

**THE APOCALYPSE OF JOHN : A
HERMENEUTICAL STUDY**

Brian Michael Halloran

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil
at the
University of St Andrews



1988

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by Brian Michael Halloran

September 1987.



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Certificate of Supervisor

I certify that Brian Michael Halloran has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution of the University Court, 1981, No. 2, and is qualified to submit this thesis in application for the Degree of Master of Philosophy.

Declaration by Applicant

I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance 350 (General No. 12) on 1st October, 1982, and as a candidate for the degree of M. Phil. under Resolution of the University Court, 1981, No. 2 on 11th April 1984.

The following thesis is based on the results of research carried out by myself, is my own composition, and has not previously been presented for a higher degree. The research was carried out in the University of St Andrews under the supervision of Dr. Alexander J.M. Wedderburn.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my supervisor, Dr Alexander Wedderburn, for his invaluable assistance and encouragement throughout the last five years. His general guidance, bibliographical help and meticulous examination of work done, far exceeded the demands of duty. I also thank him for inviting me as his guest to the 1985 S.N.T.S. Meeting in Trondheim.

My thanks must also be expressed to Prof. Dr. T. Holtz who asked me to give a seminar paper at that S.N.T.S. Meeting on *Social and Religious Stress in Asia at the time of the writing of John's Apocalypse* (which paper is now the basis of chapter two of this thesis), and to the members of the seminar for their helpful constructive criticism.

Prof. Ernest Best gave me valuable guidance on how to assess 'relevance', and to him also I am indebted.

I am also grateful to the firm of *Ramtur* in Izmir and their excellent guides who took me round the Seven Cities of the *Apocalypse*, and to ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΣ ΘΕΟΧΑΡΗΣ for his hospitality on the island of Patmos.

Without the help and encouragement of all these people, and many others, both within and without the University of St Andrews, this thesis could not have been submitted, and I am grateful to all of them.

Fr Brian Halloran.

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

The aim of this dissertation is to discover the relevance (so often called in question) of John's *Apocalypse*.

It was necessary first of all to examine the nature of the genre 'apocalypse'. Modern scholarship seems close to reaching a consensus of opinion concerning the main elements of the genre. Yet there are different views regarding its purpose. Our hypothesis is that the genre develops from a therapy in crisis towards a treatise on eschatology.

The next step was to examine the *Sitz-im-Leben* of *Revelation*. Here we favoured the most commonly accepted opinion that *Revelation* was probably written towards the end of Domitian's reign. Then we examined the social and religious conditions in Asia at that time, and came to the conclusion that *Revelation* was indeed contending with crisis, mainly religious but social to some degree.

John's literary sources were then examined. In terms of quantity Old Testament allusions are the most numerous, but our author is also thoroughly familiar with Christian ideas and with the thought of intertestamental literature. It was interesting to find similarities to the Qumran literature. What came as a surprise was the number of ideas that seem to be derived from pagan sources or from the secular world.

From these investigations, some aspects of *Revelation's* relevance became apparent.

The genre facilitates a championing of future eschatology that has sometimes been blurred in our own century, and provides some principles for a Christocentric theodicy.

The *Sitz-im-Leben* investigation led us to see that John stirs the Christian conscience to protest against political evil, and by implication condemns condoning by silence. This provides a basis for a theology of liberation.

John's use of sources shows an appreciation of an ongoing process of hermeneutics, portends a recognition of the religious value of the profane, and proclaims victory through the cross.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 THE GENRE

| | Page |
|--|------|
| Part 1 The genre 'apocalypse' | 1. |
| Part 2 <i>The Book of Revelation</i> classified as an apocalypse. | 31. |
| Part 3 Ways in which <i>Revelation</i> differs from other apocalypses. | 37. |

CHAPTER 2 THE SITZ-IM-LEBEN OF THE APOCALYPSE OF JOHN

| | |
|---|-----|
| Part 1 Date of <i>John's Apocalypse</i> . | 40. |
| Part 2 Social Stress in Asia | 62. |
| Part 3 Religious Stress in Asia | 70. |
| Part 4 Possible Reasons for Persecution | 84. |

CHAPTER 3 THE SOURCES OF JOHN'S APOCALYPSE

| | |
|--|------|
| Part 1 Old Testament and Pseudepigraphical Sources. | 90. |
| Part 2 The Dead Sea Scrolls. | 114. |
| Part 3 New Testament Parallels | 119. |
| Part 4 Pagan Sources and Ideas from the Pagan World. | 129. |

CHAPTER 4 THE RELEVANCE OF JOHN'S APOCALYPSE

| | |
|--|------|
| Part 1 The Relevance of the Apocalyptic Genre. | 152. |
| Part 2 The Relevance of <i>John's Apocalypse</i> as seen from its historical context | 185. |
| Part 3 The Relevance of the Hermeneutics of <i>John's Apocalypse</i> | 190. |

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS | 206. |
|-------------------------|------|

NOTES

| | |
|-----------|------|
| Chapter 1 | 211. |
| Chapter 2 | 220. |
| Chapter 3 | 230. |
| Chapter 4 | 243. |

BIBLIOGRAPHY

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Primary Texts | 251. |
| Secondary Literature | 257. |

CHAPTER 1

THE GENRE

Part 1 The genre 'apocalypse'

The difficulty and lack of uniformity in defining the terms 'apocalypse', 'apocalypticism' and 'apocalyptic' has been expressed by many authors. We have, for example, G. von Rad's warning, "whoever uses the term apocalypticism ought to be aware of the fact that we have not yet succeeded in defining it in a satisfactory way"¹, and H.D. Betz's observation, "thus far we have by no means as yet grasped the nature of the concept of Apocalypticism itself."²

Käsemann, who has started an avalanche of writings on apocalyptic literature, was not unaware of the difficulty. He writes, "There is no denying that the term 'apocalyptic' remains ambiguous. What term, however, does not?"³ Nevertheless the fact that W.G. Rollins challenges his thesis on grounds of definition⁴ emphasizes the importance of defining the genre 'apocalypse'. The great amount of attention devoted to this in the last two decades provides us with a better chance of discerning the more common understanding of the terms than Käsemann had in 1960.

Apocalypticism is defined by Paul D. Hanson as a system of thought produced by visionary movements.⁵ This is close to the description of John J. Collins who describes apocalypticism as the ideology of a movement that shares the conceptual structure of the apocalypses.⁶

Chapter One

Apocalypticism can exist in a community which does not produce apocalypses; Qumran is an example of this.

Michael Stone has argued that there are apocalypses devoid of apocalypticism,⁷ but we would agree with John J. Collins that this is confusing.⁸ Stone has formed his concept of apocalypticism from eight motifs of apocalypticism listed by Klaus Koch.⁹ J.J. Collins has pointed out that these motifs are not enough; though they account well enough for the features of apocalypticism found in the historical apocalypses, they fail to include characteristics of apocalypticism found in apocalypses that incline to mysticism and cosmic speculation.¹⁰ We would agree with J.J. Collins that the word 'apocalypticism', being derived from 'apocalypse', should indicate some analogy with the apocalypses, though the affinity will always be one of degree.¹¹

Apocalyptic is the word that has caused most confusion. Koch tells us that in the last century the word 'apocalyptic' was used to describe all that is eschatologically improper.¹² We are more concerned with its more recent and current meaning.

The word 'apocalyptic' can be used either as an adjective or as a noun. As an adjective, it could be related either to apocalypse or to apocalypticism, and further confusion has been caused by the arbitrary way in which connections have been made with different aspects of the apocalypses, especially the *Book of Revelation*, made first on the basis of literary features and later made on a basis of diverse doctrines or concepts. Paul Hanson holds that since $\alpha \pi \sigma \kappa \acute{\alpha} \lambda \upsilon \psi \iota \varsigma$ refers

Chapter One

in the first instance to the definition of the literary genre 'apocalypse', rather than to a definition of the phenomenon of 'apocalypticism', the adjective 'apocalyptic' should follow suit.¹³

One common usage of the adjective is found in the phrase 'apocalyptic eschatology'. It has been argued that since there is not a consistent eschatology in all apocalypses, the phrase 'apocalyptic eschatology' is meaningless. While it is true that there are different kinds of eschatology in different apocalypses, a common factor in all apocalypses is a transcendent eschatology that looks for retribution beyond the bounds of history. This can rightly be termed 'apocalyptic eschatology'. Indeed other literary works have a transcendent eschatology too, but as we shall discuss later, no characteristic of apocalypse is exclusive to the genre.¹⁴

The noun 'apocalyptic' has been used in even more diverse ways. Koch says that during the last century, a collective term 'apocalyptic' came into use to characterize a certain kind of religious speculation about the future of man and the world.¹⁵ Koch himself uses the noun to describe an historical movement.¹⁶ 'Apocalyptic' has also been used as a collective term for all the material found in the apocalypses.¹⁷ The noun has even been used to designate the writer of an apocalypse. J.J. Collins says that more recent scholarship has abandoned the use of 'apocalyptic' as a noun.¹⁸

'Apocalypse' is the name given to the genre of works resembling *John's Apocalypse*, and also applied to an individual work within this

Chapter One

genre. We are principally concerned here with the definition of the genre 'apocalypse'.

It seems best to start with a list of books generally classified as 'apocalypses' (bearing in mind Hanson's warning that the genre is often fused with other forms),¹⁹ and try to discern their common characteristics that would distinguish them from works in other genres. To some extent this is begging the question, since the definition is going to be affected by the works selected. This, however, cannot be avoided; a similar difficulty would arise in the definition of any literary genre.

Authors are not agreed on which works to include. The lists of J.J. Collins and the S.B.L. genre group are used as a starting point here, both because they seem more comprehensive than most, and because they are the result of a special recent study on the subject of genre.

Fifteen works are listed as Jewish apocalypses:⁻²⁰

Daniel 7-12,

The Animal Apocalypse (1 Enoch 85-90),

The Apocalypse of Weeks (1 Enoch 93; 91:12-17),

Jubilees 23,

4 Ezra,

2 Baruch,

The Apocalypse of Abraham,

1 Enoch 1-36,

The Book of Heavenly Luminaries (1 Enoch 72-82),

The Similitudes of Enoch (1 Enoch 37-71),

Chapter One

2 Enoch,

The Testament of Levi 2-5 (in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs)

3 Baruch

The Testament of Abraham 10-15 (in the Testament of the Three Patriarchs)

*The Apocalypse of Zephaniah.*²¹

Twenty-four works are deemed to be early Christian Apocalypses:⁻²²

*The Apocalypse of Sedrach,*²³

*The Book of the Resurrection by Bartholomew 17b-19b,*²⁴

*The Mysteries of St John the Apostle and the Holy Virgin,*²⁵

*The Apocalypse of James,*²⁶

*The Apocalypse of the Mother of God,*²⁷

*The Story of Zosimus,*²⁸

*The Testament of Jacob 5 (in the Testaments of the Three Patriarchs)*²⁹

*The Testament of Isaac 5-6 (in the Testaments of the Three Patriarchs)*³⁰

*The Apocalypse of the Virgin Mary,*³¹

*The Apocalypse of Esdras (The Greek Apocalypse of Ezra)*³²

*The Apocalypse of Paul,*³³

*The Ascension of Isaiah 6-11,*³⁴

*The Book of the Resurrection by Bartholomew 8b-14a,*³⁵

*The Questions of Bartholomew,*³⁶

*The Testament of Jacob 1-3a (in Testaments of the Three Patriarchs),*³⁷

*The Testament of Isaac 2-3a (in Testaments of the Three Patriarchs),*³⁸

*5 Ezra (Fourth Book of Ezra 2:42-48),*³⁹

*The Testament of the Lord 1:1-14,*⁴⁰

*The Apocalypse of John the Theologian,*⁴¹

Chapter One

*The Book of Elchasai,*⁴²

*The Shepherd of Hermas,*⁴³

*The Apocalypse of Peter,*⁴⁴

*Revelation,*⁴⁵

*Jacob's Ladder.*⁴⁶

Nineteen Gnostic Apocalypses are listed:-⁴⁷

1 *Jehu,*⁴⁸

The Dialogue of the Saviour,

Thomas the Contender,

The Apocalypse of Paul,

Zostrianos,

The Paraphrase of Shem,

Pistis Sophia I-III,

*Pistis Sophia IV,*⁴⁹

The Letter of Peter to Philip,

The Apocalypse of Peter,

1 *Apocalypse of James,*

The Nature of the Archons,

The Gospel of Mary,

The Apocryphon of John,

The Sophia of Jesus Christ,

Melchizedek,

2 *Apocalypse of James,*

Allogenes,

*The Apocalypse of Adam.*⁵⁰

Chapter One

Amongst other works, only three would seem to qualify as apocalypses under the definition of J.J. Collins and the S.B.L. group. They are *Poimandres*⁵¹ and the *Zand-i-Vohumen* and *Ardâ Virâf*.⁵² A good many others, however, are discussed as related works, manifesting some of the characteristics of apocalypse.

Many characteristics of apocalypses can be listed. J.J. Collins⁵³ and David Hellholm⁵⁴ both list over thirty, although their lists are not quite identical. No characteristic is exclusive to the genre 'apocalypse', neither are all characteristics found in any one apocalypse.⁵⁵ It is not therefore enough to list characteristics; the order of importance and the relationship between characteristics must also be taken into account.⁵⁶

Hellholm groups the characteristics according to content, style and function;⁵⁷ this seems a good pattern to follow. It does not seem to be necessary or even desirable to put every characteristic into the definition. We must select those characteristics which we think are essential to the definition of the genre, and give due consideration to any characteristics that have been thought by others to be essential. In other words, we must give due consideration to the order of importance amongst the characteristics.

Content Characteristics

Revelatory Experience

First amongst the characteristics concerning content is the revelatory experience. The word $\alpha\pi\omicron\kappa\acute{\alpha}\lambda\upsilon\psi\iota\varsigma$ means

Chapter One

'revelation', and a work cannot be an apocalypse without some form of revelation. Christopher Rowland believes that the revelatory experience is of the very essence of apocalypses, and that it is indeed the main distinctive mark.⁵⁹

The revelation might be made in visions, epiphanies,⁶⁰ auditions or otherworldly journeys or in a combination of these modes of revelation. There are visions in almost all the Jewish and Christian apocalypses, and there are otherworldly journeys in more than half of them. In the Gnostic apocalypses, what is prominent is the spoken word. The revelation is usually transmitted through discourse or dialogue. There is little emphasis upon vision other than the sight of the revealer, although there are some exceptions (e.g. *Apocalypse of Peter*, *Pistis Sophia* 4, *Apocalypse of Paul*). There are no allegorical visions.⁶⁰

What is common to all apocalypses, however, is that the revelation is always imparted through an otherworldly mediator; it is never a direct oracular utterance by either a heavenly being or a human.⁶¹

The profound theological truth behind the revelation is that all knowledge and all history are already in the mind of God. The apocalyptists believe "that the secrets of the universe are in some sense stored up in heaven. Heaven is a kind of repository of the whole spectrum of human history which can be glimpsed by the elect."⁶² A glimpse of the spectrum is offered in the account of a revelatory experience.

Chapter One

Eschatology

Eschatological ideas abound in apocalypses. No one denies this. There are some authors, however, who hesitate to list eschatology as a distinctive feature of apocalypses, pointing out that eschatology is found in other religious writings.

Nevertheless, eschatology is so predominant in apocalyptic literature that the words 'eschatology' and 'apocalyptic' are sometimes used as synonyms.⁶³ We have already noted the tendency in the last century to use the word 'apocalyptic' to describe all that is eschatologically improper.⁶⁴ Not many would subscribe to such a view today, but the fact that such an opinion was ever held emphasizes how strong a strain eschatology is in the apocalyptic books.

"Apocalyptists have a burning interest in eschatology", says Koch.⁶⁵ "Eschatology is the dominating centre."⁶⁶ For Paul D. Hanson, eschatology "constitutes the heart of the major apocalyptic compositions", though he does warn that "eschatology will not in itself fully answer the question of the origin of every work designated 'apocalyptic'".⁶⁷ Leon Morris points out that "The revelations cover a wide range of subjects", but "commonly there is a concentration on the end-time."⁶⁸

J.J. Collins points out that apocalyptic eschatology is always marked by some form of after-life. This is true of all Christian, Gnostic and Graeco-Roman apocalypses. He finds only two Jewish apocalypses in which personal after-life is not explicitly mentioned -

Chapter One

the *Apocalypse of Weeks* and *Testament of Levi* 2-5. Logically we think that he should exclude these two writings from the genre of apocalypse, but he leaves them in because personal after-life is implied, and both are parts of larger works where after-life is explicit.

While personal after-life is the most consistent aspect of apocalyptic eschatology, there is often a cosmic transformation as well.⁶⁹

Interrelationship between macrocosmic and microcosmic events.

In the apocalypses, there is an interest in the greater universe, commonly referred to as 'the cosmos'. Since the word 'cosmos' can refer either to the world or to the universe, we prefer to use David Hellholm's terminology, distinguishing the macrocosm or universe from the microcosm or the world of human nature.⁷⁰

The macrocosmic events are seen in visions that symbolize events on earth. The visions may symbolize past history, as we find in the historical apocalypses, or they may reflect present crisis, or, as is most frequent, they may refer to the end of the world, the judgment of God and an eschaton beyond this world.

The macrocosmic events are on a grand exaggerated scale, that Giblin has compared to a cartoon. Ugo Vanni has used the expression *salto qualitativo* to describe the leap between reality on earth and the symbolic expression of it in the macrocosm.⁷¹

Chapter One

The apocalyptists spoke as if all events happened on a grand scale in heaven before they took place on earth. The theological truth behind this is that all knowledge is in the mind of God who knows even the future. He can grant a glimpse of this future for the guidance of people on earth. It can serve as an encouragement and as a warning.

The interrelationship between macrocosmic and microcosmic events is typical of apocalypses, and as Hellholm points out goes as far back as Iranian apocalypticism where it is one of the main features.⁷²

Form or Style Characteristics

Narrative Framework

In general the mode of writing in the apocalypses is the narrative form, though naturally this does not exclude poems or dramas occurring in the texts; the extensive use of symbolism and myths often leads the language to come closer to the poetic than to ordinary narrative. This is important in interpretation, and as Paul Ricoeur says, we should sometimes "allow several concurrent identifications play."⁷³

Symbolic Language

D.S. Russell says that "symbolism may be said to be the language of apocalyptic",⁷⁴ and E. Schürer regards symbolism as a characteristic feature of apocalyptic writing. He writes, "A special characteristic of this later 'apocalyptic', compared with much of the older genuine prophecy, is that it gives its revelations mysteriously and enigmatically. What is to be communicated is wrapped in parables and symbols so that the context can only be conjectured." Schürer admits

Chapter One

that the amount of symbolism can vary from apocalypse to apocalypse. Yet "sometimes the entire presentation is symbolical."⁷⁵

Symbolism is of course a very common feature in religious writings, but it is very prevalent in apocalyptic writings, and can be sustained there for a long time. D.S. Russell calls it "imagery of a fantastic or bizarre kind."⁷⁶

The sublimity of the apocalyptists' subject, their use of mythic material, and in some cases a fear of reprisal from persecutors, led the apocalyptists to use much more symbolism than other religious writers did.

Pseudonymity

Pseudonymity has been claimed to be an essential feature of apocalypses.⁷⁷ Certainly it is more common than not in apocalypses. All the Jewish apocalypses and all the Gnostic apocalypses are pseudonymous. Even in Christian apocalypses, it is usually present; of the twenty-four Christian apocalypses listed by Adela Collins, only five are without pseudonymity.⁷⁸

Many reasons for the use of pseudonymity have been suggested, but whether or not it is an essential feature of apocalypses seems best decided by the function it serves.

Chapter One

J.J. Collins has pointed to two effects of pseudonymity; it enhanced the prestige and authority of a work, and it created the possibility of *ex eventu* prophecy.

In earliest Christianity, both the need for the prestige of an ancient writer and the need for *ex eventu* prophecy became superfluous. An authoritative status was once again accorded to prophecy, and a revelation of Jesus Christ (as is found in John's *Apocalypse*) would be accepted without the authority of a pseudonymous author. *Ex eventu* prophecy had been used to show that the end of the world was very near, but the earliest Christians, while expecting the parousia within the lifetime of at least some of their members, felt no need for its demonstration.

Although there was not any difference between Jewish and Christian apocalyptists in their expectation of an imminent end, the former felt the need to prove to others that the end was near, whereas the Christian apocalyptists did not think that their audience would need that proof, because some of the eschatological events had already taken place..

Thus in early Christianity, the advantages gained by pseudonymity, namely the establishment of authority and the "interpretation of the persecuted present in the light of the imminent eschatological events" can be achieved by different means, and therefore pseudonymity is not essential to the genre.⁷⁹

Chapter One

Definition

Before considering the function of an apocalypse, about which there is a current dispute, we turn our attention to J.J. Collins' definition which includes only content and form characteristics. Collins says that "'Apocalypse' is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, in so far as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial in so far as it involves another, supernatural world."⁸⁰

This definition is described by Hellholm as a paradigmatic definition, i.e. one that is derived from the patterns of content and style, and he accepts that this is the usual course followed in reaching a definition.⁸¹ He believes, however, that there is a need also for a syntagmatic definition, i.e. one that will include structural characteristics.⁸²

The two most striking syntagmatic characteristics that Hellholm finds in apocalypses are (1) a hierarchy of communication levels,⁸³ and (2) an alternation of world scenes between this world and a greater cosmic universe.⁸⁴ An examination of these gives us more insight into the genre.

As regards the first, communication levels in apocalypses are multiplex; for example, in *Revelation*, we can discern communication between the author and the general Christian audience, between the

Chapter One

author and the seven churches, between other-worldly mediators and the author, between the "Heavenly scroll" and the author, between the other-worldly mediators and the author within the "Heavenly scroll", and between God himself and the author.^{es}

Though the number of communication levels varies from one apocalypse to another, Hellholm believes that the graded levels of communication constitute a characteristic of apocalypses. One purpose of this hierarchy of communication levels is to establish the authority of the message. A second function is to present the promise of vindication to the just and the threat of damnation to the unfaithful.^{ee}

As regards the second, the relationship between macrocosmic and microcosmic events has already been mentioned but dealt with only paradigmatically. Hellholm examines how this relationship is structured. In *Revelation*, for example, the microcosmic situation (primarily of the Church) is portrayed in intercalations amongst the macrocosmic visions, and the verification of the microcosmic events lies in the macrocosmic visions.^{e7}

Hellholm's syntagmatic analysis seems likely to produce fruitful results in leading to a deeper understanding of the genre.

David Aune, however, while accepting the value of the analysis, has made the following observations:-

Chapter One

(1) The analysis so far is based on only two texts. Many more texts, both apocalyptic and non-apocalyptic, would have to be compared before results could be considered definitive.

(2) The nature of the relationship between paradigmatic and syntagmatic characteristics has not yet been enunciated.

(3) It is not yet clear what degree of embedment of communication levels should be regarded as constitutive for the apocalyptic genre. Aune, for example, finds a considerable amount of embedment of communication levels in the *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas*, not generally regarded as an apocalypse.⁸⁸

As far as we know, Hellholm has not so far used these insights to formulate a syntagmatic definition of the genre 'apocalypse'.

On the paradigmatic level, Hellholm would accept J.J. Collins' definition of the genre apocalypse provided there is added "intended for a group in crisis with the purpose of exhortation and/or consolation by means of divine authority."⁸⁹ Hellholm holds firmly that the definition should include functional characteristics, and he clearly sees the purpose of apocalypses as connected with stress or crisis.⁹⁰

J.J. Collins, on the other hand, points to apocalypses such as *Slavonic Enoch* and the *Testament of Abraham* 10-15 that cannot be related to a political crisis,⁹¹ and would say that the purpose varies in different apocalypses, and so cannot be specified in the definition.⁹²

In view of this controversy, it is necessary to review extant apocalypses as regards their function.

Functional Characteristics or the Purpose of Apocalypses

It is commonly said that apocalypses were composed in times of persecution or stress, and that they are the literature of the underprivileged, the disenfranchised or the persecuted. Their purpose, it is alleged, is to tackle the problem of theodicy, to give comfort to the suffering, and affirm the final victory of God, and assure the just that they will ultimately share in God's rewards.

This would seem to be the viewpoint underlying Hellholm's addition to the definition of apocalypse.

It is likewise Hanson's viewpoint in his thesis on the development of apocalypses.²³ He considers that before the fully developed apocalypses were written in the second century B.C., there was a gradual development of apocalyptic characteristics which can be discerned in post-exilic prophetic passages of the O.T.. Hanson sees this apocalyptic development stemming from polarities in a divided Judaism, and the oppression of visionaries by the party in power.

After the exile, there was great tension between a hieratic party (the Zadokite priests) and a group of visionaries who followed the tradition of Second Isaiah. Increasingly the Zadokite party gained control and excluded the visionaries from any say in the leadership of the people. The visionaries appear to have been joined by a group of Levites who in all probability had kept worship going in Palestine during the exile period, and now found themselves disenfranchised.

Chapter One

At any rate the visionaries felt deprived of a rôle that was truly theirs, and they were extremely critical of the priestly party. As they had no say in politics, and no chance to change the state of affairs in their own day, they described God's action in cosmic terms, and less and less did they translate their cosmic vision into historical terms. They could not see betterment in the ordinary course of history, and believed that God would make a direct intervention. These views are seen expressed in Third Isaiah (*Isaiah* 56-66), in *Zechariah* 9 and 10, and in *Isaiah* 24-27; these passages are described by Hanson as 'early apocalyptic'.⁹⁴

Several features of apocalyptic literature are seen emerging in Third *Isaiah* and Second *Zechariah*. Most notable is the abdication of interest in and responsibility towards historical realities, but there is also the emergence of the ideas of world epochs, universal judgment, dualism and determinism, ideas that come to full bloom in later apocalyptic literature. One can also see comfort and consolation being offered to the oppressed just.

No longer is the big divide between Jews and Gentiles, but between the just and the wicked, because the nation is no longer considered to be all of a piece. This leads to a change in literary genres. Oracles, for example, change their form. Before the exile there were salvation-oracles and there were judgment-oracles; now there is a change to salvation-judgment oracles because the nation is no longer seen as a unity.⁹⁵ Similarly the inability to be effective politically led to the emergence of apocalyptic characteristics.

Chapter One

Thus in Hanson's well developed thesis, apocalyptic was in its origin the language of the underprivileged and those found themselves marginalized.

Hanson has in fact given us a review of the early stages of apocalypticism rather than of apocalypses themselves.³⁶ It is, however, interesting to note his conclusion that apocalypticism emerged because of power loss and stress.

It is necessary, however, to look at the apocalypses themselves in search of their *Sitz-im-Leben* and purpose. As well as noting signs of stress, we shall refer to criticisms of authorities since these may be occasioned by the feeling of disenfranchisement.

Jewish apocalypses of Palestinian provenance do in the main show signs of being written in time of stress, and display concern for problems of theodicy.

The apocalypse now regarded as the earliest that has survived is *The Heavenly Journeys of Enoch* or *The Book of Watchers* (*I Enoch* 1-36). Although it reveals no evidence of oppression by the wicked, it is concerned with the problem of evil; it finds the origin of evil in the actions of the wicked angels, and sees in their punishment a paradigm of retribution that will befall all wicked people.

The second extant apocalypse is probably *The Book of the Heavenly Luminaries* (*I Enoch* 72-82). It is principally concerned with matters

Chapter One

of astronomy, and as such is a peculiar use of apocalyptic writing.⁹⁷ Although there is no mention of theodicy, it is worth noting, as Gruenwald has pointed out, that in the *Book of Job* there is a correlation between man's inability to understand the basic laws of nature and his inability to understand the principles of God's justice.⁹⁸ The apocalyptists, on the other hand, believe that their knowledge of natural secrets "opens the way for man's understanding of divine justice."⁹⁹ Thus the aim of the writer of *The Book of Heavenly Luminaries* may not be unconnected with theodicy nor remote from it.

The Apocalypse of Weeks is usually dated shortly before the Maccabean revolt¹⁰⁰ (a time of great trial), and it explicitly refers to judgment due to fall on the oppressors in the eighth week. (*I Enoch* 91:12).

The Animal Apocalypse was probably written during the persecution of Antiochus IV;¹⁰¹ Rowland dates it about 164 B.C.¹⁰² In addition to the external stress of the persecution, there is internal distress experienced by some of the Jewish people on account of their leaders' conduct. R.H. Charles attributes this apocalypse to one of the Hasidim (Chasids) "who is critical of the moral and ceremonial abuses in the temple."¹⁰³ The Hellenizing Sadducees are blamed by the Hasidim in *I Enoch* 90:6f., and a terrible judgment is predicted for the false shepherds and the blinded sheep (*I Enoch* 90:25f.).

The persecution is depicted in *I Enoch* 90:8-12; the account starts by instancing one particular martyr; Charles identifies him as

Chapter One

Onias III who was put to death by the Syrians in 171 B.C.¹⁰⁴ There follows a more general account of the persecution.

It is generally accepted that the *Book of Daniel* was also written during the persecution of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Two mentions of the 'abomination of desolation' (*Dan* 9:27 and *Dan* 11:31) are widely assumed to refer to the desecration of the temple in 167 B.C.. As there is no reference to the cleansing of the temple which took place in December 164 B.C., it is likely that *The Book of Daniel* was written between 167 B.C. and 164 B.C. in the height of the persecution.¹⁰⁵ It was almost certainly written by one of the Hasidim, the pious ones whose zeal for the law allowed no compromise with Hellenism, who formed the core of opposition to Antiochus IV.¹⁰⁶

The problem of suffering is raised. One can feel the anguish experienced by the author as he cries to God, stressing the enormity of the calamity (*Daniel* 3:34-39 - Vulgate & Catholic Texts). These words are put on the lips of Azariah in the Babylonian Captivity, but in apocalyptic fashion, they apply to the crisis of the day.

In *Daniel* there is also criticism of those in authority, especially in the Susanna story (now in Chapter 13 in the Vulgate Bible). It is not certain whether some Jewish leaders are included in the condemnation or whether it is confined to pagans. For some exegetes, the two wicked elders symbolize the pagans and apostate Jews who tried to make the Jews fall into the sin of apostasy from Jahweh. Other exegetes would go further and see this story as an indictment

Chapter One

against the worldly minded Sadducees who acted as 'elders' or leaders of the people.¹⁰⁷ In view of the contemporary Chapter 90 of *I Enoch*, this is not unlikely.

Chapter 23 of *The Book of Jubilees* is included amongst the apocalypses by J.J. Collins, even though it is not an independent composition. It contains an *ex eventu* prophecy of history between the time of Abraham and the Maccabean revolt.¹⁰⁸ It expresses very vividly the crisis of corruption within Israel (*Jubilees* 23:16-21) and gives a graphic description of persecution by foreign nations which is seen as a punishment for infidelity.

The Similitudes of Enoch is also of political import, and the best indication of date is the reference to the invasion of Palestine by the Parthians in 40 B.C. (*I Enoch* 56:5-7).¹⁰⁹

4 Ezra was written after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.,¹¹⁰ as were *Syriac Baruch* (*2 Baruch*) and *The Apocalypse of Abraham*. The problem of reconciling Israel's suffering with God's justice has become very acute indeed, and finds poignant expression.

The author of *4 Ezra* questions why Israel is given over to the heathen (*4 Ezra* 4:23) and has the greatest difficulty finding an answer (*4 Ezra* 5:29) and the author goes as far as to argue the case with God (*4 Ezra* 6:57-59.)

Chapter One

In *2 Baruch* bitter anguish is expressed at the sight of Jerusalem's destruction (*2 Baruch* 10:6f.). Neither the sins of the people nor those of their priests are enough to account for the calamity. The apocalyptist is perplexed by the illogicality of the situation (*2 Baruch* 14:9).

The Apocalypse of Abraham is probably from the same period as *IV Ezra* and *2 Baruch*.¹¹¹ The problem of evil is once again posed, this time in the form of asking why sin is permitted. The question is answered by God in Chapter 26; it is because man has been given free will and he does not listen to God's exhortations. Despite this answer, after mention of the burning of the temple, the writer asks, "Eternal, Mighty One! If this is so, why now have you afflicted my heart and why will it be so?" (*Apoc Ab* 27:6.)

The apocalypses reviewed so far would seem to be of Palestinian provenance. They manifest an interest in theodicy and speak of present tribulation and oppression, which we can usually identify with a known crisis.

In contrast to these, there are five Jewish apocalypses that do not manifest signs of stress, nor seem to stem from a situation of oppression.¹¹² They are *2 Enoch*, *Testament of Levi* 2-5, *3 Baruch*, *Testament of Abraham* 10-15, and *The Apocalypse of Zephaniah*. Though they bristle with problems of date and provenance,¹¹³ it seems more likely that all five were written in the Diaspora rather than in

Chapter One

Palestine,¹¹⁴ and none of them can be dated with any confidence before the first century A.D..¹¹⁵

It would appear that the genre 'apocalypse' which developed in stress situations and which was in these crises deeply concerned with theodicy, came to be used in not so stressful times for the purpose of expounding eschatological judgment and exhorting on that basis. This was a natural development, since the main answer to problems of theodicy had been retribution in the world to come.

Among Christian apocalypses, we find the same pattern; it tends to be the earlier ones that are concerned with persecution. What appear to be the first six written all have this interest to a greater or lesser degree.

The Testament of Hezekiah which is part of *The Ascension of Isaiah*¹¹⁶ mentions the persecution of Nero. *The Testament of Hezekiah* is very probably a first century writing; the description of the state of affairs in the Church harmonizes with a first century date, and the strong Jewish colouring suggests a date not later than the end of the first century.

The crisis is twofold. Not only is there external persecution, but the internal state of the Church is bad too. Worldliness and lawlessness prevail among its ministers, there is much covetousness, respect of persons, slander and vainglory, and true 'prophets' are hard to find.¹¹⁷

Chapter One

The author believes that the persecution of Nero is the prelude to the end of the world. As in other apocalypses, one martyr is mentioned to illustrate the crisis (*Asc of Isaiah* 4:3). He is almost certainly St. Peter.¹¹⁸

Nero is Beliar incarnate, thus fulfilling the rôle of Antichrist,¹¹⁹ and his reign shall last three years and seven months and twenty-seven days (*Asc of Isaiah* 4:12) which corresponds with the 1335 days of the reign of Antichrist in *Daniel* 12:12, and is used symbolically in the *Testament of Hezekiah* to denote a period of stress.

The Book of Revelation is generally dated at the end of Domitian's reign (95 - 96 A.D.). The stress involved in its *Sitz-im-Leben* will be discussed fully in the next chapter.

The Book of Elchasai has survived only in ten fragments. Two of them enable us to date the work by referring to the third year of Trajan's reign (Fragment 2 and Fragment 7).¹²⁰ Fragment 8 speaks of a time of imminent persecution.¹²¹

Visions I - IV in *The Shepherd of Hermas* would seem to have been written sometime during the reign of Trajan when a persecution was threatened.¹²² The fourth vision speaks of "the great tribulation about to come" (*Hermas* 23:5; 24:6) although Hermas is told that he can escape if his heart becomes pure and blameless (*Hermas* 23:5; 24:6).

Chapter One

The Apocalypse of Peter was probably written not long after 133 A.D.¹²³ In chapter 2 it is predicted that a false messiah will kill those (Christians) who refuse to recognise him as the Christ. Weinel suggested that the false Christ is Bar Cochba. This is quite feasible since Justin Martyr says that Bar Cochba commanded that those Christians be punished severely who refused to deny that Jesus was the Messiah, and Eusebius states that in 133 A.D. Bar Cochba killed Christians who refused to fight with him against the Romans.¹²⁴

Jacob's Ladder is impossible to date in its present form, but the earliest part may date from the first century A.D.¹²⁵ The element of persecution is present in the description of the violent reign of the heir of Esau, in the motif of exile and in the allusion to the destruction of the temple.¹²⁶

Later Christian apocalyptists tend to use the apocalyptic form to describe rewards and punishments with the intention of promulgating Christian morality.¹²⁷ Nevertheless the themes of persecution, and of theodicy do recur.

V Ezra, which may be a 2nd or 3rd century work, implies the expectation of persecution (*2 Esdras* 2:45-47),¹²⁸ and *The Testament of the Lord* 1:1-14 speaks of a king of foreign race who is a persecutor.¹²⁹

In *The Apocalypse of Sedrach*, which could have been written any time between the 2nd and 5th centuries, the main interest is its concern for theodicy. Concern with suffering is also evident in *The Apocalypse*

Chapter One

of *Esdras* (2nd - 9th century A.D.), and *The Apocalypse of Paul* (3rd or 4th century A.D.) has a brief reference to the sufferings of the prophets.¹³⁰

The general pattern, however, in Christian apocalypses is similar to the one we found in Jewish apocalypses. The early ones emanate from a crisis situation; later apocalypses dwell on eschatological rewards as a means of encouraging morality.

In the two Persian works that are categorized 'apocalypses' in *Semeia 14*,¹³¹ we can discern a similar development of function. There are dating problems, but we believe that the *Zand-î Vohûman Yasn* is the earlier. Professor A.V. Williams Jackson places it about the twelfth century, but according to Dr West, it might have been written in the latter part of the reign of Khosroes I (531-575 A.D.). This early date is favoured by Mrs B.T. Anklesaria as the probable date of the original *Zand*.¹³² This date would fit invasions by Turks, Chinese and Arabs mentioned in the *Zand*;¹³³ it would correspond well to a period of trouble following "the accursed Mazdak"¹³⁴ who became prominent about 500 A.D. and was killed c. 532 A.D.¹³⁵ It would fit fairly loosely into a millennium after Zoroaster¹³⁶ if we follow the traditional view that is accepted by Williams Jackson that places Zoroaster's birth in 660 B.C. and his death in 583 B.C.¹³⁷

The contents of the *Zand-î Vohûman Yasn* make it quite clear that it is written in a time of internal crisis for Mazda-worshippers, and that there is also external oppression. "That wicked ganâck-mînoê will

Chapter One

be very oppressive and tyrannical, when it shall be necessary to destroy him' (Zand 4:66). The faithful are exhorted that "they must bear and suffer the trouble, evil and oppression of those alien div-worshippers" (Zand 4:67).¹³⁸

The Book of Ardâ Virâf probably dates in its present form from the ninth century.¹³⁹ Martin Haug believes that Virâf might have been flourishing in the 5th or 6th century C.E., or at least before the downfall of the Sassanian dynasty in the seventh century.¹⁴⁰ The whole contents and the wording of the introduction, however, are such as to exclude the assumption that the work might be the original account of Ardâ Virâf himself.¹⁴¹

There is no mention of external stress in this apocalypse, and the purpose quite clearly is to prove the truth of the Zoroastrian religion, and it is for this reason that Ardâ Virâf is selected to visit the other world.¹⁴²

Once again we see a change of function with the earlier apocalypse being written in a time of stress and oppression, and the latter adopting the genre for different religious purposes.

Our conclusion from this review is that there is phased development of function in the genre 'apocalypse'. *The Book of the Watchers* (I Enoch 1-36) and *The Book of the Heavenly Luminaries* (I Enoch 72-82) might be regarded as belonging to an embryonic phase in which the genre is not yet used for a homogeneous purpose.

Chapter One

In phase two, apocalypses are written in stressful situations, and are concerned with the problem of theodicy. The majority of Jewish apocalypses and first century and early second century Christian apocalypses belong to this group. This might be regarded as the classical phase in the history of the genre.

In phase three, the genre is used to describe eschatological matters with the purpose of inculcating morality. Jewish apocalypses of the diaspora and later Christian apocalypses fall into this category.

We can discern a fourth phase in *Ardā Virāf* where the other-worldly adventure is undertaken and later described in order to prove the truth of the Zoroastrian religion.

As with the three phases of generic development described by Alastair Fowler, the phases are not always distinct, may interpenetrate chronologically, or even be in doubt within a single work.¹⁴³



Since the initial draft of this review, Aune has proposed three complementary literary functions of apocalypses. The first is to legitimate the message, the second is to enable a reliving or audience experience of the original vision, and the third is to encourage cognitive and behavioural modifications.¹⁴⁴

We are surprised at the order in which these are presented, and also that they are presented as if on the same level. The desire to legitimate the message is in fact very dominant in apocalyptists, but

Chapter One

presupposes the intention of imparting a message; the message itself is the primary aim. The endeavour to help the audience or readers to share the experience is a means of getting the message across, and thus ancillary to the message itself. Thus it is the function mentioned third by Aune that we would consider to be the primary purpose of apocalypses, namely, to encourage cognitive and behavioural modifications.

This way of expressing the function is broad enough to apply both to apocalypses written in times of stress and to later ones written as eschatological treatises. We would suggest, however, that it is broad enough to apply to any form of paraenetic writing, and is therefore inadequate to specify the function of apocalypses.

Taking account of function and from our previous considerations, the following is suggested as a definition of apocalypse. 'Apocalypse' is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing eschatological events and an interrelationship between macrocosmic and microcosmic events, expressed in symbolic terms. The genre developed in crisis situations to exhort and console the just. Later, in non-stress circumstances, the genre was employed to inculcate morality.

Chapter One

Part 2 The Book of Revelation is an apocalypse

We believe that John's *Apocalypse* belongs to the genre of apocalypse, despite the differences between *Revelation* and other apocalypses. Since, however, some have denied that *Revelation* is an apocalypse, it is necessary to refute their arguments.

The Book of Revelation has been excluded from the genre of apocalypse because it lacks pseudonymity and *ex eventu* prophecy, though we believe that there is one instance of *ex eventu* prophecy in *Rev* 17:10f. to be discussed below. B.W. Jones, for example, regards pseudonymity as the essential feature of apocalyptic, and therefore cannot accept *Revelation* as an apocalypse.¹⁴⁵ We have already considered the lack of pseudonymity and *ex eventu* prophecy, and came to the conclusion that they are not essential features of an apocalypse.

James Kallas holds that a work is apocalyptic when it views suffering as coming from God-opposing forces, in contradistinction to the O.T. view that suffering is the retributive work of God. Since in his opinion, *Revelation* treats suffering in the O.T. way, he excludes it from the genre of apocalyptic.¹⁴⁶

In reply, we would deny that suffering is treated in such a one-sided way in the Old Testament or in apocalyptic or in the *Book of Revelation*.

Chapter One

The O.T. does often interpret suffering by the nation as a consequence of sin, but this does not exclude God-opposing forces causing suffering; the innocent do suffer, and we can think of examples like Naboth, Uriah and Jeremiah.

Bruce Jones has pointed out that the attitude to suffering in apocalyptic is not as consistent as Kallas suggests. In *Daniel*, for example, tribulation is the work of God-opposing powers, but they work by the permission of God.¹⁴⁷

We cannot therefore accept the interpretation of suffering as the distinguishing mark between apocalyptic and other literature. Still less can we regard it as the essence of apocalyptic.

In *The Book of Revelation* too, which is held by Kallas to have returned to the retributive interpretation of suffering, there is nevertheless a lot of distress caused by God-opposing forces; John himself, Antipas at Pergamum, and the martyred saints all suffered because of evil forces, not as a punishment at the hands of God.

David Hill deems *Revelation* to be prophecy rather than apocalyptic. He accepts von Rad's criterion that prophecy and apocalyptic are to be distinguished by their differing views of history. The prophets believe firmly in salvation-history and see God revealing himself both in past history and in their own time, whereas apocalyptists believe that the present age is meaningless, and that it is to be swallowed up and destroyed in the end-time.¹⁴⁸

Chapter One

This raises two questions. Firstly, are prophecy and apocalyptic mutually exclusive? Secondly, are they to be distinguished by their different views of history?

As regards the first question, we must distinguish between genre and message. We believe that with our definition of an apocalypse, the genres are exclusive. In an apocalypse, the revelation is always mediated by an otherworldly being; in prophecy the revelation is usually given to the prophet by God Himself. The difference is even more pronounced in those apocalypses which employ the device of pseudonymity; the revelation is presented as if it had been granted originally to a worthy of the past, whereas the prophets present their message with a sense of urgency and do so in their own person. Of course, pseudonymity is only a literary fiction (apocalypists too might have considered their message urgent), but we are dealing here with 'genre', with the way in which the matter is presented.

We do not believe, however, that prophetic message and apocalyptic message are mutually exclusive. The same work might contain both.

This is the view of J.J. Collins who places *Revelation* in the genre of apocalypse because it has the form of mediated revelation which is rare in the prophetic corpus. Nevertheless he points out that John himself considered his work to be a prophecy and refers to "the words of prophecy" (Rev 1:3) and "the prophecy of this book" (Rev 22:7). He also designated his work as $\alpha\pi\omicron\kappa\acute{\alpha}\lambda\upsilon\psi\iota\varsigma$ and saw no tension between this term and $\pi\rho\omicron\phi\eta\tau\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$.¹⁴⁹

Chapter One

George Eldon Ladd can also see prophecy and apocalyptic wedded. In an article entitled "Why not Prophetic-Apocalyptic?", he deals with the subject in so far as it concerns eschatology, and holds that the apocalyptic outlook on eschatology can be found as early as Amos, since "Amos seems to envisage convulsions of nature on something like a cosmic scale which involves genuine eschatology."¹⁵⁰ In *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* he says "there is a prophetic and a non-prophetic apocalyptic, and the *Apocalypse* of the N.T. stands in the first type."¹⁵¹

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has also maintained that prophecy and apocalyptic need not be exclusive, especially as by New Testament times the Jewish apocalyptists could describe themselves as prophets.¹⁵²

W.C. van Unnik holds the same opinion. He has argued that *Rev* 1:19 contains a widely recognised formula describing prophecy, that is strongly bound up with O.T. prophecies,¹⁵³ and he states that the prophetic character of St John's *Apocalypse* is evident and well-known.¹⁵⁴ The author of *The Apocryphon of John*, a Gnostic apocalypse, also wanted his book to be considered as a 'prophetic revelation'.¹⁵⁵

But are apocalyptic and prophecy to be distinguished by their views of history as von Rad contends? This is a difficult question on which there is a great divergence of opinion. Undoubtedly many apocalyptists were pessimistic about their own age, saw themselves as at the end of the world, and believed that God's intervention would bring a new world of a completely different order from the world we know. Because of this many writers have held that the apocalyptists abandoned

Chapter One

salvation-history as taught by the prophets.¹⁵⁶ Other writers react strongly against this view.¹⁵⁷

Faced with such divergent interpretations of the apocalyptists' meaning, let us try to discern their attitude to salvation-history by examining the reason for their historical reviews.

Hanson is typical of those who see this kind of review as a timetable indicating how close men are to the ultimate event.¹⁵⁸ The historical review was often given as if it were written as a prophecy in the past, thus indicating that just as the prophecy had come to pass, so too would the approaching end come as surely.

Christopher Rowland, however, seems to have a deeper insight into the apocalyptists' purpose. For him history takes up too much space for it just to be a device justifying the validity of predictions.¹⁵⁹ It seems to have a theological point. The reason for it is theodicy. The present black patch of history has to be understood in the light of the overall pattern of God's purposes for mankind. The present is just a tiny part of the canvas. There have been difficulties in the past from which God has delivered his faithful, and we are assured of the ultimate triumph of God at the end. It is one way of encouraging a religious group to see that their theological convictions are to be trusted.¹⁶⁰ Determinism is not absolute. The opportunity is open to each one to decide for or against the Divine will in the present. People are exhorted to maintain religious convictions in the face of

Chapter One

apparent futility. This is not an abandoning of sava-tion-history, but an aid to perseverance in a time of political impotency.

Thus there is not a clash between apocalyptists and prophets over history, but, as Rowland says, "what was inherent in the prophetic attitude to history, as well as the attitude of the Deuteronomist, namely the hidden meaning of events which seemed so ill with Israelite traditions, is clearly enunciated in apocalyptic."¹⁶¹

Where some apocalyptists made their mistake was in thinking that the end of the world was imminent and that they stood in the last generation. Even this view was modified in those apocalypses which express the idea of a millennium or messianic interregnum at the end of time.¹⁶² Moreover, later Christian apocalypses say nothing of an imminent end to the world.

We conclude by admitting that John's message in his *Apocalypse* might well be a prophetic message, but this does not exclude the work from the apocalyptic genre. *The Book of Revelation* fully meets the requirements for our definition of an apocalypse that it is a written account of a revelation, mediated by an otherworldly being, of the future course of events, in which eschatology is presented as the final triumph of God, and God's purposes are unfolded in macrocosmic events.

Chapter One

Part 3 Ways in which Revelation differs from other Apocalypses.

Convinced as we are that *Revelation* is an apocalypse, we must complete the picture by mentioning some ways in which the book differs from most apocalypses.

Revelation's lack of pseudonymity has already been mentioned. Only four other apocalypses lack pseudonymity, all of them Christian.¹⁶³ There are a few authors who say that *Revelation* is pseudonymous and that the author is writing in the name of the apostle John.¹⁶⁴ Nowhere, however, does the author make that claim, and the way in which the twelve apostles are mentioned in *Rev* 21:14 would seem to exclude it. J.N. Sanders says that the absence of 'apostle' in all four places where the name of John is given (*Rev* 1:1, 4, 9; 22:8) virtually rules out the possibility that *Revelation* is pseudonymous. If it were the author could hardly have resisted the temptation to put in *ἀποστόλος*.¹⁶⁵

Nor is there an ante-dating of the work to the distant past. John is writing to his contemporaries. He states explicitly that he too is suffering in the present crisis. In sharp contradistinction to other apocalypses which were to remain sealed for many generations, John is admonished, "Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book".¹⁶⁶

We think, however, that we should concede that there is a short ante-dating in *Rev* 17:10f.¹⁶⁷ John says that he is in the reign of the sixth emperor, but the content makes it clear that he is writing in the reign of the eighth. Some hold that the emperors were never meant to

Chapter One

be identified individually and that the number seven is merely symbolic. In that view, however, it is difficult to see why an eighth is introduced and identified with one of the seven; there seems to be a reference to the Nero redivivus myth. If that is so, the ante-dating is difficult to explain; it might be a lapse into the old apocalyptic form, possibly occasioned by re-writing previously written apocalyptic material, and seemingly apt if much of the imagery of chapter 17 came from a coin of Vespasian's reign, as we will suggest in a future chapter.¹⁶⁸ Despite this possible concession to the old form, John is nevertheless generally taking his stance in his own time, and is writing to people of his own generation.

Repentance has a dominant rôle in *Revelation* that is not customary in other apocalypses. Not only are the members of the seven churches warned to repent,¹⁶⁹ but Jezebel was given time to repent though she did not,¹⁷⁰ and the woes of the sixth trumpet seem to have been inflicted with a view to the rest of the sinners repenting, though again the opportunity was spurned.¹⁷¹

These differences, however, do not, we believe, exclude *Revelation* from the genre 'apocalypse'.

Conclusion

In recent years, valuable contributions have been made to our understanding of the genre 'apocalypse', and there is now a more

Chapter One

widespread consensus of opinion on the main characteristics of the genre.

There is still controversy concerning the function of apocalypses; we favour a view of generic development from exhortations in crisis towards eschatological discourses.

Despite some notable differences between John's *Apocalypse* and most other apocalypses, we believe that *Revelation* belongs to the genre 'apocalypse'.

In the following chapters, we will examine the *Sitz-im-Leben* and the sources of John's *Apocalypse* before attempting to illustrate its relevance today.

CHAPTER 2

The *Sitz-im-Leben* of the Apocalypse of John

Part 1 Date of the Apocalypse

In considering the background to John's *Apocalypse*, it is first necessary to make some assessment of its date. The consensus of opinion is that it was written sometime between 68 A.D. and 96 A.D., the chief controversy being between those who believe that it was occasioned by the Neronian persecution and those who hold that its composition was due to the Domitianic persecution.

External Evidence

The bulk of external evidence favours the view that John wrote after experiencing the Domitianic persecution.

Eusebius quotes from Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria and 'the record of our ancient men' in favour of the *Apocalypse* being written after Domitian's persecution.¹⁷² Victorinus says that John was condemned to the mines at Patmos under Domitian.¹⁷³

Although Jerome in quoting Tertullian interprets Tertullian to mean that John's suffering, like that of Peter and Paul, occurred under Nero, he explicitly states that John was exiled to Patmos fourteen years after Nero, and returned to Ephesus after Domitian's death.¹⁷⁴ Tertullian does not name the emperor, but Eusebius,¹⁷⁵ differing from

Chapter Two

Jerome in his interpretation, understood that Tertullian included John amongst those referred to as suffering at the hands of Domitian.¹⁷⁶

The introduction to the Syriac version of *Revelation* states that Nero banished John,¹⁷⁷ as also does the *History of John, Son of Zebedee* in Syriac.¹⁷⁸ Theophylact can also be quoted as dating John's exile in Nero's reign when he says in his commentary on the *Gospel of St John* that that Apostle was "an exile in the island of Patmos thirty-two years after the ascension of Christ."¹⁷⁹ Theophylact, however, in another place dates *Revelation* in the reign of Trajan.¹⁸⁰ In any case, his evidence is rather late, as he wrote in the eleventh century. Theophylact also quotes a life of John by Sophronius which states that John wrote the *Apocalypse* fourteen years after the death of Nero, after being exiled to the island of Patmos in a persecution started by Domitian.¹⁸¹

The Muratorian fragment is also quoted in favour of a Neronian date for the *Apocalypse* because it says, "The blessed Paul himself, following the order of his predecessor John, writes to seven churches only by name."¹⁸² If this be understood in the sense of chronological order, then the *Apocalypse* would have to be written at least before the last of Paul's Epistles, and Nero's persecution only began in 64 A.D.

The writer of a tract on "*The life and death of the apostles and disciples of our Lord*" at the close of the third century says that the *Apocalypse* was written in the reign of Trajan.¹⁸³

Chapter Two

Thus the weight of external evidence favours a Domitianic date. As Hort expressed it, and he favoured a Neronian date, "If external tradition alone could decide, there would be a clear preponderance for Domitian."¹⁸⁴

Hort,¹⁸⁵ Lightfoot¹⁸⁶ and Westcott¹⁸⁷ all held that the Apocalypse was written between 68 A.D. and 70 A.D., and this was the general opinion for most of the 19th century.

Nowadays most scholars believe the Revelation was written about 96 A.D., although there are exceptions. Torrey,¹⁸⁸ and the Classicists, Henderson,¹⁸⁹ Edmundson,¹⁹⁰ Momigliano¹⁹¹ and Weigall¹⁹² all favour the Neronian persecution, as also does the Jurist, K.A. Eckhardt.¹⁹³ Massyngberde Ford dates *Revelation* earlier than the Gospels.¹⁹⁴

More recently, John A.T. Robinson¹⁹⁵ and Christopher Rowland¹⁹⁶ have also argued for the Neronian date. An examination of their arguments may serve as a review of the internal evidence.

Internal evidence

Parallel Situations in *Revelation*, *Jude* and the *Petrine Epistles*

Robinson had already advanced the opinion that *1 Peter* was dispatched somewhere around the end of April 65 A.D.,¹⁹⁷ and that *Jude* and *2 Peter* were written c. 61-2 A.D.¹⁹⁸

Chapter Two

By citing situations in *Revelation* parallel to those in *Jude* and the *Petrine Epistles*, he now argues that *Revelation* can be dated close to the date of these three epistles.¹⁹⁹

Robinson himself admits that if *2 Peter* and *Jude* are not early this argument fails.²⁰⁰

We would argue that Robinson's early dates for *Jude* and the *Petrine Epistles* are far too uncertain to sustain his thesis. Many scholars tend to regard *2 Peter* as the latest N.T. document, written perhaps c.140 A.D. or even later. Thomas Leahy does not see any need for such a late date, but he suggests a date towards the end of the first century A.D. or early second century.²⁰¹ Though Leahy admits that *Jude* could have been written by the middle sixties (though he adds that it may have been two or three decades later), Shelkle maintains that *Jude* could scarcely be much earlier than 90 A.D.²⁰² Bauckham, however, holds that *Jude* may have been written in the fifties and that nothing in it requires a later date. Though Bauckham himself seems to favour an early date, he admits that *Jude* could have been written any time in the second half of the first century A.D.²⁰³

Even *1 Peter* may not have been written as early as the sixties. Though there are authors who admit the Petrine authorship of *1 Peter*, and therefore must assign the letter a date before 67 A.D.,²⁰⁴ others like F.W. Beare,²⁰⁵ Holtzmann²⁰⁶ and Streeter²⁰⁷ see it as contemporary with Pliny's letter to Trajan (111-2 A.D.). W.G. Kümmel believes that *1 Peter* was written in Domitian's reign.

Chapter Two

Recently A.Y. Collins has argued convincingly that the word 'Babylon' used for Rome in Revelation is an indication of a post 70 A.D. date. Her argument is that in Jewish literature Babylon was used as a symbolic name for Rome only after the destruction of the temple by Rome's forces, the name being applied because Babylon had destroyed the first temple. Collins argues that John probably learned the symbolic name from the Jews.²⁰⁹ If the name 'Babylon' dates Revelation after 70 A.D., it must also date *1 Peter* after the destruction of the temple, since the epithet 'Babylon' is used for Rome there too.

In any case the dates of *Jude* and the *Petrine Epistles* are too uncertain to be used in the dating of Revelation.

Designation of Christians as 'true Jews'

Robinson holds that the *Apocalypse* presupposes a time when the final separation of Christians and Jews had not yet occurred. "For is it credible that the references in *Rev* 2:9 and *Rev* 3:9 to those who 'claim to be Jews but are not' could have been made in that form after 70 A.D.?"²¹⁰

Indeed the usual interpretation of *Rev* 2:9 and *Rev* 3:9 is that the Jews who are 'not true Jews' are Jews by birth, while the true Jews are Christians.²¹¹

This is a perspective found in Paul. Although there was a more definite separation of Jews and Christians after the fall of Jerusalem,

Chapter Two

it is difficult to rule out such language in that later period. After all, John's *Gospel* which most authorities (though not JAT Robinson) would date between 90 and 100 A.D. can use such phrases as 'salvation is of the Jews', 'an Israelite indeed', 'the Jews that believed', and he denies by implication that certain of the Jews are truly the children of Abraham (*Jn* 8:37-44); this passage especially manifests a viewpoint similar to Paul's, namely that true Jews are Christians.

Evidence from the State of the Seven Churches

One could well agree with Robinson that arguments from the state of the churches in Asia present material 'very difficult to handle'. It is very difficult to say how much time is required for the church of Ephesus to have lost its early love (*Rev* 2:4), or for the church of Laodicea to have grown lukewarm (*Rev* 3:15f.).²¹²

It has been argued on the basis of Polycarp *Phil.* 11:3 that the church of Smyrna could not have existed as early as 60-64 A.D., for Polycarp says, "For concerning you [the Philippians] he boasts in all the churches who then alone had known the Lord, for we [the Smyrnaeans] had not yet known him."²¹³

Although Charles says that the time of boasting was 60-64 A.D.,²¹⁴ this does not necessarily follow, for, as Robinson following Lightfoot rightly observes, all that Polycarp actually says is that Paul boasted about the Philippians before the church at Smyrna was founded.²¹⁵ The

Chapter Two

boasting may well have been before 60 A.D., and if it was, this dating argument does indeed fall down as Robinson says.

The boasting of riches in *Rev 3:17* is often related to Laodicea's recovery from the earthquake of 60 A.D.. To some it seems unlikely that the boast of being rich could be made less than ten years after almost total destruction by earthquake.²¹⁶ Yet the city did decline to accept financial help from the emperor.

A.A. Bell refers to the reconstruction of Laodicea in his argument for a Galban date.²¹⁷ C.J. Hemer concurs with him in seeing a possible allusion in *Rev 3:17* to the boasted self-sufficiency of the Laodiceans in rebuilding without imperial help, but he quotes an inscription which shows that the building continued into Domitian's reign with the erection of towers and a triple gate. He thinks that the boasting may be connected to the completion of the rebuilding.²¹⁸ We would, however, agree with Robinson that *Rev 3:17* cannot provide a decisive argument for a date.²¹⁹

Hemer sees some other possible indications of date in the seven letters. *Rev 2:7* may allude to the abuse of the right of asylum in Ephesus which was acute in Domitian's time. The 'synagogues of Satan' may be linked to conflicts arising under Domitian, the occasion being provided by the insertion of the curse of Minim in the *Shemoneh 'Esreh* about 90 A.D.. The resurgence of paganism in Ephesus at the time of the Salutaris bequest (104 A.D.) is explicable as a reaction to the

Chapter Two

revival of Christian zeal following the letter to Ephesus in the *Apocalypse*.²²⁰ None of these, however, are very compelling.

Robinson quotes Charles' view that the letters to the churches were first written before the reign of Domitian because the outlook in them is one in which Christians could still be expected to survive to the parousia. ("Only hold fast to what you have, until I come" *Rev 22:25*.)²²¹ Apocalyptists, however, generally believe that their time is just before the end, and so this attitude tells us little about date.

Persecution

Moving from the evidence of the seven letters to that of the main part of the book, Robinson deals first with the subject of persecution. That violent persecution has already taken place is an inescapable inference from such texts as *Rev 6:9f.*, *16:6*; *17:6*; *18:20 & 24*; *19:2* and *20:4*.²²² Robinson contends that Nero's persecution fits the picture of many martyrs slain much better than Domitian's.

Revelation, however, was addressed to churches in Asia, and there is absolutely no evidence that Nero's persecution affected the province of Asia. Robinson has already made the point that in the main body of *Revelation* (the visions of *Rev 4:1 - Rev 22:5*) the focus, in so far as it is upon earth at all, is in Rome and to a lesser extent in Jerusalem.²²³ We feel that this point should not be pressed; the main body of the book is apocalyptic and written in symbolic language. Rome

Chapter Two

is mentioned as the seat of imperial authority, and Jerusalem as the seat of spiritual power. It is as symbols, rather than as historical places, that John is concerned with these cities.

No doubt persecution in Domitian's reign was far less terrible than Nero's, and far less terrible than was once imagined by Christians. Yet it is not without evidence. This evidence is given later in this chapter. It is because persecution in Domitian's reign occurred in Asia that we believe that it is a more probable background to Revelation.

The number 666

John himself provides us with a clue to the identity of the beast; "If anyone is clever enough he may interpret the number of the beast; it is the number of a man, the number 666" (Rev 13:18).

By far the most usual interpretation of the conundrum is that the figure stands for the sum of the letters in Hebrew of the name 'Neron Caesar'.²²⁴ Undoubtedly there have been countless other explanations, and perhaps the interpretation is late in coming, but Robinson quotes the very interesting parallel from Suetonius,

"Count the numerical values
Of the letters in Nero's name,
And in 'murdered his own mother',
You will find that their sum is the same."²²⁵

Chapter Two

This suggests that *Rev* 13:18 is the Christian version of the same game. Robinson also quotes from Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* where Nero is described as a beast.²²⁶

We agree with Robinson that the beast is Nero, but *Revelation* is written at a time when "the beast, who once was and now is not, is at the same time the eighth." In other words, Nero is dead, and there is a reference to *Nero redivivus*. Although *Rev* 13:14 might be interpreted as just a snatching back from the threshold of death, we cannot say the same of *Rev* 17:11; "who once was and now is not" implies the death of the beast.

Charles traces stages of development in the myth about Nero.²²⁷ It began with a rumour that Nero was not dead but in hiding. We know from Tacitus that this began within months of his death.²²⁸ Then it was believed that Nero had fled to the Parthians, and that he would return to Rome at the head of a Parthian army. (In 80 A.D. an impostor was accepted by the Parthians. In 88 A.D. another impostor almost persuaded the Parthians that he was Nero.) The last phase of the myth was the fusion of the Nero myth with those of Antichrist and Beliar in the belief that Nero would rise from the dead as a Satanic power. It is only this last stage that can properly be called the *Nero redivivus* myth, and this is the stage referred to in *Rev* 13 and *Rev* 17.

Now Charles contends that this phase belongs to the last decade of the first century,²²⁹ and he maintains that the fusion of the Nero and

Chapter Two

Antichrist myths could not have taken place before the first half of Domitian's reign when the last Neronic pretender appeared in 88 A.D.²³⁰

Robinson, however, would not see these stages as dependent on the passage of time, but on the pattern of credulity. He believes that Christians could have envisaged Nero emerging from the abyss very soon after his death, just as Herod believed that Jesus might be John the Baptist risen from the dead. In John the Baptist's case, however, there was no popular belief that he had not died.

One feels that Charles has the stronger case. The belief that Nero was still alive and the expectation that he would return from the East were especially strong in Asia Minor. It seems more likely that a *Nero redivivus* myth would emerge after the widespread belief that he was alive had waned.

Enforcement of Emperor Worship

Emperor worship had started in the reign of Augustus who was worshipped in at least seven cities of Asia during his life-time. Robinson cites that Caligula was threatening to have his image imposed upon the temple in Jerusalem in 40 A.D. though this was averted by his death, and that a statue of Nero was set up for worship in Rome in 55 A.D..

Chapter Two

But what Robinson does not make clear is that in *Revelation* there is mention not just of a decree to worship the emperor, but the enforcement of emperor worship under penalty of death (Rev 20:4).

Now the first hard evidence of emperor worship being commanded under penalty of death is not until the reign of Trajan,²³¹ although we agree with Robinson that Pliny was probably using a stock test of loyalty. How long it had been a stock test of loyalty is impossible to say with certainty. It seems more likely, however, to have originated under Domitian than under Nero, because it is in Domitian's reign that as far as we know for the first time new municipalities had to swear by the genius of the emperor²³² and that a soldier in Egypt took an oath by the "*genius sacratissimi imperatoris Domitiani*".²³³

The Famine of Rev 6:6

Robinson rejects the relating of Rev 6:6 to the revoking of Domitian's edict of 92 A.D.²³⁴ Owing to the shortage of cereals and the superabundance of wine, Domitian issued an edict that no fresh vineyards should be planted in Italy and that half the vineyards in the provinces should be cut down. But the edict set the Asiatic cities in an uproar and they prevailed on Domitian not only to withdraw his edict, but to impose a punishment on those who allowed their old vineyards to go out of cultivation.²³⁵

We would agree with Robinson that there is not enough evidence to prove the date of *Revelation* from Rev 6:6. Charles points out that the

Chapter Two

scarcity of bread and the plentifulness of the vintage in the last days was an old Jewish expectation.²³⁶

Nevertheless we incline to the opinion that the sarcastic phrase "do not tamper with the oil or the wine" was an answer to some well known expressed attitude that encouraged wine production even in a time of wheat shortage. The events of 92 A.D. fit the case very well. This position is advanced by Harnack and supported by Bousset, Swete, Reinach and Moffat. Although Charles considers it doubtful, he does add that "Domitian's edict may have occasioned the mention of this old eschatological expectation".²³⁷

Chapter Eleven and the Destruction of the Temple

Robinson claims that chapter eleven gives evidence of a pre-70 A.D. date for Revelation because it presupposes that Jerusalem and the Temple are still standing.²³⁸

This is perhaps Robinson's strongest argument, and "before the technique of source criticism was applied regularly to *Revelation*, that is, before 1882, this passage was used to date the book as a whole before 70 C.E."²³⁹

For it is indeed generally agreed that this passage speaks of a pre-70 situation.²⁴⁰ Many authors believe that John is re-using earlier oracles which were written before 70 A.D. in their original

Chapter Two

form.²⁴¹ Robinson rejects this solution, but deals with only part of the reason for the hypothesis.

One argument for the source theory is the Jewish thought and ideas in chapter eleven. Anderson Scott believes that especially the idea of the two witnesses betrays Jewish origin.²⁴² Beckwith argues that such an oracle understood literally could not be attributed to a Christian prophet, that nothing is known in Christian tradition of a preservation of the temple from Gentile desecration, and that events are recounted which have no parallel in Christian thought.²⁴³

Robinson, on the other hand, can see no reason why the oracle should not have been uttered by a Christian prophet.²⁴⁴ However that might be, there are many other reasons adduced, not referred to by Robinson, for considering that chapter eleven contains sources.

Anderson Scott points out that the whole passage is a parenthesis, and it introduces a new circle of ideas.²⁴⁵ Charles gives other reasons. The diction and idiom of chapter eleven differ very perceptibly from those of our author. The order of words differs decidedly from that of our author. The meaning of certain phrases in Rev 11:1-13 differs absolutely from that which they bear in the rest of the *Apocalypse*.²⁴⁶

There are thus many reasons for considering chapter eleven as a re-use of source material, and Robinson's case against the use of sources is unconvincing.

Chapter Two

Moreover *Rev 11:1-2* and *Rev 11:3-13* are from different sources. Anderson Scott points out the strange abruptness with which the third verse opens.²⁴⁷ The connection between the two sections is loose and external. The first section focuses on the temple, but the second does not mention the temple at all.²⁴⁸ And, very significantly, Jerusalem is the 'holy city' in the first section, but 'Sodom and Egypt' in the second.

The second section presents no difficulty. It does not mention the temple at all, and could easily fit a post 70 A.D. situation. Although much of Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus in 70 A.D., a legion was probably stationed there with an ancillary civilian population. And it is likely that a number of Jews and Christians returned to the city after the war, and that they did some rebuilding.²⁴⁹

It is the first section that mentions the measuring of the sanctuary and the altar, and from the context the measuring implies preservation.²⁵⁰ Granted that John is using a source and therefore restating prophecy, it is quite feasible to believe that he is giving the prophecy a new interpretation. A.Y. Collins suggests that the outer courtyard represents the earthly Jerusalem which has been given over to the Gentiles, while the temple itself refers to the heavenly temple which the Gentiles cannot control.²⁵¹

This explanation is fully consistent with John's other references to the temple in the main part of his book. In *Rev 7:15*, *Rev 11:19*, *Rev 14:15*, *Rev 15: 5,6,8*, *Rev 16:1* and in *Rev 17*, the temple refers to

Chapter Two

the temple in heaven. John's meaning of the temple in *Rev 11:1* should be considered in the light of the meaning of 'temple' in the rest of the book. John shows no interest in the historical temple in the rest of his book. Moreover in the final vision of the New Jerusalem, it is explicitly stated that there is no temple in the city. Such an idea is more likely to date from after the destruction of the temple.²⁵²

The Seven Emperors of *Rev 17,10*

Rev 17:10 gives the author's own dating. Although there are authors who deny that there is any attempt in this verse to determine an historical setting, and interpret the number of emperors in a purely symbolic way,²⁵³ similar dating procedures in the *Sibylline Oracles 5*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, and *2 Esdras* most strongly suggest that an indication of a specific emperor's reign is intended.

Milligan questions whether the seven emperors are emperors of Rome.²⁵⁴ The previous verse answers the question. "the seven heads are the seven hills." As Anderson Scott puts it - "the reference to Rome, the city of the seven hills is unmistakable",²⁵⁵ (Yet in fairness it must be added that Charles sees this part of verse 9 as added by some scribe.)²⁵⁶

Unfortunately the dating in verse ten is not as clear as we would like it to be. It depends on two questions. Are we to reckon Caesar or Augustus as the first emperor? Are any of the emperors to be omitted?

Chapter Two

Robinson claims to be taking the simplest hypothesis and to be taking *Rev* 17:10 literally when he reckons that Galba is the sixth emperor that "is here now".²⁵⁷ But there are difficulties. Robinson starts his count of emperors with Augustus, whereas Suetonius' *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, Josephus, *Sibylline Oracle* 5, 2 *Esdras*, and the *Epistle of Barnabas* all start with Julius Caesar. It could be argued that the simplest hypothesis would be to start with Julius Caesar.

A more serious difficulty, however, arises from the reference to *Nero redivivus* which Robinson agrees must be seen in the text.²⁵⁸ We have already accepted the reasoning of Charles which argues that the *Nero redivivus* myth was unlikely to be circulating before 88 A.D., and this we believe is the best cue for interpreting *Rev* 17:10. In this view the date of the book cannot be earlier than Domitian's reign.

Dependance on Events of 69 A.D.

Finally Robinson follows Edmundson in seeing the description of Babylon's plight in chapter eighteen as being influenced by the sack and the burning of Rome in 69 A.D., and the scenes at Armageddon and the Battle with Gog and Magog as inspired at least in part by the battles earlier in 69 A.D. between the armies of Vitellius and Vespasian.²⁵⁹

While points of similarity may be found, they are not so striking as to demand John's dependence on these events.

Chapter Two

Christopher Rowland's Arguments for an Early Date

In addition to reckoning that Galba is on the throne (a point that we have already dealt with), Rowland thinks that the year of the four emperors with their turmoil would be the likeliest time for Christians to have eschatological hopes of Rome's destruction.²⁶⁰ Broughton points out, however, that the sufferings of the year of the four emperors hardly affected Asia at all.²⁶¹

Rowland plays down the Domitianic persecution,²⁶² but there is more evidence for persecution in Asia under Domitian than under Nero.

Rowland sees the Jewish War as the occasion of pressure on Jews, and on Christians who at that time would be identified with Jews, to demonstrate their loyalty to the emperor.²⁶³ If, as we will try to show later,²⁶⁴ Rev 2:9 refers to Jews making accusations against Christians, it argues against this dating. The Jewish War is the least likely time for Jews, or people professing to be Jews, to be complaining about others to the Roman authorities.

Finally Rowland alleges that nowhere does John suppose that a persecution had already begun.²⁶⁵ Yet he does mention the death of Antipas,²⁶⁶ and that he himself had been exiled to Patmos "for having preached God's word and witnessed for Jesus."²⁶⁷ He also mentions the souls of the martyrs under the altar "who had been killed on account of the word of God."²⁶⁸

Chapter Two

The Use of *Matthew* and *Luke*

Charles in setting forth his argument in favour of a Domitianic date refers to our author's most probable use of *Matthew* and *Luke*.²⁶⁹ Robinson makes no reference to this argument in his chapter on *Revelation*. Since Robinson has already argued for an early date for *Matthew* and *Luke*,²⁷⁰ this argument would not upset his own hypothesis..

Nevertheless reference is made to this point as it has been used as part of the internal evidence for date. But if *Matthew* and *Luke* are early, as Robinson contends, then there is no evidence here for a late date for the *Apocalypse of John*. As long as there is serious doubt about the dates of *Matthew* and *Luke*, the argument from their use by John of Patmos is of little weight.

Moreover there is nowhere in *Revelation* a *verbatim* quotation from *Matthew* or *Luke* (though the same is true of the O.T. which is certainly used by John the seer.) So it could be that the alleged references to *Matthew* and *Luke* could come from written or oral sources (e.g. Q) used by *Matthew* and *Luke*.

Although Charles puts this argument first in his case for a Domitianic date, it does not seem to be very strong.

Chapter Two

Advanced Christology

A stronger argument can be adduced from the advanced Christology in John's *Apocalypse*. Jesus Christ is Son of God essentially, He is "the Word of God", He sits with God on His throne, the divine worship offered to Christ is described in the same terms as that offered to God, the same hymn of praise is sung in honour of both Christ and God. Many designations which belong to God alone in the O.T. are freely used of Christ, e.g. "ancient of days", "he searcheth the reins and hearts", "His are the seven eyes that are sent out into all the earth", "His garments are sprinkled with blood", and "Lord of lords". John thus appears to co-ordinate God and Christ.²⁷¹

It is generally agreed that advanced Christology appears in later books of the N.T.. This argument, however, would not appeal to Robinson, as he assigns John's gospel to an earlier date than most authors would allow.²⁷²

A Coin of Vespasian's Reign

Two recent articles may indirectly shed a little light on the subject of date.

The first is an article by Robert Beauvery²⁷³ in which he describes a coin of Vespasian's reign which he believes inspired the imagery in Rev 17. The similarity between the imagery of the coin and

Chapter Two

the imagery in chapter seventeen is described fully in our next chapter under the heading of 'pagan sources'.²⁷⁴

If John did get his imagery from a coin of Vespasian's reign, then his *Apocalypse* cannot be given a Neronian or Galban date.

24 Elders and 24 Lictors

The second article is by David E. Aune²⁷⁵ in which he gives an interesting parallel to the number of elders round God's throne in Rev 4. Domitian doubled the number of lictors who acted as body-guards to twenty-four. As John is portraying the Lamb as the antithesis of the emperor, this could explain the number of elders round the throne.

If there is any weight in this suggestion, it would tend to confirm a Domitianic date for *Revelation*, since it was not until Domitian's reign that the number was increased to twenty-four.

Conclusion

Robinson's strongest argument seems to be the non-mention of the destruction of the temple, and the prophecy of its preservation in Rev 11:1. When we consider, however, that John is using a source, that he shows no interest in the historical Jerusalem, and that elsewhere in the book the temple refers to the Christian community or to the heavenly temple, we can readily accept that John is re-interpreting an old prophecy and is in fact referring to the heavenly temple.

Chapter Two

The main arguments that lead us to accept the Domitianic date are the mention of the *Nero redivivus* myth (accepting Charles' argument that it would not have been current before 88 A.D.), the fact that persecution in Asia is probable in Domitian's reign but most improbable in Nero's, and the advanced christology that we find in *Revelation*.

We also accept the probability of A.Y. Collins' argument that the use of 'Babylon' for Rome probably arose after 70 A.D..

On balance, we believe that the internal evidence supports the external testimony, and that *Revelation* was probably written in Domitian's reign.

Part 2 Social Stress in Asia

In our first chapter we found that Christian apocalypses of the first century, like early Jewish apocalypses were written in a time of stress. We believe that *Revelation* belongs to this category of the genre, and so we look for signs of stress in the Roman province of Asia in the latter half of the first century A.D.

There is a very limited allusion to social stress in the book of *Revelation*. The poverty of Christians in Smyrna is mentioned,²⁷⁶ and there is some criticism of the rich Christians in Laodicea.²⁷⁷ Rev 6:6 speaks of famine, and we have seen that there may be an allusion here to the revocation of Domitian's edict, and hence to the corn shortage which occasioned the edict. Rev 13:17 speaks of a trade embargo, but as this is imposed for religious reasons, it is perhaps best classified as 'religious stress'. Rev 18 condemns the wealth and luxury of Rome, and those who have grown rich through her debauchery (Rev 18:3).

These hints lead us to examine social conditions in first century Asia. At first sight, Asia presents a picture free from stress. Yet there are signs here and there that the appearance of prosperity may have been a façade which concealed disruptive and enfeebling elements.²⁷⁸ Koester believes that in the cities the possibility of poverty was a social problem.²⁷⁹ The contrast between the rich and the poor became increasingly pronounced. In time of unemployment, free workers could be worse off than slaves, because slaves were at least entitled to their food.²⁸⁰

Chapter Two

Although, generally speaking, our knowledge of the Greek provinces is well illustrated by Greek literature, by thousands of inscriptions and the remains of cities,²⁸¹ specific evidence of social conditions in first century Asia is sparse.²⁸² So we have to draw inferences from events in other parts of Asia Minor, and from events in the early second century. Broughton is of the opinion that there does not appear to be a great deal of diversity between the Flavian period and the Antonine.²⁸³

Gerd Theissen has pointed out that social unrest often stems not so much from the poor as from the impoverished rich, or from groups which have become insecure.²⁸⁴ Consequently we must pay less attention to static structures than to change.

Earthquakes

One cause of socio-economic change is natural catastrophe. The catastrophe that most frequently struck Asia was earthquake. In Domitian's reign there were earthquakes in the Hellespont region;²⁸⁵ there may have been others as our records of earthquakes are probably incomplete.²⁸⁶

One of the seven cities addressed in the *Apocalypse*, Laodicea, had experienced an earthquake in 60 A.D., and according to Orosius, Hierapolis and Colossae were also affected. Tacitus records that Laodicea recovered without help from the emperor.²⁸⁷ But individuals probably lost fortunes and businesses; it would be quite natural for

Chapter Two

these people or their children to feel resentment against the *nouveau riche*. Is there an echo of this resentment in the letter to Laodicea (Rev 3:17)?

Famine and Food Shortage

Famine was another hazard, and it could sometimes lead to food riots. There was a local famine in Pisidian Antioch in Domitian's reign that promptly brought about the intervention of imperial officials with the publication of an edict. In *The Transactions of the American Philological Association*, the edict is dated between 88 and 93A.D.. The edict prohibited hoarding, and the price was limited to a single denarius for a single measure.²⁸⁸ The need for such measures shows that some were prepared to take advantage of others.

Close to the same time, at Aspendus in Pamphylia, Apollonius of Tyana had to settle food riots. When he arrived in Aspendus, he found nothing but vetch on sale in the market. This was because the rich men had shut up all the corn, and were holding it for export. The mob were going to burn the governor, and the old men were groaning and moaning as if they were on the point of dying by hunger. Fortunately Apollonius was able to get the merchants to bring the corn to the city for the people.²⁸⁹

Riots and fires at Prusa in Bithynia (perhaps c.100 A.D.) show the sort of thing that could easily occur when grain prices rose. Dio Chrysostom admits that the cost of grain has risen higher than

Chapter Two

customarily, though he pleads that it is not so high as to make the populace desperate. The populace, however, had been so enraged as to attempt to stone Dio and another, and to burn their houses with their children and their wives. Objections to Dio's building programme to which he referred in the speech after this event may have come from those who thought that the money should have been given to the needy.²⁹⁰

These examples of famine and food problems occurred outside the province of Asia. But at Sardis too we have a record of a time of need, probably in the reign of Trajan. On this occasion, one modius of grain was given to each citizen by Lucius Julius Libonianus,²⁹¹ who seems to be the same who was *strategus* under Trajan (98-117 A.D.).

Galen from Pergamum wrote in the second century of how famine for many years in many provinces brought malnutrition and disease. The city dwellers carried off wheat and other crops to the city, and left the peasants with pulse; in the spring, the peasants were reduced to eating twigs and shoots of trees and bulbs and roots of inedible plants.²⁹²

Corruption of Officials

The age-old problem of dishonest magistrates, embezzlement in office and the improper use of public funds usually adds to feelings of stress and resentment. There is a little evidence of such corruption in Asia Minor close to our period, though it was nothing like the degree of exploitation under the late republic. For instance, two proconsuls

Chapter Two

of Asia and two proconsuls of Bithynia were brought to trial in the earlier part of the first century.²⁹³

What is more significant for us is that in individual cities, imperial efforts to correct abuses led to the appointment of curators or *logistae*, and the earliest case that Broughton can find is at Sardis before 92 A.D..²⁹⁴

There was also a lax administration of the funds of the *γερουσία* of Ephesus in the time of Hadrian;²⁹⁵ while for the period a little earlier, Dio Chrysostom reveals how the rivalry of the Bithynian cities was leading to excessive display, probably preventing money being used for real needs.²⁹⁶

Civic Disorder

We have already seen in the food riots at Aspendus and at Prusa that stress sometimes led to violence and civic disorder. A few other incidents of civic disorder and cases of strife are recorded, which we will attempt to list in chronological order.

There was the famous riot caused by the silversmiths at Ephesus who feared that Paul's preaching would ruin their trade (Acts 19:23-41). This took place about 56 A.D.. It was also at Ephesus, in the time of Apollonius of Tyana, who died in the reign of Nerva (96-98 A.D.), that the Ephesians were going to stone their governor because he did not warm

Chapter Two

their baths enough.²⁹⁷ Apollonius also rebuked Sardis for civil strife.²⁹⁸

At Smyrna, Antonius Polemo was called upon to arbitrate differences between men of the upper part of the city territory and men near the shore.²⁹⁹ Dio Chrysostom refers to civic disturbances at Tarsus, when he recommended a solution to the problem was the admission of the lower classes to full citizenship, waiving the legal payments of 500 denarii.³⁰⁰ There are also two discourses of Dio Chrysostom urging an end to discord between the Apameians and the men of Prusa,³⁰¹ and a discourse on concord in Nicaea.³⁰²

There are hints that these were not the only instances of discord. There are references to disputes found in the correspondence between Pliny and Trajan (98-117 A.D.). When Trajan refused Nicomedia a fire-brigade, he said it was because such societies could be used for political purposes, and these cities especially were troubled by factions of this kind.³⁰³ Later, Hadrian had occasion to express his hope, in a letter to Pergamum, that there would be no disturbances there.³⁰⁴

In 145 A.D., as a letter from Antoninus Pius reveals, there was a lack of gratitude for the buildings of Vedius Antoninus at Ephesus.³⁰⁵ Broughton suspects that dissatisfaction of the poor with the rich governing classes lay behind this lack of gratitude, when less permanent but more popular gifts, like shows and distributions would have been appreciated.³⁰⁶ In August 146 A.D.,³⁰⁷ when Aelius Aristides was away

Chapter Two

at Pergamum, his land in Mysia was seized by a band of armed slaves and hired men. Aristides was able to appeal to the consul, and had his land restored to him.³⁰⁸ Three years later, Aristides wrote to the men of Rhodes in an attempt to settle class disputes which had arisen after the earthquake of 142 A.D.³⁰⁹

Millar³¹⁰ and Koester³¹¹ draw the conclusion that riots were commonplace in the cities. Walton thinks that a serious situation could have developed if some demagogic leader had arisen and inflamed the poor.³¹² Broughton is justifiably more cautious, pointing to the insufficiency of the evidence, and noting that the instances could have been recorded because they were exceptional. Even Broughton admits, however, the likelihood of there being an inflammable situation.³¹³

Other Possibilities

We can add that there seems to be little evidence of provision for the needs of the poor. Broughton's assessment is that "public charity was probably a small item in a municipal budget."³¹⁴

We must also remind ourselves that it need not be absolute poverty that caused anguish, but a feeling of frustration or powerlessness. It might be experienced by people who had been supplanted, or by people who had found opportunities in a new situation, and afterwards discovered that mobility was blocked.³¹⁵

Chapter Two

Our conclusion is that from the very small amount of information on social conditions, there are glimpses of injustice, stress and disturbance. The evidence, however, is hardly sufficient to describe the situation as desperate. This leads us to look rather for religious stress as the reason for the publication of the *Apocalypse*.

Chapter Two

Part 3 Religious Stress in Asia.

The religious stress depicted in the *Apocalypse* was both internal and external. The internal stress came from the Nicolaitans and from the 'synagogue of Satan'.

Nicolaitans

Whoever the Nicolaitans were, they were a source of discord and stress to the Church in Asia. They had been repudiated in Ephesus,³¹⁶ but had adherents in Pergamum,³¹⁷ while at Thyatira, the false prophetess seems to be of their number (at least her errors are those of the Nicolaitans); the majority of the church members at Thyatira are rebuked for tolerating her.³¹⁸

The Nicolaitans are condemned because they ate food offered to idols and because they committed fornication.³¹⁹ Fornication need not be literal; it can be a term used to denote faithlessness to the one true God. Even if the word is used literally, it does not necessarily follow that the accused were guilty of it in fact; many writers in the early Church were all too ready to accuse their adversaries of libertine behaviour, often because they believed that unorthodoxy in doctrine inevitably led to unorthodoxy in morals.

Here, however, fornication seems to be used in the literal sense of sexual immorality. The dissidents at Pergamum are said to "hold the teaching of Balaam"³²⁰ whose story in the O.T. is linked with sexual

Chapter Two

immorality. "Have you let all the women live? Behold these caused the people of Israel, by the counsel of Balaam to act treacherously against the Lord...kill every woman who has known man by lying with him." (*Numbers* 31:15ff.), while the false prophetess at Thyatira is called Jezebel³²¹ who is accused of fornication in the fourth book of *Kings* (4 *Kings* 9:22). Although here fornication is a metaphorical expression for idolatry, in tradition the metaphor may have been lost sight of, helped by the fact that the foreign cults with which Jezebel was associated were often united with sexual practices abominable in Jewish eyes. We also note the link between food sacrificed to idols and fornication; the same combination is found in *1 Corinthians*³²² and in the apostolic decree in the *Acts of the Apostles*.³²³

The phrase "deep things of Satan"³²⁴ may point in a Gnostic direction; it is similar to a phrase current at the time and used by the mystery cults, "the deep things of God", which seems to lay claim to a special kind of Gnosis. Harnack believes that the Nicolaitans themselves used the phrase, as he holds that the subject of "ὡς λέγουσιν" in *Rev* 2:24 can be none other than the Nicolaitans;³²⁵ the Westminster translation into English understands the phrase in the same way.

The picture of the Nicolaitans thus gleaned from *Revelation* corresponds to that of Gnostic groups with libertine teaching that are thought by some to be adversaries of Paul in *1 Corinthians* and adversaries of the writer of the *Epistle of Jude* which Kümmel believes to be contemporaneous with *Revelation*.³²⁶

Chapter Two

It would be a mistake, however, to insist on a link-up of these groups; in the first century A.D. such Gnostic and libertine ideas could spring up independently anywhere.

The Nicolaitans actively spread their teaching and it is quite likely that "the evil men...who call themselves apostles" in *Rev 2:2* in the letter to Ephesus were of their number. This gives a strong impression that they were organised into a group or sect (as indeed does the name "Nicolaitans" applied to them.³²⁷

In reaching the conclusion that the Nicolaitans were libertine in practice and teaching, we are not accusing all Gnostics of sexual misbehaviour. Though this accusation was often made in the early Church, there does not seem to be sufficient evidence to support it. Frederick Wisse, for example, can find little or no evidence of sexual misdemeanour in the Nag Hammadi Gnostic writings.³²⁸ If, therefore, the Nicolaitans were guilty of libertinism, we have no evidence that its motivation was Gnostic.

Nevertheless the combined witness of the apostolic decree (in *Acts*), of *1 Corinthians*, *Revelation*, the *Epistle of Jude* and *2 Peter* give ample grounds for believing that the first century church did have to combat groups with libertine teaching, and the Nicolaitans seem to be such a group. This could have arisen from pressure to participate in pagan rites in guilds or in citizens' meetings.

Chapter Two

The Fathers of the Church add little to *Revelation's* picture of the Nicolaitans, so much so that it is often thought that *Revelation* might be the Fathers' only source of information on this sect.

Irenaeus, however, could reasonably be expected to have some other information as he was born in Smyrna about 120 A.D.. He tells us that they claimed to be the followers of Nicholas, "one of the seven first ordained to the diaconate by the apostles", that they formed a branch of the movement called 'Gnosis', and he regards them as forerunners of Cerinthus.³²⁹

Tertullian classes the Nicolaitans with the satanic sect of Cainites.³³⁰

Hippolytus in his *Syntagma* says that they believe in a dualism founded on the opposition between light and darkness. In *Ad Mammaeam* he adds that they did not believe in the resurrection of the flesh, because they held that resurrection had already taken place in faith and baptism.³³¹

Clement of Alexandria calls them "lascivious goats" and says that they lived by the maxim, 'It is proper to abuse the flesh'.³³²

We need not rely too heavily on this patristic evidence. What one can say, however, is that the picture of the Nicolaitans that the Fathers draw is consistent with the internal evidence of *Revelation*. They may have been Gnostic; they may have been dualistic, especially if

Chapter Two

they themselves used the phrase "deep things of Satan"; what seems to have made them odious to John of Patmos was their active propaganda of libertine ideas. To the early church in a pagan environment, this would be a serious threat from within.

Synagogue of Satan

Another threat came from those who profess to be Jews, but are called in *Revelation* members of the synagogue of Satan. In the letter to Smyrna, they are accused of making slanderous accusations against Christians.³³³

We cannot be certain about the identity of this group. Koester and Vielhauer merge them with the Nicolaitans and see them as Jewish-Christian Gnostics.³³⁴ However, having drawn the conclusion that the Nicolaitans were libertine in their behaviour, it seems to us that the Nicolaitans were more likely to be found amongst the Gentile converts. If the Jews had their own tribes and their own guilds, as William Ramsay has suggested and does seem likely,³³⁵ they would not be under pressure to participate in pagan rites at guild or citizens' meetings.

Hanfman makes the suggestion that the members of the synagogue of Satan may be rival Christian groups without specifying which,³³⁶ and Vaughan admits the possibility of their being a Judaizing party within the professed Church.³³⁷

Chapter Two

The vast majority of English commentators, however, understand these to be Jews who denounce Christians to the Roman authorities. We know from the *Acts of the Apostles* and from the *Epistles of Paul* that the Jews often made trouble for the Christians, and would even go as far as to accuse them before the Roman authorities. They did this because the Christians gave offence to the Jews by preaching the divinity of Christ, because some Christians proclaimed a law-free gospel, and also because the success of Christian preaching often made the Jews jealous.

Often it was in Asia Minor that Jewish hostility was expressed, e.g. at Pisidian Antioch in *Acts* 13:45, at Iconium in *Acts* 14:2, and at Lystra in *Acts* 14:19. It was Jews from Asia who started the accusations that led to Paul's final arrest in Jerusalem (*Acts* 21: 27-29). It is quite conceivable that when Domitian extended the Jewish tax to all who followed the Jewish way of life, that the Jews complained to the authorities about Christians being classified as Jews. Later, in Smyrna, the Jews were to join with the pagans in demanding the death of Polycarp from the Asiarch and from the chief priest Philip.³³⁸

We may wonder at the Jews finding a hearing for such accusations after the Jewish War of 66-67 A.D.. Yet we have evidence that even in Palestine they did. There is the case of Symeon ben Clopas, Bishop of Jerusalem about 107 A.D.,³³⁹ and the Rabbi Eliezer of Lydda in the same period.³⁴⁰

Thus It seems not improbable that there were Asian Jews ready to denounce Christians in Domitian's reign, as there were before and after.

Chapter Two

Emperor-Worship

Emperor-worship is a further source of stress to the church in the *Apocalypse*. Symbolically Emperor-worship is described as worshipping the beast or its image. The problem is described as widespread in *Rev 13:8*. Those who have worshipped the beast merit the wrath of God and punishment, while the martyrs in the judgment scene of *Rev 20* are described as those "who had not worshipped the beast or its image" (*Rev 20:4*).

Emperor-worship was a threat to the church in two ways. Internally there was a threat to the church when church members were tempted to participate. There could be pressure to do so at state functions or guild meetings, while those in public office might be required to take an oath by the genius of the emperor. Externally there was a threat to life if Emperor-worship was demanded as a test of loyalty under pain of death. The *Apocalypse* implies that such was the case in *Rev 20:4* and in *Rev 13:15*.

No part of the Roman Empire worshipped the emperor as much as the province of Asia. Indeed the eastern provinces of the empire had a long tradition of showing loyalty to their leaders by according them divine honours. The Roman emperors accepted the tradition because it was a useful means of getting unified allegiance.

Emperor-worship began to take on new dimensions under Domitian. Domitian was a strong upholder of the state religion, but he was also

Chapter Two

determined to exalt himself as *dominus et deus*. There is a lot of evidence for this. The new municipalities of Salpensa and Malacca had to swear by Jupiter, Divus Augustus and the other Divi, and also by the genius of Domitian who is placed before the *dei Penates* in the list.³⁴¹ In the year 94 A.D., a soldier in Egypt takes an oath simply by *Juppiter optimus maximus* and by the *genius sacratissimi imperatoris Domitiani*.³⁴² As the Abbé Beurlier comments, "What is new is the invocation of the genius in a public oath, with the same title as Juppiter."³⁴³ In Ephesus, a colossal statue of Domitian, three times life size, dominated the façade of a temple.³⁴⁴ Juventus Celsus only escaped punishment by abasement and by addressing Domitian as a god. We know from Suetonius³⁴⁵ and from Dio Cassius³⁴⁶ that Domitian was constantly addressed in speech and writing as *dominus et deus noster*; and Philostratus also reflects the tradition because, when Apollonius is on trial, his accuser bids him look on the 'the God of all mankind'.³⁴⁷

It appears to have left little trace on inscriptions. But as early as 89 A.D. Martial refers to an *edictum domini deique nostri*,³⁴⁸ and the occurrence of this type of flattery in Quintillian,³⁴⁹ and the scornful notices of the younger Pliny³⁵⁰ and Dio Chrysostom³⁵¹ leave no doubt that in the second half of his reign, Domitian was given a form of address which implied his divinity.

We have no direct evidence of Emperor-worship being made compulsory as a test of loyalty in Domitian's reign, except in the *Apocalypse* itself.³⁵² There is, however, an indirect indication in Pliny's correspondence with Trajan. When Christians were denounced to

Chapter Two

Pliny in Bithynia c.112 A.D., he ordered those who denied the charge to worship the emperor's statue, and to offer religious rites with wine and frankincense before the statue.³⁵³ Pliny, though he had never been present at the trial of Christians, readily adopted this procedure. Being a hesitant character, Pliny is unlikely to have been an innovator in this. It is much more likely that he followed a procedure already established, and as some of those denounced had renounced Christianity twenty (or twenty-five) years previously, it points to the test being applied in Domitian's reign.

Thus secular writers confirm the existence of Emperor-worship and show that it was more likely to be a serious threat in Domitian's reign than in any other of the potential settings for *Revelation*.

Chapter Two

Persecution

In addition to the internal stress, there was a persecution afflicting the church. We agree with Robinson when he says, "One thing of which we may be certain is that the *Apocalypse*, unless the product of a perfervid and psychotic imagination, was written out of an experience of the Christian suffering at the hands of the imperial authorities."³⁵⁴

It is now generally agreed that there was no general persecution of the church by Domitian, though he may have clashed with a few Christians in an indirect way. We believe that there was also a local persecution which would have been sufficient catalyst for the writing of John's *Apocalypse*. We would not expect to find much reference to this in pagan authors.

Recently Adela Collins has argued against there being any persecution.³⁵⁵ It is difficult to see how readers could take *Revelation* seriously if such were the case. Admittedly persecution is often described in macrocosmic scenes where events are enlarged and exaggerated, but without microcosmic foundation such descriptions are like a monster out of control, and they have no meaning or relevance.

Admittedly too we have to consider the whole scenario of stress, internal and external. It was the whole picture and not just one element that produced an apocalypse. Nevertheless one element is persecution, and John refers to the death of Antipas³⁵⁶ and to his own exile on Patmos.³⁵⁷

Chapter Two

Can we find other evidences of this persecution?

Pliny's evidence, already referred to, is the strongest secular evidence of persecution. Trials of Christians and apostasies twenty (or twenty-five) years before 112 A.D. point to persecution in Asia Minor in Domitian's reign.³⁵⁸

Next we consider the evidence of Dio Cassius who declares that many suffered upon charge of atheism, and were condemned either to death or confiscation or banishment.³⁵⁹ This was the climax of a chain of policies pursued by the emperor; first Domitian applied the Jewish tax strictly; then he extended it to "persons living the Jewish way of life", but finally he decided that Jewish propaganda must be stopped, and those who "followed the Jewish way of life without the justification of race were to be punished for 'atheism'". This could include Christian Gentile converts as well as proselytes to Judaism, and so there is every possibility that some of those who Dio Cassius says were condemned to death were Christians.³⁶⁰

Another recorder of persecution during Domitian's reign is the historian Eusebius. He gives four pieces of evidence for this claim.

(1) Relying on Irenaeus, he says that John of Patmos was exiled by Domitian.³⁶¹

(2) On the evidence of a certain 'Brettius' or 'Bruttius' and others unnamed, he declares that Flavia Domitilla was exiled to the island of Pontia because she was a Christian.³⁶²

Chapter Two

(3) He quotes a story from Hegesippus about the grandsons of Jude, and declares at the end of the story that Domitian then "decreed an end to the persecution of the church."

(4) Finally, in a later section, Eusebius quotes a letter that Melito of Sardis sent to Marcus Aurelius. Melito wrote, "The only emperors who were ever persuaded by malicious men to slander our teaching were Nero and Domitian, and from those arose the lie, and the unreasonable custom of falsely accusing Christians."³⁶³

It does not seem fair to dismiss the testimony of Eusebius just because it is late. Eusebius had access to a library at Caesarea, a library that is twice mentioned by Jerome,³⁶⁴ and he quotes his authorities for all the evidence of persecution that he gives.

Regarding his second piece of evidence, for a time, after Rossi's excavations in the 1860s and 1870s, it was believed that there was archaeological evidence from a catacomb cemetery to confirm that Domitilla was a Christian. This evidence, however, is no longer admissible since Styger has demonstrated that christian burials in the cemetery of Domitilla did not start until the mid-second century at the earliest.³⁶⁵

Since Dio Cassius, a century earlier than Eusebius, had recorded that Domitian executed his nephew Flavius Clemens and exiled to Pandateria the latter's wife, Flavia Domitilla, on a charge of impiety, brought because they both inclined to Judaism,³⁶⁶ Fergus Millar has concluded that the Eusebius version is merely an inaccurate attempt to

Chapter Two

absorb an item from pagan historiography into the tradition of martyrdom.³⁶⁷

This seems to be an arbitrary dismissal of the evidence of Brettius and Eusebius. 'Being inclined to Judaism' could mean adherence to Christianity in the confusion between the two faiths in the minds of first century Romans.³⁶⁸ Thus there need not be a contradiction between Brettius and Dio Cassius. What seems more significant is that Eusebius does not claim that Flavius Clemens was a Christian; if he had merely taken over Cassius Dio's account to make it Christian, one would have expected him to claim Flavius Clemens for Christianity as well as Domitilla.

Therefore we would lean towards the opinion of W.H.C. Frend when he considers that "we may, if we allow maximum weight to the testimony of the author Bruttius...believe that in Domitilla's case 'Jewish customs' meant Christianity."³⁶⁹

Millar also denigrates the story of Hegesippus on the grounds that it bears all the marks of legend.³⁷⁰ It is, however, improbable that Eusebius should insert into a defamation of Domitian's character a tale that by and large tells of Domitian's fairmindedness if it were legend rather than fact. It is almost by accident that there is a reference to the end of persecution, and the uncontrived artifice of the allusion rings true.

Chapter Two

The letter of Melito of Sardis to Marcus Aurelius comes later in the book, and is not generally denied. It seems improbable that Melito would write to an emperor in this vein without being sure of his facts.

Therefore we are inclined to accept the testimony of Eusebius that there was some persecution, albeit of a local and *ad hoc* nature, in the reign of Domitian.

We can add to these testimonies the two new municipalities, already mentioned, which had to swear an oath by the genius of Domitian,³⁷¹ and the record of a soldier taking a similar oath in 94 A.D.³⁷² We submit that enjoining an oath which is against conscience is a form of persecution, more especially if the consequences of not swearing it are severe.

Moreover *Rev* 13:17 implies a trade embargo on those who did not worship the emperor; this too is persecution.

Our conclusion is that the combined evidence of John in *Revelation*, Pliny, Dio Cassius and Eusebius, with some evidence of enforced oaths, is enough to establish that there was persecution in Domitian's reign.

Part 4 Possible Reasons for Persecution

Almost certainly persecution was of a local nature. But why on earth should there be persecution in Asia which may well have been the most prosperous and the most peaceful province of the Roman Empire?

Christians fell in between two sections of the community, the pagan and the Jewish; they did not belong to either. From the pagan section the threat probably came in the guilds and for citizens in the city tribes; a normal condition of membership of either guilds or city tribes would be attendance at pagan ritual, and there would be pressure on Christians to conform.

In Asia Minor, Jews seem to have had citizenship. This can be gathered from Acts 21:39, from the most obvious reading of Josephus in *Ant.* 12.3.2.125-26³⁷³ and from the fact that some Jews were city councillors in Sardis.³⁷⁴ It is still doubtful how this was achieved in practice; Ramsay's theory that there were special Jewish city tribes is not quite proved,³⁷⁵ but it does seem a likely hypothesis. If this were so, the Jews may well have had their own guilds too. Thus Jews could be exempted from attendance at pagan ritual.

Jewish Christians could have benefitted from these exemptions as long as they were not expelled from the Jewish tribe or guild. When Domitian extended the Jewish tax to all who followed the Jewish way of life, Jewish Christians almost certainly had to pay, if they had not already been doing so; it is quite possible that even Gentile

Chapter Two

Christians were considered by the Roman officials to be following the Jewish way of life and were therefore subject to the Jewish tax. Christians were probably glad to pay if it bought them the immunity from the obligation to attend pagan ritual. The Jews, however, were probably not happy about Christians being classified as belonging to their number, and they may have complained.³⁷⁶ This could have been the occasion of Jewish denunciations of Christians.

When Domitian changed his policy and decided that those who followed the Jewish way of life without the justification of race were to be punished for 'atheism', Gentile Christians were liable to persecution, and some of their names may already have been the subject of Jewish complaint.

It may well be asked how Asia Minor differed from the rest of the empire in these respects.

Firstly the guilds may have been more numerous and more important in Asia Minor. Ramsay considers, for example, that in Thyatira, guilds were very numerous and that it would hardly have been possible for a tradesman to maintain his business without belonging to the guild of his trade.³⁷⁷

Secondly the Jews in Asia and in the rest of Asia Minor may have been more disposed to denounce Christians to the authorities; we have already quoted several instances in an earlier section of this chapter.

Chapter Two

Thirdly Emperor-worship was more developed in Asia Minor, and so we can understand this being used as a test of orthodoxy as we read in Pliny.

A fourth factor may have played a part, though we have not seen anyone else relate this to the persecution. In the reign of Domitian, a proconsul of Asia had been executed during his term of office. He was C. Vettulenus Civica Cerialis and the date of his execution was about 88 A.D.³⁷⁸ When Agricola was offered the proconsulship of either Asia or Africa, he saw the execution of Cerialis as a warning of what might happen to him if he was not in the emperor's favour, and he declined the office.³⁷⁹

Subsequent proconsuls would be more than usually concerned lest any charge of disloyalty would be brought against them. Hence if Christians were denounced as lacking in loyalty, the most rigorous tests would be applied.

We may add to this that there is some evidence that economic reasons sometimes led to pagan animosity. In Acts 19: 23-41, we have an account of the silversmiths' riot in Ephesus. Demetrius felt that the preaching of Paul would have an adverse effect on his business; he said, "you know that from this business we have our wealth". He added that the result of Paul's preaching might be "that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may count for nothing", and he stirred up a great number of people against Paul and his companions. This happened about 56 A.D. .

Chapter Two

About the year 50 A.D., there had been a similar incident at Philippi. After Paul had cast the devil out of a girl soothsayer, "her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone" and so dragged Paul and Silas to the law courts, and the magistrates had them stripped, flogged and put in prison.³⁸⁰

People who felt that their business could be threatened took action against the Christians. It is perfectly understandable, and it is one way in which the social threat led to animosity against the church.

It is possible, as de Ste Croix suggests,³⁸¹ that the butchers of Bithynia were similarly aggrieved, as Pliny says that the victims for sacrifice had met with few purchasers for some time past, and he blames this decline on the spread of Christianity.³⁸²

One can well imagine other groups who might resent Christian preaching for similar reasons. Ephesus, for example, had a very famous brothel, the ruins of which can be seen today; even a signpost to it with a lady's head, a heart, and a foot pointing in the direction, has survived the ravages of time, and can be seen in one of the main streets. It would not be surprising if people who profited from this place resented Christian teaching, and joined in any action against Christians.

Indeed Christians could be very outspoken against the rich, as John of Patmos was in his letter to Laodicea;³⁸³ Christian writings

Chapter Two

were probably among the few places, though not the only ones, where the dissatisfaction of the poor with the rich found expression. The rich who felt that this was directed against them would resent such writing.

We do not, however, see economic threats as the paramount reason for persecution, but conclude that the problem more likely came from the Christians' refusal to worship in the guilds, and from Jewish complaint when Christians were classed as Jews or tried to avail themselves of Jewish privileges. In Asia, after the execution of Cerialis, no proconsul could afford to ignore charges of disloyalty.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOURCES OF JOHN'S APOCALYPSE

Nowhere in John's Apocalypse do we find a direct quotation from the Old Testament or from any known work. As Schmithals has observed, this lack of direct quotation is a characteristic of apocalyptic works in general. The most likely reason for this is that the apocalyptists saw themselves as inspired seers, and as such they did not want their works to appear to be derived from other texts.³⁸⁴

Despite the absence of direct quotation, there are a great number of passages in John's *Apocalypse* that are either derived from other writings or have a great deal of affinity with passages from the Old Testament, the Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament. These are listed by R.H. Charles in his *Commentary on Revelation*.³⁸⁵ The sources will be examined here, and we hope to show the kind of material that is used by John, under the following headings:-

- 1) Old Testament and Pseudepigraphical Sources.
- 2) Affinities with Qumran Documents.
- 3) New Testament Parallels.
- 4) Pagan Sources and Ideas from the Pagan World.

Chapter Three

Part 1 Old Testament and Pseudepigraphical Sources

John's use of the O.T. is extensive. Charles avers that the author of the *Apocalypse* "constantly uses Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel; also, but in a less degree, Zechariah, Joel, Amos and Hosea; and in a very minor degree Zephaniah and Habakkuk. Next to the prophetic books, he is most indebted to the Psalms, slightly to Proverbs, and still less to Canticles. He possessed the Pentateuch and makes occasional use of all its books, particularly of Exodus. Amongst others that he and his sources drew upon, are Joshua, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 2 Kings."³⁶⁶

Sometimes there is direct use of O.T. texts; in other cases ideas may have been mediated through the apocalyptic tradition; the absence of direct quotations often make it difficult to determine the immediate source. For this reason it seems best to consider Old Testament and Pseudepigraphical sources together.

Charles reckons that "the evidence that our author used the Testament of Levi, 1 Enoch and the Assumption of Moses is sufficiently strong" and "It is not improbable that he was acquainted with 2 Enoch and the Psalms of Solomon."³⁶⁷ The Pseudepigraphical book in which we find most parallels to *Revelation* is *1 Enoch*.

Most of the borrowings from the O.T. and from the Pseudepigrapha can be grouped under the headings of Vision Descriptions, Christological Texts, Denunciations of Oppressors, Cosmic Catastrophes, Depictions of

Chapter Three

the Bliss of the Redeemed, Heavenly Books, and finally Stress and Persecution Symbols. These categories sometimes overlap, as for example, when visionary material from *Daniel 7* is used for Christological purposes.

Vision Descriptions

We have already seen in Chapter One of our thesis that revelation by means of a vision is one of the chief characteristics of apocalyptic literature. It comes as no surprise, therefore, to find that John communicates his vision with terms used by the prophets to describe their visions.

The description of John's inaugural vision is indebted to both *Isaiah* and *Ezekiel*. Thus the Lord is "seated on the throne"³⁸⁸ and the temple is filled with smoke, as in *Isaiah*.³⁸⁹

The Book of *Ezekiel* is the ultimate source for the description of the four living creatures with faces like a lion, like an ox (calf in *Ezekiel*), like an eagle and like a man.³⁹⁰ Yet Charles has shown how the four living creatures in this vision resemble more the cherubim of apocalyptic tradition than they do the cherubim of *Ezekiel*:³⁹¹ in six significant ways, John's cherubim differ from *Ezekiel*'s, and assume characteristics that are found in the apocalyptic tradition.

(1) *Ezekiel*'s living creatures have four faces each;³⁹² John has four living creatures with one face each.³⁹³ John is thus closer to *1 Enoch* 40:2 where the four faces have individual names, and are later in the

Chapter Three

same passage described as four angels. It is quite clear that they have one face each.

(2) In John's *Apocalypse*, they have each six wings³⁹⁴ as in *2 Enoch* 21:1 and *2 Enoch* 19:6, while in *Ezekiel* they have each four wings.³⁹⁵

(3) In our *Apocalypse*, they stand round the throne³⁹⁶ as in *2 Enoch* 21:1 where they are "standing all around God's throne" and in *1 Enoch* 71:7 where they act as guardians of the throne, while *Ezekiel's* cherubim support God's throne.³⁹⁷

(4) The throne in *Ezekiel* is carried by the cherubim in different directions,³⁹⁸ and each of the cherubim has a wheel.³⁹⁹ Though wheels are mentioned in *Daniel* 7:9, the throne is fixed; and despite the mention of wheels in *1 Enoch* 14:17f., there is no mention of the throne moving. In *T. Lev* 5:1 and 18:6, the throne rests on the floor of the temple, and there is no mention of wheels. John is again closer to the apocalyptic tradition with a stationary throne which is set on the firmament.⁴⁰⁰

(5) The movement of *Ezekiel's* living creatures was bound to the movement of the wheels of the throne, and they could not move independently or individually. A different idea is found in *1 Enoch* 71:3 where Michael, one of the four named archangels, acts independently of the other three. This is closer to John's depiction of the living creatures, since only one of them presents the golden bowls.⁴⁰¹

(6) Finally, John's four sing a Trisagion (as in *1 Enoch* 39:12,⁴⁰² *2 Enoch* 19:6⁴⁰³ and *2 Enoch* 21:1⁴⁰⁴), whereas *Ezekiel's* cherubim are silent.

Chapter Three

Each of the features in which John differs from *Ezekiel* could have been derived from *Isaiah's* seraphim. Thus the seraphim in *Isaiah* 6 have each six wings, they stand above God and therefore do not support the throne, they sing a Trisagion, and they can move individually since one flies to *Isaiah* with a burning coal. There is nothing to suggest that they have more than one face each, and there is no mention of a moving throne.

Revelation agrees with apocalyptic tradition in merging *Ezekiel* and *Isaiah*. John might have done this independently, but with six points of resemblance, it seems more likely that John is here following the apocalyptic tradition.

In the same vision of *Revelation*, the comparison with precious stones has its parallels in apocalyptic tradition, but this kind of simile was already used in *Ezekiel* where the throne is like sapphire.⁴⁰⁵ Even the rainbow appears in *Ezek* 1:28 as an adornment of God's throne.

The idea of a door opening in heaven at the beginning of John's vision⁴⁰⁶ is an apocalyptic idea found in *1 Enoch* 14:15 in the Greek versions,⁴⁰⁷ and also in *T. Lev.* 5:1 where "the angel opened for me the gates of heaven."⁴⁰⁸

In front of God's throne in heaven "There is as it were a sea of glass" (*Rev* 4:6). A similar idea is found in *2 Enoch* 3:3 - "And they showed me a vast ocean, much bigger than the earthly ocean";⁴⁰⁹ there are also two references to water in heaven in *1 Enoch*.⁴¹⁰ This idea,

Chapter Three

found in apocalyptic literature, seems to be derived from the waters above the firmament, referred to in *Gen* 1:7 and *Ps* 148:4.

One text of *Exodus* is also used for the visionary depiction of chapter four; in *Rev* 4:5 "from the throne issue flashes of lightning, and voices and peals of thunder". This sketch comes from the vision given to Moses before he received the ten commandments in *Exodus* 19:16.

In *Rev* 1:10, the loud voice of the Son of Man is probably based on *Ez* 3:12, and its description as the voice of many waters comes from *Ez* 43:2. The phrase in *Rev* 19:11 - "I saw heaven opened, and behold" is also derived from *Ezekiel*.⁴¹¹

The *Book of Jeremiah* is used slightly for visions. The command to prophesy after the opening of the small scroll is given in terms very similar to the first commissioning of Jeremiah as prophet.⁴¹²

The visionary material derived from *Daniel* comes from two visions in *Daniel* - the judgment vision of *Daniel* 7 and the vision on the banks of the Tigris (*Dan* 10 and *Dan* 11). John has combined descriptions of the Son of Man, of the Ancient of Days, and of the angel clothed in linen to paint a picture of Christ. Thus Christ is "like a son of man";⁴¹³ "he is coming with the clouds";⁴¹⁴ "his head and his hair were white as wool"⁴¹⁵, he has "a golden girdle round his breast",⁴¹⁶ "his eyes were like a flame of fire",⁴¹⁷ "his feet" "like burnished bronze".⁴¹⁸ John's reaction to the vision is parallel to Daniel's; he

Chapter Three

"fell at his feet as though dead" until a hand touched him, and a voice said, "Fear not".⁴¹⁹

In other places, the description of *Daniel's* angel clothed in linen is retained as an angelic portrayal. Thus John's angel of punishment has "legs like pillars of fire"⁴²⁰ and he "lifted up his right hand to heaven and swore by him who lives for ever and ever."⁴²¹ And the three angels with the seven plagues are "robed in pure bright linen".⁴²²

Thus John gets images from the Old Testament to describe his vision; sometimes he follows the apocalyptic tradition in the way he uses them; he uses the ideas freely and adapts them to his own purposes.

Christological Texts

In looking at the vision material, we have already come across Christological texts that have been derived from the O.T.. John the seer builds up a very full picture of Christ, and often gets the imagery for his portrayal of Jesus from the O.T. and from the apocalyptic tradition.

Some of the texts John employs were used of the Messiah in the Old Testament, and John's use of them leaves little doubt that he sees Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah. Thus Jesus is "the Root of David"⁴²³ and "the Lion of the tribe of Judah";⁴²⁴ "in righteousness he judges"⁴²⁵ and "he will rule them with a rod of iron";⁴²⁶ he "has the key of

Chapter Three

David, who opens and no one shall shut, who shuts and no one opens";⁴²⁷ he is "the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth";⁴²⁸ the martyrs "have washed their robes ...in the blood of the Lamb",⁴²⁹ phraseology echoing Jacob's blessing of Judah, though modified by John to refer to the crucifixion.

Three phrases derived from the 'Servant Songs' in *Isaiah* were used by the prophet to describe Christ. Two refer to the lamb that is led to the slaughter;⁴³⁰ the third is "from his mouth issued a sharp two-edged sword".⁴³¹

One striking Christological phrase - "every one who pierced him"⁴³² - is derived from *Zechariah*. It is very difficult to ascertain to whom *Zechariah* is referring; it could be the Good Shepherd or the Suffering Servant or Onias III. John applies the text to Christ because of the piercing of Christ's side with a lance by one of the soldiers on calvary; the same application of *Zechariah's* text is made in the fourth gospel,⁴³³ while *Matthew*⁴³⁴ had already used another part of *Zechariah's* text in a Christological sense.⁴³⁵

Many of John's Christological texts are derived from passages that referred in the O.T. to God Himself. This is very significant and their combined use shows that John believes in the divinity of Christ. Christ is Judge just as God was in the O.T.; "he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty";⁴³⁶ he says "I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you as your works deserve",⁴³⁷ and "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense."⁴³⁸

Chapter Three

Christ also says "I am the first and the last",⁴³⁹ "I am alive for evermore",⁴⁴⁰ "I have loved you",⁴⁴¹ "Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten"⁴⁴² and "I stand at the door and knock",⁴⁴³ and these phrases are derived from O.T. passages where God Himself is speaking.

We have already referred to texts derived from *Daniel*. Amongst these is the expression "like a son of man". here we can see in John's use of the term the influence of the apocalyptic tradition. In *Daniel*⁴⁴⁴ "son of man" refers to "the saints", but it is the *First Book of Enoch*⁴⁴⁵ which first identifies *Daniel's* figure with the Messiah..

A similar affinity with apocalyptic tradition is seen in *Rev* 19:15 - "From his mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron". This verse combines the ideas of *Is* 11:4 and *Ps* 2:9, but these ideas are already combined in *Pss Sol* 17:26-27, 39,⁴⁴⁶ and applied there to the Messiah.

The phrases "Lord of lords" and "King of kings"⁴⁴⁷ are found in the *First Book of Enoch*.⁴⁴⁸ Likewise the idea of the Messiah sharing the throne of God in *Rev* 22:3 is already found in *1 Enoch* 62:2⁴⁴⁹ where the Lord of Spirits places the Elect One "on the throne of His glory".

John's use of the O.T. shows us that he sees Christ as the Messiah, probably as the Suffering Servant, and certainly as divine. His Christological expressions also owe something to the apocalyptic tradition which finds expression in *1 Enoch* and in the *Psalms of Solomon*.

Chapter Three

(3) Denunciations of Oppressors

As is customary in apocalypses, *Revelation* has denunciations of oppressors, along with threats and warnings and predictions of their doom. Once again Old Testament images furnish the pictures of forthcoming punishment.

Many enemies are to be punished; they include the sinners of Thyatira,⁴⁵⁰ those who killed the martyrs,⁴⁵¹ the enemies of the two olive trees,⁴⁵² fallen angels,⁴⁵³ beast-worshippers⁴⁵⁴ and pagans.⁴⁵⁶ Old Testament texts are drawn upon for the denunciation of all of these.⁴⁵⁶

By far the most denounced enemy, however, is Rome. Rome is referred to by the allegorical name of Babylon. Babylon, the ancient enemy, had been denounced by *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Daniel* and *Psalms* 137. It now became a pseudonym for Rome because like Rome "it was the capital of a world-empire, it was famous for its luxury and moral corruption, above all it was the powerful foe of God's people."⁴⁵⁷ Probably too, the name was adopted because Rome, like Babylon of old, had destroyed the temple.⁴⁵⁸

Already in *Daniel*, Babylon had been used metaphorically, as the whole story of Babylonian oppression in *Daniel* is an allegory; the real enemy is Antiochus Epiphanes and his empire. Babylon became a synonym for Rome in the first century A.D., and we find it used this way in

Chapter Three

2 Bar 11:1, *Sibyl* 5: 143, 159, and probably in 1 Pet 5:13.⁴⁵⁹ Thus John does not stand alone in his use of Babylon for Rome.

Having adopted this pseudonym, it is natural for John to use the oracles of doom against Babylon in *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah* and *Psalms* 137 to prophesy the downfall of Rome.

Oracles against Tyre are also employed both from *Isaiah* and from *Ezekiel*. Rome resembled Tyre in so far as both were great commercial cities with unbounded enterprise and devotion to material interests.⁴⁶⁰ But what the prophets hated most was Tyre's pride of heart which was seen as rebellion against Jahweh.⁴⁶¹ Ezekiel had charged the prince of Tyre with pride of heart and self-deification. Rome with her pride, with her enormous sphere of influence which she used to spread moral corruption, and with her emperor taking the name of god, merited the same denunciations as Tyre of old.

In *Rev* 20:8 the nations in the final onslaught of the wicked are described as "Gog and Magog". The combination of the two names is found in *Ezek* 38:2, but there it is "Gog of the land of Magog". The *LXX* and *Peshitta*, however, have "toward Gog and (+'toward', *Pesh.*) the land of Magog", a reading which prepares the way for the later view in Judaism which conceived Gog and Magog as two enemies. The two names are used twice in this way in the *Third Sibylline Oracle*, and by the second century B.C., this invasion of Palestine by the two peoples Gog and Magog was clearly expected. Gog and Magog are frequently mentioned in Rabbinic works as nations marching against God and the Messiah.⁴⁶²

Chapter Three

We may conclude that John's use of the phrase "Gog and Magog" is derived from its usage in the apocalyptic tradition, rather than directly from the *Book of Ezekiel*.

In Rev 9:20, God's enemies are denounced for worshipping devils and idols in terms that have remarkable similarity to a denunciation in *1 Enoch* 99:7;⁴⁶³ in both texts enemies are accused of worshipping demons and idols of gold and silver and wood.⁴⁶⁴

In both John's *Apocalypse* and the apocalyptic tradition generally, the punishment for the wicked is to be fire, e.g. Rev 14:10 and *1 Enoch* 48:9.⁴⁶⁵

(4) Cosmic Catastrophes

It is a feature of apocalyptists to describe the end of the world and impending judgment as being preceded by cosmic catastrophes. John is no exception. Sometimes John utilises cosmic signs that he finds as such in the Old Testament. In other cases, he uses events of the past to describe cosmic signs at the end.

There are many examples of John's cosmic signs showing dependence on the O.T.

In Rev 6:13f., "the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit" and "the sky vanished like a scroll that is rolled up". Heavenly luminaries refusing their light is a favourite

Chapter Three

theme with apocalyptic writers, but the mention of the fig-tree in this context appears to be wholly due to *Is* 34:4, and the dependence on *Isaiah* is confirmed by the immediate juxtaposition of "the sky vanished like a scroll that is rolled up" which immediately precedes the fall of the stars in *Is* 34:4.⁴⁶⁶

The sweeping down of a third of the stars of heaven and casting them to the earth in *Rev* 12:4,⁴⁶⁷ though very similar in wording to *Rev* 6:13, refers not to the impending end, but to primeval war in heaven. This text is derived from *Daniel* 8:10.

In *Rev* 8:7 in the woe that comes with the sounding of the first trumpet, we get hail and fire raining on the earth. This is a cosmic sign warning of judgment. These words recall *Exodus* 9:24 where the hail of the seventh plague has "fire flashing continually" in its midst. In *John*, the terror is heightened by the fire and hail being "mixed with blood". This may have been the result of a personal experience of *John*, because volcanic eruptions could cause blood-red rain,⁴⁶⁸ or *John* may have added the idea of blood because of persecution in Asia Minor.

The *Book of Exodus* is also a source for the description of the last series of plagues that come from the seven bowls of God's wrath. There is an evident similarity between these plagues and some of the ten plagues in Egypt. Thus there are boils,⁴⁶⁹ waters turned into blood,⁴⁷⁰ and darkness over the beast's kingdom;⁴⁷¹ great hailstones are part of the seventh plague,⁴⁷² and in the sixth where the Euphrates

Chapter Three

is dried up⁴⁷³ (reminiscent of the Red Sea) there are three unclean spirits like "frogs".⁴⁷⁴

The locust plague also finds a place in the *Apocalypse*, but in a different series; it is announced as part of the woe revealed on the sounding of the fifth trumpet;⁴⁷⁵ the locusts are then described with many of the characteristics of the locusts in the prophet *Joel*.⁴⁷⁶ As in *Joel*, the locust plague is associated with the darkening of the sun.⁴⁷⁷ Although the darkening of the sun is a common apocalyptic concept, the close association of the darkening of the sun with a plague of locusts may point to the prophecy of *Joel* being in the seer's mind. (A further resemblance is that this oracle of *Joel* is also introduced by the blowing of a trumpet.)⁴⁷⁸ We can see, however, how John reshuffles the material. In *Joel* the darkening of the sun and moon was added to the prophecy of the locusts to emphasise the warning of judgment. In John's *Apocalypse* the sun is darkened by the smoke from a great furnace, and out of the smoke come the locusts. The message, however, is the same.

The fire which came down from heaven to devour Gog and Magog inflicts punishment on God's enemies at the end. Such a concept of God destroying enemies by fire was very ancient in Israel's history; the closest verbal parallel to *Rev* 20:9 is found in *2 Kings* 1:10 where Elijah deals with the embassy of King Ahaziah - "The fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty" - but *Rev* 20:9 may also owe something to *Ezekiel* 38:22 where God promises to rain fire and brimstone on Gog.

Chapter Three

"Fire and sulphur" is also the punishment threatened on anyone who worships the beast or its image in Rev 14:10. It is a punishment as old as Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:24).

The apocalyptic tradition too has its influence on *Revelation's* descriptions of catastrophe. Three phrases from *Revelation* show a very close similarity to expressions in *1 Enoch*; they are - "a great mountain burning with fire" in Rev 8:8 (cf. *1 Enoch* 18:13 and 21:3), the "star fallen from heaven" in Rev 9:1 (cf. *1 Enoch* 86:1), "Death and Hades gave up the dead in them" in Rev 20:13 (cf. *1 Enoch* 51:1).

"The sun became black.....the full moon became like blood" (Rev 6,12) finds a parallel in the *Assumption of Moses* 10:5.

Akin to the cosmic catastrophes are the eschatological descriptions. Here we can mention the "great sword"⁴⁷⁹ given to the rider on the red horse, since the usage here shows a development from its use in the O.T.. In the O.T., the sword is wielded by God Himself; in the next stage, it is committed to Israel to take vengeance on their own and God's enemies (*1 Enoch* 90:19). In the third stage of development, it is given to the enemies in order that they may destroy one another with it (*1 Enoch* 88:2).⁴⁸⁰ John's usage is closer to the third stage of development than to the other two.

When John uses cosmic signs from the Old Testament and from the apocalyptic tradition, he is very faithful to their original meaning. Moreover, he multiplies cosmic signs by moulding images that have been

Chapter Three

previously used as expressions of God's warning and punishment. Notable amongst the are the plagues of Egypt, and the "fire and brimstone".

(4a) The Earthquake Motif

Amongst the cosmic catastrophes are earthquakes. This is a common sign in apocalyptic literature, and is to be expected in John, especially as earthquakes were many in Asia Minor. John has in fact five references to earthquakes.⁴⁸¹

Lars Hartman has examined the earthquake motif in a number of Jewish apocalyptic texts, and has come to the conclusion that the "use of the motif of the earthquake as a sign presaging the end.....does not reveal any direct dependence on the O.T., but rather on apocalyptic tradition, which may certainly have adopted O.T. motifs but enlarged on them fairly freely."⁴⁸² He considers O.T. earthquakes to be mainly the accompaniment of theophanies, and notes that "nowhere in the O.T. are earthquakes described as signs or wonders."⁴⁸³

Certainly John's earthquakes are always forebodings of doom, either as precursors of the end of the world or instruments of God's judgment on enemies. It would have been difficult for anyone in Asia Minor to have viewed an earthquake as a manifestation of God's power in a benevolent way.

Chapter Three

We can agree that John's use of earthquakes probably owes more to the apocalyptic tradition than it does to the O.T., but there are a few passages in *Ezekiel*, *Amos* and *Joel*⁴⁸⁴ where the earthquake is an instrument of punishment, and sometimes a sign that the end is near. The earthquake in *Joel* 2:10 immediately follows the locust plague that John draws from extensively in describing the woe of the fifth trumpet. This earthquake was probably still in mind when John puts an earthquake into the troubles of the seventh trumpet.⁴⁸⁵

(5) Depictions of the Bliss of the Redeemed

To describe the bliss of the redeemed, John draws extensively from passages in *Isaiah* and *Ezekiel* that were originally designed to illustrate the joy of the returning exiles. The scene of the saints' reward is New Jerusalem, a concept found in *Isaiah* and *Ezekiel* where it probably means the new city, especially the new temple, to be built after the exile, but it is described in lyrical terms which transcend the actual reality of the new buildings.

From *Isaiah* comes the description of the wall built of jasper,⁴⁸⁶ and the second foundation of sapphire,⁴⁸⁷ the non-necessity of sun and moon since God is the light,⁴⁸⁸ the gates continually open,⁴⁸⁹ the nations living by its light⁴⁹⁰ and bringing their treasures.⁴⁹¹

The vision of the New Jerusalem from a high mountain comes from *Ezekiel*,⁴⁹² as does God's dwelling with men,⁴⁹³ the city lying foursquare,⁴⁹⁴ and the names of the twelve tribes on the twelve

Chapter Three

gates.⁴⁹⁵ The river of the water of life issuing from the throne of God, and going through the middle of the city is derived from *Ezekiel's* river issuing from below the threshold of the temple.⁴⁹⁶ The tree of life on either side of the river is a modification of all kinds of trees for food "on both sides of the river". John's trees bear twelve crops of fruit in a year, just as *Ezekiel's* bear fresh fruit every month. In both the leaves are for healing.⁴⁹⁷

"There shall no more be anything accursed" is a detail from the picture of the glory of New Jerusalem from *Zechariah*,⁴⁹⁸ and the blessed beholding the face of God is from *Psalms* 17.⁴⁹⁹

Other elements of John's description of New Jerusalem come from *Isaiah's* more general picture of restoration after exile, which often transcends the actual reality of that return. Thus "the former things have passed away.....Behold I make all things new"⁵⁰⁰ is an echo of *Isaiah* 43:18-19. "To the thirsty I will give from the fountain of the water of life without payment"⁵⁰¹ is based on *Isaiah* 55:1. "Nothing unclean shall enter it"⁵⁰² reflects *Isaiah* 52:1 in a hymn of redemption referring to redemption from exile. "Neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more"⁵⁰³ is parallel to *Isaiah* 35:10. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat"⁵⁰⁴ is borrowed from *Isaiah* 49:10 where almost the same words are part of a picture of emancipation and return of the exiles. *Revelation's* final message from Christ - "Behold I am coming soon, bringing my recompense"⁵⁰⁵ is very close to "Behold the

Chapter Three

Lord God comes with might.....behold his reward is with him" (*Is* 40:10).

We have already noted that *Isaiah* often transcends the reality of the exiles' return. Sometimes John's borrowings are from Isaian passages describing a consummation beyond history as we know it. "And the Lord will wipe away tears from all faces" (*Is* 25:8)⁵⁰⁶ is from a hymn depicting the rule of God after the manner of a coronation banquet at the end of history. "A new heaven and a new earth" in *Rev* 21:1 is reminiscent of *Isaiah* 45:17 - "I create new heavens and a new earth", another instance where the prophet seems to be predicting a consummation beyond history.

Added to John's description of bliss in the New Jerusalem, we have many hymns and praises of the saints. For these passages, John is indebted to the *Psalms*. This is the distinctive (though not exclusive) way in which John draws from the *Psalms*. One example might suffice. "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great" (*Rev* 19:5) can be compared with *Psalms* 135 - "Praise the name of the Lord, give praise, O servants of the Lord" (verse 1) and "You that fear the Lord, bless the Lord" (verse 20).⁵⁰⁷

Several aspects of the description of bliss have parallels in the *Pseudepigrapha*. Thus the promise of feeding from the tree of life (*Rev* 2:7) and the promise of being given a new name (*Rev* 2:17) have their counterparts in *T. Lev* 18:11 and *T. Lev* 8:14 respectively.

Chapter Three

Much stronger signs of dependence on the apocalyptic tradition as it appears in the *Pseudepigrapha* can be seen in the description of the fifth seal.

We may first note the presence of an altar in heaven. This was a current belief in the 2nd century B.C., and it is implied in *T. Lev* 3:6 where the archangels offer propitiatory sacrifices. Charles suggests that since in *Ex* 25:9,40 and in *Num* 8:4 the earthly altar and tabernacle were to be modelled on heavenly patterns, the belief may be of much earlier origin. These models, however, were just plans shown to Moses without suggestion of an already existing counterpart in heaven.

The idea of the souls of the righteous being under the altar in heaven is also found in Judaism. Though the authorities for the tradition are late, they probably represent a Jewish tradition anterior to Christianity, since it is very unlikely that the Jews borrowed this idea from early Christian sources.

That a sacrificial death of the martyrs is implied in our text is clear from the words *Θυσιαστηρίου ἔσφαγμένων*. This belief that the martyrs were a sacrifice was already current in pre-Christian Judaism as can be seen from the prayer of Eleazar in *4 Macc* 6:29 and from *4 Macc* 17:21. *1 Enoch* 47:4 comes near to expressing the same idea.⁵⁰⁸

The impatient request of the martyrs for vengeance⁵⁰⁹ is found in Judaism; an example of it is the suing of the spirit of Abel in

Chapter Three

1 *Enoch* 22:7. The answer that judgment will come when the number of martyrs is complete is found in 4 *Ezra* 4:36. In 1 *Enoch* 2:4 also, the prayers of the righteous will cease and their hearts will be filled with joy when the number of the righteous is complete.

Each of the martyrs was given a "white robe",^{s10} The idea of garments of glory which owes something to *Psalms* 104, is found in 1 *Enoch* 62:16 and in 2 *Enoch* 22:8.

Thus the description of the vision revealed by the breaking of the fifth seal owes much to the apocalyptic tradition as it is expressed in the Pseudepigrapha.

(6) Heavenly Books

There are three types of heavenly books in apocalyptic literature. They are clearly differentiated by Charles^{s11} as:-

- (1) Books of the living which are rosters of the elect kept in heaven.
- (2) Books of remembrance of good and evil deeds which can also be called books of judgment.
- (3) The heavenly tablets (more descriptively designated 'books of destiny' by A.Y. Collins).^{s12}

The idea of a book of the living originated in the O.T., and is found in *Exodus* 32:32 and in *Psalms* 69:28. Originally confined to a sharing in temporal blessings, the idea is elevated in *Daniel* 12:1 to mean a roster of the elect in heaven.^{s13} John the seer adopts this

Chapter Three

latter idea, and he calls the roster "the book of life". The phrase "book of life" is not used in any of the canonical books of the O.T., but is found in *1 Enoch* 108:3, in the *Book of Jubilees* 30:32 and in *Philippians* 4:3. Since there are many other parallels in *Revelation* to *1 Enoch*, it seems probable that John derives the phrase "book of life" from *1 Enoch*.

The second type of book is present in *Rev* 20:12 where "the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done". Books of judgment in which good and bad deeds of men are recorded are frequently mentioned in apocalypses, and there are several references to them in *1 Enoch*.⁵¹⁴ The closest verbal parallel in *Revelation*, however, is to the *Book of Daniel* where "books were opened".

The third type presents itself in the scroll with seven seals in chapter five, and in the little scroll of chapter ten. Books of destiny which tell of future events are commonly found in the Pseudepigrapha,⁵¹⁵ but the scrolls of *Revelation's* chapters five and ten seem to show more dependence on *Ezekiel's* scroll by the fact that *Revelation's* first scroll has writing on it back and front,⁵¹⁶ while the second is taken from the *hand* of an angel, and when eaten "it was sweet as honey in my mouth".⁵¹⁷

As well as references to the "heavenly books", we frequently come across mention of a non-heavenly book *viz.* the apocalypse itself. In the *Book of Daniel*, the apocalyptic book is to be sealed and kept for a future generation to read.⁵¹⁸ This idea is also found in *1 Enoch*.⁵¹⁹

Chapter Three

John shows that he is familiar with the tradition, though he does not follow it, when he writes, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book."⁵²⁰

Although John adds his own details, in his use of the heavenly books, he adheres to their meaning as found in his Old Testament and apocalyptic sources.

(7) Stress and Persecution Symbols

We saw in our first chapter that early Jewish apocalypses and the earlier of the Christian apocalypses were written in times of stress. The stresses at the time of *Revelation* were discussed in the previous chapter, and amongst these, there was evidence of persecution. It is not surprising, therefore, to find John using symbols and phrases derived from the *Book of Daniel* which had been written in the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Thus the time during which pagans defile God's sanctuary in *Rev* 11:2 lasts forty-two months. This period is derived from *Dan* 7:25 where, however, it is described as "a time and times and half a time", and marks the duration of the desecration of the temple under Antiochus Epiphanes.

The time appears in three forms in *Revelation*:-

- (1) In *Rev* 11:2 and 13:5 as forty-two months.

Chapter Three

(2) In *Rev* 11:3 and 12:6 as 1260 days. (Akin to *Daniel* 12:11 where the number is 1290 owing to the insertion of an intercalary month.)

(3) In *Rev* 12:14 as "a time and times and half a time". This is a literal rendering of *Dan* 7:25 and 12:7.

It is evident from *Luke* 4:25, *James* 5:7, and 4 *Ezra* 5:4 that three and a half had become a symbol of disaster. This might have been derived from a literal three and a half years desecration of the temple in *Daniel*; it has also been suggested that 3½ is the splitting in half of the perfect number 7.⁵²¹

The "beast" who is Antichrist and probably "Nero redivivus"⁵²² who persecutes the two olive-trees "ascends from the bottomless pit", just as *Daniel's* "four great beasts came up out of the sea",⁵²³ and it "shall make war against them, and conquer and slay them" just as the horn of *Daniel's* fourth beast "made war with the saints and prevailed over them."⁵²⁴

Charles identifies this beast of *Rev* 11:7 with the beast of *Rev* 13:1.⁵²⁵ This beast has anatomical references to a leopard, a bear and a lion, probably derived from the first three beasts of *Daniel's* vision in chapter seven,⁵²⁶ and it even has ten horns like *Daniel's* fourth beast.⁵²⁷ It has "a mouth uttering haughty.....words" as the little horn in *Daniel* had "a mouth speaking great things".⁵²⁸ It was given power "to make war with the saints and to conquer them" (cf. *Dan* 7:21).⁵²⁹ "All that worship not the image of the beast" are to be

Chapter Three

slain, just as those who would not worship King Nebuchadnezzar's image were to be cast into a burning fiery furnace.⁵³⁰

It seems that we could identify the beast of *Rev 13* with the red dragon of *Rev 12* as it too has "seven heads and ten horns",⁵³¹ unless with Charles we see this phrase as an interpolation.⁵³² In any case, there is dependence on *Daniel* in *Rev 12:4* where the red dragon with his tail "swept down a third of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth" (cf *Dan 7:10*).⁵³³

Thus it can be seen that John gets much of his beast image from *Daniel*, and he sees a resemblance between Antiochus Epiphanes and the Roman Emperor, in their persecution, their pride, and their demand that people worship their own image.

Conclusion

John displays a thorough acquaintance with the Old Testament, but most of the borrowings are from the major prophets. The apocalyptic tradition also plays a major rôle in providing John with imagery, the largest number of similarities being with 1 *Enoch*.

Although John often uses the images in the way they are used in his sources, it is also apparent that he frequently adapts the pictorial representations to his own purposes.

Part 2

The Dead Sea Scrolls

Since the literature of the Qumran community discovered near the Dead Sea often contained apocalyptic elements, it is natural to enquire whether or not the writer of *Revelation* was familiar with these writings.

Several similarities between John's *Apocalypse* and the Dead Sea Scrolls have been noted,⁵³⁴ but most do not seem to be significant except in so far as they show a common sharing in the general apocalyptic tradition of Judaism.

The resemblance between the apostles as foundation stones (*Rev* 21:14) and the twelve laymen as a precious corner-stone (*1QS* 8:7-8) is more notable than most of the other likenesses.

It is, however, with regard to chapter 12 of the *Apocalypse* that we have remarkable counterparts in the Qumran literature.

Charles, and indeed others before him, demonstrated that chapter twelve of John's *Apocalypse* is composite, made from two main sources. These, he said, consist of *Rev* 12:1-5, 13-17 and *Rev* 12:7-10, 12.⁵³⁵ We believe that there are parallels to both sources in the Qumran literature.

Chapter Three

William H. Brownlee too has noted the parallel between Rev 12:1-6 and the third Qumran Hymn where "the man" of the Qumran hymn is born through the birth-pangs of mother Israel, and he describes this parallel as 'remarkable'.⁵³⁶

It seems possible to demonstrate the parallel still further by setting side by side the comparable verses from both texts.

Rev 12:2 - "She was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery."

1QH 3 - "like a woman in travail with her first-born child, upon whose belly pangs have come and grievous pains"⁵³⁷

Rev 12:4 - "and the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child".

1QH 3 - "For amid the throes of Death she shall bring forth a man-child, and amid the pains of Hell there shall spring from her child-bearing crucible a Marvellous Mighty Counsellor"⁵³⁸

(There is no new verbal parallelism here, but in both texts, the powers of evil oppose the birth of the child.)

Rev 12:5a - "she brought forth a male child"

1QH 3 - "she shall bring forth a man-child"⁵³⁹

Rev 12:5b - "but her child was caught up to God and his throne"

1QH 3 - "Thou hast raised me up to everlasting height.....with the congregation of the Sons of Heaven"⁵⁴⁰

Chapter Three

Rev 12:6 - "and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days."

1QH 3 - "for Thou hast redeemed my soul from the Pit, and from the Hell of Abaddon"⁵⁴¹

(The similarity here is in divine redemption from distress.)

Rev 12:15 - "The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with the flood."

1QH 3 - "The torrents of Satan shall reach to all sides of the world. In all their channels a consuming fire shall destroy every tree, green and barren, on their banks"⁵⁴²

Rev 12:16 - "but the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river which the dragon had poured from his mouth."

1QH 3 - "The land shall cry out because of the calamity fallen upon the world".⁵⁴³

(These verses both show the sympathy of the earth.)

Rev 12:17 - "Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring."

1QH 3 - "The war of the heavenly warriors shall scourge the earth"⁵⁴⁴

There are certain differences between *Revelation* and the Qumran hymn. One of the main ones is that in the Qumran hymn, evil is not given the embodiment of a beast, but remains abstract, whereas in

Chapter Three

Revelation, evil is symbolised by 'the dragon'. In both, however, we have the powers of evil opposing the birth of the child.

Another difference is that in the Qumran hymn, it is the psalmist himself who is afforded the special protection of God, whereas in *Revelation*, it is the woman's male child, but in both, the protection is described as being taken up to heaven.

In *Revelation*, the woman is given a place of safety for 1260 days, whereas in the Qumran hymn, the psalmist is redeemed from the Pit and from the Hell of Abaddon. We have already seen, however, that by John's time, 3½ years was a symbol of distress.

The warfare in *Revelation* is instigated by the dragon, but in the Qumran Hymn, it is the heavenly warriors who take the initiative. The only real parallel here is warfare, in both cases occurring near the end of the passage.

Despite these differences, however, there is a remarkable amount of similarity. In both texts we see a pregnant woman experiencing the pangs of child-birth, a male child being born, and the powers of evil opposing the birth. In both passages, someone is taken up to heaven, and God provides protection in a time of stress. In both writings, the hostile powers of evil are described with the metaphor of a river; in the *Apocalypse*, earth comes to the rescue, while in *Hymn 3*, earth cries out in sympathy; in both places, warfare spreads throughout the world.

Chapter Three

We have also come across a parallel to John's second source which lies behind Rev 12:7-10,12. It is to be found in *The War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness* in chapter seventeen.⁵⁴⁵ The parallel is not as close as our previous one. Yet the following common ideas appear in both texts in the same order. There is warfare with Michael and his angels on one side, on the other the dragon (Rev) or Prince of the Dominion of Wickedness (War), the defeat of the enemy, the hymn of victory because the enemy has been defeated, rejoicing in heaven and for all, and finally a warning that a time of trouble or trial is coming.

Our parallels are not close enough to say that John knew these Qumran documents, but we can see the affinity between them and *Revelation*, and the likelihood that they descend from a common source. Knowing the way that John can re-use and re-order the material in his sources the similarities are all the more remarkable.

There is no need for us to regard a common ancestor as John's exclusive source. There are often hints that John was aware of several ways in which his images had been used previously.

Part 3 New Testament Parallels

We have already noted that the absence of direct quotations in *Revelation* makes it difficult to determine sources. This difficulty is more acute when we try to find N.T. sources underlying the text of *Revelation*, because even when we observe remarkable similarities, we cannot be sure whether John got the ideas from a N.T. text or from the source of that text, written or oral. It seems best, therefore, to speak of New Testament parallels rather than sources.

Charles has listed many of these parallels,⁵⁴⁶ and we will consider the main ones under the same headings as we used for O.T. and Pseudepigrapha sources.

(1) Visionary Material

In *Rev* 21:10, John says that an angel "carried me away to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem". Charles notes the similarity to the devil taking Jesus unto a very high mountain in *Mt* 4:8, but we have already seen that our text from *Revelation* is akin to *Ezek* 40:2 where the resemblance is closer in so far as the transportation is the work of God, and it is effected in order to point out a city.

Chapter Three

(2) Christological Texts

Rev 1:7 says of Christ, "Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, every one who pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth will wail on account of him." Here we can see a conflation of *Zechariah* 12:10 and *Daniel* 7:13. These two O.T. texts had already been combined in *Mt* 24:30. *Matthew* had also transformed the original meaning of *Zech* 12:10 from mourning for the one pierced to mourning for themselves because of him, and this same change can be observed in *Revelation*. In both *Mt* 24:30 and *Rev* 1:7, the reference to Christ is mainly eschatological, and in both the verb ὀψεσθαι is used whereas the LXX and other versions have ἐπιβλέψονται and in both, we have the phrase πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς - unique as regards the N.T. and the LXX. These similarities led Charles to believe that *Rev* 1:7 was derived from *Mt* 24:30.

Lindars, however, believes that *Zech* 24:30 and *Dan* 7:13 were first combined in an early Christian apologetic text; the disappearance of 'only son' and 'firstborn' from the text of *Zechariah* may indicate an early use of this text since a developing Christology might have retained them. Lindars further suggests that the apologetic text was more likely used in oral tradition rather than in written, because there are hints that the two clauses of the text were sometimes used in reverse order, and Justin's false ascription of the passage to *Hosea* also points to its belonging to an oral tradition.

Chapter Three

The "Even so, Amen" of *Rev* 1:7 may have some dependence on *2 Cor* 1:20 where both words are found in the same verse.

Charles notes the likeness of *Rev* 1:18 and *2 Cor* 6:9. In both there is a paradox concerning death and life, but the verbal similarity is confined to *καὶ ἰσοῦ*, and the words apply to Christ in *Revelation*, whereas in *2 Corinthians* they apply to the ministers of God.

The phrase "(the) first-born of (from) the dead" is found in both *Rev* 1:5 and *Col* 1:18, while "the beginning of God's creation" (*Rev* 3:14) is fairly close to *Col* 1:18 and 15 - "he is the beginning" and "first-born of all creation".

There is similarity between *Rev* 13:8 - "the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world" and *1 Peter* 1:19f. - "a lamb.....He was destined before the foundation of the world". If there is dependence here, then *Rev* 7:17 could owe something to *1 Peter* 2:25, though the idea of Christ as the good shepherd is more fully developed in the Fourth Gospel to which we shall refer later.

(3) Denunciations of Oppressors

We have already seen that Babylon in *Revelation*⁵⁴⁷ is a pseudonym for Rome, and that almost certainly, we have the same usage in *1 Peter* 5:13.⁵⁴⁸

Those who did not repent after the three plagues in chapter nine are simply referred to as "the rest of mankind"⁵⁴⁹ or, literally "the

Chapter Three

rest of men". The same phrase "other men" is used scathingly by the Pharisee in *Lk 18:11* for those whom he reckons break the commandments.

(4) Cosmic Signs

The subject matter of the seals in *Rev 6* is very similar to the prediction of woes in the little apocalypse of *Matthew 24*; in both we have predictions of war, famine, persecution, earthquake, darkening of the sun, changes in the moon, and stars falling from heaven. All are common enough apocalyptic material, yet the inclusion of all in practically the same order is remarkable, and strengthens the likelihood of John being familiar with *Matthew's* gospel or with a source of *Matthew's* gospel.

(5) The Just and Bliss

A good number of *Revelation's* passages about the just and their bliss have counterparts in other parts of the N.T. As usual, it is difficult to determine whether this shows dependence on the texts in question or a common sharing in the Christian heritage.

In *Rev 1:6*, we read "and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father" which expresses the same idea as is found in *1 Peter 2:9* - "a royal priesthood". The priesthood of all the people was an idea developing in apocalyptic literature (*Isaiah 61:6*); in both *Revelation* and *1 Peter*, however, the idea of priesthood is linked to that of kingdom.

Chapter Three

There is a parity of ideas in *Rev* 21:4d,5b and *2 Cor* 5:17, though different words are used in each text. We can also see the similarity of concept in *Rev* 3:5 and *Mt* 10:32f..

Other parallels listed by Charles do not seem close enough to warrant a strong claim to dependence. Such ideas as the just being called and chosen,⁵⁵⁰ God vindicating his elect,⁵⁵¹ following Christ,⁵⁵² the blood of the prophets,⁵⁵³ bliss described as being at God's supper,⁵⁵⁴ the sealing of the saints,⁵⁵⁵ the just sharing God's throne,⁵⁵⁶ dying in Christ,⁵⁵⁷ and the crown of life⁵⁵⁸ were probably commonly used by many early Christians.

(6) Stress

We have already noted that the stress symbol "3½" is used by *Luke*⁵⁵⁹ and *James*⁵⁶⁰ who both extend the drought in Elijah's time by six months to make it fit the symbol. This shows that the "3½" symbol was probably in current use in N.T. times; John could have taken the symbol from *Daniel*⁵⁶¹ or from a N.T. source, or he may have been aware that the symbol was present in both.

People saying to the mountains "Fall on us" (*Rev* 6:16) has a close resemblance to *Lk* 23:30, though the idea is ultimately derived from *Isaiah* 2:10,19.

Some other phrases indicative of stress (*viz* "what must soon take place",⁵⁶² "the time is near",⁵⁶³ "take peace from earth",⁵⁶⁴ "who can

Chapter Three

stand")⁵⁶⁵ have their parallels in other N.T. books, but this is not enough to prove derivation. Likewise *Rev* 13:11 and *Mt* 7:15 contain the same kind of metaphors, but there is hardly any verbal similarity at all.

(7) Exhortatory Phrases

Quite a number of the N.T. parallels quoted by Charles⁵⁶⁶ could be grouped under the heading "Exhortatory Phrases"; the term is used very broadly, and, to avoid further headings, includes greetings and phrases that come in what are generally exhortatory passages. This is a heading that we did not have when examining O.T. and pseudepigraphical material. This is not really surprising because we have already seen in chapter one that ethical teaching is not too common in apocalypses which are more concerned with comforting the just, rather than warning and rebuking the sinner. John is rather unusual for an apocalyptic writer in his amount of parenetic material, and it is quite natural for him to express it with N.T. phrases.

Thus we find, "He who has an ear, let him hear" (*Rev* 2:7 - cf. *Mt* 11:15); "If you will not awake, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you". (*Rev* 3:3 - cf. *Mt* 24:42; *1 Thess* 5:4; cf. also *Rev* 16:15 & *Mt* 24:43,46.); "Let us rejoice and exult" (*Rev* 19:7 - cf. *Mt* 5:12); "Blessed are those who hear, and who keep" (*Rev* 1:3 - cf. *Lk* 11:28); "Weep not" (*Rev* 5:5 - cf. *Lk* 7:13); "Come out of her, my people" (*Rev* 18:4 - cf. *2 Cor* 6:17, though there is a greater verbal similarity to *Jeremiah* 51:45 and *Jeremiah*, like *Revelation*, speaks of Babylon.)

Chapter Three

Rev 2:20,24 suggests that John is familiar with the apostolic injunction of Acts 15:28, especially as John includes the idea of laying no further burden on the faithful.

Two greetings in *Revelation* are very reminiscent of Paul, viz Rev 1:4 - "grace to you and peace" (cf. *Rom* 1:7 and eight other Pauline epistles), and Rev 22:21. Some form of this grace is found at the close of the Pauline Epistles (e.g. *2 Thess* 3:18) and at the end of *Hebrews*.

In the exhortatory letters to the seven churches, the metaphor for missionary opportunity of a "open door" is used as in Paul (Rev 3:8 - cf. *1 Cor* 16:9 and *2 Cor* 2:12). The paradoxical juxtaposition of poverty and riches found in Rev 2:9 is very reminiscent of *2 Cor* 6:10 and *James* 2:5. The "deep things of Satan" in Rev 2,24 is the same kind of construction as "the deep things of God" in *1 Cor* 2:10.

Conclusion

Our conclusion in this section is that there is a probability that John knew either *Matthew's* Gospel or a source of *Matthew's* Gospel, and it is quite likely that he was familiar with *Luke* or a source of *Luke's* Gospel. He may have known the apostolic injunction that is quoted in Acts 15. He was possibly acquainted with some of the Pauline Epistles, especially *2 Corinthians*, and there is a possibility that he knew *1 Peter*.

B. The Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel.

Some consideration must be given to the relationship between John's *Apocalypse* and the *Fourth Gospel*. The difficulty in ascertaining what this is is well expressed by Raymond Brown when he says, "the relationship of *Revelation* to the main Johannine corpus remains puzzling".⁵⁶⁷ At the moment, we are concerned with the problem only in so far as it might reveal possible sources of John's *Apocalypse*.

There are resemblances in the two books, and three of them could be described as "striking":-

(1) In Rev 19:13 Jesus is called the "Word of God", an expression which is elsewhere in Scripture applied to Christ only in John's Gospel and in the *First Epistle of John*.⁵⁶⁸

(2) John's *Gospel* and *Revelation* are the only two N.T. books which apply "they look on him whom they have pierced" from *Zechariah* to the passion of Christ, and both *John* and *Revelation* use the non-Septuagintal $\epsilon\kappa\epsilon\upsilon\tau\eta\sigma\alpha\nu$ which is found also in Aquila and Theodotion. We have already seen, however, that another part of *Zechariah* 12 was applied to Christ in *Matthew*, and that there is a likelihood of there having been an early Christian apocalyptic text conflating *Zech* 12 and *Daniel* 7 and applied to Christ.⁵⁶⁹

(3) Only John's *Gospel* and *Revelation* contain the metaphor that the thirsty can receive living water (or "the water of life" in *Revelation*) from Christ.⁵⁷⁰ Although the image echoes *Isaiah* 55:1, it is significant that only *Revelation* and the *Fourth Gospel* use it. Both

Chapter Three

books express this idea twice, and in each book, the second reference contains the invitation to "come" and drink.

Both the *Fourth Gospel* and *Revelation* refer to Christ as "lamb".⁵⁷¹ The idea of the lamb in John's *Apocalypse* may owe a lot to the conquering lamb of Jewish apocalyptic works, but it has assumed the Christian character of the lamb of sacrifice that we find in *Acts* 8:32 and *1 Peter* 1:19. It is disputed whether the "lamb of God" in *John* 1:29,36 points to the paschal lamb or merely to the apocalyptic lamb conquering sin.⁵⁷²

Both the *Fourth Gospel* and *Revelation* refer to Christ as "shepherd"⁵⁷³ as do also *Heb* 13:20 and *1 Peter* 2:25 & 5:4.⁵⁷⁴

The question arises about the possible connection between *Revelation* and a Johannine circle or community such as is envisaged by Cullmann and Brown.

Similarities to the *Fourth Gospel* can be seen in the hostility to the Jews,⁵⁷⁵ and in a heavenly Jerusalem to replace the earthly Jerusalem and temple. Yet the stress on final eschatology in *Revelation* contrasts with the amount of realized eschatology in *John*.⁵⁷⁶

In like manner, *Revelation* and *1 John* manifest both similarities and differences. Both books express the idea of being washed in the blood of the lamb, an idea which echoes *Gen* 49:11, but, in the N.T., is found exclusively in these two books.⁵⁷⁷ These two books are also the

Chapter Three

only ones in the N.T. to use the verb $\gamma\iota\kappa\alpha\omega$ when referring to the just overcoming the wicked one.⁵⁷⁸ Apocalyptic signs of the last times appear in *1 John* as well as in *Revelation*, and both books place emphasis on final eschatology. *1 John*, however, seems wary of teachers and prophets, whereas in *Revelation* there are prophets in the community and John of Patmos is himself a prophet.

The *Apocalypse of John* has a special regard for the 'twelve apostles', but the word apostle is found neither in *John's Gospel* nor in the Johannine epistles.⁵⁷⁹

Brown concludes that *Revelation* is probably distantly related to the Johannine writings, and suggests the thesis that the recipients of *John's Apocalypse* may have been derived from a group which originally shared the tradition of the Johannine community, but left Palestine for Asia Minor at an early date and did not come under the influence of the Fourth Evangelist or his companions.⁵⁸⁰

This seems a good hypothesis, but it would be impossible to say with any certainty whether or not John the seer used the *Fourth Gospel*; it may not have appeared in the form we know it at the time of his writing, in which case it is possible that the dependence is the other way round, the final author of the Fourth Gospel drawing ideas from *Revelation*, or it may be that John the seer was familiar with an earlier Johannine document that later became a main source for the final edition of the *Fourth Gospel*.

Part 4 Pagan Sources and Ideas from the Pagan World

We have seen that John has an abundance of references and images that come from the O.T. and the Pseudepigrapha. As a Christian writer, he also shares in the Christian heritage, and uses imagery that is paralleled in other N.T. books.

It may be added that John lived in an atmosphere of Hellenistic syncretism in which ideas of different parentage frequently changed hands and crossed borders. A close study of John's *Apocalypse* reveals that our author not infrequently employed words and images either from pagan sources or from the world about him, sometimes retaining their initial sense, and at other times using them as a polemic against their original users.

Even close parallels in Jewish sources do not preclude the possibility of John being aware of similar images in Hellenistic sources, and deliberately using imagery that would be equally intelligible to Jew and Greek.

In referring to examples of non-Jewish non-Christian influence, we propose to cite them in the order in which they occur in *Revelation*.

Chapter Three

Rev 1.

In Rev 1:8 we find the self-predication of Christ - "I am the Alpha and the Omega", an expression not to be found either in the O.T. or in the Pseudepigrapha. David Aune⁵⁸¹ has pointed out that ΑΩ occurs in the *Greek Magical Papyri*, occasionally in conjunction with another divine name (PGM V 363, 367),⁵⁸² sometimes as a divine name or part of a divine name in sequences of vowel permutations (PGM IV 1182ff.,⁵⁸³ IV 992, 993,⁵⁸⁴ IV 3241),⁵⁸⁵ and once as a reduced form of ΙΑΩ (PGM VII 220)⁵⁸⁶ which is a very common name for God in the magical papyri.

ΙΑΩ is twice used in conjunction with "who exist" (PGM XIII 1020,⁵⁸⁷ 1045),⁵⁸⁸ similar to the "who is" in Rev 1:8, and once in conjunction with "Lord, ruler of all" (LXXI 3-4)⁵⁸⁹ similar to ΠΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ in Rev 1:8.

These papyri, dating mostly from about the fourth century A.D., appear to be too late to be considered as source material for *Revelation*, but Aune has pointed out that the conservative nature of the religious formulas, hymns and rituals which they contain suggests that Graeco-Egyptian magic had achieved its basic form by the first century A.D.⁵⁹⁰ If this is so, magical formulas may have suggested the Alpha and the Omega to John. Christ himself uses the words, not some human agent; this suggests that Christ cannot be controlled by human incantations, but is indeed lord of the universe.

Chapter Three

In Rev 1:18b, Christ says, "I have the keys of Death and Hades". This image may be derived from Greek beliefs about the goddess Hekate⁵⁹¹ who was conceived as holding the keys to the underworld. Hence she is described as "key-bearer" and as she "who bursts forth from the earth". She is associated with many symbols including "key", and often the context makes it clear that it is the key to the underworld. It is not only in the *Greek Magical Papyri* that we find Hekate as "key-bearer", but also in the *Orphic Hymns*, probably written during the early second century C.E. in Asia Minor, very near in time and place to the composition of the *Apocalypse*. Moreover coins of Hekate occasionally show her carrying a key.

Hekate's popularity centred in south-west Asia Minor, and it would seem that John is combating goddess worship and her magic by attributing her powers to Christ.

Rev 2

Sir William Ramsay⁵⁹² has shown the great number of local allusions in the letters to the seven churches, and how local features were a source of John's ideas. Recently Colin Hemer⁵⁹³ has developed this theme.

In the letter to Ephesus, we read, "I will come to you and *remove* your lampstand from its place" (Rev 2:5). Ramsay linked this imagery of moving with the changing sites of Ephesus; he considered that the threat was that the church might have to move to a different place, and

Chapter Three

make a fresh start.⁵⁹⁴ Perhaps Hemer's suggestion is better; the threat is not of physical but of spiritual change; the vigorous church of Ephesus, unless it repented, would be moved back under the deadening power of the pagan temple dominance of Lydian and Persian times, as the population progressively drifted back towards the Artemisium.⁵⁹⁵

"The tree of life" (Rev 2:7) was undoubtedly an O.T. concept that can be traced back to Gen 2:9 and 3:22. But Ramsay saw the possibility that this metaphor was chosen because the tree was as significant a symbol of life-giving divine power to the Asian Greeks as it was to the Jews.⁵⁹⁶ Hemer has enlarged on this by illustrating the importance of the tree in the Artemis cult. He quotes two passages that describe the foundation of the holy place as a tree shrine, and he instances the many coins of Ephesus which depicted a tree.⁵⁹⁷ F.J.A. Hort had already suggested that *παράδεισος τοῦ θεοῦ* may stand in antithesis to the *τέμενος* of the temple of Artemis. Hemer sees the interesting possibility that salvation from the tree of life in paradise may be in antithesis to the ancient right of asylum in the precincts of the temple of Artemis. Domitian increased the extent of the precincts, thus placing part of the city within the asylum; this had the effect of making part of the city a refuge for scoundrels. In contrast to this, the true Christian would find salvation in the cross of Christ set in God's paradise.⁵⁹⁸

Chapter Three

In the letter to Smyrna, two phrases may have been suggested by the history of the city, and one by the physical appearance of the city.

"Who died and came to life" is one of the self-predicates of Christ in this letter. Smyrna had in the past ceased to be a city and revived again, as is mentioned by Strabo.⁵⁹⁹ Aristides compared Smyrna with the phoenix, and he was referring not only to the rebuilding after the earthquake of 178 A.D., but also to previous refoundations of the city.⁶⁰⁰ Hemer further notes, though somewhat tenuously, that the name Smyrna was sometimes associated with myrrh, and the use of myrrh in embalming indicated a belief in a future life, and for Christians myrrh was associated with the resurrection of Jesus. Some of these considerations may have prompted the use of the resurrection expression.⁶⁰¹

The church in Smyrna is addressed with the command "Be faithful". This exhortation may have been suggested by Smyrna's long-standing reputation for fidelity to her allies, as is mentioned both by Tacitus and by Cicero.⁶⁰²

The metaphor "crown of life" would readily spring to mind when addressing a city whose emblem was a crown, associated with the crown of the goddess Smyrna, and the crown of buildings on the top of Mount Pagos. Smyrna's emblem of the crown is extolled by Aristides, and used to exhort the Smyrnaeans by Apollonius of Tyana.⁶⁰³

Chapter Three

The "ten days" of tribulation (*Rev* 2:10) are usually understood as denoting a short time of tribulation, and are sometimes thought to be derived from the "ten days" in *Dan* 1:12. However the kind of trial in *Daniel* is quite different from punishment inflicted by a persecutor, and we would agree with Hemer that the allusion to *Daniel* would seem to be too obscure for the first recipients to catch it.⁶⁰⁴

Hemer refers to three inscriptions, one from the Agora in Smyrna, which may shed light on the "ten days" of tribulation. The context of the inscriptions is gladiatorial, and the number of days is expressed in two of the inscriptions in the same syntactical form as in *Revelation*. The only real similarity, however, is that we have a specific number of days in the genitive case; in *Revelation* there is no mention of the sharpened weapons which relate the Smyrna inscription to the other two.⁶⁰⁵

Nevertheless it is interesting that on monuments commemorating benefactions of arena spectacles, the number of days is often enough mentioned. Louis Robert quotes fourteen examples,⁶⁰⁶ and the inscription from Smyrna makes a fifteenth. It does seem likely that arena events were referred to with the number of days of their duration. But whether a number of days would be enough to suggest an arena event is more open to question.

In the letter to Pergamum, the two-edged sword is possessed by Christ as the symbol of absolute authority, and power of life and death. This could well be an antithetical reference to the *jus gladii* of the

Chapter Three

proconsul, especially as the exercise of this right may have been responsible for the death of Antipas.⁶⁰⁷

In Rev 2:16 we meet for the first time the phrase "I will come to you soon". This oracular or prophetic present accompanied by the adverb "Ταχὺ" makes this phrase unique in early Christian literature. Aune has shown how this expression probably owes its origin to the language of pagan magic. The ritual impatience of magicians is well known. Many spells in the *Magical Papyri* end with permutations of "Now, now, quick, quick."⁶⁰⁸ Invocations often call on the god to come quickly. John turns the tables on magical practice, and places the promise to come quickly on the lips of the risen Jesus.⁶⁰⁹

At the end of the letter to Thyatira, those who are faithful to the end are promised the gift of "the morning star" (Rev 2:28) which considering Rev 22:16, would seem to denote Christ himself. The expression remains obscure; it may denote sovereignty, immortality or priority.⁶¹⁰

We have often noted John of Patmos' use of antithesis, particularly in regard to magic and emperor worship. It is, therefore, interesting to note that Statius compared the emperor Domitian with the morning star.⁶¹¹ Could John once more be showing that the supreme honour given to the emperor really belongs to Christ?

Chapter Three

Rev 3

In the letter to Sardis, we read, "If you will not awake, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you" (Rev 3:3). The words of warning are reminiscent of Mt 24:43 and Lk 12:39, and could be applicable to Christians of all times and all ages. But their use in a letter to Sardis seems most likely to have been suggested by the history of the city.

In the sixth century B.C., Cyrus had taken the city from Croesus because of lack of vigilance when soldiers climbed up an oblique crack in the perpendicular rock. About 320 years later, history repeated itself when Antiochus the Great captured the city from Achaeus in the same way. Thus secular history seems to have influenced the choice of imagery.⁶¹²

In the letter to Philadelphia, "never shall he go out of it" is possibly a reference to the insecurity felt by citizens after the earthquake of 17 A.D. when the majority lived as farmers outside the city, as Strabo tells us.⁶¹³

"The name of the city of my God" may be an allusion to the fact that Philadelphia had for a time changed its name to Neokaisareia.⁶¹⁴

The letter to Laodicea also reflects local circumstances. Rudwick and Green⁶¹⁵ have pointed out that the words used in *Revelation* for hot, cold, and lukewarm, ζεστός, ψυχρός and χλιαρός

Chapter Three

are more commonly applied to water than to anything else. Nearby Hierapolis has its hot springs, much prized for their healing properties. Colossae, less than ten miles away, has cold water that can refresh the weary. Laodicea had no water supply of its own, but had to pipe hot water from Denizli; though it cooled on its way, the water was still lukewarm when it reached Laodicea. By comparison with its neighbours' water, that of Laodicea was useless, neither healing the sick nor refreshing the weary. Hence the use of the adjectives to illustrate the condition of the local church.

"I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing" reflects the pride of the city which recovered after the earthquake of 60 A.D.⁶¹⁶ The "white garments" may be a deliberate contrast to the black glossy-coated sheep of the region, especially as this phrase stands in a paragraph where contrasts are being made with local allusions.⁶¹⁷ The "eye-salve" to cure blindness may have been brought to mind by local eye prescriptions which may have contained "Phrygian powder".⁶¹⁸

Aune⁶¹⁹ has shown certain parallels between Rev 3:20 and the *Magical Papyri*; in these latter there are several examples of the magician dining with a god; the verb John uses, εἰσερχεσθαι, for the coming of Christ is practically a *terminus technicus* for the entry of a summoned god in the magical papyri; the meal is always in the home of a magician. These three similarities suggest that in part the imagery of Rev 3:20 may have originated in Hellenistic magical divination.

Chapter Three

If a eucharistic conotation is included in *Rev* 3:20, and we are inclined to agree with G.B. Caird that "the mention of a supper with Christ could hardly fail to conjure up pictures of the last supper",⁶²⁰ then it is surprising that the verse speaks of an individual sharing Christ's meal. One possible explanation is that there is a deliberate supplanting of meals shared with a god such as we encounter in the *Magical Papyri* and in the 'Sarapis Invitations' found in the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* and elsewhere.⁶²¹ It is noteworthy that Christ takes the initiative in *Revelation*; this would seem to be a deliberate reversal of the magician's rôle in order to refute his claim of being able to summon a god.⁶²²

Rev 4

Aune has presented the hypothesis that several elements in the throne-room scene of *Rev* 4 are based on the ceremonial of the Roman imperial court.⁶²³ His thesis is well presented, and he cites many parallels, viz: the rôle of God as compared with that of the emperor especially when acting as judge; the four living creatures, elders and rainbow round the throne, seen as concentric circles, and compared to the round Golden House built by Nero after the fire of 64 A.D.; the presentation of golden crowns; prostrating before the throne; hymns to the emperor compared with hymns to God; the vast throngs acclaiming God compared to the *consensus omnium* legitimating imperial accession; and finally a comparison of honorific titles.

Chapter Three

The most convincing case of derivation would seem to be the presentation of the golden crowns. "The heavenly scene of the twenty-four elders throwing down their crowns before the throne has no parallel in Israelite-Jewish literature." On the other hand, "the presentation of gold crowns to a sovereign was a ceremony inherited by the Romans from the traditions of Hellenistic kingship."²⁴

Aune gives three examples of golden crowns being presented. Two are antecedent to the writing of John's *Apocalypse*. Alexander was crowned with golden crowns by envoys from Greece, themselves crowned.²⁵ Nearer home and closer to the time of the *Apocalypse*, Anthony received a golden crown at Ephesus from an embassy of Hyrcanus.²⁶

The third example is later - from the early third century. Delegations from the Italian cities bring golden crowns along with statues of their local gods to the emperor Maximinus.²⁷ Further late examples are mentioned by Sabine G. MacCormack in *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*. The column base of Arcadius with scenes depicting the joint consulship of Arcadius and Honorius (c. 402 A.D.) has a register with two groups of senators, each headed by a senator carrying a crown.²⁸ Symmachus also brought gold presents to Gratian and Valentinian I in 369 A.D., and Synesius offered a crown to Arcadius (emperor from 395 - 408 A.D.) on behalf of his home city Cyrene.²⁹

These examples seem to provide evidence of a custom which had its origins prior to the writing of *Revelation*. As there is no evidence of

Chapter Three

any such custom in Israelite-Jewish tradition, it does seem likely that John derived this idea from Graeco-Roman state ceremonies.

Another interesting parallel given by Aune⁶³⁰ has already been mentioned since it had some bearing on the date of the *Apocalypse*. It concerns the number of elders round the throne. The parallel to the twenty-four elders is that Domitian doubled the number of lictors to twenty-four. These lictors announced the approach of the emperor, and acted as body-guards. Dio Cassius mentions the new number along with Domitian's wearing the triumphal garb in the senate-house.⁶³¹ If Domitian was surrounded by twenty-four lictors in the senate-house, and John is portraying the lamb as the antithesis of the emperor, this could be the reason for making the number of elders twenty-four.

An entirely different scenario, namely that of Greek drama, is seen by Raymond Brewer as influencing the throne-room scene. This need not exclude the possibilities of the imperial court influence. John can gather and collate images from a great variety of sources.

Brewer⁶³² sees the influence of Greek drama in the position of the thrones and of the altar. The theatre in Ephesus had twelve thrones in the lowest tier of seats, and these are seen to be analogous to the thrones round the throne. The altar is not mentioned explicitly until Rev 6:9, but Brewer understands the altar to be implied by the "Lamb standing, as though it had been slain" (Rev 5:6). The lamb is envisaged as being in the position of the altar in the Greek theatre, with the throne of God in the place of the theologium or of the stage.

Chapter Three

In the Greek drama, members of the choruses were usually disguised, animal disguises being common. The appearance of the four living creatures can easily be seen as of this ilk.

Finally, it is the extensive use of choruses that convinces Brewer that the author of the *Apocalypse* was influenced by the Greek drama.

Since our author is portraying events in heaven in the mode of a drama, it would not be unlikely that his mind would sometimes turn to the place where terrestrial dramas were enacted in his own day, namely the Greek theatre.

The circle of thrones is a new concept in religious writing, though thrones in heaven had been mentioned before, and it seems quite possible that this image came from the theatre at Ephesus.

The comparison between the theatre altar and the "Lamb standing as though it had been slain" is much weaker, the four animals are sufficiently accounted for by passages from *Isaiah*, *Ezekiel*, and the Pseudepigrapha, and the singing in chorus may bear as much reference to liturgy as it does to drama.

Our personal evaluation is, therefore, that Brewer exaggerates his case, but the circle of thrones emanating from the prominent theatre at Ephesus remains an attractive possibility.

Chapter Three

Rev 12

The resemblance to pagan symbols and myths in chapter twelve is very strong, and suggests a possible use of pagan sources by John the seer.

Verse one depicts a heavenly woman "clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars".⁶³³ As A.Y. Collins has pointed out, in spite of many partial parallels in the O.T. and Pseudepigrapha, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the imagery of sun, moon and zodiac comes from the adornments of a pagan goddess. The model may have been Isis, Atargatis or Artemis (Diana).⁶³⁴

Atargatis is the least likely of the three, because she was not well-known in western Asia Minor. The description of the heavenly woman most closely resembles that of Isis who is the only one of the three associated with sun, moon and stars.⁶³⁵ Artemis, however, could be the one in mind because she was the goddess of Ephesus (closely associated with the apocalypse), and she was the twin of Apollo who seems to be the prototype of the hero in the myth which is employed in the following verses.

Goddess worship was prevalent in Asia Minor, and just as he presents God and the Lamb as antithetical to Satan and the Emperor, John seems to be consciously providing an antithesis to the goddess. At

Chapter Three

least, the description of his heavenly queen seems to be taken from the iconography of pagan goddesses.

Chapter Twelve as a whole is an adaptation of the combat myth found in different forms in nearly every major ethnic tradition. This was recognized as early as 1895 by Herman Gunkel.⁶³⁶ The chapter has been composed from two major sources, as we have already seen. Source 1 lies behind Rev 12:1-5, 13-17; source 2 lies behind Rev 12:7-10, 12.⁶³⁷

The question here is, "Did John of Patmos adopt a Jewish form of the myth, or did he have recourse to Greek forms of the myth, or did he perhaps use both Jewish and Greek forms as sources for his work?"

A.Y. Collins demonstrates that the myth had been used in a Jewish way before being adopted by John. This for two reasons. Firstly, the passage is concerned with the birth, not the death, of the Messiah who is translated into heaven immediately after birth, with the postponement of his messianic task till after the ascension. If the passage had been formulated by a Christian, we should have expected concentration on the death of Christ, with ascension following death, and the messianic work prior to the ascension. Secondly, there is difficulty in giving a Christian interpretation to the woman. In v.6 and vv.14-16, she seems to be the Church undergoing persecution, but in vv. 1-5, she gives birth to the Messiah. In a Jewish interpretation of the woman as Israel, the difficulty is not there.⁶³⁸ These are telling arguments in favour of a prior Jewish use of the myth. 1QH 3, in which we have already seen

Chapter Three

similarities to *Revelation 12* (Thesis pp. 115-117), shows traces of the combat myth, and tends to confirm that there was a Jewish use of the myth.

Chapter 12, however, as A.Y. Collins has shown, bears a remarkable resemblance to the Python-Latona-Apollo form of the combat myth.⁶³⁹ Both depict a serpentine monster attacking a pregnant woman; in both the intent is to kill the child, and the motive is the threat posed by the child; in both we have the safe delivery of the child; the eagle wings which rescue the heavenly woman are parallel to the North Wind rescuing Latona, and the aid of the earth corresponds to the protection of Poseidon, god of the sea; in both, God is the prime mover (in *Revelation* a place for the woman is prepared by God, in the myth the rescue is *Jovis iussu*). The number of resemblances is so striking as to incline us to think that the author of *Revelation 12* may have been familiar with an Hellenic form of the Python-Latona-Apollo myth,⁶⁴⁰ which he may have used in addition to a Jewish form of the combat myth.

In a later work, *The Apocalypse*, A.Y. Collins says that John expresses his vision in terms of the conflict between Pytho and Apollo in contradistinction to the claims of the emperors. Augustus had claimed that he was the new Apollo. Nero apparently alluded to the Python-Apollo myth when he claimed that he was threatened by a serpent as an infant. John was at pains to show that it is Christ and not the emperor who brings in the new golden age.⁶⁴¹

Chapter Three

Suetonius quotes a story in which Augustus is regarded as the son of Apollo,⁶⁴² and another story in which Messalina, wife of Claudius, tried to have Nero strangled out of jealousy, but the would-be assassins were frightened away by a snake which darted out from under his pillow.⁶⁴³ Suetonius did not publish his *Lives of the Caesars* till 120 A.D., and so could not be a source for John if he wrote about 96 A.D.. But for the story about Augustus, Suetonius says that he is quoting from Asclepias of Mendes;⁶⁴⁴ so it is possible that this story and the one about Nero were known in Asia. If John felt that the emperors were posing as Apollo-like figures, it would be a sufficient reason for a conscious re-use of the Python-Apollo myth.

The theses of the two works of A.Y. Collins are not necessarily mutually exclusive. John could have used a Jewish form of the myth, but to counteract the Apollo image of the emperors, might have deliberately used elements of original Python-Apollo myth. As chapter twelve has more resemblances to the Python-Apollo myth than to any Jewish form of it now extant, this seems quite possible.

Rev 13:13-15.

So far we have seen several examples where John's source may have lain in custom rather than in a written text. Such may be the case with Rev 13:13-15.

Chapter Three

Steven J. Scherrer⁶⁴⁵ has collected examples of talking statues⁶⁴⁶ and lightning-making machines.⁶⁴⁷ The latter were chiefly for use in the theatre, but the talking statues were associated with cults.

There is even a reference in Dio Cassius to artificial lightning effects associated with the Emperor Gaius. "He had a contrivance by which he gave answering peals when it thundered, and sent return flashes when it lightened."⁶⁴⁸

Scherrer suggests that talking statues and lightning-making machines may have been employed in the cult of the *princeps* in the East. Since talking statues were definitely employed in other cults, and Gaius had a lightning-making machine, it does seem possible. *Rev* 13:13-15 may therefore refer to an actual practice in the imperial cult in the Province of Asia.

Rev 16:4-7

Hans Dieter Betz has pointed out that both Jewish and Christian apocalypses can only be fully understood in the light of a broad appreciation of Hellenistic syncretism.⁶⁴⁹

The text that he chooses to illustrate this is *Rev* 16:4-7. He is not able to identify the source of this passage, but he does succeed in determining and exemplifying the genre of that source. It is a myth, traces of which are found in such diverse works as *1 Enoch*, the works of

Chapter Three

Philo, the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*, *3 Baruch*, the *Apocalypse of Paul*, and the Naassene document.

The most complete surviving form of the myth is found in an Hermetic Document, *Kore Kosmou*. The tradition might be condensed into four basic stages:-

- (1) Fighting and bloodshed amongst men.
- (2) Pollution of the elements by blood.
- (3) Complaints of the elements presented in the form of prayers.
- (4) Osiris and Isis bring salvation.⁶⁵⁰

In some forms of the tradition, punishment is interposed between (3) and (4). Thus in *1 Enoch*, the bloodshed occurs when the giants ate people and drank blood; the earth is the only element to bring an accusation; then follows the deluge; but God promises to heal and purify the earth.⁶⁵¹

In Jewish (and consequently Christian) contexts, angels might occupy the place of the four elements. In *3 Baruch*, for example, angels, instead of elements, are the suppliants.⁶⁵²

In *Revelation*, the bloodshed has been the martyrdom of the saints and prophets; the element of water is polluted as a punishment; then a judgment doxology replaces the prayer for redress, since God has already executed justice.

Chapter Three

One consequence of identifying the tradition behind *Rev* 16:4-7 is that the opinion of Charles that verses 5b-7 were originally separate from v.4 calls for revision.⁶⁵³

This study also calls for a revision of Charles' exegesis when he says, "The main point of these verses was not understood by the Johannine editor. Rightly understood they mean: God is righteous, inasmuch as He has made those who shed the blood of the prophets and saints to shed each other's blood."⁶⁵⁴ From a comparison of all the other adaptations of the myth, our passage does not mean this at all. Rather the shedding of blood has brought about the pollution of the elements; this is a just punishment, and men have to suffer the consequences.

Another fruit of these findings, however, is that the passage is not just to be seen as an operation of *ius talionis*, but it looks forward to the next stage of redemption and purification of the elements. This comes in chapter twenty-one⁶⁵⁵ where there is a new heaven and a new earth, and the water is from the well of life; the whole of creation is made new.

The lesson we are mainly concerned with at this time is that Christian and Jewish sources are often not enough to unravel the meaning of the *Apocalypse*; we must take into account other traditions in Hellenistic syncretism. The *Kore Kosmou*, for example, while almost certainly not an immediate source of *Rev* 16:4-7, helps us to a better appreciation of its meaning.

Chapter Three

Rev 17

It is generally agreed that the great prostitute with the cryptic name of Babylon the Great in chapter seventeen of John's *Apocalypse* is to be identified with Rome.

An article by Robert Beauvery in *Revue Biblique*,⁶⁵⁶ which we have already mentioned because of its bearing on the date of *Revelation*, suggests that some of the imagery of *Rev 17*, particularly of the woman sitting on the seven hills, is derived from a coin (a sesterce) of Vespasian's reign.

With the absence of a picture of the coin, it will be necessary to give a brief description, at least of the elements to which we wish to refer. On one side, there is the head of Vespasian facing right, with the inscription round it "IMP CAESAR VESPASIANUS AUG PM T PP COS III".

On the reverse side of the coin, the goddess Roma sits on the seven hills, her elbow resting on the top of the sixth hill. In front of the hills, on the line of the earth, to the left, there is a wolf. At the extreme right of the base line of the ground, there is the river Tiber, divinised and portrayed anthropomorphically, in a situation almost symmetrical to that of the wolf.

Comparing the motifs of the coin with the description in the *Apocalypse*, Beauvery observes that neither the goddess Roma of the money nor the great prostitute of the *Apocalypse* is an historical person, but

Chapter Three

both are to be identified with one and the same symbolic woman, Rome, in both cases sitting on the seven hills.

John applies the term "prostitute" to Rome in the same way as prophets of the O.T. had used the term of other towns; a town was called a prostitute if it was hostile to God and given up to worshipping other deities. If John had the coin in mind when he described the woman as sitting on the seven hills, the term "prostitute" could easily have been suggested by the wolf of the coin. "Lupa" was an equivocal term; it could mean a debauched person, and indeed in one version of the Romulus and Remus legend, "lupa" was a term used figuratively of Larentia, the mother of the twins, who was known to shepherds as a prostitute.

What seems most remarkable is that in the *Apocalypse*, the woman is described as sitting on many waters (*Rev 17:1*), sitting on a scarlet beast (*Rev 17:3*), and sitting on the seven hills (*Rev 17:9*), a curious combination of three images. Yet all three can be seen on the coin; Roma is sitting over the seven hills and over the wolf, while the Tiber is symbolised on the same level.

The beast is "full of blasphemous names" (*Rev 17:3*); perhaps it is not without significance that Vespasian's head is surrounded by titles; even with abbreviations there is no room for spaces between the letters.

Chapter Three

Two minor points might be added. The seven heads are seven hills and also seven kings; the author is writing in the reign of the sixth. On the coin, Roma rests her elbow on the summit of the sixth hill. Many commentators have reckoned that the sixth emperor was Vespasian, and it is precisely a coin of his reign that we are considering.

John also writes that the beast is itself the eighth, and the coin shows a beast among the seven hills.

The imagery of chapter seventeen and the imagery of the coin are both very varied and very complicated, and when we consider how much they have in common, it does indeed seem possible that the coin or one like it might have sparked off some of John's ideas.

Rev 20:14

Our final example of possible pagan origin was spotted by Aune.⁶⁵⁷ The motifs of "the second death" and the "the lake of fire", rare enough in themselves, are found combined only in the *Coffin Texts* and *The Book of the Dead*⁶⁵⁸ from ancient Egypt. What the link might be we cannot say; yet the combination of two unusual ideas suggests that there is one.⁶⁵⁹

Conclusion

Not all our examples of possible pagan influence are of equal weight. In many cases the connection is tenuous. We would, however, contend that John of Patmos did indeed use ideas from the pagan world, both for illumination and for antithesis, and in many ways pioneered the Christian tradition of baptizing pagan ideas.

CHAPTER 4

THE RELEVANCE OF JOHN'S APOCALYPSE

Part 1 The Relevance of the Apocalypse Genre

One can hardly discuss the relevance of John's *Apocalypse* without paying some heed to the many objections to its relevance that have been voiced over the centuries. Many of these objections stem from the use of the apocalyptic genre.

Perhaps the most conspicuous obstacle to relevance is the obsolescence of the apocalyptic form. The genre is undoubtedly archaic, and although science fiction of the more serious sort manifests some similar characteristics, apocalypses have long since ceased to be a normal form of writing.

This means that an apocalypse may need a lengthy explanation and elucidation for the uninitiated, but this does not preclude a pertinent message for today. Just as a book written in Russian could be relevant to English-speaking readers after translation, an apocalypse could be useful to many after the interpreter has done his work.

More serious objections have been raised. Perhaps it will be appropriate to start with a consideration of Martin Luther's criticisms. Luther has three objections to the *Book of Revelation*:-

- (1) It is full of visions; unlike Peter and Paul and Christ, John of Patmos does not speak in clear, plain words.
- (2) John of Patmos recommends his own work too highly.

Chapter Four

(3) "Christ is not taught or known in it."

Of these, it is the first and the third that concern relevance, but even in his treatment of the second, Luther makes a point that some have seen as confirming *Revelation's* irrelevance, namely that the work contains no truths that are not found elsewhere in the New Testament.⁶⁶⁰

Luther's first objection would seem to be an objection against the very use of the apocalyptic genre. Admittedly it is not the best medium for narrating historical facts, though *Revelation* does mention that Jesus was of Israelite birth,⁶⁶¹ that he had twelve apostles,⁶⁶² and was crucified in Jerusalem.⁶⁶³ In addition, it tells us quite a lot about the attitude of Roman authority, and in the introductory letters, gives us information about the first century church in Asia.

Granted that there are disadvantages in the genre, we will see later that there are advantages too.

The second of Luther's points that we would like to take up is that *Revelation* is said to add nothing new to the New Testament. "It is just the same as if we had it not."⁶⁶⁴

Even if this were true, we do not think that John's *Apocalypse* should thereby be deemed irrelevant. Would we say that Michelangelo's paintings are irrelevant because all his themes have been treated by someone else? Surely the manner of treatment makes all the difference, and at least the originality of John's depictions must be recognised.

Chapter Four

But our defence would go further. We have already referred to the condemnation of the injustices of a specific government, a point that concerns Christian responsibility in the world. We find no parallel to this in the rest of the New Testament.

Moreover, we will speak later of Christology in *Revelation* and hope to show that John's *Apocalypse* has a special contribution of its own.

Luther further states about the *Book of Revelation* that "Christ is not taught or known in it."⁶⁶⁵ If he means this literally, it is a very strange statement indeed. Only four of the twenty-two chapters in *Revelation* have no mention of Christ.⁶⁶⁶ The title "Lamb" is used twenty-nine times,⁶⁶⁷ and over a score of other titles are applied to Christ.⁶⁶⁸

In ten places, the redemptive sacrificial death of Christ is at least implied⁶⁶⁹ while there are three references to his resurrection⁶⁷⁰ and two to his ascension.⁶⁷¹

The title "word of God" would seem to express the apocalyptic mission of Christ, but if *Revelation* comes from the same circle as the other Johannine writings, the phrase may also be an echo of the Johannine prologue. The phrase "ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως" probably means that Christ is the one from whom creation took its beginning (as in *Jn* 1:3, *Col* 1:16 and *Heb* 1:2). When taken together these phrases show that the thought of Christ as the incarnation of the pre-existent Word is very close if not actually presupposed.⁶⁷²

Chapter Four

The triumph of Christ is celebrated,⁶⁷³ his sovereignty over the world well established so that he is "King of kings and Lord of lords".⁶⁷⁴ The lamb is frequently coupled with his Father, especially as sharing his throne,⁶⁷⁵ his victory⁶⁷⁶ and his hymns of praise.⁶⁷⁷ Titles given to God are applied to Christ.⁶⁷⁸ Worship is not denied to him.⁶⁷⁹ Christ shares in judgment,⁶⁸⁰ and his parousia is eagerly expected.⁶⁸¹

What Luther probably means is the the *Book of Revelation* is thin on the love of Christ and on his forgiveness. John Hick has said that to omit the heart of the gospel is to be sub-Christian.⁶⁸² By the heart of the gospel, he means God's utterly free and miraculously transforming love for his human creatures.⁶⁸³ It has sometimes been felt that *Revelation* omitted this heart of the gospel.

Let us hasten to reply that the love of Jesus is explicitly mentioned three times in the introductory letters,⁶⁸⁴ and is surely seen in the one standing at the door knocking waiting to come in to share a meal, side by side with the one who hears Christ's voice.⁶⁸⁵ In the visionary part of the book, we have the image of the marriage of the Lamb and of the wedding feast of the Lamb that just breathes of love.⁶⁸⁶

Forgiveness too is explicit since Jesus Christ "has freed us from our sins by his blood".⁶⁸⁷ The animals and elders sing "thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God",⁶⁸⁸ and the saints "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the

Chapter Four

Lamb."⁶⁸⁹ The frequent calls to repentance⁶⁹⁰ would be meaningless if there was no forgiveness.

Despite the numerous threats of damnation, the desire for the salvation of all finds expression. "Let him who desires take the water of life",⁶⁹¹ and the angel announcing the day of judgment is sent to announce the Good News of eternity "to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and tongue and people".⁶⁹²

If it comes to a question of the proportion of love and forgiveness motifs in the composition, we would have to admit that the proportion is small. This is because of the nature and purpose of the book; it is dealing with an *ad hoc* situation, a crisis occasioned by government policy and internal stress within the churches themselves. The need is to encourage the downhearted - hence the stress on ultimate victory - and to warn the weak against compromise - hence the stress on divine sanctions. The book does not set out to be a complete exposition of Christianity, but a revelation of what is to come. The important thing is that love and forgiveness are not denied, which would make the book sub-Christian, but in fact they are explicitly included.

Luther is by no means the only one to raise objections to the use of the genre of apocalypse. Another objection sometimes voiced is that in apocalypses generally, there is a lack of grey area between righteous and wicked behaviour. People tend to be classified as wholly bad or wholly good. In John's *Apocalypse*, however, this perspective is

Chapter Four

balanced in the seven letters where Christians are urged to repent⁶³³ and to recover first fervour.⁶³⁴

An objection is also made that apocalyptists are gloomy pessimists, harbingers of dreadful despair. This viewpoint, however, is controversial; equally as many would see apocalyptists as incurable optimists with their complete faith that God will bring victory. Their unyielding expectation of divine intervention, however, has led to the accusation of irresponsibility towards this present world in which we live. While this could be a danger arising from apocalypticism (in our opinion an abuse rather than an estimate of its true spirit), it would be difficult to convict John of Patmos on the charge of inaction or of inculcating a negative attitude.

First of all, there is his forthright condemnation of the course adopted by the Roman Empire. This was a brave act indeed, and it is not inconceivable that his exile on Patmos was the penalty for voicing similar censures.

Secondly, the churches are not merely to wait for the divine deliverance, but they are to persevere in their Christian faith, and are exhorted to more good works.

Thirdly, in the incipient theology of martyrdom in which victory will be won by sacrifice⁶³⁵, no little part of the triumph over sin will be by personal repentance, and this is firmly placed on the Christian agenda.

Chapter Four

Even if other apocalyptists tended to opt out of responsibility to the world, John of Patmos makes his *Apocalypse* a vehicle of power for Christian action, and it constantly looks forward to the conversion of all the pagans.⁶⁹⁶

One particular cause of aversion to the *Book of Revelation* is its expression of vengeance. It has been held that there is a savage delight in the destruction of enemies.

The problem of theodicy that arises from the attempt to reconcile God's omnipotent infinite goodness with an eternal hell is not confined to the *Book of Revelation*. The possibility of damnation arises from the fateful gift of free will; if man is truly free, he can reject God and his own ultimate good. It is therefore logical for the scriptures to warn against such a fate, and to show that this is where sin is leading.

Considering, however, the strength of God's will to save all mankind and the abundant graces He bestows, it would not be unreasonable to think that damnation may be rare, or even that it may never happen in practice.⁶⁹⁷ To rely on this supposition, however, without keeping the commandments would be a grave sin of presumption. Hell is portrayed in the New Testament as a logical possibility, the ultimate sanction presented boldly to warn us against going there.

One cannot condemn *Revelation* simply for preaching an eternal hell without condemning the rest of the New Testament as well; it is when

Chapter Four

and if it views this ultimate prospect for sinners with relish that it would be open to criticism. Therefore it is our task principally to defend John's *Apocalypse* against the charge of taking a savage delight in the destruction of enemies.

William Klassen defends the *Apocalypse of John* against this charge in an article in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*.⁶³⁹ He deals with four passages in which personal vengeance is considered to be present.

The first passage is *Rev* 6:9-11, especially v.10, the prayer of the martyrs under the altar, "How long, O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, dost thou delay to judge and avenge our blood upon them that dwell upon the earth?" Klassen points out that the martyrs are more concerned about the time when their vindication will take place than they are about vengeance being meted out. He urges that we should "differentiate between the wrath of God and the human desire for vengeance and see these materials rather as a genuine Christian response to a serious violation of justice." In saying this, however, he seems to leave the impression that there is some human desire for vengeance in the text.

We prefer to see this verse solely as a means of expressing a theological question. A passage from the almost contemporary *Fourth Book of Ezra*⁶⁴⁰ sheds light because it shows that questions about when the new age would come, about when the righteous dead would be rewarded, and about when final justice would be achieved were in the air at the time. *Rev* 6:10 would seem to be an expression of a contemporary

Chapter Four

theological question, - "When would judgment be given, and the just get their reward?" Whereas *4 Ezra* presupposes that final judgment and reward will be simultaneous when the number of saints has been completed, *Revelation* makes a distinction; final justice will only be given when the roll of martyrs is complete, but meantime the martyrs are granted immediate bliss. If we are right in thinking that the question in *Rev* 6:10 is asked in order to establish this answer to contemporary theological problems, we can see that the question is not written as a desire for personal vengeance.

Another 'vengeance text' is *Rev* 16:5-7. Klassen rightly observes that these verses express praise of God's integrity rather than selfish vindication. We have already seen that this text has been derived from an Osiris and Isis myth.⁷⁰⁰ Bloodshed, in this case the martyrdom of the saints, has led to the pollution of the waters which have been turned into blood. A judgment doxology replaces the prayer for redress in the original myth. The phrase, "it is what they deserve",⁷⁰¹ is not a gloating over the fate of the wicked, but an assertion of God's justice which is to be praised in the next verse.

The next passage is the great cry of rejoicing over the destruction of Babylon in *Rev* 18:20. Klassen directs attention to the lament over the city's destruction (*Rev* 18:10,16,19,22f); though there is joy in the obliteration of evil, there is sadness at the thought of Rome being destroyed. The joy is on the outcome of God's cause; He has completed His process of judgment.

Chapter Four

The text that comes closest to expressing enjoyment in the misfortune of enemies is Rev 19:3. Klassen avers that it is incorrect to say that "not a breath of sympathy is to be found here", for the very reason it is written is to warn people to avoid this fate. Klassen would seem to understate the defence because the famous prostitute is not a real person, but the symbol of Rome's corruption.

A fifth text, not mentioned by Klassen, which might cause concern is Rev 19:17f with its idea of the birds of prey having a great meal of the bodies of enemies. (Some English translations increase repugnance by translating $\Sigma \hat{\epsilon} \pi \nu \theta \nu$ as 'feast'.)⁷⁰² This text is clearly derived from *Ezekiel* 39:17. So it is not the original idea of John or indeed of another apocalypticist. Moreover, there is no idea of the just enjoying this terrible fate of the wicked which is uttered as a warning.

Although there are images of messianic warfare in John's *Apocalypse*, victory is not achieved by killing the enemy. Nor is there ever any incentive to violence. The Lamb wins his victory by his sacrificial death; the blood shed is his own. Likewise the victory of his followers comes through accepting martyrdom, and patterning one's life upon the Lamb's sacrifice.

Nowhere are saints depicted as enjoying for ever the torture of their enemies. In this respect, there is an immense difference between *Revelation* and Jewish apocalyptic writings. A few examples from the latter will show how great is the contrast. In *1 Enoch* 98:12,⁷⁰³ the wicked are threatened with being delivered into the hands of the

righteous "who shall cut off your necks, slay you, and show you no compassion." The *Apocalypse of Abraham* looks forward to the time when "they shall destroy those who destroyed them, and shall insult those who have insulted them, and of those who have defamed them they shall spit in the face, scorned by Me, while they (the righteous) shall behold Me full of joy."⁷⁰⁴ The *Book of Jubilees* anticipates the time when they "will cast out their enemies; and the just shall see it and be thankful and rejoice in joy to all eternity, and shall see judgment and curses upon all their enemies."⁷⁰⁵

John's *Apocalypse* does portray the wrath of God, but the wrath of God is real, and is not to be sentimentalized; it is central to the christian faith. The wrath of God is experienced when God allows suffering, but the final destiny of the world will be determined by the Lamb who overcame violence by his own sacrifice.

It is doubtful that John's *Apocalypse* views the wrath of God differently than do other writers of the New Testament. What is abundantly clear is that the eschatological emphasis is not upon viewing the sufferings of the wicked with delight, but on the fellowship of the Lamb and his followers.

Having considered some of the arguments brought against the relevance of John's use of the apocalyptic genre, we now turn to some of the advantages of using this form.

Chapter Four

The Insights of Myth

Apocalypses in general, and John's *Apocalypse* in particular, manifest an abundant use of myth. In saying this we do not wish to underemphasize mythological usage in the rest of the N.T.. In *Revelation*, however, the use of myth is more obvious and, we believe, more conscious.

John's *Apocalypse* not only turns the events of Christ's life into myth (a feature of all N.T. writings), but also reuses and reworks ancient myths of the pagan world. We have already spoken of John's use of the ancient combat myth between hero and monster that recurs in different forms several times throughout *Revelation*, the form of the myth in chapter twelve showing vestiges of the 'Mother Earth' myth ("the earth came to the help of the woman" - Rev 12:16), traces of the Osiris and Isis myth we have seen in chapter sixteen, and there are at least parallels to the ancient myth of the 'Golden Age' and to the myth of the redeeming rôle of the just, whose sufferings are destined to change the ontological status of the world. To this we can add the abundant use of symbolic imagery, horned beast, dragons, trumpets, lightnings, fire, hail, earthquakes, stars falling, angels calling, rocks falling and the rest that we associate much more with myths than with historical narrative or any other prosaic form of writing.

Before we assess the value of this myth input, a word on different definitions of 'myth' may not be inappropriate. Norman Perrin has

Chapter Four

summarised the descriptions of David Friedrich Strauss, Mircea Eliade and Paul Ricoeur.⁷⁰⁶

For Strauss, myth is fundamentally the narrative expression of an idea. Strauss contrasted myth and factual history. In Christianity, however, both can be present at the same time; historical events in Christ's life become a mythical paradigm for behaviour.

For Eliade, myth narrates a sacred history that took place in primordial time, and tells how through the deeds of supernatural beings a reality came into existence. This description fits the ancient myths very well, but does not do justice to the events of Christ's life which took place in historical time, and yet are used as myths.

Therefore we prefer Ricoeur's definition of myth as a narrative account of the effective origin of a symbol, which is acknowledged as representing a primary aspect of experienced reality. To put it more simply, a myth is a story that enshrines an ultimate truth that is of perennial relevance to man, and is therefore used as an effective symbol.

Our question is, "What could apocalyptic mythology accomplish that other literary forms could not?" Amos N. Wilder answers this well.⁷⁰⁷

In times of crisis and the experience of anomie on account of the crisis, the whole culture of the particular period appears hostile, and there is experienced a need to get beyond and behind the culture to

Chapter Four

something more fundamental, more basic. It is here that myth provides a precultural medium, a primitive expression of ultimate values, that is not tied to the immediate or its *dramatis personae*. The mythic form is large and flexible, allusive rather than specific, concerned with expressing absolute values.

The apocalyptists found meaning in this medium from outside the immediate cultural heritage that seemed to have betrayed them. In fact they adopted it "in terms of the Hellenistic outlook according to which man's consciousness and fate were associated with world elements and with astral and chthonic powers." By doing this, they were able to assign meaning and hope to history in terms of the wider cosmic drama.

We are indebted to Eliade for his demonstration of the function and power of myth. Myth is both a revelation of divine power and a means of participating in its effects by recalling, and as it were entering into, a determinative act of the past.⁷⁰⁸ In the case of *Revelation*, the combat myth depicts the struggle between God (or Christ) and evil. Evil is not minimized; it is depicted as a beast of immense power, but God is victorious, and victory is certain for us if we remain in Christ. The just even share in the redeeming rôle by their sufferings. The earth is at this moment polluted by evil, but Christ will redeem it, and there will be "a new heaven and a new earth". A Golden Age will come because God has decreed it and revealed it. The mythical contemplation of these ideas is not just an escape from time, but it is like a bathing in the divine that fortifies and reassures.

Chapter Four

This enables man to transcend present difficulties, and gain access to the world of spirit.

Thus apocalyptic visions are a good medium for depicting the struggle between good and evil and the ultimate victory of goodness because the mythology employed gets beyond the individual case and reveals what is ultimately at stake.

Apocalyptic mythology has also a cosmic and social dimension. By contrast, Bultmann's theology is not able to do justice to these social and cosmic aspects, because being based on existentialism, it concentrates on the individual.

It is here that Käsemann finds inadequacy in the Heideggerian existentialist interpretation; he recognises that it enables one to see the historicity of man, but its drawback is that it fails to give an adequate view of world history.⁷⁰⁹

World history cannot simply be equated with the historicity of man. Man's life is determined not only by the individuals who meet him, but by many anonymous powers, whether good or evil, that can be included in the concept of 'world'. One is thrown not only onto his neighbour, but into the entanglement of a common fate.⁷¹⁰

Mythology is able to express this cosmic dimension. Salvation and disaster have world-wide horizons. John's *Apocalypse* shows beyond

Chapter Four

doubt that the Christian message is concerned not only with the fate of individuals, but at the same time with world history.⁷¹¹

The cosmic aspect of redemption is quite explicit. The whole of creation, and not only man, is to come under God's redemptive plan, and thus there is to be "a new heaven and a new earth".⁷¹² "Behold, I make all things new."⁷¹³

Concerning mythology's insight into the invisible forces that determine human existence, the anonymous powers that Käsemann referred to, Walter Wink⁷¹⁴ has provided an interesting existentialist interpretation, a 'demythologizing' in the Bultmann sense of the word, of the 'angels' of the seven churches addressed in Rev 2 & 3. Wink describes an angel in this context as the interiority or spirituality of the congregation as a single entity. The 'angel' is thus an anonymous force which exerts a powerful influence. This conclusion is reached by considering that the 'you's' in the seven letters are almost all singular so that it is the angel who is held accountable for the state of the church, and it is the angel who is admonished to change.

Nowadays it is difficult for us to perceive a group of people as a whole; we are so used to thinking of them merely as individuals gathered together, often failing to perceive that the group itself has a spirit. Yet the inner spirit of a community has an immense influence. If change is deemed necessary, we must take time to discern the 'angel' first, because "real change must alter the spirit of the entity as a

Chapter Four

whole." This has startling pertinence for the way that we relate to corporate entities today.

The social dimension of *Revelation's* mythology is seen in the depictions of eschatological bliss (here we are anticipating the eschatology discussed in a later section of this chapter.) Although the promise of eternal reward is often expressed as the rightful inheritance of the faithful individual, the glorified saints are always depicted in groups:- a great multitude which no man could number (*Rev* 7:9), companions of the lamb (*Rev* 14:1), conquerors of the beast (*Rev* 15:2), a large multitude in heaven (*Rev* 19:1), servants who minister before him (*Rev* 22:3). Under the image of the bride (*Rev* 19:8; 21:9), all the elect are regarded as a corporate entity. The same is true in the promise to the church at Smyrna - "I will give you [singular] the crown of life."⁷¹⁵ The words are addressed to the angel who represents the church viewed as one body.

That the reward of the just is both social and individual would seem to be implied also in *Rev* 6:11. God's justice manifested when the roll is complete would seem to indicate a general judgment leading to the bliss of all the elect, but meantime each martyr given his white robe suggests a particular judgment after which the individual may immediately enter heaven.

Chapter Four

The Emotional Power of the Genre

Closely related to mythical insight, and in part bound up with it, is the emotional power of the genre. Here of course we enter the realm of the subjective. Not all are moved by apocalypses, and some are even repelled. Though some apocalyptic elements still recur in literature, the genre is not a medium of our own age. Yet in their heyday, Jewish apocalypses enjoyed considerable popularity, and were translated into Greek and into many other languages.⁷¹⁶ They were influential enough to play a part in the Jewish revolts against Rome, and it has been suggested that at the time of the Hadrianic persecutions, the Romans may have destroyed apocalyptic books, regarding them as dangerous.⁷¹⁷ These are indications that apocalypses spoke to the heart.

The apocalyptic genre does not generally seek to convince by rational argument; its wisdom is rather intuitive, presented as a divine revelation. Its mythic pictures are full of concrete images, colourful and grand, seeking to overwhelm the hearer.

Perhaps above all, it is myth's power to involve the receiver that makes apocalypses so potent. The hearers or readers are made to feel that they share in the struggle and in the victory.

Considerations such as these may have influenced John of Patmos in his choice of genre, and as wielder of emotional power, he has outstripped all other apocalyptists.

Chapter Four

J. H. Gardiner, a professor of language, has extolled the richness of the seer's imaginative power.⁷¹⁹ Gathering images from almost all parts of the O.T. and beyond, he has welded them together, without the effect of patchwork, to the expression of his own purpose.⁷¹⁹ His work is "full of words for the great forces of nature before which man is impotent".⁷²⁰ John manages to impart "the cloud of implications, associations, suggestions" that "stand for purely emotional affections of the mind, for large and deep stirrings of the soul."⁷²¹

The mixing of metaphors and sheer profusion of images often make it impossible to construct a visual picture. Here too is art concealed, as the effect is to make us aware that we are in the presence of the spiritual, something beyond our powers of imagination. Thus is avoided the presenting of a graven image, but the visions manage to transcend the limitations of human nature, and give glimpses of the other world.⁷²²

To this we may add the music of the style, and Gardiner claims that "not only in the English but also in the Greek and in the Latin, the most impressive passages of *Revelation* are dominated by the same general sounds, the long, open vowels and the liquid, singing consonants".⁷²³ (The English translation he is referring to is the A.V.).

Myth, however, is another ingredient of the emotional recipe, especially when it is used in recurring fashion. We have already seen that the ancient combat myth is presented over and over again in

Chapter Four

different forms. For Gager⁷²⁴, who sees myth as a psychological therapy, this wave-like pattern, with victory and oppression alternating, is the essence of its effectiveness, because he holds that "the therapeutic value of the myth rests on its periodic structure."⁷²⁵

As in any drama, there is an element of suspense. Sometimes it seems as if the monster is going to win, but eventually it is defeated.⁷²⁶ This is important in the answer to the crisis because persons enduring stress often get the feeling that evil is going to triumph, and they need to be reassured that despite present appearances, good will be victorious.

Once again we anticipate our next section because it is perhaps the descriptions of heaven drawn by John of Patmos have had the greatest emotional effect. By a series of mythical pictures, he enables us to dwell for some time on the glory to come. Since we know so little of the world to come, it would scarcely be possible to achieve this effect in a more prosaic form of literature.

The joys of heaven are so well depicted that the Church in every age has used the words of John's *Apocalypse* to comfort the bereaved. As A.C. Welch expresses it so beautifully,⁷²⁷

"It is to a New Testament *Apocalypse* that we owe those great grave utterances which have passed into the perennial use of the Church in the presence of death, and which have consoled more troubled hearts than any other words in literature. John bewilders his readers, as he passes from his crashing trumpets and streaming bowls to describe the red dragon

Chapter Four

which vomited a flood out of its mouth, but he has comforted the Church in all its mourning generations and has been able to turn its sorrow into triumph. The mighty music of his unforced sentences comes back to stay up the hearts of men, when they are most intimately threatened with defeat. When a man could write: 'They shall hunger no more neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes', it is idle to represent him as aloof from the needs and aspirations of men, nor can anything else he writes be readily pronounced negligible."

Future Eschatology

When it comes to speaking of life after death, we are, in the words of Paul, perhaps paraphrasing *Isaiah*,⁷²⁸ speaking of what "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard".⁷²⁹ The future is only portrayable in imaginative terms. Here the vision form of apocalypse is an excellent medium, as it makes it clear that the horizons described are not discerned by ordinary sight, and the picture drawn has the character of a supernatural revelation.

Undoubtedly John in describing heaven or life after death uses mythological language. No N.T. book proves Bultmann's case for demythologizing better than does John's *Apocalypse*.⁷³⁰

Chapter Four

The holy city, New Jerusalem, with its walls and gates, and gold and jewels, and river and trees is readily seen as a mythological picture. Mythical too is the implication that heaven is "up here",⁷³¹ that the Son of Man will come on the clouds of heaven (Rev 1:7), and the immediate expectation of Christ's parousia.

The mythological descriptions cry out for interpretation, especially in the scientific world of today. Bultmann is right to point out this need, and he has emphasized that it is a need for the *interpretation* of myth and not for its *removal* from scripture.⁷³²

Yet in his demythologizing programme, Bultmann has virtually robbed eschatology of the future dimension that lay at the heart of apocalyptic eschatology. "Last things" when demythologized by Bultmann are stripped of their temporal associations and become symbols of the transcendence of God and of the importance of that transcendence.⁷³³ Eschatological preaching enables man not only to recognise human ineptitude, but also calls man to responsibility and repentance.⁷³⁴ The imminent end preached by Jesus is the final judgment and the beginning of the time of salvation and eternal bliss.⁷³⁵ Obtaining bliss means obtaining grace and righteousness.⁷³⁶ In a certain manner, the unknown future is present in the holiness and love which characterizes the believers in the Holy Spirit.⁷³⁷

For Bultmann, the meaning of the mythological preaching of Jesus is that it is a preparation for the unknown future that God will give so that we may be open to God's future in the face of death and

Chapter Four

darkness.⁷³⁸ Thus in his application of biblical apocalyptic to the authentic existence of persons, life after death is not taken account of, and eschatology is understood as the ultimate moment of decision.

We would not wish to deny that Messianic expectations were realized in the Christ event. The Old Testament had looked forward to the future coming of the Messiah and the beginning of a new age; these were regarded as eschatological events. Now that the Messiah has come, the new age has started and a measure of eschatology has been realized. This, however, is but part of the picture.

J. Christiaan Beker⁷³⁹ has shown that the strength of Bultmann's existentialist analysis lies in its pointing to the centrality of the cross of Christ and to the need for Christians to make the existential decision of becoming cross-bearers.

The centrality of the cross, however, is made to absorb all the mysteries of Christ. 'The cross alone is our theology' is a false maxim, because in this perspective, the cross is seen as an alternative to future apocalyptic, instead of both being fitted into a wider horizon.

The cross and resurrection are not closure events, but inaugurating events. Christ is the 'first fruits', and so resurrection points to a general resurrection.

Chapter Four

Paradoxical statements of life amidst death are not alternatives to life after death. Indeed such paradoxes lose their meaning unless there is an analogy to a life consecutively following death.

Divorcing the cross from apocalyptic expectations collapses future apocalyptic into the Christ-event so that Christ is no longer the 'first fruits'.

Therefore we should not support an opposition between a theology of glory and a theology of the cross.

Bultmann appeals to both Paul⁷⁴⁰ and John⁷⁴¹ as beginning a demythologizing of eschatology in terms of the here and now. He sees the process beginning in Paul, and becoming more radical in John.

Bultmann acknowledges, however, that for both Paul and John, the present time is a 'time-between', and they both looked forward to the parousia.⁷⁴²

It is here that Bultmann asks the question, "Can the chronological sense of the 'time-between' be retained?" He answers, "No."⁷⁴³ The effect of his interpretation is that the comparison between Christ's resurrection and that of the just is weakened. For Christ was crucified in time on a specific Friday of a specific year, and yet he is risen *now* in glory. John of Patmos and Paul agree in making Christ's resurrection the paradigm of ours.⁷⁴⁴ This means that the faithful are to have an existence in glory beyond the grave.

Chapter Four

It is not sufficient to say that the expectation of the coming Kingdom of God means "standing in the crisis of decision".⁷⁴⁵ The expectation must also be of existence after death if it is truly to be likened to Christ's resurrection.

Bultmann sees the early church as going back on developments in Paul and John,⁷⁴⁶ and no doubt he would include John's *Apocalypse* in this indictment, but the truth is that with all their appreciation of realised eschatology, neither Paul nor John abandoned the idea of the dead rising again. Paul expected a *parousia*⁷⁴⁷ even though he shifted ground as to when it would happen. John speaks of resurrection at the end in *John* 6:39,40,44,54; 5:29. Bultmann regards these verses as later additions by the ecclesiastical redactors of the Gospel.⁷⁴⁸ Wendt is of the same opinion for *Jn* 5:28f.⁷⁴⁹ Such an opinion, however, is hard to substantiate. C.K. Barrett holds that "there is no reason whatever for regarding vv. [5:] 28f. as a supplement to the original Johannine discourse unless it is held incredible that John should have thought of resurrection and judgment under both present and future aspects."⁷⁵⁰ Regarding *Jn* 6: 39, 40, 44, 54, he states, "It is quite arbitrary to regard these as insertions into a discourse with which as 'futurist eschatology', they are inconsistent. There is no ground for thinking of them otherwise than as a genuine part of John's thought and they must be interpreted as such."⁷⁵¹

J.H. Bernard likewise says of *Jn* 5:28f. that these verses "cannot be torn from the text as an interpolation or later addition; they are an integral part of the argument."⁷⁵² He also regards the phrase "I

Chapter Four

will raise him up at the last day" (Jn 6: 39, 40, 44, 54) as genuine and five times refers to the importance of its repetition.⁷⁵³

We would, therefore, fully endorse the statement of Oscar Cullmann when he says that these passages cannot just be discarded.⁷⁵⁴

A salvation-historical framework, such as we find in the writings of Cullmann can do better justice to the futurity of eschatology. Cullmann retains the framework of linear time that is found in the New Testament.⁷⁵⁵ Along this line of time, there is an age in which creation is being prepared, the second age is from creation to parousia, and in the third age the first creation is replaced by the new creation.⁷⁵⁶ This enables us to see the resurrection of the dead as coming in the future in the third age of the new creation.

Time may also be divided into two with Christ as the mid-point. With this division, we can discern the difference in perspective between the Old Testament and the New. For the O.T. the mid-point was always in the future; for us, under the new dispensation, it has already occurred.⁷⁵⁷

This distinction enables Cullmann to take full account of realised eschatology, and the tension between 'already' and 'not yet'.⁷⁵⁸ The Kingdom of God has been established on earth by Jesus, but it is still to be fully realised. Likewise the decisive battle against evil has been won with Calvary and the resurrection, but the fighting still

Chapter Four

continues until the final phase. The analogy is drawn with a war that drags on for some time after the decisive battle has been won.⁷⁵⁹

This corresponds remarkably with the visions in chapters 19 and 20 of John's *Apocalypse*, where there are two battles of the end. Satan is defeated in the first, chained and imprisoned, and the millenium is established, but there is still fighting, and a second battle is described before the final peace. As Cullmann says, the 'strong man bound' (*Mark* 3:27; *Matt.* 12:29), that appears again in *Rev* 20:2 as Satan chained up for a thousand years, refers to the salvation-historical tension of 'already' and 'not yet'.⁷⁶⁰ Thus John's two battles present the same perspective as Cullmann describes with his analogies of D-Day and V-Day.⁷⁶¹ John may well be indicating that the first battle is Calvary by the mention of Christ's cloak soaked in blood,⁷⁶² as this coincides with his viewpoint already expressed in *Rev* 5:9 and *Rev* 12:11.

In the depiction of the Lamb's sacrifice as the decisive victory, we can see that John of Patmos teaches realized eschatology as well as future eschatology.

In accepting that Cullmann's salvation-historical framework does justice to the futurity of eschatology (and fits in very well with *Revelation*), we are not implying that it is the only acceptable approach.

Although Cullmann utterly rejects the Greek idea of circular time with its sharp distinction between time and eternity,⁷⁶³ and we

Chapter Four

recognise that the Greek viewpoint is clearly different from the N.T. suppositions, we believe that to exclude an interpretation in terms of the Greek philosophical distinction between time and eternity would be unwarranted.

St Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle, described time as the measure of motion ("*numerus motus secundum prius et posterius*") to be contrasted with eternity which he called '*nunc stans*'.⁷⁶⁴ This viewpoint has the disadvantage of making God's life and the life of the blessed after death appear static rather than dynamic, but it can overcome the problem of disembodied souls waiting for the last day; from God's vantage point in eternity (*nunc stans*), all can be seen as leaving time simultaneously and immediately achieving resurrection. The delay is only in the temporal realm which the dead have left.

It would appear that an interpretation of the N.T. in terms of the Greek philosophy is a valid approach. It has its difficulties. It remains mythological, but, as Ricoeur points out, we cannot avoid all use of myth; "the non-mythological signification of myth is no longer of the order of signification at all."⁷⁶⁵

What we regard as the kernel of truth, whatever our philosophical suppositions may be, is that resurrection of the blessed is modelled on that of Christ. Christ crucified in time is risen now. Any valid interpretation of the N.T. must therefore include an existence of the blessed after death or beyond the grave.

Chapter Four

It is here that we see the relevance of John's *Apocalypse*. More than any other book of the N.T., he mentions again and again the continued existence of the dead:- under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God (Rev 6:9), those who have triumphed by the witness of their martyrdom (Rev 12:11), those who die in the Lord (Rev 14:13), the souls of all who had been beheaded for having witnessed for Jesus (Rev 20:4), the rest of the dead (Rev 20:5), the dead both great and small standing in front of his throne (Rev 20:12). The virtuous dead are to share the throne of the Lamb "as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne." (Rev 3:21).

It may also be said of the mythological pictures of heaven in John's *Apocalypse* that they draw a lively picture of the elect. As well as singing⁷⁶⁶ and shouting,⁷⁶⁷ prostrating⁷⁶⁸ and harp playing,⁷⁶⁹ feasting on the tree of life⁷⁷⁰ and drinking from the water of life,⁷⁷¹ the blessed are like guests at a wedding feast;⁷⁷² they share in the judging of God.⁷⁷³ and reign with Christ.⁷⁷⁴ Symbolic pictures they are, but pictures of a dynamic rather than a static existence.

Yet another eschatological suggestion may come from the text. Personally (and we say 'personally' because we have not read this elsewhere, and expect that it will raise a few eyebrows), we believe that *Revelation* has the germ of the notion of purgatory or progressive sanctification after death. In Rev 20:4f. the martyrs are raised to life while the rest of the dead have to wait "until the thousand years were ended."

Chapter Four

The possible relationship between the text and a purgatorial type of purification occurred to us when reading John Macquarrie.⁷⁷⁵ He writes, "It was a sound instinct which led the early Church to believe that only the martyrs might immediately enter heaven and that other Christians would need purification; for the martyrs are those who have utterly transcended selfish being, and attained a likeness to Christ and so to God...This is nothing but the perfecting of self-giving love."

It struck us that John of Patmos had made this same distinction between the martyrs and the rest. The martyrs are given immediate life; the rest have to wait. Waiting for bliss after death, and presumably for purification because less perfect than the martyrs, comes very close to the idea of purgatory or progressive sanctification after death.

Theodicy

We saw in our first chapter that earlier apocalypses emerged in a crisis situation when theodicy problems were being raised, and that the apocalypses themselves were at least in part an attempt to answer the question of why the just should suffer.

In our second chapter, we saw that stress was part of the *Sitz-im-Leben* of John's *Apocalypse*. From the seven letters we find out that John has been exiled (Rev 1:9), Antipas has been martyred (Rev 2:13), some are going to be imprisoned (Rev 2:10), there is even a possibility of death (Rev 2:10), there are trials (Rev 2:2,9,19; 3:10) and

Chapter Four

sufferings (Rev 2:3), there are problems from Nicolaitans (Rev 2:6), from the synagogue of Satan (Rev 2:9; 3:9), from followers of Balaam (Rev 2:14) and from Jezebel (Rev 2:20) whether or not these four form the same group, and there is imperfection at Sardis (Rev 3:3) and 'lukewarmness' in Laodicea (Rev 3:17). Judging from the repeated polemic against emperor worship in the main part of the book (Rev 13:3,4,8,12; 14:9ff.; 15:2; 19;20), we may infer that there was a danger of succumbing to this, and Pliny's evidence suggests that some had already done so.^{77e}

John feels that the members of the seven churches need encouragement. The real crisis, as at the writing of earlier Palestinian apocalypses, is not the trials themselves, but the contradiction they seemed to present, since Christians were the chosen people of God. The apocalyptic genre was the medium of the time for dealing with problems of theodicy, and so it is not surprising to find John of Patmos employing it.

John's answer to the problem of suffering is not essentially different from that of earlier Palestinian apocalyptists, except in one important regard - the victory over evil is achieved by Christ and his death on the cross.

The prophetic view that suffering could come as a punishment for sin still has great force as witness all the calamities that happen to the wicked and all the warnings issued to everyone.

Chapter Four

The idea that God could allow suffering to test and purify his loved ones, which we meet in the *Psalms of Solomon* (*Pss Sol* 7:3,9; 8:32, 10;2; 13: 8f.), finds some expression in the opening letters. "I am the one who reproveth and disciplines all those he loves." (*Rev* 3:19; cf *Rev* 2:10; 3:10).

That the just would receive prosperity in this life too is a concept not abandoned as we can see from the establishment of the millennium in chapter 20. Christ "will reign for a long long time, fulfilling the prophetic conception of God's purpose to justify the toilsome process of history, by establishing on earth the perfect Kingdom of His Son."⁷⁷⁷

A distinctive contribution to answering the problem of suffering came from the apocalyptists' realization that the vindication of God's dealings is only possible in the light of a perspective which can take account of God's overall plan for creation.

This would seem to be the reason for the historical reviews found in several apocalypses. So often we get a one-sided view when we see only a small part of the picture, whereas we need to be aware of the whole canvas of history in order to appreciate God's justice.⁷⁷⁸

Although there is no historical review of the past in the *Book of Revelation*, the same perspective is presented in *Rev* 6:10f.. When the souls under the altar ask how long vengeance will be a-coming, they are

Chapter Four

told to wait until the roll of martyrs is complete. Only at the end with a total view can God's justice be fully seen.

Above all, however, John is emphatic about the final victory of good over evil. Essentially the victory is Christ's and it is won on Calvary. "Worthy art thou...for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God" (Rev 5:9 cf Rev 5:5,12). "The accuser of our brethren has been thrown down,...they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb." (Rev 12:10f. cf Rev 1:5; 17:14). This is crucial in John's case; unlike in earthly kingdoms where the symbol of power is often a mailed fist or an eagle, and victory is achieved by slaughtering, Christ is victor by being the sacrificial Lamb. Thus martyrdom and sharing in the Lamb's sacrifice are not signs of defeat, but the emblems of victory.

The final vindication of God's justice lies in His providing everlasting reward for the just and everlasting retribution for the wicked who do not repent. No book of the New Testament gives more space to symbolic descriptions of punishment and of bliss after death, as we saw in the last section. No matter how bad things are, the happiness to come will outweigh the suffering. "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev 2:10).

Chapter Four

Part 2 The Relevance of Revelation as seen from its historical context.

In chapter 2, we detected that the *Sitz-im-Leben* of John's *Apocalypse* was mainly characterized by crisis.

In a situation of stress, there is often a tendency for a community to split. One group may practise dissimulation and pretend that the crisis is not there; another group might want to identify with the enemy or at least compromise to avoid reprisals; a third group might be paralysed with fear and panic; and there may be those who want to face the crisis head-on.

This would seem to come close to the situation in Asia when Domitian and his government officials began to insist more on emperor worship, and some who refused were treated with the utmost severity.

The dissimulators are perhaps represented by those in Sardis who are asleep⁷⁷⁹ and those in Laodicea who are blind and think that nothing is wrong.⁷⁸⁰

The Nicolaitans may represent the compromisers who are prepared to participate in pagan practices,⁷⁸¹ possibly because of social pressure in trade guilds or citizens meetings.

The pressure to worship the emperor has already been referred to: though we do not know from the *Book of Revelation* that any Christians succumbed, Pliny's evidence strongly suggests that some did.⁷⁸²

Chapter Four

The main thrust of the book is to encourage Christians to keep faithful with great emphasis on the victory of Christ and powerful visions of the world to come.

John of Patmos himself may be fairly placed in the fourth category with those who want to face the crisis head-on. He does this with a thorough-going and devastating condemnation of imperial policy. There is no other New Testament book that can compare with it, and the contrast with *1 Peter* which may have been evoked by the same situation is remarkable indeed (*1 Peter* 2:13f.).

It is Käsemann who fastens onto the tremendous relevance of John's stance. "The revolutionary utterances of *Revelation* are relevant theologically, although this does not mean taking to revolutionary violence."⁷⁸³

The church must not condone evil. Yet so often she has appeared to do so, and in the opinion of some has in fact done so, and shared in the profits of unjust regimes. Käsemann believes that it is not without reason that the church has been a target in both western and colonial revolutions.⁷⁸⁴

The church has to take responsibility for what she has not done. We cannot turn a blind eye to oppression. Are they innocent who shut their eyes?⁷⁸⁵

Chapter Four

No one could reasonably deny the difficulty in determining the when and how of what to say, but the dilemma must be faced, because condonation of injustice is evil. We cannot go to sleep and opt out. John the seer prods us to face our responsibilities.⁷⁸⁶

In the world of today when the media provide a universal awareness, we ought to make common cause with all who are oppressed.⁷⁸⁷ Yet so often we are too nationalistic, or disinterested, or simply asleep. John reminds us of our responsibility to the future that can be shaped by our voice today, and that includes taking an interest in the affairs of governments.

John of Patmos not only condemns the corrupt system, but he foresees the complete abolition of the system. The fall of Rome precedes the establishment of the millennium. The seer does not envisage a reform within the system; it is too evil for that. The whole order is to be replaced.

This would be the aim of many liberation theologians, like Gustavo Gutiérrez, who oppose half measures and patchwork remedies.⁷⁸⁸ For them, palliatives only consolidate exploitive systems.⁷⁸⁹ They believe that the only satisfactory remedy lies in abolishing the present *status quo*, and replacing it with a qualitatively different one.⁷⁹⁰

While it is true the *Revelation* is not primarily concerned with social justice, it is nevertheless the principle of liberation that is at stake. It is interesting to see the Exodus theme appearing in this

Chapter Four

context; The hymn of Moses (*Rev* 15:3-4), which tells of justice, is sung by those "who had fought against the beast and won."⁷⁹¹

Moreover, although John of Patmos is principally concerned about religious freedom, social injustice is being condemned too. He has great sympathy with the poor at Smyrna,⁷⁹² he censures the Laodiceans for boasting about being rich,⁷⁹³ he disapproves of false priorities in a time of famine,⁷⁹⁴ he complains about the trade embargo put on those who would not worship the emperor,⁷⁹⁵ and he condemns the wealth and luxury of Rome, as well as those who have grown rich through her debauchery.⁷⁹⁶

If some are appalled at the subversive words of liberation theologians, what do they make of *Revelation*? Like many today, John of Patmos suffered banishment for his subversion,⁷⁹⁷ but he still had the courage to write his book of protest.

Yet in all this political subversion (can we rely deny that that is what it is?), there is not one word advocating violence. Though Antipas is dead,⁷⁹⁸ and more may have to die,⁷⁹⁹ victory comes only from the sacrifice of Calvary and from Christian participation in that sacrifice. The figure of the Lamb says that, and it also expresses the fullest confidence in victory.

Revelation, however, is not just a protest against Rome. It is a critical self-examination for the Church. Compromisers within the ranks of the Church (for such would seem to be the dissidents at

Chapter Four

Pergamum and Thyatira) are rebuked and warned to repent. Each church is corporately held responsible for the evil in its midst. Thus the angel (representing the church) at Thyatira is reprimanded for tolerating the woman Jezebel. As Tyconius says, "For he who thinks a guilty leader should be condoned is an accomplice in his misdeeds." The boasting of rich Christians at Laodicea is severely censured.

The eschatology in *Revelation* provides the impetus for reform. The final goal of history is depicted in great splendour; it is worth repenting in order to share in that glory; thus the end gives value to the present. We believe that John's faith in the future includes a better time in this world as well as in the next. Although it is the subject of controversy, we believe that the millennium is envisaged as on this earth, because there is still a struggle with Satan "when the thousand years are over."⁸⁰⁰ Be that as it may, the glorious end ever beckons man forward, dispelling gloom, and filling man with hope.

Man's better future is not to be achieved by man alone. *Revelation* shares the apocalyptic expectation of divine intervention. Although we no longer expect this in traumatic cosmic fashion, God's providential activity in the world is not to be denied. *Gaudium et Spes* laments the fact that liberation is often seen exclusively as the fruit of human effort.⁸⁰¹ *Revelation* reminds us of our need of divine help.

In all this, we have, as Schillebeeckx puts it, "a real basis for a Christian theology of liberation."

Part 3 The Relevance of the Hermeneutics of Revelation

(a) Revelation's Use and Interpretation of the Old Testament

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, pointing out that John does not once introduce his O.T. materials with a *formula citandi*, and never refers to the O.T. as authoritative scripture, holds that the author of *Revelation* employs O.T. texts in an 'anthological' way, using them as a language arsenal from which he can get words, images and phrases to express his own prophetic vision.⁸⁰³

We would agree with Fiorenza that John does not explicitly quote the O.T., and does not use passages as proof texts. Nevertheless John's use of the O.T. is far from haphazard; visions are described with images from O.T. visions, stress and persecution symbols are used for the current stress, Rome is denounced with terms from the old oracles against heathen nations, plagues of Egypt furnish imagery for cosmic signs, the joy of returning exiles is used to describe eternal bliss, Christological texts are derived from Messiah texts, 'suffering servant' texts, and sometimes from texts that applied to God. Our analysis in the previous chapter shows that the seer's use of the O.T. is thematic; texts are used which were used in a similar way before. In fact, John of Patmos is interpreting the O.T. when he applies it to his own situation.

Since John follows the custom of apocalyptists in not making direct quotations from other works, we do not find the *pesher* formula,

Chapter Four

'this is', linking quotation and commentary as we find in *The Habbakuk Pesher*.

Despite this difference, *Revelation's* use of the O.T. does otherwise have certain similarities with the Qumran community's interpretative use of the O.T.

In the *midrash pesher* found in the Qumran documents, a citation from the O.T. is often altered to accommodate it to the desired interpretation.⁸⁰⁴ The same thing is sometimes found in Paul.⁸⁰⁵ It is not falsifying the text, but making it clearer how the user understands it. This is difficult to discern in *Revelation*, since its author always modifies the text at least a little. Yet there are some places in which we may glimpse an interpretative alteration of the O.T. text. In Rev 15:8 "the temple was filled with smoke", the word "temple" replacing and clarifying the "house" of *Is* 6:4. In Rev 18:2 "demons", "every foul spirit" and "every foul and hateful bird" replace "wild beasts", "howling creatures", "ostriches" and "satyrs" of *Is* 13:21, thus emphasizing the sinister character of the creatures that is implied, but not explicit in the O.T. prophet. Babylon boasts that she is a "queen" in Rev 18:7, emphasizing her pride even more than does "mistress" in *Is* 47:7. In Rev 1:17, John "fell at his feet as though dead", "as dead" intensifying the "deep sleep" of the Hebrew text of *Dan* 10:9. More categories of musicians are silenced in Rome (Rev 18:22) than were silenced in Ezekiel's Tyre (*Ezek* 26:13) thus making Rome appear more desolate, though in no way changing the essential meaning. The river of the waters of life issues forth "from the throne of God"

Chapter Four

(Rev 22:1) rather than "from below the threshold of the temple" as in Ezek 47:1, thus showing more directly that the water of life is a gift from God.

In these interpretative alterations, John of Patmos who claims that his work is a prophecy is claiming the prophet's right to understand properly the words of sacred writ. What E. Earle Ellis says of Paul can be applied to our author, "His idea of a quotation was not a worshipping of the letter or 'parroting' of the text; neither was it an eisegesis which arbitrarily imposed a foreign meaning upon the text."³⁰⁶

The *Book of Revelation* is also akin to Qumran texts in so far as material from non-canonical traditions is freely used alongside material taken from biblical texts³⁰⁷ without differentiating between the two.

In fact, the use of intertestamental ideas in *Revelation* is very significant, because it shows the author's acceptance of previous interpretations, and sometimes we see him interpreting further. Not surprisingly this is clearest seen in Christological passages. Thus John shares with *1 Enoch* the interpretation of the Danielic figure of "one like a son of man" as messianic,³⁰⁸ and further interprets it to mean Christ. He adopts the combination of the titles "lord of lords" and "king of kings",³⁰⁹ and applies this to Christ too. He also adopts the combination of *Is* 11:4 and *Ps* 2:9 as is found in *Pss Sol* 17:26f.,³⁹ and likewise applies this to Christ.

Chapter Four

In non-Christological texts also, John often adopts the intertestamental interpretations as we have noted in the previous chapter. Sometimes we can see a further re-interpretation. For example, the pseudepigrapha had portrayed the tree of life as transferred to the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, i.e. the earthly Jerusalem cleansed from all iniquity. John develops this by placing the tree of life in the street of the Heavenly Jerusalem.²¹⁰

Where we find intertestamental interpretation followed by *Revelation's* reinterpretation, we can see our author's acceptance of a continuing and ongoing process of hermeneutics. John of Patmos understands the O.T. as perennially important, pointing to a future beyond the time of its composition. It has a definitive realization in Christ, but he awaits its complete fulfillment in the eschaton.

A far more significant resemblance to *The Habakkuk Pesher* is *Revelation's* orientation to a present-time eschatological fulfillment.²¹¹ In fact it is more pronounced than in the *Pesher*. Although the *Pesher* finds fulfillment for the words of *Habakkuk* in recent events, it nevertheless lacks a focal point which still lies in the future. For John, however, the focal point is Calvary. The whole Christology of John's *Apocalypse* points in this direction since the Lamb has won the victory, and the victory is his sacrifice. Thus the turning-point of the age has been reached.

It is the event of the present that is of primary interest to John. Old Testament allusions illumine it; they also serve to explain

Chapter Four

it. The Old Testament helps to show John whom Jesus is - Messiah, suffering servant, divine.

Contemporary evil is seen in Roman corruptions; it is the same kind of evil as prophets saw in some pagan nations; the oracles of the past enable John to discern the evil, to describe it and to loathe it, but he does not refer to the past because his whole concern is with that evil crystallized in the present.

John believes that cosmic signs are about to herald the end; like the plagues of Egypt, these are to be both warnings and precursors of deliverance; the singing of the hymn of Moses in Rev 15:3 is evidence that John sees the Exodus events as about to have present fulfilment.

The depictions of bliss so soon to be realised are the consummation of ancient hopes, the true fulfilment of ancient yearnings.

For John of Patmos the message of the Old Testament is perennially important, but it is reshaped for his own day; it is re-interpreted in terms of Christ, of a struggle with contemporary evil, and future events about to take place.

(b) Revelation's Use of Pagan Sources

A catalogue of instances in which John of Patmos may have drawn ideas from non-Jewish sources was presented in the previous chapter. Here we are concerned with the various ways in which our author uses this material.

Sometimes it is merely for illustration, as when a Roman coin provides imagery in chapter 17,⁸¹² or Greek drama colours the throne room scene.⁸¹³ Most of the local allusions in the first three chapters would fall into this category.

There is sometimes, however, a positive adoption of pagan traditions adapted for Christian use. This is particularly the case in the use of myths.

Myths are recognized by John of Patmos as containing valuable insights and as a help in explaining relationships between the world and the divine.

John therefore adopts a form of the ancient combat myth and baptizes it into Christian service. In doing so, three important modifications take place. Firstly, the myth is made monotheistic. Secondly, the real person of Jesus is substituted for the mythical Apollo. Thirdly, the myth becomes prophetic and future-seeing. All pre-Christian myths were retrospective, remembering the ancient dealings of the gods with man. Now we have the present dealings of God with man

Chapter Four

about to flower into a more glorious future. This is new mythology with a new vision at a higher level than the old.⁸¹⁴

The same modifications are made when the Osiris and Isis myth is baptized in chapter 16. While preserving the pagan insights that man's bloodshed pollutes the earth, and that divine help is needed, monotheism is made explicit, and the redemption and purification of the elements, delayed until chapter 21, has been won by Christ's victories (Rev 19: 11-21; 20:7-10). The future shall see a new heaven and a new earth and the whole of creation made new.

Sometimes there is an outright rejection of pagan traditions, as when John denounces the talking statues and the great signs of the beast (Rev 13:13-15).

Most interesting of all, however, and most original, are those passages where the pagan tradition is rejected by a substitution process in which the very words of paganism are used to provide a Christian alternative.

Magical practices are rejected in this way, and shown to be unnecessary for those who have Jesus. Thus John turns the tables on the magicians by placing their words on the lips of Jesus. Instead of impatient imprecations for the god to come quickly, Christ says "I am coming soon."⁸¹⁵

Chapter Four

Likewise the sacred meal to establish a permanent bond with a god is replaced by a meal shared with Jesus who says, "I will come in to him, and eat with him and he with me." In both instances, the initiative is taken by Jesus himself in sharp contradistinction to the magical view that gods can be manipulated.²¹⁶ Thus the validity of magical assumptions is implicitly denied.

The replacement technique is also seen at work in some of the titles given to Christ. Thus Christ is now the key-bearer with power over the underworld in place of the goddess Hekate, the key-bearer in Graeco-Roman revelatory magic, and Christ now has her title "the beginning and the end."²¹⁷ Likewise "the Alpha and the Omega" once used to denote pagan gods is now Christ himself.²¹⁸ The fact that Christ himself utters this title suggests that he cannot be controlled by human incantations, but is himself the Lord of the universe.

Emperor worship is tackled with the same kind of polemic. We have seen that several elements in the throne-room scene of Rev 4 seem to have some similarity with the ceremonial of the Roman Imperial court. John is deliberately taking elements of the court ritual, like the offering of golden crowns, and magnifying them in their application to God. He is at pains to show that God has the greater majesty, and that judgment belongs to Him.

This might have been an additional reason for the employment of the Apollo myth, as A.Y Collins has suggested.²¹⁹ The emperors had

Chapter Four

been posing as Apollo-like figures, but John is anxious to show that it is Christ and not the emperor who brings the new golden age.

Likewise the 'morning star'⁸²⁰ title may be applied to Christ because Domitian had used it first.⁸²¹ Christ has the prior claim to titles and honours.

Goddess worship is also opposed in the same way by providing a counteracting figure, the heavenly woman of chapter 12. She is not a goddess; She is, however, described with some of the accoutrements of a goddess; she is described as a great sign, with a crown on her head,⁸²² and she is definitely to be admired and honoured, but not worshipped.

This woman is the Church. We have already seen in a previous chapter that John's use of the myth shows evidence of having been used previously in a Jewish way, and that in the Jewish interpretation, the woman is Israel. The Christian counterpart is the Church.

In effect John is saying, "Why worship a goddess, when this heavenly woman is more radiant?" But he takes care to show that she is dependent upon God.

In this substitution of Christian counterparts to oppose goddess worship, emperor worship and magical practices, John does not hesitate to practise the most daring syncretism. Words, phrases and concepts that had hitherto been the property of pagan deities are now applied to Christ. No N.T. writer goes further than John of Patmos in

Chapter Four

transferring pagan epithets to Christ. In this he is one of the pioneers in the Christian tradition of baptizing pagan customs.

All that is not opposed to Christianity can be amalgamated, and even in that which is opposed some good can be seen, and that good can be directed to its true home in Christ, the source of all good.

As John of Patmos uses profane and pagan material in different ways, different lessons may be drawn from his work. In the simplest usage which is for illustration, he follows the example of Christ who, as the Vatican Council says, "revealed the love of the Father and the sublime vocation of man in terms of the most common of social realities, and by making use of the speech and the imagery of plain everyday life."⁸²³ Here we have the sound psychology of arresting people's attention by starting from familiarly known things.

In the adoption of pagan myths, there is a recognition of the genuine good in pagan religion. John not only illustrates this, but elevates the myths with his own Christian insight. A posture that is not ready to recognize truths in other religions would scarcely be Christian; unqualified denunciation would be a betrayal of our own gospel.

In today's world this principle, latent in *Revelation* can be extended to an appreciation of the religious value of the profane. As *Gaudium et Spes* states, "salvation is something which embraces all human

Chapter Four

reality",⁸²⁴ and nothing truly human should fail to find a response from the Christian heart.

Today people are recovering an awareness of the unity of life, and a division of one's life into separate religious and secular compartments is recognized to be false. The Church is more than ever aware of the good to be found in secular organizations, and that the Church herself can greatly benefit from them. "Earthly matters and the concerns of faith derive from the same God",⁸²⁵ and it is a worthy aim to combine them for the benefit of mankind.

In the rejection of pagan tradition by substituting the Christian one, we can see profound psychological insight. The seer discerns what is attracting the pagan, and rather than condemn this yearning, directs it away from its idolatry to the divine. Direct confrontation is avoided, as the author carefully distinguishes the praiseworthy longing from its fulfillment in the unworthy object. But even there the object is not described explicitly as unworthy; the approach is more positive by substituting the divine power for the pagan.

This has particular relevance today as Christianity is confronted by the new paganism; it will be increasingly necessary to have a sympathetic understanding of the deep yearnings in the hearts of modern people in order to direct them to the ultimate source of fulfillment. "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and restless is the heart till it find rest in Thee."⁸²⁶

(c) Revelation's Use and Interpretation of Christian Sources

Revelation's unique Christology stems from its use of the apocalyptic genre. An apocalypse discloses a heavenly world with its inhabitants, its secrets and its events as a way of dealing with problems here on earth, and so it is Christ in glory that is predominant in John's *Apocalypse*. As Charles says, "Nowhere in the N.T. is the glory of the exalted Christ so emphasized."⁸²⁷

Vincent Taylor has pointed out that the names used of Jesus are the key to early Christology.⁸²⁸ Over a score of titles are used for Christ in *Revelation*, but the one that predominates is that of "Lamb", used twenty-nine times.

Under the image of the Lamb, John combines two ideas. One comes from the Christian interpretation of *Isaiah* 53, so deeply embedded in N.T. works that it seems highly probable that it was inherited from Jesus himself.⁸²⁹ In this interpretation, the Lamb is the victim of sacrifice. The other image is of the horned lamb found in apocalyptic writings.⁸³⁰

It is disputed whether or not these ideas are combined in the "Lamb" of *John* 1:29.⁸³¹ No such doubt exists, however, in *Revelation*. At the first mention, the Lamb "seemed to have been sacrificed" and "it had seven horns".⁸³² The combination epitomizes John's message; Christ is our victorious leader, but the victory was won by his sacrifice.

Chapter Four

The horned lamb of apocalyptic works was an eschatological figure. Thus with the new perspective of Christianity, he is both the triumphant leader of realized eschatology and glorified champion in future eschatology. Hence he is identified with three other apocalyptic figures, the heavenly bridegroom (*Rev* 19:7,9; 21:9), the new temple (*Rev* 21:22) and the light of the Messiah (*Rev* 21:23).

It has been said the "Lamb" ceases to be an image and becomes a title of the Messiah.³³³ We would accept this with qualification; in all *Revelation's* usages of "Lamb", there is some reference to sacrifice,³³⁴ to the victorious leader³³⁵ or to the eschatological figure.³³⁶ An apparent anomaly such as "the Lamb...will be their shepherd"³³⁷ is quite consistent with the apocalyptic idea of the horned lamb as leader.

The combination of the horned lamb with the lamb of sacrifice is thus a stroke of genius that unites Christ's victory with Calvary, and unites Calvary with the life to come. The Lamb is our leader and his followers like him will achieve victory through sacrifice (*Rev* 7:14; 12:11).

In John's *Apocalypse*, the kingship of Christ finds its most exalted expression. Both *Matthew* and *Luke* had claimed that Jesus is king in the infancy stories (*Mt* 2:2; *Lk* 1:32). In *John*, Jesus is given the title by Nathanael (*Jn* 1:49) and by the multitude at the Triumphal Entry. The enemies of Jesus use the title against him at his trial before Pilate, and on Pilate's questioning, Jesus accepts the title

Chapter Four

"king".³³³ Pilate then puts the title on the cross as an explanation of Christ's political guilt.

It is *Revelation*, however, that makes kingship the glorious prerogative of Christ who is "ruler of the kings on earth" (*Rev* 1:5) and "King of kings and Lord of lords" (*Rev* 17:14; 19:16).

In *Revelation* the kingship is expressed in a political way. "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ" (*Rev* 11:15). Christ has been given authority over the pagans by his Father (*Rev* 2:28), and he is to rule all the nations with an iron sceptre (*Rev* 12:5; 17:14). This contrasts with the presentation of Christ's kingship in the Fourth Gospel where Jesus replied, "My kingship is not of this world." (*John* 18:36). John of Patmos preaches Christ as Lord of the earth; not only does he castigate the emperor for usurping God's titles, but he gives Christ political titles that the emperor would claim as his own. John is claiming that the emperor should accede to Christ's demands.

While the Lamb-theme and the King-theme have distinctive characteristics in John's *Apocalypse*, it is interesting to note our author's concurrence with other N.T. writers. Sometimes he has his own distinctive way of expressing mutual ideas.

Like Paul, John uses the phrase "firstborn of the the dead" (*Rev* 1:5), a phrase peculiar to Paul and our author. Charles believes that the phrase in *Revelation* may simply mean 'the sovereign of the dead'

Chapter Four

rather than refer to the resurrection as it does in Paul.³³⁹ If, however, our author was familiar with the letter to the *Colossians*, as Charles believes he was,³⁴⁰ this would seem to be an unnecessary limitation on his meaning, since John of Patmos clearly refers to the resurrection in other verses.

As throughout the N.T, Jesus' death is a victory over sin. Where *Mark* emphasizes this by recounting exorcisms, *Revelation* stresses it by mythical battles. In both works, the life of the disciple is related to the cross.

As in *Luke*, Jesus is portrayed as the proto-martyr. This is done in *Revelation* first of all by introducing Antipas with the title "faithful witness" (*Rev* 2:13) which is the first title given to Christ himself.³⁴¹ The theme is further developed by portraying the martyrs as those "who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (*Rev* 7:14) and those "who have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb" (*Rev* 12:11).

Revelation like *John's Gospel*³⁴² reaches a high Christology. Thus Jesus is "The Word of God" (*Rev* 19:13) and he is "the beginning of God's creation" (*Rev* 3:14). His sacrifice was foreordained from the foundation of the world (*Rev* 13:8).³⁴³ John of Patmos may not explicitly say, as does the author of the Fourth Gospel, that the Word is God nor explicitly attribute absolute existence to the Son of God, but he leaves us in no doubt about the Lamb's divinity. He sits with God on his throne, he exercises judgment, and he receives the praise and

Chapter Four

adoration of the elect.

It is, however, the distinctive features of John's Christology that have the greatest relevance today. Christ is king of the world - hence protest is made against the emperor's policies which are condemned with great vigour. Not for John of Patmos is a 'distinction of planes' type of theology that would prevent him from commenting on the political scene. Rather with his cosmic vision, John appreciates that Christ's redemptive work embraces all the dimensions of existence.

The figure of the Lamb stands for "victory by sacrifice"; this is the maxim presented by John of Patmos, and it summarizes his book.

Summary and Conclusions

Genre

Having examined the main characteristics of apocalypses, we reached the following definition. 'Apocalypse' is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing eschatological events and an interrelationship between macrocosmic and microcosmic events, expressed in symbolic terms.

There is controversy between J.J. Collins and Hellholm regarding the purposes of apocalypses. We suggest that this might be resolved by the hypothesis of the evolution of the genre. In Jewish, Christian and Persian apocalypses, we observed the same trend; the earlier ones were written in crisis situations and the later ones were eschatological discourses written in order to inculcate morality. Hence generic development might be the best explanation of the different purposes for which apocalypses were written.

John's *Apocalypse* differs from most others in its absence of pseudonymity and ante-dating, and also in its emphasis on repentance. Despite these differences, however, we believe that *Revelation* has all the essential characteristics of an apocalypse, and can therefore be included in the genre 'apocalypse'.

Summary and Conclusions

Sitz-im-Leben

An examination of the *Sitz-im-Leben* led us to accept the more common opinion today that John's *Apocalypse* was written towards the end of Domitian's reign. Some confirmation of the later date may be found in the contention of A.Y. Collins that the word 'Babylon' was used for Rome only after the destruction of Jerusalem. If a coin of Vespasian's reign provided imagery for chapter seventeen, as Beauvery suggests, and if the twenty-four elders have any relationship to Domitian's twenty-four lictors, as Aune thinks possible, these too may be regarded as straws of support for the later date.

After examining the social and religious stress in Asia of that time, we tried to discover why there should be a local persecution in Asia. We could only draw a picture from converging possibilities.

The trade guilds may well have been stronger in Asia than elsewhere in the Empire; Christians may have experienced pressure to participate in pagan ritual in pagan guilds, and those in Jewish guilds may have been expelled.

The Jews in Asia may have been more ready to denounce Christians to the Roman authorities than Jews in other parts of the Empire. At least we found other instances of this.

Emperor-worship was most advanced in the province of Asia and it took on new dimensions under Domitian. Its use as a test of loyalty is

Summary and Conclusions

mentioned by Pliny in 112 A.D. with a strong hint that it may date from Domitian's reign.

Added to these, we make the hypothesis that the execution of C. Vettulenus Civica Cerialis (c. 88 A.D.) during his term of office may have made subsequent proconsuls hypersensitive if there were charges of disloyalty to the Emperor, and Christian allegiance may have been construed as perfidy.

Sources

Old Testament sources and Pseudepigraphical sources have been listed by Charles. We have analysed the lists and shown that the references can be sorted into groups, thus showing that John's use of this material is thematic; John does not just use the O.T. as an anthology or word-arsenal as Fiorenza suggests.

Two passages in the Qumran documents show a striking resemblance to parts of *Rev 12*.

Christian sources are used in a unique way in our author's treatment of the 'Lamb' theme and the 'King' theme.

D.E. Aune, R. Beauvery, H.D. Betz, R.R. Brewer, A.Y. Collins, C.J. Hemer, F.J.A. Hort, W.M. Ramsay, M.J.S. Rudwick and E.M.B. Green, and S.J. Scherrer have all cited passages in which our author seems to use pagan sources or to derive his images from the secular world. We

Summary and Conclusions

have gathered all these together, making quite an impressive catalogue. Some instances of secular derivation may be doubtful, but seeing all the instances together strengthens the conviction that John of Patmos quite consciously used material that was not derived from either Jewish or Christian sources.

Relevance

Although the genre 'apocalypse' has disadvantages, it has advantages too. It facilitates an emphasis on future eschatology, that we think has been blurred in Bultmann's interpretation. We suggest that *Revelation* may even contain the germ of the notion of progressive sanctification after death. *Revelation* also baptizes earlier apocalyptic answers to the problem of theodicy, and makes them thoroughly Christocentric: the final victory which compensates for all suffering is won by the Lamb's sacrifice. Moreover, the emotional power of apocalypse is so used to advantage that the symbolic pictures of eschatological bliss are of great comfort to those who are bereaved.

The *Sitz-im-Leben* is one of crisis and oppression. John of Patmos does not accept it without protest. Here he stirs the Christian conscience to speak against injustice, and by implication condemns condoning by silence. Thus we find in *Revelation* a real basis for the theology of liberation.

In our author's use of O.T. and intertestamental sources we see his belief in the perennial value of scripture married to an

Summary and Conclusions

appreciation of an ongoing process of hermeneutics. His use of pagan sources shows that he recognised the good in paganism; this can lead us today to a recognition of the religious value of the profane.

Revelation's Christology is unique in the N.T. by hailing Christ as King in a political way, thus broadening the horizons of Christian responsibility. The apocalyptic Lamb and the Lamb of sacrifice are one and the same; thus victory will come from the sacrifice of the Lamb, and not exclusively as the fruit of human effort.

From these considerations, we do indeed find John's *Apocalypse* relevant today.

NOTES: CHAPTER ONE

(Abbreviated titles and initials of authors' first names are given in the notes; full titles and, where known, full first names of authors are given in the 'Bibliographies'.)

1. G. von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, Vol 2, 4th German ed., p.315. Not in ET. Cf. H.D. Betz op. cit. in n.2, p.135.
2. H.D. Betz, 'On the Problem of the Religio-Historical Understanding of Apocalypticism', *Journal for Theology and the Church* 6, 1969, p. 135.
3. E. Käsemann, 'On the Topic of Primitive Christian Apocalyptic', *Journal for Theology and the Church* 6, 1969, p.100 n.1.
4. W.G. Rollins, 'The New Testament and Apocalyptic', *N.T.S.* 17, 1970-1, pp. 454-476.
5. P.D. Hanson, 'Apocalypse, Genre', 'Apocalypticism', *I.D.B.*, Supplementary Volume, p. 27.
6. J.J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, pp. 10f..
7. M. Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature", *Magnalia Dei: the Mighty Acts of God*, pp. 440,443.
8. J.J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, p.10.
9. M. Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature", *Magnalia Dei: the Mighty Acts of God*, p.440.
10. J.J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, pp.10f..
11. Ibid. p.10.
12. K. Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic*, p.18.
13. P.D. Hanson, 'Apocalypse, Genre', 'Apocalypticism', *I.D.B.*, Supplementary Volume, p.29.
14. J.J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, p.9.
15. K. Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic*, p.20.
16. Ibid. p.28.
17. *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd Edition, Revised, 1973, p.87.
18. J.J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, p.2
Nevertheless Collins himself uses the word 'apocalyptic' as a noun in the sense of a collective term for all the apocalypses: *C.B.Q.* 39, p.330.

Notes: Chapter One.

19. P.D. Hanson, 'Apocalypse, Genre', 'Apocalypticism', *I.D.B.*, Supplementary Volume, p.27.
20. J.J. Collins, "The Jewish Apocalypses", *Semeia* 14, 1979, p. 28.
21. *Daniel* is canonical; *The Book of Jubilees* is to be found in J.H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 2, p. 35; the others are in Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1.
22. A.Y. Collins, "The Early Christian Apocalypses", *Semeia* 14, 1979, p.104.
23. In J.H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1. p.605.
24. In M.R. James, *Apocryphal N.T.*, p. 181.
25. In E.A.W. Budge, *Coptic Apocrypha*, Text p.59, trans p.241.
26. *Ibid.*, Text pp.137-144; translation pp.344-350. *The Apocalypse of James* is not a complete work in itself, but part of *An Enconium on Saint John the Baptist*, by Saint John Chrysostom. E.A.W. Budge has mistranslated 'John' in Fol 11b, p.345. The Coptic has $\text{ἰ} \alpha \kappa \omega \beta \omicron \varsigma$, p.139, line 4.
27. *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Additional Volume, pp.169-174. A.Y. Collins (*Semeia* 14, p.116) mistakenly refers to Vol 10. The Additional Volume itself has a misprint 'Volume IX' on the contents page.
28. *Ibid.* pp.220-224.
29. J.H. Charlesworth, *The O.T. Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1 p.916.
30. *Ibid.* p.908.
31. Latin Text, *Apocrypha, Anecdota 1 (Texts and Studies)*, Part 2, ed. M.R. James; English Summary, M.R. James, *Apocryphal N.T.* pp. 563f..
32. J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1. p.561.
33. M.R. James, *Apocryphal N.T.*, p.525. E. Hennecke, *N.T. Apocrypha*, Vol 2, p.755..
34. E. Hennecke, *N.T. Apocrypha*, Vol 2, p.651.
35. M.R. James, *Apocryphal N.T.*, p.181.
36. E. Hennecke, *N.T. Apocrypha*, Vol 1. p.486.
37. J.H. Charlesworth, *The O.T. Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1. p.914.

Notes: Chapter One.

38. Ibid. p.905.
39. J.H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, p.528. E. Hennecke, *N.T. Apocrypha* Vol 2, p.695 (as Fifth Book of Esra).
40. J. Cooper & A. Maclean, *The Testament of Our Lord*, Edinburgh, Clark, 1902.
41. Greek Text: Tischendorf, *Apocalypses apocryphae*, pp. 70-94.
42. E. Hennecke, *N.T. Apocrypha*, Vol 2, p.745.
43. *The Apostolic Fathers*, tr. Graydon Snyder, Vol 6.
44. M.R. James, *Apocryphal N.T.*, p.505. E. Hennecke, *N.T. Apocrypha*, Vol 2, p.663.
45. Canonical.
46. J.H. Charlesworth, *The O.T. Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 2. p.401.
47. F.T. Fallon, *Semeia 14*, p.148.
48. C.A. Baynes, *A Coptic Gnostic Treatise contained in the Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae: A Translation* (Bruce MS 96, Bod. Lib. Oxford), 1933.
49. G.R.S. Mead, *Pistis Sophia*, 2nd Edition, London: Watkins, 1921.
50. All these Gnostic apocalypses, with the exceptions of *1 Jeu* and *Pistis Sophia*, are in *The Nag Hammadi Library*, Ed. J.M. Robinson, 1977.
51. H.W. Attridge, *Semeia 14*, p.159.
52. J.J. Collins, *Semeia 14*, p.208.
53. Ibid. pp.6-8.
54. D. Hellholm, *1982 S.B.L. Seminar Papers*, p.164.
55. Ibid. p.165.
56. Ibid. p.159.
57. Ibid. p.164.
58. C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, p.13.
59. There seems to be little difference between visions and epiphanies, but they are listed as different characteristics in the lists in *Semeia 14* (pp.28, 105, 148). It would appear that the mere sight of the revealer without further elaboration, such as is frequent in the Gnostic apocalypses, is named 'epiphany'.

Notes: Chapter One.

60. *Semeia* 14, p.125.
61. J.J. Collins, *Semeia* 14, p.10.
62. C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, p.56.
63. H.H. Rowley says that the two terms are often confused: *The Relevance of Apocalyptic*, p.51.
64. K. Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic*, p.18.
65. *Ibid.*, p.45.
66. *Ibid.*, p.46.
67. P.D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, p.8.
68. L. Morris, *Apocalyptic*, p.34.
69. J.J. Collins, *Semeia* 14, pp.25f..
70. D. Hellholm, *1982 Seminar Papers*, p.189.
71. H. Gibling & U. Vanni gave these useful illustrations at S.N.T.S. Seminar on *Revelation*, Trondheim, 1985.
72. *Ibid.*, p.189.
73. J.J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, p.13.
74. D.S. Russell, *The Method & Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, p.122.
75. E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, Vol 3, part 1, p.243.
76. D.S. Russell, *The Method & Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, p.122.
77. e.g. B.W. Jones cited by J.J. Collins, *C.B.Q.* 39, p.330.
78. A.Y. Collins, *Semeia* 14, from the table on p.104.
79. J.J. Collins, *C.B.Q.* 39, pp.330-340.
80. J.J. Collins, *Semeia* 14, p.9.
81. D. Hellholm, *S.B.L. Seminar Papers 1982*, p.172.
82. *Ibid.*, p.172.
83. *Ibid.*, p.176.
- 84, *Ibid.*, pp.178-180.

Notes: Chapter One.

85. D. Hellholm, "The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre", *Semeia* 36, pp.43f..
86. Ibid., pp.45f..
87. Ibid., p.53.
88. D. E. Aune, "The Apocalypse of John and the Problem of Genre", *Semeia* 36, pp.73f..
89. D. Hellholm, *1982 Seminar Papers*, p.168.
90. Ibid. pp.167f.
91. J.J. Collins, "The Genre Apocalypse in Hellenistic Judaism", *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, p.544.
92. D. Hellholm, *S.B.L. Seminar Papers 1982*, p.167.
93. P.D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, pp.11f.,21, referring to apocalyptic eschatology; this theme is developed throughout the work.
94. Ibid., p.27.
95. Ibid., pp. 143f..
96. M.E. Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things in Apocalyptic Literature", *Magnalia Dei, the Mighty Acts of God*, p.442.
97. J.J. Collins, *Semeia* 14, p.38.
98. I. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, p.5.
99. Ibid., p.12.
100. J.J. Collins, *Semeia* 14, p.31.
101. Ibid., p.31.
102. C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, p.252.
103. R.H. Charles, *The Apocrypha & Pseudepigrapha of the O.T.*, p.257 in footnote.
104. Ibid., p.257 in footnote.
105. C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, p.251.
106. J. Bright, *A History of Israel*, p.426.
107. L.F. Hartman, "Daniel", *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, p.459.

Notes: Chapter One.

108. J.J. Collins, *Semeia* 14, p.32.
109. Ibid., p.39.
110. G.H. Box, in (ed.) R.H. Charles, *Apocrypha & Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 2, p.552.
111. G.H. Box, *The Apocalypse of Abraham*, p.xvf..
112. *Slavonic Enoch* and *The Testament of Abraham* are discussed in this light in J.J. Collins, "The Genre Apocalypse in Hellenistic Judaism", *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, p.544.
113. C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, p.258.
114. R.H. Charles ascribed *2 Enoch* to Egyptian Judaism and this view has been generally accepted (Collins, *Semeia* 14, p.40; J. Becker deems that *The Testaments of the 12 Patriarchs* is probably from Egyptian Judaism; J.C. Picard claims that *3 Baruch* is a product of Jewish mysticism in the Diaspora; L. Rost claims that *3 Baruch* is a product of Syrian Jewry.
115. *2 Enoch* can most plausibly be dated with Charles to the first century A.D. (Collins, *Semeia* 14, p.40). Collins holds that it is impossible to date the *Testament of Levi* 2-5 with any confidence (Collins, *Semeia* 14, p.40). The date for the composition of *The Testaments of the 12 Patriarchs* as a whole has been variously put in the early second century B.C. (J. Becker) and 200A.D. (M. de Jonge) - Collins, *Semeia* 14, p.46 & Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, p.776. *3 Baruch* has a fictive setting after the Fall of Jerusalem and so must be after 70 A.D. and is possibly later (Collins, *Semeia* 14, p.41. There is an adequate consensus that *The Testament of Abraham* was written about the first Christian century (Collins, *Semeia* 14, p.42). The possible time-span within which *The Apocalypse of Zephaniah* could have been written coincides roughly with that of *The Testament of Abraham* (Collins, *Semeia* 14, p.43). Wintermute says that *The Apocalypse of Zephaniah* can be placed somewhere between 100 B.C. and 175 A.D. (Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, p.500).
116. *The Ascension of Isaiah*, Introd. G.H. Box, p.ix, p.37 n.5, p.38 n.1
117. G.H. Box, *The Ascension of Isaiah*, ed. R.H. Charles, p.ix.
118. Ibid., p.38, text and footnote.
119. Ibid., p.37 footnote.
120. E. Hennecke, *N.T. Apocrypha*, Vol 2. p.750 from Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies*. Hennecke gives the references as

Notes: Chapter One.

9.13.3-4 and 9.16.2-4; in *A-N.C.L.*, the passages are found in chapter 8 and chapter 11 of book 9. (*A-N.C.L.*, Vol 6, pp.346: 350.

121. Ibid. p.750.

122. G.F. Snyder, *The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol 6, p.24.

123. A.Y. Collins, *Semeia* 14, p.72.

124. Ibid., p.72.

125. H.G. Lunt points out the difficulties of date and provenance, J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha* Vol 2, p.404. The first century is tentatively suggested in the list of contents, J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 2, p.vi.

126. A.Y. Collins, *Semeia* 14, p.69.

127. G.F. Snyder, *The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol 6, p.9.

128. A.Y. Collins, *Semeia* 14, p.79.

129. Ibid. p.77.

130. Ibid., p. 86.

131. *Zand-i-Vohûmen Yasn* and the *Book of Ardâ Virâf*, J.J. Collins, *Semeia* 14, p.208.

132. *Zand-i-Vohûman Yasn*, ed. B.T. Anklesaria, p.ii.

133. Ibid., 4:58, p.112; 6:10, p.117; 9:10, p.127. Percy Sykes, *A History of Persia*, p.454ff..

134. *Zand-i-Vohûman Yasn*, 2:1, p.102.

135. P. Sykes, *A History of Persia*, Vol 1, p.442 and p. 449.

136. *Zand-i-Vohûman Zasn*, 1:2 et passim.

137. P. Sykes, *A History of Persia*, Vol 1, p.105.

138. *Zand-i-Vohûman Zasn*, p.113.

139. J.J. Collins, *Semeia* 14, p.213.

140. M. Haug, *The Book of Ardâ Virâf*, p.lxxiii.

141. Ibid., p.lxxii.

142. Ibid., 1:18-29, pp.146f..

143. A. Fowler, *The Life and Death of Literary Forms*, p.213.

Alastair Fowler deals with the development of genres in general. He distinguishes three phases, viz.:- the development stage, the developed stage in which the genre is consciously used (even in this stage, Fowler deems that a genre can be used for slightly different purposes) and a third stage in which a genre can be used in a radically new way, either in a burlesque, antithetic or symbolic way (ibid., pp.212f.).

The third and fourth stages that I have suggested in the development of the genre 'apocalypse' would not be such a radical development as in Fowler's tertiary stage.

144. D.E. Aune, "The Apocalypse of John and the Problem of Genre", *Semeia* 36, p.73f..
145. B.W. Jones cited by J.J. Collins, *C.B.Q.* 39, p.330.
146. J. Kallas, *J.B.L.* 86, pp. 69-80.
147. B.W. Jones, "More about Apocalypse as Apocalyptic", *J.B.L.* 87, p.325.
148. D. Hill, *N.T.S.* 18, pp.401-406.
149. J.J. Collins, *C.B.Q.* 39, pp.331f.
150. G.E. Ladd, *J.B.L.* 76, p.197.
151. G.E. Ladd, in *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, p.54.
152. E.S. Fiorenza, "Apokalypsis and Propheteia", *L'Apocalypse johannique et l'Apocalypse dans le N.T.*, pp. 111-114.
153. W.C. van Unnik, *N.T.S.* 9, pp. 86-94.
154. Ibid., p.94.
155. Ibid., p.94.
156. e.g. Ladd, Ebeling, von Rad, Nissen, Murdock, Moltmann, Rollins, Morris, Schmithals.
157. Gloege, Pannenberg, Hengel, Schmidt, Koch, Wilder, Braaten, Russell.
158. P.D. Hanson, *Interpretation* 25, p.478.
159. C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, p.137.
160. Ibid., p.143.
161. Ibid., p.143ff.
162. W. Schmithals, *The Apocalyptic Movement*, p.180.

Notes: Chapter One.

163. A.Y. Collins, *Semeia* 14, from list on p.104.
164. e.g. J-P. Charlier, *Lumen Vitae* 40, no. 2, pp. 181f.
165. J.N. Sanders, *N.T.S.* 9, p.76.
166. *Rev* 22:10.
167. J.P. Charlier, *Lumen Vitae* 40, no. 2, p.182.
168. R. Beauvery, *Revue Biblique*, April 1983, pp.243-260.
169. *Rev* 2:5, 16, 22; 3:19.
170. *Rev* 2:21.
171. *Rev* 9:20f..

NOTES: CHAPTER TWO

172. Eusebius, *H.E.* 4. 14. 3-8 (L.C.L. Eusebius 1, pp.337-339).
H.E. 5. 20. 4-8 (L.C.L. Eusebius 1, pp.497-499).
173. Victorinus, *In Apoc.* 10. 11. J. Haussleiter, p.92.
174. Tertullian, *On Prescription against Heretics*, 36. *A Library of the Fathers*, tr, Dodgson, p.487.
Jerome, *Contra Jovin.* 1.26, P.Schaff & H. Wace, Vol 6.
" *De Vir. Illus.* 9 " Vol 3, p.364.
175. Eusebius, *H.E.* 3. 20 (L.C.L. Eusebius 1, pp.238f.).
176. Origen does not name the emperor.
Origen, *Comm on Mt 20:22*, *Origines Werke* 10, p. 486, lines 5-27.
Epiphanius says that John's banishment was under Claudius.
Epiphanius, *Haer.* 51.12.2 and 51.33.9 (Epiphanius 2 (von Karl Holl), p.263 and p.308).
177. J. Gwyn (ed.), *The Apocalypse of St John in a Syriac version hitherto unknown*, p.1.
178. W. Wright (ed.), *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, Vol 2, p.55.
Reading on in this chapter, however, as to how Nero released John after receiving a vision from an angel, and how Peter and Paul visited John in Ephesus, we realise that this work can scarcely be relied on for historical details.
179. Theophylact, *Praef. in Joann.*, para 504, Migne PG 1, p.1134.
180. Theophylact, *on Mt 20:22*, para 107, Migne PG 1, p.363.
181. Theophylact, *Vita Joannis ex Sophronia*, para 499, Migne PG 1, p.1127.
182. Muratorian Fragment, lines 47-50, Souter, *The Text and Canon on the N.T.*, p.192.
183. W. Milligan, *Discussions on the Apocalypse*, p.76.
184. F.J.A. Hort, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, p.xviii.
185. *Ibid.*, p.x; pp.xiv-xxxiii.
186. J.B. Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, p.52.
Essays on the Work entitled Supernatural Religion, p.132.
187. B.F. Westcott, *The Gospel according to St. John*, p.lxxxvii.
188. C.C. Torrey, *Apocalypse*, p.89. Torrey holds that it was written in the reign of Galba, probably in the year 68 A.D.

Notes: Chapter Two.

189. B.W. Henderson, *Nero*, pp.439-443.
190. G. Edmundson, *The Church in Rome*, pp.164-179.
191. A.D. Momigliano, *Cambridge Ancient History X*, p.726.
192. A. Weigall, *Nero, Emperor of Rome*, pp.298f..
193. K.A. Eckhardt, *Der Tod des Johannes*, pp.58-72.
194. J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, p.37, holds that chs 4-11 and 12-22 should be placed earlier than the Gospels, perhaps earlier than most of the N.T.
195. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the N.T.*, pp. 221-253.
196. C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, pp.403-413.
197. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the N.T.*, p.169.
198. *Ibid.*, p.198.
199. *Ibid.*, pp.226f.
200. *Ibid.*, p.226.
201. T.W. Leahy, "The Second Epistle of Peter", *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Vol 2, p.495.
202. T.W. Leahy, "The Epistle of Jude", *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Vol 2, p.379.
203. R.J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, pp.13f.
204. E.g. J.A. Fitzmyer, "The First Epistle of St. Peter", *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Vol 2, p.362.
E.H. Maly, *The Epistles of St James, Jude, Peter* (N.T. Reading Guide), pp.34f..
C. Bigg, *St Peter and St Jude* (I.C.C.), pp.85-87.
205. F.W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter*, pp.32-34.
206. H.J. Holtzmann, *Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament*, p.121.
207. B.H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, p.489.
The Primitive Church, p.134.
208. W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the .N.T.*, pp.298f.,
209. A.Y. Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, pp.57f.
210. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the N.T.*, p.227.

Notes: Chapter Two.

211. I.T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*, p.453.
R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation (I.C.C.)*, Vol 1, p.56f..
W.G. Heidt, *The Book of the Apocalypse (N.T. Reading Guide)*,
p.42
R.H. Preston & A.T. Hanson, *The Revelation of St. John the
Divine*, p.62.
W.H. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia*, p.409.
C. A. Scott, *Revelation (The Century Bible)*, pp.140, 152.
C. A. Scott, *The Book of Revelation*, p.72.
Dr Vaughan, however, admits the possibility that the members of
the synagogue of Satan could have been a Judaizing party within
the Church - C.J. Vaughan, *Lectures on the Revelation of St.
John*, Vol 1, p.44.
G.M.A. Hanfmann suggests that they could have been a rival
Christian group - G.M.A. Hanfmann, *Sardis from Prehistoric to
Roman Times*, p.180.
212. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the N.T.*, p.229.
213. Polycarp, *Phil 11:3, The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol 1 (L.C.L.),
p.297.
214. R.H. Charles, *Commentary (I.C.C.)*, Vol 1, p.xciv.
215. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the N.T.*, pp.229f.
216. J.A.T. Robinson, by contrast, thinks that this might well be
possible. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the N.T.*, p.230.
217. A.A. Bell, *N.T.S.* 25 (1978/9), pp.100f..
218. C.J. Hemer, in *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*,
pp.57f..
219. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the N.T.*, p.230.
220. C.J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, p.4.
221. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the N.T.*, p.230.
222. *Ibid.*, p.231.
223. *Ibid.*, p.226.
224. *Ibid.*, p.235.
225. Suetonius, *Nero*, 39, (L.C.L. Suetonius 2, p.159).
226. Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, 4. 38. (L.C.L. Philostratus,
Vit. Apoll., pp.437-439).
227. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation (I.C.C.)*, Vol 1, p.xcvi.
228. Tacitus, *Hist.* 2, 8. (L.C.L. Tacitus 1, p.173).

Notes: Chapter Two.

229. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, p.xcvi.
230. *Ibid.*, Vol 2, p.83.
231. Pliny, *Ep. x. 96. 10, Letters of Pliny* (L.C.L.), p.405.
232. Dessau, *I.L.S.*, Vol 2, pt 2, 6088 (SXXVI), p.517; 6089 (SLIX), p.522.
233. *Ibid.*, 9059, Vol 3, p.lx.
234. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the N.T.*, p.238.
235. Suetonius, *Domitian 7* (L.C.L. Suetonius 2, p.353).
236. R.H. Charles, *Commentary* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, p.168.
237. *Ibid.*, p.168.
238. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the N.T.*, pp.238-242.
239. A.Y. Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, p.65.
240. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the N.T.*, pp.240f.
241. C. A. Scott, *The Book of Revelation*, p.211.
I.T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*, p.585.
R.H. Charles, *Commentary* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, pp.lxiif.; 270-273.
242. C. A. Scott, *The Book of Revelation*, p.211.
243. I.T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*, p.585.
244. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the N.T.*, p.242.
245. C. A. Scott, *The Book of Revelation*, p.211.
246. R.H. Charles, *Commentary* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, pp.271-273.
247. C. A. Scott, *The Book of Revelation*, p.211.
248. A.Y. Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, p.65.
249. *Ibid.*, p.68.
250. *Ibid.*, p.66.
251. *Ibid.*, p.68.
252. *Ibid.*, p.67.
253. I.T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*, p.708.
254. W. Milligan, *Discussions on the Apocalypse*, p.101.

Notes: Chapter Two.

255. C. Anderson Scott, *Revelation* (Century Bible), p.263.
256. R.H.Charles, *Commentary* (I.C.C.), Vol 2, pp.68f.
257. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the N.T.*, p.244.
258. *Ibid.*, p.245.
259. *Ibid.*, p.251f.
260. C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, pp.406f.
261. T.R.S. Broughton in (ed.) T. Frank, *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, Vol 4, p.744.
262. C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, pp.407f.
263. *Ibid.*, pp. 410-413.
264. Below, pp.74f..
265. C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, p.413.
266. *Rev* 2:13.
267. *Rev* 1:9.
268. *Rev* 6:9.
269. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, p.xciv.
270. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, pp.86-117.
271. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, pp.cxif.
272. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, pp.254-284.
273. R. Beauvery, "L'Apocalypse au risque de la Numismatique", *Revue Biblique*, April 1983, pp.243-260 & Plate 1.
274. Below, pp.147-149.
275. D.E. Aune, "The Influence of Roman Imperial Court Ceremonial on the Apocalypse of John", *Journal of the Chicago Society of Biblical Research* 28, 1983, pp.5-26.
276. *Rev* 2:9.
277. *Rev* 3:17.
278. T.R.S. Broughton in (ed.) T. Frank, *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, Vol 4, p.795.
279. H. Koester, *Introduction to the N.T.*, Vol 1, p.63.

Notes: Chapter Two.

280. Ibid., p.63.
281. F. Millar, *The Roman Empire and Its Neighbours*, p.195.
282. T.R.S. Broughton in (ed.) T. Frank, *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, Vol 4, p.812.
283. Ibid., p.794.
284. G. Theissen, *The First Followers of Jesus*, p.40.
285. Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 6, 41, (L.C.L. Philostr. 2 p.139).
286. T.R.S. Broughton in (ed.) T. Frank, *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, Vol 4, p.601.
287. Orosius, *Hist. adv. paganos*, 7. 7. 12. (ed. Deferrari). Tacitus, *Annals* 14.27. (L.C.L., Vol 4, p.151).
288. *T.A.P.A.* 55, 1924, pp.7ff. and *J.R.S.* 26, 1926, p.116f.. Ramsay dated this famine in 92-93 A.D., caused by the long continuance of the winter severity under Rusticus. He considers that it was a local famine because the remedy was local, and weather conditions are generally different in Antioch from the rest of Asia.
289. Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, 1, 15. (L.C.L. Philostratus 1, pp.39-43.
290. Dio Chrysostom, 46 9-12. (L.C.L., Dio Chrys. Vol 4, pp.234-238)
291. *Sardis: Publications of the American Society for the Excavation of Sardis*, Vol 7, no. 47, p.63.
292. Galen, *On Good and Bad Diet*, cited by F. Millar, *The Roman Empire and its Neighbours*, p.208.
293. Gaius Silvanus was accused of extortion and also of cruelty, and he was convicted: Tacitus, *Annals* 3, 66-69. (L.C.L., pp.627-633). Lucilius Capito was convicted of employing soldiers, and acting in other ways as if he had held supreme command. This was in 23 A.D.: Dio Cassius *Roman History*, 57. 23. (L.C.L., Vol 7, p.181).
294. T.R.S. Broughton in (ed.) T. Frank, *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, Vol 4, p.810.
295. *S.I.G.*, 833, pp.547f..
296. Dio Chrysostom, 47, 13ff.; 45 passim (L.C.L. Vol 4, pp. 257, 207-225).
297. Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 1, 16, (L.C.L. Vol. 1 p.47).

Notes: Chapter Two.

298. Philostratus, *Ep. Apoll.* 56 (L.C.L. Vol 2, p.453).
" *Ep. Apoll.* 76 (L.C.L. Vol 2, P.473).
299. Philostratus, *Vit. Soph.* 1 25, p.531, (L.C.L. Philostatus & Eunapius, p.109).
As Polemo received honours from Trajan, we can date factions before his time as being very close to the writing of *Revelation*. Also at Smyrna, it seems that some ferry men formed a private combination to monopolize the business and raise the fares, as a result of which public regulation began. *I.G.Rom.* Vol 4, 1427, p.473.
300. Dio Chrysostom, *Discourse* 34, 23, (L.C.L 3, p.359).
301. Dio Chrysostom, 40 & 41, (L.C.L. 4, p.106 & p.149).
302. *Ibid.*, 39. (L.C.L., p.94).
303. Pliny, *Ad Traj.* 34, *Pliny 2* (L.C.L.), pp.319-321.
304. Hadrian, *Letter to Pergamum*, *I.G.Rom.* Vol 4, 351, pp.137ff.
T.R.S. Broughton in (ed.) T. Frank, *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, Vol 4, p.811.
305. *Letter of Antoninus Pius to Ephesus*, *S.I.G.*, 3rd edition, 850, pp.561f..
306. T.R.S. Broughton in (ed.) T. Frank, *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, Vol 4, p.811.
307. This is dated by Behr, *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales*, p.339. He thinks that the governor Julianus is Q. Fabius Julianus Optatianus who was proconsul in 145/6 A.D.. It was August because it was the time of the assizes in Pergamum: Behr, *op. cit.* pp. 134, 133.
308. Aristides, *Orat.* 50. 105-108. (Behr, *The Complete Works of Aristides*, Vol 2, p.339).
309. Aristides, *Orat.* 24 passim esp. 32-40, *The Complete Works*, ed. Behr, Vol 2, pp.45-57.
Dated by Behr, *Aelius Aristides*, pp.73f..
310. F. Millar, *The Roman Empire and Its Neighbours*, p.199.
311. H. Koester, *Introduction to the N.T.*, Vol 1, p.63.
312. T.R.S. Broughton in (ed.) T. Frank, *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, Vol 4, p.811.
313. *Ibid.*, p.812.
314. *Ibid.*, p.807.

Notes: Chapter Two.

315. W. A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, p.172.
316. Rev 2:6.
317. Rev 2:15.
318. Rev 2:20-23.
319. Rev 2:14.
320. Rev 2:14.
321. Rev 2:20.
322. 1 Cor 6:13.
323. Acts 15:29.
324. Rev 2:24.
325. A. Harnack, "Sect of the Nicolaitans", *Journal of Religion* 3 1923, p.415.
326. W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the N.T.*, pp. 301-302.
327. A. Harnack, "Sect of the Nicolaitans", *Journal of Religion* 3 1923, p.415.
328. F. Wisse, "Opponents in N.T.", *Colloque International sur les Textes de Nag Hammadi*, pp. 116f.
329. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3. 11. 1; 1. 26 3. (*Ante-Nicene Christian Library* Vol 5, p.287 & pp.97f.).
330. Tertullian, *On Prescription against Heretics*, *Library of the Fathers*, Vol. 1, p.467.
331. Hippolytus, *Ad Mammaeam* (G.C.S. ed. Achelis, Vol 1, p.251).
332. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 2.20, (*Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Vol 12, Clement of Alexandria, Vol 2, p.67).
Clement explains in his treatise *On Marriage* that the Nicolaitans misunderstood Nicholas the Deacon: Clement of Alexandria, *On Marriage* 4.25f. (A-N.C.L. p.52).
333. Rev 2:9.
334. H. Koester, *Introduction to the N.T.*, Vol 2, p.253.
335. Below, p.84.
336. G.M.A. Hanfmann, *Sardis from Prehistoric to Roman Times*, p.180.
337. C.J. Vaughan, *Letters on the Revelation of St John*, Vol 1, p.44.

Notes: Chapter Two.

338. *Martyrdom of St. Polycarp*, 13.2, (*The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol 2, p.329, *Ancient Christian Writers*, Vol 6, p.96).
339. Eusebius, *H.E.* 3. 32. 2-6. (L.C.L., Vol 1, pp.273-5).
340. W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom & Persecution in the Early Church*, p.185.
341. Dessau, *I.L.S.*, Vol 2, pt 2, 6088 XXVI, p.517; 6089 LIX, p.522.
342. *Ibid.*, *I.L.S.*, Vol 3, 9059, p.lx.
343. M.P. Charlesworth, *Harvard Theological Review* 28, p.33.
344. The head of this statue and the left arm can be seen today in the museum at Izmir.
345. Suetonius, *Domitian* 13.2, (L.C.L., Suetonius Vol 2, p.367).
346. Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 67. 5. (L.C.L., Vol 8, p.337).
347. Philostratus, *Apollonius of Tyana*, 8,4. (L.C.L. 2, p.279).
348. Martial, 5. 8. 4. (L.C.L., Vol 1, p.300),
" 7.34. 8. (" " p.446),
" 7. 2. 6. (" Vol 2, p.4),
" 10.72. 3. (" " p.208).
349. Quintillian, *Inst. Orat.* 4, praef. (L.C.L., Vol 2, pp.3 & 5),
" " 10.1.91. (L.C.L., Vol 4.
pp.51, 53).
350. Pliny, *Panegyricus* 2, (L.C.L., Vol 2, p.325).
" 52, (" " p.439).
351. Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses*, 45.1.8-10. (L.C.L., Vol 4, p.207).
352. Rev 20:4.
353. Pliny, *Ep. ad Traj.* 10.96, (L.C.L., Vol 2, p.403).
354. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the N.T.*, pp.230f.
355. A.Y. Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, pp. 69-73.
356. Rev 2:13.
357. Rev 1:9.
358. Pliny, *Ep. ad Traj.* 10. 96, L.C.L., Vol 2, p.403.
359. Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 67. 14. (L.C.L., 8, p.349).
360. B.W. Henderson, *Five Roman Emperors*, pp.44f.

Notes: Chapter Two.

361. Eusebius, *E.H.* 3.18.3, (L.C.L., Vol 1, p.237).
362. Eusebius, *Chronicle*, *Eusebius Werke* 7, p.192, lines 14-19.
" *Chronicum*, Paris: 1512, p.88.
" *Chronicorum Canonum*, Milan: 1818, p.379.
363. Eusebius, *E.H.*, 3. 19. 20. (L.C.L., pp.237-9).
364. Jerome, *De Vir. Illus.* 3, (Schaff/Wace, Vol 3, p.362).
" *Contra Pelag.* 3. 2, (Schaff/Wace, Vol 6, p.472).
365. W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom & Persecution in the Early Church*, p.217
366. Dio Cassius, 67.14.1f., (L.C.L., Vol 8, p.349).
367. F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World*, p.554.
368. C. Wells, *The Roman Empire*, pp.183f.
He refers to Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicles*, 2. 31, apparently based on a lost part of Tacitus' *Histories* 5, and to Suetonius, *Claudius* 25. 4, (L.C.L., Vol 2, p.53).
369. W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom & Persecution in the Early Church*, p.217
370. F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World*, p.555.
371. cf. note 232.
372. cf. note 233.
373. Josephus, *Ant.* 12. 3. 2. L.C.L., Vol 7, p.63.
374. C.J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, p.137 & n.36.
375. W.M. Ramsay, *Letters to the Seven Churches*, pp.146-154.
376. A suggestion made by C.J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, pp.9f.
377. W.M. Ramsay, *Letters to the Seven Churches*, p.352.
378. The exact date is variously given; we have accepted that given by B. Jones, *Domitian and the Senatorial Order*, p.26.
379. Tacitus, *Agricola* 42. (L.C.L., p.243).
380. *Acts* 16:16-24.
381. G.E.M. de St Croix, "Why were the Early Christians Persecuted?", *Past & Present* 26, p.37 n.145.
382. Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96.10. (L.C.L., p.405).
383. *Rev* 3:17.

Notes: Chapter Three.

NOTES: CHAPTER THREE

384. W. Schmithals, *The Apocalyptic Movement*, p.69.
Another possible reason, although it does not apply to
Revelation, is pseudonymity. It would not do for Enoch or
Moses to quote a later prophet.
385. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1,
pp. lxviii - lxxxvi.
386. *Ibid.*, Vol 1, p.lxv.
387. *Ibid.*, Vol 1, p.lxv.
388. *Rev* 4:2; *Isaiah* 6:
389. *Rev* 15:8;. *Isaiah* 6:4.
390. *Rev* 4:7; *Ezekiel* 1:10.
391. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1,
pp.119-123.
392. *Ezekiel* 1:10; 1:6.
393. *Rev* 4:7
394. *Rev* 4:8.
395. *Ezekiel* 1:6.
396. *Rev* 4:6.
397. *Ezekiel* 1:6.
398. *Ezekiel* 1:17;
399. *Ezekiel* 1:15.
400. *Rev* 4:2.
401. *Rev* 15:7.
402. J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, p.31.
403. *Ibid.*, p.133.
404. *Ibid.*, p.134.
405. *Ezekiel* 1:26.
406. *Rev* 4:1.
407. The Greek is found in the Gizeh Fragment - η $\theta\upsilon\pi\alpha$

Notes: Chapter Three.

(αὐτοῦ) ἡ εὐρυμέγῃ - R.H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch*, p.346, though the word 'door' does not appear in the English translations.

408. J.H. Charlesworth, *O.T. Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, p.789.
R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, p.107.
409. J.H. Charlesworth, *O.T. Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, p.110.
410. 1 Enoch 14:11, J.H. Charlesworth, *O.T. Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, p.20. Note also "the floor of crystal" in the previous verse.
1 Enoch 54:7, J.H. Charlesworth, *O.T. Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, p.38.
411. *Ezekiel* 1:1.
412. *Rev* 10:11; *Jeremiah* 1:10.
413. *Rev* 1:13; 14:14; *Daniel* 7:13.
414. *Rev* 1:7a; *Daniel* 7:13.
415. *Rev* 1:14a; *Daniel* 7:9.
416. *Rev* 1:13; *Daniel* 10:5.
417. *Rev* 1:14b; *Daniel* 10:6.
418. *Rev* 1:15; *Daniel* 10:6.
419. *Rev* 1:17; *Daniel* 10:9f., 12.
420. *Rev* 10:1; *Daniel* 10:6.
421. *Rev* 10:5-6; *Daniel* 12:7.
422. *Rev* 15:6; *Daniel* 10:5.
423. *Rev* 5:5; cf. *Isaiah* 11:1 ,
"a shoot from the stump of Jesse".
424. *Rev* 5:5; cf. *Genesis* 49:9
"Judah is a lion's whelp".
425. *Rev* 19:11; *Isaiah* 11:4.
426. *Rev* 19:15; cf. *Isaiah* 11:4 "the rod of his mouth".
427. *Rev* 3:7; *Isaiah* 22:22;
428. *Rev* 1:5; *Psalms* 89:27.
429. *Rev* 7:14; *Genesis* 49:11.

Notes: Chapter Three.

430. Rev 5:6; 13:8; *Isaiah* 53:7.
431. Rev 1:16; *Isaiah* 49:2.
432. Rev 1:7b; *Zechariah* 12:10.
433. *John* 19:37.
434. *Matthew* 24:30.
435. B. Lindars, *N. T. Apologetic*, pp.122-127.
436. Rev 19:15; *Isaiah* 63:3.
437. Rev 2:23; *Jeremiah* 17:10.
438. Rev 22:12a; *Isaiah* 40:10.
439. Rev 1:17b; *Isaiah* 48:12.
440. Rev 1:18; *Daniel* 12:7.
441. Rev 3:9c; *Isaiah* 43:4.
442. Rev 3:19; *Proverbs* 3:11f.
443. Rev 3:20; *Canticles* 5:2.
444. *Daniel* 7:13.
445. *1 Enoch* 46:2f., J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, p.34.
446. J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, p.649f.
447. Rev 17:14; 19:16.
448. *1 Enoch* 9:4., J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, p.17.
449. J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, p.43.
450. Rev 2:22f.
451. Rev 16:6.
452. Rev 11:5.
453. Rev 12:8.
454. Rev 16:2; 14:10.
455. Rev 14:20; 19:15.

Notes: Chapter Three.

456. *Ezekiel* 33:27; *Isaiah* 49:26; *2 Samuel* 22:9; *Daniel* 2:35; *Exodus* 9:10; *Genesis* 19:14; *Isaiah* 63:3.
457. I.T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*, p.656.
458. A.Y. Collins, *Crisis & Catharsis*, p.58.
459. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation*(I.C.C.), Vol 2, p.14.
460. J. Skinner, *Isaiah*, Vol 1, p.172.
461. A.B. Davidson, *Ezekiel*, p.190.
462. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 2, p.188f.
463. J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, p.80.
464. G^F adds "and of stone"; so does Tertullian, *De idolis* 4, Charlesworth, *O.T. Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, p.80n.. This is even more like the text in *Revelation*.
465. J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, p.36.
466. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, p.181.
467. *Rev* 12:4.
468. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, p.233.
469. *Rev* 16:2.
470. *Rev* 16:3f.
471. *Rev* 16:10.
472. *Rev* 16:21.
473. *Rev* 16:12.
474. *Rev* 16:13.
475. *Rev* 9:3-11.
476. "like unto horses" (cf. *Joel* 2:4); "arranged for battle" (cf. *Joel* 2:5); "teeth...like those of lions" (cf. *Joel* 1:6); "noise like that of many horse charriots rushing" (to battle) (cf. *Joel* 2:5).
477. *Rev* 9:2; *Joel* 2:10.
478. *Joel* 2:1.
479. *Rev* 6:4.

Notes: Chapter Three.

480. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, p.165.
481. Rev 6:12; 11:13; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18.
482. L. Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted*, p.77.
483. L. Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted*, p.76.
484. *Ezekiel* 38:19; *Amos* 8:8; 9:5; *Joel* 2:10.
485. Rev 11:19.
486. Rev 21:18; *Isaiah* 54:11.
487. Rev 21:19; *Isaiah* 54:11.
The Westminster and the Jerusalem Versions have the second foundation adorned or faced with 'lapis lazuli', but irrespective of how the name of the stone is translated, the proximity of *ὁ θεμέλιος* *ὁ* ... *σάπφειρος* in *Revelation* is close enough to show probable dependence on *τὰ θεμέλια σου σάπφειρον*.
in *Isaiah* 54:11.
488. Rev 21:23; *Isaiah* 60:19.
489. Rev 21:25; *Isaiah* 60:11.
490. Rev 21:24; *Isaiah* 60:3.
491. Rev 21:26; *Isaiah* 60:11; 60:5.
492. Rev 21:10; *Ezekiel* 40:2
493. Rev 21:3; *Ezekiel* 37:27; cf. *Lev* 26:11f..
494. Rev 21:16; *Ezekiel* 48:16
(where the measurements show that it is foursquare i.e. 4,500 cubits each side).
495. Rev 21:12; *Ezekiel* 48:31.
496. Rev 21:1f; *Ezekiel* 47:1; cf. *Zech* 14:8.
497. Rev 22:2; *Ezekiel* 47:12.
498. Rev 22:3a; *Zechariah* 14:8.
499. Rev 22:4; *Psalms* 17:15.
500. Rev 21:4f.
501. Rev 21:6. *Revelation* expresses this idea again in the final invitation of Christ in the epilogue (*Rev* 22:17).

Notes: Chapter Three.

502. *Rev* 21:27.
503. *Rev* 21:4.
504. *Rev* 7:16.
505. *Rev* 22:12a.
506. cf. *Rev* 7:17 - "and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."
507. Other examples:-
Rev 7:10; *Psalms* 3:8.
Rev 11:15; *Psalms* 2:2; 10:16;
Rev 15:3; *Psalms* 111:2; 139:14.
Rev 15:3; *Psalms* 145:17; 119:151,
Rev 16:7; *Psalms* 19:9.
Rev 19:2; *Psalms* 19:9.
Rev 19:4; *Psalms* 106:48.
Rev 19:6f; *Psalms* 90:1.
Rev 15:4; *Psalms* 86:9.
508. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, pp.172-174.
509. *Rev* 6:10.
510. *Rev* 6:11; 7:9,13; cf. also *Rev* 3:5 (just in Sardis); *Rev* 4:4 (24 elders); *Rev* 15:6 (7 angels); *Rev* 19:8 (bride of Christ); *Rev* 19:14 (Christ's heavenly armies); all of these are dressed in white.
511. R.H. Charles, *Book of Enoch*, p.132n.
512. A.Y. Collins, *Combat Myth*, p.24.
513. R.H. Charles, *Book of Enoch*, p.132n.
514. *1 Enoch* 81:1-4; 89:61-64, 68, 70, 71, 76, 77; 90:17, 20; 98:7, 8; 104:7.
515. *1 Enoch* 93:2f; 103:2; 106:19; 107:1; 108:7.
516. *Rev* 5:1; *Ezekiel* 2:9f.
517. *Rev* 10:9; *Ezekiel* 3:1-3.
518. *Daniel* 12:9.
519. *1 Enoch* 104:11-13.
520. *Rev* 22:10.
521. H.L. Strack & P. Billerbeck, Vol 3, pp. 760f.; Vol 4, 2

Notes: Chapter Three.

Excursus 30, pp.1003f., 1009f.

522. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation*, (I.C.C.), Vol 1, p.286.
523. *Rev* 11:7; *Daniel* 7:3
524. *Rev* 11:7; cf. *Rev* 13:7; *Daniel* 7:21.
525. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, p.286.
526. *Rev* 13:2; *Daniel* 7:6.
527. *Rev* 13:1; *Daniel* 7:7.
528. *Rev* 13:5; *Daniel* 7:8.
529. *Rev* 13:7; *Daniel* 7:21.
530. *Rev* 13:15; *Daniel* 3:6.
531. *Rev* 13:1; *Rev* 12:3.
532. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, p.319.
533. *Rev* 12:4; *Daniel* 8:10.
534. *Rev* 6:11; 7:9; *I. Q. S.* 4:8.
Rev 11:3f; *I. Q. S.* 9:11.
Rev 16:8; *I. Q. H.* 3:29f.
Rev 17:14; *I. Q. S.* 8:6.
Rev 19:20; *I. Q. H.* 6:25f.
Rev 20:8; *War of Sons of Light* 20:8.
Rev 21:23,25; 22:6; *I. Q. H.* 7:24.
Rev 22:16; *Zadokite Doc.* 7:19.
This last one, though quoted in Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, p.350, seems unlikely.
535. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, p.lxiii.
536. J.H. Charlesworth, *John and Qumran*, p.179n.
537. G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, p.157.
538. *Ibid.*, p.157.
539. *Ibid.*, p.157.
540. *Ibid.*, p.158.
541. *Ibid.*, p.158.
542. *Ibid.*, p.159.
543. *Ibid.*, p.160.

Notes: Chapter Three.

544. Ibid., p.160.
545. Ibid., pp.145f.
546. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, pp.lxxxiv, lxxxvi.
547. Rev 16:19; 17:5; 18:10,21; 14:8.
548. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 2, p.14.
549. Rev 9:20.
550. Rev 17:14; cf. *Matthew* 22:14.
551. Rev 6:10; cf. *Luke* 18:7.
552. Rev 14:4; cf. *Luke* 9:57.
553. Rev 18:24; cf. *Luke* 9:50.
554. Rev 19:9; cf. *Luke* 14:16.
555. Rev 7:3; cf. *Eph* 4:30.
556. Rev 3:21; cf. *Col* 3:1; *Eph* 2,6.
557. Rev 14:13; cf. *1 Thess* 4:16.
558. Rev 2:10; cf. *James* 1:12.
559. *Luke* 4:25.
560. *James* 5:17; cf. *4 Ezra* 5:4.
561. Rev 11:2; 13:5; 11:3; 12:6; 12:14;
cf. *Daniel* 12:11; 7:25; 12:7.
562. Rev 1:1; cf. *Matthew* 24:6.
563. Rev 1:3; cf. *Matthew* 26:18.
564. Rev 6,4; cf. *Matthew* 10:34.
565. Rev 6:17; cf. *Luke* 21:36.
566. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, p.lxxxivff.
567. R.E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, p.6 n.5. In the same note, he goes on to refer to Fiorenza's thesis that the author of *Revelation* is more familiar with Pauline than with Johannine school traditions, but he finds the hypothesis exaggerated.

Notes: Chapter Three.

H. Gebhardt, *The Doctrine of the Apocalypse*, believes that the author of *Revelation* and the *Fourth Gospel* are one and the same, and he devotes 121 pages to showing similarities. This too seems exaggerated, and not many would subscribe to this today. C.G. Jung, *Answer to Job*, argues from psychological reasons that the *Epistles of John* and *Revelation* could be written by the same man. We did not find his hypothesis convincing, and would consider exegetical arguments to be more weighty.

568. *John* 1:1, 9, 14. (*1 John* 5:7 in A.V.)
569. *Rev* 1:7; *John* 19:37.
570. *Rev* 21:6; 22:17; *John* 4:10; 7:38.
571. *John* 1:29, 36; *Revelation* 22 times.
572. C.H. Dodd holds that 'Lamb' is used here in the apocalyptic sense of 'leader', but allows a possible reference to the suffering servant of *Isaiah*. - C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, Cambridge, University Press, 1953, pp.230-238.
C.K. Barrett believes that the Baptist used the word in an apocalyptic sense, but the Evangelist probably intended a passover allusion. - C.K. Barrett, "The Lamb of God", *N.T.S.* 1, 1954-5, pp.213-218.
R.E. Brown accepts Barrett's view about the Baptist's meaning, and sees no serious difficulty in maintaining that the Evangelist intended references to both the suffering servant and to the paschal lamb. - R.E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John (i-xii); Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, Garden City, New York, Doubleday & Co., 1966, pp.58-63.
573. *Rev* 7:17; *John* 10:12, 14, 16.
574. *Hebrews* 13:20; *1 Peter* 2:25; 5:4.
575. R.E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, pp.42f.
R.E. Brown, *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind*, p.23.
576. R.E. Brown, *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind*, p.23.
577. *Ibid.*, p.24; *Rev* 7:14; *1 John* 1:7.
578. *Rev* 12:10f.; *1 John* 2:14; 4:4; cf. H. Gebhardt, *The Doctrine of the Apocalypse*, p.375. Also *Rev* 17:14.
579. R.E. Brown, *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind*, p.24
580. *Ibid.*, p.24.
581. D.E. Aune, S.N.T.S. Seminar Paper, 1985, pp.16-20.
582. H.D. Betz, *F.M.G.* translation, p.107.

Notes: Chapter Three.

583. Ibid., p.61.
584. Ibid., p.57.
585. Ibid., p.100.
586. Ibid., p.122.
587. Ibid., p.194.
588. Ibid., p.195.
589. Ibid., p.298.
590. D.E. Aune, S.N.T.S. Seminar Paper, 1985, p.4.
591. Ibid., pp.7-16.
592. W.M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, 1906.
593. C.J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches in their Local Setting*, 1986.
594. W.M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, p.244.
595. C.J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, p.53.
596. W.M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, p.247.
597. C.J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, pp.41-47.
598. Ibid., pp.48-50.
599. Strabo, *Geography*, 14.1.37. (L.C.L., Vol 6, p.245).
600. Aristides, *A Palinode for Smyrna*, Oration 20,19,
cf. *The Smyrnaean Oration*(1), Oration 17,2,
(*The Complete Works*, Vol 2, ed. Behr, p.18 & p.1).
601. C.J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, p 64.
602. W.M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, pp.275-277.
603. Ibid., pp.256-259, 275.
604. C.J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, p.69.
605. Ibid., p.69.
606. L. Robert, *Les Gladiateurs dans l'Orient Grec*, pp.280f.
607. W.M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, pp.291-293.
608. P.G.M. 3. 123f., Betz translation p.21.

Notes: Chapter Three.

609. D.E. Aune, S.N.T.S. Seminar Paper, 1985, pp.21-24.
610. C.J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, p.128.
611. Statius, *Silvae*, 4. 1. 1-4. (L.C.L. Statius, Vol 1, pp.206f.
612. W.M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, pp.359-362.
613. Strabo, *Geography* 13.4.10. (L.C.L., Vol 6, p.181).
614. W.M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, pp.409-412.
615. M.J.S.Rudwick & E.M.B. Green, "The Laodicean Lukewarmness", *Expository Times* 69, 1957-8, pp.176-178.
616. W.M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, p.428.
617. *Ibid.*, p.429.
618. *Ibid.*, p.429.
619. D.E. Aune, S.N.T.S. Seminar Paper, 1985, pp.25-30.
620. G.B. Caird, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*, p.58.
621. *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Nos 110 & 523, cited and quoted in full in A. Deissman, *New Light on the N.T.*, p.83.
622. D.E. Aune, S.N.T.S. Seminar Paper, 1985, pp.25-30.
623. D.E. Aune, "The Influence of Roman Imperial Court Ceremonial on the Apocalypse of John", *Biblical Research* 28, 1983, pp.5-26.
624. *Ibid.*, pp.12f.
625. Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 7.23. (L.C.L., Vol 2, p.283).
626. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 14.304. (L.C.L., Vol 7, p.611).
627. Herodian, *History of the Empire*, 8.7.2. (L.C.L. Vol 2, p.295).
628. S.G. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*, pp.57f.
629. *Ibid.*, p.58.
630. D.E. Aune, S.N.T.S. Seminar Paper, 1985, p.13.
631. Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 67.4.3. (L.C.L. Vol 8, p.327).
632. R.R. Brewer, "The Influence of Greek Drama on the Apocalypse of John", *Anglican Theological Review* 18, pp.74-92.
633. *Rev* 12:1.

Notes: Chapter Three.

634. A.Y. Collins, *Combat Myth*, p.71.
635. Ibid., p.75. The aretology which associates Isis with the sun, moon and stars was found in a city on the west coast of Asia Minor (ibid., p.75).
636. Ibid., p.59.
637. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, p.xci.
638. A.Y. Collins, *Combat Myth*, pp.105-107.
639. The most complete form of the myth is found in *Hygini Fabulae* (ed. H.J. Rose), 140, pp.102f.. A.Y. Collins refers to the myth as the Apollo-Python-Leto myth. The goddess is known by the names of Latona, Lato and Leto. We have retained 'Latona' because it is used in the text of H.J. Rose which is our best source of the myth.
640. A.Y. Collins, *Combat Myth*, pp.65-67.
641. A.Y. Collins, *The Apocalypse* (N.T. Message 22), p.86.
642. Suetonius, *Augustus* 94.4. (L.C.L. Vol 1, p.267).
643. Suetonius, *Nero* 6.4. (L.C.L. Vol 2, p.97).
644. Suetonius, *Augustus* 94.4. (L.C.L. Vol 1, p.267).
645. S.J. Scherrer, "Signs and Wonders in the Imperial Cult", *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 103, 1984, pp.599-610.
646. Lucian, *Alexander the False Prophet*, 17.26. (L.C.L. pp.210f.).
Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies*, 4. 41, 4. 28, *A.N.F.*, Vol. 6, pp.106f., pp.95f.
Suetonius, *Gaius*, 57.1. (L.C.L., pp.490f.).
Athenagoras, *Supplication for the Christians*, chap. 27, *A.N.F.*, Vol 2, p.410.
647. Julius Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 4. 130. (E. Bethe text, p.240).
Heron of Alexandria, *Druckwerke*, 30.1-6. (cited by S.J. Scherrer, *J.B.L.* 103, 1984, p.608).
Plutarch, "To an Uneducated Ruler", *Moralia*, 780 F (L.C.L., *Moralia*, Vol 10, pp.60f.).
Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 59.28.6. (L.C.L., pp.354f.).
648. Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 59.28.6. (L.C.L. Vol 7, p.355).
649. H.D. Betz, "On the Problem of the Religio-Historical Understanding of Apocalypticism", *Journal for Theology and the Church* Vol 6, 1969, p.134-156.
650. Ibid., pp.142-144.

Notes: Chapter Three.

651. 1 *Enoch* 7:4 - 10:20 (Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha* 1, pp.16-18).
652. 3 *Baruch* 13:1 (Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha* 1, p.677).
653. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 2, pp. 120f..
654. *Ibid.*, p.121; cf. p.123.
655. H.D. Betz, "On the Problem of the Religio-Historical Understanding of Apocalypticism", *Journal for Theology and the Church* Vol 6, p.148.
656. R. Beauvery, "L'Apocalypse au risque de la numismatique", *Revue Biblique*, April 1983, pp. 243-260 and Plate 1.
657. D.E. Aune, S.N.T.S. Seminar Paper, 1985, p.5.
658. *The Book of the Dead*, 175:1, 15, 20. (ed. Budge, pp.596-598).
659. There is a combination of 'fire' and 'second death' in the *Targum of Isaiah* 65:6, but there is no mention of a lake.- M. McNamara, *The N.T. and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*, p.123. Although the extant text cannot be placed earlier than 5th century A.D., we have mentioned the Targum because it may represent a much older tradition.
"Lake of fire" occurs in the *Coffin Texts*, spells 1054 and 1166. (*The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, ed. R.O. Faulkner, Vol 3, pp.138, 184.), but we have failed to find "lake of death" combined with "second death" except in *The Book of the Dead* (cf. note 658 above).

Notes: Chapter Four.

NOTES: CHAPTER FOUR

660. M. Luther, "Preface to the Revelation of Saint John", cited in W.G. Kümmel, *The N.T.: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems*, pp.25f.
661. Rev 5:5.
662. Rev 21:14.
663. Rev 11:8.
664. M. Luther, "Preface to the Revelation of Saint John", cited in W.G. Kümmel, *The N.T.: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems*, p.26.
665. Ibid., p.26.
666. Chapters 4, 9, 10, 18. R.H. Charles sees Rev 16:15 as an interpolation (*Commentary on Revelation*, Vol 2, p.49). If this is so (though we do not see any necessity for thinking so), chapter 16 would have to be added as a fifth.
667. Rev 5:6,8,12,13; 6:1,16; 7:9,10,14,17; 8:1; 12:11; 13:8; 14:1,4(2),10; 15:3; 17:14(2); 19:7,9; 21:9,14,22,23,27; 22:1,3.
668. Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-born from the dead, the ruler of the kings of the earth, like a Son of Man, the first and the last, the living One, Son of God, the holy and faithful One, the Amen, the ultimate source of God's creation, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, his Christ, faithful and true, judge with integrity, warrior for justice, the Word of God, King of kings and Lord of lords, the temple, lighted torch, Jesus, Lord Jesus, shepherd, morning star, "alpha and the omega", the beginning and the end.
669. Rev 1:5,7; 5:6,9,12; 7:14; 11:8; 12:11; 13:8; 19:13.
670. Rev 1:5,18; 2:9.
671. Rev 3:21; 12:5.
672. J.D.G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, pp.246f.
673. Rev 5:5; 7:10.
674. Rev 19:16; 17:14; cf. Rev 1:5; 11:15.
675. Rev 3:21; 5:13; 6:16; 7:9; 22:1,3.
676. Rev 7:10; 12:10.
677. Rev 5:9f.; 19:7-9.

Notes: Chapter Four.

678. "Judge" - Rev 19:11; "The first and the last" - Rev 1:17b.
679. Rev 1:6; 5:8,12,14.
680. Rev 22:12; 19:11; 21:27.
681. Rev 1:7; 22:7,12,20.
682. J. Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, pp.112f.
683. *Ibid.*, p.112.
684. Rev 1:5; 3:9,19.
685. Rev 3:20.
686. Rev 19:8,9; 21:9.
687. Rev 1:5.
688. Rev 5:9.
689. Rev 7:14.
690. Rev 2:5,16,22; 3:3,19.
691. Rev 22:17.
692. Rev 14:6.
693. Rev 2:5,16,22; 3:3,19.
694. Rev 2:5; 3:3.
The introduction of the seven letters into our argument raises the question as to whether or not they are from the same hand as the main part of the *Apocalypse*. R.H. Charles believes that they are on grounds of diction and idiom (R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, p.2). A full discussion of the problem, however, would seem to be unnecessary here, since we are considering the relevance of the *Apocalypse* as it has been accepted into the N.T. canon.
695. Rev 12:11.
696. Rev 22:17; 14:6.
697. J. Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, p.380. We would not, however, go as far as Hick as to say that damnation is 'morally impossible'. Our knowledge is too meagre for certitude; we can only speculate.
698. W. Klassen, "Vengeance in the Apocalypse of John", *C.B.Q.* 28 1966, pp.300-311.

Notes: Chapter Four.

699. *IV Ezra* 4:35-77, J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha* I, p.531.
700. Above - chapter 3, pp.59ff.
H.D. Betz, "On the Problem of the Religio-Historical Understanding of Apocalypticism", *Journal for Theology and the Church* Vol 6, 1969, pp.134-156.
701. *Rev* 16:6
702. The Jerusalem Bible, R. Knox translation.
703. J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, p.79.
704. *Apoc. Ab.* 29:19f. J. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, p.704.
705. *Book of Job* 23:30 J. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 2, p.102.
706. N. Perrin, *The N.T.: an Introduction*, pp.21-26.
707. A.N. Wilder, "The Rhetoric of Ancient and Modern Apocalyptic", *Interpretation* 25, 1971, pp.436-453.
708. M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, pp. 95-104.
709. E. Käsemann, *Jesus Means Freedom*, p.132.
710. *Ibid.*, p.133.
711. *Ibid.*, p.133.
712. *Rev* 21:1.
713. *Rev* 21:5.
714. W. Wink, *Unmasking the Powers*, pp.69-86.
715. *Rev* 2:10.
716. D.S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, p.29.
717. *Ibid.*, p.32.
718. J.H. Gardiner, *The Bible as English Literature*, pp.250-281.
719. *Ibid.*, pp.268f.
720. *Ibid.*, p.273.
721. *Ibid.*, p.275.
722. *Ibid.*, pp.270-273.

Notes: Chapter Four.

723. Ibid., p.276.
724. J.G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community*, pp.50-57.
725. Ibid., p.55.
726. B. McConvery, *The Apocalypse*, pp.8f.
727. A.C. Welch, *Visions of the End*, pp.16f.
728. *Isaiah* 64:4. Since Paul's words are a paraphrase, his source is not certain. Origen thought it was *The Apocalypse of Elijah*, but the Coptic fragments of that scripture which have turned up in Egypt do not contain the words - Moffatt, *1 Corinthians* (Moffatt N.T. Commentary), p.30.
729. *1 Cor* 2:9.
730. E. Käsemann, *Jesus Means Freedom*, p.132.
731. *Rev* 4:1
732. R. Bultmann, *New Testament and Mythology*, p.12.
733. R. Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, pp.22f.
734. Ibid., p.26.
735. Ibid., p.27.
736. Ibid., p.29.
737. Ibid., p.31.
738. Ibid., p.31.
739. J.C. Beker, *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel*, pp.70-74.
740. *2 Cor* 6:2; cf. *2 Cor* 5:17; *Gal* 4:4.
741. *Jn* 5:24f.
742. R. Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, p.49.
743. Ibid., p.49.
744. *1 Cor* 15: esp. vv.12-24; *Rev* 3:22.
745. R. Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, p.52 (whole context pp.51-56).
746. R. Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, pp.49f.
747. *1 Thess* 4:15-17; *1 Cor* 1:8.

Notes: Chapter Four.

748. R. Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, p.47 n.1.
749. H.H. Wendt, *Gospel according to St John*, pp.131ff.
750. C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to John*, p.219.
751. *Ibid.*, p.244.
752. J.H. Bernard, *The Gospel according to St John* (I.C.C.), p.245.
753. *Ibid.*, pp.clxvii, 201, 202, 204, 211.
754. O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, p.238.
755. *Ibid.*, p.xxviii.
756. *Ibid.*, p.67.
757. *Ibid.*, pp.81-83.
758. *Ibid.*, p.xx.
759. *Ibid.*, p.84; cf. p.xix.
760. O. Cullmann, *Salvation in History*, pp.195f.
761. O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, p.xix; cf. p.84.
762. Rev 19:13.
763. O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, p.37.
764. St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a. 10. 1-6, Blackfriars, *Text and Translation*, Vol 2, pp.134-155.
765. P. Ricoeur, *Essays on Biblical Interpretation*, p.66.
766. Rev 4:8; 5:9; 14:3; 19:1.
767. Rev 5:12; 6:10; 7:10.
768. Rev 4:10; 5:8, 14; 7:11; 19:4.
769. Rev 5:8; 14:2; 15:2.
770. Rev 22:14; cf. Rev 22:2, 19.
771. Rev 21:6; 22:1, 17.
772. Rev 19:7-9; 21:9.
773. Rev 20:4.
774. Rev 20:4, 6; 22:5.

Notes: Chapter Four.

775. J. Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology*, pp.326f.
776. Pliny, *Ep. ad Traj.*, 10.96.10. (L.C.L., p.405).
777. W.J. Ferrar, *The Apocalypse Explained*, p.119.
778. C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, p.137.
779. *Rev* 3:2.
780. *Rev* 3:17.
781. *Rev* 2:20.
782. cf. note 776.
783. E. Käsemann, *Jesus Means Freedom*, p.135.
784. *Ibid.*, p.137.
785. *Ibid.*, p.136.
786. *Ibid.*, p.139.
787. *Ibid.*, p.139.
788. G. Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, pp.204, 307.
789. *Ibid.*, p.110.
790. *Ibid.*, p.48.
791. *Rev* 15:2.
792. *Rev* 2:9.
793. *Rev* 3:17.
794. *Rev* 6:6.
795. *Rev* 13:17.
796. *Rev* 18:3.
797. *Rev* 1:9.
798. *Rev* 2:13.
799. *Rev* 2:10.
800. *Rev* 20:7.
801. *Gaudium et Spes*, 10, 20, *Documents of Vatican II*, pp. 208, 217f.

Notes: Chapter Four.

802. E. Schillebeekx, *Christ*, p.461.
803. E.S. Fiorenza, "Apokalypsis and Propheteia", *L'Apocalypse johannique et l'Apocalypse dans le Nouveau Testament*, p.108.
804. E.E. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutics*, p.175.
805. *Ibid.*, p.170-180.
806. *Ibid.*, p.180.
807. *Ibid.*, p.226.
808. *1 Enoch* 46:2f.; J. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, p.34.
809. *Deut* 10:17; *1 Enoch* 63:4; 84:2; *2 Macc* 13:4; combined in *1 Enoch* 9:4 J.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, p.17.
810. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, p.54.
811. E.E. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutics*, p.226; cf.p.175.
812. R. Beauvery, "L'Apocalypse au risque de la numismatique", *Revue Biblique*, April 1983, pp.243-260.
813. R.R. Brewer, "The Influence of Greek Drama on the Apocalypse of John", *Anglican Theological Review* 18, 1936, pp.74-92.
814. E. Bock, *The Apocalypse of St John*, pp.93f.
815. D.E. Aune, S.N.T.S. Seminar Paper 1985, p.24.
816. *Ibid.*, p.29.
817. *Ibid.*, pp.7-16.
818. *Ibid.*, pp.16-21.
819. A.Y. Collins, *The Apocalypse* (N.T. Message 22), p.86.
820. *Rev* 22:16; *Rev* 2:28.
821. Statius, *Silvae*, 4.1.1-4. (L.C.L., Statius, Vol 1, pp.206f.).
822. *Rev* 12:1.
823. *Gaudium et Spes*, 32, *Documents of Vatican II*, p.230.
824. G. Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p.151.
825. *Gaudium et Spes*, 36, *Documents of Vatican II*, p.234.
826. St. Augustine, *Confessions*, 1. 1. 10ff. (L.C.L., p.3).

Notes: Chapter Four.

827. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, p.cxi.
828. V. Taylor, *The Names of Jesus*, p.1.
829. B. Lindars, *N.T. Apologetic*, p.77.
830. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, p.cxiii.
831. In *John*, the Greek word used is *ἄμνος* and not *ἀρνίον* as in *Revelation*. C.H. Dodd, who discusses the expression in *Jn* 1:29 very fully, concludes that the expression in *John* is probably used in the apocalyptic sense of 'leader' and is equivalent to the expression 'the King of Israel', with a possible allusion to the suffering servant of *Isaiah* 53. C.K. Barrett (*N.T.S.* 1, pp.213-218) suggests that the Baptist may have used 'lamb' in an apocalyptic sense, and that the Evangelist probably intended a passover allusion.
Neither Dodd nor Barrett claim *Jn* 1:29 as an authentic saying of the Baptist, but both believe that he may have referred to Christ as 'lamb'.
832. *Rev* 5:6.
833. C.K. Barrett, "The Lamb of God", *N.T.S.* 1, 1954-5, pp.215f.
834. *Rev* 5:6,12; 7:14; 12:11; 13:8.
The three references to the lamb and the scroll are *Rev* 5:8; 6:1; 8:1; we would include these with the sacrificial references because the reason for the Lamb breaking the seals of the scroll is that he was sacrificed (*Rev* 5:9).
835. *Rev* 5:6; 7:10, 17; 14:1, 4; 15:3; 17:14.
836. *Rev* 5:13; 6:16; 7:9; 14:4, 10;
19:7, 9; 21:9, 14, 22, 23, 27; 22:1, 3.
837. *Rev* 7:17.
838. *Mt* 27:11; *Mk* 15:2; *Lk* 23:3; *Jn* 18:37.
839. R.H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, p.68.
840. *Ibid.*, p.lxxxiii.
841. *Rev* 1:5.
842. J.H. Bernard, *Commentary on John* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, p.cxxxv.
843. R.H. Charles, *Commentary* (I.C.C.), Vol 1, pp. 354f.

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