upon and suffocated by the “beast which rises from the bottomless pit,” the “holy city” is so profaned and corrupted that it becomes the residence of Satan.*

**Third: The death of Christ [death of Christ – seventh trumpet – third woe]**

- *The death of Christ therefore is seen only from a negative point of view: the profanation of the Temple and the end of Judaism (Corsini 286).*

**15:1** “*Then I saw another portent in the heaven, **great and wonderful**, seven angels with **seven plagues**...are the **last**...*” these adjectives conclusively indicate the crucifixion.

**15:2** “*I saw... a sea of glass mingled with fire...*” Is this “sea of glass” the same as the one in the vision of the throne in chapter 4:6? Why is it here “mingled with fire?” In 8:7 we see an angel throwing down fire from heaven upon the sea and upon the land. “The fire which is now mixed with this sea is, in general, the influence of Satan, the moral and physical corruption which he has introduced (Corsini 290).” More specifically, it refers to the corruption of political authority (the sea).

“...and those who had conquered the beast and its image...” “the conquerors of the beast have given witness, not only to the Law given by God to Moses, but also to the coming of Jesus Christ, in which the liberation promised and the Law would have their fulfillment (Corsini 289).”

Who are they, “standing beside the sea of glass”? These are the 144,000 who stand with the Lamb (14:1), and who are found in the sixth seal (7:1), and the ones slain in the fifth seal (6:9-10). “It is clearly a question of martyrs, because the beast slays all those who oppose his absolutist and idolatrous pretensions (13:5) (Corsini 288).” Standing: victory over death. These conquerors have two things in common with the Lamb whose song they sing:

- Like him, they have given witness through the sacrifice of their own lives
- Because of this, they have obtained, in anticipation, the benefits of the sacrifice of the Lamb (Corsini 289).

**15:3** “...and they sing the song of Moses...” obviously, this is a reference to the Exodus when Moses brought the Jews out of Egypt through the Red Sea and into the “freedom” of the desert (Exodus 15:1ff). **Message:** The Hebrew people are as hard hearted as Pharaoh. “In a sense, God brought Israel out of Egypt, but he could not bring Egypt out of Israel (Hahn).” Note also that this is the “Song of the Lamb,” showing the Old Testament’s fulfillment in the new.

**15:4** “*Great and wonderful are your deeds...*” God’s wrath is bitter sweet. His chastisements are difficult and the suffering can be intense, but it is through these chastisements that mankind is purified. Remember the seven fold curse attached to the covenant. Moses warned that if they broke the covenant, God would bring a seven-fold vengeance upon his people (Hahn).

“*All nations shall come and worship Thee, for thy judgments have been revealed...*” An explicit reference to the object of the messianic kingdom: the reign of God over the whole of mankind.

“*O King of the ages!*” is the exaltation of the power and glory of God.

**15:5** “...the temple of the tent of witness in heaven was opened...” There is much Exodus imagery here. The angels are dressed like priests. There are plagues, reminiscent of the 10 plagues of Egypt (See chapter 16 for description of the plagues).

**15:6** “*came... seven angels with the seven plagues, robed in pure bright linen, and their breasts girded with golden girdles.*” Back reference to Daniel 10:5 and to one like the “son of man” in chapter 14 and, more specifically in Revelation 1:13. This has great significance: “a more precise indication of the historical event of the incarnation, of the union of the divine and the human in Jesus Christ (Corsini 295).”

**Plagues: the judgment and punishment for sin.**

**15:7** Very important to note that the angels appear with plagues in hand; then are given the bowls of God’s wrath. What is God’s wrath? Simply his judgment upon the world (which, according to Corsini, also means

the condemnation and destruction of the wicked (291)). On the other hand, the wrath of God also means vindication and salvation for the servants of God.

### **Bowls of Wrath: the destruction of evil.**

**15:8** “...and the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God...” This language is found two times in the Scriptures: Exodus 40:43 and 1 Kings 8:10. In both events, the same thing is being described. In the Book of Exodus, the first tabernacle is being erected (the tent). As soon as the prayer of dedication was finished, in verse 34, there is a spectacular confirmation of God’s presence. Then, in 1 Kings 8:10, the first temple is being consecrated by Solomon. In verse 8, the priest consecrates the temple and the same type of manifestation is apparent: the presence of God. Now, the destruction of the old temple in the Book of Revelation marks the dedication of the new temple.

The Temple is now referred to as a tent, an illusion to the fact that the Temple is stripped of its ornate decoration and the focus is now upon the Temple’s original function: “a sacred place for divinity to dwell” not to mention as a meeting place for God and man.

“It is the new Jerusalem which descends from heaven, coming from God. This, in fact, is none other than ‘the tent of God with men. He will dwell with them and they shall be his people and God himself will be with them (21:2-3).”

### **Where is all of this leading?**

**Revelation 21:22** “And I saw no temple in the city for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.”

## **Chapter 16**

### **Background:**

- 1) The pouring out of the bowls is found between the opening of the Temple of God (15:5) and the lighting, sounds of thunder, earthquake of the final bowl in 16:18.
- 2) “It is true that the pouring out of the bowls follows the order of the trumpets, but the effects which they produce are different. While the plagues, at least as regards the first four trumpets, strike directly on the physical world, and only indirectly strike humanity itself, here in the bowls all are directed against living beings and particularly against men.”
- 3) “Here, though the plagues still strike men, their real objective goes further than mankind, into the profound root which has caused their deception, their physical and moral wickedness: the dragon and his two agents in history, the two beasts (corrupt political and religious authority.” (Corsini 299)
- 4) Corsini holds there are two phases to God’s judgment: first, marked by the trumpets, God limits himself to casting Satan from heaven, protecting the woman, giving the Law and promising liberation. This phase actually sees a “widening of the attempt of Satan to dominate both the world and humanity, helped by political and religious authority.” “*The ancient Law (the sound of the trumpet) can reveal the presence of sin, but it cannot remedy it.* It is therefore, a partial and limited judgment of God (300).”
- 5) The first four bowls reveal the origin of sin, its miserable consequences and man’s attempt to further perpetuate its effect by his own participation in evil.

6) 1 Maccabees 1:22, the cups are used by the priests to pour out drink offerings. While sacrifices were being made, trumpets would sound and the final act would be to pour the blood around the foot of the altar.

**16:2** First bowl: “*and foul and evil sores came upon men...*”

► Bowl poured out on earth; festering sores upon the followers of the beast result

⇒ First trumpet: fire mixed with blood on the earth

RESULT: the corruption of human nature and the loss of original justice due to original sin.

**16:3** Second bowl: “*...and it [the sea] became like the blood of a dead man...*” Parallel: Exodus 7.

► Bowl poured out on the sea and every living creature in the sea dies

⇒ Second trumpet: large burning mountain on the sea

RESULT: the corruption of political authority.

**16:4** Third bowl: “*...the rivers and the fountains of water, and they became blood.*”

► Bowl poured out on the rivers and springs of water

⇒ Third trumpet: large star burning on the rivers and springs of water

RESULT: the corruption of that which was given to provide strength and spiritual life (compare to Rev. 22)

**16:8** Fourth bowl: “*...allowed to scorch men with fire... and they cursed the name of God...*”

► Bowl poured out on the sun to burn all with fire

⇒ Fourth trumpet: a third of the sun and of the moon and of the stars struck

RESULT: the climax of human pride which challenges God in its haughtiness.

Even in the midst of these extreme circumstances, the people do not recognize God as just judge and repent (Hahn). Man “rages against God, cursing him and blaspheming against him, as if God were the author of the evils” (Corsini 301).

**16:10** Fifth bowl: “*...on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was in darkness...*”

► Bowl poured on the throne of the beast

⇒ Fifth trumpet: a star falls from heaven; locust are released

RESULT: The fifth bowl seems to be a completion of the fourth bowl. The fifth bowl drives Satan back to the bottomless pit which is his kingdom of darkness. The action also completes the fourth bowl by driving the origins of human sinfulness back into the same bottomless pit. “In the fifth bowl, John anticipates one aspect of the judgment which took place at the death of Christ: the definitive and eternal ratification of the condemnation reserved for the sin which knows no turning back or repentance” (Corsini 303).

**16:12** Sixth bowl: “*...on the great river Euphrates, and its water dried up...*”

► Bowl emptied on the Euphrates

⇒ Sixth trumpet: four angels of the Euphrates released

A sure reference to 2 Kings 23:29. The righteous King Josiah, committed to the reform in Judah, is met by Pharaoh Necco on the field of battle where Josiah is slain at Megiddo.

**16:13** “*the dragon... the beast... and the false prophet...*” an “anti-Trinity.” “*...three foul spirits like frogs...*” analogous to the locust released in the sixth trumpet: satanic influence.

**16:15** “*Lo, I am coming like a thief...*” Reference to Christ’s presence whenever there is persecution. For example, it is placed here between v. 14 (Satan’s diabolic seduction) and v. 16 the gathering at Armageddon.

**16:16** “*...And they assembled them at the place which is called in Hebrew Armageddon.*”

➤ Armageddon (Gk. harmagedon, Hb. har megiddo)

➤ Armageddon is only mentioned *once* in the Book of Revelation.



- Armageddon means “Mountain of Megiddo.” “Arm” means Mount, but Megiddo is NOT a mountain, it is a plain. As a matter of fact, there are no mountains on this plain (with the exception of Mt. Carmel).
- Hahn sees this as a double reference. He thinks John is trying to make a reference to the plains of Megiddo *as well as* to Mt. Carmel, the mountain closest to Megiddo. (Recall that Mt. Carmel is the mountain where Elijah defeated the Prophets of Baal who were in alliance with the queen, Jezebel.)
- The association would be **2 Kings 23:29**: the defeat of Josiah by Necho. Josiah was the most beloved *as well as righteous* (some say more so than David or Solomon) King in the Davidic Dynasty. Josiah was the grandson of Manasseh who was probably the most evil king of the Dynasty. Manasseh erected altars to every god but Yahweh. He even sacrificed thousands of children on these altars. The prophets made it quite clear that you do not do such evil and without consequences... *he sealed the fate of Israel!*
- When Josiah came to rule, he crushed every altar and began to rebuild the city and remake the Temple... yet it was too late, God had no plan to deliver Jerusalem at this point. In spite of all that Josiah did, there was no hope.
- In spite of his zeal and in the height of his youth, Josiah, (in disobedience to God) went out to meet Necho, the Pharaoh of Egypt, who was on his way to Assyria. Necho slew Josiah at Megiddo in 609 BC. A few months later, Pharaoh was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar. In 605 BC, Jerusalem fell to the Babylons and the Jews were taken to Babylon. Thus, a son of David was unable, because the sins were so great, to save Jerusalem.
- Zechariah 12:10-11 “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of compassion and supplication, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a first born. On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadadrimmon (Another name for Josiah?) in the plain of Megiddo.”
- **So Armageddon becomes a symbol of the Son of David, the King of Israel, a righteous reformer, being “cut down” in his prime (Hahn)! [Thought: Josiah was faithful, was he really defeated?]**

**16:17 Seventh Bowl:** “*poured his bowl into the air...*”

► Bowl poured out into the air with the declaration, “**It is done.**”

⇒ Seventh trumpet: “God’s reign over the world has arrived.”

“*Poured into the air*” seems to be a reference to Jesus Christ being lifted up on the cross; reference John 3:14, John 8:28, John 12:32. And also, recall Jesus’ description of himself as the Son of man coming on the clouds.

RESULT: “What is described in the seventh bowl is rather the judgment of God upon the effects which the fall of Satan has provoked in humanity. He has caught up man with him in his rebellion against God, and man has been punished. God has taken away from him his original condition of privilege for a further period of trial, as he awaits for his final liberation.”

“The correct way to overcome this trial is to resist the diabolic temptation which, basing itself on pride, appears to exalt man but in reality, aims at making him a slave of the satanic domination and the power of death” (Corsini 307).

**16:18** “...noises, peals of thunder land a great earthquake...”

- Reference Matthew 27:51ff, the earthquake that shakes the city of Jerusalem upon Christ’s death; John 19:30, the tearing of the Temple veil and Christ’s statement, “It is finished.”

**16:19** See Ezekiel 5. Ezekiel was commanded to cut his hair and pile it into thirds... he was to burn a third and watch a siege of the city, cut a third into bits, and scatter a third into the wind. Later in chapter 5, the Lord declares, “A third part of you shall die of pestilence, and be consumed with famine in the midst of you; a third part shall fall by the sword round about you; and a third part I will scatter to all the winds and will unsheathe the sword after them.”

**16:21** “...and great hailstones...” Hail is first seen in the blowing of the first trumpet and is an allegory for the fall of Satan and the rebellious angels.

### Image of the Exodus

1. water to blood
2. frogs
3. mosquitoes

### Trumpets 2<sup>nd</sup>

### Bowls 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> 6<sup>th</sup>

4. flies
5. disease of animals
6. fowls sores
7. hail
8. locusts
9. darkness
10. death of firstborn

	1 <sup>st</sup> & 7 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>
	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
	4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>

Revelation 19:18

## Chapter 17

### FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF CHAPTER 14 AND THE SEVEN ANGELS:

“We can draw from this a conclusion of great importance: the final section of the book is taking up and developing what was synthetically anticipated in chapter 14” (Corsini 320). (Son of Man seated on white cloud).

- |                              |                                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Judgment of Harlot (17:1) |                                |
| 2. Babylon is Fallen (18:1)  |                                |
| 3. Babylon no More (18:21)   | → 4. Faithful and True (19:11) |
|                              | 5. Armageddon (19:17)          |
|                              | 6. Binding Satan (20:1)        |
|                              | 7. Heavenly Jerusalem (21:9)   |

**17:1** “...I will show you the judgment of the great harlot...”

- Isaiah 1:10 “Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom (Jerusalem)!”
- Isaiah 1:21 “How the faithful city (Jerusalem) has become a harlot she, that was full of justice!”
- Jeremiah 2:20 “Yea, upon every high hill and under every green tree you bowed down as a harlot.”
- Jeremiah 3:1 “You (Jerusalem) have played the harlot with many lovers; and would you return to me?”
- Jeremiah 5:8 “They (Sons of Israel) were well-fed lusty stallions, each neighing for his neighbor’s wife.”
- Ezekiel 16:30 “‘How lovesick is your heart,’ says the Lord God, ‘seeing you did all these things, the deeds of a brazen harlot...’” (This chapter is filled with images of harlotry and the infidelity of Jerusalem.)

“...seated upon many waters...” water: gentile power, nations. See Jeremiah 57:13; we see Babylon situated on the Euphrates. The woman becomes the prophet (spiritual leader) for the beast. Again, she becomes the antithesis of Christ who is compared to a “voice of many waters” (1:15) and in 19:6 announcing the marriage of the Lamb.

**17:3** “...I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast...” This is Jerusalem riding on the power of Rome. “...it had seven heads and ten horns...” The dragon of Chapter 12 + the beast from the sea of Chapter 13 – Thus, it represents a synthesis of Satan and his subject: corrupt political power. This time, the power is the Roman Empire. Note that scarlet, red, and purple represent worldly authority.

**17:4** “The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet...” certainly, she is dressed as a prostitute. There is a strong possibility that this woman is related to the woman in Chapter 12. If the woman in Chapter 12 represented humanity, and Israel in particular, what we have now is the woman in her fallen state – friendly with he who was once her adversary. “In the first case, the woman feared and fled from the dragon, while in the second she has a relationship and even an intimacy with him” (Corsini 331). The prostitution imagery is synonymous with idolatry. Israel’s infidelity is seen as adultery. See Isaiah 1:21; Ezekiel 16:15ff; Hosea 2:1ff; 5:3.

“...holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations...” is a wicked parody on the passion of the Christ. The golden cup (chalice) would have immediate recall to the Eucharist for Christians. In addition, the chalice is like the one that Jesus drinks – a symbol of a blood which is shed in sacrifice. Yet, “the difference is that the blood poured out by the prostitute is not her own and it is not poured out for a good and holy cause. On the contrary, it is poured out in violence, in the search for authority and domination” (Corsini 338).

**17:6** “...*I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs...*” Perhaps what is happening here is not clear. The woman is not literally drunk on the blood of saints and martyrs as this blood belongs to God; rather, she is drunk on the blood of the men and women who *should have* become saints and martyrs.

**17:8** “*The beast...was, and is not, and is to ascend...*” Satan in “his original state as the most perfect creature, his rebellion and dismissal from heaven, his relegation to the abyss, his brief return for the “great persecution (714), with Christ as his victim” (Corsini 323). Satan is definitively defeated in 20:10.

**17:9** “...*the seven heads are the seven hills on which the woman is seated...*” It seems, the city of seven hills is Rome, upon which Jerusalem sits (i.e. derives her power). Historically, the Jews were the people responsible for inciting Rome against the Christians. Recall these entities have already been identified by Hahn as the Caesars and the Herodian dynasty to which the Caesar’s “gave” their power.

**17:10** “*they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he comes he must remain a little while.*” Hippolytus suggests that the five kings who have fallen represent the five millennia which precede Christ. The one who is, represents the king of the sixth millennia and the one to “remain a little while” will do so because his reign coincides with that of the Christ! Corsini holds that “it is impossible to understand the Apocalypse purely against a historical and temporal background” (323). Recall that the symbolic “week of years” or the “cosmic week” which is a metaphor of persecution. Important to note: see the pattern of sevens in the Apocalypse; the “salvific intervention always occurs in the sixth set followed by the crucifixion in the seventh! (reference Corsini 325).

**17:11** “*it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven...*” Do not be fooled, this is Satan (consummate evil): he goes to perdition.

**17:12** “...*the ten horns that you saw are the ten kings...*” “...in all probability, [this is a] representation of the series of human sovereigns who abuse their authority, objectively placing it at the service of Satan, and in opposition to the Lamb, i.e. to Christ” (Corsini 327). The Lamb is he who is “Lord of lords and King of kings” (17:14). [“The presentation of the beast with the seven heads and the ten horns represents, therefore, an all-assuming symbol of human history in so far as it is under the sign of the domination of sin and Satan” (327).] Notice that 7 X 10= 70.

**17:15** “*The waters...are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues...*” is an illusion to the great Roman Empire and/or all peoples of all times.

**17:15-18** “*They and the beast will hate the harlot...*” **can only refer to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D.** “...*the great city...*” is spoken of in 11:8; “the city where they crucified the Lord.” “...*the great city which has dominion over the kings of the earth.*” This would seem to be alluding to Rome. However, it was the Davidic Dynasty which was given the promise to rule over all the earth. After David conquered Jerusalem, established his throne there, and brought up the Ark of the Covenant (making Jerusalem the sacred and spiritual center of the world), Solomon received the commission to build the Temple. 2 Samuel 7:19, David says, “who am I?” that he would be the mediator between God and ALL the nations just as Moses was the mediator between God and Israel. This makes the Torah the possession of all nations, not just the Hebrews. In Psalm 89, there is a description of the ideal order: “And I will make him (Israel) the first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth.” **Therefore, the Covenant of David is the fundamental element behind interpreting the Book of Revelation (Hahn).**

Note: The destruction of Jerusalem is covered in chapters 17 & 18, but the destruction itself is not described. For the description, one must review 16:18ff and the great earthquake.

### **The Prostitute Called “Mystery”**

The prostitute of chapter 17 is presented as the one morally responsible for all the wickedness and corruption throughout the world. With her the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and with the wine of whose fornication the dwellers of the earth have become drunk” (17:2) and she is “Babylon, the great mother of harlots and of earth’s abominations” (17:5). A man like John, with his deep knowledge of the Scriptures, could not attribute to Rome nor to any other city this sort of spiritual and religious responsibility. They could certainly be prostitutes, but to none of them could be given the description: “The great mother of harlots and of earth’s abominations” (v. 5)

Such wickedness, so great as to become the model and paradigm of all wickedness, John could only place in a perversion which had been formerly pure and holy. This was the case with Jerusalem which shifts from “holy city” to “Sodom and Egypt” in 11:2 and 8. Here she is called “Babylon,” and this indicates that she has now reached the lowest point in her degradation, identifying herself with the last and worst of Israel’s enemies, Babylon, which had made an end of the Kingdom of Judah.

On the other hand, it is clear we are before a sacred reality which has been perverted from the mysterious name which the prostitute carries on her brow: “And on her forehead was written a name of mystery” (17:5). This is the true name of the prostitute. The other name, “Babylon the great, mother of harlots and of earth’s abominations” appears to be an explanation of the first name, as the angel says to John: “Why marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast... that carries her” (17:7).

The word “mystery” in the language of the New Testament does not simply mean an enigmatic reality which is difficult to comprehend. It is a term closely associated with the divine plan of salvation, the Kingdom of God and the death of Christ. This is also its meaning in the Apocalypse in other places where it appears (1:2-10:7). Therefore, if the prostitute is called “mystery,” that means that she, even in the moment in which she is judged and condemned, still forms an integral and important part in the divine plan of salvation. This cannot be the case for Rome or any other pagan city, but only for Jerusalem. Only she, and no other city, will be renewed and will descend from heaven upon Mt. Sion to celebrate a marriage with the Lamb (21:2, 10ff), because “in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God... should be fulfilled.” (10:7).

The “mystery of God” which is fulfilled in the seventh trumpet is the death of Christ. It marks at the one time both the judgment and the end of the Old Economy, of Judaism, of the earthly Jerusalem, and the beginning of a New Economy, of the heavenly Jerusalem, of an authentic spiritual Judaism, of the Church (Corsini 334-335).

## **Chapter 18**

**18:2** “*Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!*” Jeremiah 50: the taunt against Babylon.

**18:4** “*Come out of her my people...*” is similar language in 2 Corinthians 6. Chapter 6 of 2 Corinthians marks the climax of a dissertation by Paul on the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant. In 3:7, St. Paul calls the Old Covenant a “dispensation of death, carved in letters on stone...” (The Decalogue was written on stone tablets.). In contrast, 3:6 refers to the ‘life giving New Covenant’ which is not a written code, but a covenant in the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 4 and 5 are summaries by Paul on the passing of the Old Covenant and the coming of the New Covenant. This leads to 6:17, “therefore, come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord...” (Hahn). Reference Jeremiah 51:6, 45; “Flee from the midst of Babylon, let every man save his life... Go out of the midst of her, my people!” See also, Isaiah 48:20; 52:11.

**18:8** “*...and she shall be burned with fire...*” Note that the punishment of fire is not common. More common punishments were stoning or hanging in a tree. Leviticus 21:9, “And the daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the harlot, profanes her father; she shall be burned with fire.”

**18:9** “...will weep and wail over her...”

**18:11-13** In many ways, Jerusalem was the trade capital of the world...even surpassing Rome at times. She really is the cross-roads of the Middle-East. She had many articles (it is said, no less than 118 different articles) from all over the world for trade (Hahn). Also, “the Jews expected a political Messiah who would give them material riches, power, and political domination over all the peoples of the world” (Corsini 332). Yet, the mission and focus of Jesus Christ was primarily the spiritual order.

**18:16** “...the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, bedecked with gold, with jewels, and with pearls...” Thus, the city which God built and adorned with all things precious... the same city whose inhabitants defiled these gifts and became a harlot to the nations is destroyed.

**18:17** “In one hour all this wealth has been laid waste.” Another indication that, again, this city is not Rome, as Rome never suffered any such fate. (i.e. total destruction.)

**18:20** “Rejoice over her, O heaven...” Even as the earth is mourning over the fallen city, the heavens are rejoicing.

**Fun Freebie:** Julian the Apostate (he was once Christian) in the 4th Century launched a persecution against the Christians even after the Edict of Milan was promulgated years before. He taxed Christians to rebuild the Temple for the Jews and urged the Jews to rebuild the temple. Nevertheless, every time the Jews would attempt to lift the huge stones of the old temple, huge billowing explosions of fire would engulf the workers! Construction had to stop. God’s judgment is final and it is real.

## **Chapter 19**

❖ “The destruction of Satan is the preliminary effect of the putting into action of the divine salvific plan which John sees happening in two moments: first, through the economy of the Old Testament and then in the death and resurrection of Christ” (Corsini 342).

**19:1-3** “what seemed to be the mighty voice of a great multitude...” (Angelic intervention)

**19:4-5** “the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down...”

**19:6-8** “the voice of a great multitude...many waters... thunder peals...” (The voice of Christ)

**19:1-8** These verses parallel Revelation 11:15-19:

- 11:15 “The kingdom of the world now belongs to our Lord and to his Anointed, and he will reign forever and ever.”
- 19:1-2a “Alleluia! Salvation, glory, and might belong to our God, for true and just are his judgments.”
- 11:16 “The twenty-four elders who sat on their thrones before God prostrated themselves and worshiped God and said...”
- 19: 4a “The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying...”
- 11:17 “We give thanks to you, Lord God almighty, who are and who were.”
- 19:4b “Amen. Alleluia!”
- 11:19 “Then God's temple in heaven was opened...”
- 19:11 “Then I saw heaven opened...”

- 11:19b “...and the ark of his covenant could be seen in the temple (a woman clothed with the sun... (12))”
- 19:7 “...and his Bride has made herself ready...”

“*Hallelujah!*” The word Hallelujah first appears. This word appears in the Book of Revelation four times and it is *never* mentioned any other place in the New Testament. Hallelujah means *Hallel* “to praise” and *Jah* a shortened form of “Yahweh” or Praise be the Lord! It is only sung at the Passover and during the Feast of Tabernacles. Psalm 118 was the psalm sung between the third and fourth cup during the Passover. The Psalm describes the victory of God echoed in the heavenly liturgy. Thus, these Hallel Psalms of the Book of Revelation indicate that the cup of blessing will shortly become the cup of consummation.

**19:7** “...for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready...” This is the first instance of the word **Bride**. Notice that the harlot must be punished, burned, and killed before the Bride may appear. See Matthew 22:1-2ff; 25:10, 2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:32.

**19:9** “...Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb...” “God’s people have been saved from the whoredoms of the world to become the bride of His only Begotten Son, and the constant token of this fact is the Church’s weekly celebration of her sacred feast, the Holy Eucharist. It should go without saying, but unfortunately it can’t, that the Eucharist is the center of Christian worship. Everything else is important [teaching, instructing, and preaching, etc.], but secondary. Instruction in the faith, therefore, is an indispensable part of Christian worship, but it isn’t the heart of Christian worship. The heart of Christian worship is the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This is assumed by Saint Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 and 11:20-34. We see it reflected in Luke’s simple statement in Acts 20:7, and *on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread...* It is also described in the Didache, a document from the first century of the early Church where we read, ‘But every Lord’s Day, do you gather together yourselves, and break bread and give thanksgiving (*eucharisto*) after having confessed your transgressions that your sacrifice may be pure’” (David Chilton, *In the Days of Vengeance*).

**19:10 (See also 22:9)** “*I fell down at his feet to worship him...*” The word worship here, in the Greek, is a term which means “to prostrate oneself before a superior to show bodily respect and homage.” (Hahn)

“The words of the angel in both cases explain the function of the angels: their absolute equality with the human agents of revelation, the prophets. In fact, in the second case the angel extends this equality to all the members of the Christian community. This indicates two things:

- a) The angels, even before the coming of Christ, were not the authors, but only the instruments of revelation in so far as even then, Christ was the real author.
- b) After the coming of Christ “the Spirit of prophecy” which is “the witness to Jesus” (19:10) no longer passes through privileged mediators, angels and prophets, but is communicated to all the faithful who form part of the Christian community” (Corsini 346).

**19:11** “*Then I saw heaven opened...*” This is the “decisive battle.” The heavens were also opened in the vision of 4:1. Corsini sees that revelation and salvation began with “an open door” in chapter 4 (the Old Testament) and now receives its full and perfect actualization with “the open heaven.” “The divinity, which at first revealed only his existence, power and majesty, now reveals the totality of his love for man and for all creation. This love is so great that it has driven the Son of God to come down from heaven to become a man among men and to share their destiny” (Corsini 349). CONSEQUENCE: “The basic meaning of this image is that the relationship between heaven and earth, i.e., between divinity and humanity, has been re-established in the fullness of its original integrity. Following him, and as a consequence of his descent, John will see immediately afterwards the descent of “the holy city, the new Jerusalem” (Corsini 350).

**19:11b-12** “...a white horse... Faithful and True... makes war.”

Horse = Symbol of war as well as humanity.

White = symbol of victory.

Eyes like flame of fire = just judge.

Diadems = bridegroom.

**“Seated upon this horse, the Logos descends from heaven to combat his enemies. It is clear enough that we have an allegory of the incarnation here: the white horse symbolizes the original condition of perfection which Christ has once again made possible for man by the very fact that he has taken on human nature. Guided by him, which means, taken up in his person, human nature will be victorious over the wicked and hostile powers which made him fall and which have robbed him of his original privileges. That will happen in a final and complete way in the battle which Christ is preparing to fight against his enemies, ranged against him at Armageddon” (Corsini 351).** *“We will see how this battle is an allegory of the death of Jesus on the Cross. The scene of chapter 19 is really a dramatic presentation of John 1:14: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” (Corsini 351)”*

**19:13** *“...a robe dipped in blood...”* Remember to resist linear chronology since the vision of 19 takes place before that of chapter 1 (when Christ appears to St. John in his resurrected glory). Interpretation: “As all recognize, this comes from a famous passage in Isaiah where *God is presented, after a terrible punishment of his enemies, likened to a warrior who returns from the battle covered with the blood of his enemies*, or like a wine presser who climbs out of the press with his clothes dripping with the new wine (Is 63:1ff). Perhaps, however, this very passage of Isaiah has led many commentators to see the blood as that of the enemies which he has wiped out. Others, more correctly, have thought of the blood of Christ on the Cross, but as they also see the battle as some future event, the blood of Jesus still has to be understood as some sort of threat, a sorrowful memory which is the very incentive for revenge” (Corsini 352). Correctly interpreted, therefore, the robe dipped in blood is an allusion to the destruction of the evil forces which are hostile to God and to humanity. “For John, the only blood that ever flowed in this destruction was the blood of Christ, as we know from the very beginning of the book (1:5) and then from the dominant symbol of the slain lamb” (Corsini 353).

**Three angles now introduce a key narrative: the battle of Armageddon (19:17-21), the judgment and destruction of the Satanic rule (20:1-15), the gathering of the elect (21:1-22:5)**

**19:19** *“Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered to fight against the one riding the horse and against his army.”* Most see this battle occurring on the “mountain of Megiddo.” In the history of Israel, this mountain was the location of two great battles... Barak defeated the Canaanites, freeing the Hebrews from 20 years of slavery (Judges 5:19ff) and Josiah was defeated and killed there by the Egyptian king Neco (2 Kings 23:29).

Gathered: See 15:16 *“...and they assembled...”*

Again, it must be kept in mind that Armageddon is an allegory of the death of Christ. Like Josiah, the just and holy king who was slain, the innocent Jesus also seems to fall victim to a coalition of evil powers. His death does not, however, signify defeat and destruction. It is precisely this event which forms the decisive element for victory because Jesus Christ is not simply a man like Josiah, but the “Logos of God” descended from heaven. Keep in mind that the Crucifixion of Christ took place on Golgotha (a hill outside of Jerusalem).

## **Chapter 20**

**St. Athanasius** (*On the Incarnation*) - When did prophet and vision cease from Israel? Was it not when Christ came, the Holy One of Holies? It is in fact a sign and a notable proof of the coming of the Word that Jerusalem no longer stands. Neither is prophet raised up, nor vision revealed among them. And it is natural that it should be so. For when he that was signified had come, what need was there any longer of any to signify him? And when the Truth had come, what further need was there of the shadow? On his account only they prophesied continually until such time as essential righteousness had come, who was made the ransom for the sins of all. For the same reason, Jerusalem stood until the same time in order that there men might premeditate the types before the truth was known. So, of course, once the Holy One of Holies had come, both vision and prophecy were sealed. *And the Kingdom of Jerusalem ceased at the same time.* Because kings were to be anointed among them only until the Holy of Holies had been anointed. Moses also prophesies that the kingdom of the Jews shall stand until his time saying, *“A ruler shall not fail from Judah, nor a prince from his loins, until the things laid up for him shall come, and the expectation of the nations themselves”* (Genesis 49:10). And that is why the Savior himself was always proclaiming the Law and the Prophets prophesied until John (Matthew 11:13). So if there is still king, or prophet, or vision among the Jews, they do well to deny that Christ has come. But if there is neither king nor vision, and since that



time all prophecy has been sealed, and city and Temple taken, how can they be so irreligious? How can they so flaunt the facts, as to deny Christ who has brought it all about? The plain fact is, as I say, there is no longer any king or prophet, nor Jerusalem, nor sacrifice, nor vision among them. Yet the whole earth is filled with the knowledge of God. And the Gentiles, forsaking atheism, are now taking refuge with the God of Abraham through the Word, Our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**St. Irenaeus** (*Against the Heresies*) - “Further also, concerning Jerusalem and the Lord, they venture to assert that if it had been the city of the Great King, it would not have been deserted... *why is it destroyed then?* Since then, the Law originated with Moses, it terminated with John the Baptist, as a necessary consequence. And therefore, Jerusalem, taking its commencement or beginning from David, and fulfilling its own times, must have an end of legislation when the New Covenant was revealed. For God does all things by measure and in order. Nothing is unmeasured with him because nothing is out of order.”

Chapter 20, like many others which we have seen, is a repetition, a summary of events already described, so the author can further deepen his reflections on the profound significance of these events. In Revelation 20, then, we find a summary of the history of salvation, all the way up until the coming of Christ... As we shall see then, **the thousand years’ reign is the allegorical representation of the salvation obtained by some just ones within the context of the old economy**” (Corsini 357).

**20:1-2** “...an angel coming down from heaven... holding... the key of the bottomless pit... And he seized the dragon... and bound him for a thousand years...” Reference Isaiah 24:21: the earthly and heavenly opponents of Yahweh are taken and thrown into a great pit to await judgment. In Ezekiel, the idea that God will make his enemies fall into the abyss of Sheol is common (Ezekiel 28:8; 31:15ff; and especially 32:17ff). (Corsini 363)

“A thousand years...” is mentioned in the chapter five times. This is the center of a great controversy... one which will continue through the year 2000, especially in Protestant circles. The positions are based on these questions: is the millennium before Christ’s coming, or is the millennium (1000 year reign) after Christ’s coming?

The three positions:

1. **Pre-Millennialism (Before Christ’s Second Coming):** Christ will come again and usher in the new millennium; reality will become progressively worse until Christ comes to triumph.
2. **Post-Millennialists (After Christ’s Second Coming):** Literal Millennialists believe Christ will come after the millennium and that the Church age is the millennial period (1000 years). Symbolic Millennialists hold there are many years to come when the Gospel triumphs.
3. **A-Millennialists (There is no Millennium):** believe the millennium is the heavenly glory of the Communion of Saints in heaven and the earthly saints who have Christ’s power over evil. Recall the Jews saw the Temple as a microcosm of the whole universe. Thus, the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD does not preclude a fulfillment at the end of time, it, in fact, establishes it. For whatever happens to the temple, a microcosm, is going to happen to the universe, a macrocosm or macro-temple. Hahn holds that in 70 AD we have the fulfillment, at a provisional level, of what is going to occur at the end of time. The millennium corresponds to the 1000 years *before* the FIRST coming of Christ. The 1000 years in which Jerusalem, the earthly Jerusalem, served as a proto-type of the New Jerusalem. Hahn realized this when he discovered that David conquered Jerusalem in 1003 BC. A thousand years before Christ was born. So for a millennium we have God identifying himself with a kingdom in the earthly city of Jerusalem -- a proto-type or blue print of the new covenant kingdom yet to come.

WHEN?

- Thus far, the book is centered on the definitive moment: the Paschal Mystery (Therefore, the thousand year reign predates the Christ event).
- Corsini has established the angelic intervention of the Old Economy. This angel belongs to that era.
- “There are further indications that the chaining of Satan and the reign of a thousand years are events which precede the coming of Christ. The angel which comes down from heaven holds in his hand, as well as the chain, the key to close the door of the bottomless pit. In the fifth trumpet it is said that the key of the bottomless pit is given to Satan as he fell from heaven to earth (9:1ff). Yet, again, in the vision of Chapter 1 Christ solemnly affirms that he has the keys of Death and Hades (1:18). Is there a link between these facts, and if so, what is that link? A. In Chapter 1 (which is the “end” scene) Christ is holding the keys of Death and Hades; he is the one “who has the key of David, who opens and no one shall shut, who shuts and no one opens” (3:7)
- Peculiar parallel regarding Satan’s release between 20:3 and 9:1ff
- 14:7ff Angel announces the fall of Babylon

- 18:1ff Another angel announces the fall of Babylon the great
- 10:1ff Angel descends with “small open book” – a tangible sign of victory and dominion
- ***All, in fact, allude to a victory over Satan, a victory for which, in some way, the angels are responsible (365).*** See chapter 12:7-9 “This is the victory of the angels over Satan which is celebrated in the scenes just mentioned, and which the chaining of Satan at the beginning of chapter 20 again presents in a dramatic fashion (366). Further evidence: 12:9 and 20:2 “the ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan.”
- *Striking difference:* “He stood on the sand of the sea” (12:8) “Satan’s standing upon the dividing line between sea and land and as indicating that he no longer has a dwelling in either place, and he can no longer work directly” (366).
- ***“In summary, everything happens as if he himself were, for the moment, chained and closed within the bottomless pit. [The] thousand years’ reign is the allegorical representation of the salvation obtained by some just ones within the context of the Old Economy. It is on account of the thousand years’ reign, i.e., on account of those just ones, who, despite Satan, are saved, that Satan is chained, rendered impotent. This activity, his only desire after his rebellion against God, is to spread his rebellion among all men, ‘to deceive the whole world.’ But God opposes this murderous project with his salvific plan whose working out is presented by the Apocalypse in two great stages: one of which has the angels as heroes and mediators, the other being realized by Christ” (Corsini 367).***
- Thousand years: a duration of time which is indefinite.

**20:3b** “*After that, he must be loosed for a little while.*” “In order for the sacrifice of Christ to take place, it is necessary for Satan to be freed. Only he (using Rome and the Synagogue), in fact, can have the audacity and wickedness to carry an attack against the divinity itself, present on the earth in the person of Jesus Christ” (Corsini 368).

**20:4** “*...those to whom judgment was committed...*” See Daniel 3:29. What the kings of Israel did not do in the first 500 years, the prophets and the saints of God now do in the second 500 years through their suffering and perseverance (Hahn). “There is a belief [held by early Christians] that the salvific effects of the death of Christ extended, even in the first place, to all those who lived and died before the coming of Christ. See I Peter 3:19.

**20:4b-6** “*I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony...*” “*This is the first resurrection.*” “*...they came to life, and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*”

- Note that the verb “to behead” is only used in reference to John the Baptist in the Gospels (Hahn). In addition, 20:4 includes the same martyrs as found in 6:9 and 12:17.
- These are the select few to whom participation in the Thousand Years means “to participate already in the realities which Christ gives to mankind.”
- Faithful people in the Old Testament, those who had suffered for the truth and persevered, must not have had to be consigned to Sheol (i.e. Elijah). Hahn holds that these righteous men and women of the Old Testament reign with the Second Person of the Trinity until he came to be born among us.
- Hebrews 11:33ff, describes the “witnesses” of the Old Testament who suffered that they might “rise again to a better life” (35) and are seen as so “great a cloud of witnesses.” (12:1) Hebrews 12:22ff - Heavenly Jerusalem; Hebrews 11:13ff - heavenly homeland, city of God; Hebrews 13:14 - “city which is to come”
- The text indicates participants are limited in number, a very strong indication we are dealing with the Old Economy.
- ***“The witnesses to Jesus and to the word of God” who carry their witnessing to the point of sacrificing their own lives are admitted to all the benefits of the redemption even before this act has happened historically***” (Corsini 378).
- “*The rest of the dead did not come to life*” (20:5) This is the effect of original sin. Following the work of Christ, “entry into the divine life was now possible for mankind.”

**20:7** “...and when the thousand years are ended...” That is, when Jesus comes. “The rule of a thousand years of chapter 20 is therefore the repetition and summary of the various earlier situations and its meaning is always the same: to explain for whom and under what conditions the salvation procured by the Old Economy was valid. It is granted to those who gave witness to the future coming of the redeemer of mankind and to the laws, given by God for that period of expectation, and who carried witness to the point of the sacrifice of their lives (12:11). The witness, joined to martyrdom, allowed access to the reign of a thousand years, i.e.: it gained for them, even before the historical arrival of Jesus, the salvation of Christ” (Corsini 374).

**20:8** “*Satan will be loosed... Gog and Magog... gather for battle.*”

1. Angel descends from heaven and binds Satan in the bottomless pit
  2. First judgment, first resurrection: the thousand year reign (of the righteous before Christ)
  3. \*\*\*The freeing of Satan; deception of the nations, Gog and Magog, the final battle against God and the destruction of forces of evil [Hinge]\*\*\*
  4. Second judgment and second resurrection (which now includes all of humanity)
  5. Second death: removal from the book of life
  6. The second resurrection: inclusion in the heavenly Jerusalem
- The battle against Gog and Magog is a repetition, in a different form, of the battle of Armageddon, in which we have seen an allegory of the death of Christ. This impression seems to be enforced by the fact that, in the battle of Armageddon, the beast and the false prophet are spoken of as being captured (19:20), while in the battle against Gog and Magog, only of Satan is it said that he “was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone. ...first the helpers of Satan (the beast and the false prophet) are eliminated (battle of Armageddon) and then Satan himself (battle against Gog and Magog) (Corsini 358).
  - Who are Gog and Magog? See Ezekiel 38:1ff “Four corners:” The totality of the face of the earth with an allusion to “the four empires.”
  - Gog and Magog, in fact, perhaps already in Ezekiel, but especially in the later apocalyptic literature, were connected with the coming of the Messiah; they stood for the final, furious attack against the setting up of the messianic kingdom.”

**20:9** “*And they marched up... and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city...*” The battle is against the camp of the saints. Hahn argues that this is what occurs between 30 and 70 AD. During this period the Jews are deceiving the Romans and they enter into an unholy alliance against the Christians. Notice that the language the “camp of the saints,” is drawn from Exodus 29 and Leviticus 26. The saints of God are called a camp only during the 40 years in the wilderness... a type of the new Exodus of Jesus and his chosen. “...but fire came down and consumed them...” Where else does this occur? Genesis 18 & 19, Sodom and Gomorra.

### **International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Volume 1, *The Theology of the City*:**

“The Millennium that followed the period of David and Solomon was filled with the drama of Israel’s apostasy and revival. Jerusalem is sacked, its Temple destroyed and its people carried off in captivity to Babylon, only to be rebuilt later under God’s leadership. Finally, Jerusalem’s status as Holy City was ended with the arrival, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. The earthly temple is destroyed and replaced by the body of Christ as the resurrected temple of God. (John 2:19, 1 Peter 2) Jesus’ death and resurrection are the de-sacralization of the earthly Jerusalem and the sacralization of the People of God. Yet that is by no means the end of the city. The coming eschatological reality is described in terms of the New Jerusalem Revelation 21. In this city there is no temple for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. Babylon has been destroyed completely, all things are new, and the New Jerusalem is all in all. The Old Jerusalem takes its place in history as a witness and a pointer to the new.”

**20:11** “...*great white throne...from his presence earth and sky fled away...*” Christ’s throne, as seen also in Revelation 4:2; 6:14. White means victory and great means power. This judgment is different than the first, it follows the victory of Christ. In other words, the judgment is the result of Christ’s death and resurrection.

**20:12ff** “*And I saw the dead...standing before the throne... and the dead were judged... and another book was opened, which is the book of life.*” This indicates the second judgment is universal and includes the works of every single person. This second judgment “refers to the universal, conclusive and definitive character of the coming of Christ, and especially his death, as it finalizes the divine plan of salvation (the book of life) and the condemnation (the second death) which it brings cannot be modified” (Corsiini 384).

**20:14** “*This is the second death.*” Following the second judgment, “Satan and his wicked allies are condemned to the ‘second death’ (20:14): their destiny is definitive and their impotence total” (Corsiini 385). “But he is driven out of both places: first from heaven by the hand of the angels, and secondly from earth through the action of Jesus Christ. Now he has no dwelling, not even the bottomless pit. He is now fixed forever in his condition of spiritual death, “the second death,” “the lake that burns with fire and brimstone” (Corsiini 391).

### ***Thoughts to Make One Lose Sleep by Dr. Scott Hahn:***

**St. Thomas on Jerome in the introduction to his commentary on the Psalms:** “Prophecies are sometimes uttered about things which existed at the time in question, but are not uttered primarily with reference to them, but in so far as they are a figure of things to come. Therefore, the Holy Ghost has provided that when such prophecies are uttered, some details should be inserted which go beyond the actually thing done so that the mind may be raised to the thing signified.”

So the destruction of the Temple is the type of **the end of the world**. Israel’s Old Testament history becomes a proto-type of the history of *every nation*. The pattern: conversion, renewal, subsequent lapse, apostasy, and eventual judgment and destruction. This will happen to every nation, including our own! Thus, in verse 11, 12 and 13, within the judgment of the Old Testament Kingdom, there is a foreshadowing of the judgment of all nations. The incident points beyond itself to the end of the ages. Thus, there is a jump from middle history to the end of history.

## **Chapter 21**

**The Book of Revelation now enters into the positive results of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

What are these results? According to Father Corsini:

- Redemption
- Elimination of the consequences of original sin
- Restoration of the interrupted relationship between God and man
- Returning to man the possibility to enter into the eternal divine life (388)

**21:2** “*And I saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem...*” John “applies to the New Jerusalem, i.e., to the reality of the messianic rule inaugurated by Christ, the prophecies concerning the reconstruction of the Temple and the restoration of the cult (Ezekiel and Zechariah)” (Corsiini 403).

- For background on the New Jerusalem see Isaiah 54:1ff; 62:1ff.

### **Corsiini on Messianism**

“What of the prophecies concerning the transformation of material conditions and the social and political situation of this world? This form of messianism was kept at the margins of official Judaism dominated by the priestly caste for a long time. However, it survived tenaciously, especially at a popular level, going more decisively in a political direction on the face of foreign occupation, first by the Hellenists of Syria and then by the Romans. In the period which preceded and follows the preaching of Jesus, messianic hopes are especially of this nature. It is especially on this political level that a union is eventually formed between the political messianism and that of official Judaism, leading to the Jewish rebellion of 68-70 A.D.

The disastrous result of that attempt, in which the Christian community plays no part, is not sufficient to discourage the Jewish nationalist faction from pursuing this line until a second revolt, under Bar Kochbah in 135, is finally defeated. When the Apocalypse was written towards the end of the first century, political messianism was, therefore, very much alive. This took place not only in Judaism. There was a variation of it, perhaps a little less political but nevertheless “temporal” in the idea of the reign of a thousand years (Millenarianism) which spread within the Christian community. As we have already suggested, the Apocalypse may be a reaction against both of these forms of messianism: Jewish and Christian.” (404)

**21:3** “Behold the dwelling of God is with men.” We have much strong nuptial imagery in this chapter to indicate the intensity and intimacy of the new relationship between God and his people. “The relationship between God and man [is] understood as the relationship which unites a man to a woman, and all the other related ideas which come with it: FAITHFULNESS, UNFAITHFULNESS, BETROTHAL, MARRIAGE, WEDDING FEAST, and LIFE SHARED TOGETHER” (Corsini 395).

**21:5** “Behold, I make all things new.” Keep in mind that we are witnessing SPIRITUAL REALITIES. For example, 21:1, “the sea was no more.”

### **21:9ff Numerology and Mineralogy**

⇒ The number THREE

- The “spiritual number,” above the cosmos, of divine nature (Trinity) or angelic nature

⇒ The number FOUR

- The cosmos, “the four corners of the earth,” “the four winds”

⇒ The number SEVEN

- Four + Three = Seven; the initial number of the unity between God (three) and Man (four)
- The number represents the visible (four) and the invisible (three) world
- Prevalent number in the Apocalypse where it typically represents “totality”
- NOTE: Seven (the sum of three and four) is noticeably absent from Chapters 21 & 22; the number disappears in the presence of the greater number, the *multiple* of three and four.

⇒ The number TWELVE

- The twelve tribes/twelve apostles – the new reality which continues and surpasses the old
- Four X Three = Twelve
- The number, not only of totality, but also of perfection

⇒ Gold, pearls, precious stones

- Exodus 28:17ff, 39:10ff – the stones are found in the Ephod of the Hebrew High Priest
- Ties to astrological speculations?

### **Corsini Identifies Two Women**

#### **THE WIFE OF THE LAMB**

A. “a bride from heaven (21:2)”\*

B. “in the Spirit to a great high mountain” (21:10)

C. “...to a great mountain” (21:10)\*\*

\*“...down from God” indicates she is a direct creation of God!

\*\*Mountain indicates divine protection.

#### **THE GREAT PROSTITUTE**

A. “great harlot who lives by the waters” (17:1)

B. “...in the Spirit into a wilderness” (17:3)\*

C. “...seated on a monstrous beast” (17:3)

\*the human condition, sinful, but aided by God; the chosen people, in desert, pursued by Pharaoh

**Summary:** These are the same women. The redemption worked by Christ returns humanity to its original condition: the perfection of something hitherto imperfect.

**21:15** John is asked to measure the new Temple which happens to be 12,000 by 12,000 by 12,000. To a Jewish Christian, he would have recognized it as the Holy of Holies! Thus, when the time of the New Jerusalem

arrives, there will be no outer court. God will not be cordoned off from his people. Everyone will enjoy face to face fellowship with the Lord God (Hahn).

**21:19** *Precious stones*: see 21:9. The stones found in this list were also found in the breastplate of the High Priest. It is possible that John is indicating the universal and common priesthood “in spirit and in truth” of the faithful (kings and priests).

**21:22** “*And I saw no temple in the city...*” “The Lord God the almighty and the Lamb” (:22) is the New Temple as well as the New Jerusalem because “God is with men.” (:3) But, as is typical of the generosity of God, there is more, God’s people are made into “kings and priest” as per 1:6, fulfilling the promise of Moses in Exodus 19:6.

**21:27** “*But nothing unclean shall enter it...*” A proof text for the support of Purgatory; if nothing unclean enters the City, are we not all in need of purification or purging before we enter?

**KEY**: “The description of the new Jerusalem is based upon what the prophets Ezekiel and Zechariah make of the Temple which the Hebrew people must construct on their return from the exile (Ezekiel 40-48 and Zechariah 2:1ff) (Corsini 397).

## **Chapter 22**

### **Light and Water – Truth and Life**

**Light, water, fruit: to see, to drink, to eat.** These basic needs of man are, of course, on a spiritual level, now satisfied. For John it is not a question of a variety of distinct values. Not only are they all complementary and inseparable, but they form that one and only absolute good, God himself, in the fact that now he dwells among men (21:3, 22; 22:3), and they worship him, contemplating his face [EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION] and bearing his name on their foreheads (22:3-4) which means that they participate in his life [EUCCHARIST]”  
The spiritual reality of the New Jerusalem: “adoration of the divinity forever in a perfect fashion [PERPETUAL SACRIFICE], the developing of God among men, the abundance of spiritual food and drink, perpetual and unfailing spiritual light, the gaining of the source of life [EUCCHARIST] (7:15-17)” (Corsini 406).  
Eucharist: “For John, ‘eternal life’ is not something which happens on the other side of death; it is essentially a participation in the divine life” (408).

**22:1** “*the river of the water of life...*” [**Compare this vision of Chapter 22 with the vision of 7:15]**

- “The water of life, the throne of God, the Lamb: an image of the Blessed Trinity.”
- Present in both Ezekiel [flowing from under the Temple] (47:1ff) and Zechariah [flowing from Jerusalem] (14:8ff)
  - Represents spiritual renewal which affects all the earth
  - “[The river’s] universality will come from God’s communication of himself to the whole of humanity, without any distinction of nation or race. The river... becomes a very clear symbol of the divine life which is communicated directly to the whole of humanity, now that Christ has re-established the relationship between God and man through his SACRIFICE of self” (Corsini 398). **EUCCHARIST?**

“*on either side... the tree of life*”

- The tree grows on either side of the river. Thus, it should be seen in *sacramental* symbolism (i.e. both sides: heaven and earth).
- “Tree of life” translates literally, “wood of life”
- Fruit: Ezekiel 47:12
- Tree and River signify “the abundance, the never ending and fruitful giving of the life which the divinity now bestows upon mankind.”

**22:2** “...and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” There is one tree. The Early Church Fathers saw this tree as Baptism and the Eucharist. Baptism is the River of Life and the Eucharist is the Tree of Life: the antidote to mortality. This is common in the early liturgies of the Church. In Ezekiel 40 there is a description of the new temple. This comes after the battle of Gog and Magog. As soon as the Messiah has come, the temple is restored and rebuilt by the Lord. In Ezekiel 47 there is a description of another river. As he measures the water, it gets increasingly deeper and “everything will live where the river flows.” (Hahn) The Scriptures say that “water will flow from his belly...” not sure where, but it is an illusion to the temple.

**22:5** “And the night shall be no more” “Light is the ancient and obvious symbol of life, especially of the spiritual life and the intellectual life. To be in light means to be able to see all things and the truth of all things: light is true knowledge” (Corsini 405).

**22:6** “...what must soon take place.” This indicates that the prophecy will soon be fulfilled. Yet, this should not preclude a future fulfillment or a present fulfillment. Apostasy seems to be the great indicator of apocalyptic fulfillment. The battle goes on. Enemies rage all around.

**22:8ff** “I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel...but he said to me, “You must not do that...” In the Old Testament it was not uncommon for people to worship the angels. But now the angels and the saints are on an equal level. We are entering into a share of the glory that the angels alone enjoyed in the Old. The angels become fellow servants and we worship God together.

**22:9** See 19:10

**22:10** “...for the time is near” Again, indications of a first century fulfillment.

**22:12** “Behold, I am coming soon...” These words are significant: they are the last public words of Jesus in Scripture.

**22:15** “Outside are the dogs and sorcerers...” Outside the Church the evil still prowls.

**22:18** “I warn every one who hears the words... not to add or detract.” Be careful to consider that this is not applicable to the entire Bible, but only the Book of Revelation. The Book of Revelation was originally a single volume work. This warning is clear: no man created being can add to Christ’s work of redemption; nor can anyone take away from his work.

### **Promises to the Conqueror**

The great promise of the seven letters to the universal church is realized in the NEW JERUSALEM. This is the realization of a “radical renewal of human nature.” Note, in particular, the promise to the church in Philadelphia: the spiritual material for the making of the Temple is the faithful. John “wishes to convince us of a consoling truth (“good news,” “*evangelion*”): **they are the New Jerusalem; in them has been realized, in a concrete, full and definitive fashion, what had been only announced and promised to the old earthly Jerusalem**” (Corsini 409).

**2:7b** Ephesus: “To him who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the paradise of God.”

**2:11b** Smyrna: “He who conquers shall not be hurt by the second death.”

**2:17b** Pergamum: “To him who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone which no one knows except him who receives it.”

**2:26** Thyatira: “He who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, I will give him power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received power from my Father; and I will give him the morning star.”

**3:5** Sardis: “He who conquers shall be clad thus in white garments, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life; I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.”

**3:12 Philadelphia** “He who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God; never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.”

**3:21 Laodicea:** “He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on this throne.”

### **Conclusion to the book by Dr. Scott Hahn:**

Only a Catholic interpretation of the Book of Revelation can bring together all the hidden details, messages, and meanings. We are losing the interpretation game for lack of trying. We should all read, pray, and study... begin Bible studies which are utterly faithful to the Magisterium of the Church as well as utterly tied to the Word of God in the Scriptures.

**Summary:** We have in the Book of Revelation a theological vision of how we are to live with an eternal perspective; to see God’s purpose behind every crisis; to know with faith the certainty of God’s presence in history as well as God’s active presence in our own lives. We must see that he sends struggles to make us learn to overcome. He gives us problems so we can experience Christ’s Lordship. He does not do this with us as individuals but as a cell in the Mystical Body. He is doing this with me and with you and with all the brothers and sisters of Christ. He is doing this in the Church and for the Church. And the Church is empowered to experience these crises and overcome evil in her Liturgy and most especially in the Eucharistic Sacrifice of the Mass where the Lamb gives to us a share of his own triumph. There in the Liturgy, the Old Covenant and the New Covenant are one. In the Liturgy, humanity is deified and deity takes on humanity. In the Liturgy, we receive the God-man onto our tongues and into our bodies and souls. In the Liturgy, the seals are broken to bring about the judgments of God in history. In the Liturgy, the seven trumpets are sounded. In the Liturgy, the seven cups are poured out. In the Liturgy we have the marriage supper of the Lamb. In the Liturgy, we experience the Lord’s Day; we experience the final judgment; we experience our deliverance; we experience Christ unveiling his judgment which will ultimately vindicate us against those who would slander us and persecute us both within the Church as false brethren as well as outside the church in the world. In the Liturgy, we have hope.

Therefore, we should be throwing ourselves body and soul into the singing, into the praying, and into the recitation of whatever lines we have. Because, invisibly yet present, are the angels and the saints. And there before us is the altar, the throne of Christ. **History is controlled from the altar:** a summary of the Book of Revelation. History is controlled from the altar, the throne of Christ. His altar and throne are one. Nothing interprets the apocalypse as well as the Liturgy, and nothing interprets the Liturgy as well as the apocalypse. This book can be studied for years without reaching its depth. This book also shows us the radical sources of sin, the ultimate sources of injustice. We cannot hate our fellow man, no matter how much he hates us. He is acting within the grips of powers much greater than he. Our enemies are real, to be sure, but they are also deceived and in need of the Gospel. This is our responsibility. Yet, do not exaggerate the burden. The real struggle goes on above us. This is Christ’s battle. We witness. We offer up our bodies.

### **Conclusion by Father Eugenio Corsini:**

The past, therefore, is in the service of the present, says the Apocalypse. Is then the present in the service of the future? Certainly! There is this basic difference, however, at the level of the full realization of the divine salvific plan: “It has been done!” (10:7; 16:17; 21:6). From now on the future is firmly committed to the hands of man.

### **Appendix:**



## Book of Revelation's "Hymn of the Redeemed"

VATICAN CITY, MARCH 31, 2004 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Here is a translation of the address John Paul II gave at today's general audience, which he dedicated to comment on the "Hymn of the Redeemed," taken from the Book of Revelation.

1. The canticle we have just heard and on which we will now meditate forms part of the liturgy of vespers; we have been commenting on its Psalms systematically in our weekly catecheses. As happens often in the liturgy, some prayer compositions are created by joining biblical fragments from ampler pages.

In this case, some verses have been taken from Chapters 4 and 5 of the Book of Revelation, which depicts a glorious and grandiose heavenly scene. A throne rises at the center on which God himself is seated, whose name is not pronounced out of veneration (see Revelation 4:2). Subsequently, the Lamb, symbol of the risen Christ, is seated on the throne: mention is made, in fact, of a "Lamb that seemed to have been slain," but standing upright, alive and glorious (5:6).

Around these two divine figures is spread out the choir of the heavenly court, represented by four "living creatures" (5:6), who seem to evoke the angels of the divine presence in the four cardinal points of the universe, and "twenty-four elders" (4:4), in Greek "presbyteroi," namely, the leaders of the Christian community, whose number recalls the twelve tribes of Israel and the Twelve Apostles, that is, the synthesis between the first and the new covenant.

2. This assembly of the People of God sings a hymn to the Lord exalting his "glory and honor and power," which are manifested in the creation of the universe (see 4:11). At this point a symbol of particular relevance is introduced, in Greek a "biblion," that is, a "scroll," which is, however, totally inaccessible: There are, in fact, seven seals which impede its reading (see 5:1).

Therefore, it is about a hidden prophecy. That scroll contains the whole series of divine decrees that must be carried out in human history to make perfect justice reign. If the scroll remains sealed, these decrees can neither be known nor acted upon, and wickedness will continue to propagate itself and to oppress believers. Therefore, there is need for an authoritative intervention: It will be accomplished, precisely, by the slain and risen Lamb. He will be able "to receive the scroll and to break open its seals" (see 5:9).

Christ is the great interpreter and Lord of history, who reveals the hidden thread of divine action that runs through it.

3. The hymn then indicates the basis of the power of Christ over history: his paschal mystery (see 5:9-10): Christ was "slain" and with his blood he "delivered" the whole of humanity from the power of evil. The verb "to deliver" refers to Exodus, to the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian slavery. For ancient legislation, the duty of deliverance devolved on the closest relative. In the case of the people, it was God himself who called Israel his "firstborn son" (Exodus 4:22).

Christ, therefore, carries out this work for the whole of humanity. His redemption does not just have the function of delivering us from the evil committed in the past, of healing our wounds, and of relieving our miseries. Christ gives us a new interior being, he makes us priests and kings, participants in his own dignity.

Alluding to the words that God had proclaimed on Sinai (see Exodus 19:6; Revelation 1:6), the hymn confirms that the redeemed people of God is made up of kings and priests who must guide and sanctify the whole of creation. It is a consecration that has its origin in Christ's Pasch and that is realized in baptism (see 1 Peter 2:9). From it follows an appeal to the Church, to be aware of its dignity and mission.

4. Christian tradition has constantly applied to Christ the image of the paschal Lamb. Let us listen to the words of a second-century bishop, Meliton of Sardis, a city in Asia Minor, who expresses himself in his Easter Homily thus: "Christ came down from heaven to earth out of love for suffering humanity, he took on our humanity in the womb of the Virgin and was born as man. ... He was caught as a lamb, and as a lamb was slaughtered, and in this way he delivered us from the slavery of the world. ... He drew us from slavery to freedom, from darkness to light, from death to life, from oppression to eternal royalty; and made of us a new priesthood and a people chosen forever. ... He is the silent lamb, the slaughtered lamb, the son of Mary, lamb without stain. He was taken from the flock, led to death, slain toward evening, buried at night" (Nos. 66-71: SC 123, pp. 96-100).

At the end, Christ himself, the slain Lamb, addresses his appeal to all peoples: "Come then, all you race of men who are stained by sins, and receive the remission of sins. I am, in fact, your remission, I am the Easter of salvation, I am the Lamb slain for you, I am your ransom, I am your way, I am your resurrection, I am your light, I am your salvation, I am your King. I am he who will lead you to the heights of heaven, who will show you the Father who is from all eternity, who will deliver you with my right hand" (No. 103: *ibid.*, p. 122).

### **Commentary on Revelation 19**

On the "Wedding Day of the Lamb"

VATICAN CITY, SEPT. 15, 2004 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Here is a translation of John Paul II's address at today's general audience, which he dedicated to comment on the canticle in Chapter 19 of the Book of Revelation.

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1. The Book of Revelation is sprinkled with canticles that are raised to God, Lord of the universe and history. Now we have heard one that we come across constantly in each of the four weeks in which the liturgy of vespers is articulated.

This hymn is sprinkled with the "Alleluia," a word of Jewish origin which means "praise the Lord" and which, curiously, in the New Testament appears only in this passage of Revelation, repeated five times. The liturgy only selects some verses from the text of Chapter 19. In the narrative framework of the passage, they are intoned in heaven by a "great multitude": It is like an imposing chorus that rises from all the elect, who celebrate the Lord in joy and festivity (see Revelation 19:1).

2. For this reason, the Church, on earth, marks the rhythm of her song of praise with that of the just who already contemplate the glory of God. Thus a channel of communication is established between history and eternity: It has its starting point in the earthly liturgy of the ecclesial community and has its end in the heavenly, where our brothers and sisters have already arrived who have preceded us on the way of faith.

In this communion of praise three topics are substantially celebrated. First of all, the great characteristics of God, his "salvation," "glory" and "power" (verse 1; see verse 7), namely, transcendence and saving omnipotence. Prayer is contemplation of the divine glory of the ineffable mystery, of the ocean of light and love that is God.

In the second place, the canticle exalts the "Kingdom" of the Lord, namely, the divine plan of redemption of the human race. Taking up again the theme of the savior of the so-called Psalms of the Kingdom of God (see Psalms 46; 95-98), here is proclaimed that "the Lord has established his reign" (Revelation 19:6), who intervenes with supreme authority in history.

This is certainly entrusted to human freedom, which generates good and evil, but it has its ultimate seal in the decisions of Divine Providence. The Book of Revelation celebrates precisely the end toward which history is led through the effective work of God, despite the storms, wounds and devastations caused by evil, man and Satan.

In another page of Revelation is sung: "We give thanks to you, Lord God almighty, who are and who were. For you have assumed your great power and have established your reign" (11:17).

3. The third topic of the hymn is typical of the Book of Revelation and of its system of symbols: "For the wedding day of the Lamb has come, his bride has made herself ready" (19:7). As we will have the opportunity to reflect more deeply in future meditations on this canticle, the definitive end toward which the last book of the Bible leads us is the nuptial meeting between the Angel, who is Christ, and the purified and transfigured bride, which is redeemed humanity.

The expression "the wedding day of the Lamb has come" refers to the supreme moment -- "nuptial," as our text says -- of the intimacy between the creature and the Creator, in the joy and peace of salvation.

4. Let us conclude with the words of one of St. Augustine's discourses that illustrates and exalts the Alleluia Canticle in its spiritual meaning: "We sing in unison this word and, united around it in communion of feelings, we encourage one another mutually to praise God. God can be praised with a peaceful conscience by the one who has not committed anything that displeases him. Moreover, as regards the present time in which we are pilgrims on earth, we sing the 'Alleluia' as a

consolation to fortify ourselves through life; the 'Alleluia' which we pronounce now is like the song of the wayfarer; in walking on this exhausting way we tend toward that homeland in which is rest, in which, with all the present concerns having disappeared, there will only be the 'Alleluia' (No. 255,1: "Discorsi" [Discourses], IV/2, Rome, 1984, p. 597).

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