The wrath of God-Seven Plagues

A number of questions require clarification before we further analyse the plague-vials. It has been noted by scholars such as H.-P. Müller[1] that the vials are stereotypical or formulaic, much more so than the seals or the trumpets, for example they can be deconstructed into:

> And [the X (angel)]…..then [the X-angel] poured out his bowel upon the…..and [it] happened…with the result that…and….into three parts happened…

Most of the vial-plagues follow the established stereotypical rubric shown above and some of them demonstrate correspondence with the trumpets:

Revelation 9:20 - these plagues (fifth)
Revelation 16:9 - these plagues (fourth)

Revelation 8:8 - the third part of the sea became blood (second)
Revelation 16:3 - upon the sea, as the blood of a dead (second)

Revelation 8:10 - star upon the fountains of waters (third)
Revelation 16:4 - upon the rivers and fountains of waters (third)

Revelation 9:20 - yet repented not (sixth)
Revelation 16:11 - repented not of their deeds (fifth)

This has some preterist commentators concluding that the vial-plagues were all realized in the first century particularly as the "same" protagonists occur, namely, the dragon, the beast and the false prophet (Rev 16.13). That a relationship exists between the trumpets and Rev 16 is undeniable but is it, identical, equal, equivalent or isomorphic? Similar questions are posed in mathematical number theory etc where it becomes clear that the terms are not interchangeable.[2] So also here, equivalence does not mean equal or identical.[3] Suffice to say that there is a period when the beast "is not" (<u>does not exist</u>) and therefore the beasts that John is shown <u>do not from a historic continuum</u>. At some point this beast is dead until it is reincarnated in the future and the fact that the dragon becomes the "old serpent" (even after it no longer exists as a historical entity) and the earth-beast (two horned Lamb) becomes the "false prophet" in later chapters (Rev 16.3, 19.20, 20.10) indicates equivalence <u>but not identity</u>. The same can be said of the "beast" of Rev 16 which carries no descriptor such as "red" or "scarlet" or, "emerges from the sea". Therefore the beast of Rev 16 is not a specific beast but a generic concatenation that represents all of them. On each occasion when the beast reappears it is subtly different, yet still recognizable (always with seven heads and ten horns).

Therefore we need to progress with care as from Rev 16 onwards we are dealing with a new historical phenomenon, albeit bearing similarities with patterns established in the past. A brief survey suggests that Rev 15-22 is sequential and in parts parallel:

Rev 15 - In heaven seven angels with seven vials
Rev 16 - Pour out the vials of wrath on the earth
Rev 17 - Vial angel shows John the Judgement of the great whore
Rev 18 - Lament: Babylon is fallen
Rev 19 - Marriage Supper of the Lamb
Rev 20 - The Thousand years
Rev 21-22 - New Heavens and Earth

Therefore, Rev 16 sets the agenda for the following chapters, first using the ten kings as an instrument for retributive justice against Babylon (the great whore) and then universal judgements at Armageddon (marriage Supper of the Lamb) in so doing the Apocalypse draws on examples from the Old Testament – principally, the plagues of Egypt and the judgement of Babylon (like the seals and trumpets did) but it also draws on earlier intra-biblical material from the Apocalypse itself in order to depict a picture that has past manifestations of the beast merging into a future "parousia" of the beast creating a supra-historical reality – a larger than life monster that represents everything that went wrong throughout history.

The Apocalypse is able to recycle its own material because first and second century historical patterns build up to a finale.[4] Similar themes deliver similar but not exactly the same outcomes because this time, rather than a "coming in judgement", **the sequence ends** with the physical presence of the kingdom on earth. John lived at a time when he only saw the first phase play out (the fall of Jerusalem) but he would have understood (from the Olivet prophecy etc) that further repeats were necessitated by the obstinate refusal of the Jews to repent. In other words, in order to achieve full realization of the covenant, Yahweh would need to keep repeating the patterns until the obstinate spirit of Jewry was shattered and this has proven extremely difficult as pogroms, genocides and holocausts have failed to make an impact on the indomitable character of Jacob who was almost (but not quite) able to wrestle God himself to a stand-still. No wonder John was amazed and marvelled at the persistence of the beast. However, John is asked why he marvelled (Rev 17.7) as θαυμάζω (admiration) is one step removed from worship.

The lesson to us is not to act as sycophants or cheerleaders to an apostate nation – their hearts have been hardened (like that of Pharaoh) --- "*What* if God, willing to shew *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? " (Rom 9.22-24). But God always remembers mercy (the rainbow covenant) in wrath. The consequence of Jewish intransigence was the offer of hope to the Gentiles ---an in-grafted branch into the one "holy Church" of God that has its root in the covenant promises concerning the messiah. The reconciliation of Israel at the end of the trumpets is both literally and spiritually "life from the dead" when there will be no more "Jew" or "Gentile" but one people – a kingdom of priests, although God will vent his wrath on the heathen nations at the last (Rev 11.18) for their over-zealous retribution against his people (Isa 10.5-15). Israel will be judged but also the Gentiles. In the meantime the tragedy must play out one more time – but this time it ends positively resulting in praise (Rev 15.3-4) from the saints for his marvellous works (saving works) and from the Gentiles for his judgements (righteous punishments).

At this point we have truly reached the "end of history" as the "man of sin" has been revealed in all his "glory" and the glory of Yahweh (Jesus Christ) is manifested with the destruction of the enduring principle of self-divinization that has bedevilled history in the form of empire and religion from the beginning of time. Only then will it become undeniable that there is a God in Israel who is sovereign over all creation and that, "he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17.31).

Therefore the penultimate challenge[5] to the authority of God has truly cosmic proportions and spiritual dimensions –good versus evil, light versus eternal darkness. This is not an exaggeration as everything that man has created is opposed to God (as will become abundantly and undeniably apparent) and humankind will learn the hard way that man is not, nor ever can become divine through self-determination. Man is not the creator of his own destiny, the master of his own soul. In the denial of his creator he has become but a brute beast, satisfying his own appetites and destroying the beautiful world that has been gifted to him.

Pour out the vials (Rev 16.1)

> "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth".

Even though this chapter concludes with the pouring forth of the seventh bowl, at which the work of God's wrath is complete, John's vision will not be complete. For three more chapters (Rev 17, Rev 18, and Rev 19) remain within which John is shown details attending the judgments associated with these bowls culminating in the Second Coming of Christ and the binding of Satan prior to the Millennial Kingdom (Rev 20).

In Psalm 79 we find the following appeal: "**Pour out** Your wrath on the nations that do not know you, and on the kingdoms that do not call on your name".[6] The context of the Psalm is the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the cities of Judea during Hezekiah's reign. Previously it was demonstrated that Psalm 79 is an important inter-text for Rev 11[7] informing the background of the witnessing program that resulted in a repentant remnant. It seems then that this final onslaught and devastation of the "great city" has the desired result (repentance) and the wrath of God is now turned against the Gentiles. The thought in their hearts was that there was no longer a God in Israel as the undefeatable Jews had been shattered. However, God had allowed the Gentiles (the ten kings) to function as his instrument of retribution but they had acted in a high-handed unrestrained manner (cf. Isa 10.5-15) and now they would reap the consequences. The following table gives an overview of the vial-plagues:

Rev 16	Vial	Location	Plague	Result
v.2	**First**	Earth	Grievous sore	Image worshippers (666) dead
v.3	**Second**	Sea	Blood	Living souls died
v.4-5	**Third**	Rivers & fountains	Blood	Give them blood to drink
v.8-9	**Fourth**	Sun	Scorching	Blasphemy, unrepentant
v.10	**Fifth**	Seat of the Beast	Darkness	Pain, blasphemy, unrepentant
v.12	**Sixth**	Euphrates	Dried up	Prepared for kings of the East
v.13		Mouth dragon, beast, false prophet	Three unclean Spirits like frogs	
v.14			spirits of devils working miracles	Gather them to the battle
v.15			Warning	I come as a thief
v.16		Armageddon		gathered
v.17	**Seventh**	Air	Great voice	It is done
v.18-20		Great Babylon	Great Earthquake	City divided into three parts, islands flee.
v.21		Upon men	Great hail	Blasphemed God

The plagues of Rev 16 employ the plagues against Egypt as inter-text:

Vials (Revelation)	**Plagues of Egypt (Exodus)**
1. A grievous sore.	1. Boils.
2. The sea as the blood of a dead man.	2. Pharaoh's army drowned in the sea.
3. Rivers become blood.	3. Nile turned to blood.
4. Sun scorches men with fire.	4. The Shekinah glory?
5. Darkness.	5. Darkness.
6. Unclean spirits like frogs.	6. Frogs.
7. Hail, with fire.	7. Hail and lightning – "fire ran along the ground." (Ex.9: 23)
The effect: they repented not, they blasphemed God. (16: 9,11,21)	**The effect:** Pharaoh hardened his heart.

The fist plague (Rev 16.2)

> "And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and *upon* them which worshipped his image".

The context of Exodus is theomachy, a contest between Yahweh (the God of Israel) and Pharaoh (the god of Egypt). Each "plague" was a judgement against a "god" (the Nile was a "god", frogs were "gods" etc). Rev 16 contains numerous echoes and intertextual linguistic connections with Exodus. The first plague is described as a "noisome and grievous sore" (harmful and festering). The resemblance to the plague of Egypt is unmistakable even the same word (*helkos*) as the Septuagint (LXX) is used [sore] (Ex.9: 8-12). The victims of the second plague (16.3) are literally, *hos nekros* – as (like a) dead [man] echoing (Ex.12: 33); "we be all dead men".

It is interesting to note that Moses' first miracles were mimicked by Pharaoh's magicians. These "false prophets" are traditionally referred to by the Talmudists and the Rabbis as "Jannes and Jambres" and are used as examples of reprobation in 2 Tim 3.8. Expanding beyond the context of Rev 16 we find that two witnesses were initially sent to a place "spiritually called Egypt…." (Rev 11.3) to "…smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will" (v.6) alluding to the prophetic ministry of the witnesses **Moses** (and Elijah who invokes drought).

In Rev.13.13-14 the false prophet mimics the wonders of the true witnesses for a similar time period (three-and-a-half-years) and in Rev 15.3 the martyred victors are portrayed as singing the **Song of Moses** the servant of God (Song of the Sea) in anticipation of judgement vial-plagues of Exodus. The **Song of Moses** (Exod 15) and the **Song of Witness** (Deut. 31.21-32.52), form the woof and weave of Rev 16. Deuteronomy 31 introduces the **Song of Witness** (v.21) which was to be used as a testimony against the people, because after the death of Moses they would break covenant and worship strange gods. The **Song of Witness** that follows is prophetic, "will befall you in the latter days" (v.29).

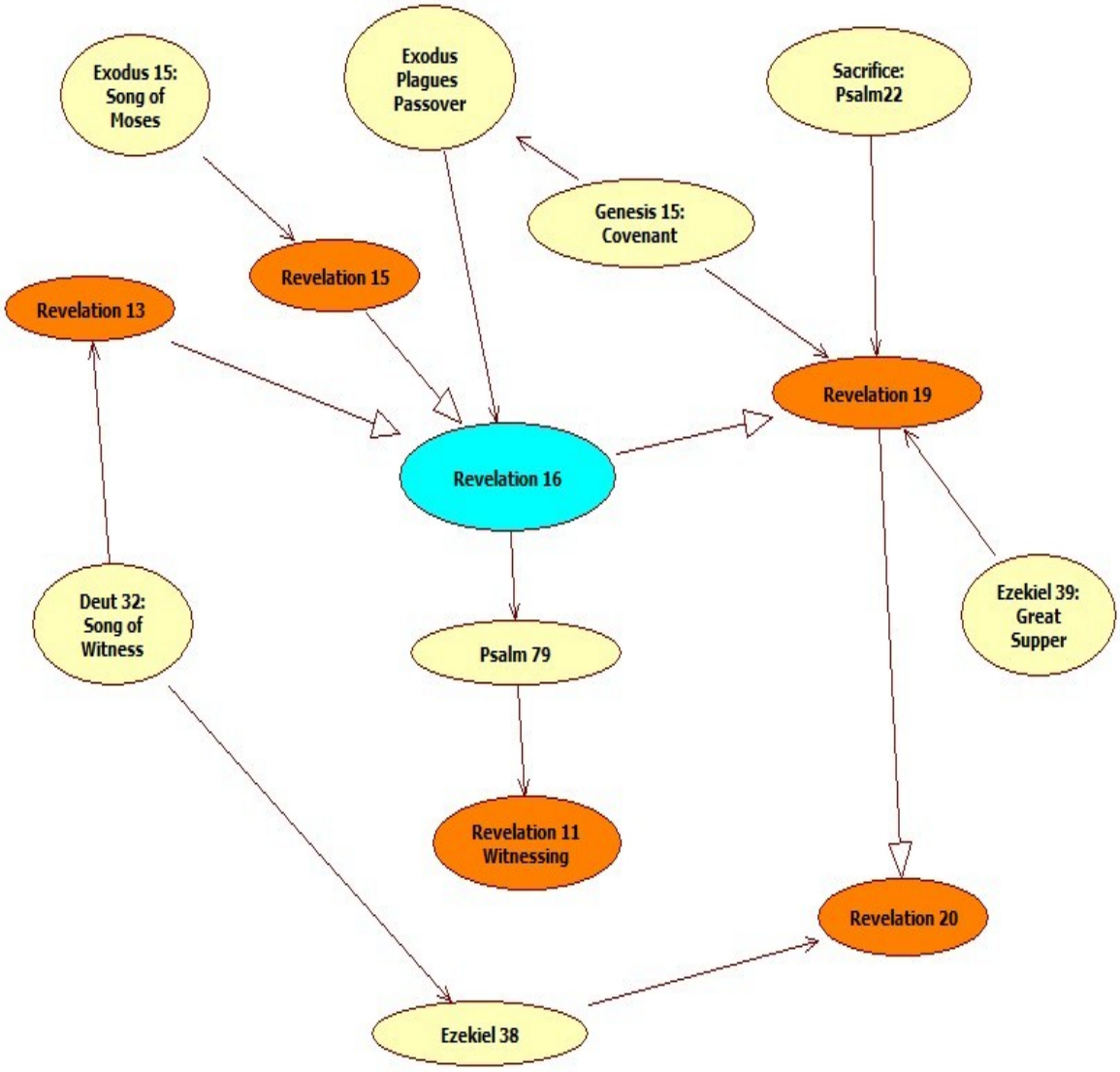
In our analysis of Rev 10 we observed by means of a comparison table how allusions to the Song of Witness function as an inter-text throughout the Apocalypse. Below we concentrate specifically on allusions found in Rev 16:

Revelation 16	Deuteronomy 32
Men which had the mark of the beast and worshipped his image. (v.2)	They sacrificed to devils (demons RV) not to God.(v.17)
Third Vial: For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink. (v.16)	Rejoice, O ye nations, *with* his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, *and* to his people. (v.43)
Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. (v.7)	For all his ways are judgment: a God of truth without iniquity, just and right is he. (v.4)
Fourth Vial: And the forth Angel poured his vial upon the sun; and power was given him to scorch men with fire. (v.8)	For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains…. I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them…..(Deut. 32:22-24)

The Song of Witness is employed in Rev 13 to contrast the power of God with the power of the beast:

Deuteronomy 32	Revelation 13
See now that I, even I, am he,	Who *is* like unto the beast? (13.4)[8]
And there is no god with me…	…he exerciseth all the power of the first beast (13.12)[9]
I kill, and I make alive;	…to give life to the image of the beast. (13: 15)
I wound and I heal….	One of his heads as though it were wounded unto death; and his deadly wound was healed. (13: 3)
Neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. (v.39)	…who is able to make war with him? (13.4)

The matrix of links is complex[10], for example, Ezek 38 (Gog invasion) is linked with Deut 32, which in turn is linked with Rev 20. Armageddon in Rev 16 (expanded in the Great Supper of Rev 19) is connected with Ezek 39, Ps 22 and Gen 15 (land covenant).[11] A schematic matrix is drawn below with Rev 16 at the centre. However, each of these chapters forms the centre of its own matrix in an ever increasing web of complexity. Moreover, the matrix below is not exhaustive as there are many other links both within Revelation and across the Testaments.



Of course, we need to remind ourselves that the "beast" and the "image worshippers" in this chapter (Rev 16) are not the same ones as found in the second century (Rev 13). It is a repeat pattern. In the same way as we do not regard the invasion of Psalm 79 as depicting a literal invasion by an Assyrian king ---these are types and patterns.

The Second Plague (Rev 16.3)

> "And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead *man*: and every living soul died in the sea".

The first plague was poured out on the "earth" (i.e., Israel) because that is where the beast and the image worshipers are found. They have the "mark of the beast" but now they are also marked by God with a "grievous sore". They are therefore readily identifiable as they carry two marks, one from the beast that allows the beast worshipers economic freedom and one from God that speaks of their uncleanness and unsuitability for any form of worship, as those with festering leprous sores were not allowed before the divine presence until healed and ritually cleansed. Lilje comments that "those who once bore the mark of the beast are now visited by 'marks' of God."[12] God promised to strike Israel with similar boils if they continued in disobedience toward Him (Deut 28.27, 28.35).

However, the beast has no such qualms and does not allow impurity to disrupt his lucrative trade in everything under the sun including the "souls of men" (Rev 18.13 i.e., the living or breathing). The outpouring of the vial on the sea disrupts the beasts' life sustaining force – just as Egypt was economically ruined by the death of the Nile so now also the beast when his lucrative trade from Gentile nations (the sea) is disrupted. In this way Yahweh demonstrates his sovereignty over both earth (Jew) and sea (Gentile) and every living (breathing) creature.

The unusual phrase, blood of as a dead *man* is used here. The KJV renders a more exact translation as the word man is not found in the original Greek and is therefore placed in italics. Literally it reads, ***hos nekros*** – as (like a) dead. This is a direct allusion to the effect of the last plague on Egypt: "And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste: for they said, we be all dead *men*." (Exod.12.33). The nation of Israel was God's wife and she had been taken by another man; "But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said unto him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman that thou has taken; for she is married to a husband" (Gen.20.3RVmg).[13] God will punish the heathen nations that have taken his bride, but he will also punish the nation for being a harlot.

Unlike Sarah, this wife proved to be unfaithful, for as soon as she was free from Egyptian bondage she worshipped the image of the beast (golden calf – Exod 32.8) and was given the waters of jealousy to drink (Num 5); "Moses took the calf they had made, burnt it with fire, ground it to powder, sprinkled it on the water and made them drink it" (Exod 32.20). The next vial describes how the harlot is made to drink blood because of her unfaithfulness.

It has already been noted that the vial-plague of 16.3 is similar to the trumpet judgement in Rev 8.8 and that indicates that although they are separated in historical time the punishments are dealing with familiar themes. In the second century it was the establishment of temple worship under the false messiah bar Kochba with the support of the Parthian (Babylonian) beast. Jewish trade was temporarily interrupted when Trajan conquered Parthia. Moreover, Bar Kochba issued his own coinage depicting his "messianic star" rising above the temple. Without his coinage Jews would have not be able to "buy or sell" and objecting Christians would have been easily singled out. In the trumpets only a third of the sea became blood, now the whole sea becomes lifeless[14] – the judgements have universal consequences beyond the shores of Israel.

The Third Plague (Rev 16.4-7)

> "And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. [6] For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments".

The vial punishment in these verses is enlarged upon in the vision shown to John in chpt.17.

Revelation 16	**Revelation 17**
The third poured his vial upon the rivers **(v.4)**	vial angel….I will show you the judgment **(v.1)**
The angel of the waters **(v.5)**	Of the whore that sits upon many waters **(v.1)**
Give them blood to drink **(v.7)**	the whore drunk saints blood **(v.6)**

The "rivers and fountains" of waters indicate the **source** of the "many waters" that the harlot sits upon. In the kingdom age the New Jerusalem is depicted as the source of <u>healing waters</u> that flow to the nations- the "living waters" being idiom for the gospel that flows from Jerusalem when her king reigns. Here, the harlot city reigns supreme and poisons the world with her gospel she is the source of apostasy. The angel "of the water (judgement) that shows John the fate of the harlot in Rev 17 is one of the vial angels. The comparison makes it likely that the vial angel who interprets the vision in Rev 17.1 is the same as the angel of the waters in Rev 16.5.

The third vial is therefore a description of the destruction of the harlot city. She is the source of intoxication for all the surrounding nations. The "many waters" that she sits upon are now turned into rivers of blood. The waters are, "peoples, and multitudes nations and tongues" (Rev 17.1) which form the source of her wealth and admiration. The "harlot city" has become a prostitute, a place of global worship, but despite the outward appearance of gaudy religiosity and purity her god is mammon.

Then I heard another out of the altar say – the RV, NSRV and NIV have the altar itself responding, thereby personifying the altar itself. This is wrong for the verb, "I heard" is linked with a partitive genitive, the AV translation is therefore correct – another (or someone) out of the altar. This is obviously a reference to the martyrs of Rev 6.10 (from way back in the first century) --- whose blood lies poured out at the base of the altar. God responds with the principle of lex talionis, an eye for an eye (cf. Ps 79.3; Ezek 32.6-7). This section ends with an allusion to the **Song of Witness**; "For all his ways are judgment: a God of truth without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deut 32.4) demonstrating that the "harlot city" is Jerusalem/Babylon.

> **Isaiah 49:26** And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD *am* thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.
>
> **Matthew 23:35** That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

Ἄξιοι γάρ εἰσι [Axioi gar eisi], *For worthy they are.* By their works, they have demonstrated their worthiness of this righteous punishment. Although the vial judgments do not recapitulate the trumpet judgements there is a striking similarity between them with a third of the rivers and springs of water becoming wormwood in Rev 8.8. The trumpet-plagues are partial in their effect (one-third of the earth is burned, Rev 8.7; one-third of the sea becomes blood, Rev 8.8; see also Rev. 8.9-12) while the vials are universal ("every living soul died," Rev 16.3; "every island fled away," Rev 16.20) and final; (2) the trumpets are to a certain extent a call to repentance while the bowls are the pouring out of divine wrath; and (3) man is affected indirectly by the first four trumpets but is directly attacked from the outset by the bowls. It should also be noticed that the bowls are poured out in rapid succession with the customary interlude between the sixth and seventh elements of the sequence missing.[15]

The Fourth Plague (Rev 16.8-9)

> "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory".

To scorch is καυματίσαι [kaumatisai] the intense scorching heat[16] they endure is an indication of judgment (Rev14.18). This may well allude to Isa.30.26: "The light of the sun shall be sevenfold as the light of seven days", this is in connection with, "the day of the great slaughter." While the worshippers of the beast suffer pain and thirst and are fearfully scorched by the sun, the martyrs have gone where "they shall never be hungry nor thirsty again; never shall the sun strike them or any scorching heat." (Rev 7.16), where, "pain shall be no more" (Rev 21.4).[17] However, God will save the Jews, once they have been humbled, he will not give the heathen opportunity to despise his name (cf. Isa 30.29). These vials affect those who are too deeply involved in Babylon's sins to be disassociated from her fall, those who had the mark of the beast, which worshipped his image, who shed the blood of saints and prophets, who blasphemed the name of God.

The last phrase is of peculiar importance, because, outside the present chapter, John in the prophetic part of his book attributes blasphemy only to the beast (Rev 13.1, 5, 6; 17.3). The thrice-repeated statement that men blasphemed (Rev 16. 9, 11, 21) can only mean that they have wholly taken on the character of the false god they serve. There can be no question about John's belief that in some men the mark of the beast might become indelible and earn for them final reprobation and annihilation (Rev 14.10-11; 20.15; 21.8; 22. 15). "They repented not to give him glory." This is in stark contrast with the death and vindication of the witnesses, which resulted in a repentant remnant, and the birth of a church (Rev11.14). Well might John say, "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still" (Rev.22.11).

The Fifth Plague (Rev 16.10-11)

> "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds".

The previous plague was scorching heat from a burning sun and this is immediately followed by darkness in imitation of the Egyptian plagues (Exod 10.21-23). It is poured out on the "seat of the Beast" which is the "throne". This has religious implications, for the throne of Yahweh was the Ark of the Covenant. The "throne" is situated in Babylon (Rev 16.19 Cf. Zech 5.11) the headquarters of false worship –rabbinic Judaism (Jerusalem/Babylon) is no longer a "light" to the Gentiles. The Jews were confident that they were a guide of the blind and a light to those in darkness (Rom 2.19). But Jesus says, "But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt 6.23-24).

One can but speculate on the plague phenomenon – they are supernatural but carry a spiritual as well as a literal or natural dimension and follow each other in quick succession. They suggest cosmic events – perhaps a tipping point is reached in global warming and increased radiation causes an outbreak of melanomas, perhaps an unusually large solar flare? An electromagnetic pulse (EMP), also sometimes called a transient electromagnetic disturbance, is a short burst of electromagnetic energy. Such a pulse's origination may be a natural occurrence or man-made and can occur as a radiated, electric or magnetic field or a conducted electric current, depending on the source. It destroys electronic equipment and would literally thrust us back to the dark ages – the end of civilization as we know it. Water turning blood-red might be linked to algae blooms known as "red tide" often caused by water that is oxygen depleted because it is too warm. However, the plagues also have spiritual dimensions as the sea is linked in scripture with the Gentiles and also (see Rev 18) with sea-borne trade. Perhaps magnetic fluctuations lead to increased plate activity resulting in the sky being darkened by volcanic ash and pyroclastic flows. Enormous ash clouds cause electric storms in the upper atmosphere and giant hail stones? Finally, tectonic activity results in the greatest earthquake the earth has ever experienced in civilized history. It is a fact that since the year 2000 much more earthquake activity has been recorded around the plate boundaries than in the previous one hundred years.

It seems that the earth is on the move and a number of calderas are swelling. Constant drilling, fracking and the building of dams on fault lines does not help the situation. Of course this is speculation and we can imagine that such events would be blamed on "natural phenomenon" or explained away as the Egyptian magicians (our scientists) did in the past. On top of all this we are overdue the greatest financial crash in history. Civilisation is about to be rocked to its core – man will be shown to be completely naked and vulnerable. Without God there is only darkness. However, **none of these plagues led to repentance.** This suggests that mankind has become completely reprobate at this point and would rather be destroyed than submit to the will of God. This fact alone justifies the punishments as righteous.

The Sixth Plague (Rev 16.12-14)

> "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty".

Without citing any sources (to save embarrassment) let us summarise the type of "traditional interpretation" usually accorded to the frog spirits; "The interpretation that puts forward the Frankish origin of the frog as a heraldic symbol, and its association with the early Frankish king Clovis **is sound**. These are the rights of freedom, equality and liberty offered in the Declaration of Rights formulated by the French (frogs) in the French (frog) Revolution of 1789". One is left dumbfounded and flabbergasted at what can only be described as abuse of Scripture with no regard to context, intertextuality or relevant history.

A **scripturally sound approach** is taken by Ha Young Son -[18]

> "Jewish literature needs to be examined before defining the background of the word [frog] in the OT, the word occurs fourteen times: twelve times in Exod 8:2—13 (Exod 7:27—8:9, LXX) relating to the second Egyptian plague, and two times in the Psalms (77:45; 104:30). In Jewish literature, the word occurs in Wis 19:10; Josephus, *Ant.* 2.296-98; Philo, *Sacr.* 69; *Migr.* 83; *Mos.* 1.103-6, 144.[19] The important point is that "all mentions of frogs refer to the Egyptian plague"[20] Consequently, the unique usage of the word in the NT also needs to be understood against this background. In addition, considering that "the other preceding bowls and trumpets [are] moulded in part on the exodus plagues,"[21] the Exodus plague tradition should be considered as the primary background".[22]

This is an excellent exegesis that can be further elaborated by understanding the role of frogs in the ancient cultures of Egypt and Greece and then connecting it with the Euphrates (the source of the frogs) and the intra-texts within the Apocalypse itself and further intertextual allusions in the OT. That is how **sound hermeneutics** is conducted.

In Egyptian mythology, the Ogdoad (Greek *ογδοάς* "the eightfold",[23] Egyptian Khemenu, Ḫmnw) were eight primordial deities worshipped in Hermopolis during the Old Kingdom period (27th to 22nd centuries).[24] Out of that era emerged the many great kingdoms of Egypt, who worshiped the eight immortal deities including Kek for the next two thousand years. Kek is the deification of the primordial concept of darkness in ancient Egyptian religion.[25] As part of the Ogdoad (the eight primordial gods), Kek was viewed as androgynous, his female form being known as Keket or Heqet, which is simply the female form of the word Kek. Like all four dualistic concepts in the Ogdoad, Kek's male form was depicted as a frog, or as a frog-headed man. To the Egyptians, the frog was a symbol of life and fertility, since millions of them were born after the annual inundation of the Nile, which brought fertility to the otherwise barren lands. Heqet (Keket), a goddess in the form of a frog, was associated with the final stages of childbirth and also with rebirth. The life cycle of frogs and toads involves at least one major transformation, from tadpole to adult. Many also shed their skins regularly as they grow, and some species eat the shed skin. These spectacular transformations may explain why many cultures see frogs and toads as symbolic of re-creation, or as keepers of the secrets of transformations.

This is relevant in light of the Beast who was at one **stage dead.** The reincarnated beast sends forth "frog spirits" associated with rebirth and re-creation – **the message of the deceased second century monster** has been resurrected and reinvigorated. This reading is also supported by a famous Greek play by Aristophanes that provided a look into the **Underworld** in his satirical farce, called **Frogs**. This ancient play was produced in the year 405 BCE and played at two different festivals (an unusual honour) where it won first prize **and was well known in the ancient world** the play tells the story of the journey by the god Dionysus to bring someone back from Hades and its chorus of croaking frogs (from which the play takes its title) that surround the lake of the dead.[26] Edmonds[27] says, "For these frogs are not simply the ordinary frogs that sing in the marshes of Attica, but 'swan-frogs' (βατράχοι κύκνοι), whose song is amazingly beautiful. As befits pipers in the realm of the dead, their song is a 'swan-song', since the song of the swan is heard only at death.[28] Frogs themselves, as creatures that live in the two worlds of water and land, are appropriate creatures to facilitate the transition of Dionysos across the border between the worlds of living and dead".[29] In Plutarch's (ca.46–120CE) much later *De Sera Num.* 567f, Nero is transformed into a frog in the afterlife, a fare befitting his pretensions to singing in life no doubt encouraged by the myths surrounding his return from the dead.

Therefore, cultural and religious beliefs in Egypt *and* Greece support the themes of rebirth from the underworld. However, there is more as the "frog sprits" are also characterized as "unclean" (ἀκάθαρτα, akatharta) and "the spirits of devils (δαιμονίων, daimoniOn)[30], working miracles". The same words are used in Rev 18.2 to describe Babylon as a location of unclean/devils. The only time these words occur together in the NT is in Luke 4.33: "And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil (δαιμονίου ἀκαθάρτου)." Perry demonstrates that the man in the synagogue was "possessed by Egypt"[31] and Jesus' healing of the man was perceived by the audience as an expression of doctrine (v.36) – it was therefore an acted parable about Jewry who refused to leave Egypt behind. Egypt was the land of the dead with an elaborate death cult; it is fitting then that "unclean demons" that look like (the plague of Egyptian) "frogs" emerge from the mouth of creatures who have on multiple occasions been condemned to the underworld (the beast **is not** cf. Rev 17.8, 10, 11).

Contacting the dead is necromancy which is condemned in scripture, yet the world is willing to be deceived by something that should have remained dead; "Do not turn to mediums or necromancers; do not seek them out, and so make yourselves unclean by them: I am the Lord your God" (Lev 19.31 ESV). The priesthood was instructed not to be defiled by the dead (Lev 21.1) nor to marry a whore (Lev 21.7) and to burn by fire any daughter given to prostitution (Lev 21.9) and yet all these events are alluded to in the Apocalypse. To be unclean (ἀκάθαρτα, akatharta) refers to ritual or ceremonial impurity in relation to temple worship and the word is used thirty one times in Septuagint (LXX) of Lev 11; of particular interest is (vv.31-32) the fact that a creature on the list of unclean foods could contaminate anything that it came into contact with even after it had died and especially vessels (think here of the temple service) required to be either scrubbed clean (brass) or smashed (clay).

Josephus (*J.W.* 7.185) defines "demon" as the "sprits of wicked men" and Aune comments that it is a "major way in which *daimons* were understood in the Greco-Roman world: cf. Plutarch *De def.orac.,* 415B-C.[32] In the OT "demons" are always associated with idol worship which makes it a good term to describe worshippers of the "image of the beast" which in the first and second centuries became the temple:

> **Revelation 9:20-21** And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

The "idols" described here consist of a number of materials that were employed to construct the temple and many of the same materials describe the beauty of Babylon in Rev 18.12. All these elements are found in the temple as 2 Tim 2.20 makes apparent when drawing a parallel between believers and a "great house" (i.e. the temple); "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth (earthenware or clay); and some to honour, and some to dishonour". The first use of "brass" (χαλκᾶ) in the LXX is Exod 27.3, employed to describe the temple instruments and "stone" (λίθινα) is used to describe the Law tables given to Moses in Exod 24.12,[33] with the adjective wooden (ξύλινα) used as a genitive (ξυλίνου) in Lev 11.32 to describe vessels made of-wood[34] and again as a genitive noun to describe the ark, of –shittim-wood (ξύλων). The first mention of the word-pair gold/silver in the LXX is the Genesis account of Rebecca's dowry and the next mention of the word-pair is in Exod 3.22 as the "dowry" that the Egyptians gave the Israelites when they leave Egypt to marry Yahweh. The wealth of Egypt was used to construct the tabernacle. Soon after leaving Egypt they used the gold to construct a facsimile of the cherubim (golden calf); "And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold" (Exod 32.31). Stephen refers to this incident in Acts 7.41; "And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands" and then he adds (vv. 47-48); "But Solomon built him a house. Howbeit the most High does not live in temples made with hands". This is Stephen's way of saying that the temple had become an idol (like the golden calf). They had become murders (killing the prophets and saints), sorcerers (like Jezebel), fornicators (like Solomon)[35] and thieves (turning the temple into a house of merchandise).

To summarise: The spirits "like frogs" are based on the frog plague of Egypt. They have associations with rebirth and the underworld in ancient Greece *and* Egypt. They have connections with ritual impurity (unclean) and idol worship (devils or demons). They seduce and represent something that has come back (like a zombie) from the dead. In the past wars and crusades were fought to liberate the "holy places" of Jerusalem from the hands of the "infidel". It seems that such a call (to liberate Jerusalem) issues from these seducing spirits – a historical analogy would be Parthia/Babylon supporting the Bar Kochba rebellion to liberate Jerusalem and reinstitute temple worship.

However, the "frogs" do not come from the Nile but from the marshes of the Euphrates because it is "dried up" by the vial angel (on the request of the witnesses cf. Rev 11.6). Babylon was located on the alluvial plain drained by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, watered by an amazing system of canals built by the Babylonians - boasting probably the most fertile soil in the world, covered by rich crops and other vegetation and the famous Babylonian hanging gardens. The punishment of drought called down on the "seat of the beast" by the witnesses and implemented by the vial angel (of the waters) is anticipated by the prophet Jeremiah; "A **drought** *is* upon her waters; and they shall be **dried up**: for it *is* the land of graven images, and **they are mad upon *their* idols**" (Jer 50.38). It is the worship of idols, particularly the "image of the beast" (v.2) [36] that invokes such drastic punishments. When Babylon is destroyed the angel declares "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become **a dwelling place of demons**, a prison for every **foul spirit**, and a cage for every **unclean** and hated bird!"[37]

Therefore Babylon becomes a "dry place" or wilderness – the place where the "scapegoat" was sent (where the Jews were exiled)[38] and alluded to by Jesus in Luke 11.24-26[39]. Casting the demons out of Legion enacted this principle.[40] The scapegoat was sent to Azazel (Lev 16), [41] which is no doubt a corruption introduced from pseudo-graphic and rabbinical writings in an attempt to clarify the term. Therefore later Jewish literature interpreted Azazel as a "demon king", an angel that had rebelled against God.

On the Day of Atonement the priest cast lots to determine the sacrificial goat "for Yahweh" and the other lot for the scapegoat (Lev.16.8). The Hebrew for scapegoat עֲזָאזֵל is treated as a proper name; the goat for "Azazel" and various solutions have been proposed [42] but as the NetBible admits, "Perhaps a play on words between the proper name and the term for "goat" has occurred so that the etymology has become obscure". Pinker suggests that the term עזאזל was originally the homophone, עזזאל "Powerful God"[43] and Jacqueline C.R. De Roo also understands the etymology as denoting **strength**.[44] According to the Syriac Peshitta Version, azazel is rendered Za-za-e'il (the strong one against/of God), as in Qumran fragment 4Q180.[45] Jesus was certainly referencing the meaning **strong**.[46] However, multiple word-play-associations are possible in the Hebrew. In later apocrypha (Enochic literature; an obvious corruption of Genesis 6 combined with the atonement ritual)[47] Azazel (Asael) becomes a leader of rebellious angels who is chained in a place called **Dudael** (ddl) a probable cipher for **Babel** (bbl).[48]

If this is indeed correct, then even Jewish mythical apocryphal writings recognisees Babylon (Babel) as the "cage/prison/hold/abyss" for rebellious Azazel, the very place where the rebellious and unclean **Jewish nation** (scapegoat) was sent for exile!

Summary of first six plagues

The Jews had been exiled to Egypt and to Babylon and both locations form a complex matrix of allusions throughout the Apocalypse and particularly in Rev 16. Each time they emerged from exile they built a temple. The first temple (temple of Solomon) was desired by David (with the best of intentions) but it was not God's will. Although the temple builder Solomon began his reign as a righteous king he apostatized, practiced syncretism and fornication and built an empire for his own glory. The building of the second temple, after the Babylonian exile was blessed by God (it was almost not built because of the corruption of the priesthood and resistance from the Samaritans), it was defiled by Antiochus and rededicated by the Maccabee priests and renovated (almost a complete rebuild) by Herod the Great. Since the time of the Babylonian exile it no longer contained the Ark, instead the "immovable rock" stood there (which came to represent Christ –the stone of stumbling and rock of offence, currently housed in the Islamic shrine the "Dome of the Rock"). Under Herod the Great the temple reached new heights of corruption and commercialism and Babylonian Jewry and pharisaic rabbinism commenced a long journey away from God in the land of Shinar. The temple was again destroyed (as predicted by Christ) in 70 CE and another attempt to rebuild was made by Bar Kochba which ended in failure in 135 CE. At that point Jerusalem officially became a "Gentile city". The Jews have once again emerged from the "Babylonian" wilderness (Day of Atonement) just as they did from Egypt (Passover) all the while still rejecting the true temple **– Jesus Christ.** The beast, false prophet and image of the beast are therefore a corruption of the principle of the temple –representing empire, propagandists for false religion and a corrupted temple (image) – the desire to become "like God" (self-determination and self-divinization). However, the "spirit" that they represent is like a frog from the primordial darkness (underworld) – the people are ritually unclean and no longer worship God but Babylonian "demons". Like the serpent this frog seduces with its ancient message, the message itself is the plague because it gathers the whole world to confront Christ at Armageddon.

The Euphrates is "dried up" and the "frog message" goes forth to prepare the kings of the east. Abraham sent his sons by Keturah (the concubine) "eastward, unto the east country" (Gen.25. 6). He also gave them gifts as a substitute for the inheritance that was reserved for Isaac. In Matthew's gospel wise men appear from the east bearing gifts for Christ (Matt. 2.2, 11). The kings of the east are therefore Semitic peoples, sons of Abraham, who were sent away (like Ishmael) because of their hatred toward their brother. The names of the twelve sons of Keturah carry meanings that suggest contention and strife. However, the eventual call to battle is universal (the whole world v.14). The drying of the Euphrates may refer to a natural or a political event or perhaps a combination.[49] It does not refer to the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1922 as some of the events portrayed in the Rev.16 are concurrent with the witnessing (three-and-one-half-years) with the vials probably stretching a full seven years (week). Both the witnessing and the vials end on a similar note (Rev 16.18 cf. Rev 11.19). In the second century the Euphrates formed the border between the Roman and Parthian Empires. The miracle or "sign" that resulted in the call to war was the reestablishment of temple Judaism and an independent Jewish state under Bar Kochba (clandestinely supported by Parthia/Babylon). On that occasion the "four angels bound in the great river Euphrates" were unleashed (Rev 9.14-15) but there they only **killed a third of mankind.** Rev 16 seems like an action –replay of that trumpet, howbeit with universal and more devastating consequences that are described in the next plague (and elaborated on in Rev 19).

Sequence of events

At this point it is germane to interrupt the exegesis to discuss the sequence of events. The plague-vials are linked by their inter-texts with Exodus plagues and the Day of Atonement. However, no Passover deliverance or Day of Atonement forgiveness is forthcoming – only wrath. We are constantly informed that there is no repentance only blasphemy and an outpouring of wrath follows. In Rev 15 we encounter the saints in heaven celebrating as thought the victory was already finalized –presumably these saints are martyred because they refused the mark of the beast. Not only does the vision of Rev 15 look backwards at past victories over the beast it also anticipates the final victory through the praises of the conquerors who have paid the ultimate price. However, not all believers die during this period as Christ issues a warning concerning preparedness during the sixth plague-vial and therefore we can presume that there are still some believers alive at this time. The witnessing of Rev 11 occurred in the past (first and second centuries) but scripture suggests a repeat pattern during the final reincarnation of the beast. The call to the witnesses to "come up hither" and ascend to heaven need not indicate a literal ascension but rather vindication and justification by God. In other words, their prophetic testimony is proven undeniably true (think here of the testimony of Jesus concerning the destruction of the temple).

Resseguie comments; "Few structural breaks slow down the rapid-fire pace of one disaster after another. With the end around the corner the narrative speed quickens to a breathless pace. Unlike the seals and trumpets, which have embedded narratives between the penultimate and ultimate events in their respective series, the bowls lack intercalations to slow the narrative pace. The expectation of delay is in the distant past (6:11), and the strong angel's promise of no more delay is now a reality (10:6)".[50]

An alternating sequence of punishments can be discerned, switching between the Jewish nation and the world as Jerusalem becomes a cup of trembling and a burdensome stone (Dome of the rock)[51] for the whole world (Zech 12.2-3). Each outpouring of wrath against the Jewish nation is counterbalanced with a universal out-poring that punishes the whole world and further undermines the support system that keeps the beast alive.

A[1] (1) Earth (Babylon) - Worshipers punished
B[1] (2) Sea (Universal) – Economic support system destroyed
A[2] (3) Fountains (Babylon) - **Source** (temple) destroyed (Rev 17-18; Whore burnt)
B[2] (4) Sun (Universal) – Natural support system destroyed - **no repentance**
A[3] (5) Seat of the Beast (Babylon) – **Source** of political power darkened- **no repentance**
B[3] (6) Euphrates (Universal) - frogs gather nations/Armageddon (Rev 19; Great Supper)
A[4] (7a) Air (Babylon) - Babylon falls
B[4] (7b) Air (Universal) - Cities of the nations fall

It becomes clear from Rev 16 that "Babylon" is both a local *and* a universal phenomenon. The focal point or "source" is **A**[2] and **A**[3] but the poison has spread globally and therefore the punishments alternate between local *and* universal consequences. The source of the infection is attacked as well as the sources "support systems" – this is not just a punishment "of the Jews" as the whole world has effectively become Babel –unified in opposition to God as can be seen in the rush to globalism with negative financial and environmental consequences.

In the third plague-vial (**A**[2]) it was noted that the "angel of the waters" was probably the same vial angel that showed John the fate of the harlot (who sits on many waters in Rev 17). Therefore it is probably during the third plague-vial that the whore is burnt. Working backwards it is sometime before these events that ten kings cede power to the whore. It must be during this period of cooperation and mutual agreement that image-worship (a temple) is established and image worship commences. If the destruction of the whore occurs in the third plague-vial that does not necessarily constitute the final punishment for Israel. For example, if the burning of the whore in the third plague-vial relates to the capture of the temple mount and abolishment of a false religious system established there, then the next plague-vial to strike the "source" (**A**[3]) may relate to the occupation of Israel leading to a period of "darkness" such as in the eight century where the people are described as "walking in darkness and the shadow of death" (Isa 9.2 cf. 60.2) or in the Babylonian destruction where Jeremiah describes the ensuing chaos as the reversal of creation "I beheld the earth, and, lo, *it was* without form, and void; and the heavens, and they *had* no light" (Jer. 4.23). Of course, the "heavenly lights" were initially appointed to regulate the Jewish feasts (Gen 1.14) and therefore "darkness" may indicate that Judaism is banned in the land of Israel. The precedent here would be the banning of circumcision and teaching of the Law by the Emperor Hadrian, or, it could refer to a natural phenomenon (as discussed previously) or perhaps a combination of both literal and metaphorical "darkness"[52] – whatever it represents it causes the worshippers to bite their tongues in agony (cf. Ps 12.4).[53]

We note that neither the universal punishment (**B**^{2}) of excessive light (scorching) nor the local punishment of darkness (**A**^{3}) produce repentance. Despite the expression of divine wrath the Jews and the world generally hardened their heart and probably seek alternative theories to explain away their predicament (like pharaoh did). The sixth plague (**B**^{3}) has been designated as "universal" because although originating at the Euphrates the "frogs" spread throughout the world to gather all nations to battle. We would expect the "seat of the beast" (throne) to be situated on the Euphrates because that was the original location of Babylon. Obviously, an attack on the "seat of the beast" is an attack on the heart of the Empire's political power but if the "seat" is Babylon then how can the dual location of Babylon/Jerusalem be explained?

The precedent in the second century was the conquest of the Parthian Empire (Babylon) by Trajan which resulted in the Parthian "frogs of war" (sic) calling for rebellion and for the reestablishment of temple worship in Judea. A rebellion ensued in the Jewish Diaspora of the Roman Empire (Kitos war) followed by the Bar Kochba revolt.

The large Jewish communities of Parthia were wealthy and politically important. However, even after the fall of the temple in 70 CE the Jews of Syria-Palestine remained "religiously" predominant. We can then speak of two important Jewish centres of power; Syria-Palestine and Parthia. We could say that the centre of Jewish religious power was Syria-Palestine and the centre of Jewish political power was Parthia and this held true until the failure of the Bar Kochba revolt after which Jewish religious and political power shifted to Parthia (Babylon).

The Jews are a remarkable people; "a peculiar treasure unto me above all people" (Exod 19.5) but Yahweh adds the caveat "if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant". The chosen race has always had their hands on the levers of power. Joseph was second to Pharaoh, Daniel, Nehemiah, Esther and Mordecai are the faithful found in the royal courts of Babylon and Persia. In Roman and Parthian times there were many influential Jews (think here of Josephus in the court of Titus) but they were not always faithful. Although the Jews are less than 0.2% of the world population they are disproportionately represented in the corridors of power and have a huge influence in the world of politics, academia, business and media. About 6 million Jews live in Israel (44%) with roughly the same amount living in the USA (39.5%). If we had to chose a modern counterpart to Babylon then the USA would make a good candidate as a centre of Zionist political and financial support. Just as in the past, the Jews have a large presence inside and outside the land and the "frogs" represent a call to liberate the "holy places".

The Seventh plague- Armageddon (Rev 16.15-21)

> "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every stone* about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great".

Unlike the seals and trumpets the plague-vials have no narrative interruptions of the plot with the exception of the warning and blessing in v.16. The warning relates to the faithful keeping their garments and this is an allusion to the parable of the king who invited guests to the wedding feast of his son who found some of the guests without a wedding garment. This left the king speechless as it was a sign of disrespect to turn up unprepared (Matt 22.1-14). The garment is an obvious reference to baptism which covers the nakedness (vulnerability) of sin –something that the fig leaf in Eden could not do (because the fig tree represented Judaism).[54]

There are a total of seven beatitudes in the Apocalypse and they appear at critical junctures to encourage and comfort the faithful:

> **Revelation 1:3** Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

> **Revelation 14:13** And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

> **Revelation 16:15** Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.
>
> **Revelation 19:9** And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.
>
> **Revelation 20:6** Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.
>
> **Revelation 22:7** Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.
>
> **Revelation 22:14** Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

The first blessing anticipates the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE and the second the fall in 135 CE the third anticipates the return of Christ and Armageddon the fourth blessing rests on those who are at Armageddon the fifth blesses the saints that will live and reign with Christ during the millennium the sixth blesses those who "keep the words" (remain faithful) because the judgements of Christ will soon become apparent (70 CE) and the last blesses those who keep his commandments (cf. Rev 12.17) which refers to the breaking of bread –"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread" (1 Cor. 11.23). Without baptism and the "agapae feast" believers are naked.

The next phrase that draws our attention is "it is done" which also occurs at critical points of redemptive history. This will be discussed in more depth in Rev 19, for now we turn to Armageddon.

The battle of that great day of God Almighty (Rev 16.14)

The Greek verb gather (συνάγω, sunago) in v.16 obviously refers to the kings that are gathered by the "frog spirits" in v.14 where the same verb is employed and the modern translations supply the ellipses which is not present in the Greek; "Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon" (v.14 NIV) as opposed to the older literal translations that simply have "And he gathered them together". In Rev 19 it is noted that the word "gather" is used throughout the NT to denote opposition to the gospel and it is demonstrated that the verb is connected with the land covenant given to Abraham in Gen 15.
For now we note that not one **but two** assemblies occur simultaneously, namely those that oppose Christ are "gathered" and at the same time the saints are "collected" because they are present at the marriage supper in Rev 19. Christ makes it clear that Armageddon is not just a battle but also a marriage supper. A marriage supper requires guests that will participate in the ceremony – it is fitting that Jesus began his ministry with a wedding feast and ends the age with a wedding banquet.

This answers the question posed by the disciples in Luke 17.37; "Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body *is*, thither will the eagles/vultures be gathered (συνάγω, sunago) together". It has already been demonstrated that this saying is connected with the land covenant made with Abraham in Gen 15 and Rev 19 (see there) describes the out working where the "fowls" (birds of prey) are called to feast on the dead bodies of Christ's enemies. It seems that these two events are closely related, namely (1) the death and exposure of the witnesses bodies (2) the death and exposure of the bodies of the witnesses enemies. In between these two events the witnesses are vindicated (Come up hither) and a remnant repented (gave glory to God).

Osborne comments, "This is the first time the earthquake is called "great," though the hailstorm was also called "great" in 11:19. The description of it as greater than any that had ever happened "since people were on the earth" is reminiscent of the Olivet discourse, where Jesus spoke of the "days of tribulation" as "unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world" (Mark 13:19 par.). Both go back to Dan. 12:1 (LXX but especially close to Theodotion's wording), which describes "a tribulation such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then" (cf. Exod.9: 18, where the hailstorm was "the worst that had ever happened in Egypt form the day it was created until then"). In Dan. 12:1-2 a contrast is established between the people of God who will be delivered "to everlasting life" and the many who will awake "to shame and everlasting contempt."[55]

Indeed, if we compare the last trump at the end of Rev 11 and Armageddon in Rev 16 it becomes apparent that the witnessing immediately precedes the resurrection and the judgement of the nations showing that these two events happen almost simultaneously:

Revelation 11	**Revelation 16**
shall make war against them (the witnesses) , and shall overcome them, and kill them **(v.7)**	For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy **(v.6)**
a great earthquake **(v.13)**	
the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven **(v 13)**	
Last Trump	**Seventh plague-vial**
And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come **(v.18)**	*which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them them **(v.14)**
shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth **(v.18)**	the battle of that great day of God Almighty **(v.14)**
thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned **(v.17)**	And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice[56] out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done **(v.17)**
and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward **(v.18)**	Behold, I come as a thief **(v.15)**
Lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake **(v.19)**	And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake **(v18)**
and great hail **(v.19)**	because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great **(v.21)**

The vial-plagues are obviously associated with the witnessing as the witnesses are able "to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will" (Rev 11.6). Therefore the angels that pour out the plague-vials do so in response to a request from the witnesses. From Rev 11 we can surmise that there will be repentance and a "great earthquake" before the seventh trump is sounded. This seems to be a different earthquake from the one described in Rev 16 which is an order of magnitude greater (if that is even possible) than the "great quake" of Rev 11. Rev 11 is a repeat of the witnessing patterns of the first and second centuries and the "great quake" in 70CE and 135 CE was the fall of Jerusalem as predicted by the witnesses, therefore, the "come up hither" of Rev 11.12 can be understood as vindication of Christ and his witnesses.

In the case of Jesus a literal ascension followed his martyrdom (witnessing). However, in 70 CE and 135 CE repentance did not follow – the reverse was true – and therefore the last trump was not sounded.

The exegesis presented here argues for a repeat of the trumpets (i.e., "whenever they sound") but this time they actually conclude (they are not cut short by the times of the Gentiles) and therefore they are completely executed including the plague-vials. If that is the case we can expect a measure of repentance by a remnant (which is caused by the death and vindication of the witnesses) after which the temple is closed. At that point (Rev 16) there is no more access to forgiveness….but it is not needed anyway because there is no more repentance. The moral of the story is to pray to God in a time when he can still be found……because the time will come when that is no longer possible. Well might the prophet declare; "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! To what end *is* it for you? The day of the Lord *is* darkness, and not light" (Amos 5.18). "*It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb 10.31).

It is suggested that the first "great earthquake" (Rev 11.13) which vindicates the witnesses is related to the temple mount. The Lord predicted that "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matt 24.2) but the Jews still worship at the "Wailing Wall" the outer stone wall that supported the temple platform has become a "holy place". When Joshua sounded the seventh trumpet the walls of Jericho fell down with a "great shout". (Josh. 6.20) Moreover, the east gate to Jerusalem known as the "gate of mercy" was bricked up by Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent to prevent a Jewish messiah from entering.[57] We can imagine then that the witnesses offer the destruction of the Wailing Wall and the opening of the eastern gate as a sign of the messiah's imminent return. Their prediction is that an earthquake will destroy the wall and open the gate three-and-one half days after they have been executed. The accuracy of their prophecy also vindicates Christ who emphatically declared "not one stone" which means that it is still unfulfilled prophecy. God will be vindicated even after 2,000 years!
The destruction of the temple platform and opening of the "Gate of Mercy" are signs that work repentance among the Jews. They now know that Jesus is the messiah and that he is coming soon….very soon. They display godly fear and give glory to Yahweh. But they are only a remnant. The majority ascribe it to "coincidence", natural phenomenon etc…people always justify their ignorance…if one rose from the dead they would not believe him. The apostle Paul has the following to say about this event;

1 Thessalonians 4:14-18 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Armageddon

Osborne describes Armageddon as follows:

> "The articular τὸν πόλεμον concretizes this to mean "*the* war" namely Armageddon (16:16). This end-of-the-world battle was predicted in the OT (Ezek. 38-39; Zech. 12-14; Joel 2:11; 3:2), early Jewish literature (1 Enoch 56.7-8; 90.15-19; 94.9-11; T. Dan 5.10-11;2 Esdr. [4 Ezra] 13:33-39), and the NT (2 Thess. 2:8), so in a sense the use of the definite article points back to the final battle predicted by the prophets. The battle itself is described further as "the great day of God Almighty", similar to Rev. 6:17, where it is depicted as "the great day of their [God's and the Lamb's] wrath." It is a "great day" because it culminates the plan of God that existed "from before the creation of the world" (Matt. 25:34; Eph. 1:4; Heb. 4:3; Rev. 13:8; 17:8)".[58]

This is indeed the day that all the prophets speak of. Every other occasion that Yahweh has intervened in history is but a foretaste of this world shattering event, even so each past occasion forms a pattern or type ---that is how scripture works ---recurrent patterns that build to a climax. One of the commentaries states that there are as many as fifty interpretations of Armageddon and that is very likely because it is a Hebrew word that has been Grecized [59] --- the text tells us this "in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" but the word is not Hebrew it is in the Greek: Ἁρμαγεδών and it only occurs in Rev 16.16.

Therefore, it is something that sounds like Armageddon in the Hebrew and many commentators opt for "Har-Megiddo" or the "mountain of Megiddo" as many critical battles were fought at Megiddo. However, the problem is that Megiddo is a city situated in a valley between mountains. It was suitable for ancient chariot battles because of its vast plain. For this reason many commentators reject that location (as does this exegesis).

Before we proceed it is important to note that this is no ordinary "war" between nation states Dalrymple[60] analyses the term "war" in the Apocalypse and comes to the conclusion that "the focus of this war is actually <u>the people of God</u>" and that it is "the work of the devil… that which Satan has always waged, and still does, against the people of God". In this he is essentially correct as for example in Rev 12 where the "devil" is cast out of heaven and makes "war" with the remnant of the woman's seed (or the beast that makes "war" with the saints). The "frogs" also send out the spirits of "devils" (demons).

We need not think here of a supernatural adversary but the principle is ancient (old Serpent) and Satanic (in opposition to God) and embodied in human opposition of the religious and Imperial kind. This is a kind of "Jihad" (holy war) against Christ and his saints – it is not a tank battle. The suggestion is that the preceding events (witnessing, earthquake etc) point to the imminent return of Christ and the "frogs" put forth the idea that the antichrist is about to appear.

From the east came the "wise men" to herald the birth of the messiah now the way of "eastern kings" is prepared by unclean frog spirits to oppose the return of Christ. For example, in Islamic eschatology the Mahdi (the redeemer of Islam) will be sent and with the help of Jesus (the Messiah in Islam who will become the ruler of the world and abolish all religions but Islam), will battle Masih ad-Dajjal (Antichrist in Islam).[61] That does not mean that we are promoting that particular scenario but it is obvious that there is opportunity for chaos, misunderstanding and manipulation amongst adherents of Islam as well as Christians (to be discussed in a separate chapter). Even modern sci-fi mythology depicts mankind having to fend off some type of "alien" takeover by malevolent forces intent on enslaving mankind and taking away our "freedom". The will to self-determination is so strong in human nature and in all cultures that we cannot see that **the enemy is us**.[62]

Returning to the term "Armageddon" which in the English is rendered with a double **d** but only has one "d" in the Greek (Armagedon). Reproduced below are some relevant commentary by Michael Barber and James E. Smith, after which follows a short discussion. First we turn to Barber (footnotes not included) with the exception of footnote 14 which is relevant and placed in the main body as indicated:

> "By adding the image of a battle on a mountain, he evokes passages from the prophets which spoke of final devastation. Isaiah prophesied that Babylon's destruction would occur on the mount of assembly" (Is. 14:13). Ezekiel predicted thy apocalyptic battle would occur on the "mountains of Israel," where Gods enemies would be crushed once and for all (Ezek. 39:4). The term "Armageddon" thus symbolizes that Jerusalem is the New Babylon, receiving its final catastrophic judgment. Here the enemies of Gods people will be defeated.
>
> Zechariah links Megiddo with an apocalyptic battle in which the enemies of Jerusalem will be destroyed (Zech. 12:9-1). It is clear that John is thinking of this passage, since Revelation 16 has many parallels with the final prophecies in Zechariah:

—Both speak of the nations being gathered for battle against the city of Jerusalem (Zech. 12:3; 14:2; Rev. 16:14)

—Both speak of an earthquake and the splitting of the city (Zech. 14:4-5; Rev. 16:18-19)

—Both speak of false prophets and evil spirits (Zech. 13:2; Rev. 16:13)

—Both describe the Lord sending "plagues" (Zech. 14:12; cf. parallels of Rev. 16:1-2 and the plagues of Egypt)

Footnote 14:

Day further strengthens the case that Zech. 12 is the source for "Armageddon" by pointing out that it is the only place in the Hebrew Bible where Megiddo is referred to as *megiddon* rather than *megiddo*. Though the term *megiddon* appears in several places in the Greek Old Testament, this fact is significant because John asserts that "Armageddon" is derived from a Hebrew word (i.e. "at the place which is called in Hebrew..."). See J. Day, "Origin of Armageddon: Revelation 6:16 as an Interpretation of Zechariah 12:11," Crossing the Boundaries: Essays is Biblical Interpretation in Honour of Michael D. Goulder, Stanley Porter, *et al*., eds. (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 315-26".[63]

The following is a contribution by James E. Smith:

"A case can be made for tracing ***magedōn*** to the Hebrew ***mō 'ēd*** (assembly). So Har-magedon means "Mount of Assembly/Gathering." John hints that we are to look for the meaning of the disputed term in the Hebrew. Five other times in his writings John identifies transliterated Hebrew words. In each case John offers an accompanying clue as to the explanation of the transliteration. The present v is no exception to the pattern. The verb gathered (***synagō***) in effect translates the noun ***magedōn***. So God gathered the nations to the Mount of Gathering. In Isa 14:13 the Mountain of Gathering in the heights of Zaphon" (NRSV) is heaven, the abode of God Ps 48:2 regards Zion /Jerusalem, the earthly counterpart of God's heavenly dwelling, as being "in the heights of Zaphon." Through these two passages we can establish that the Mountain of Gathering= heights of Zaphon –Zion/Jerusalem, Ps 48 goes on to relate how rebellious kings gathered at Zion, Yahweh shattered these kings and secured peace for his people".[64]

Both commentaries reach the same conclusion via slightly different routes – the location is Jerusalem. The prophet Zechariah does mention ***Megiddon*** but only for comparative purposes[65] and Joel also alludes to the same historical defeat for the same reason. Apparently the Aramaic harma-geddon means "the destruction of their army". Removing the letter h in accordance with the current Greek orthographic practice arrives at "Armageddon" without any vowel changes. It seems to me that we are dealing with multiple layers of meaning.

Of course, that may seem like a lazy way to approach what is posed as an etymological problem but John is deliberately enigmatic in order to force the reader to search the scriptures. To this end we can add one more possible derivation without feeling the necessity to pin down one particular definition as they are all relevant.

The place of destruction is also the place where the saints are gathered, that much is made clear by the "bird logion"; "Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body *is*, thither will the eagles (vultures) be gathered together" (Lk 17.37//Matt 24.28). The place where the saints are collected is the same place where the "kings" are gathered. As observed earlier Rev 16.14 refers to "them" being gathered to Armageddon with the obvious reference being the "kings" of the previous verse but the ambiguous phrasing may well be intended to allow a dual reference to the saints. If that is the case then ***magedōn*** might be derived from ***meged*** (Strong's 4022)[66] found in Deut 33.13-16 and Song of Sol 4.13, 16; 7.13 variously translated in those passages as the "precious [things]", "precious [fruits]", "pleasant [fruits]", "choice[fruits]", "choicest [fruits]". The passage in Deuteronomy is concerned with the messianic blessing poured out on Joseph and Song of Solomon is concerned with the beloved bride.

Therefore ***Har-magedōn*** may mean the "mount of precious things/fruit"[67] (denoting the "harvesting" of the saints) or it may mean "mount of assembly" or it may mean "the destruction of their army" as there are associations with all those themes. Whatever the meaning, the location is clearly Jerusalem and not Megiddo, although the "mourning" and blow to national pride will be similar to that event. This will be like the multitudes in the "valley of decision" (Joel 3:12, valley of Jehoshaphat i.e. Megiddo) a reference to the Assyrian invasion which was a "holy war" (jihad) – "Proclaim ye this among nations, Sanctify a war, stir up the mighty ones, Come nigh, come up, let all the men of war" (Joel 3.9 YLT). The saints are not gathered to Sinai, nor are they gathered to Megiddo – they are gathered to Jerusalem, or rather to the heavenly Mount Zion where the Lamb stands (Rev 14.1) for, "The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD *will be* the hope of his people, (the faithful remnant as in the days of Hezekiah) and the strength of the children of Israel" (Joel 3.16).

The aftermath of Holy War

The battle is fought on unequal terms and the aftermath is devastating as indicated by the superlatives; "so mighty" and "such as was not since men were upon the earth" and "so great" and "exceeding great". The earthquake is followed by hail as big as stones. The saints are uninjured but the adversary is completed annihilated and thrown into the "lake of fire". There is every reason to believe that this describes a natural phenomenon such as a gigantic earthquake.

The Great Rift Valley is a name given to the continuous geographic trench, approximately 6,000 kilometres (3,700 mi) in length that runs from Lebanon's Beqaa Valley in Asia to Mozambique in South Eastern Africa.[68] The fault-line runs through the Jordan valley and no doubt a minor quake destroyed Jericho and blocked the Jordan River allowing the Israelites to enter the land. The dividing of the Red Sea may also have been caused by such a quake. A devastating quake occurred in the days of Uzziah (when he entered unsolicited into the most holy place) and that is used by the prophet Zechariah (14.5) as an example of the "end time" earthquake.[69]
Suffice to say that this is an order of magnitude greater than anything seen in civilized history –a catastrophic event which opens up a "lake of magma" such as seen on Hawaii where the molten rock breaches the surface. The text speaks about "every island fleeing away" and this indicates huge plate movements. The point being made here is that the only stability is to be found in God, who is our "rock"…even the ground under our feet is unreliable and can be made to move like a wave on the sea.

The destruction of the adversary has overtones of the punishment of Korah, Dathan and Abiram who challenged the authority of Moses because "the whole congregation is holy" they were subsequently swallowed whole by the earth. On that occasion both fire and plague were used; "And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun" (Num 16.46). Zechariah also describes a plague that consumes peoples <u>flesh</u>, <u>eyes</u> and <u>tongues</u> (Zech 14.12), elements in opposition to God –the <u>flesh</u> of the beast, the <u>eyes</u> of the worshippers and the <u>tongue</u> of the false prophet. The "plague" is sometimes described as a "nuclear war" but that is not the case –it is the glory of Christ that consumes them with <u>eyes</u> like a flame of fire, (Rev 19.12), a <u>tongue</u> like a sword (Rev 19.15) and **<u>on his flesh written</u>**, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev 19.16).

Babylon is divided into three parts just as she was divided in the days of Peleg (Gen 10.25); Christ has "scattered" the builders of the "tower of Babel" a global enterprise to "make a name for ourselves" to become self-determining…to unify peoples nations and tongues in world-wide-wickedness (www). Every false shrine will fall in Jerusalem, whether it is a church, a mosque, a synagogue or a Jewish temple. The tripartite division of Babylon denotes the punishment of the "unholy trinity" of beast, image worshippers and false prophet but besides Jerusalem (that burdensome stone) the nations are also punished as the cities of the nations fall. Everything man held dear is swept away to make room for a new city –

> **Revelation 21:1** And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, **New Jerusalem**, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Appendix on Psalm 79

> "For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy". (**Revelation16:6**)
>
> "Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and *there was* none to bury *them"*. (**Psalm 79:3**)

It is always good practice to establish the setting (context) of the allusion as we can be sure that the writer has not randomly chosen to introduce snippets of the Old Testament into his vision without reason. It is not coincidental that the nations of Psalm 79 are promised **sevenfold** judgment (v.12) mirroring the **seven vial-plagues** of Revelation 16. This Asaph Psalm is a lament over the destruction of Jerusalem and is often placed in 586 BC when Babylon destroyed Jerusalem. The city is in ruins and the temple defiled (v1), many are dead (vv 2-3) and the land has been laid waste (v7) vv 6-7 of this psalm match Jeremiah 10.25 and this is often offered as supporting evidence that Psalm 79 should be placed in BCE 586. However, the psalm itself uses the older word for kingdom, "mamlakah" in v.6 and that suggests that Jeremiah is quoting the psalm. The objection to this would be that the temple (and city) was never destroyed in earlier history therefore it can only be applicable to 586. This ignores the fact that partial desecration of the temple (and invasion of the land) occurred during the reign of Hezekiah[70] when the city was saved. Jeremiah is known to be a prophet that extensively quoted and alluded to earlier scriptures. Davis observes; "Jer.26:18 is an unusual case where one prophetic book explicitly cites another by name. In this verse, Micah of Moresheth is named when Mic.3:12 is quoted. Micah was written 80-100 years before this event (editor: in the Hezekiah era)…..Jeremiah 50-51 is dependent on Isaiah 13-14. Although the Jeremiah 50-51 passage is not clearly dated, Isaiah was born a little less than 100 years before Jeremiah, and the two passages are probably separated by nearly that amount of time. One verse in this passage, Jer. 51:58, shows further the influence of Hab2:13…" [71]

On Jeremiah (c. 627-586 BCE) using the Psalms Holladay comments as follows: "…If the prophet really cites a given psalm, then of course the psalm must predate the prophet; but the problem obviously is to be sure that the borrowing is not the other way around—that the psalmist is not quoting the prophet—or that both texts are not simply conventional language. The matter is best dealt with by examples.

There are two such parallels in the book of Jeremiah to Psalm 1, namely, Jer.12: b-2 and 17:5-8; and in each of them Psalm 1 is deformed in a different way. If both the passages in Jeremiah are genuine to the prophet (and I have become convinced that they are), then the psalm must be prior. Similarly, both Amos 9:2-3 and Jer. 23:23-24 draw on Ps. 139:7-12, and Amos in particular uses the material ironically the psalm must be prior. Even if to a psalm passage there is only a single prophetic parallel, if the prophet (Jeremiah) uses the phraseology ironically, then the psalm is surely prior, irony is not a characteristic of the psalms. **Thus Jer. 10:2 5 cites Ps. 79:6-7**. The two verses just before the Jeremiah verse in question similarly offer an expansion of Prov. 16:9 and 20:24 and an expansion of Ps. 6:2 (1) or 38:2 (1). These citations, I am convinced, are genuine to Jeremiah: he is citing passages that are repeated by people who are unwilling to accept any covenant responsibility. **The psalms in question are therefore prior…**.In this way I have concluded that sixteen psalms—namely, Psalms 1, 2, 6, 7, 9—10, 22, 35, 38, 63, 64, 78, 79, 83, 84, 122, and 139—are older than Jeremiah." [72]

The setting of Psalm 79 tells us something about Revelation 16 but the reverse is also true. In Rev. 16.15 the saints are gathered (Behold, I come as a thief) avenged and the enemy is destroyed (described in Rev 19) and this approximates the Hezekiah scenario of partial destruction of the land before divine intervention. Thematically Psalm 79 represents a blasphemous challenge issued by Sennacherib and his god (Asshur) against Yahweh (2 Kgs.19.3, Isa.37.3); "Wherefore should the heathen say, 'Where is their God?'" (Ps.79.10; cf., blasphemed the name of God in Rev 16.9) and is correlated with the challenge in Rev 13.4: "Who is able to make war with him?" This was Sennacherib's boast --- no other nations "gods" were able to prevent defeat against the all powerful Asshur and his mouthpiece (false prophet) Sennacherib/Rabshakeh (2 Kgs.18.33-35). We have then two texts (Exodus 12-24 and Psalm 79) related to theomachy --- a contest between Yahweh and his true witnesses against the beast ("gods") and his witnesses (the false prophet). It should come as no surprise then that the chapter concerned with witnessing (Rev. 11) also extensively alludes to Psalm 79.

Old Testament and Extrabiblical Literature

The table below contains more allusions and verbal parallels in the Old Testament and extra-biblical Literature[73] but it is not exhaustive. It does not contain links within Revelation or within the wider NT and no doubt misses other OT links.

Rev	Old Testament and Extrabiblical Literature
16:6	Ps .79:3; Isa .49:26
16:7	Pss.19:9; 119:137; Amos 3:13 LXX; 4:13 LXX
16:10	Exod.10:21; Isa.8:22
16:12	Isa.11:15; 44:27; Jer.50:38; 51:36
16:14	Amos 3:13 LXX; 4:13LXX
16:16	Judg.5:19; 2 Kings 9:27; 23:29; Zech.12:11
16:17	Isa.66:6
16:18	Exod.19:16–19; Esther 1:1d LXX; Dan.12:1
16:19	Ps.75:8; Isa.51:17,22; Jer. 25:15
16:21	Exod. 9:24

End Notes Chapter 16 Pages 318-358

[1] So Aune, *Ibid*., Rev 6-16,p.,868

[2] Identical and equal are very often used synonymously. However, sometimes identical is meant to say that the two things are not just equal, but actually are syntactically equal. Equivalence is a strictly weaker notion than equality. It can be formalized in many different ways (for instance, as an equivalence relation). The identity relation is always an equivalence relation, but not the other way around. Isomorphism is a specific term from category theory. Two objects are isomorphic if there exists an invertible morphism between them. Informally, two isomorphic objects are identical for the purposes of answering any question about them in their category.

[3] Ambiguity and repetitive action implies isomorphism see Rev 17 page 365 **Access Here**

[4] Think here of the last section of an instrumental musical composition i.e., a symphony with four movements: an allegro, which by this point was in what is called sonata form, complete with exposition, development, and recapitulation that reaches a crescendo (with God as the conductor).

[5] There is a last challenge at the end of the 1,000 years but the wicked are consumed and the rebellion is cut short – the "end of history" (as we know it) occurs before the start of the millennium.

[6] The retribution is first against Israel then against the Gentiles: "Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate" (Dan 9.27). Ray observes; "The choice of 'is poured out' (תֻּתַּךְ [tittak], a Qal imperfect) as the verb reminds the reader of 'flood' in v. 26. It can be used figuratively (Job 10:10) or literally (Ex. 9:33)". Ray, Charles H., "A Study of Daniel 9:24-17, Part II" in the Conservative Theological Journal, vol. 5 no. 16 (Fort Worth, TX: Tyndale Theological Seminary, December 2001), 212. Now the Gentiles are punished: "Pour out Your fury on the Gentiles, who do not know you, and on the families who do not call on your name; for they have eaten up Jacob, devoured him and consumed him, and made his dwelling place desolate" (Jer. 10.25).

[7] See the excurses on Psalm 79 at the end of this chapter and the comparison between Psalm 79 and Rev 11 in Chapter 11 page 208. **Access Here**

[8] A play on the name of Michael--- Who is like God?

[9] Yahweh "has no god with him" but the reincarnated beast has the false prophet (lamb with two horns)

[10] For other allusions see; *Old Testament and Extrabiblical Literature* at the end of this chapter.

[11] The reader is encouraged to examine the following articles as they clarify the connections (start with the Ezekiel article): (1) P. Wyns, *An Intertextual Analysis of Ezekiel 38: Part 1*, ***CEJBI***, Vol.10, No.4, Oct 2016; (2) P. Wyns, *Where the Vultures Gather*, ***CEJBI***, Vol.4. No.3. Jul 2010; (3) P. Wyns, *Psalm 22*, ***CEJBI***, 10, No.2, Apr 2016; **See the resources page** [accessed Oct 2017]

[12] Robert H. Mounce, The Book of Revelation (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), Rev. 16:1.

[13] Note the previous occasion when a similar event occurred: **Genesis 12:17 "**And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife".

[14] The "life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17.11).

[15] Robert H. Mounce, The Book of Revelation (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 291.

[16] **Matthew 13:6** "And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away".

[17] However, according to Mills, "This plague will apparently affect the whole of mankind, including the saints alive at the time (Rev. 7.16)."—Monty S. Mills, Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1987), Rev. 16.8.

[18] Ha Young Son, Praising God beside the Sea: An Intertextual Study of Revelation 15 and Exodus 15, (Wipf and Stock, 2017),74 including footnotes below.

[19] Beale, *Revelation*, 832.

[20] Ford, *Revelation*, 274 Beale also clearly mentioned that these references are all "in descriptions of the exodus plague". Beale, *Revelation*, 832.

[21] Beale, *Revelation*, 832.

[22] Beckwith argued the reference to frogs is taken from some mythological tradition (e.g., Persian mythology) rather than from the Egyptian plague tradition. He said, "The loathsome appearance of the frog makes the representation appropriate; possibly it is suggested by the Egyptian plague, Ex. 8:6, but this seems remote. It is more likely that the idea is taken from some mythological tradition. The frog figures in Persian mythology (Völter *Offenb.* 114)." Beckwith, *Apocalypse*, 683-84. However, his argument loses persuasion when considering the usages of "frogs" in the OT and in the Jewish literature (as Beale and Ford argued) and considering the whole context of the trumpet and bowl judgments (as Beale argued). Beckwith suggested another allusive source of Rev 16:13. Although the features that came out of the mouth of a beast are different from frogs, "A certain parallel to this passage is found in Hermas *Vis.* IV. 1, 6, where fiery locusts are seen coming out of the mouth of a fabulous beast" Beckwith, *Apocalypse*, 684; cf. Aune, *Revelation* 6-16,894.

[23] Coincidently (sic) in Rev 17.11 the Scarlet beast is represented as an "eighth" using exactly the same Greek word ὄγδοος (ogdoos).
[24] Ogdoad (Egyptian). (2017, May 19). In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 09:26, May 25, 2017, from **Access here**
[25] Kek (mythology). (2017, May 11). In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 09:31, May 25, 2017, from **Access here**
[26] Acheron was the god of the underworld river and lake of pain. The daimon Kharon (Charon) ferried the souls of the dead across its dark waters in his skiff.
[27] Radcliffe G. Edmonds, III, Myths of the Underworld Journey: Plato, Aristophanes, and the 'Orphic' Gold Tablets,(Cambridge University Press, 2004),133-134 including footnotes.
[28] For the idea that swans sing just before death, cp. Plato *Phaedo* 85b; cp. Aristophanes *Birds* 769-784; Euripides *IT* 1104.
[29] cp. Moorton on the liminality of frogs: "Aristophanes' amphibians incorporate a duality that embraces both life and death and the ridiculous and the sublime, situated as they are on the dividing line between them. Likewise, the identification of the frogs with swans, which in popular belief sing only at the moment of death, is particularly appropriate to the frogs, singing eternally on the threshold of death.' (Moorton, 1989, p. 313.)
[30] The KJV frequently renders the word as "devils" but it should be "demons".
[31] Some of the inter-texts that Perry employs to establish the case: Destroy us (Deut 1.27, Luke 4.34), Leave us alone (Luke 4.34, Exod 14.12), Hold your peace (Luke 4.35, Exod 14.14), Nations/Crowd amazed (Luke 4.36, Exod 15.15). Jesus was accused of wanting to destroy the temple (Matt 26.61) and the Jews maintained they had never been in bondage (John 8.33). See Andrew Perry, Demons Magic and Medicine, (Willow Publications, 1999),91-105
[32] *Ibid*, Aune, Revelation 6-16,895
[33] Although stone appears in Gen 35.14 (λίθινα) it is in the feminie form (describes Jacob's pillar) however the second occurrence in Exod 24.12 is the adjective accusative neuter plural, similar to Rev 9.20.
[34] The context of ritual cleanness suggests temple vessels
[35] Solomon the temple builder loved many women i.e., entered into covenant agreements and was led astray cf. the great whore committing fornication with the kings of the earth.
[36] In the book of Daniel (located in Babylon), Nebuchadnezzar makes an image which he commands everyone to worship. Nebuchadnezzar himself is transformed into a beast. See, P. Wyns, God is Judge, (Biblaridion Media, 2011) Chapter 5 page 75 **Access here**
[37] BibleWorks NT (NA27) has the Greek word for animal or beast instead of bird the same Greek word (beast) is used in the LXX of Dan 4.16 and in Dan 7.19 (x2), v.23
[38] **Isa.13.19-22.** Babylon would become a place for "wild beasts of the desert" note especially the "satyr" which can denote a "hairy goat" or a "goat-demon" (Lev.17.7) possibly connected with the scapegoat carrying national sin.
[39] Jesus alludes to the feast of unleavened bread when it was customary to sweep the house clean of leaven (spring clean): see Exod 12.15 (Jesus swept the money changers out the temple before Passover) and the Day of Atonement when the scapegoat was sent into the wilderness (The "dry place" being Babylonian exile).
[40] For an analysis of Legion typology see chapter 11 page 227 **Access here**
[41] Older translations have "scapegoat" but modern translations render the term as a proper noun "Azazel".
[42] **NetBible Lev.18.6:** The meaning of the Hebrew term עֲזָאזֵל (ʾaza'zel, four times in the OT, all of them in this chapter; vv. 8, 10 [2 times], and 26) is much debated. There are three or perhaps four major views (see the summaries and literature cited in J. Milgrom, Leviticus [AB], 1:1020-21; B. A. Levine, Leviticus [JPSTC], 102; J. E. Hartley, Leviticus [WBC], 237-38; D. P. Wright, The Disposal of Impurity [SBLDS], 21-25; M. V. Van Pelt and W. C. Kaiser, NIDOTTE 3:362-63; and M. S. Moore, NIDOTTE 4:421-22). (1) Some derive the term from a combination of the Hebrew word עֵז (ʾez, "goat"; i.e., the word for "goats" in v. 5) and אָזַל (ʾazal, "to go away"), meaning "the goat that departs" or "scapegoat" (cf., e.g., the LXX and KJV, NASB, NIV, NLT). This meaning suits the ritual practice of sending the so-called "scapegoat" away into the wilderness (vv. 10, 21-22, 26). Similarly, some derive the term from Arabic ʾazala ("to banish, remove"), meaning "entire removal" as an abstract concept (see BDB 736 s.v. עֲזָאזֵל). (2) Some see the term as a description of the wilderness area to which the goat was dispatched, deriving it somehow from Arabic ʾazazu ("rough ground") or perhaps עָזַז, (ʾazaz, "to be strong, fierce"). (3) The most common view among scholars today is that it is the proper name of a particular demon (perhaps even the Devil himself) associated with the wilderness desert regions. Levine has proposed that it may perhaps derive from a reduplication of the ז (zayin) in עֵז combined with אֵל (ʾel, "mighty"), meaning "mighty goat." The final consonantal form of עֲזָאזֵל would have resulted from the inversion of the א (aleph) with the second ז. He makes the point that the close association between עֵז and שְׂעִירִים (shÿʾirim), which seems to refer to "goat-demons" of the desert in Lev 17:7 (cf. Isa 13:21, etc.), should not be ignored in the derivation of Azazel, although the term ultimately became the name of "the demonic ruler of the wilderness." The latter view is supported by the parallel between the one goat "for (לְ, lamed preposition) the Lord" and the one "for (לְ) Azazel" here in v. 8. The rendering as a proper name has been tentatively accepted here (cf. ASV, NAB, NRSV, TEV, CEV). **Perhaps a play on words**

between the proper name and the term for "goat" has occurred so that the etymology has become obscure. Even if a demon or the demonic realm is the source for the name, however, there is no intention here of appeasing the demons. The goal is to remove the impurity and iniquity from the community in order to avoid offending the Lord and the repercussions of such (see esp. vv. 21-22 and cf. Lev 15:31).

[43] A. Pinker, 'A Goat to Go to Azazel', JHS 7 [2007]: **Access here**

[44] "The spelling עזזאל occurs in the Samaritan Pentateuch and in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The most basic meaning of the word עזאועז and its synonym עז is 'strength, fierceness', which, in particular contexts, becomes an expression to describe God's powerful wrath as a retribution for sin (Ps 66,3; 90,11; Isa 42,25; Ezra 8,22)." Jacqueline C.R. De Roo, ***Was the Goat for Azazel Destined for the Wrath of God?*** (*Biblica* **81 2000), 233-242** **Access here** The name in Leviticus is לְז'ז' in b.Yoma 67b לז'ז' and לְ'ז' in 4QEnc it is לְ'ם' in the Greek Gizeh text it is Aseal; Syncellus has Azalzel; the Ethiopic Enoch has Asael at 6.7 but Azazel in the Similitudes at 69.2; 4QEnGiants has ל [ז]'ז' the same form as Leviticus, whereas 4Q 180 has ל'זז':

[45] D.J. Stökl in *Sacrifice in religious experience* ed. Albert I. Baumgarten p. 218

[46] See the parable told by Jesus (Luke 11:21-26// Mk.3:9-30// Mtt.12:22-37) where he specifically refers to **a strong** (the word *man* is in *italics* and is therefore not present in the original Greek).

[47] Several distinguished students of the apocalyptic traditions have previously discerned that some details of Asael's punishment are reminiscent of the scapegoat ritual. Later rabbinic materials also link the sacrificial animal known from the scapegoat ritual to the story of the angelic rebels. Lester Grabbe points to another important piece of evidence – a fragmentary text from the Book of Giants found at Qumran (4Q203). In this document the punishment for all the sins of the fallen angels is placed on Azazel. Daniel Stökl also observes that "the punishment of the demon resembles the treatment of the goat in aspects of geography, action, time and purpose. Andrei Orlov, Azazel as the Celestial Scapegoat an excerpt from A. Orlov "The Eschatological Yom Kippur in the Apocalypse of Abraham: Part I: The Scapegoat Ritual," in: Symbola Caelestis. Le symbolisme liturgique et paraliturgique dans le monde Chrétien (Scrinium, 5; eds. A. Orlov and B. Lourié; Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2009) 79-111.

[48] Kelley Coblentz Bautch admits that, "The location and even the identity of Dudael are enigmatic" Kelley Coblentz Bautch, A Study of the Geography of 1 Enoch 17-19: No One Has Seen What I Have Seen, (Brill, 2003), 138. Dudael is sometimes referred to by other names. Yoma 6:8 of the Mishnah refers to the place as *Beth Hadudu* (בית חדודו), which literally means 'house of his piercing.' The second word comes from the root *hadad* (**חדד** Strongs 2300), meaning 'to be sharp'. *Beth Hadudu* is probably based on some clever Hebrew wordplay, for in Enoch 10.5 Azazel is tossed upon rough and jagged rocks, and the root *hadad* sounds similar to *dadah*. In later times the scapegoat ritual was corrupted and the goat was cast of a cliff probably because the Jews wanted to prevent the goat (bearing the nation's sins) returning to the temple. The scapegoat was not meant to be killed but merely exiled as it represented the nation and the nation could return if it repented. Rabbinic literature states; "So would the crowd, called <u>Babylonians or Alexandrians</u>, pull the goat's hair to make it hasten forth, carrying the burden of sins away with it (Yoma vi. 4, 66*b*; "Epistle of Barnabas," vii.), and the arrival of the shattered animal at the bottom of the valley of the rock of Bet Hadudo, twelve miles away from the city, was signalized by the waving of shawls to the people of Jerusalem, who celebrated the event with boisterous hilarity and amid dancing on the hills" (Yoma vi. 6, 8; Ta'an. iv. 8). It is interesting that in Daniel 3:1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of **Dura, in the province of Babylon.** This reminds us of the "image" of the "beast" (Nebuchadnezzar was transformed into a beast) and it had dimensions of 60x6 cubits (reminiscent of 666). It is possible that the writers of the apocrypha based **Dudael** on **Dura**. The Hebrew letters d (ד) and r (ר) are very similar and are often confused and **Dura in Babylon** (**d**[u]**r**[a] **b.b**[a]**b**[e]**l**) could easily be transformed into **ddl** (**d**[u]**d**[a][e]**l**) thus the **ddl** cryptically referencing **bbl** Babel (**b**[u]**b**[a][e]**l**). Oppert placed Dura to the Southeast of Babylon, near a small river and mounds bearing the name of Douair or Duair, where, also, was what seemed to be the base of a great statue (Exped. scientifique en Mesopotamie, I, 238). Others have believed the name to indicate a portion of the actual site of Babylon within the great wall (duru) of the city-perhaps the rampart designated dur Su-anna, "the rampart (of the city) Lofty-defence," a name of Babylon. Therefore the plain of Dura in the province or district of Babylon (בִּמְדִינַתבָּבֶל), was most likely in the vicinity of the city and "dur" as in "the plain of the dur" or "rampart" points to a place within the city or possibly to the historical location of the earlier tower of Babel. In their depiction of the banishment of Azazel the apocryphal writers may have been influenced by the mythical Sumerian gods. The main temple to Enki (whose chief symbol is a goat) is called E-abzu, meaning "abzu temple" ("house of the abyss"- i.e., the subterranean waters), depicted by a ziggurat temple surrounded by Euphratean marshlands near the ancient Persian Gulf coastline at Eridu. In the later Babylonian epic (Enûma Eliš), Enki puts a spell on Abzu (the "begetter of the gods") thereby confining him **deep underground**. Enki subsequently sets up his home "in the depths of the Abzu."

[49] Water Shortages Unite Iraq, Islamic State Against Turkey **Access here** Turkey's control of the Euphrates might lead to disaster **Access here** [Accessed Sept 2016]

[50] James L. Resseguie, The Revelation of John: A Narrative Commentary,(Baker Academic,2009),209

[51] Although a natural rock formation it is called the foundation stone by the Jews.

[52] Mounce, [ibid, Revelation, 297,fn.36] notes: Kiddle interprets the darkness as "the darkness of civil strife 321), while Caird understands it as the total eclipse of the monster's imperial power" (204). He goes on to call the last three plagues a "triad of political disaster" — internal anarchy, invasion, and irreparable collapse (204). As the first four plagues fell on the elements of nature, the last three are "directed against the forces of deception and persecution" (Sweet. 246).

[53] Barker offers a completely preterist interpretation of the plague-vials and refers to Josephus and extra biblical literature. Although our interpretation of the plague-vials lies in the future the past pattern is important for establishing precedents. Barker says; "The fifth plague was the destruction of the temple, which was no longer the place of the heavenly throne (cf. Ps. 11.4) but had become the throne of 'the Angel of Darkness' (1QS III), of Satan, 'the Angel of Malevolence who rules in darkness' (1QM Xlii), and so of his earthly manifestation, the beast. The temple became a place of darkness, not light. Men gnawed their tongues in anguish (16.10). Josephus described how the famine was at its most acute in the days immediately before the temple was burned: 'Necessity drove the victims to gnaw anything and objects which even the filthiest of brute beasts would reject they condescended to collect and eat: thus in the end they abstained not from belts and shoes and stripped off and chewed the very leather of their bucklers. Others devoued tufts of withered grass' (War 6.197—98). One woman ate her own child" Margaret Barker, Revelation of Jesus Christ: Which God Gave to Him to Show to His Servants What Must Soon Take Place (A&C Black,2000), 270.

[54] As some point out (Mounce 1998: 300, from Bruce 1969: 657), a member of the temple police caught asleep had his clothes stripped and burned, and he was sent off naked and in disgrace.

[55] Osborne, Grant. *Revelation*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. 2002. 598.

[56] Osborne [p.578] comments: "The "loud voice" is then heard in Revelation(1:10; 5:2, 12; 6:10; 7:2, 10; 8:13; 10:3; 11:12,15; 12:10; 14:7,9, 15, 18; 19:1, 17; 21:3); and while it sometimes speaks "from heaven" (11:12, 15; 12:10; 14:2, 13), the only times it speaks "from the temple" are here and in 16:17, undoubtedly due to the temple scene in 15:5-8. Many (Beckwith, Beasley-Murray, Prigent, Mounce, Wall ,Beale, Aune) believe that this is the voice of God and that there is an echo of Isa. 66:6 LXX, in which Isaiah tells the righteous remnant among the nation to "hear the voice from the temple, a voice from the Lord repaving his enemies all they deserve." Since only God is in the temple (15:8), it must he who speaks".

[57] Golden Gate (Jerusalem). (2017, May 19). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 07:53, May 29, 2017, **Access here**

[58] *Ibid*, Osborne, 592

[59] To make Greek; give a Greek form to; Hellenize

[60] Rob Dalrymple, Understanding Eschatology: Why it Matters, 159

[61] Islamic eschatology. (2017, May 28). In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 11:24, May 29, 2017, **Access here**

[62] Walt Kelly, "We have met the enemy and he is us".

[63] Michael Barber, Coming Soon: Unlocking the Book of Revelation and Applying Its Lessons Today,(Emmaus Road Publishing, 2006), 202-203 including footnote 14

[64] James E. Smith, Ph.D., Dictionary of Figures in the Book of Revelation, (Lulu,2011),14

[65] **Zechariah 12:11:** In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, **as the** mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

[66] The word **mgd** has no entry in *NIDOTTE*. BibleWorks has the Origin coming from an unused root probably meaning to be eminent; TWOT - 1144a; n m. Gesenius remarks that the Hebrew letters **m** and **n** are often interchangeable and suggests that the unused root **mgd** (4021) is related to **ngid** (5057) for prince, therefore denoting something that is chief or noble, hence **mgd** 4022 something very precious or noble. Without later vowel pointing the form can be found in **m.mgd** (Deut 33.13), **u.m.mgd** (Deut 33.14), **u.m.mgd** (Deut 33.15), **u.m.mgd** (Deut 33.16), **mgdim** (Song 4.13), **mgdi.u** (Song 4.16), **mgdim** (Song 7.13[14]). Grateful acknowledgment to Robin Bell for this insight.

[67] **Deuteronomy 33:15a:** And for the chief things (meged) of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills

[68] Great Rift Valley. (2017, May 1). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 02:12, May 30, 2017, **Access here**

[69] Evidence for this earthquake has been uncovered by the archaeologists spade throughout Israel and Jordan. Graphic evidence can be seen at Hazor and Ein Hazeva (Biblical Tamar). The earthquake measured an 8.2 on the Ritcher scale and the epicentre was located in the Beka Valley, in present day Lebanon. Steven A. Austin, Gordon W. Franz, and Eric G. Frost, "Amos's Earthquake: An Extraordinary Middle East Seismic Event of 750 B.C." International Geology Review 42 (2000) 657-671. Yadin and Finkelstein date the earthquake level at Hazor to 760 BC(plus or minus 25 years) based on stratigraphic analysis of the destruction debris (Y. Yadin, Hazor, the Rediscovery of a Great Citadel of the Bible (New York: Random House, 1975). I. Finkelstein, "Hazor and the North in the Iron Age: A Low Chronology Perspective," Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research 314 (1999) 55-70). Both are cited in Austin et al., "Amos's Earthquake," 658. Similarly, Ussishkin dated the "sudden

destruction" level at Lachish to approximately 760 BC. (D. Ussishkin, "Lachish" in E. Stern, ed., The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993) vol. 1, 338-342, cited in Austin et al., "Amos's Earthquake,"660). This article employs the date 750BC, however, any suggested dates for the earthquake draw on a combination of historical, biblical and archaeoseismological evidence and therefore precision is difficult and we should probably speak of a dating range around the mid 8th century. See, David Danzig, A Contextual Investigation of Archaeological and Textual Evidence for a Purported mid-8th Century BCE Levantine Earthquake, 2011 in which he offers a fair minded critique of the methodology of archaeoseismology as related to the book of Amos. Interestingly he lists 40 references or allusions to the earthquake in the book of Amos. Danzig distinguishes theophanic, phenomological and literal language. The epicentre seems to have been near the temple (the Beth-el sanctuary?), contra Zechariah seems to draw on the effects that it had on Jerusalem during Uzziah's reign. Danzig finds the biblical evidence strong but the archaeoseismological evidence inconclusive.

[70] On this see: P. Wyns, The Problem of the Destruction of the Temple page 521 in the addendum to *God is Judge* **Access here**

[71] Craig Davies, *Dating the Old Testament*, (RJ Communications: New York, 2007), 260 [accessed Oct 2016] **Access here**

[72] Bold emphasis mine, footnotes omitted. William L. Holladay, *The Psalms Through Three Thousand Years: Prayer book of a Cloud of Witnesses*, (Fortress Press, Minneapolis,1996),41

[73] Insert taken from Mark Wilson, Charts on the Literary, Historical, and Theological Perspectives [of Revelation], (Kregel, Grand Rapids, 2007), 28 **Access here** [accessed Oct 2017]