

EUGENIA SCARVELIS CONSTANTINOU

**ANDREW OF CAESAREA AND THE APOCALYPSE  
IN THE ANCIENT CHURCH OF THE EAST:  
Studies and Translation**

Thèse présentée  
à la Faculté des études supérieures de l'Université Laval  
dans le cadre du programme de doctorat en théologie  
pour l'obtention du grade de Philosophiae Doctor (Ph.D.)

FACULTÉ DE THÉOLOGIE ET DES SCIENCES RELIGIEUSES  
UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL  
QUÉBEC

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This dissertation is a study of the most important Greek patristic commentary on the Book of Revelation, composed in 611 by Andrew, Archbishop of Caesarea, Cappadocia. The dissertation consists of two parts: Part 1, *Studies on the Apocalypse Commentary of Andrew of Caesarea*, and Part 2, *Translation of the Apocalypse Commentary of Andrew of Caesarea*.

Part 1, *Studies on the Apocalypse Commentary of Andrew of Caesarea*, consists of an analysis of the commentary and an explanation of the Book of Revelation in the history of Eastern Christianity.

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the commentary and to the historical context, audience, purpose and motivation for its composition.

Chapter 2 discusses the Book of Revelation in the canon of Eastern Christianity through an historical overview of the place of Revelation in the canon of the East from the second century through the present day. The chapter considers which factors accounted for the early and immediate appeal of Revelation, examines the attitudes toward it as revealed in primary sources, and demonstrates that the Apocalypse was consistently recognized as an apostolic document from the second century through the early fourth century. Revelation eventually came under attack due to its association with controversies such as Montanism and chiliasm. Doubts about its authorship were raised to discredit it in order to undermine the controversial movements which relied upon it. It remained in an uncertain canonical status until relatively recently and is now presumed to be part of the New Testament by most Eastern Christians but the question of its status in the canon has never been “officially” resolved.

Chapter 3 explains the importance of the commentary from a text-critical perspective and for the purpose of studying the history of the Apocalypse text itself. A large percentage of Apocalypse manuscripts contain the Andreas commentary, which has preserved a text type of its own, and the study of the Andreas text type facilitates the analysis and evaluation of other text types by comparison. This chapter also discusses the dual textual transmission of the Book of Revelation, unique among the books of the New Testament, since manuscripts of Revelation are found both in scriptural collections as well as bound with a variety of spiritual and profane writings.

Chapter 4 discusses Andrew's commentary in the context of the trajectory of other ancient Apocalypse commentaries, East and West, and how the interpretative history proceeded along a dual stream of tradition. The first commentators greatly influenced those who followed them, but only those who wrote in the same language. The Latin tradition did not influence Greek interpreters, nor vice-versa, and commonalities between Greek and Latin writers can be traced back to the earliest Fathers and to the perspectives, Scriptures, exegetical techniques and traditions common to both East and West from the first centuries of Christianity.

Chapter 5 commences an evaluation of the commentary itself, including Andrew's purpose, motivation and orientation, as well as a discussion of the structure, style and characteristics of the commentary. This chapter also explains Andrew's methodology, techniques and use of sources.

Chapter 6 explores Andrew's theology, including his doctrine, view of prophecy, history, eschatology, angelology and salvation.

Chapter 7 reviews Andrew's influence on subsequent Eastern commentators, the translation of his commentary into other ancient languages, its impact on the reception of the Book of Revelation into the Eastern canon and the commentary's lasting pre-eminence and importance.

Part 2 of the dissertation, *Translation of the Apocalypse Commentary of Andrew of Caesarea*, is an English translation of the commentary with extensive explanatory footnotes.

Revelation's shaky canonical status and association with heresy caused the East to lag behind the West by three hundred years before producing a commentary on Revelation. Not until the end of the sixth century did the first Greek commentary appear, authored by Oikoumenios, a Monophysite philosopher. Serious crises in the Empire contributed to a sentiment that the end of the world might be near, renewing interest in apocalyptic writings. As the only Greek commentary on Revelation, Oikoumenios' interpretation would have found a ready readership. But due to his philosophical background and obvious lack of exegetical training, Oikoumenios' quirky commentary expressed theological, eschatological and exegetical conclusions which were unacceptable in mainstream ecclesiastical circles.

Not long afterward, a second Greek commentary appeared to respond to Oikoumenios. This second commentary was composed by Andrew, Archbishop of Caesarea, Cappadocia, a well-known and respected exegete during his time. Andrew's superior skill and exegetical training produced a commentary that quickly eclipsed the work of Oikoumenios to become predominant and the standard patristic commentary for the East, including the Greek, Slavic, Armenian and Georgian Churches.

Andrew demonstrated that he stood in the stream of patristic tradition, even if it amounted to no more than a trickle. Although composed in 611, (a specific date proposed here for the first time), Andrew refers to many interpretations of Revelation found in passages by earlier Fathers as well as citing the opinions of anonymous teachers, pointing to a heretofore unexplored rich oral tradition of interpretation of the Apocalypse in the Greek East reaching back into the centuries preceding Andrew's time.

The totality of the ancient Greek tradition for the interpretation of the Apocalypse was preserved in the commentary of Andrew of Caesarea, who succeeded in drawing together the various strands of ancient tradition. His thoughtful, balanced and well written commentary was quickly embraced and became extremely important. His accomplishment was widely recognized and is evidenced by the existence of eighty-three complete manuscripts of Andrew's commentary, along with countless abbreviated versions.

Andrew's commentary also influenced the textual transmission of the Apocalypse and created a unique text type. Moreover, Andrew's commentary is responsible for the

eventual acceptance of Revelation into the canon of the Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches as well as influencing Eastern Christian eschatology.

The commentary was published in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 106 (Paris 1863) 215-458, and also exists in Latin, Georgian, Armenian and Old Slavonic translations. Until now, no complete translation of Andrew's commentary has appeared in any modern language and no significant amount of scholarship has been devoted to his commentary, undoubtedly the most important ancient Greek Patristic commentary on Revelation.

Many of Andrew's opinions are reported by George Mavromatis in his book, *Ἡ Ἀποκάλυψις τοῦ Ἰωάννου μετὰ Πατερικὴ Ἀνάλυση* (Athens: Apostolike Diakonia, 1994). Some excerpts of the commentary already existed in English translation. An exposition on the Book of Revelation composed in Russian by Archbishop Averky Taushev quoted portions of the Old Slavonic text which he had translated into Russian. This work was thereafter translated into English by Seraphim Rose and published under Archbishop Averky's name as *Apocalypse* (Platina, CA: Valaam Society of America, 1985). Additional excerpts from Andrew's commentary were very recently published as volume XII, "Revelation," (ed. and trans. William Weinrich), as part of the *Ancient Christian Commentary* series, ed. Thomas C. Oden, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005) along with other comments from various ancient authors. This volume was published after the present translation had been completed and therefore did not factor into the present translation.

A thorough analysis of Weinrich's rendition of Andrew's comments is not included in the scope of this dissertation, however a cautionary note is appropriate. Weinrich states that his translations are based on Schmid's critical text, however, they are lifted out of the context of the commentary and at times can mislead the reader with respect to Andrew's true opinion, the discernment of which requires a careful reading of the entire relevant portion of the commentary.

Weinrich's compilation highlights the significant problem created by the fact that a *complete* translation of Andrew's commentary has not heretofore existed in which one can read the work in its entirety and truly understand Andrew's thoughts, analysis and style. This problem has arisen repeatedly among authors who discuss Andrew's work and

is demonstrated on the very first occasion in which Weinrich includes an excerpt from Andrew's commentary. Weinrich presents *Oikoumenios'* opinion as that of Andrew on Rev. 1:4: "Grace to you and peace from the One who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before his throne." (Weinrich, 3) Andrew believes that specifically in Rev. 1:4 this statement refers to the Father, *not* to the Trinity, and he goes to great lengths to explain why Oikoumenios is incorrect exegetically even if he is correct theologically. Averky makes *exactly* the same mistake as Weinrich (Averky, 44). Without the complete commentary as a guide, isolated passages from Andrew's commentary are translated and carelessly presented as Andrew's own opinion because Andrew often reported the opinions of others as alternative interpretations.

The piecemeal approach to Andrew's commentary, translating bits here and there while making no effort to understand the flow and content of the commentary as a whole, not to mention its historical context, has even affected disciplines outside the history of biblical interpretation. Misunderstandings and erroneous conclusions have been drawn by Byzantine historians, no doubt based on the assessment of Andrew by scholars in the history of interpretation field. For example Paul Magdalino, probably relying on earlier mistaken assessments, states in his article "The History of the Future and its Uses: Prophecy, Policy and Propaganda," (*The Making of Byzantine History*, Roderick Beaton and Charlotte Roueché, eds. [London: Variorum, 1993], 3-34), that Andrew was under the sway of apocalyptic fervor and even that Andrew *systematically* tried to relate Revelation to the Roman Empire. (*Making of Byzantine History*, 11) The truth is actually the opposite: If anything, Andrew was attempting to quell apocalyptic fears through his commentary, not inflame them.

The following dissertation consists of two parts: Part 1, "Studies on the Apocalypse Commentary of Andrew of Caesarea," an analysis of the commentary, and Part 2, "Translation of the Apocalypse Commentary of Andrew of Caesarea." The translation is based on the critical text of the commentary produced by Josef Schmid, *Der Apokalypse-Kommentar des Andreas von Kaisareia*, vol. 1 of *Studien zur Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypse-Textes*, 3 parts (München: Karl Zink Verlag, 1955-56).

Schmid employed brackets [ ] in the publication of his critical text to indicate doubtful words or passages, and I have retained these brackets. Therefore, instead of brackets, which would normally be used to insert words into the translation for clarity of reference, parentheses ( ) were employed to indicate words which I supplied to make the translation more accurate, more understandable or more readable in English. References to the critical text will begin with Andrew's own chapter numbering, indicated as *Chp.*, followed by the page number in Schmid's critical text, given as *Text*, and finally the page number as found in the present translation of the commentary, cited as *Comm*.

This dissertation has been a long and difficult task, often extremely tedious, but also fascinating and rewarding. I came to this dissertation topic after it was suggested to me by Fr. Ted Stylianopoulos of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts. I would like to thank him for the suggestion of this interesting and worthwhile subject. I had never heard of Andrew of Caesarea but I was very aware that little attention has been given to the Book of Revelation in the Eastern tradition. When I first met Professors Poirier and Roberge at Université Laval as a new doctoral student, I was both impressed with and pleased by their enthusiastic response to the subject. They encouraged me and confirmed my hopes for the potential contribution to scholarship through this topic.

I would like to thank Université Laval, especially my director, Prof. Paul-Hubert Poirier, for his advice, expertise, encouragement, and patience during this long process, and Prof. Thomas Schmidt for his Greek expertise and assistance with the translation. I also wish to sincerely thank all of my professors over the years at the University of San Diego, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology and Harvard Divinity School for their instruction, advice, encouragement, and their contributions to my intellectual growth in a great many ways. Many thanks also to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, Archbishops Demetrios and Spyridon, and Bishop Savas for the Taylor Scholarship.

My colleagues in the Theology and Religious Studies Department at the University of San Diego have boosted my spirits many times during the past five years with their kindness, advice and encouragement, and I sincerely thank them. Countless thanks also to my friends and family for their support and understanding, (including those who – rumor has it – doubted that I would ever finish), especially since they never exactly understood what I was doing or why. My deepest thanks and appreciation especially go to my husband, Rev. Dr. Costas Constantinou, for his proofreading of the Greek, his knowledge of the patristic tradition and his sensitivity to the nuances in the Greek language, which made his help invaluable, and mostly for his love, support, encouragement, patience and his faith in me. And finally many thanks to our beloved son, Christopher, for his love and understanding. I take full responsibility for any mistakes in this dissertation, all of which are entirely my own.

Eugenia Scarvelis Constantinou  
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**WORKS CITED**

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ACW	Ancient Christian Writers series
ANF	Ante-Nicene Fathers series
<i>Barn.</i>	<i>Epistle of Barnabas</i>
<i>Cel. Hier.</i>	Pseudo-Dionysios, <i>The Celestial Hierarchy</i>
<i>Chp.</i>	Chapter. Numerical divisions created by Andrew for the commentary
<i>Chr. and Ant.</i>	Hippolytus, <i>On Christ and the Antichrist</i>
<i>Comm.</i>	Commentary. <i>Comm.</i> with a page number indicates the present translation
CWS	Classics of Western Spirituality series
De Groote	<i>Oecumenii Commentarius in Apocalypsin</i> , ed. Marc De Groote.
<i>Dial.</i>	Justin Martyr, <i>Dialogue with Trypho</i>
<i>E.H.</i>	Eusebius of Caesarea, <i>Ecclesiastical History</i> .
<i>Eccl. Hier.</i>	Pseudo-Dionysios, <i>The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	Epistle
fn	footnote
FC	The Fathers of the Church series
<i>Heres.</i>	Irenaeus, <i>Against Heresies</i>
<i>Hom.</i>	<i>Homily</i>
KJV	Bible, King James Version.
LF	Library of the Fathers series
<i>Marc.</i>	Tertullian, <i>Against Marcion</i>
<i>Morals</i>	Gregory the Great, <i>Morals on the Book of Job</i>
NIV	Bible, New International Version
NKJV	Bible, New King James Version
NPNF 1 <sup>st</sup>	A Select Library of the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, first series
NPNF 2 <sup>nd</sup>	A Select Library of the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, second series
<i>Oik.</i>	Oikoumenios, <i>Commentary on the Apocalypse</i>
<i>On Dan.</i>	Hippolytus, <i>Commentary On Daniel</i>
<i>Or.</i>	Oration
<i>Prin.</i>	Origen, <i>On First Principles</i>
RSV	Bible, Revised Standard Version
<i>Serm.</i>	<i>Sermon</i>
Suggit	<i>Oecumenius, Commentary on the Apocalypse</i> , translated by John Suggit.
<i>Symp.</i>	Methodios of Olympus, <i>The Symposium</i>
<i>Text</i>	Schmid, Josef, <i>Der Apokalypse-Kommentar des Andreas von Kaisareia, Studien zur Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypse-Textes</i>
<i>Vic.</i>	Victorinus, <i>Commentary on the Apocalypse</i> .
[27]	Square brackets enclosing a number in bold type indicate page numbers in Schmid's critical edition
[ ]	Square brackets enclose those words bracketed in the critical text by Schmid to indicate questionable text from a critical or textual perspective.
( )	Parentheses indicate words supplied by the translator for clarity. Parentheses also indicate the Septuagint number of a psalm.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 The Apocalypse Commentary of Andrew of Caesarea

By far the most important ancient commentary on the Book of Revelation produced by the Greek East was composed by Andrew, Archbishop of Caesarea, Cappadocia. It not only became the standard patristic commentary in the Eastern Christian tradition and significantly influenced all subsequent Eastern commentaries, but decisively influenced the reception of the Book of Revelation into the canon of the Orthodox Church. Long after the canon was fixed in the West, the East still wavered in its attitude toward the Apocalypse of John. Certain councils, bishops and patriarchs accepted it, while others rejected it.

This uncertain canonical status continued well into the second millennium and was probably only fully resolved after the invention of the printing press, which standardized the production of the Bible. By this time, Revelation had gained widespread acceptance in the Orthodox world. Moslem conquests and occupation of many traditionally Orthodox lands renewed Eastern interest in Revelation. The fall of Constantinople in 1453, and the Greek Orthodox experience of more than four hundred years of subjugation, persecution and martyrdom under Islamic rulers, furthered interest in John's apocalyptic vision. Doubts raised commonly during the fourth and fifth centuries regarding the apostolic authorship of Revelation — due to its association with heresy, strange imagery and Semitic style of Greek — had nearly excluded the Apocalypse entirely from the canon. Eventually, these doubts faded away. This occurred in no small part because of the existence of a commentary on Revelation penned by Andrew, a respected ancient bishop and thoughtful orthodox interpreter of the Scriptures, who occupied the celebrated see of Caesarea, Cappadocia.

Andrew's commentary exists in its entirety in eighty-three manuscripts. In addition, thirteen abbreviated versions of the commentary survive, as well as fifteen manuscripts with scholia from Andrew. It was published in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 106 (Paris 1863) 215-457, however, the first critical edition of the *Apocalypse Commentary of Andrew of*

*Caesarea* was published in 1955 by Josef Schmid.<sup>1</sup> Before Andrew's commentary was ever printed in the Greek original text, the Jesuit scholar Theodore Peltanus, a professor at the University of Ingolstadt in the mid-sixteenth century, had created a free Latin translation which appeared in print in Ingolstadt in 1584 and is reprinted in the *Patrologia Graeca* volume. Several additional Latin editions were also subsequently printed.<sup>2</sup>

## 1.2 The Life and Work of Andrew of Caesarea

The person and work of Andrew of Caesarea is veiled in mystery. Virtually nothing is known about his life. Of his exegetical work, little remains except for his *Commentary on the Apocalypse* and a few small fragments consisting of questions and answers.<sup>3</sup> While scholars have placed Andrew's episcopal tenure as early as the fifth century and as late as the ninth century, today most locate him in the mid to late sixth century or early seventh.

The ancient city of Caesarea was located in eastern central Asia Minor, in the geographical center of modern-day Turkey, approximately 150 miles almost due north of the extreme northeastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>4</sup> For centuries it was the civil and

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<sup>1</sup> Josef Schmid, *Der Apokalypse-Kommentar des Andreas von Kaisareia*, vol. 1 of *Studien zur Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypse-Textes*, 3 parts (München: Karl Zink Verlag, 1955-56). The sections consist of the following: (1) *Der Apokalypse-Kommentar des Andreas von Kaisareia. Text* (1955), which I will refer to as "Text," is the Greek critical text of the commentary, (2) *Die alten Stämme* (1955), or "Alten Stämme," is a study of the textual tradition of the Apocalypse itself and the relationship of the Andreas commentary to the textual transmission of the Apocalypse, and, (3) *Historische Abteilung Ergänzungsband, Einleitung*, (1956) or "Einleitung," is a review of the manuscript tradition of the commentary and the subsequent history and reception of the Andreas commentary. For purposes of clarity, I will cite to each section, rather than giving citations to volumes, since the number and composition of the volumes can differ.

<sup>2</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 122. An earlier Latin translation may have already existed, since the famous Armenian bishop, Nerses of Lampron, describes the discovery of a commentary on Revelation by Arethas, (who was heavily dependent on Andrew), in a Latin monastery in the city of Antioch. It was in the "Lombard language," and Nerses was unable to find anyone who could translate it into Armenian. Nerses eventually found a copy of Andrew's commentary in the Greek language at the "Roman" (i.e., Greek Orthodox) monastery of St. Pathius. After earnestly begging for the manuscript, Nerses acquired it and then had it translated into Armenian. Nerses, the Archbishop of Tarsus (d. 1198), is considered responsible for the acceptance of the Apocalypse into the New Testament canon of the Armenians and his discovery of the Andrew commentary played no small role. Schmid, *Einleitung* 107-108. Also see chapter 7.2.1 of this dissertation.

<sup>3</sup> These fragments were published by Friedrich Diekamp in *Analecta Patristica* (Rome, 1938) 161-72, and came from a work entitled Θερσαπεντικῆ. Andrew produced at least one other commentary, *Commentary On Daniel*, which is attributed to him in a catalogue of the Patriarchal Library of Constantinople, printed at Strasbourg in 1578, but that commentary is otherwise entirely unknown as no manuscript of it has been found. *Bibliotheca Sive Antiquitates Urbis Constantinopolitanae* (Argentorati, 1578), 22. See *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* 7478.

<sup>4</sup> Present day "Kaysari."

religious center of the Roman province, and later the Byzantine province, of Cappadocia. The episcopal see of Caesarea was among the most prominent of the Byzantine Empire. Indeed, the metropolis of Caesarea was second in importance only to Constantinople itself. The bishop of Caesarea held the titular rank of “Archbishop” and his see was designated as *protothronos*, giving the Archbishop of Caesarea a precedence which is consistently recorded as such in the *Notitiae episcopatum*.<sup>5</sup>

Little can be said about Andrew with certainty except that he was the Archbishop of Caesarea in the late sixth and/or early seventh centuries. Apart from his ecclesiastical rank and see, and his authorship of a commentary on Revelation, we only know that Andrew wrote other commentaries, now lost, and responded to exegetical questions. Therefore, he must have been a well known and respected expert in Scripture interpretation. He confessed in the opening lines of his commentary that he was pressed by many people to undertake the job of writing a commentary on the Book of Revelation, which until then he had repeatedly declined.

It is not surprising that Andrew had previously denied requests to comment upon Revelation, despite his expertise in Scripture. Due to the very nature of the book itself, an interpretation of Revelation is challenging and difficult for anyone. In addition, almost no Greek exegetical tradition existed for the Apocalypse that Andrew could rely upon for assistance. But his statement that numerous persons appealed to him to assume this difficult task reveals that he was recognized as a proven exegete, technically and theologically well-qualified, and a respected hierarch.

### 1.2.1 Dating Andrew’s Episcopal Reign

In recent years, scholarly opinion has finally reached a general consensus that Andrew flourished in the late sixth and early seventh centuries.<sup>6</sup> Andrew’s episcopal reign

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<sup>5</sup> Daniel Stiernon, “Caesarea, Cappadocia,” *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, (2 vols.) vol. 1, ed. Angelo Di Berardino, trans. Adrian Walford, (Cambridge, Eng: James Clark & Co., 1992), citing Jean Darrouzes, *Notitiae episcopatum Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* (Paris, 1981).

<sup>6</sup> However, arrival at this consensus has been ridiculously slow. Even very recently scholars appear entirely unaware of the discoveries (now more than 100 years old) which have affirmatively and unquestionably established the parameters for dating Oikoumenios, the author of the first Greek commentary on Revelation, and Andrew. For example, Manlio Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, trans. John A. Hughes (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1994), 112, writes vaguely that Andrew and Oikoumenios “followed each

has been dated from 563-614.<sup>7</sup> While this is a useful approximation, it is highly unlikely that Andrew reigned for fifty-one years as a bishop, although it is not entirely impossible. It is more plausible that another bishop or bishops held the see during an intervening period of time between the end of Theokritos' episcopacy in 563 and Andrew's ascent. Andrew could have occupied the see as early as the end of the sixth century, but internal evidence in the commentary suggests that he most definitely served as the bishop during the critical first years of the seventh century.

We know for certain that while Andrew was writing his own commentary he had before him the earliest Greek commentary on Revelation, which had been authored only a few years prior by Oikoumenios. Oikoumenios provided us with a rough date for his own commentary when he remarked that he was writing more than five hundred years after John experienced his revelation.<sup>8</sup> This places Oikoumenios' work at the end of the sixth century and provides the first parameter for dating Andrew's commentary. Since Andrew's commentary followed that of Oikoumenios, Andrew could not have written prior to the very end of the sixth or early part of the seventh century.

### 1.2.2 Dating Andrew's Commentary on the Apocalypse

Many scholars surmise that Andrew's commentary was composed not only prior to

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other at an uncertain date in the sixth or seventh centuries." Georgios B. Mavromatis, *Ἡ Ἀποκάλυψις τοῦ Ἰωάννου με Πατερικὴ Ἀνάλυσις*, (Athens: Apostolike Dianoia, 1994), places Andrew in the 5<sup>th</sup> century and, even more surprisingly, places Oikoumenios around 600, well *after* Andrew (Mavromatis, 21). Frederick W. Norris, likewise dates Andrew in the fifth century. "Andrew of Caesarea," *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, ed. Everett Ferguson (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), 38.

<sup>7</sup> The *terminus post quem* is that a previous Archbishop of Caesarea, Theokritos, died in 563 and Andrew followed him at some point thereafter. We know the names of the archbishops of Caesarea from the year 500 through 563. See Franz Diekamp, *Analecta Patristica* (Rome, 1938), 162, and Panagiotis K. Chrestou, *Ἑλληνικὴ Πατρολογία*, 5 vols. (Thessalonika: Kyromanos, 1992), 5:514, and also Chrestou in *Πατέρες καὶ Θεολόγοι τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ*, 2 vols. (Thessalonika: Tehnika Studio, 1971), 1:338. Chrestou correctly states that Andrew lived in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries. The *terminus ante quem* is the date of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Persians, an extremely significant event about which Andrew gives no hint of any knowledge. Diekamp believes the last possible date of composition is 637, the date at which time Moslems took control of Jerusalem. But Andrew presents Jerusalem as still under the rule of "pious" kings, i.e., Christian Roman emperors. *Chp. 52, Text 178, Commentary Translation*, (hereinafter "*Comm.*"), 171.

<sup>8</sup> "But what does he mean by adding *what must soon take place* since those things which were going to happen have not yet been fulfilled, although a very long time, more than five hundred years has elapsed since this was said?" (Oikoumenios 1.3.6) Oecumenius: *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, trans. John N. Suggit, *Fathers of the Church Series*, vol. 112 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 22. Oikoumenios' identity and dating are discussed in greater detail below.



the sack of Jerusalem in 614 as Chrestou proposes, but also prior to the Persian sack of Caesarea in 610 and that Andrew's episcopal reign had ceased by then. This conclusion is based on the observation that Andrew made no explicit reference to the sack of Caesarea in his commentary on the Apocalypse. However, the commentary contains three references to barbarian invasions<sup>9</sup> as well as other clues that Andrew *had* in fact experienced the conquest of Caesarea. Another reference also indirectly hints at important details which help to narrow the time frame and suggests that Andrew had witnessed disasters on a great scale.<sup>10</sup> Internal evidence thus strongly suggests that his commentary was written in the context of the traumatic events of the early seventh century, including the Persian invasion and sack of Caesarea.

Unfortunately, the seventh century, especially the earliest years, is among the worst documented periods of Byzantine history. Not only are sources very limited, but the few dates available among the sources frequently conflict, often by a year or more.<sup>11</sup> Recently, however, consensus seems to be gaining among scholars that Caesarea, Cappadocia was actually taken by the Persians *twice* within two years, the first time in 609 or 610, and then again in 611.<sup>12</sup> The first capture occurred while the Empire was engaged in a civil war

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<sup>9</sup> Twice Andrew refers to "bloodshed" by barbarian hands, (*Chp. 22, Text 90, Comm. 102; Chp. 27 Text 103, Comm. 113*), and later Andrew refers to *the unspeakable misfortunes encircling us by barbarian hands* (*Chp. 49, Text 169, Comm. 165*). A fascinating and easily overlooked clue can also be found in Andrew's comments about the swiftness of the fall of Babylon in Rev. 18:8. The biblical text reads: "So shall her plagues come in a single day, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she shall be burned with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who judges her." Andrew mentions how quickly evils and deaths of various kinds can take place after *enemies* take the city. But there are no "enemies" in the scenario presented in the text of Revelation: God destroys Babylon. Andrew's comments reflect his own recent experience: (*It is*) *in the course of this (same) day in which these things prophesied will prevail over her. For after the enemies have taken control of the city, it suffices that in one day all of the evils are to be brought upon the defeated ones and various manners of death...* (*Chp. 45, Text 196, Comm. 184*).

<sup>10</sup> *Chp. 16, Text 65-66, Comm. 77*. Andrew quotes from a section of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* 9.8, which describes famine, plague, an Armenian revolt, and refers to casualties so numerous that there were not enough people to bury the dead. Andrew then remarks, *In our own generation we have known each of these happenings*.

<sup>11</sup> See J.F. Haldon's prefatory chapter about the sources of the period, in *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, revised edition, 1997), xxi—xxvii. Haldon writes, "For a historian of the seventh century, the interrelationship between evidence and hypothesis plays a more than usually central role." *Ibid*, xxviii. See also Warren Treadgold, *A History of Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 905, on the problems with sources.

<sup>12</sup> Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 103. Treadgold, *A History of Byzantine State and Society*, 288; Andreas Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, vol. 1 (5 vols.) trans. Marc Ogilvie-Grant (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1968), 104-5.

between factions led by Phocas, a usurper to the throne, and Heraclius. The Persians took full advantage of the chaos to make an incursion westward toward Constantinople, which they never actually reached. In the meantime, Heraclius arrived in Constantinople in 610 and killed the tyrant, Phocas. He was crowned emperor, began to restore order, and immediately mounted a campaign to push the Persians back. The second capture of Caesarea occurred in 611 during the return of the Persian army on its way back to Persia. In that instance, they not only sacked the city but occupied it for one year until a Byzantine siege forced them to quit the city in 612.<sup>13</sup> As they withdrew, the Persians set fire to Caesarea.

While Andrew makes veiled references to these traumatic events, he does not suggest any knowledge of a far more momentous historical event: the Persian sack of Jerusalem. This took place in 614 and resulted in unspeakable carnage. As was the case for many other eastern cities, the Persian assault on Jerusalem was nothing less than catastrophic. Thousands of people were put to the sword and survivors were taken away into slavery. For the sheer scale of human suffering both the events at Caesarea and Jerusalem would have had an immense effect on Andrew. But in the case of Jerusalem, the trauma rocked the entire Christian world. Not only did Jerusalem experience bloodshed and destruction on a massive scale, as did Caesarea, but in Jerusalem the Persians destroyed countless monasteries and churches on holy sites. The staggering losses included the Church of the Resurrection which contained both the site of Golgotha and the tomb of Christ. The Persians even captured the "True Cross." Those who escaped the initial massacre<sup>14</sup> were made captives and taken back to Persia as slaves.<sup>15</sup> Among them was the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Zacharias.

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<sup>13</sup>Clive Foss dates the capture of Caesarea at 611 and states that the Persians occupied the city for one year and burned it when they withdrew. Foss, "The Persians in Asia Minor at the end of Antiquity," *The English Historical Review* 96 (1975): 721-743. Kaegi concurs. See W.E. Kaegi, Jr., "New Evidence on the Early Reign of Heraclius," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 66 [1973]: 308-330, 323. This was only the beginning of many such tragic occurrences for the city. In fact, Caesarea was sacked four times between 636 and 740 (Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 107), most notably in 647 by the Syrians and in 726 by the Arabs. The city was later sacked again by various parties: in 1067 by the second sultan of the Seltsak, in 1243 by the Mongols and finally by the Ottoman Turks, also in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>14</sup> The number of dead, arrived at by an actual count of the bodies, was 66,509 people. "Antiochus Strategos: The Capture of Jerusalem by the Persians in 614 AD," trans. F.C. Conybeare, *English Historical Review* 25 (1910): 502-517, 515-516. Details about the sack of Jerusalem, as well as what transpired for the captives who were taken back to Persia, were preserved in a very gripping and heartbreaking account composed by a monk, Antiochus Strategos, who was an eyewitness to the events and recorded them.

<sup>15</sup> Approximately 35,000 captives were taken to Persia as slaves from Jerusalem. Sebeos, 24. *The Armenian History Attributed to Sebeos*, trans. R.W. Thomson and commentary by James Howard-Johnston, Translated Texts for Historians series, vol. 31 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999).

Drawing conclusions from silence is hazardous. The absence of reference does not necessarily mean an absence of knowledge. However, in the context of a commentary on the Book of Revelation, the absence of any express or implied reference to the sack of Jerusalem is far more significant than the absence of explicit references to the sack of Caesarea because of Jerusalem's special historical, spiritual, theological and prophetic importance, especially in relation to Revelation. This, in addition to Andrew's reference to Jerusalem as a Christian-controlled city,<sup>16</sup> allows us to conclude with nearly absolute certainty that Andrew's commentary was written after the initial capture of Caesarea in 609/10, but prior to the sack of Jerusalem in 614.<sup>17</sup>

At the very end of Andrew's commentary is a paragraph consisting of an epilogue by a compiler or an editor who explains that he put the commentary together from rough drafts with the help of the author.<sup>18</sup> It seems that Andrew must have died shortly after the commentary was completed. This also helps to narrow the date of Andrew's episcopal reign.

It also seems unlikely that Andrew would have devoted time to writing a commentary immediately after either of the sacks which Caesarea experienced, since he would probably have been leading efforts to provide relief for the populace, ransoming captives and organizing reconstruction efforts. One would expect at least a year to elapse before the worst effects of the sacks had subsided and some measure of stability and normalcy was restored in the city. If the first sack of Caesarea occurred in 609 or 610, we should allow for a reasonable intervening period of time in the aftermath to address the needs and problems of the population which would have demanded Andrew's time and leadership. It is reasonable to

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<sup>16</sup> The city is ruled by "pious ones," i.e. Christian kings. *Chp. 52, Text 178, Comm. 171.*

<sup>17</sup> One might expect that the sack of one's own city would more likely warrant a specific reference than the sack of another city, even that of Jerusalem. But notice that the anonymous compiler of the *Chronicon Paschale*, writing in Constantinople not many years later, simply observes that numerous cities were destroyed by the Persians during this period without mentioning any of the cities by name, except for Jerusalem. He devotes a detailed paragraph to the sack of Jerusalem, which reads as follows: "In this year [614] about the month of June, we suffered a calamity which deserves unceasing lamentations. For, together with many cities of the east, Jerusalem too was captured by the Persians, and in it were slain many thousands of clerics, monks, and virgin nuns. The Lord's tomb was burnt and the far-famed temples of God, and, in short, all of the precious things were destroyed. The venerated wood of the Cross, together with the holy vessels that were beyond enumeration, was taken by the Persians, and the Patriarch Zacharias also became a prisoner." *Chronicon Paschale*, trans. Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby, Translated Texts for Historians series, vol. 7 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1989), 156.

<sup>18</sup> *Text 267, Comm. 242.*

conclude, therefore, that he wrote the commentary in 610/611, after the first conquest, but before the return of the Persians in 612.

An alternative possibility is that Andrew wrote the commentary subsequent to the second sack, after the occupation of the city had ended. In that instance, again, allowing time for his efforts to help the city rebuild and recover, the commentary might have been written in 613. However, since we know that upon their return the Persians occupied the city for an entire year and burnt it as they withdrew, considering the likely devastation to the populace and to the city's infrastructure, a date of 613 for the composition of the commentary seems unlikely.

We do not know the extent of Caesarea's destruction following the second sack, but it is difficult to imagine that Andrew would have found time to compose the commentary after the second sack but prior to the shocking destruction of Jerusalem in 614. A year-long siege by the Roman army to liberate the city would have depleted all the resources within the city and greatly ravaged the surrounding countryside as well. Agricultural production would have been disrupted, leading to food shortages within the city and its environs. These difficult conditions would have continued long after the Persians had withdrawn. This second sack would have involved the destruction of city walls and the destruction by fire of many homes, merchant establishments and other significant infrastructures needed for daily life. In addition, the second sack and the resulting fire would have meant the destruction of many churches and the destruction or theft of many valuables, including liturgical items, and possibly even the loss by fire of the episcopal library which Andrew would have needed for the composition of his commentary.

The question must be asked whether Andrew would have had the resources available to write a commentary even after the first capture of Caesarea. The Persians were known for their devastating destruction of cities and the massacre of populations. Not long before the capture of Caesarea, Khosrov had captured Dara in 604, approximately 400 km from Caesarea, where he not only destroyed the walls and plundered the city but "put all [the inhabitants] to the sword."<sup>19</sup> When Khosrov had returned to Persia from Dara and the other expeditions he had conducted at that time, he organized yet another army for an invasion of

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<sup>19</sup> Sebeos 31. *Armenian History*, 58.

Roman territory to be led by his famous generals Shahin and Shahrbaraz.<sup>20</sup> According to Sebeos, "He gave them the following order: 'Receive in a friendly way those who will submit, and keep them in peace and prosperity. But put to the sword those who may offer resistance and make war.'"<sup>21</sup> Syrian cities which submitted, such as Edessa, were spared destruction.<sup>22</sup> Soon after this, Sebeos briefly chronicles the first capture of Caesarea when the Persian general Shahin "made an incursion, raiding the regions of the west and reaching Caesarea of Cappadocia. Then the Christian inhabitants of the city left the city and departed. But the Jews were out to meet him and submitted."<sup>23</sup> Since the Jewish citizens surrendered and opened the city gates, the city would have been spared destruction at that time and Andrew would still have his library available to him during this period.<sup>24</sup>

Even if most of the Christians left the city, it is almost certain that Andrew would have remained in Caesarea.<sup>25</sup> Although some bishops departed in the face of danger,<sup>26</sup> most

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<sup>20</sup> Stratos, 63-5. They captured many cities in Mesopotamia, including Edessa.

<sup>21</sup> Sebeos, 33. *Armenian History*, 62-63.

<sup>22</sup> Sebeos, 33, *Armenian History*, 63.

<sup>23</sup> Sebeos, 33, *Armenian History*, 64.

<sup>24</sup> The inhabitants of Jerusalem also surrendered and the city was not destroyed initially. After the Persian army had continued on its way toward Alexandria, a few youths killed the Persian officers who had been left in charge at Jerusalem. When the Persians learned of the revolt, they returned and destroyed the city, killing approximately 66,000 people and leading the survivors back to Persia into slavery. Sebeos, 34.115-16, *Armenian History* 68-9. See footnote 17 above.

<sup>25</sup> As the bishop, Andrew would have shouldered a significant amount of responsibility for the city. Treadgold notes that "With the decline of city councils, bishops were often the most powerful men in their cities, and were on a par with the provincial governors whom they helped to select. Bishops judged court cases and conducted civic business whenever those involved the Church, and sometimes when they did not. The clergy and monks, all subject to their local bishops, numbered in the tens of thousands, far surpassing the bureaucracy and approaching the army in size. The churches of Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch possessed a great many church buildings, monasteries, and charitable institutions, besides wholly secular properties with income that contributed to church salaries and charities. Lesser sees had smaller but still substantial buildings, endowments and incomes." Treadgold, 259. "Few of the remaining decurions were still influential in their cities, where the leaders were men of higher rank, and increasingly the bishops. Beginning with the reign of Anastasius, bishops had a voice in choosing local officials, including provincial governors. Justinian gave bishops jurisdiction over many civil cases in their courts and in some cases precedence over governors." Treadgold, 257. Stratos also writes about the significant involvement of bishops in the administration of the Empire. Andreas Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, vol. 1 (5 vols.) trans. Marc Ogilvie-Grant (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1968), 8. See also A.H.M Jones, *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), 209, on episcopal involvement in electing city officials and 253-53 on episcopal responsibilities for providing not only charitable services, but also assisting with various public expenditures normally borne by the city, such as the construction of baths and aqueducts.

would not have abandoned their sees.<sup>27</sup> Some sources suggest that the Persians remained in Caesarea, whereas others suggest that they moved on and later returned. What is certain is that the Romans arrived at Caesarea and besieged the city for one year in an effort to push the Persians out. When the Persians left they set the city on fire.<sup>28</sup> Taking into consideration all of these factors, the most likely date for the composition of the commentary is 611, subsequent to the first capture of Caesarea but prior to any catastrophic destruction.

## 1.3 The Audience and Purpose of the Commentary

### 1.3.1 The Request From “Makarios”

In the opening sentence of his commentary, Andrew refers to a number of unnamed persons who had appealed to him to write a commentary on the Book of Revelation. Apparently he resisted until he received a request from an individual whose exact identity is unclear. This person, whom Andrew addresses as “Makarios,”<sup>29</sup> apparently made a request that could not be denied, thus compelling the composition of Andrew’s commentary. The commentary is addressed to Makarios. The only concrete clue as to Makarios’ identity, other than possibly the name itself, is found in the very first line: Andrew refers to Makarios as *my lord brother and co-celebrant*.<sup>30</sup> This can only mean that Makarios was a clergyman. Had it not been for this detail, our search for the man who prompted this commentary could have included men of political or social prominence. With this detail, we can safely exclude

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<sup>26</sup> If Andrew had fled the city he would have almost certainly gone to Constantinople because of his rank within the Church and the safety of its fortification. When the Armenians rebelled against the Persians in 571-2 and revolution erupted, the Armenian Patriarch, Catholikos John, sought refuge in Constantinople. Stratos, 22. When the Persian general Shahrbaraz was marching toward Egypt in 616, John, the Patriarch of Alexandria, left for Constantinople. Stratos, 113. If Andrew had fled to Constantinople, he might have been urged to write the commentary during his stay there, since he would have had the patriarchal library at his disposal. But if he had indeed fled the city in advance of the Persian army it would be difficult to explain his comments, such as *the unspeakable misfortunes encircling us by barbarian hands*. Chp. 49, Text 169, Comm. 165.

<sup>27</sup> A memorable example is the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Zacharias, who could have fled but remained in the city when the Persians attacked. He was captured and taken to Persia as a slave. *Chronicon*, Whitby, 156.

<sup>28</sup> Sebeos 34.113, *Armenian History* 66.

<sup>29</sup> *Prologue*, Text 8 (line 13), *Comm.* 7.

<sup>30</sup> συλλειτουργός.

them.<sup>31</sup>

Even though “co-celebrant” might include any clergyman, we can confidently exclude men holding only priestly rank and look instead for a fellow bishop, on account of the additional title “lord” and other clues regarding Andrew’s relationship to Makarios. Most likely, Makarios was a hierarch of great importance in the church, probably ranking higher than Andrew. We can assume this for a number of reasons. First, Andrew is pressed to write a commentary on Revelation, which he would rather not write. Second, the commentary is in fact personally addressed to Makarios, and to him alone. Third, despite the fact that “many people” had requested that Andrew write this commentary, he had declined these requests repeatedly. But when Makarios made the request, Andrew acquiesced. In addition, we can safely assume that Andrew was entirely sincere in his reluctance to assume this task and not expressing feigned or false modesty. Of all the books of the Bible, Revelation is by far the most difficult to interpret. Many famous exegetes shrank from the task. Hence, Andrew writes from a sense of obligation, out of obedience or, possibly, out of great affection. More than once in the early lines of the commentary, Andrew mentions a sense of obligation to Makarios. Consequently, Makarios is a man to whom Andrew feels significantly obligated, possibly as a close personal friend, but most likely as someone to whom Andrew must obediently acquiesce by reason of his superior rank.

Furthermore, Andrew addresses Makarios with a degree of deference which we can be certain does not simply reflect the ordinary expectations of ecclesiastical protocol. Andrew writes the commentary only at the request of Makarios, noting three times his “obedience”<sup>32</sup> to the request and stating that he hopes to shortly complete the task which had been “assigned” to him.<sup>33</sup> Finally, Andrew was the highest ranking bishop in the region, second only to the Patriarch of Constantinople. If Makarios is not a close personal friend,

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<sup>31</sup> Had this detail not been included, one might also argue that “Makarios” (“Blessed One”) might refer to any reader of the commentary, in the same manner that some have suggested that the recipient of the Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles, Theophilus, (whose name means “One who loves God” or “Friend of God”), was not a real person but a literary device employed by the author of Luke-Acts to address the books to anyone who loves God. Absent the descriptive detail “co-liturgist,” a persuasive argument could be made that Makarios represents the reader of the commentary, especially since Revelation contains seven beatitudes, all of which begin “Makarios” (“Blessed is the one who...” in 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:6; 22:14), and some of which are directed specifically at the reader of Revelation.

<sup>32</sup> ὑπακοή. See *Prologue, Text 8, Comm. 7* and *Text 10, Comm. 11*.

<sup>33</sup> τὸ ἐπιταχθέν, *Text 8, Comm. 7*.



someone to whom Andrew acquiesces out of affection, then Makarios could not have been an ordinary bishop. Since Andrew himself held such a high rank in the Church, Makarios must have been a bishop of even higher rank, one whose request Andrew feels obligated or compelled to accommodate.

A review of the names of the bishops on the five patriarchal thrones during the late sixth and early seventh centuries reveals no one bearing the actual proper name “Makarios” who fits our time frame, a time frame for which we have significant confidence as outlined above.<sup>34</sup> Had we found a patriarch or other notable hierarch with the name Makarios, we might conclude that we had found our man. Since we have found no hierarch ranking higher than Andrew who bears the *actual* name, “Makarios,” we must consider another possibility. While Makarios is in fact a proper Greek name, it could have been used by Andrew as a title of address according to its literal meaning: “Blessed One.” Andrew only addresses Makarios once, in the prologue of the commentary,<sup>35</sup> and in that instance the name takes the form of a direct address, necessitating the use of the vocative case: “Μακάριε.” Because it appears in the vocative case, it is impossible to ascertain whether the word was being employed as a title of address or an actual name.

The actual given name of the addressee might in fact be “Makarios.” But since we know that someone of *higher* rank induced Andrew to write the commentary and we have no one on record by that name occupying any of the Patriarchal sees within our approximate time frame, it appears more likely that “Μακάριε” is employed by Andrew as a deferential title, “Blessed One,” or a form of address equal to “Your Beatitude.”<sup>36</sup> The most likely person to have been the recipient of the commentary, the only bishop ranking higher than

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<sup>34</sup> A certain Makarios II served as Patriarch of Jerusalem in 552, was deposed, and then restored to occupy the see again from 563-575. It might have been appropriate to consider him as a potential recipient of this commentary since his name was Makarios and a possible start for Andrew’s episcopal reign has been given as early as 563. But because we know that Andrew wrote *after* Oikoumenios, the date of our commentary depends upon the dating of Oikoumenios, who wrote at the very end of the sixth century. The date for the Oikoumenios commentary must be resolved first and has been addressed in more detail below.

<sup>35</sup> *Prologue, Text* 8 (line 13), *Comm.* 7.

<sup>36</sup> Precedent exists for this use of the word as a term of address for bishops and also simply as a literary device to address the reader. As a matter of fact, it is so used by two of the authors which Andrew employed for his commentary. It can be found in the prologue to Methodios’ *Symposium, Proem.* 6.13, as a simple mode of address. It is specifically to the reader in Pseudo-Dionysios’ *The Divine Names* 1.1 and in Athanasius’ *Against the Gentiles* 1. See, *A Greek Patristic Lexicon*, ed. G.W.H. Lampe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 822.



Andrew within his jurisdiction, who also would have been in a position to pressure a reluctant Andrew to write this commentary, would be the Patriarch of Constantinople.<sup>37</sup>

If Makarios was not a higher ranking bishop being addressed with an honorific title, we might consider a secondary possibility, but a far less likely prospect: that Makarios is the actual name of an individual who stands in a unique relationship to Andrew, a relationship of great respect and affection, which would prompt deference and compliance to such a request. This could be Andrew's spiritual father or possibly even a very close friend. Could Makarios be monk-priest or a monk-bishop who served as Andrew's father confessor? This is certainly conceivable, but the likelihood of this scenario appears far less plausible, considering that: (1) Andrew was probably advanced in years and approaching the end of his episcopal reign, (2) Andrew's own rank in the Church was extremely high, (3) the many burdens of his office, especially during such turbulent times, and (4) his reluctance to undertake this task.

### 1.3.2 Response to Oikoumenios

For centuries, Andrew's commentary was believed to be the first Greek commentary on the Apocalypse. But in fact, that distinction must go to Oikoumenios, a late sixth century writer. Oikoumenios' commentary was not known to have preceded Andrew's until the discovery of an Oikoumenios manuscript in 1901 at Messina by Friedrich Diekamp.<sup>38</sup> First

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<sup>37</sup> If our dating is correct, "Makarios" would be Sergius I, whose reign lasted from 610-638. That Sergius might have pressured Andrew to undertake this work is not incompatible with other details that we know about Sergius and about the literary atmosphere in Constantinople during his tenure. Michael Whitby, in his introduction to his translation of *Chronicon Paschale*, notes that during the time of Sergius' episcopacy "classicizing historiography was being revived" by Theophylact Simocatta and that Sergius was serving as his patron in this endeavor. (*Chronicon*, xiii) "While Heraclius was absent on campaign against the Persians, Sergius was the dominant figure in the civil administration of Constantinople, a suitable patron for any aspiring writer, and the most likely person to commission an established author to produce a particular work." Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and His Historian: Theophylact Simocatta on Persian and Balkan Warfare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 33. Whitby also remarks generally that there "seems to have been a revival of, or increase in, literary activity at Constantinople in the 620s." This coincides with the latter period of Sergius' reign. Whitby also believes that Sergius was the patron of the anonymous author of the *Chronicon Paschale* (*The Emperor Maurice*, 357; *Chronicon*, 149, fn 419). Also operating within Sergius' circle during this period was the poet and deacon, George Pisidia. See George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. Joan Hussey (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1957), 79.

<sup>38</sup> Friedrich Diekamp, "Mittheilungen über den neu aufgefundenen Kommentar des Oekumenius zur Apokalypse," *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 43 (1901), 1046-1056. A commentary had circulated under the name of Oikoumenios since 1532, when Donatus had edited a work falsely attributed to him. The discovery of the Messina manuscript, now entitled San Salvatore 99, also

published by H.C. Hoskier in 1928,<sup>39</sup> recently both a critical edition and an English translation have been published.<sup>40</sup> The discovery and publication of Oikoumenios' commentary proves conclusively that his commentary preceded Andrew's, since Andrew mentions Oikoumenios' opinions frequently, usually to refute them, but sometimes to add to them. Prior to Diekamp's discovery, it was impossible to attribute the references in Andrew's commentary to Oikoumenios, since Andrew never refers to Oikoumenios by name. Instead, Andrew prefaced references to Oikoumenios' opinions with vague statements that gave no clue as to authorship, such as "some say." Since we now possess Oikoumenios' complete commentary we know that Andrew was in fact frequently referring to Oikoumenios.

Ascribing a reliable date for the life and work of Andrew is vitally and inextricably connected to the commentary of Oikoumenios. The latter's identity and dating are also nearly entirely unknown except for one small piece of crucial information found in the prologue to the Oikoumenian commentary: Oikoumenios remarks that he is writing more than five hundred years after John witnessed the Apocalypse. This would place his work toward the very end of the sixth century, since Oikoumenios believed that John wrote the Apocalypse during the time of Domitian.<sup>41</sup>

### 1.3.2.1 Who was Oikoumenios?

Oikoumenios' commentary is critical to understanding the Andreas commentary not only because it provides a clue for dating Andrew, but because the existence of the Oikoumenian commentary was likely a primary factor prompting the request by Makarios and motivating Andrew's subsequent composition.

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revealed that the works previously attributed to Oikoumenios which were edited by Cramer in *Catena Graecorum Partum VIII* (Oxford: University Press, 1844) 497-582, proved to be nothing more than a conflation of the commentaries of Andrew and Arethas, a tenth century bishop of Caesarea, Cappadocia.

<sup>39</sup> *The Complete Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse*, ed., H[erman] C[harles] Hoskier, University of Michigan Humanistic Studies series, vol. XXIII (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1928).

<sup>40</sup> The first critical Greek edition was *Oecumenii Commentarius in Apocalypsin*, ed. Marc De Groote, *Traditio Exegetica Graeca* series, vol. 8 (Louvain: Peeters, 1999). The English translation, only recently made available, is *Oecumenius Commentary on the Apocalypse*, trans. John N. Suggit, *Fathers of the Church* series, vol. 112 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2006).

<sup>41</sup> Oikoumenios, 1.21.1, 2.13.9 and 12. 20.6; De Groote 75, 98, and 291; Suggit 28, 47-48 and 203.

Determining the identity of Oikoumenios is extremely difficult, partly due to confusion created by a conflation of sources, and partly due to an absence of historical information. Oikoumenios has been misidentified and confused with a tenth century bishop of Trikkis by the same name and further confused with a sixth century Monophysite rhetor and philosopher of the same name.<sup>42</sup> Diekamp conflated all of these details and concluded that Oikoumenios lived in the first half of the sixth century, that he was a Monophysite and follower of Severus who later became bishop of Trikkis in Thessaly.<sup>43</sup> Diekamp's efforts to harmonize the traditions about Oikoumenios are obviously untenable.<sup>44</sup>

It is now almost universally acknowledged that the Oikoumenios who authored the commentary was not the bishop of Trikkis. However, some still believe him to be the sixth century Monophysite rhetor. During the first half of the sixth century a certain well-educated man named Oikoumenios was the governor of Isauria, a province bordering Cappadocia to the south and west. He received two letters from the Monophysite Patriarch of Antioch, Severus (+538)<sup>45</sup> and would have flourished in the *first half* of the sixth century. But the Oikoumenios who wrote the commentary clearly indicates that he is writing at the *very end* of the sixth century. Commenting on Rev. 1:1, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to show his servants what must take place soon*, Oikoumenios writes:

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<sup>42</sup> Chrestou, *Πατέρες και Θεολόγοι τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ*, 1: 338.

<sup>43</sup> Diekamp, "Mittheilungen über den neuaufgefundenen Kommentar des Oekumenius zur Apokalypse," 1046f.

<sup>44</sup> But the errors and inconsistencies continue to be repeated, most recently by Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 2 vols. (Brill: Leiden, 2004), II:937-38. In the entry under "Oecumenius," he describes Oikoumenios as "Count of Isauria," "philosopher and rhetor," and "a Monophysite in line with Severus of Antioch" who wrote the first Greek commentary on Revelation five hundred years after the Apocalypse (*Ibid*, 937). In that entry Kannengiesser does *not* refer to Oikoumenios as a bishop and omits the fact that Count Oikoumenios was an actual correspondent with and friend of Severus (not simply "in line with"), in the *first* half of the century, a fact which renders his authorship of the commentary five hundred years after the Apocalypse practically impossible. Compounding the confusion is Kannengiesser's description of Oikoumenios in his entry for Andrew on the *very next page*. There, Kannengiesser describes Oikoumenios as "the Thessalian bishop who, a few decades earlier, had written the very first Greek Commentary on the Apocalypse" (*Ibid*, 938), with no reference to Oikoumenios being a rhetor, Monophysite, Count of Isauria, or writing five hundred years after the Apocalypse. Kannengiesser presents all of the ideas about Oikoumenios absolutely uncritically, without analysis, disregarding the fact that they are contradictory. Unfortunately, an unwillingness to confront, analyze or resolve the discrepancies about Oikoumenios has not been uncommon. Possibly Kannengiesser believes there were two different Oikoumenioi, which may in fact be the case, but they could not *both* have been the author of the *first* Greek commentary.

<sup>45</sup> Chrestou, *Ἑλληνική Πατρολογία*, 5:512.

“But what does he mean by adding *what must soon take place* since those things which were going to happen have not yet been fulfilled, although a very long time, more than five hundred years, has elapsed since this was said?”<sup>46</sup>

Numerous efforts have been made to circumvent the problem of Oikoumenios’ identity by challenging the date which clearly places the Oikoumenian commentary at the end of the sixth century. Scholars such as Schmid<sup>47</sup> and more recently (and quite strenuously) John Lamoreaux<sup>48</sup> argued that the author of the Oikoumenian commentary is the same Oikoumenios who was a Monophysite correspondent of Severus of Antioch in the earlier part of the same century.<sup>49</sup> An earlier dating of Oikoumenios would neatly provide us with an important bishop named Makarios as a potential recipient of Andrew’s commentary. However, after objectively analyzing the evidence, the opinion that the earlier Oikoumenios, Monophysite rhetor and friend of Severus, wrote the commentary must be rejected. A desire to neatly wrap up Oikoumenios’ identity by brushing off Oikoumenios’ *own reference* to the date as a mistake, as Schmid does, or straining to interpret the five hundred years as a reference to Christ’s incarnation, as Lamoreaux does, is unsupportable and lacks credibility. Lamoreaux’s logic is weak, somewhat circuitous, and his reasoning is not persuasive.

The greatest weight *must* be given to Oikoumenios’ clear statement that he is writing more than five hundred years after the Revelation was received by John, (“since this was *said*”), not since the Incarnation. Any scholar would have to counter the author’s own

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<sup>46</sup> Oik. 1.3.6, De Groote 68, Suggit 22.

<sup>47</sup> Josef Schmid, “Die griechischen Apokalypse-Kommentare,” *Biblische Zeitschrift* 19 (1931): 228-54.

<sup>48</sup> John Lamoreaux, “The Provenance of Ecumenios’ Commentary on the Apocalypse,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 52, no. 1 (1998): 88-108. One of Lamoreaux’s primary arguments is that it is highly unlikely that two highly educated men with the unusual name of Oikoumenios could have lived in the same century. This is an extremely weak argument, given the fact that local preferences exist for certain names, and furthermore Lamoreaux does not seem to consider even the simple possibility that the commentary could have been falsely attributed to the well-known earlier figure of Oikoumenios. The earliest manuscript of Oikoumenios does not bear his name. See Adele Monaci Castagno, “Il Problema della datazione dei commenti al’ Apocalisse di Ecumenio e di Andrea di Cesarea.” *Atti della Accademia delle scienze di Torino II, Classe de scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* 114 [1980]: 224-246, 227. Castagno and Marc De Groote place Oikoumenios at the end of the sixth century. However John Suggit seems to be persuaded by Lamoreaux’s arguments and dates Oikoumenios to the first half of the sixth century, despite Oikoumenios’ own statement, because of Oikoumenios’ many peculiar inconsistencies and because Oikoumenios cites Evagrius, whom Suggit and Lamoreaux believe Oikoumenios would not have cited after 553 (Suggit 4-6). See also footnotes 626 and 820.

<sup>49</sup> Oikoumenios states more than once that John wrote in the time of Domitian, so no one can argue for an earlier date based on the idea that Oikoumenios might have believed that the Apocalypse was written during the reign of Nero. (See fn 41.)

statement with overwhelming evidence to convincingly argue that the Oikoumenios who was the correspondent of Severus at the beginning of the century and the man who wrote a commentary on the Apocalypse the end of the sixth century are the same individual.

As satisfying as it might be to resolve the mystery of Oikoumenios' identity by connecting the two, Oikoumenios' unequivocal statement about the dating of his commentary makes this association impossible. Despite concerted efforts to explain away, discount, or creatively reinterpret the plain meaning of that statement in order to identify Oikoumenios the author of the commentary with Oikoumenios the friend of Severus of Antioch, the two cannot be reconciled. The identity of Oikoumenios the Commentator remains a mystery.

### 1.3.2.2 Oikoumenios' Commentary Was Unacceptable

If Oikoumenios' commentary was available to Andrew for his use, it follows that it was available to others as well. Since it has been established that Oikoumenios' commentary is, to our knowledge at least, the first full Greek commentary on the Book of Revelation, it is a curious phenomenon that this commentary has been scarcely been utilized by the Christian East. After five hundred years without a Greek commentary on the Apocalypse, one would expect Oikoumenios' work to be eagerly embraced and enthusiastically employed by Greek-speaking Christians in the centuries that followed. But it was not. In fact, Andrew's subsequent commentary was so well received that it eclipsed Oikoumenios' commentary to the extent that it was almost entirely lost to history. Ignored and apparently rejected by the Church at large, the Oikoumenian commentary must have been viewed as unacceptable or unsuitable.

Does any evidence exist that Oikoumenios' commentary was in fact unacceptable or unsatisfactory? Yes, on several counts. First, if Oikoumenios' commentary was acceptable according to the prevailing ecclesiastical standards of the time, it hardly seems likely that Andrew would have felt compelled to undertake such a difficult task as to explain the Apocalypse, by far the most difficult book of the Bible to interpret. Indeed, as we have seen, Andrew openly expresses his reluctance to attempt the effort. If Oikoumenios' commentary had been satisfactory, Andrew could have referred people to it and would have used it himself.

Secondly, few copies of Oikoumenios' commentary survive. This manuscript witness is perhaps the most compelling evidence. The meager number of existing Oikoumenios manuscripts is strong proof that the commentary was unacceptable. Only one complete copy of the commentary exists along with only a few manuscripts with portions of the commentary.<sup>50</sup> Andreas manuscripts, on the other hand, number eighty-three complete copies, thirteen abbreviated versions, fifteen manuscripts with scholia and numerous other manuscripts with notes from the commentary. In addition, Andrew's translated commentary exists in manuscripts in Georgian, Armenian, Latin and Slavonic. Had Andrew's commentary *preceded* Oikoumenios, the scant number of Oikoumenios manuscripts might have been more easily explainable: one could surmise that Andrew's commentary was copied more frequently because it was the first, and for that reason Oikoumenios was overlooked or perceived as less necessary. But strangely, the reverse is true: although Oikoumenios' commentary came first, it was Andrew's which quickly became predominant.

Andrew's commentary was earnestly translated, prodigiously copied, and became the standard and authoritative Eastern Christian commentary on Revelation. In contrast, Oikoumenios' commentary was almost entirely lost to posterity. Why was Oikoumenios' commentary not well received or widely accepted? This is a basic question, since it bears on Andrew's purpose and motivation for composing a commentary, and possibly has a bearing upon other underlying premises, presumptions, objectives of his interpretation and conclusions in the commentary.

Andrew must have found the Oikoumenian commentary unacceptable overall. We reach this conclusion for several reasons. First, when Andrew was pressed to write a commentary on Revelation, he could simply have referred people to Oikoumenios' commentary. Second, Andrew could have borrowed heavily from Oikoumenios without citing him to produce his own commentary, but he did not.<sup>51</sup> Third, Andrew never names Oikoumenios, although this in itself is not surprising or unusual.<sup>52</sup> However, if Oikoumenios

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<sup>50</sup> De Groote discusses the Oikoumenios manuscript tradition and describes in detail the complete manuscript, the partial manuscripts, as well as existing fragments and scholia. De Groote, 9-21.

<sup>51</sup> Ambrose of Milan, in his composition, *On the Six Days of Creation*, borrowed heavily from Basil the Great's work of the same name without crediting him. This was considered acceptable by ancient standards.

<sup>52</sup> Chrysostom, for example, never referred to other exegetes by name when citing the opinions of others.

were a respected ecclesiastical figure and commentator, Andrew *might* have referred to him, not as a patristic authority, but in some favorable fashion as a contemporary expert, authority or source.<sup>53</sup> Instead, Andrew usually mentions his views to refute him, disagree with him, to distinguish himself from Oikoumenios, or to add something to Oikoumenios' opinions.

Oikoumenios' commentary cannot be presumed unacceptable solely because Oikoumenios was a heretic or schismatic, if indeed he was one. If in all other respects Oikoumenios' work was acceptable, Andrew could have borrowed heavily from Oikoumenios and still produced his own orthodox commentary. This pattern has been seen in the case of Tyconius, the Donatist commentator on the Apocalypse, whose work was extremely influential in the West. Latin writers from Jerome and Augustine all the way down to Bede borrowed heavily from Tyconius, usually without naming him.<sup>54</sup> But although Andrew frequently refers to Oikoumenios he does not rely upon Oikoumenios for his conclusions. Clearly, he did not find Oikoumenios' exposition acceptable overall.

We have established that Oikoumenios' commentary was unacceptable to the Church at large, by virtue of the fact that it was not copied, and it was unacceptable to Andrew personally, by virtue of the fact that he wrote his own commentary. But the question remains, why? What characteristics of Oikoumenios' work rendered it unacceptable? If this question can be answered, it may reveal some insights into the purpose or aim of Andrew's commentary. In the end, the answer to this question must remain only speculation; however several possibilities may explain this lack of popular acceptance of Oikoumenios' commentary.

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<sup>53</sup> An example of this type of citation can be seen in the correspondence between Augustine and Jerome, each of whom cites ecclesiastical writers to support his particular interpretation. See, for example, Jerome's letter to Augustine in which Jerome refers to numerous ecclesiastical authorities, past and contemporary, in his famous exegetical dispute with Augustine. Augustine's *Ep. 75. Augustine: Letters* (5 vols.), trans. Wilfred Parsons, Fathers of the Church series, vols., 12, 18, 20, 30 and 32 (Washington, D.C: Catholic University Press, 1951-56), 12:345-348, 364. See also, Augustine's *Ep. 148* to Fortunatianus, in which Augustine cites Ambrose, Jerome, Athanasius the Great and Gregory Nazianzen as authorities. FC 20:228, 229, 231 and 232, respectively.

<sup>54</sup> Tyconius was so popular that even though his original commentary is no longer extant, it can be recreated in its entirety from quotations and other references found in subsequent Latin authors who borrowed from him extensively, including Jerome (in his revision of Victorinus of Pettau's commentary), Caesarius of Arles (aka, Pseudo-Augustine), Cassiodore (*Complexiones*), Pseudo-Jerome (*Commemoratorium*), Bede the Venerable, Ambrosius Autpertus, and Beatus of Liebana. See Kenneth B Steinhauser, *The Apocalypse Commentary of Tyconius: A History of Its Reception and Influence* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1986), 2. Steinhauser provides examples of the work done by Jerome to excerpt the chiliastic portions and correct any theological weaknesses in Victorinus' work (Steinhauser, 32). He certainly would have done the same for any errors he saw in Tyconius. Jerome's revision of Victorinus also serves as an example of what Andrew might have done to the Oikoumenian commentary if he had believed that Oikoumenios' commentary was acceptable for the most part.



First, it is likely that Oikoumenios was not Chalcedonian, but probably was a Monophysite and perhaps an Origenist. Modern readers may be in the dark about Oikoumenios' identity and theological affiliation, but these details would have been well known to Andrew and other contemporary church leaders. Secondly, perhaps Oikoumenios himself was not objectionable, but his commentary was simply perceived as too influenced by Origenism, or possibly too Hellenistic, too philosophical, or too Monophysite in tone. Third, Oikoumenios' commentary may not have been sufficiently orthodox in style and methodology. Long on imagination and short on traditional explanations, Oikoumenios often surprises the reader with extremely unusual interpretations which might easily have led one to question the validity or soundness of his other opinions.<sup>55</sup> Modern commentators and writers on the history of exegesis often prefer Oikoumenios to Andrew. They treat Andrew as a lackluster compiler of chains and praise Oikoumenios for his innovation and originality.<sup>56</sup> However, these would not have been considered admirable traits in ecclesiastical circles in Andrew's time, or even now in the Orthodox world.

Another possibility is that Oikoumenios was not a clergyman, or perhaps he simply was not a bishop. Nearly all of the notable interpreters of the Bible in the early centuries of the Church were bishops, or at least presbyters. A final reason for Oikoumenios' lesser popularity might have been his style: the commentary is neither easy to read nor easy to use. Oikoumenios does not quote the text of Revelation and then comment upon it in an orderly fashion, as do most commentators. Rather, the text of Revelation, other biblical quotations, and his comments flow into and out of each other in a continuous stream. It is often difficult to distinguish the text of Revelation from biblical allusions and citations, as well as from the

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<sup>55</sup> One example of Oikoumenios' imaginary propensity is his interpretation of the twenty four elders (Rev. 4:4), whom interpreters almost universally consider to be representatives of Old and New Israel. But Oikoumenios believes these to be specific persons whom John saw in heaven, twenty one personalities from the Old Testament and three from the New. Oikoumenios even names them. Another example is his interpretation of the four animals by the throne (Rev. 4:6), widely interpreted in the patristic tradition as representing the four evangelists. Oikoumenios believes they represent the four basic elements: earth, fire, water and air.

<sup>56</sup> Among them, Adele Monaci Castagno, "I Commenti de Ecumenio e di Andrea di Cesarea: Due letture divergenti dell'Apocalisse." *Memorie della Accademia delle scienze di Torino II, Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* V, Fascicolo IV, (1981) 303-424, 423. Castagno concludes that Oikoumenios is more original and more educated than Andrew. *Ibid*, 426. She finds Andrew's commentary rather disappointing and believes it is akin to a catena (*Ibid*, 423), but later she expresses some appreciation for Andrew's preservation of the Greek tradition of Apocalypse interpretation. *Ibid*, 426.



comments of Oikoumenios himself.<sup>57</sup>

The precise reason why Oikoumenios' commentary was not more widely embraced in the Christian East may never be known with certainty. However, it is without question that the commentary was unacceptable or unsatisfactory, at least in Chalcedonian circles. The paucity of extant manuscripts is the best evidence of that fact.

## 1.4 Motivation for Andrew's Commentary

The Greek-speaking half of the Church had existed for five hundred years without a commentary on the Apocalypse. In Andrew's time the Book of Revelation was still generally rejected in the Eastern Church and formed no part of the lectionary. Up to that point there appeared to be little interest in a commentary nor any pressing need for one. Why would Andrew write one?

### 1.4.1 The Historical Milieu

A sad and tragically pivotal era in the history of the Roman Empire provides the context for the composition of this important commentary. A series of calamities from the middle of the sixth century through the beginning of the seventh brought about the end of late antiquity in Asia Minor and has been identified as the beginning of the dark ages for Byzantium.<sup>58</sup> First, bubonic plague broke out during the reign of Justinian in 541, killing over one quarter of the inhabitants of the empire<sup>59</sup> with 230,000 deaths in Constantinople alone.<sup>60</sup> Six more epidemics of the plague occurred between its initial outbreak in 541 and 610.<sup>61</sup> Over the course of two generations the empire lost one-third of its population.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> "In the original document the commentary sweeps along without halting between the sections of text and is without the slightest mark to guide the reader as to what is text and what commentary." Hoskier, *The Complete Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse*, 4. This is also discussed below. See chapter 5.3, page 156.

<sup>58</sup> Foss, 747. Ostrogorsky, 76.

<sup>59</sup> Treadgold, 276.

<sup>60</sup> Treadgold, 196 and 279.

<sup>61</sup> Treadgold, 276.

The plague caused tremendous loss of revenue, diminished the strength of the empire by the loss of money and manpower, and created enormous disruption in trade and agriculture leading to many outbreaks of famine.<sup>63</sup> Famine also resulted from a severe winter<sup>64</sup> and from the civil war which raged in the empire for several years, from 602 to 610.<sup>65</sup> Famine grew even worse from the disruption of ordinary planting and harvesting and the interference with trade due to the Persian invasions. The masses of people who crowded into walled cities to escape invaders and the number of troops confined inside the cities with them compounded the effect, putting the food supply under even greater strain.<sup>66</sup>

In 602, the Emperor Maurice was murdered by a usurper, Phocas, an army officer who took the throne. The event was a great shock since it was the first time that the throne of the Roman Emperor had been forcibly seized since the founding of Constantinople.<sup>67</sup> Phocas' ascent inaugurated a period of horrific anarchy and upheaval,<sup>68</sup> not only in the capital but in cities throughout the empire.<sup>69</sup> Phocas was eventually opposed by Heraclius who mustered

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<sup>62</sup> Treadgold, 278.

<sup>63</sup> Treadgold, 276.

<sup>64</sup> A severe winter in 601-2 and bad weather impeded the grain shipments (Stratos, 41) and led to riots in Constantinople (Treadgold, 235) and in 609 the sea even froze at Constantinople. *Theophanis Chronographia*, Carl de Boor, ed. 2 vols., (Leipzig: Teubner, 1883, 1885), 1:297. *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, trans. Cyril Mango and Roger Scott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 426. See also Treadgold, 240. Many people and animals died of hunger in 608 and 609. Stratos, 78.

<sup>65</sup> Heraclius, who was in Egypt when Phocas seized the throne, prevented grain shipments from Egypt and Carthage to the capital as part of his strategy to remove Phocas from power. Almost all of Constantinople's grain supply came from Africa. Treadgold, 239. The remainder came from Asia Minor which had been severely impacted by the Persian invasions.

<sup>66</sup> Foss, 746.

<sup>67</sup> Treadgold, 235.

<sup>68</sup> "The capital was a perpetual scene of torturing and executions. Phocas had killed all [former Emperor] Maurice's relations, many leaders and senators. Many more had been exiled. Michael the Syrian says succinctly that while the Persians were capturing territory, Phocas was killing everybody so that nobody was left to fight them." Stratos, 79, citing Michael the Syrian 2.378.

<sup>69</sup> This situation in Thessalonica has been vividly described: "...the demes, not satisfied with shedding the blood of their fellow demesmen in the streets, have forced their way into each others' houses and mercilessly murdered those within, throwing down alive from the upper stories women and children, young and old, who were too weak to save themselves by flight; in barbarian fashion they have plundered their fellow-citizens, their acquaintances and relations, and have set fire to their houses..." Ostrogorsky 77, fn 3, citing *Miracula S. Demetrii, Acta Sanctorum* IV, 132 (Antwerp, 1643). Migne PG, 116, 1261F. Long before the seventh century, the deme factions had spread throughout the empire along with their enmity and rivalry.

an army in Egypt and arrived in Constantinople, defeating and killing Phocas, and becoming the emperor in 610. Meanwhile, in the west and north, numerous nations and tribes, such as the Huns, the Visigoths, Lombards, Avars, Bulgars, and Slavs had been invading and attacking various parts of the empire for decades while the Persians had been raiding the eastern areas. Several years of civil war had left the empire especially vulnerable to attack by the Persians, historically the empire's most troublesome and feared enemy.

The Persians took full advantage of the upheaval caused by the civil war to invade the empire. They besieged, conquered, occupied and plundered many leading cities, including Caesarea, Cappadocia,<sup>70</sup> often completely destroying them and taking their inhabitants back to Persia as slaves. For the first time in three centuries the interior of Asia Minor, which had only known peace and prosperity since the time of Diocletian, experienced war and devastation.<sup>71</sup> In the midst of all of this, massive earthquakes in Antioch killed tens of thousands in 526 and 588 and other quakes in the empire wreaked havoc and took lives,<sup>72</sup> including large tremors in Constantinople in 554<sup>73</sup> and 611.<sup>74</sup>

These traumatic events led people to wonder whether the prophecies of Revelation were indeed coming true and if the end of the world had arrived. Apocalyptic expectation was growing in the empire at the time Andrew composed his commentary. The situation was so dire that people living during the opening years of the seventh century could hardly have imagined that worse disasters were yet to come.<sup>75</sup> "City life, as it had been known for centuries under the Greeks and Romans, almost entirely disappeared."<sup>76</sup> Clive Foss

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<sup>70</sup> Although the Persians had invaded during the late sixth century, those incursions had the nature of raids which had no lasting effects on the empire. Foss, 722, fn 3.

<sup>71</sup> Foss, 722.

<sup>72</sup> Treadgold, 279.

<sup>73</sup> *Chronicon*, Appendix 2.8. Whitby, *Translated Texts*, 196.

<sup>74</sup> *Chronicon*, 702. Whitby, *Translated Texts*, 153.

<sup>75</sup> Terrible destruction continued in the years immediately following the composition of Andrew's commentary. Foss notes the Persian capture of Ancyra, Rhodes, Cyprus, Alexandria and Chalcedon, not to mention the destruction of Jerusalem, Ephesus, Sardis, Pergamum and Magnesia. The war with the Persians lasted until 628 when Heraclius finally triumphed. In the meanwhile, losses to the empire were equally dramatic to the west where the Avars and Slavs reached the Aegean and took all of Greece. See Ostrogorsky, 74-76 and 84-5. Only Thessalonica was spared. *Chronicon*, Whitby, xii.

<sup>76</sup> Foss, 747.

poignantly describes how people reacted during the first two decades of the seventh century. "Panic and desolation struck every province of the empire, and those who feared the end of the world were in a sense justified, for the society which they and thirty generations of their ancestors had known was never to be restored."<sup>77</sup>

The considerable vicissitudes of plague, famine, civil war, incursions by barbarian invaders, and the general weakening of the empire, led to a renewed interest in apocalyptic writings, and prompted requests for a commentary on Revelation.

### 1.4.2 An Orthodox Response to Oikoumenios

Was it only dissatisfaction with Oikoumenios' work that may have motivated Andrew and Makarios? Might there be another possibility? Perhaps the Oikoumenian commentary was *gaining* influence and readership, if for no other reason than simply the lack of an alternative Greek commentary. This, just as easily, could have provided at least some motivation for Makarios to pressure Andrew to write his commentary.

Writing so soon after Oikoumenios had composed his commentary, and considering the content and tone of Andrew's commentary, it is evident that Andrew wrote for the purpose of providing an acceptable, sanctioned, orthodox guide to Apocalypse, so that Greek-speaking Christians would not be forced to resort to Oikoumenios' commentary, and so that Andrew might refute points made in the Oikoumenian commentary itself.

Andrew wrote his commentary at least in part as an alternative to Oikoumenios and to usurp any growing influence it might have gained. He and Makarios simply could not allow Oikoumenios' interpretation to stand without a response from an intelligent and educated ecclesiastical representative of Chalcedonian Christianity.

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<sup>77</sup> Foss, 746. For more details on the apocalyptic mood in the empire during the late sixth and early seventh centuries, see Paul Magdalino's article, "The History of the Future and its Uses: Prophecy, Policy and Propaganda" in *The Making of Byzantine History*, eds. Roderick Beaton and Charlotte Roueché (London: Variorum, 1993), 3-34. Magdalino mistakenly believes, however, that Andrew of Caesarea was also swept up into this apocalyptic fervor and that in his interpretation of Revelation Andrew "tries systematically to relate its prophecies to the Roman Empire." *Making of Byzantine History*, 11. Magdalino badly misreads Andrew. If Andrew wished to relate the events of the Apocalypse to current events he easily could have done so, but he does not. Rather, he makes very clear his belief that the final times have *not* arrived. He does believe that the Antichrist might come in the future as King of the Romans, because of the traditional patristic interpretation of the succession of kingdoms. This is primarily because he cannot imagine a kingdom after the Roman Empire, (which the Fathers characteristically believed was the final kingdom in the sequence), but he does not believe that the end times have arrived. For Andrew's view of history and eschatology see chapter 6.4.1.

### 1.4.3 The Chalcedonian Alternative

Oikoumenios' commentary contains many fanciful interpretations and questionable conclusions. A careful reading of his commentary reveals clear indications that Oikoumenios was a non-Chalcedonian, or "Monophysite."<sup>78</sup> We do not reach this conclusion because the Monophysite bishop Severus of Antioch had a friend named Oikoumenios, whom we have already concluded could not have been the author of this commentary, but based on the terminology of the commentary alone. Two lengthy Christological statements can be found in Oikoumenios' commentary, one near the beginning and one near the end. The first reads:

It is a sign of genuine theology to believe that God the Word has been begotten from God and the Father before all eternity and temporal interval, being co-eternal and consubstantial with the Father and the Spirit, and joint-ruler of the ages and of all spiritual and perceptible creation, according to the saying of the most-wise Paul<sup>79</sup>...But it is also a sign of genuine theology to believe that in the last days he has become for us and for our salvation a human being, not by divesting himself of his divinity, but by assuming human flesh, animated by a mind (ἀλλὰ προσλήψει σαρκὸς ἀνθρωπίνης, ἐμψυχωμένης νοερῶς). In this way, he who is Emmanuel is understood to have been made one from two natures (ἐκ δύο φύσεων), divinity and humanity, each being complete according to the indwelling Word and according to the different specific characteristics of each nature (κατὰ ποιότητα φυσικὴν ιδιότητα), without being confused or altered by their combination into a unity, and without being kept separate after the inexpressible and authentic union.<sup>80</sup>

It has been said, based on this passage, that Oikoumenios was not Monophysite because of his acceptance of the phrase "two natures." But the key word here is "from," which signals the belief in one person (*hypostasis*) a term which was sometimes used interchangeably with "nature" (*physis*). "One nature" or "one from two natures, *after* the

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<sup>78</sup> Those who belong to the "Oriental" Orthodox Churches object to this term as misleading, since they in fact do believe that Christ is both fully human and fully divine. Some even consider this term offensive and pejorative. The term is employed here simply because it has historically been the term used to describe those Christians who rejected Nestorianism but who also did not accept the Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon. The term is accurate to the extent that it describes the reason why Monophysites were so labeled: they insisted on the terminology of "one nature" (μία φύσις) after the Incarnation of the Logos.

<sup>79</sup> Citing Colossians 1:18 and 16.

<sup>80</sup> Oik. 1.3.2-3, De Groote 67, Suggit 21.

union,” was the Monophysite position, as opposed to the Chalcedonian concept of one person “in two natures” (ἐν δύο φύσεσιν). Monophysites believed that maintaining the distinction of “two natures” after their “union” in the person of Christ created a Nestorian-type of division between the natures which amounted to two Christs. Oikoumenios frequently emphasizes the union of the divine and the human in Christ<sup>81</sup> and specifically refers to the quality of the “hypostatic union.”<sup>82</sup> He also uses other common Monophysite phrases, such as the Lord’s body “animated by a mind”<sup>83</sup> or “animated by the soul,”<sup>84</sup> as well as terms which refer to the specific properties or qualities of each nature preserved as they were prior to the union.<sup>85</sup> Also noteworthy is Oikoumenios’ use of “Emmanuel,” which was a favorite title of Monophysites for Christ<sup>86</sup> and the citation of Fathers who were especially favored by Monophysite theologians.<sup>87</sup> The emphasis on union is not necessarily contrary to Chalcedon. In fact it was the entire point of the decision of Chalcedon, but the Monophysites remained convinced that Chalcedon had in fact maintained a Nestorian separation of the humanity and divinity in Christ. For this reason, the emphasis in Oikoumenios on the *unity* of natures is not only anti-Nestorian, it is anti-Chalcedonian.<sup>88</sup> Other shorter Christological comments are

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<sup>81</sup> Oik. 1.3.3, 1.11.1, 2.13.13, 10.13.20, 12.3.20.

<sup>82</sup> Including καθ’ ὑπόστασιν ἐνωθῆναι (2.13.13), καθ’ ὑπόστασιν ἐνωθεῖς (10.13.20), and καθ’ ὑπόστασιν ὁ Λόγος ἦνωται (12.3.20).

<sup>83</sup> ἐμψυχαμένης νοερῶς. 1.3.3, Suggit 21, and νοερῶς ἐμψυχαμένου σώματος 3.3.3, Suggit 50.

<sup>84</sup> ἐμψυχαμένος νοερῶς 12.3.20, Suggit 193.

<sup>85</sup> κατὰ ποιότητα φυσικὴν ιδιότητα “specific characteristic of each nature,” (Suggit 21), and ἡ κατὰ ποιότητα φυσικὴν ιδιότης “peculiar quality of each nature” (Suggit 200). For a concise discussion of the use and meanings of all of these terminologies as classic Monophysite expressions, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, volume 2 *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 48-65. See also J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1960, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) 310-343, John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1974), 32-38, Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought* (Washington, DC: Corpus Books, 1969), 3-31, and Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1989) 177-8 and 216-230.

<sup>86</sup> Pelikan, 58-9.

<sup>87</sup> Pelikan, 51. Athanasius, Basil, the Gregories (Nazianzus and Nyssa) and Cyril of Alexandria, each of whom is used by Oikoumenios. They are also mentioned in his introduction (1.1.5), except for Gregory of Nyssa.

<sup>88</sup> The use of similar terms by Chalcedonians and Monophysites also leads Castagno to say that Oikoumenios could be either Monophysite or a neo-Chalcedonian, but concludes that he probably was not Monophysite because after Justinian’s failure to achieve union in the Church, subsequent emperors persecuted the Monophysites, especially toward the end of the sixth century. She assumes that he would show hostility toward

sprinkled throughout the commentary, but the second lengthy statement made by Oikoumenios is also very telling:

He is Emmanuel in his divinity and in his humanity, each of the two natures being complete according to their respective qualities, without confusion (ἀσυγχύτως), without change (ἀτρέπτως), immutable (ἀναλλοιώτως), unimaginable (ἀφαντασιάστως). We believe that after the inexpressible union there is one person, one hypostasis, and one activity (ἓν πρόσωπον καὶ μίαν ὑπόστασιν καὶ μίαν ἐνέργειαν), “*even if the difference of the natures, from which we say that the ineffable union has been effected, may not be overlooked,*” as well as the peculiar quality of each nature (ἢ κατὰ ποιότητα φυσικὴν ιδιότης), according to the words of our blessed father Cyril.<sup>89</sup>

Again, the similarity to the statement of Chalcedon has led some to conclude that Oikoumenios was not Monophysite.<sup>90</sup> However, the important details here remain the emphasis on the union of the natures and that the union has been affected *from* the natures. A new detail in this quotation provides additional proof: Oikoumenios’ reference to “one activity,” to further accentuate the unity of the person of Christ. This eventually led to the doctrine of Monoenergism and later Monothelitism, both of which were efforts to create a union between the Chalcedonians and the Monophysites and were later rejected. The combination of Oikoumenios’ theological expressions are proof positive that he was Monophysite. Monophysites would not distinguish between nature and hypostasis. Only one nature/hypostasis could exist after the union. “Energy” reflected the hypostasis, person, agent or actor.<sup>91</sup> To accept two “activities” or two “energies” meant to have two Christs.

Another significant clue that Oikoumenios was Monophysite can be found in his pointed assertion that the hymn of the seraphim was sung to Christ, a reference to the *Trisagion* Hymn which had become a focal point for dogmatic debates between Monophysites and Chalcedonians.<sup>92</sup>

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the empire if he were Monophysite. Since Oikoumenios’ theology is not easily defined, he does not rely on the Cyrillian formula “one nature of the incarnate Logos,” and his commentary does not reflect any tensions with the figure of the emperor, Castagno concludes that Oikoumenios leans more toward the Chalcedonian camp. “I Commenti de Ecumenio e di Andrea di Cesarea,” 303-424, 324-26.

<sup>89</sup> 12.13.6, Suggit, 200. Oikoumenios is quoting Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistle to John of Antioch* 8.

<sup>90</sup> Castagno, “I Commenti de Ecumenio e di Andrea di Cesarea,” 318-324.

<sup>91</sup> *Byzantine Theology*, 38.

### 1.4.4 Hope and Vigilance

Andrew does not believe that the end of the world is near, despite the desperate state of the empire. But perhaps many among his flock were not so convinced. Rather than allow them to sink into despair or hopelessness, Andrew would need to bolster their spirits, encourage them to continue with their lives and to maintain Christian hope, along with the appropriate spirit of vigilance which is expected of all Christians, even in the best of times, so that spiritual laziness and indifference do not result in exclusion from the kingdom of heaven. It is very possible that Andrew's attitude in this area, which shines through in the commentary, was also a motivating factor for "Makarios," Patriarch Sergius, in ordering its composition.<sup>93</sup>

The fighting spirit and optimism exemplified by the Patriarch of Constantinople, Sergius I, in the face of overwhelming difficulties in the darkest moments of the empire have been well-documented. Sergius' personal determination and his partnership with Emperor Heraclius literally saved the empire during the troubled times of the early seventh century. Sergius never showed any belief that the end was near. In fact, he effectively rallies the demoralized people to courageously resist the invaders. Sergius led religious processions on the walls of Constantinople when it was surrounded and besieged by Avars, Slavs and Persians,<sup>94</sup> including bringing the icon of the Theotokos and her relics to the walls.<sup>95</sup> Sergius' impact on the populace, not only the people of Constantinople but throughout the empire, has been well expressed by Dimitri Obolensky who describes the crucial role played by Sergius while Heraclius was absent on a military campaign against the Persians and the capital was surrounded by the Avars:

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<sup>92</sup> 2.13.1. On the use of the *Trisagion* hymn during this controversy, see Meyendorff *Imperial Unity*, 200 and 224, Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology* 36-38, and Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom*, 59-60. Castagno does not notice this detail. She focuses on the similarity of terms used by Monophysites and neo-Chalcedonians, and Oikoumenios' lack of animosity toward the Empire to conclude that he was not Monophysite. "I Commenti," 323-4.

<sup>93</sup> See above, page 13, fn 37.

<sup>94</sup> See *Chronicon*, Whitby, 173, fn 462, citing Theodore Syncellus 305.13-28, *Theodore Syncellus*, ed. L. Sternback, *Analecta Avarica* (Cracow, 1900).

<sup>95</sup> *Chronicon*, Whitby, 180, fn 476, citing Theodore Syncellus 301.17-35.



In the absence of Heraclius, the citizens of Constantinople were inspired during the siege with civic and religious fervour by the Patriarch Sergius, the head of the Byzantine Church. He, no less than his sovereign, instilled a fresh spirit of resistance into the people of Byzantium, and provided this resistance with a new spiritual and moral foundation. The belief that the empire was divinely protected, and that its victories were those of the Christian religion, was not new in Byzantium; but it acquired a more compelling force in the reign of Heraclius, whose victories over the Persians, the Avars and the Slavs were hailed as the triumph of Christ and his Church over the forces of pagan barbarism. This conviction....sustained the citizens of Thessalonica and Constantinople during the sieges of their cities by the Avaro-Slav hordes in the early seventh century; and it led them to ascribe the salvation of their cities to the personal intervention of their supernatural defenders, St. Demetrius, the patron saint of Thessalonica, and the Mother of God, the heavenly protectress of Constantinople. Nowhere is this belief in the heavenly protection vouchsafed to the empire more eloquently expressed than in the words of the *Akathist Hymn* still in current use in the liturgy of the Orthodox Church, which was probably composed by the Patriarch Sergius after the Avars and the Slavs retreated from Constantinople in 626.<sup>96</sup>

Andreas Stratos agrees that the role played by Sergius was monumental, but not only in raising the morale of the people but also helping the Emperor Heraclius on a personal basis psychologically and financially:

From the beginning he ranged himself on Heraclius' side and helped him in a variety of ways. He was constantly with him. He exercised an immense influence over him and succeeded in encouraging him in his moments of despair and raising his morale.... He was not concerned with religious duties alone, but tried to turn the situation in favor both of Christianity and the Empire. When he saw the danger threatening Byzantium he did not hesitate to place the Church treasure at Heraclius' disposal, with which the latter was able to confront the situation. This act alone is sufficient to show his courage and high quality. During the emperor's absence he acted as Regent and was the real inspiration of the people during the siege of Constantinople in 626.<sup>97</sup>

Whether Sergius was already convinced that the end-times were not at hand prior to reading Andrew's commentary, or whether Andrew's opinion influenced Sergius or inspired

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<sup>96</sup> Dimitri Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500 -1453* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 54.

<sup>97</sup> Stratos, 96.

him to this spirited resistance, we can never know. Certainly, Andrew's commentary itself played a role in lessening apocalyptic expectations. In light of all of the tragic events that befell the empire, and the quest for insight and understanding for which people hungered during those troubled times, Andrew's commentary offered a traditional, spiritual, well-thought, and rather reassuring analysis of Revelation. The effectiveness of Andrew's commentary in shaping Eastern Christian eschatological attitudes is confirmed by the numerous manuscripts which preserved the commentary, the fact that his commentary has never been superseded by any other ancient interpretation of the Book of Revelation, and by the eventual acceptance of Revelation as canonical by the Orthodox Church.

## Chapter 2

# An Overview of the Book of Revelation in the Canon of the Eastern Church

### 2.1 Creating a Christian Canon

#### 2.1.1 The Need for a Canon

The process by which the Book of Revelation found a place in the New Testament canon of scripture for Eastern Christianity is obscure and complex. Although a number of books were disputed, the Apocalypse traveled a particularly bumpy road on its way to canonical status. An examination of the process by which the Apocalypse ultimately found acceptance is impossible without a rudimentary survey of the formation of the New Testament canon, at least with regard to the broad issues and movements which prompted the creation of a fixed canon and shaped its ultimate form, eventually incorporating the Book of Revelation.

Fundamental questions must be posed to unravel the process of canonization for the Apocalypse and by extension such questions are applicable to the entire New Testament: On what basis were certain books accepted and others rejected? What criteria were used? Did the authority of the book precede its canonization or was it recognized as authoritative because of its history or a particular quality that ultimately rendered it officially canonical? Which qualities were most important? Apostolicity? Prophecy? Spirituality? Perceived inspiration of the writer? Inspired reaction in the reader? Dogmatic importance? Orthodoxy of doctrine? Use by the community of faith? Didactic usefulness? Resonance with Christian experience?

A combination of the history of the reception of the text, the internal qualities of the text and external factors (heresy, other controversies or its acceptance by a key ecclesiastical figure) seem to have pushed the consensus of the Church in a particular direction for any given book. In the earliest years of the Church, no Christian writings were considered "Holy Scripture." During this period the primary method for passing on Christian tradition, especially stories and sayings of the Lord, remained oral. In fact, a preference for oral

tradition remained even well after written gospels existed<sup>98</sup> and the presence of floating *logia* in the second century Fathers confirms the continuing rich oral tradition of the “words of the Lord.”

Until the end of the second century, the term “Scriptures,” referred exclusively to the Jewish scriptures. Just as they had been the sole Scriptures for Christ and the apostles they remained the only Holy Scripture of the Church for many decades. Christ himself had quoted them, appealed to them, interpreted them and, most of all, fulfilled them. The Law and the Prophets had been normative for so long that it was difficult to conceive of any other writings achieving such high status. Although it appears that Christian documents were read within the context of Christian worship services by the early second century, another hundred years passed before they were recognized as possessing a level of authority that placed them on par with the Old Testament.

Christian writings were clearly subordinate to the revered Jewish Scriptures, writings which the Church had appropriated as its own. Scripture was sacrosanct. Scripture was unalterable. Scripture was holy. Even the four gospels — while respected as “the memoirs of the apostles”<sup>99</sup> were not truly considered Holy Scripture in this highest and most definitive sense until the end of the second century.<sup>100</sup> The earliest evidence supporting this conclusion can be found within the gospels themselves. The evangelists themselves and their disciples never thought of either their own writings or the earlier sources they relied upon for their gospels as Scripture. Our present gospels are the products of a certain amount of editorial

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<sup>98</sup> Eusebius records Papias as writing in Papias’ no longer extant work *Exposition of Dominical Oracles*: “I do not suppose that information from books would help me so much as the word of a living and surviving voice.” *E.H.* 3.39.3-4. Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History* (2 vols.), trans. Kirsopp Lake (vol. 1) and J.E.L. Oulton (vol. 2), Loeb Classical Library series, vols. 153 and 265 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926, 1932, reprint 1998, 1994), 1:293. See Harry Gamble who comments that the same sentiments were also found in pagan literature and cites L. Alexander “The Living Voice: Skepticism towards the Written Word in early Christian and in Graeco-Roman Texts,” in *The Bible in Three Dimensions*, ed. D.J.A. Clines (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 221-247. Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 31-32. Gamble believes that Papias seems to be stating a preference for first-hand information and personal instruction, and was not necessarily disparaging the written word.

<sup>99</sup> Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 67.3. Justin Martyr, *The First Apology*, trans. M. Dods and G. Reith, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. I (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted 1989), 186.

<sup>100</sup> One hint of this fact is that the term “New Testament” first appears around this time, placing Christian writings on par with the Jewish Scriptures. The term was coined by an unknown author writing against the Montanists in 192 CE. He was quoted by Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 5.16.3.

shaping. While none would dare to tamper with the text of the Jewish Scriptures, one need only look at the complex and carefully crafted structure of the gospel of Matthew,<sup>101</sup> or read the prologue to the gospel of Luke<sup>102</sup> or the appendix added to the gospel of John<sup>103</sup> to recognize that in their earliest decades the gospels, and the proto-gospels upon which they were based, were not considered holy and inviolate.

Even during the second century, well after the gospels had acquired a relatively fixed text, they still had not achieved the status of Holy Scripture comparable to the books which came to be known as the "Old Testament." Proof of this is evident in the activities of Marcion and Tatian.<sup>104</sup> Each felt free to take the acknowledged written gospels, cut them and shape them to suit their ideology. Marcion, a presbyter, came to Rome in the first half of the second century from Asia Minor and began teaching that the God of the Old Testament was not the God of the Christians. He rejected the Jewish heritage of Christianity including the Jewish Scriptures.<sup>105</sup> He produced his own gospel, which is no longer extant, but which

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<sup>101</sup> For an impressive analysis of the amazingly complex structure of Matthew's gospel, see Peter Ellis, *Matthew: His Mind his Message* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1974).

<sup>102</sup> Luke 1:1-4.

<sup>103</sup> John 21.

<sup>104</sup> See Adolph Harnack, *History of Dogma*, vol. IV. (3<sup>rd</sup> German ed.), trans. E.B. Speirs and James Millar, (London: Williams and Norgate, 1898), 38-43.

<sup>105</sup> In the years immediately prior to Marcion's arrival in Rome, the Jews had revolted against the Roman Empire, for the second time, in the Bar Kochba Rebellion of 135 CE. The first rebellion resulted in the Roman-Jewish war of 63-73 C.E., during which the Second Temple and all of Jerusalem were destroyed. The Bar Kochba Rebellion is named for the man who claimed to be the Messiah and led the revolt, Simon Bar Kochba. The rebellion ended in a crushing defeat. Jerusalem was once again left in complete ruin and all Jews were forbidden ever again to set foot on the site of the holy city, or even to live in Judea at all. Justin Martyr mentions Hadrian's edict forbidding Jews to enter Jerusalem on pain of death (*Dial.* 16, also *First Apol.* 47). The banishment lasted hundreds of years. To Marcion, it seemed to be a confirmation of his vision of a Pauline inspired, gentile-oriented Church against a more Jewish imbued Christianity. In light of those historical developments, Marcion considered the Old Testament Scriptures to be the history of a nation and people which for all purposes appeared finished forever. William Farmer and Denis Farkasfalvy, *The Formation of the New Testament Canon*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 62. Furthermore, Marcion asserted that the God of the Jews was not the God of the Christians, and therefore the Jewish Scriptures ought to be rejected by the Church and Judaic passages in Christian writings, including the gospels, should be removed. Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 63. Instead it was Marcion who would be rejected by the Church after a hearing in 144 CE. Although excommunicated, Marcion devoted the rest of his life to an energetic missionary effort designed to persuade the Church to completely break away from its Jewish foundation. He established many communities and produced a document, *The Antitheses*, which listed the conflicts he perceived between the Jewish Scriptures and the Christian Faith. Marcion's gospel, a Pauline-inspired redaction, was accompanied by a corpus of Pauline epistles which themselves had been edited to remove those portions which had a Jewish inspiration or flavor, or which advanced or affirmed the Church's Jewish heritage.

some described as a heavily edited version of Luke. It also bore similarities to Mark in that it contained no birth narratives and it omitted precious “words of the Lord,” such as the Lord’s prayer. It also appeared to contain some material from Matthew. Marcion’s gospel clearly followed the synoptic tradition and took an overt stance against the gospel of John.<sup>106</sup>

The period of Marcion’s activity represents a stage in the development of the canon during which tampering with a gospel text was a possibility not so unthinkable as to be entirely rejected, not even by a presbyter such as Marcion. But at same time the text had reached a sufficiently fixed form that his version was clearly seen as a redaction so extensive that it was denounced by the majority of Christians.<sup>107</sup> This is confirmed by Tertullian who complains that Marcion’s gospel is merely a mutilated recension of Luke’s gospel which had been preserved in the apostolic churches.<sup>108</sup> Irenaeus also complains about the material which Marcion had removed from Luke’s gospel.<sup>109</sup> Marcion’s activities generated a great deal of controversy, and prompted discussions about why Christians retained the Jewish Scriptures at all and which Christian writings were authoritative. Marcion probably sparked the first real stimulus toward the formation of a specifically Christian canon.

Another example from the mid-second century, Tatian and his activities, confirms the status of Christian writings during this period. Tatian had come to Rome from Syria. Then after returning to the East around 170, he produced a gospel version which combined the four gospels into one continuous Syriac narrative called *Diatessaron*, literally “through four,” or four-fold. The fact that Tatian, like Marcion before him, felt free to rework the gospels in this way shows that he and others did not consider the gospels Scripture, although their contents

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<sup>106</sup> Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 59.

<sup>107</sup> Harnack believes that the texts could not have been fixed before 150 and that this is certainly proof that even the gospels had not attained “full canonical authority.” *History of Dogma*, 42.

<sup>108</sup> Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 4.5. *Against Marcion*, trans. Peter Holmes, *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian*, ed. Alan Menzies, Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. III (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprint, 1989.)

<sup>109</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.14.4. *Irenaeus, Against Heresies*, trans. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. I. (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted 1989.)

were certainly authoritative.<sup>110</sup> Eusebius reports that Tatian even tried to improve the gospels by rewriting them.<sup>111</sup> Clearly, by the time Tatian had left Rome in 170 the gospels themselves had not achieved the status of consecrated Christian Scripture: venerated, inviolable and equal to the Jewish Scriptures.<sup>112</sup> But by the third century, such liberty with the gospels had disappeared. Tampering with an acknowledged text was no longer acceptable.<sup>113</sup> Troublesome passages in existing acknowledged texts could only be countered through interpretation since the New Testament books had achieved true "Scripture" status, if not universally, at least within certain Christian areas.

One factor which contributed to the difficulty of defining the limits of a canon or even thinking about Christian writings as a set of Scripture which could stand alongside the Old Testament, was that physically each book had a separate existence.<sup>114</sup> Today we think of the New Testament, (and even the entire Bible), as a unit, but initially each book was contained in a separate manuscript.<sup>115</sup> Furthermore, no standardized Christian collection existed since each congregation possessed a different collection of books.<sup>116</sup> Books circulated slowly, often by happenstance as Christians changed domicile, traveled for other purposes, or through deliberate exchanges of documents between communities. Even the most widely-

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<sup>110</sup> Bruce Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 116.

<sup>111</sup> *E.H.* 4.29.6

<sup>112</sup> The Diatessaron was a great success among Syrian Christians, but it was ultimately rejected by the Church in favor of four separate gospels. Theodoret of Cyrus reports that he had confiscated two hundred Diatessaron manuscripts and replaced them with the canonical gospels. (Metzger, *Canon*, 218, citing Theodoret, *Treatise on Heresies* 1.20) A small Greek fragment of the Diatessaron was discovered in 1933 (Metzger, *Canon*, 115). An Arabic version of the Diatessaron exists which was published in 1888, but no copy of the Syriac exists. Edgar Goodspeed, *The Formation of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926), 116.

<sup>113</sup> Harnack remarks that "the canon emerges quite suddenly in an allusion of Melito of Sardis preserved by Eusebius." *History of Dogma*, 43. "Accordingly, when I went to the East... I learned accurately the books of the Old Testament..." *E.H.* 4.26.13. This presumes the existence of a *New Testament*.

<sup>114</sup> This is even more so in the case of Revelation, which has a manuscript tradition entirely distinct from the rest of the New Testament. See chapter 3.

<sup>115</sup> Collections of Paul's letters probably began to be created early, however, even 2 Peter, unquestionably pseudonymous and a second century or later composition, seems to indicate an existing Pauline collection. "So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures." 2 Pet. 3:15-16 (RSV)

<sup>116</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 6.

traveled second century Christian who had visited many different congregations would probably never encounter the entire New Testament canon we now possess.

As books were exchanged, the rapidity of a given book's acceptance by a congregation could depend upon a number of factors, including but not limited to whether the book appealed to the congregation on a spiritual or inspirational level, whether it contained words of the Lord, and whether it was of apostolic origin. Initially no apparent need to delineate a canon existed. But as the number of Christian writings grew and dogmatic questions pressed upon the Church, heresies took hold and began to threaten orthodox Christianity. Apocryphal books soon mushroomed, both in an effort to promote divergent views and to preserve earlier oral traditions. Consequently, lists of acceptable Christian writings began to be drafted. Harnack remarks that the process of creating a Christian canon was "a kind of involuntary undertaking of the Church in her conflict with Marcion and the Gnostics."<sup>117</sup> The only way to accomplish this was for the Church to collect "everything apostolic and declare herself to be its only legal possessor."<sup>118</sup>

### 2.1.2 Factors Influencing the Formation of the Canon

It was not at all inevitable that the canon would take the shape of our present list of twenty seven books. The New Testament could easily have evolved in a very different direction. Harnack lists seven "embryonic collections" which might have led to collections of works that would have formed a very different canon. According to Harnack, one collection could have been Jewish and Christian prophetic books, standing "side by side with the Old Testament...The Revelation of John...was meant to stand side by side rather than inside the Old Testament."<sup>119</sup> Johannes Leipoldt elevated the importance of the apocalyptic tradition, after he surveyed the development of the canon and concluded that the apocalypses were foundational for the New Testament canon.<sup>120</sup> Harry Gamble believes that another factor

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<sup>117</sup> Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 45.

<sup>118</sup> Harnack, *History* 46.

<sup>119</sup> Adolph von Harnack, *The Origin of the New Testament*, trans. by JR Wilkinson (London: Williams and Norgate, 1925), 169-178, cited by Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 27.

<sup>120</sup> Johannes Leipoldt, *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1907, 1908; reprinted, Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1974.)



influencing canonicity was whether a congregation was accustomed to hearing a book read in church.<sup>121</sup> James Brenneman emphasizes a particular book's use and importance in the worshipping community.<sup>122</sup>

The most obvious and oft-cited criterion for canonical status was apostolicity, undoubtedly the most important factor. But the formation of the canon was never an organized or centralized process supervised by any single authority. No consensus existed, either as to the choice of books, the criteria for their acceptance, the relative importance of the criteria, or the manner in which the criteria would be applied. The formation of the canon proceeded in a haphazard manner, and the process took the form of a disorganized discussion spanning many centuries, with any given book's prospects rising or falling according to the critiques rendered, the persuasiveness of the arguments, the prominence of the critic, and the use or reputation of a book in a given locale.

But the same criteria were not applied to every book with equal force. Apostolicity might be emphasized for one book while it was conveniently overlooked in the case of another.<sup>123</sup> Every disputed book was discussed on its own merits and its case considered independently of the other disputed books.<sup>124</sup> So while apostolicity and antiquity of witness was an important factor in the West in the case of Revelation, this was clearly less important or even ignored in the case of 2 Peter or Hebrews.

In the West, explicit endorsement by a key ecclesiastical figure or authority such as Augustine or Jerome, or its usage by the Church of Rome, significantly bolstered a book's acceptance. But it was much more difficult to reach a consensus in the East which enjoyed a far greater number of important and influential ecclesiastical figures and larger number of ancient and important sees, not to mention many famous centers of ecclesiastical learning: Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Caesarea Palestine and Edessa.

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<sup>121</sup> Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 214-218.

<sup>122</sup> James Brenneman, *Canons in Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Brenneman points to the lesson learned from the Dead Sea Scrolls, that "single communities can appeal to multiple traditions of authority and multiple communities create multiple canons." *Canons in Conflict*, 62.

<sup>123</sup> Hebrews, as an anonymous book, did not claim any apostolic authorship, but was so admired in the East for its inspired Christology and theological insights that its lack of apostolic pedigree and non-Pauline style were ignored and it was attributed — quite conveniently — to Paul.

<sup>124</sup> With the probable exception of 2 and 3 John, which were discussed and adjudged as a unit.

In some respects, it is remarkable that a consensus for the canon of Scripture occurred at all. No apostle, no bishop, no synod, no emperor, no event was *the* determining factor which would ultimately shape the New Testament canon. The earnest debate over the Christian canon spanned at least three hundred years and featured the participation of the greatest minds of early Christianity. While regional synods at times addressed the question, no Ecumenical Council defined the limits of the canon.<sup>125</sup>

The canon had certainly become an issue by the time of the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea in 325, yet Nicea did not address the question of the canon. By that time, certain books were unquestioned, while most apocryphal works were recognized as such and universally rejected. But individual churches and bishops exercised their own discretion among disputed works. Clearly the issue was not resolved at Nicea because no pressing need to create a definitive canon was perceived: the question of the canon was simply not a divisive issue. This lack of concern among the participants of the Nicene council with respect to the canon indicates that opinions about the canon were not essentially dogmatic. Two persons could disagree about the canon and both could be entirely orthodox in doctrine. This also indicates that dogmatic issues were not ultimately resolved by appealing to the Scriptures, since the Arians also argued their case by quoting the Scriptures. Rather, dogmatic issues were resolved by appeal to the tradition of the Church, or at least to the long-standing interpretations of those recognized Scriptures.

Therefore, the simplistic conclusion, commonly given, that the New Testament canon was “fixed” in the fourth century (usually with the appearance of the Paschal Encyclical of Athanasius in 367) is untenable, especially in the case of the Eastern Church, and most especially in the case of the Book of Revelation.<sup>126</sup> In the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the opinions

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<sup>125</sup> Later Ecumenical Councils ratified the New Testament canons of numerous local synods, which only added to the confusion, since the canons they ratified did not agree. John Cheek believes that the attitude shown toward the canon indicates that the canon remained fluid, with Christian tradition setting limits of what *may* be used as authoritative writings as opposed to requiring conformity. The “Christian canon of Scripture is largely permissive rather than obligatory.” John Cheek, “The Apocrypha in Christian Scripture,” *The Journal of Bible and Religion* 26 (1958) 207-212, 207.

<sup>126</sup> Surprisingly, the mistaken belief that Revelation was largely accepted in the East in the fourth century because of its acceptance by Athanasius remains alive. See Eldon Jay Epp, “Issues in the Interrelation of New Testament Textual Criticism and Canon,” in *The Canon Debate*, eds. Lee Martin McDonald and James Sanders (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2002, second edition, 2004), 485-515. Epp writes: “[T]he place of the Revelation to John in the canon of Eastern Christianity was not certain until the late fourth century, and even later in some places.” Epp, 505, citing Harry Gamble “Canon: New Testament,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary*

of Augustine and the adoption of Jerome's Vulgate were very instrumental in standardizing not only the Latin translation but the canon itself for the West.<sup>127</sup> The Greek-speaking East had no such opportunity for standardization since earlier Greek manuscripts and lectionaries were simply recopied repeatedly, thus retaining the status quo and having no impact on the canon.<sup>128</sup>

It can only be said that by the end of the fourth century a consensus existed in both the East and West for the *core* of the canon: our present fourfold gospel corpus, Acts of the Apostles, thirteen Epistles of Paul, 1 John and 1 Peter. However, Hebrews, James, 2 and 3 John, Jude, 2 Peter, and Revelation remained disputed at least to the extent that they were not universally accepted.<sup>129</sup>

## 2.2. The Book of Revelation in the New Testament Canon

Every disputed book which ultimately found a place in the New Testament canon has a story of its own. But the story of the Apocalypse of John is especially unique and peculiar. Of the books which eventually *did* become part of the New Testament, it can be said that those which enjoyed early and universal acceptance and were never in serious dispute remained undisputed, such as the gospels and the thirteen epistles of Paul. Other New

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1:853-56, Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament: History and Literature of Early Christianity* (2 vols.) 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: de Gruyter, 1995-2000), 2:6-12.

<sup>127</sup> But even then, some aberrations remained, and it took time for uniformity to become the norm. Even into the Reformation era, variations persisted in the Latin canon. For example, the apocryphal epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans, was included in many pre-Reformation and Reformation era bibles. Metzger, *Canon*, 239f.

<sup>128</sup> Metzger believes that the Latin Church "had a stronger feeling than the Greek for the necessity of making a sharp delineation with regard to the canon" and that "it was less conscious than the Greek Church of the gradation of spiritual quality among the books that it accepted." Metzger, *Canon*, 229. Arthur Darby Nock agreed that the Greeks were more flexible in their attitudes toward the canon, whereas in the West there was "a tendency to define, not only *de facto*, but also *de iure*, what is permissible." "A Feature of Roman Religion," *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 32, no. 1 (1939) 83-96, 95.

<sup>129</sup> The canon was not officially fixed for the Roman Catholic Church until the Council of Trent (1546). The Eastern Orthodox Church does not recognize Trent or any synod beyond the Seventh Ecumenical Council as "ecumenical" in character, that is, possessing the highest degree of authority. For the Orthodox East, it can be said that the canon *still* has not achieved that level of established status which Trent created for the Catholic Church since the issue has never been resolved by an Ecumenical Council. However, for all practical purposes it is inconceivable that today any Orthodox Christian would seriously question or challenge the New Testament canon. Hence, the Orthodox canon has been settled in a *de facto* manner, nonetheless in classic Orthodox style: by consensus over time.

Testament books of dubious background were disputed early in the process by many individuals but slowly gained acceptance and were eventually received into the canon, such as James, Hebrews and 2 Peter. But the Book of Revelation alone is peculiar and unique in that it did not follow either pattern toward canonical acceptance in the East. Instead, Revelation appears to have been undisputed and widely accepted extremely early, from the first quarter of the second century, as were the gospels. But later it became highly disputed and remained rejected or ignored by many in eastern Christian circles into the Ottoman period. Unlike other disputed books, which were initially disputed but slowly gained acceptance, Revelation was widely accepted initially then quickly lost acceptance, in contrast to the normal pattern. The two criteria which had originally gained favor for the Apocalypse (apostolicity and prophecy) were assailed, disputed and impugned in the process.

Another oddity regarding Revelation is that among all the books seeking acceptance into the New Testament canon, Revelation alone claims divine inspiration.<sup>130</sup> It describes itself as prophecy in its opening and closing. It blesses those who read it and curses those who alter it<sup>131</sup> and it also recommends that it be read publicly in the churches. No other New Testament book makes such claims or expects itself to be treated as Scripture.

The question of the authorship of the Apocalypse is a complex one which has been discussed at length by numerous modern scholars. The issue of the *actual* authorship of Revelation is not under consideration here. The only issue for our purposes is when, where and by whom was Revelation considered apostolic and authoritative? Our investigation is not into whether these ancient witnesses were *correct*, but what we can uncover regarding the attitude of ancient Church toward the Book of Revelation.

It is also not necessary for our purposes to resolve the question of which factors most

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<sup>130</sup> Revelation is the only possible exception to the rule that no part of the New Testament was recognized as inspired and authoritative. "Only the book of Revelation claims for itself such a lofty position that would come close to the notion of inspiration and Scripture...Even the Gospels do not in themselves claim final authority." Lee McDonald, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon* (Peabody MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995), 9.

<sup>131</sup> "The writer, John, is evidently a prophet, and if his prophetic vocation be acknowledged, it is a natural conclusion that his book is inspired prophecy and therefore Scripture. The striking thing is that it is so intended, and by virtue of this fact claims for itself a place of permanent authority, side by side with the Jewish Scriptures. In this new type of Christian literature we see the welding of the new prophetic sense of inward spiritual endowment with the old Jewish idea of inspired books. It thus foreshadows a Christian Scripture. Alone among the books of the New Testament the Revelation claims for its whole contents the authority of divine inspiration." Goodspeed, *The Formation of the New Testament*, 14- 15.

contributed to the shape of the *entire* New Testament canon. Therefore, the remainder of this discussion will examine the stance taken by various ecclesiastical figures, local churches or synods, as well as various other factors, which directly impacted the acceptance or rejection of Revelation in the ancient East.<sup>132</sup>

### 2.3 The Early Appeal of Revelation

It has been argued that the primary factors which contributed specifically to the early acceptance of Revelation were its antiquity, its prophetic character<sup>133</sup> (including chiliastic elements), its support for Christians in a climate of persecution and martyrdom,<sup>134</sup> and its apostolicity.<sup>135</sup> Secondary factors which have been raised to explain its early appeal are that it contained words of the Lord<sup>136</sup> and that the letter genre within Revelation was known to Christians and present in acceptable books.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> In a recently published work, Charles E. Hill, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) exhaustively examined all of the historical sources to determine the status of the Johannine corpus in the second century. It is an outstanding resource and provides a detailed investigation of evidence related to the attitude toward Revelation in various sources, about which the present work can only give an overview.

<sup>133</sup> See Adolph von Hamack, *The Origin of the New Testament*, trans. J.R. Wilkinson (London: Williams and Norgate, 1925).

<sup>134</sup> This is William Farmer's opinion in his book with Denis Farkasfalvy, *The Formation of the New Testament Canon*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1983). Farmer takes the position that the New Testament canon is a "martyr's canon which can be traced through Origen, Hippolytus and Irenaeus to a particular traditional idealization of Christian martyrdom exemplified by Polycarp and Ignatius and reflecting the influence of the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul in Rome." Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 8. According to Farmer, the three major factors which contributed to the shaping of the New Testament canon were: (1) the persecution of Christians, which not only evoked martyrdom but also stimulated a whole set of responses by the Church to strengthen the faith and the discipline of its members, (2) diverse systems of Christian theology, and (3) Constantine's legalization and promotion of Christianity." Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 8. "Diverse systems of theology" refers to diversity concerning the value of martyrdom (mainly questioned by Gnostics), which weakened Christian resolve in the face of persecution. Having a canon that affirmed martyrdom would be beneficial.

<sup>135</sup> N.B. Stonehouse, *The Apocalypse in the Ancient Church* (Goes, [Holland]: Oosterbaan and Le Cointre, 1929).

<sup>136</sup> John Elliotson Symes, *The Evolution of the New Testament*, (London: John Murray, 1921), 331. Symes believed that three factors determined canonicity: "(1) the authority of the Church, (2) evidence that these books contain the teachings of the Apostles and their immediate disciples, and (3) the internal evidence — the response of Christian hearts to the New Testament teaching. None of these answers may seem quite satisfactory, if taken separately: but, in conjunction, they have been found by almost all Christians to provide an adequate ground for their belief in the authorized Canon." More recently, Lee McDonald lists four primary factors: apostolicity, orthodoxy, antiquity and use, with the possible additional factors of adaptability and inspiration. Lee Martin McDonald, "Identifying Scripture and Canon in the Early Church: The Criteria Question," in *The*

### 2.3.1 The Prophetic Character of Revelation

The theory that the Apocalypse gained acceptance as Christian prophecy was championed by some early twentieth century scholars, including Harnack<sup>138</sup> and Leipoldt.<sup>139</sup> The rationale for this theory is that in the first decades of Christianity the Old Testament prophets were supremely important. They were thoroughly studied, analyzed, discussed, and cited to support Christian messianic claims for Jesus, especially against Jewish rejection of those claims. This led to the enthusiastic reception of early Apocalypses, such as the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and the budding formation of an early canon of Christian prophetic literature which would stand side by side with the Old Testament prophetic canon.<sup>140</sup>

Under such a standard, the Apocalypse of John would have been accepted simply due to its prophetic character. But did Christians generally regard all prophetic utterances as divine and canonic? Was the Apocalypse accepted primarily on that basis and did its prophetic claims give the book its authority and high status among second century Christians? Would it have received the same reception or enjoyed as much authority were it *not* attributed to an apostle but still regarded as prophetic? In light of the evidence provided by second century sources, Harnack's and Leipoldt's argument cannot be supported.

It is possible that the prophetic character of Revelation at one time played a significant role, especially in the earliest decades and in those areas where chiliasm was prominent. Harnack assigns the Apocalypse a very strong position as the foundation of the New Testament canon where, along with other Apocalypses, Jewish and Christian, he believed it created a secondary canon equal to the Old Testament.<sup>141</sup> Stonehouse disputes the

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*Canon Debate*, eds. Lee Martin McDonald and James Sanders (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2002), 416-439.

<sup>137</sup> Denis Farkasfalvy's opinion. Farmer and Farkasfalvy, *The Formation of the New Testament Canon*, 156-7.

<sup>138</sup> Adolph von Harnack, *The Origin of the New Testament*, 169-178.

<sup>139</sup> Johannes Leipoldt, *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1907, 1908; reprinted, Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1974.)

<sup>140</sup> See Goodspeed's comments in fn 131 above. Goodspeed notes that eventually *Shepherd* would be rejected because the apostles were now felt to be inspired in a higher sense than such erratic prophets as Montanus or even Hermas. Goodspeed, 78.

<sup>141</sup> Stonehouse, 2, citing Harnack, *Die Entstehung des Neuen Testaments und die wichtigsten Folgen der neuen Schöpfung* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1914), 58. Stonehouse summarizes the argument: "In the early Church with

view that there was a canon of apocalypses which were accepted *because* they were prophetic. "The whole construction that at one time the Church possessed a canon of apocalypses, which were accepted apart from any question as to their authorship and time of their origin is not grounded on fact and particularly looks in vain to the Canon Muratori for support."<sup>142</sup>

Harnack argued that it would have been natural for the Christian apocalypses to form a corpus of Christian prophetic writings. The reason the New Testament has no such corpus is because *later* the criterion became "apostolicity," which he believed is antithetical to the earliest criterion of the canon, prophecy.<sup>143</sup> But Harnack's argument fails because its underlying premise is unsound. Harnack presupposed the existence of a Christian canon with authority equal to that of the Old Testament. The Jews had not even fixed their *own* canon by this time, (that is, adding "The Writings"), but at least the "Law and the Prophets" were recognized by Christians as Scripture. Christians certainly had no conception of their own writings possessing authority equal to Jewish Scripture for at least 150 years. Furthermore, the idea that the authority of Christian prophets was absolute is a vast overstatement of the authority of Christian prophets as compared to that of the apostles, as we will see below.

In support of his position, Harnack calls to our attention Montanism's revival of early Christian enthusiasm with its claim that the Age of the Paraclete, promised by Christ, was now ushered in by the New Prophecy. Church leaders were forced to distinguish between the prophetic claims of the Montanist prophets and reinforce apostolic authority as against the New Prophecy, and thus excluded all of the writings which were not apostolic.<sup>144</sup>

However, long before the rise of Montanism, which will be discussed below, the Church was already looking back on the apostolic era as an ideal. By the early second

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its enthusiasm, the authority of the Christian prophets was absolute, and criticism of their oracles or writings was viewed as the sin against the Holy Spirit. At a time when neither gospels nor epistles were cited as Scripture, we find Jewish pseudepigraphic apocalypses so introduced, and new Christian apocalypses claim for themselves the authority of and were received as Scripture." Stonehouse, 1. Stonehouse, whose monograph on the Apocalypse in the ancient Church extensively analyzed the sources, concluded that while various other characteristics were contributing factors, nothing less than a belief in the apostolicity of Revelation can account for its early and widespread acceptance.

<sup>142</sup> Stonehouse, 86.

<sup>143</sup> Stonehouse, 2.

<sup>144</sup> Harnack, *Die Entstehung*, 58. Stonehouse, 2.



century, the time of composition of Ignatius' epistles, and also possibly the Pastoral Epistles and certainly 2 Peter, we see an emerging institutional Church. This Church is more structured and more concerned with order and authority. Such a posture, which looks back on the apostolic era as an ideal and the apostles as figures of authority, is less likely to enthusiastically embrace the free-style spirit of prophetic utterances which can be difficult to authenticate. The authority which Christian prophets might have held was diminishing in favor of the authority of the bishop standing in succession to the apostles. From the beginning, the apostles carried the greatest authority in the Church bar none except for the authority of Christ himself. Paul's letters contain overwhelming evidence of the importance of apostolic authority.<sup>145</sup> With the exception of a few prophets mentioned in the New Testament,<sup>146</sup> the early Church prophets are unknown to us. A vibrant prophetic spirit pervaded in the early Church, yet prophetic authority did not even begin to approach the authority and influence of the apostles.

Christian prophets could never rival the importance of the apostles. Christian prophets made exhortations in the context of worship services.<sup>147</sup> Although they sometimes received revelations, the utterances of Christian prophets were not of such a character that they were written down and preserved. Christian prophets were respected and influential, but usually only known within their immediate communities. On the other hand, the apostles were the spokesmen and representatives of the Lord. They were obeyed, respected and revered in a manner and to an extent unlike any Christian prophet.<sup>148</sup> Papias' attitude toward the apostles

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<sup>145</sup> This is seen, if by nothing else, than the fact that Paul insists so adamantly on his apostolic status. His authority is tied to him receiving that recognition. Prophets were consistently placed second to apostles. Eph. 2:20, 3:5, 4:11, Rev. 18:21, *Didache* 11:3. See Jan Fekkes, *Isaiah and the Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation. Visionary Antecedents and Their Development*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series vol. 93 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994.) Fekkes also notes that church authority was not yet fixed. Bishops could and did function as prophets also, such as Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp and Melito of Sardis. *Ibid* 40-41.

<sup>146</sup> Such as Agabus (Acts 11:28; 21:10) or the daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9).

<sup>147</sup> For example, 1 Cor. 11:4-5. See David Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984), 198. According to Guy Bonneau, prophecy was not limited to the Christian assembly, but it was manifested and proven in that context. *Prophétisme et institution dans le christianisme primitif* (Montréal: Médiaspaul, 1998), 58.

<sup>148</sup> Some argue that the *Didache* gives more authority to prophets, but they were not the "designated leaders" of the community. After the *Didache* expresses their "honored role in the eucharist" almost every subsequent reference to prophets is "cautionary." Aaron Milavec, *The Didache. Faith, Hope, and Life of the Earliest*



was probably typical. For him, the apostles possessed pre-eminent authority. We have no indication that Papias held prophecy in equally high regard.<sup>149</sup> Since Papias was a promoter of chiliasm, the apostolic origin of the *Apocalypse* would have been important to him as a source of its authority and credibility, but not necessarily because of its prophetic character.<sup>150</sup>

Furthermore, prophets had less authority than apostles and they played a different role in the Church. A prophet could never take the role of an apostle, but an apostle sometimes assumed a prophetic role.<sup>151</sup> The visions of apostles had far more importance to the Church than those of ordinary Christian prophets since the apostles were those who preserved Christian tradition.<sup>152</sup> Early Christian writers such as 1 Clement and Ignatius of Antioch make no appeal to the authority of Christian prophets, but they *do* appeal to the authority of the apostles as second only to the Lord. Ignatius himself was a prophet and spoke in that capacity, but he does not appeal to his own authority as a prophet,<sup>153</sup> which may indicate that even Christian prophets did not consider themselves on the same level as the apostles.

If prophetic writings were *ever* accepted *simply* because they were prophetic, such a period would have been very short-lived and quickly gave way to another phase in which the only acceptable prophetic writings were also apostolic. The Muratorian Canon may present an example of this phase because of its acceptance of the *Apocalypse of Peter*. But ultimately, support for the *Apocalypse of Peter* fell away because it had no ancient tradition of apostolic authorship to bolster its acceptance,<sup>154</sup> which returns us once more to the undeniable factor of apostolicity.

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*Christian Communities, 50-70 C.E.* (New York: The Newman Press, 2003), 426. Far from suggesting that *all* prophets be accepted, on the contrary, *Didache* instructs Christians to test prophets (*Didache* 11).

<sup>149</sup> Stonehouse, 43.

<sup>150</sup> Stonehouse, 43.

<sup>151</sup> Paul (Acts 16:9 and 18:9, 1 Cor. 14:6, 2 Cor. 12:1ff, Gal. 1:12 and 2:2, 1 Thess. 4:15 and 2 Thess. 2:3) and Peter (Acts 11:5ff). Apostles also functioned as prophets since they were “commissioned and sent out to accomplish a prophetic task,” following the example of Jesus. Milavec, *The Didache*, 440.

<sup>152</sup> 1 Cor. 15:1-3, 1 Cor. 11:2, 23, Heb. 2:1-3. Stonehouse, 30.

<sup>153</sup> *1 Clement* 42, 44; Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Magnesians* 6.13, *Epistle to the Trallians* 2.7, and *Epistle to the Philadelphians* 5.

<sup>154</sup> Lee McDonald believes that Montanism prompted a reaction against prophetic literature, especially in the East, and that not only Revelation suffered from it, but the *Apocalypse of Peter* was also quoted less frequently after the Montanist controversy. McDonald, “Identifying Scripture and Canon,” 433.

Chiliasm<sup>155</sup> was extremely popular during the second century, and many leading Christians ascribed to this belief.<sup>156</sup> Unquestionably, Revelation was very popular among chiliasts, and many of the earliest references to Revelation are quoted to support or to dispute this teaching. Later when chiliasm was disfavored, the chiliastic component would lead to antagonism against Revelation.<sup>157</sup> But we also find Revelation quoted outside the context of chiliasm and in documents that contain no hint of that doctrine, therefore Revelation was not inextricably tied to chiliasm.

### 2.3.2 The Appeal of Revelation in Times of Persecution

It is William Farmer's position that the New Testament canon was essentially shaped by persecution and martyrdom.<sup>158</sup> The books which were ultimately included in the canon mirrored the experience of early Christians: the gospels contained the martyrdom of Jesus, Acts of the Apostles told of the martyrdom of Stephen, the epistles reminded Christians of the martyrdom of the apostles, and Revelation concerned the martyrdom of the saints. He maintains that early apocryphal gospels which did not include the passion of Christ — such as the *Gospel of Thomas* — held less interest for Christians. Likewise, docetic gospels, which claimed that Christ was not really human and thus did not actually suffer, or Gnostic gospels, which rejected the importance of martyrdom, had to be repudiated in favor of gospels that offered encouragement to Christians in time of persecution. Hence, a Christian canon emphasizing martyrdom was formed. "The factor of heresy joined with the factor of persecution."<sup>159</sup> Farmer maintains that since Gnostic Christians questioned the value of

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<sup>155</sup> Chiliasm, or millennialism, is the belief that the second coming of Christ will usher in an earthly kingdom which will last a thousand years. Very closely connected with that doctrine is the belief that the resurrection of the righteous precedes the thousand year period, while that of the unrighteous follows it. The resurrected saints will enjoy a super-abundance of all good things on the earth in complete peace, harmony and joy, ruling over the earth with Christ for a thousand years. After this period would come the resurrection of the unrighteous and the final judgment.

<sup>156</sup> Justin stated that not all Christians believed in the literal millennium, but the "right minded" ones did. *Dial.* 80. *Justin Martyr: Dialogue with Trypho*, trans. M. Dods and G. Reith, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. I (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted 1989), 239.

<sup>157</sup> Since chiliasts primarily relied on Revelation, many who opposed chiliasm rejected Revelation altogether.

<sup>158</sup> Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 39-43.

<sup>159</sup> Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 34-5.

martyrdom, they took the position that Christians need not oppose imperial policies requiring them to sacrifice to the gods. Without an expectation that they refuse to sacrifice, Gnostics did not have the same need for support from other Christian communities, nor did they need united and disciplined episcopal leadership and consultation to survive persecution.<sup>160</sup>

The famous letter about the martyrs of Vienne and Lyon, to be discussed below and dated 178 C.E., includes the detail that the martyrs refused the title of “martyr,” and even severely rebuked anyone who called them such, insisting that the title of “faithful and true martyr”<sup>161</sup> belongs to Christ alone, a direct allusion to Revelation.<sup>162</sup> Another allusion to Revelation is found in the description of their contest with “the beast,” i.e., the evil one. The martyrs showed a very forgiving attitude toward those who were persecuting them as well as toward those Christians who had succumbed to pressure and denied Christ.<sup>163</sup> In Farmer’s opinion, Eusebius quoted large portions of the letter to emphasize the forgiving attitude of these martyrs, just as Christ and Stephen forgave those responsible for their martyrdom.<sup>164</sup>

Farmer’s contention, that the New Testament canon took its shape because of its support for martyrdom, is an interesting one. The martyrs of the New Testament certainly served as Christian exemplars, and may have contributed to each book’s appeal. However, some apocryphal books also relate martyrdoms or encourage bravery in the face of martyrdom.<sup>165</sup> Furthermore, the Apostolic Fathers also contained powerful examples of martyrdom. Ignatius’ epistles, written literally on the road to his martyrdom, are among the most compelling of all early Christian writings and certainly provide a paradigm for Christian martyrdom. These epistles are contemporary with the *Didache*, and easily predate *Shepherd*, both of which appear on some canonical lists. Yet Ignatius’ epistles are never in

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<sup>160</sup> Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 42.

<sup>161</sup> Rev. 3:14 and 19:11.

<sup>162</sup> Eusebius *E.H.* 5.2.3.

<sup>163</sup> Eusebius *E.H.* 5.2.5-6.

<sup>164</sup> Luke 23:34, Acts 7:60. “We see emerging not simply a martyr’s canon of Christian Scripture. We see emerging a *particular* martyr’s canon. This canon featured the Revelation of John, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of Paul all read in the light of the fourfold Gospel canon. Martyrs who live by this norm will not only risk their lives for the sake of Christ and for the sake of his gospel, but they will refuse to condemn those who, under persecution, became apostates and will in all matters strive to achieve concord and peace as they seek to reunite the family of God.” Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 39-40.

<sup>165</sup> Such as the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, and the apocryphal accounts of martyrdoms of various apostles.

serious consideration as Christian authoritative literature. Farmer is correct that each New Testament book reminds one of suffering and martyrdom, but in fact, they recall the martyrdom of Christ and the apostles, and are not simply supporting Christian martyrdom in general. This coupled with apostolic authorship or sources, brings us back again to the element of apostolicity in shaping the canon and Revelation's place in it. We cannot ignore or minimize the huge shadow the apostles cast over the Church. Revered even in their lifetimes, after their deaths the apostles only grew in stature, esteem and importance.

### 2.3.3 The Words of the Lord in the Book of Revelation

Another factor which may have contributed to the early acceptance of Revelation is that it contains words of the Lord. The sayings of Jesus continued to be actively recounted and orally transmitted well into the second century. The written gospels had not yet achieved prominence, and in fact probably were not preferred over the oral tradition. The only authority higher than the apostles was Christ himself. Revelation depicts him with very vivid imagery, walking among and speaking to the churches.<sup>166</sup> He appears in the early chapters to dictate the letters to the churches,<sup>167</sup> and also appears again at the close of the book to endorse its contents.<sup>168</sup> Revelation asserts a self-understanding of its stature and authority, which is not even claimed by the gospels, by virtue of its content: the words of Jesus. It was a powerful communiqué and, not surprisingly, it was followed by other revelations and prophetic writings, such as *Apocalypse of Peter* and *Shepherd of Hermas*, seeking to have the same influence over the Church. The words of the Lord present in the book, coupled with the situation of the Church facing persecution, may have been a strong factor which encouraged early acceptance of Revelation.

### 2.3.4 The Epistolary Genre in Revelation

Denis Farkasfalvy proposes another criterion, which is interesting, but less compelling than the others. The criterion was literary genre and was prompted by the Gnostic

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<sup>166</sup> Rev. 1:12-20.

<sup>167</sup> Rev. 2-3.

<sup>168</sup> Rev. 21:5, 22:16 and 18-20.

movement. Gnosticism “motivated the Church to set certain models of what an acceptable ‘apostolic writing’ was supposed to be”<sup>169</sup> and Farkasfalvy believes that genre was very important in making such a determination. He cites as an example the *Didache* and *Shepherd* which, although popular, were ultimately rejected from the canon because, he proposes, their genre did not comply with accepted apostolic works. The New Testament consists basically of Gospel narratives and apostolic letters, with the only two exceptions being Acts and Revelation. Acts was accepted into the canon as a continuation of Luke’s gospel, Farkasfalvy correctly notes. While no Christian prophetic book but Revelation is canonical, (so in that respect Revelation does not fit the genre of the New Testament), it contains seven letters, enabling it to conform to the canonic pattern. Documents such as *Didache*, without this genre, were never accepted into the canon.

The genre factor is an interesting argument. Farkasfalvy writes that there was an “expectation of certain literary genres” and that the tradition of Paul as a letter writer had “a decisive role in creating the assumption that authentic apostolic writings must be Gospel narratives or epistles.”<sup>170</sup> Nevertheless, no evidence of the criterion of the literary genre can be found in the early Church, and apparently such a criterion was never consciously or even sub-consciously applied. But Farkasfalvy argues that from the final outcome of the development of the canon we might reasonably assume that as a first “screening device it was employed to *disqualify* quickly other forms of literature since there was no reliable tradition that the apostolic Church had produced any other kind of literature than these two types.”<sup>171</sup> Yet by this very argument, Farkasfalvy has led us back, once again, to the overriding significance of apostolicity.

### 2.3.5 The Apostolicity of Revelation

Notwithstanding the early association of the Apocalypse with prophecy, its appeal in times of persecution, epistolary format and content including “words of the Lord,” the overwhelming weight of the evidence supports the conclusion that tradition connecting the apostle John with the origin of the Apocalypse was the decisive factor in its early acceptance.

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<sup>169</sup> Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 156-7.

<sup>170</sup> Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 157.

<sup>171</sup> Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 157.

In Irenaeus' writings, we at last clearly see demonstrable proof of apostolicity as the premier criterion for canonicity. Irenaeus emphasizes the apostolic nature of Christian writings and puts them on par with the Jewish Scriptures.<sup>172</sup> He considers the writings of Luke and Mark apostolic due to their association with recognized apostles.<sup>173</sup> He continually emphasizes the fact that the true gospels reflect what the apostles had handed down.<sup>174</sup> Irenaeus quotes the *Shepherd* only once, and then not in the context of a dogmatic dispute or as a prophetic writing, but for didactic purposes.<sup>175</sup>

Appeal to "the elders," those who were personally taught by the apostles, is in itself confirmation of the overwhelming authority embodied by the apostles, an authority so powerful and imposing that it seemed to "spill over" onto those who had direct contact with them. Already, apostolicity was in place as the major criterion for the eventual canon. In the witness of Papias, in which he explains the authorship of the four gospels (c. 125 CE), we see apostolic authority as the implicit yet consistent criterion. Papias describes the two evangelists who were not apostles, Mark and Luke, in terms that strongly yoke them with the most recognized and highly respected apostles, Peter and Paul, suggesting that *but for* their association with those apostles, these gospels would not have been received by the Church. The rise of apocryphal gospels, pseudonymously attributed to apostles, is additional confirmation of the overwhelming power of apostolic authority and the recognition that apostolicity was the primary criterion for canonical status.

Theories as to the actual authorship of the Apocalypse have been discussed at length by many scholars. Those who reject apostolic authorship of the book cannot offer a satisfactory explanation for how Revelation was indisputably accepted as apostolic by the mid-second century and became widely accepted as authoritative in so short a period by such leading figures of second century Christianity as Justin, Tertullian, Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria without any genuine association with the apostle John. While multiple factors may have contributed to some degree in the acceptance of Revelation, no single factor or even a combination of many factors trumps apostolicity.

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<sup>172</sup> *Heres.* 1.3:6, 2.27:2.

<sup>173</sup> *Heres.* 3.10:1, 6, 3.14:1-3. McDonald, "Identifying Scripture and Canon," *The Canon Debate*, 424.

<sup>174</sup> *Heres.* 3.11:9, 5:1.

<sup>175</sup> *Proof of Apostolic Preaching* 4. Irenaeus was well aware that *Shepherd* was not apostolic. No one in the ancient world claimed that it was.

## 2.4 The Second Century: Widespread Acceptance of Revelation

Since our question pertains to the place of Revelation in the canon of the East, we will confine our review regarding Revelation's acceptance or rejection from the canon to the evidence from Greek sources.

### 2.4.1 Ignatius of Antioch

The paucity of Christian literature surviving from the early second century creates some difficulty in determining the extent of Revelation's acceptance at that point. Ignatius of Antioch is among the earliest of the second century writers known as the "Apostolic Fathers." Ignatius passed through Asia Minor on his way to martyrdom in Rome, writing several letters along the way to communities in Asia Minor and Rome and one to the bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp. Ignatius does not mention the apostle John, the Gospel of John or the Apocalypse,<sup>176</sup> which may have been written perhaps fifteen years prior. Ignatius writes to the Asian communities of Philadelphia, Smyrna, Magnesia, Ephesus and Trallia, but makes no reference or clear allusion to the Apocalypse in any of his epistles. However, the date of his martyrdom is very early in the second century and Ignatius was from Antioch, not Asia. He may not have known of the Apocalypse and may simply have been unfamiliar with both the Johannine literature and the oral traditions about John.

### 2.4.2 Polycarp of Smyrna

More surprising – but also explainable – is the omission of any reference to Revelation in the epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians. Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, one of the cities to which Revelation was addressed<sup>177</sup> used forty-six allusions to the New Testament in a letter to the Philippians, but none from either the gospel of John or Apocalypse.<sup>178</sup> Polycarp's stance on the issue regarding the date of Easter indicates a

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<sup>176</sup> Charles Hill, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church*, 25.

<sup>177</sup> Rev. 1:11, 2:8.

<sup>178</sup> Charles Hill repeatedly notes the inherent problem in concluding whether the Apostolic Fathers had knowledge of or actually used *any* particular New Testament book, since they relied on common oral traditions

dependence on the authority of the apostolic tradition in Asia, probably that of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>179</sup> Since there was some controversy surrounding the gospel of John and it was not recognized as genuine by many Christians outside of Asia, it is conceivable that Polycarp may have omitted any references to these two works for diplomatic reasons, to avoid any controversy or offense.<sup>180</sup> It is difficult to draw conclusions about Polycarp's knowledge of or attitude toward the Fourth Gospel or the Apocalypse since we have only the one extant writing by him. The absence of any mention of Revelation is no proof that the book was unknown or not accepted. Marcion's rejection of the Johannine tradition made him quite unpopular in Asia Minor and reportedly Polycarp himself called Marcion "the first born of Satan."<sup>181</sup>

### 2.4.3 Papias of Hierapolis

Surprisingly enough, the subject of this dissertation, Andrew of Caesarea, indirectly provides evidence for the earliest use and acceptance of the Apocalypse. In the preface to his commentary, Andrew mentions Papias as among the earliest witnesses to the credibility of the Apocalypse, almost certainly in Papias' work, *Exposition of Dominical Oracles*. Andrew

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known to all Christians, including the Evangelists themselves, who also relied upon such traditions in composing their gospels. Reviewing the work of Martin Hengel on Polycarp's knowledge of John, Hill concludes that use of the Fourth gospel in Justin, Ignatius, Polycarp and Papias "is greater or clearer than is usually allowed by critical scholarship, or that this Gospel and its author fare not much differently than the other Gospels and their authors." *The Johannine Corpus*, 41, on Hengel, *The Johannine Question* (London, 1989), 5.

<sup>179</sup> The gospel of John was the gospel of Asia Minor. This is clear from the debate that arose over the date of Pascha, known as the Quartodeciman ("Fourteen") Controversy. The Churches of Asia Minor celebrated Pascha according to the exact date on which Christ was crucified, the day preparation for the Passover, which was 14 Nisan, regardless of the day of the week on which it happened to fall. Elsewhere in the Roman Empire, the Churches always celebrated Pascha on a Sunday regardless of whether 14 Nisan fell on a Friday or not. This eventually resulted in such a division in the Church that the bishop of Rome, Anicetus, attempted to use his influence to force the Asian churches to comply with the date observed by Christians elsewhere in the empire, always on a Sunday. A schism nearly erupted and was prevented by the intervention of Polycarp, who argued that the Asian tradition was ancient and apostolic (*E.H.* 4.14.1-5). Later, Pope Victor temporarily excommunicated all of the Churches of Asia Minor over this issue in 193 (*E.H.* 5.23-25). But the Asian Christians again prevailed, insisting on the validity of their tradition because it was apostolic, a tradition which is supported only by the Fourth Gospel. See fn 198 below.

<sup>180</sup> Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 70.

<sup>181</sup> Irenaeus relates that Polycarp had publicly ignored Marcion and describes an incident in which Polycarp's refusal to acknowledge Marcion led Marcion to confront him. "Polycarp himself replied to Marcion, who met him on one occasion, and said, 'Dost thou know me?' 'I do know thee, the first-born of Satan.'" *Heres.* 3.3.4, ANF 1:416.



never discusses the controversy regarding the veracity or authorship of the Apocalypse or its place in the canon. Instead, he simply states that a discussion of the divine inspiration of the Book of Revelation would be superfluous since its trustworthiness has been confirmed by several patristic witnesses, including Papias.<sup>182</sup>

Papias was the bishop of Hierapolis, a city in Asia Minor near Laodicea and Colossae. His *Exposition of Dominical Oracles*, a five volume treatise, was composed in the first half of the second century. Only a few fragments remain from this work and no fragment contains any quotations from or allusions to Revelation.<sup>183</sup> Most of our knowledge of Papias comes from Eusebius of Caesarea. Although Eusebius tells us that Papias was a chiliast, Eusebius gives no indication whether this belief was based on the Apocalypse of John or some other tradition. Eusebius provides no information about Papias' attitude toward or knowledge about the Apocalypse. But Andrew is a credible source for confirming that Papias himself confirmed the apostolic authorship of Revelation. Andrew evidently had first-hand knowledge of *Dominical Oracles* since he quotes from Papias at a later point in the commentary.<sup>184</sup> Hence, Andrew serves indirectly as a witness to the acceptance of Revelation as apostolic in the early second century by an Asiatic Father.

While no exact dates can be assigned to Papias, he certainly belongs within the first half of the second century. On what basis did Papias accept the authority of the Apocalypse? The Eusebian passage about him reveals Papias' enthusiasm for learning the earliest apostolic traditions. Whether Papias was himself an actual "hearer of the apostles,"<sup>185</sup> or only a hearer of the followers of the apostles, sometimes called "the elders,"<sup>186</sup> has been hotly debated. Eusebius quotes Papias and his references to various apostles and elders and concludes that Papias seems to be referring to two different men named John in Ephesus, one

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<sup>182</sup> *Prologue, Text 10, Comm. 11.* Stonehouse agrees that Andrew serves as a witness to Papias' belief that the Apocalypse was composed by the apostle John. "The credibility of Andreas as a witness is strengthened by the accuracy of his testimony in so far as it can be tested as well as by his first-hand knowledge of the *Exposition*." Stonehouse, 8.

<sup>183</sup> Extant Papias fragments have been recently retranslated and republished in *The Apostolic Fathers*, (2 vols.) trans. Bart Ehrman, Loeb Classical Library series, vols. 24 and 25, ed. Jeffrey Henderson, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003) 92-119.

<sup>184</sup> *Chp. 34, Text 129-30, Comm. 134.*

<sup>185</sup> As Irenaeus maintains. *Heres. 5.33.4.*

<sup>186</sup> As Eusebius argues. *E.H. 3.38.5-7.*

the apostle and the other a presbyter.<sup>187</sup> Eusebius states that he makes this observation because it provides an alternative explanation to the origin of the Apocalypse: If one does *not* accept that the apostle John was the author of the Apocalypse, then the author *could* have been John “the elder.”

Nothing in Papias suggests that an elder named John was the author of the Apocalypse. Quite the contrary: his purpose was to record *apostolic* tradition. Andrew would not have cited Papias as part of a string of witnesses to the apostolic authorship of the Apocalypse if Papias had not ascribed it to the apostle John. Andrew had other patristic witnesses, and Papias was not absolutely necessary, especially since he was not an important Father and he was a known chiliast. If Papias *had* stated or suggested that someone *other than* the apostle John received the Revelation, Andrew would not have called attention to that by citing Papias, who in such a case would have undercut rather than confirmed Andrew’s point. The other witnesses whom Andrew cites as supporting Apostolic authorship — Cyril of Alexandria, Gregory the Theologian of Nazianzus, Hippolytus, Irenaeus and Methodios — all specifically state that the Apocalypse was authored by the apostle John. We can be certain that a specific statement of authorship was what Andrew had in mind since Andrew cites Gregory Nazianzus as proof of Revelation’s apostolic authorship, despite the fact that Gregory does not even include Revelation in his New Testament canon.

Eusebius’ negative stance toward the Apocalypse was purposely designed to discredit the book. Eusebius took advantage of a hearsay account about two tombs with the name “John” in Ephesus, discussed below, and combines that with Papias’ confusing statement about the existence of the apostle John and an elder also named John, who was not even mentioned by Papias as living in Ephesus. The most logical presumption is that Papias accepted Revelation as authoritative because of its apostolic authorship, a fact which

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<sup>187</sup> Stonehouse disputes this conclusion by a grammatical analysis of the text. Stonehouse, 44. The confusion has been created primarily by Papias’ imprecise use of the term “elders,” which could mean disciples of the apostles, but in other places Papias uses “elder” to clearly refer to the apostles themselves. He mentions the name “John” twice, first with the apostles, and secondly together with one Aristion. “If, then, any one came, who had been a follower of the elders, I questioned him in regard to the words of the elders,—what Andrew or what Peter said, or what was said by Philip, or by Thomas, or by James, or by John, or by Matthew, or by any other of the disciples of the Lord, and what things Aristion and the presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord, say.” *E.H.* 3.39.4, *The Church History of Eusebius*, trans. Arthur Cushman McGiffert, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vol. I, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 171. This confusion, along with the reported “two tombs” to John in Ephesus, helps Eusebius raise doubts regarding the Johannine authorship of the Apocalypse and undermine the book. See the discussion below in chapter 2.7.2.

Andrew's citation confirms even if Papias' exact words have been lost.

#### 2.4.4 Other Apostolic Fathers

Other early writings, such as the *Didache*, the *Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Epistle of Barnabas* bear certain similarities to the Book of Revelation, but there is no conclusive evidence that the authors knew Revelation. It is possible that they simply utilized elements common to apocalyptic literature and expressed concepts derived from a common Christian world view.<sup>188</sup>

#### 2.4.5 Justin Martyr

Justin Martyr, a mid-second century Father and apologist, provides us with the earliest direct reference to the Apocalypse in an existing work and he is the first extant explicit witness to its apostolic origin, which is particularly significant because he was catechized in Asia. Justin was a pagan philosopher who became a Christian in Ephesus around 135, where he would have been instructed in the Christian faith and traditions. He arrived in Rome sometime after Marcion had been excommunicated (144 C.E.) during the period when Marcion was already busy establishing his Pauline-type churches. Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* appears to be a response to Marcion's claims that Christianity contradicts the Jewish Scriptures. Justin employed all four gospels in his arguments.<sup>189</sup>

He wrote his two famous *Apologies* around 150 and *Dialogue with Trypho* perhaps around 160. Justin was martyred in Rome approximately 165. His *Dialogue* is set in Ephesus, and even though it was written later in Rome, it may reflect early traditions of the Ephesian Church. In the *Dialogue*, Justin expresses his millennial beliefs, quoting Isaiah 65 and Psalm 90, and then states: "And then a certain man among us, whose name was John,

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<sup>188</sup> For example, *Barnabas* refers to a man who will deceive the world. But Paul expresses a similar idea, a "lawless" man who will deceive many people (2 Thess. 2), a common Jewish apocalyptic expectation. The Epistles of John also warn against deception (1 John 2:26-27 and 2 John 7, 8), as do apocalyptic passages in the gospels (Matt. 24:4-5, Mark 13:5-6 and Luke 21:8).

<sup>189</sup> Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 66. But the advantage of Marcion's single gospel, free of inconsistencies, seemed obvious to at least one of Justin's students, Tatian, who later composed the *Diatessaron*. See page 35, fn 112 above.

one of the apostles of Christ, prophesied in a revelation made to him, that those who believed in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem.”<sup>190</sup>

Justin was far more educated and sophisticated than Papias, but nonetheless they held the same opinions regarding the apostolic authority and authorship of the Apocalypse. The apostles were absolute authorities. They received the power of God, taught the word of God, and the apostolic word was indistinguishable from the word of the Lord himself.<sup>191</sup> It is inconceivable that Justin would have attributed the Apocalypse to the apostle John if that were not the tradition he had received in early second century Asia.

Like Papias, Justin was a confirmed chiliast and he appeals to the Apocalypse in support of his beliefs, as we have seen above. Certainly, Justin considered the Apocalypse to be prophecy and he cited the Apocalypse along with the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. Highly significant is Justin’s remark that the John who prophesied was “one of the apostles of Christ.”<sup>192</sup> This comment is the earliest statement in an extant work ascribing authorship of Revelation to the apostle John. It also supports the conclusion that the Apocalypse was not authoritative because of its prophetic character, but because it was apostolic.<sup>193</sup>

Justin’s remarks serve as a strong evidence of the high regard for the Apocalypse in the early second century and its apostolic association. The apostolic authorship which we can only infer from Papias is unquestionably confirmed by Justin: the Apocalypse was well-accepted in Asia Minor in the early part of the second century and was attributed to the apostle John. Justin’s position may also reflect the teaching of the Roman Church in the mid-second century, but that will be discussed below.

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<sup>190</sup> *Dial.* 81, ANF 1:240.

<sup>191</sup> *First Apology* 39, 42, 53. *Dial.* 42.

<sup>192</sup> *Dial.* 81, ANF 1:240.

<sup>193</sup> “This phrase he could have omitted without detracting from his argument if the Christians were ready to appeal to any prophetic writing as a standard by which the true doctrine might be tested. Its inclusion gives it great emphasis, and the conclusion is at hand that he regards the Apocalypse as he does because he accepts it as the work of one of the apostles.” Stonehouse, 47. “Justin is concerned with the activity of false prophets among the Christians and one gets the impression that Justin reflects a time when there is more concern about the false prophets than the true prophets (*Dial.* 82). Nowhere does he suggest that the Christian prophets added to the apostolic teaching or leave a trace of knowledge of a body of Christian prophetic writings, and it is clear that he would not have thought of placing them, if there were such, on a level with the apostolic writings. It is quite possible that if he found in other apostolic writings prophetic elements which to his mind supported the chilastic doctrine he would also have appealed to them.” Stonehouse, 46.

## 2.4.6 The Martyrs of Vienne and Lyon

During the second century a close relationship existed between the churches of Asia Minor and Gaul. They were in regular contact with each other by letter and supported each other through tribulations. An amazing letter from the churches of Lyon and Vienne addressed to the churches throughout Asia and Phrygia survives as a witness to the esteem which the churches of Gaul had for the Book of Revelation, and likewise, the high regard accorded to it by the Christians in Asia. This important text was quoted by Eusebius almost in its entirety.<sup>194</sup> The letter relates in detail the severe persecution which the churches of Lyon and Vienne endured in 178 under Marcus Aurelius and describes the martyrdoms of a number of Christians. Significant for our purpose is that in addition to five strong allusions to Revelation, this letter contains the earliest direct quote from the Apocalypse.<sup>195</sup> Also particularly noteworthy is that this letter contains the first instance in which the Apocalypse is cited as a book of Scripture, using the formula, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled."<sup>196</sup>

## 2.4.7 Irenaeus

The best source for the Eastern Christian use of and regard for the Apocalypse during the second century is Irenaeus of Lyon. Irenaeus is a key figure in our understanding of the formation of the canon because in his work *Against Heresies* he associates false scriptures with heresy. Although his birthplace is unknown, he had spent time in Asia Minor and stated that in his youth he heard Polycarp, a disciple of the apostle John.<sup>197</sup> There is also evidence that Irenaeus spent time in Rome. Irenaeus was already well known and respected in Lyon as early as 177 when he was elevated to the episcopacy there, succeeding the martyred bishop Pothinus, who died in the persecutions described in the letter from the churches of Vienne

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<sup>194</sup> *E.H.* 5.1.1-2.7.

<sup>195</sup> Rev. 22:11. "He that is lawless, let him be lawless still, and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still." Charles Hill notes that the fact that the letter contains so many references to Revelation and that it is addressed to churches in Asia strongly supports the view that the Asian churches accepted the Johannine books "without controversy." *The Johannine Corpus*, 87.

<sup>196</sup> *E.H.* 5.1.58.

<sup>197</sup> *E.H.* 5.20.5, *Heres.* 3 3.4. See also *E.H.* 5.20.1 and 5.5.8.

and Lyon.<sup>198</sup> In Irenaeus we have a well-informed and highly important witness to the early tradition of the Church, whose views represent the attitude of the churches in the regions of Asia and Gaul.<sup>199</sup>

As in the case of our previous patristic witnesses, Papias and Justin, Irenaeus also transmitted information from “the elders” of Asia Minor and in that manner passed on traditions about the Apocalypse that significantly pre-date the era in which he actually wrote. Like Justin and Papias, Irenaeus was an ardent chiliast, and unquestionably the Apocalypse must have held some special appeal to him for that reason also.

#### 2.4.7.1 Irenaeus’ Sources

Irenaeus was more precise than Papias in his use of the term “elders.” For Irenaeus, “the elders” were always *disciples of the apostles*, in this case, those who had seen and spoken with John, the disciple of the Lord in Asia. It has been argued that when Irenaeus appeals to the elders he is relying on Papias and that the “elders” who are referenced do not include the apostle John but only the presbyter John because of Irenaeus’ reference to Papias. But Irenaeus is consistent in his use of the term “elders.” It is never synonymous with “apostle” or “disciple of the Lord” and Irenaeus cites Papias as confirmation of his own, independent tradition regarding John.

It is perfectly logical that “the elders” represent an independent source of information for Irenaeus. Having spent time in Asia himself, Irenaeus was not dependent upon Papias for the teachings of the elders. Moreover, Irenaeus quotes them in a manner which *distinguishes* them from Papias. While commenting on the super-abundant fertility of the earth during Christ’s thousand-year reign on earth, Irenaeus supports the teaching first by appealing to the

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<sup>198</sup> Oik. 5.1:21 and 5. 5:8.

<sup>199</sup> Farmer notes that the churches of Asia Minor were firmly tied to the gospel of John, whereas churches in other areas preferred the synoptics and even rejected John, due to differences in style and other details regarding Jesus’ ministry. Irenaeus was very influential in championing the idea of a “fourfold gospel,” and was followed by men such as Hippolytus, Origen and Eusebius. Farmer suggests that the ultimate reception of the gospel of John paved the way for the reception of the Apocalypse. Farmer and Farkasfalvy 93, fn 77. But this it does not hold true in the East, which accepted the Gospel but remained suspicious of the Apocalypse. It also would not have been the case in Rome where it appears that the Apocalypse had already found wide acceptance, possibly even before the gospel of John due to the Quartodeciman controversy. Furthermore, and contrary to Farmer’s conclusion, the case can be made that the Apocalypse was widely accepted and recognized as apostolic in the East and in the West long before the Fourth Gospel was universally accepted.

teaching “which the elders who saw John, the disciple of the Lord, related.” Then, after quoting the elders, he remarks that Papias, a hearer of John, a companion of Polycarp, is also a witness to these matters.<sup>200</sup>

In another passage Irenaeus again refers to what he personally learned about the Apocalypse from an elder who had heard the disciples of the apostles. “And if any one will devote a close attention to those things which are stated by the prophets with regard to the [time of the] end, and those which John the disciple of the Lord saw in the Apocalypse, he will find that the nations [are to] receive the same plagues universally, as Egypt then did particularly.”<sup>201</sup>

Irenaeus unequivocally attributes the Apocalypse to John the apostle.<sup>202</sup> He frequently refers to the Apocalypse alongside other end-time prophetic scriptural passages, including Isaiah and Daniel.<sup>203</sup> Also extremely significant about these and other references to the Book of Revelation is that they demonstrate that Irenaeus recognized only one Apocalypse and only acknowledged *one* author of that Apocalypse: the apostle John. He does not incorporate or confuse John with “the elders,” for he writes that the elders saw “not only John but also the other apostles.”<sup>204</sup>

It is reasonable to conclude that the elders are independent witnesses to the reception of the Apocalypse in the ancient Church in Asia Minor, its authoritative status, and its authorship by the John the apostle. Although Irenaeus wrote in the late second century, the information he provides confirms the testimony of Papias and Justin to the authority and apostolic authorship of the Apocalypse in the early second century.

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<sup>200</sup> *Heres.* 5.33.3-4, ANF 1:563. See also Eusebius who quotes Irenaeus but disputes that Papias was claiming to be an actual hearer of the apostles. *E.H.* 3.39:1.

<sup>201</sup> *Heres.* 4.30.4, ANF 1:504.

<sup>202</sup> In *Heres.* 5.35.2 and 5.26.1. Irenaeus quotes many passages from the Apocalypse, which he states was written by “John the Lord’s disciple.”

<sup>203</sup> *Heres.* 5.34.2.

<sup>204</sup> Irenaeus relates certain oral traditions he had received as coming from John and clearly distinguishes them from what he had learned from the elders, “...as the Gospel and all the elders testify; those who were conversant in Asia with John, the disciple of the Lord, [affirming] that John conveyed to them that information. And he remained among them up to the times of Trajan. Some of them, moreover, saw not only John, but the other apostles also...” *Heres.* 2.22:5, ANF 1:392.

### 2.4.7.2 Irenaeus' Use of Revelation

Irenaeus quotes the Apocalypse frequently to support his eschatological views.<sup>205</sup> The apostolic origin of Revelation infused the book with unquestioned authority for Irenaeus who explicitly describes the Apocalypse as “Scripture.” Irenaeus states that the number of the beast in Revelation according to people who had seen John face to face, (those whom Irenaeus refers to as “the elders”), is 666, not 616, as some were misstating.<sup>206</sup> Irenaeus condemns the variation 616 as a deviation from the original revelation, and he warns that anyone who alters *Scripture* to suit his own purposes will face punishment. “There shall be no light punishment inflicted upon him who either adds or subtracts anything from the Scriptures.”<sup>207</sup> This passage is so explicit that no parsing is necessary to prove that Irenaeus was consciously referring to the Apocalypse as “Scripture.” He refers to the number 666 as “the sure number declared by Scripture”<sup>208</sup> and associates the book with inspiration by the Holy Spirit when he explains that the name of the Antichrist was not given “because it is not worthy of being named by the Holy Spirit.”<sup>209</sup>

Irenaeus does not use the term “New Testament,” but he shows that he possessed inspired Christian documents, “writings which are a second authoritative collection which he regarded as a unity alongside the Old Testament. This is clear not only in those many connections where he cites the writings of the new dispensation along with the old, and expressly speaks of them as Scripture, but also in that he traces all to one source. It is the same Spirit who speaks in the prophets and the apostles.”<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> See especially *Heres.* 5.26-36.

<sup>206</sup> *Heres.* 5.30.1.

<sup>207</sup> *Heres.* 5.30.1 See also Rev. 22:19. This detail not only reveals a manuscript variation very early in the transmission of the text, but, more importantly that the text had already been translated into Latin and was circulating with this number. The 616 variation is commonly associated with the Latin translation of the Greek text, since 616 is the Latin numerical equivalent of Nero's name.

<sup>208</sup> *Heres.* 5.30.2.

<sup>209</sup> *Heres.* 5.30.4. Along with referring to the Apocalypse as “Scripture,” and its content as a revelation of the Holy Spirit, Irenaeus demonstrates his high regard for the book by repeatedly quoting from the Apocalypse in support of his positions right alongside quotations from the Old Testament in the passage here cited and in others.

<sup>210</sup> Stonehouse, 76, citing *Heres.* 3.21.4.



Yet for all his confidence in the Spirit-inspired quality of Christian writings and the apostolic foundation of Revelation, Irenaeus could not bring himself to introduce Revelation with the formula reserved for introducing quotations from the Old Testament: "it is written." Stonehouse reasons, "This may indicate that in the mind of Irenaeus there was some hesitation about giving this work of John a place on a level with the Old Testament Scriptures."<sup>211</sup> Even as late as the last quarter of the second century, Irenaeus at least was still not prepared to place Christian writings, even apostolic ones, exactly on par with the Jewish Scriptures.

#### 2.4.8 Theophilus of Antioch

A contemporary of Irenaeus, Theophilus was the sixth bishop of Antioch and flourished around 180.<sup>212</sup> In a work now lost Theophilus quotes "testimonies from the book of Revelation" in refutation of the heretic Hermogenes. There is no trace of chiliasm in his works.<sup>213</sup> The New Testament books at use in Antioch during Theophilus' time consisted of at least three of the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, a collection of Pauline Epistles, and evidently the Apocalypse. The Jewish Scriptures remained pre-eminent, but the gospels and Pauline epistles were also considered inspired and Theophilus presents them on par with the Jewish Scriptures in his apology to Autolytus.<sup>214</sup> While Stonehouse concludes that Theophilus' use of the Apocalypse signals that it was "accepted" in Antioch at this time,<sup>215</sup> this may be too broad a conclusion.<sup>216</sup> As will be seen later, opinions regarding Revelation

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<sup>211</sup> Stonehouse, 76.

<sup>212</sup> Metzger, *Canon of the New Testament*, 119. According to Eusebius, *E.H.* 4.36.1.

<sup>213</sup> See *E.H.* 4.24.

<sup>214</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 119.

<sup>215</sup> Stonehouse, 81, fn 155.

<sup>216</sup> McDonald notes the flaw in reaching such a broad conclusion based on one detail, commenting on his disappointment in finding the same reasoning in Farmer and Farkasfalvy's book, which he remarks is an "otherwise excellent book on the canon." McDonald justifiably faults them for clinging to traditional assumptions that: "(1) if ancient authors cited a NT writing they must have considered it as scripture; (2) if one author considered a text "scripture," then everyone in the writer's era and general location did the same, and (3) the compilation of all of the citations, quotations, or allusions to biblical literature by an ancient author constituted that writer's biblical canon." McDonald, *Formation of the Biblical Canon*, 3, footnote 3. McDonald is correct and such assumptions are not only passé, but naïvely oversimplify the complex process of canon formation, and ignore the fact that opinions differed, and opinions also sometimes changed.

differed among bishops, even within the same locale. The sources already discussed strongly indicate an acceptance of Revelation in Asia Minor at this time. However, with regard to Antioch we can only say that the Apocalypse was *known* there during this time. The extent of its acceptance is unknown.

#### 2.4.9 The Muratorian Canon

The Muratorian canon is certainly an early witness for the endorsement of Revelation in the early Church. The canon is a fragment by an unknown author. Originally it was widely held that the canon was from Rome and was dated c. 170 because it refers to the recent episcopacy of Pius I (the bishop of Rome from 142-157) and the *Shepherd of Hermas* as a recent composition. The traditional date and provenance of the Muratorian Canon has been questioned in recent years in favor of a fourth century date and Greek authorship.<sup>217</sup> But some scholars hold to the original dating since the internal evidence of its date is formidable. Whether this Latin text is a translation from a Greek second century document or fourth century original is immaterial for our purposes since during the second century the language at the Church of Rome would have been Greek and this investigation focuses on Greek sources and the Eastern tradition.

The author of Muratorian canon clearly indicates that his criterion for canonicity is apostolicity: Luke is linked to Paul, John is one of the Twelve, and Acts is associated with all of the apostles. The canon accepts the Apocalypses of John and Peter, although it admits that some do not accept Peter. Inclusion of the *Apocalypse of Peter* supports an argument in favor of an earlier date. In fact, the fragment provides extremely strong evidence for the early tradition of Johannine authorship of Revelation since it argues that Paul's epistles, directed at seven churches, should be accepted into the canon on the basis of John's Apocalypse, which was also directed to seven churches. Thus, the shaky canonical position for Paul's epistles – something which can hardly be imagined by modern Christians – is amazingly bolstered by

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<sup>217</sup> See Albert C. Sundberg, Jr. "Canon Muratori: A Fourth Century List," *Harvard Theological Review* 66 (1973) 1-41, and Geoffrey Mark Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992). These conclusions have in part been challenged by Everett Ferguson, "Canon Muratori: Date and Provenance," *Studia Patristica* 18 (1982) 677-683. Metzger also disagrees with the fourth century dating and believes the canon is a very early list. *Canon of the New Testament*, 194.

the Apocalypse of John.<sup>218</sup> Furthermore, the two apocalypses are accepted by this canon on the basis of apostolic authorship, while the *Shepherd* is rejected because it is too recent and not apostolic. The statement that some do not accept the Apocalypse of Peter strongly implies that no disagreement existed with regard to the authorship of the Apocalypse of John.

#### 2.4.10 Other Second Century Witnesses

The Apocalypse of John also seems to have been accepted in the second half of the second century in Asia by Melito of Sardis (c. 190). Eusebius mentions a work by Melito entitled τὰ περὶ τοῦ διαβόλου καὶ τῆς Ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰωάννου,<sup>219</sup> which shows that Revelation was accepted in Sardis, at least by Melito at this time. Melito followed the Johannine tradition and favored the Quartodeciman date of Pascha.<sup>220</sup> Eusebius also notes that Revelation was quoted by Apollonius at the end of the second century in his anti-Montanist writings.<sup>221</sup>

### 2.5 The Rise of Schism and Heresy: Opposition to the Apocalypse Develops

Absolutely no evidence exists of any second century opposition to Revelation in orthodox circles, in Asia or elsewhere, nor does any group appear to have existed at that time which rejected Revelation or questioned its apostolic association. The absence of any doubt concerning the apostolic authorship of Revelation in early second century Asia Minor is especially significant. Objections to Revelation later in the second century arose in the camp of Marcion, not among orthodox Christians. With an initially positive and enthusiastic reception, Revelation had an optimistic future and an easy road to canonicity would be expected. But in the third century it would face serious attack. The arguments marshaled

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<sup>218</sup> See Krister Stendahl, "The Apocalypse of John and the Epistles of Paul in the Muratorian Fragment," *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation*, eds. William Klassen and Graydon Snyder (New York: Harper and Brother, 1962), 239-301.

<sup>219</sup> *E.H.* 4.26.1-2.

<sup>220</sup> *E.H.* 5.24.5.

<sup>221</sup> *E.H.* 5.18.12.

against it were designed to undermine its reputation as apostolic, furthering our contention that the basis for Revelation's early acceptance and authoritative reputation was its apostolicity. By the fourth century in the East, the place of its birth, Revelation was viewed with suspicion and widely rejected. What historical developments led such an anomalous result? What factors contributed to such controversy?

### 2.5.1 The Controversy over Marcion and Evidence of Early Acceptance of the Apocalypse

Because Marcion's activity was centered at Rome and he was also opposed there by orthodox Christians, the canon which would be acknowledged in Rome would have been an affirmation of the pre-Marcionite canon against Marcion's new gospel-apostle.<sup>222</sup> Marcion rejected the Apocalypse as a book thoroughly "saturated with the thought and imagery of the Old Testament,"<sup>223</sup> no doubt because of its strong Jewish flavor, semiticisms, and use of imagery from the prophets of the Hebrew Bible. But Marcion's rejection of the Apocalypse conversely also provides evidence that the Church of Rome accepted the Apocalypse in the mid-second century. This is confirmed through Tertullian's affirmation of the earliest Latin tradition. Tertullian wrote five books against Marcion and battled against Marcion's canon, including his rejection of the Apocalypse: "We have also John's foster churches. For although Marcion rejects his Apocalypse, the order of their bishops when traced back to the beginning rests on John as the author."<sup>224</sup>

### 2.5.2 Montanism and its Effect on the Acceptance of Revelation in the East

Among the extant sources, we have seen that Revelation was well-known and accepted as apostolic in both the East and the West. Although some Eastern writers are silent as to Revelation, no evidence exists of opposition to it or any hesitancy regarding its validity or authorship. Can the beginning of Eastern opposition to Revelation be found in a reaction against Montanism?

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<sup>222</sup> Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 65.

<sup>223</sup> Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1906), cvi.

<sup>224</sup> *Marc.* 4.5. translation in Stonehouse, 12.

During the mid-second century, a man named Montanus appeared in Phrygia with a prophetic message. Soon two prophetesses, Priscilla and Maximilla, joined him and together the three led a movement which featured ecstatic prophecy.<sup>225</sup> By the late second century, the Church was divided over the authenticity of what Montanists called the “New Prophecy.” Other than their prophetic style and claims, the Montanists appear to have been mostly orthodox in doctrine. However, they advocated rigorous forms of asceticism (especially with regard to fasting and marriage) which most Christians regarded as extremist.<sup>226</sup>

Montanist prophecy was primarily eschatological in orientation. The message contained chiliastic and apocalyptic expectations which were associated with the Revelation of John, such the promise of a New Jerusalem.<sup>227</sup> The three prophets proclaimed the imminent coming of the end of the world and professed to be the divinely appointed agents sent to warn Christians that the second coming of Christ was at hand. Among their prophetic messages was a declaration that the New Jerusalem would come down to earth at a town in Asia Minor called Pepuza. Many Christians were swept up in the enthusiasm of the movement and gathered there to watch for the coming of the Lord.

Another characteristic of Montanist prophecy was ecstasy, which the prophets claimed confirmed the genuineness of their New Prophecy. They spoke in the first person for the Holy Spirit and claimed that the Paraclete<sup>228</sup> was actually speaking through them in a manner which today we might refer to as “channeling.” Anti-Montanist writers on the other hand responded that a prophet need not speak in ecstasy and that neither Old Testament nor New Testament prophets prophesied in that manner.<sup>229</sup> The prophets of the past retained full consciousness and Paul had explicitly described a prophet’s function as providing edification, comfort and understanding for the faithful.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> *E.H.* 5.16:1-9.

<sup>226</sup> *E.H.* 5.18.2.

<sup>227</sup> Metzger, 99-106. Stonehouse, 52.

<sup>228</sup> John 14:15-17, 17:7-15.

<sup>229</sup> *E.H.* 5.16:3.

<sup>230</sup> 1 Cor. 14.

The earliest extant reference to the Montanist movement in fact may be found in a letter from the churches of Lyon and Vienne, the same churches who provided the astonishing account of the martyrdom of their brethren under Marcus Aurelius. These communities had heard about the rise of Montanism, and had asked then-presbyter Irenaeus to write to Eleutheros, Bishop of Rome, with their questions regarding Montanism.<sup>231</sup> By all appearances, the communities of Lyon and Vienne shared the opinion of most members of the Church at large: the prophecy was probably false. But they, along with the majority in the Church, decided to “wait and see,” neither rejecting the prophecy altogether nor rejecting the Apocalypse because the Montanists appealed to it. Melito of Sardis, in the third quarter of the second century, wrote a work on the Apocalypse, as we have seen above.<sup>232</sup> He did not defend Montanism, but he too did not fall into the opposite extreme of rejecting all prophecy.<sup>233</sup> Apollonius, an opponent of Montanism in Asia Minor, stressed the necessity of testing prophets, implying that he did not oppose prophecy in general.<sup>234</sup> Eusebius reports that in his work against Montanism, Apollonius quoted from the Apocalypse.<sup>235</sup> The earliest evidence, therefore, is that the backlash against Montanism did not lead Eastern Christians to reject the Apocalypse completely, at least not initially.

The continued existence and validity of Christian prophecy was never denied by anti-Montanist writers. Irenaeus recognized the prophetic function in Christian congregations during his own time.<sup>236</sup> He did not take an extreme position and ban all prophecy because of Montanism, but he condemned Montanist prophets as false. Christian prophets were honored if true, but the apostolic witness stood above Christian prophets because the standard for testing Christian prophets was, at least in part, conformity to apostolic teaching.

After the deaths of Montanus and Priscilla, Maximilla is reported to have said, “After

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<sup>231</sup> E.H. 5.3.4.

<sup>232</sup> E.H. 4.26.1-2.

<sup>233</sup> He wrote a treatise entitled *On Christian Life and the Prophets*. E.H. 4.26.2.

<sup>234</sup> E.H. 5.18.2-11.

<sup>235</sup> E.H. 5.18.13.

<sup>236</sup> E.H. 5.7.6.

me shall come no prophet, but the consummation."<sup>237</sup> Maximilla died in 179 C.E. The Church saw her claim to be the last Christian prophet as confirmation of the spurious nature of Montanist prophecy, since the prophetic charisma will always remain in the Church until the second coming of Christ. In addition, orthodox Christians were convinced of Montanism's falsity by the non-fulfillment of certain explicit prophecies she made. Maximilla predicted that wars and revolutions were imminent, and that the end of the world would soon follow her death. In fact what followed was the relatively peaceful and prosperous reign of Commodus.<sup>238</sup> The Montanists were denounced as false prophets, demon possessed, and finally excommunicated.<sup>239</sup>

Among those who were convinced of the truthfulness of the New Prophecy, even after the death of the three prophets, was Tertullian, one of the most brilliant and prolific writers of the early Church. Tertullian, a very eschatologically oriented and chiliastic Christian, believed passionately in Montanist claims and was convinced that the appearance of the New Prophecy was a sign of that the end was near. He vigorously defended Montanism and, among other things, reported that the New Prophecy had predicted that a sign would be manifest and that this sign had been fulfilled. He related a report that a city had been seen suspended in the skies of Judea early every morning for forty days. The city was the New Jerusalem preparing to receive the saints upon their resurrection.<sup>240</sup>

The Montanists seemed to have accepted all of the writings of Old Testament and New Testament. We have no information that they rejected any particular book,<sup>241</sup> certainly not the Apocalypse. Tertullian, for example, considered the Apocalypse Scripture and referred to it as though it were the only Apocalypse.<sup>242</sup> The Apocalypse appealed to the Montanists because it was prophetic and eschatological. But their appeal to Revelation in support of their claims indicates that the Apocalypse of John was already an accepted

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<sup>237</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* 48.2.

<sup>238</sup> *E.H.* 5.16.18-19.

<sup>239</sup> *E.H.* 5.16.10. Montanism permanently hindered prophetic activity and authority in the church, which afterwards turned instead toward the traditional institutional church offices. See Bonneau, *Prophétisme*, 215-16.

<sup>240</sup> *Marc.* 3.25.

<sup>241</sup> Stonehouse, 72.

<sup>242</sup> See *Marc.* 4.5, *On Flight in Persecution* 1, and *On Modesty* 19. Tertullian used the Apocalypse of John but never the Apocalypse of Peter.

authority in the Church at that time. Linking their prophetic messages to the Book of Revelation and claiming that its prophecies were on the verge of fulfillment could only have been compelling to so many Christians if they already recognized the Apocalypse as an authoritative text. But Montanism also linked Revelation to controversy and schism and was the first such association to harm the reputation of the Apocalypse.

### 2.5.3 The Rise of the Anti-Montanists

Montanism became a serious disruption in the Church. Responding to its claims, containing its spread and halting its influence required a significant effort. Numerous defenders of traditional mainstream Christianity took up the pen against Montanism. Three methods were employed to discredit Montanism: (1) condemn it as heresy, (2) show that the prophecy disagreed in form and content with the Church's traditional teachings, and, (3) discredit the Johannine writings upon which the Montanists greatly depended.<sup>243</sup> This last tactic was the one taken by a churchman named Gaius<sup>244</sup> and a group who would later be described as the "Alogoi."<sup>245</sup> All of these methods were utilized in the battle against Montanism, but it appeared that the most effective and expedient way to discredit Montanism was to demonstrate that the Johannine writings, which were the Montanist mainstay, were in fact not apostolic but heretical forgeries. Accusatory fingers were usually pointed at Cerinthus, the arch-enemy of the apostle John,<sup>246</sup> who was described by Gaius as a crass

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<sup>243</sup> Stonehouse, 93ff.

<sup>244</sup> Or "Caius."

<sup>245</sup> The Alogoi were so named by Epiphanius in the fourth century because they opposed the writings attributed to John. *Panarion* 51.3.1. Because John used the term "Logos" ("Word") for the Son in the prologue of his gospel, those who rejected the Johannine writings were therefore called the "Alogoi," Anti-Logos. But "logos" also means "reason," so Alogoi is a pun which means "irrational." "The Alogoi – for that is the name I give them – ...reject the books of John. Since therefore they do not accept the Word preached by John, let them be called Alogoi...They accept neither the Gospel of John nor his Revelation...The excuse they make... is that they are not from John, but from Cerinthus, and are not worthy to be read in the church." (*Panarion* 51.3.1-3, 6. *The Panarion of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis*, trans. Philip R. Amidon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 177. It is uncertain whether they are connected to, comprise the same group, or share the same views as the nameless anti-Montanists who were attacked by Irenaeus. However, it appears that Gaius and the Alogoi rejected both the Gospel and Apocalypse. There may have been other anti-Montanists who rejected only the gospel of John or only the Apocalypse. The anti-Montanists of the East may have been represented by the Alogoi and the West by Gaius. The extent to which they may have differed in their view, if at all, is uncertain. Stonehouse, 64. See also the discussion on Epiphanius below in chapter 2.7.4.5.

<sup>246</sup> *E.H.* 3.28.1-6, 4.14.6. *Heres.* 3.11.1.



millennialist.

Irenaeus described an anti-Montanist group whose staunch antagonism toward Montanism was so ardent that they were willing to sacrifice the Johannine writings if this would defeat the Montanist movement.<sup>247</sup> Irenaeus seems to suggest that the extreme views of these Montanist prophets who misinterpreted or misapplied passages from the Johannine corpus led some parties in the Church to reject these books altogether. He argued vigorously for the four-fold gospel canon, using the imagery from Revelation of the four animals around the throne of God (chapter 4) and assigned a gospel to each one, which also suggests that Revelation enjoyed more universal acceptance than the four gospels.

Although Irenaeus only mentions the anti-Montanist rejection of the Fourth Gospel because of its references to the Paraclete, anti-Montanists would also have rejected the Apocalypse as well. Stonehouse observes that the grounds for rejecting the Apocalypse would not have been the prophetic character of the books, because this would not sufficiently undermine the authority of the Apocalypse. They would have to attack its *apostolic* status. But Stonehouse also concludes that this anti-Montanist group must not have been very influential because Irenaeus only mentions them incidentally, and we do not know of a single work which contains their arguments nor a single writer who rejected the Johannine writings at that time.<sup>248</sup>

Irenaeus managed to preserve respect for the authority of the Johannine writings and maintain a careful balance between support for Christian prophecy and the denial of Montanist claims. Those who followed after him in combating Montanism would not draw such careful distinctions. Their extreme positions would have serious repercussions for the future of the Apocalypse.

#### 2.5.4 Gaius

Gaius, a presbyter, was a member of the church at Rome while Zephyrinus was bishop of Rome in the early third century (199-217). Gaius wrote a dialogue which recorded arguments he used in a dispute with a Montanist leader, Proclus.<sup>249</sup> Eusebius had access to

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<sup>247</sup> *Heres.* 3.11.9.

<sup>248</sup> Stonehouse, 71.

<sup>249</sup> *EH.* 2:25.6 and 3:28.1.

this document and quoted from it:

But Cerinthus also, by means of revelations which he pretends were written by a great apostle, brings before us marvelous things which he falsely claims were shown him by angels; and he says that after the resurrection the kingdom of Christ will be set up on earth, and that the flesh dwelling in Jerusalem will again be subject to desires and pleasures. And being an enemy of the Scriptures of God, he asserts, with the purpose of deceiving men, that there is to be a period of a thousand years for marriage festivals.<sup>250</sup>

Eusebius regarded Gaius highly and presented him as a champion of orthodoxy against the materialist chiliasm of the Montanists.<sup>251</sup> Gaius' primary stratagem was to undercut the authority of the Apocalypse by ascribing it to a heretic and enemy of John, Cerinthus. This single allegation would have a wide-ranging effect upon the future of the Apocalypse.

Gaius attacked the chiliastic claims of the Montanists, both the thousand year reign of Christ and the binding of Satan. Gaius said that this could not be a future event because Satan had already been bound by Christ. Gaius ridiculed the idea of a post-resurrection kingdom of Christ on earth, with a wedding feast lasting for a thousand years and people in Jerusalem living as slaves to lusts and pleasures.<sup>252</sup> Gaius endeavored to demonstrate that numerous statements in the Apocalypse contradicted the synoptic gospels and the epistles of Paul.<sup>253</sup> A favorite objection was that the Apocalypse describes in detail the things which shall precede the coming of the end of the world, whereas the gospels and Paul emphasize the sudden and unexpected nature of the Parousia.<sup>254</sup> Epiphanius also relates that Gaius quoted from various parts of the Apocalypse simply to depict it as absurd and ridiculous.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> E.H. 3.28.2 and 3.31.4. See also Robert Grant, *Heresy and Criticism: The Search for Authenticity in Early Christian Literature*, (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1993), 97-98.

<sup>251</sup> E.H. 2.25.6 and 3.28.1.

<sup>252</sup> E.H. 3.28.2.

<sup>253</sup> Stonehouse, 94-95. Note that this argument presumes that these writings represent universally accepted Christian Scriptures.

<sup>254</sup> Compare Rev. 8:8 and 12 to 1 Thess. 5:2f and Matt. 24:29-30, 36 and 44.

<sup>255</sup> Epiphanius *Panarion* 51.3.1-2, 51.3.5, 51.17.11-18.1, 51.4.5-10, 51.32.2 and 51.34.2.

Most of Gaius' dialogue was lost, however some fragments were preserved in the Syriac Apocalypse commentary of Dionysios Bar Salibi, a twelfth century Jacobite bishop. Bar Salibi quotes from a lost work by Hippolytus against Gaius and his criticisms of the Johannine writings. Prior to the nineteenth century discovery of this commentary, we were only aware of Gaius' attacks on the Apocalypse through the comments of Eusebius. But fragments preserved in Bar Salibi suggest that in the same dispute Gaius denied the authority of the Fourth Gospel and ascribed it to Cerinthus also.<sup>256</sup> For those who wished to uphold the dignity and respect for the apostle John, and yet discredit the writings attributed to him along with all of the elements that they deemed offensive or heretical, nothing could be more expedient than to attribute those writings to Cerinthus.

Since Eusebius affirmed Gaius' orthodoxy and attested that he was respected in the Roman Church, it might seem inconceivable that Gaius would have rejected the Fourth Gospel as false. But a serious controversy had arisen in the second century between the Roman Church and the Churches of Asia over the date of Pascha. Even though a compromise was reached to keep the peace, we can hardly assume that within the space of a few decades everyone in Rome had unquestionably accepted Gospel of John. Its subsequent use by the Montanists may have only confirmed earlier Roman suspicions of its specious origins.

### 2.5.5 A Culture Shift: Loss of the Sitz-im-Leben.

A final observation regarding an unstated and very basic reason why the Apocalypse would have encountered opposition as the Church moved into the third century was that it outgrew its original Sitz-im-Leben. Undoubtedly, the author of the Apocalypse wrote to an audience whom he must have been certain would understand the meaning behind the extraordinary symbols which characterize the book. Clearly, the book was intended primarily for a Jewish-Christian audience or at least an audience thoroughly seeped in the Old Testament prophets and the apocalyptic genre so popular during the two hundred years

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<sup>256</sup> "Hippolytus of Rome says that a certain man by the name of Gaius appeared, who said that the Gospel was not of John nor the Apocalypse, but that they are of the heretic Cerinthus. And against this Gaius, the blessed Hippolytus protested and proved that the teaching of John in the gospel and in the Apocalypse is different from that of Cerinthus." Dionysios Bar Salibi *On the Apocalypse*, trans. I Sedlacek, *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Scriptores Syri*, vol. 101 (Rome: de Luigi, 1910), 4.

before and after the Common Era.<sup>257</sup> As time passed, the Church, including the Jewish-Christian communities in Asia Minor, became overwhelmingly gentile, and apocalyptic writing found less favor. The original message and meanings of the various images and symbols were forgotten. With the passage of time, and with the spread of the book to other geographical areas where the faithful neither shared nor understood the culture of apocalyptic thought, the Book of Revelation became increasingly incomprehensible.<sup>258</sup>

This inevitable change in Sitz-im-Leben would leave the Apocalypse a mystery to subsequent generations. A second and related factor was the deepening animosity between the Jewish and Christian communities as the Church progressed historically. These communities engaged in serious polemic debates that spanned centuries. The Christians appropriated the Jewish Scriptures and used them to support their claims of a Messiah whom the Jews rejected as a blasphemous false prophet. The Christians claimed to be the New Israel, evidenced in their mind by the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem and by the Jewish defeat in the Bar Kochba Rebellion. The Jews were no longer favored by God, Christians claimed. Jews responded that Jesus was the product of an illegitimate birth, that he performed magic tricks rather than miracles, that the Septuagint, on which Christians relied, was a faulty translation and that Christians neither correctly understood nor correctly interpreted the Hebrew Bible. The rhetoric flew, as evidenced by such writings as *Dialogue with Trypho*, with Christians bolstering their claims and Jews aggressively responding. The continuing illegal status of Christianity often gave Jews a political and legal advantage. Jews at times prompted or aided in the persecution of Christians. Eventually, whatever Judaic elements originally present in the Church that had not been Christianized became identified with Judaism, and were explicitly rejected by the Church. Jewish-Christian practices came to be identified with heresy and canons were passed forbidding Judaic practices. By the fourth

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<sup>257</sup> Discussing the criteria for the canon's selection process, Lee Martin McDonald remarks that "[I]t appears that literature that was no longer deemed relevant to the church's needs, even though it may have been considered pertinent at an earlier time, was eliminated from consideration." "Identifying Scripture and Canon in the Early Church: The Criteria Question," in *The Canon Debate*, eds. Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 434. This observation supports the conclusion expressed later in this chapter and in chapter 7 that the experience of persecution during the Islamic era contributed in no small part to the eventual universal acceptance of Revelation by the Orthodox Church.

<sup>258</sup> Harry Gamble underscores the problem created by inability to effectively interpret a text. "The Apocalypse furnishes perhaps the clearest instance of the interplay between the authority and use of writings and problems of interpretation..." "The New Testament Canon: Recent Research and the Status Quaestionis," in *The Canon Debate*, 289.

century we also see sermons preached by persons such as Chrysostom against Judaizing tendencies and against Christian participation in Jewish festivals. In such a climate, it is hardly surprising that the Jewish flavor of the Apocalypse, the meaning of its imagery having been forgotten over the generations, would contribute to its rejection. The lack of understanding of and appreciation for the apocalyptic genre and its original historical context could only impede Revelation's acceptance into the canon.

## 2.6 The Revelation of John in the Third Century: A Mixed Reception

The situation began to change for the Book of Revelation in the third century. Charles Hill concludes with "no hesitation" that "the Johannine works were indeed a 'corpus' throughout the second century... [T]hese books existed as a definite conceptual corpus, for writers use them as if they belong together and emanated from a single, authoritative source."<sup>259</sup> Hill remarks that the Apocalypse was the first book whose "traditional authorship and standing in the Church came under question"<sup>260</sup> and this occurred in the third century.

### 2.6.1 Hippolytus

A very prolific writer of the early Church,<sup>261</sup> Hippolytus was the last Christian author in Rome to write in Greek. He was a priest in Rome during the early third century, where Origen met him during his travels. Because of his knowledge of Greek religion and philosophy, as well as the Eastern style of his expression and doctrine, he may have come to Rome from the East. He later became an anti-pope but the schism was repaired before he died and he was reconciled to the Church.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> *Johannine Corpus*, 461.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>261</sup> More than forty works.

<sup>262</sup> F.L. Cross, ed. "Hippolytus," in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, revised, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.)

Hippolytus was the first to offer exegesis of a text for its own sake, not for strictly catechetical, doctrinal or apologetic purposes.<sup>263</sup> He may not have undertaken the interpretation of entire books, but he did tackle large passages. According to Photios,<sup>264</sup> Hippolytus was a disciple of Irenaeus, so it is not surprising that his canon resembled that of Irenaeus.<sup>265</sup> Andrew of Caesarea cites Hippolytus as an authority on the Apocalypse. Hippolytus wrote a treatise entitled *On Christ and Antichrist* (c. 200), a *Commentary on Daniel* (c. 204), and a work now lost, *On the Gospel of John and the Apocalypse*.<sup>266</sup> He considered the apostle John to be the author of Revelation, and believed it possessed absolute authority along with other Scriptures. He introduced quotes from Revelation alongside Daniel and Isaiah as equal Scriptures, calls John “apostle and disciple”<sup>267</sup> and believed that the Apocalypse is inspired by the Holy Spirit.<sup>268</sup>

Hippolytus responded to Gaius’ attacks on the Fourth Gospel and his ascription of it to Cerinthus in his famous treatise, *Heads Against Gaius*,<sup>269</sup> of which five fragments have been preserved by Dionysios Bar Salibi.<sup>270</sup> Hippolytus skillfully demonstrated that it was inconceivable that Cerinthus could have written these works since his teachings were so different from John’s. He also made a careful comparison of the reputed contradictions between the synoptics, John’s Gospel and the Apocalypse. Hippolytus also corrected Gaius’ literal interpretation of Apocalypse with a non-literal and anti-chiliastic interpretation, and showed that the signs of the end times described in the Apocalypse do not contradict the rest of Scripture.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>263</sup> Manlio Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, 27.

<sup>264</sup> *Bibl. cod.* 121, citing a work of Hippolytus no longer extant.

<sup>265</sup> His canon consisted of twenty two books: four gospels, thirteen epistles of Paul (not including Hebrews) Acts of the Apostles, three catholic epistles (1 and 2 John, 1 Peter) and the Revelation of John. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 149-51.

<sup>266</sup> Pierre Nautin, “Hippolytus,” *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, (2 vols.) ed. Angelo Di Berardino, trans. Adrian Walford (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

<sup>267</sup> *Chr. and Ant.* 36.

<sup>268</sup> *Chr. and Ant.* 48.

<sup>269</sup> Or “Chapters against Gaius.”

<sup>270</sup> Dionysios Bar Salibi, *On the Apocalypse*. See fn 256 above.

## 2.6.2 Clement of Alexandria

Not until Clement of Alexandria do we have the first opportunity to learn something regarding the use of the Apocalypse in the Alexandrian Church. Clement wrote around 200 C.E., and just as we have seen throughout the East at this point, he too considered the Apocalypse to be Scripture written by the apostle John. He only knew of one John in Ephesus and relates certain traditions about the apostle.<sup>272</sup> But although Clement considered Revelation apostolic and scriptural, his canon was very wide and his canonical standards rather loose. Clement did not apply clear definitions, distinctions or uniform terms for Scripture and apostolicity. It certainly seems that for Clement, as with so many of his era, an exact or official collection of Christian Scriptures was not essential.<sup>273</sup>

Clement also referred to Barnabas and Clement of Rome<sup>274</sup> as “apostles.”<sup>275</sup> He recognized only four gospels as authoritative, yet he quoted from others. He accepted *Shepherd* as genuine, but did not refer to it as apostolic.<sup>276</sup> Clement was particularly fond of *Shepherd*, which he quoted far more frequently than Apocalypse of John,<sup>277</sup> but this only

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<sup>271</sup> For example, Christ spoke of great tribulations which would occur at the end times and cosmological signs, and the trials in the Apocalypse are similar to the plagues of Egypt in the time of Moses. See Stonehouse, 105-106.

<sup>272</sup> Such as John’s responsibility for the Church of Ephesus and that he lived until the time of Trajan. *Who is the Rich Man that is Saved?* 42. This tradition was also preserved by Eusebius, *E.H.* 3.23.1-19.

<sup>273</sup> In addition to most of our present canon, Clement cited as authoritative the *Shepherd of Hermas*, *Epistle of Barnabas*, *Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians*, *Gospel of the Hebrews*, *Gospel of the Egyptians*, *Preaching of Peter*, *Apocalypse of Peter*, and the *Didache*. In addition, he cited other works, but it is unclear whether he considered them Scripture, including the *Protoevangelium of James*, *Acts of John* and *Acts of Paul*. He also quoted a number of maxims otherwise unknown to us and which cannot be identified. Judging by his citations, those books of our present New Testament Scriptures which were most important to Clement were the four gospels, Paul’s epistles (including Hebrews), Jude, 1 John and 1 Peter. Acts of Apostles and Revelation seem comparatively less important. Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 17-8. There is also no hint of chiliasm in Clement’s writings. Stonehouse, 117.

<sup>274</sup> The author of 1 Clement.

<sup>275</sup> *Miscellanies* 4.17, 2.6. Stonehouse, 111.

<sup>276</sup> Stonehouse, 115.

<sup>277</sup> By this time *Shepherd* had fallen out of favor in the West because of the problem with Montanism, which had made the Church suspicious of contemporary Christian prophecy. See McDonald, “Identifying Scripture and Canon,” 433, Milavec, *The Didache*, 489, and Bonneau, *Prophétisme*, 215-16.

supports the argument that he considered Revelation genuinely apostolic and canonical, since he never referred to *Shepherd* in that manner, even though he seems to prefer it.<sup>278</sup>

But does Clement place *post*-apostolic writings, such as *1 Clement* and *Barnabas*, on equal footing with apostolic writings? No. He also considers apostolic writings as authority equivalent to the Old Testament but he distinguishes between the writings of the actual apostles and those from a later age, such as *Clement* and *Barnabas*. Post-apostolic tradition is of lower authority.<sup>279</sup> On a few occasions, he refers to Christian Scriptures as the “New Testament”<sup>280</sup> but also uses the designation “Gospel and Apostles” as a counterpart to the “Law and Prophets.”<sup>281</sup> Clement provides a classic example of the status of the canon as it existed at this point in Church history: a collection of books, well over thirty, which even form a “new covenant,” but the collection had no boundaries and no clear principles to govern which books belonged to it.<sup>282</sup>

### 2.6.3 Origen

Origen, (185-254) the shining star of the Alexandrian school, raised the level of Scripture scholarship to new heights, writing commentaries on nearly every book of the Bible. He represented Alexandrian ideas in many respects, but perhaps due to his wide travels and extensive education, he ascribed to a much tighter canon than did his teacher, Clement. Farmer believes that the eventual canon was “leaner,” closer to the Roman canon rather than Clement’s extremely wide canon, because of Roman influence on Origen.<sup>283</sup> Origen went to Rome and met Hippolytus, whose canon was that of his teacher, Irenaeus. Roman influence on Origen is questionable, since despite the influence of Hippolytus or

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<sup>278</sup> See Stonehouse, 115-16.

<sup>279</sup> Stonehouse, 113-14.

<sup>280</sup> *Miscellanies* 5.13.

<sup>281</sup> *Miscellanies* 5.5.

<sup>282</sup> Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 28.

<sup>283</sup> Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 22.



Rome, Origen accepted Hebrews when the Roman Church at that time did not.<sup>284</sup> Origen's wide travels allowed him to observe Scripture usage in churches throughout the East.

During Origen's time, the New Testament canon still had not been fixed. Some books were disputed, but the Church at least recognized that a collection of Christian Scripture existed with an authority equal to that of the Old Testament. Among the developments we see arise during the mid-third century is the appearance of actual canonical lists and explicit discussions on the subject of the canon, including which books ought to be considered Scripture and the reasons for their inclusion or exclusion. Origen disliked Clement's confused and indiscriminate use of Christian texts and is one of the first ecclesiastical writers to provide us with an actual list, a "canon" in the true sense of the word: a list of books recognized as Scripture. While Clement and the Alexandrian faithful were inclined to accept everything edifying as inspired, Origen was beginning to adopt a more analytical and critical attitude toward the canon, possibly after his visit to Rome and his acquaintance with Hippolytus.<sup>285</sup> Origen seems to divide Christian Scriptures into two groups: acknowledged by all (ὁμολογούμενα), and those not universally acknowledged as genuine (οὐ πάντες φασὶν γνησίους), that is, of disputed authorship.<sup>286</sup> Origen declared that the Old Testament has twenty two books,<sup>287</sup> the same in number as the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The New

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<sup>284</sup> Farmer believes that Origen's acceptance of Hebrews against the opinions of Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Gaius, Cyprian and Novatian, is key to showing that Origen's concern with martyrdom helped shape the canon and whether a book would be accepted as "apostolic." Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 23. However, despite a growing consensus that Hebrews was not Pauline, it is more likely that Hebrews was eventually accepted in the West because it was overwhelmingly accepted in the East. In spite of the controversy over authorship, it was difficult to deny the inspiration of Hebrews, a brilliant and extremely important theological treatise. Farmer is also incorrect because the writers he cites as Origen's predecessors, whom Farmer believes Origen disregarded in favor of his own opinion about Hebrews, were Western clerics, with the exception of Ignatius, who can easily be discounted because of the early date, and Polycarp, about whom we do not have enough information and whom, as we have already seen, did not even quote the Gospel of John which it is very likely that he accepted. Thus, Origen's acceptance of Hebrews does not prove Farmer's "martyr's canon" theory since Origen was following the pattern already existing in the East which accepted Hebrews. Eventually, the weight of opinion from influential Eastern thinkers and important apostolic sees tipped the scales in favor of Hebrews for the West. Augustine and Jerome's acceptance of it, largely because it had such a long and widespread history of Eastern approval, were the final factor leading to its Western acceptance. Jerome lists it in his canonical list (*Ep. 53 to Paulinus*), and Augustine lists it in his canon (*On Christian Teaching* 2.8.13).

<sup>285</sup> F.F. Bruce believes that while Origen lived in Alexandria he embraced a wider canon, but after moving to Caesarea he showed greater reserve toward those books which were not accepted there. *Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1988), 192. Metzger agrees that Origen became more discerning over time. As his scholarship and reputation grew, his opinions grew sharper and more analytical. Metzger, *Canon*, 141.

<sup>286</sup> *E.H.* 6.25.8-10.

Testament also has twenty two books which are acknowledged *by all*: four gospels,<sup>288</sup> fourteen letters of Paul,<sup>289</sup> Acts of the Apostles, 1 Peter and 1 John and the Revelation of John. This amounted to twenty-two universally “acknowledged” books. Eusebius recorded Origen’s opinions about the Johannine corpus made in his commentary on the gospel of John. Origen states that John wrote the gospel, the Apocalypse, an epistle, and maybe two others, although some say those are not genuine.<sup>290</sup> The comment indicates that acceptance of the Apocalypse of John was universal at that point in the third century.

On a personal level, Origen himself accepted other books as scriptural which were not “acknowledged” by all Christians, including James, 3 John, 2 Peter and *Barnabas*. Origen also accepted *Shepherd*, but noted that many other Christians did not.<sup>291</sup> Origen’s preference, then, seems to have been for a canon of twenty-nine books: four gospels, Acts, fourteen Pauline epistles, eight catholic epistles, (James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3, John, Jude, *Barnabas*), the Revelation of John and *Shepherd of Hermas*. This was the first time that a Christian writer is on record as accepting James and 2 Peter as part of his New Testament canon.<sup>292</sup>

The books which are not on Origen’s “acknowledged” list are those on his “disputed” list. Thus, Origen’s “disputed” list contains books which *he* accepts, but *others* reject. Considering Origen’s travels, contacts and education, which certainly exposed him to an

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<sup>287</sup> He used the Jewish numbering. Jews counted their books differently, combining smaller books into a single scroll which they counted as a single book. Jews still number their canon as twenty two books but Christians do not, even if they accept the same exact content for their Old Testament canon, as Protestants generally do.

<sup>288</sup> *Hom. on Luke* 1. See also Eusebius’ quote to this effect from Origen’s *Comm. on Matt.* in *E.H.* 4.25.3ff. Origen rejected all but the four original gospels, those approved by the Church, a much stronger stance than that taken by Clement. He lists those gospels widely rejected as heretical (*Hom. on Luke* 1) but also sometimes quoted from other, non-canonical gospels, which presumably contained nothing unorthodox, but which were not universally acknowledged within the Church. Origen also frequently quotes the unwritten sayings or *logia* of Jesus. See Metzger, *Canon*, 136-41.

<sup>289</sup> It is interesting that Origen lists Hebrews as acknowledged by all despite its lack of acceptance in the West. Origen is very aware of the problems inherent in attributing Hebrews to Paul, but he is willing to accept Hebrews because of its important theological content, even if not Pauline. *E.H.* 6.25.11-14. See fn 284 above.

<sup>290</sup> *E.H.* 6.25.7, 9-10.

<sup>291</sup> In addition to this famous list preserved by Eusebius, elsewhere Origen divides the books into three groups: genuine (universally accepted), false (accepted by none but heretics) and “mixed” (accepted by some, but not by all). *Comm. on John* 13.17.

<sup>292</sup> *E.H.* 6.25.8. The famous Codex Sinaiticus contains the exact same canon as that apparently held by Origen. Following the Revelation of John on the list come *Shepherd of Hermas* and *Epistle of Barnabas*. A note at the end of Sinaiticus says that its text has been compared with a manuscript in the famous library at Caesarea which had been established there in the later years of the third century by Pamphilus, an admirer of Origen.

extensive range of opinions, it is surprising and significant that Revelation is not on the disputed list but on the list of books accepted by "all." It is strong evidence that Revelation, even into the middle of the third century enjoyed overwhelming acceptance as Scripture, including in the East. It would appear that the anti-Montanists, Gaius and the Alogoi's efforts to discredit Johannine literature had been ineffective,<sup>293</sup> but even if the Gospel of John was safe, Revelation's place in the canon was not secure yet.

In most of his writings, Origen never expressed the slightest doubt that the author of both the gospel of John and Revelation is the apostle John, and Origen's extant works contain more than one hundred fifty references or allusions to Revelation.<sup>294</sup> Apostolicity is a clear criterion for canonicity for Origen since he repeatedly identifies the Apocalypse with the apostle John. In *Contra Celsum*, he remarked that Christian prophets expressed the loftiest thoughts but they were privy to even deeper mysteries which they did not express in words. Origen gave examples from the Old and New Testaments, making direct references to Revelation, and placing the mysteries of the Apocalypse on par with revelations made to Ezekiel, Paul, and to the Twelve in their private instruction directly from Jesus.<sup>295</sup>

Chiliasm was popular in times of persecution, but had largely fallen out of favor by this period, especially its most literal interpretation. Although Origen and Hippolytus both faced significant persecution, they did not share in the literal eschatological expectations of the chiliasts. In fact, Origen's allegorical interpretation of the millennium was exactly what the Church needed to respond to the fleshy and sensual interpretations promoted by the

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<sup>293</sup> It may be that the Alogoi themselves came to be considered not orthodox, especially on the strength of the reputations of Irenaeus and Epiphanius, who identified the Alogoi with heresy because of their rejection of John's gospel, particularly after Irenaeus had firmly established the idea that God had pre-determined that there would be four gospels.

<sup>294</sup> Stonehouse, 118. Robert Grant believes, however, that Origen's strong acceptance of the Apocalypse gave way at the end of his life to a rejection of it as non-apostolic, based on the opinion of Dionysios, his student. Grant contrasts Origen's firm conviction as to the apostolic authorship of the Apocalypse through out most of his life with what Grant believes was a hesitancy later in life. "In his treatise *On the Pascha*, written about twenty five years later, he referred to 'the Apocalypse attributed to John' and in a list of apostolic works written around the same time, he ascribed only the Gospel and epistles to John." Grant, *Heresy and Criticism*, 99. Grant cites O. Guraud and P. Nautin, *Origène Sur la Pâque* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1979), 172, *Hom. on Joshua 7.1*, and *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte 7*, 328. Grant is convinced of a change in Origen's position on the Apocalypse and attributes it to the influence of Dionysios of Alexandria. But we have no explicit statement from Origen in this regard, possibly because Revelation remained widely accepted, or as Origen would have said, "acknowledged."

<sup>295</sup> *Against Celsum* 6.6. Rev. 10:4, 9.

chiliasts from their literal interpretation of Revelation 21.<sup>296</sup> Origen's allegorical interpretation of Revelation created far fewer difficulties than a literal or historical approach. Origen disputed the earthly interpretation of the millennium. The eating and drinking represented in the kingdom is spiritual bread, the Bread of Life. The Sabbath rest is when all will keep festival with God.<sup>297</sup> Origen's spiritual interpretation directly opposed those who expected a materialistic kingdom and he left no room for chiliasm,<sup>298</sup> a belief which is based largely on Revelation, even though the book does not emphasize a fleshy existence. Origen saved Revelation's place in the canon by offering an alternative, spiritual interpretation, from which Andrew of Caesarea would later, even if indirectly, benefit.

Origen had planned to give a full exposition of the Apocalypse. Apparently, this plan was never fulfilled. If he had completed such a work it has since been lost.<sup>299</sup> In some respects Origen rendered a great service to the Church by championing the allegorical method of interpretation for Revelation, even if he never composed a commentary on the book. It would seem obvious that a book so rich in symbolism would require allegorical interpretation. Yet many Christians interpreted Revelation quite literally, and to a great degree this contributed to its decline in reputation. While the allegorical method could often be capricious, not to mention unsatisfactory from a historical perspective, such a method provided a valid starting point for a thoughtful, intelligent interpretation of Revelation and an alternative to literalism. But the literal interpretation of the Apocalypse did not disappear altogether, as we shall see below under our discussion of Dionysios of Alexandria who vigorously opposed its literal interpretation.

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<sup>296</sup> Robert Grant observes that the early Church spiritualized Christian eschatology when "the temporal categories of eschatology were replaced by the categories of what one might call "spiritual space" under Middle Platonic influence, as seen in Clement of Alexandria and Origen. The alternative methodology, anticipated in people like Melito of Sardis and seen in writers such as Eusebius, would identify Christian eschatology with the new Christian empire in which "the victory of the Church was clearly a close approximation to the coming of God's reign." Robert Grant, *Augustus to Constantine: the Rise and Triumph of Christianity in the Roman World* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990), 283.

<sup>297</sup> *Against Celsus* 6.61.2.

<sup>298</sup> Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation*, 45.

<sup>299</sup> Joseph Kelly believes it is a real possibility that Origen delivered twelve homilies on the Apocalypse based on a reference to such a work in the prologue of an anonymous Medieval Irish commentary on the Apocalypse. See Kelly, "Early Medieval Evidence for Twelve Homilies by Origen on the Apocalypse," *Vigiliae Christianae* 39 (1985) 273-279, 278.

## 2.6.4 Dionysios of Alexandria

Dionysios, who became the bishop of Alexandria in 248, had been a pupil of Origen. The most influential man in Egypt until his death in 264, he came to be known as “Dionysios the Great.” Andrew of Caesarea refers to a Dionysios “the Great” in his commentary but it is unlikely that he referring to this Dionysios, the bishop of Alexandria.<sup>300</sup>

Origen’s allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures characterized the viewpoint of the Church of Alexandria. The spiritualized interpretation of end-time prophecies engendered great criticism among those whose chiliastic enthusiasm required a literal interpretation of eschatological biblical texts. Dionysios, in agreement with his teacher Origen, also interpreted such prophecies spiritually and hence faced numerous attacks for his views. Among those critics of allegory who insisted upon a literal interpretation of the Apocalypse, was an Egyptian bishop, Nepos of Arsinoe. Nepos wrote a treatise called *Refutation of the Allegorists*, defending a literal exegesis of the prophetic writings of the Church especially the Apocalypse. The debate over a literal versus an allegorical interpretation caused great dissension in the Church. Dionysios decided to visit Nepos for a three-day conference to discuss the literal interpretation of prophecy. According to Eusebius, Dionysios convinced the conference participants that the literal interpretation of eschatological prophecy was untenable and the bishop succeeded in achieving agreement and harmony.<sup>301</sup>

Dionysios made an important contribution by persuading Nepos that a literal interpretation of eschatological prophecies was erroneous. However he is also noteworthy in the history of the Apocalypse in the Eastern Church for a very different reason. Except for Gaius, the Alogoi, and other anti-Montanists, Dionysios may be the only person prior to the fourth century to explicitly question whether the apostle John was in fact the author of Revelation. Eusebius tells us that Dionysios composed a treatise on chiliasm, *On Promises*, in which he discussed the Revelation of John.<sup>302</sup> Dionysios analyzed the criticisms of

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<sup>300</sup> Andrew mentions Dionysios by name on four occasions: *Chp. 10, Text 52, Comm. 63; Chp. 28, Text 107, Comm. 115; Chp. 45, Text 162, Comm. 160 and Chp. 68, Text 253, Comm. 232*. It would be quite ironic if Andrew believed he was quoting Dionysios of Alexandria when in fact he quotes Pseudo-Dionysios, since Dionysios of Alexandria probably did not acknowledge Revelation as Scripture at all. But it is unlikely that Andrew has confused them. See *Comm. 63, fn 274*.

<sup>301</sup> *E.H. 7.24.6ff.*

Revelation. He engaged in a lengthy analysis comparing the language and style of the gospel, epistle and Apocalypse of John, and concluded that the differences are such that the books could not have been written by the same individual. The theology is too different from that of Cerinthus so he concluded, against Gaius, that the book could not have been written by Cerinthus.<sup>303</sup> But Dionysios also raised doubts whether it had been penned by the apostle John. Dionysios decided that he could not reject Revelation outright because “many of the brethren take it seriously.” Revelation has a deep and mystical meaning which should not be taken literally, Dionysios mused, but “I suppose that there is a hidden and more wonderful meaning in each part, and accept its meaning as greater than my own comprehension....”<sup>304</sup>

So while Dionysios declined to judge the meaning of its incomprehensible mysteries and refrained from rejecting the book outright, he concluded that due to the great differences in language and style between the two books, Revelation could not have been written by the author of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>305</sup> Dionysios accepted that the author had some kind of a revelation, that he prophesied, and that his name was John. He reported, rather casually, as if to plant a seed of doubt, that he had heard that in Asia there were two monuments inscribed with the name “John.” Therefore, he concluded that the author of Revelation must have been this “other” John.<sup>306</sup> Dionysios’ opinion took root in the Church through Eusebius, even though it contradicted the uninterrupted and overwhelming early tradition of the Church.<sup>307</sup>

Stonehouse observes:

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<sup>302</sup> E.H. 7.24.3.

<sup>303</sup> Grant writes that Dionysios engaged in this refutation of Gaius and showed a willingness to accept the Book of Revelation because he wanted to show that he was moderate in his views. *Heresy and Criticism*, 105. Or was Dionysios an unprincipled opportunist? Grant observes about Dionysios: “He was quite willing, however to use the Apocalypse for an imperial eschatology of his own. He refers to Rev. 13:5 (‘to him there was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months’) to the emperor Valerian, persecutor from 257 to 260.” Grant, *Heresy and Criticism*, 105.

<sup>304</sup> E.H. 7.25.4. It seems that Dionysios would be prepared to reject Revelation outright were it not for the overwhelming acceptance it enjoyed at this time. He may also be acting prudently and tactfully as a bishop. Not wishing to inflame opinion, he expressed a weak acceptance of the book, while at the same time planting seeds of doubt regarding its authorship. He offered the “second John” as a possible author, undermining Revelation’s long-standing recognition as apostolic.

<sup>305</sup> E.H. 7.25:7-15. Grant, *Heresy and Criticism*, 104ff; Stonehouse, 125; Goodspeed, 99.

<sup>306</sup> E.H. 7.25.16.

<sup>307</sup> Goodspeed notes that the Revelation of John “lost ground” in the East since Origen’s time, and also cites the criticism of Dionysios the Great with regard to growing doubts about its apostolic authorship. Goodspeed, 102.

On the supposition that there were two Johns, we have the extraordinary, and not satisfactorily accounted for phenomenon that 'no trace of such a person appears until the beginning of the fourth century, when Eusebius calls attention to the significance of Papias' language, though Papias' book had been well known through the centuries, when the Alogoi and others were seeking a non-apostolic authorship of the Johannine Apocalypse and Dionysios was unable to find any evidence of a second John in Asia to whom to attribute it, except the two tombs at Ephesus.'<sup>308</sup>

Dionysios himself had no real evidence of a second John in Asia and only related vague hearsay of two tombs at Ephesus, as though no one else could possibly have lived in Ephesus during the intervening 150 years and have had the name John. Even if there were a second tomb bearing the name "John," absolutely nothing links it to the Apocalypse or even to any Church leader. Dionysios had no interest in weighing the evidence, since his clear motivation was to discredit Revelation. Dionysios did not mention the elements in common between the gospel and the Apocalypse or the long tradition of apostolic authorship. He failed to take into account the difference in content of book and circumstances of composition as contributing to the difference in expression. His only external evidence was the reported existence of two memorials to John in Ephesus, but that, along with the differences in style between the gospel and the Apocalypse, became enough.

In spite of his efforts to appear objective, Dionysios' criticisms are motivated by an effort to discredit chiliasm by discrediting the Apocalypse upon which chiliasm depended. If chiliasm was to be defeated, the Apocalypse's position in the canon would have to be undermined. But Revelation already had a secure position in the Church, so discrediting it was difficult to accomplish. Charles Hill notes that although Dionysios continued "to treat the Apocalypse as inspired" and refused to reject it completely, "he effectively helped to loosen it from its place in a conceptual Johannine corpus and opened the door for its rejection by some."<sup>309</sup> Stonehouse conjectures that Dionysios secretly believed that the Apocalypse had no place in the canon, but knowing its long history of acceptance in the Church he introduced doubts as to its apostolic authorship which he hoped would lead to its rejection.

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<sup>308</sup> Stonehouse, 44, citing Isbon Thaddeus Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*, (New York: MacMillan, 1919), 350. Beckwith, nonetheless believed that Papias' language implies two Johns.

<sup>309</sup> *Johannine Corpus*, 462.



But this in itself is testimony to the secure position of Revelation still enjoyed in the Eastern canon at this time. Stonehouse effectively analyzes Dionysios' actions and motivation:

And indeed, he would not want anyone to think that he would care to have it removed from the Canon, least of all that his aim in writing was to refute its claim to divine origin. So he talks very piously of a deeper sense, which he has not been able to arrive at. This is to say the least surprising from one who has been trained by Origen, and had defended the allegorical method of interpretation over against the literal exegesis of Nepos. In all his argument he is at odds with himself. He insists throughout that the writer was holy, inspired, saw a revelation, received knowledge and prophecy, but at the same time his whole aim was to weaken the regard for it as an authority by showing that it was non-apostolic and therefore less worthy of regard. In other words, no matter how much he affirms that his remarks have nothing to do with the canonicity of the *Apocalypse*, he shows that this is his first concern.<sup>310</sup>

The Codex Claromontanus, a Latin translation of an Alexandrian catalogue of Sacred Scripture, which some believe is dated approximately 50 years after the era of Dionysios, listed Revelation in its canon.<sup>311</sup> Even if the date of Claromontanus is significantly later, as some suggest, nonetheless, it shows that the Alexandrian Church was not particularly influenced by Dionysios' opinion on the Apocalypse, which did little to dampen Alexandrian support for the book since, as we will see below, Revelation was accepted by later Alexandrian figures, such as Athanasius the Great and Cyril. However, Dionysios was successful in influencing opinion in the East overall, since his analysis influenced Eusebius who later turned popular opinion against the book of Revelation.

## 2.7 The Fourth Century: Erosion of Support

Continued doubt and confusion as to the authority of certain books typified the canonical question during the fourth century, especially in the case of the catholic epistles and Revelation. Hoping to rectify this unacceptable situation, numerous leading churchmen

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<sup>310</sup> Stonehouse, 127-28. Later we will see Eusebius place Revelation on two very divergent lists for this same reason: he cannot deny that it possesses near uniform acceptance, but he would prefer to have it rejected and hopes that others will reject it as spurious.

<sup>311</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 230.



produced lists of sacred Scripture, including Gregory of Nazianzus, Athanasius of Alexandria, Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius of Salamis, Amphilochios of Iconium and Didymus the Blind. The opinions of earlier thinkers and writers regarding the canon had taken the form of passing comments, offhand statements or casual observations. But fourth century theologians produced lists specifically for the purpose of defining the canon.<sup>312</sup>

Metzger believes that the Donatist controversy also prompted the creation of canonical lists. The “Great Persecution” under Emperor Diocletian (303) included an order to destroy all Christian Scriptures. This contributed to the question of which books were in fact sacred Scripture. To hand over the Scriptures to the authorities for destruction was considered a serious sin. Some Christians found it convenient to relinquish books which probably were not considered sacred but which seemed to satisfy Roman officials. If one turned over the *Shepherd of Hermas* to state officials was it the same offense as if one surrendered a copy of Luke’s gospel?<sup>313</sup>

### 2.7.1 Methodios of Olympus

Methodios of Olympus in Lycia, (martyred in 311), was one of the most important Greek theologians of his day. He forcefully opposed the unorthodox teachings of Origen, but his exegesis was free of the wooden literalism which had characterized Nepos, another opponent of Origen.<sup>314</sup> Methodios frequently cited the Apocalypse as Scripture. Methodios condemned the literalistic interpretation of the millennium and showed no hint of belief in an earthly material kingdom.<sup>315</sup> At times he referred to the author of Revelation simply as “John,” but in other places he introduced a quote from Revelation as the word of an apostle.<sup>316</sup> Methodios disagreed with the literalism of Irenaeus and the future scenario as

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<sup>312</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 209.

<sup>313</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 229ff.

<sup>314</sup> An example of his spiritualizing exegesis is his interpretation of Revelation 13, in which the seven heads of the beast symbolize seven sins, such as gluttony, cowardice, etc. He who conquers gluttony receives the crown of temperance. He who conquers cowardice receives the crown of martyrdom, etc. *Symposium* 8.13.

<sup>315</sup> Stonehouse describes his eschatology on 130-131.

<sup>316</sup> *Symp.* 1.5, 6.5, 7.4 and *On the Resurrection* 2.28.5

outlined by Origen, but shared their high opinion of Revelation and became an important patristic source for Andrew of Caesarea.

### 2.7.2 Eusebius

Eusebius of Caesarea has made an invaluable contribution toward our knowledge of the use and acceptance of the Apocalypse in the ancient Church by preserving ancient witnesses now lost. Eusebius (c. 265-339) was a student and spiritual son of Pamphilus who was himself a student, admirer and defender of Origen. Pamphilus had established a school and library in Caesarea, Palestine, which included many works, especially those of Origen, as well as numerous Bible manuscripts, perhaps the largest collection of any library at the time.<sup>317</sup> Later Eusebius himself became the bishop of Caesarea, Palestine, and he utilized the library and its wealth of documents to write his famous and monumental work, *Ecclesiastical History*.

Up to now, we have only discussed what Eusebius reported concerning the opinions of others regarding the Apocalypse. But what was his personal assessment of its authorship and place in the canon? As we shall see, Eusebius did not accept Revelation and took every opportunity to discredit it, probably because of his aversion to chiliasm.<sup>318</sup> Eusebius preserved portions of Papias' writings and interpreted Papias' statements to conclude that two important Christian men with the name "John" resided in Ephesus.<sup>319</sup> He concluded that the second John, a presbyter, could have been the author of the Apocalypse, if one was disinclined to accept apostolic authorship of the book.<sup>320</sup> He also portrayed Papias in a rather disparaging manner, primarily because of Papias' chiliasm.<sup>321</sup> Eusebius criticized Irenaeus'

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<sup>317</sup> Eusebius, *E.H.* 6.32.3.

<sup>318</sup> *E.H.* 7.25.18-27. Metzger believes that Eusebius had once accepted the Apocalypse but changed his views over the years based on the opinions of Dionysios of Alexandria, and that this change "is reflected in some of the alterations and revisions that he made over the years in his *Church History*." Metzger, *Canon*, 205, fn 38.

<sup>319</sup> *E.H.* 3.39.3-4. Papias lists a number of early Christian leaders from whom he received information about the Lord, but Papias never mentions where they lived. Eusebius conveniently links the "second John" to the second tomb in Ephesus, even though Papias makes no mention of Ephesus.

<sup>320</sup> *E.H.* 3.39.6. See also 7.25.16.

statement supporting the early tradition that Papias was a hearer of the apostle John himself, noting that Papias seemed to be referring to two Johns, the apostle and a presbyter.<sup>322</sup> Furthermore, Eusebius highlights and promotes Dionysios' criticism of the Apocalypse, devoting an entire chapter to it in *Ecclesiastical History*.<sup>323</sup> Eusebius emphasized Dionysios' conclusion that the apostle John could not have written Revelation, based on vocabulary and stylistic differences between the gospel and the Apocalypse, and he is the first to report Dionysios' unsubstantiated comment that two tombs to John could be found in Ephesus. Furthermore, we know that Eusebius heaped praises on the efforts of Gaius because Gaius was an anti-chiliasm, even though Gaius represented the Alogoi and ardently opposed all of the Johannine writings.

Eusebius was keenly interested in the question of the canon, and made an invaluable contribution to our knowledge of its development. As he catalogued and commented upon the writings of various Christian authors Eusebius regularly noted their use of and attitude towards various books of Scripture. But in addition to his review of other Christian authors, Eusebius also explicitly made an assessment of the state of the canon during his specific era in Church history, the first half of the fourth century. In one famous passage he made an attempt, (similar to that of Origen decades earlier), to provide an overview of the attitude of the Church at large toward the various books.<sup>324</sup>

Eusebius' search for some measure of certainty with regard to the canon attests to the absence of a decision or declaration by any authoritative person or body such as a synod, or for that matter even the absence of any informal consensus among local churches or bishops. But as to the status of the Apocalypse, rather than clarifying the situation, Eusebius only further confuses the matter by listing the Apocalypse simultaneously with the acknowledged books *and* with the spurious books. It would be easy to attribute this to the divergent views regarding the Apocalypse. It appears, however, that Eusebius hopes to encourage doubt regarding the Apocalypse by listing it among the spurious books, while being compelled to

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<sup>321</sup> "For he was a man of very little intelligence, as is clear from his books." *E.H.* 3.39.12-13. *Eusebius, The Ecclesiastical History*, (2 vols.) vol. I trans. Kirsopp Lake, vol. II trans. J.E.L. Oulton, Loeb Classical Library series, vols. 163 and 265 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926, 1932, reprint 1998, 1996), 1:297.

<sup>322</sup> *E.H.* 3.39.6.

<sup>323</sup> *E.H.* 7.24.

<sup>324</sup> *E.H.* 3.25.1ff.

place it with the acknowledged books due to what may have been the actual opinion prevalent in the Church at the time. But by the end of that century, the Apocalypse *would* be generally rejected in the East primarily due to Eusebius' influence, since his *History* was very widely read in antiquity.<sup>325</sup>

Eusebius begins the discussion on the state of the canon in a straightforward manner. First, he classifies the orthodox writings by dividing them into three groups. The first group is those which are "universally acknowledged" (ὁμολογούμενα). These books are unanimously recognized as having apostolic inspiration and connections, and according to a continuous Church tradition were held to be true and genuine. Among the acknowledged books Eusebius places the four gospels, Acts, fourteen Pauline epistles (including Hebrews),<sup>326</sup> 1 John and 1 Peter. Then he adds "After these must be put, if it really seems right, the Apocalypse of John....These then [are to be placed] among the recognized books." (ἐπὶ τούτοις τακτέον, εἴ γε φανείη, τὴν Ἀποκάλυψιν Ἰωάννου....καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ἐν ὁμολογουμένοις.)<sup>327</sup>

The second group in Eusebius' survey contains the "disputed" books *antilegomena* (ἀντιλεγόμενα), those books which were familiar to most people and accepted by many, but doubt existed as to whether they were in fact apostolic. Therefore they were not universally accepted. These include James, Jude, 2 Peter, and 2 and 3 John.<sup>328</sup>

The third group is comprised of those books which were overwhelmingly rejected and which Eusebius calls *notha* (νόθα), meaning "illegitimate," "counterfeit," or "spurious." Among these are the *Acts of Paul*, *Shepherd of Hermas*, *Revelation of Peter*, *Epistle of Barnabas*, the *Didache*, the *Gospel According to the Hebrews*, and the *Apocalypse of John*, "if it seem right."<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> *Johannine Corpus*, 462.

<sup>326</sup> Here he demonstrates that he is not really giving us the state of the canon of the entire Church, but only primarily of the East, since at this time most in the West rejected Hebrews.

<sup>327</sup> *E.H.* 3.25.2. Translation by Metzger, *Canon*, 309.

<sup>328</sup> *E.H.* 3.25.3.

<sup>329</sup> *E.H.* 3.25.4. "Among the spurious books must be reckoned...in addition, as I said, the Apocalypse of John, if it seems right. (This last, as I said, is rejected by some, but others count it among the recognized books.)" Translation by Metzger, *Canon*, 309.

Finally, after delineating these lists, in which Eusebius placed the Apocalypse of John in two different and fundamentally incompatible categories, he hopelessly complicated and confused the discussion by restating the matter and regrouping the “disputed” and “spurious” books together and calling them all *antilegomena*, “disputed.”<sup>330</sup>

The double-listing of the Apocalypse of John has engendered a great deal of confusion and discussion. How can the Book of Revelation be placed by Eusebius *simultaneously* in the “undisputed” and the “spurious” categories? Stonehouse says the spurious *notha* works are part of the *antilegomena*, or disputed.<sup>331</sup> Goodspeed theorizes that Eusebius probably considered some of the disputed books canonical and accepted them as part of the New Testament, according to the opinion which prevailed in the East.<sup>332</sup> Bruce believes that Eusebius placed the Apocalypse among the spurious books because of his belief that the author was not the apostle and evangelist John, but another John.<sup>333</sup> Hill analyzes Eusebius very simply: “if the Apocalypse was apostolic, it was canonical,”<sup>334</sup> otherwise it would be a forgery and spurious. Hill believes that Eusebius’ dual categorization reflects Eusebius’ inability to “adjudicate in a definitive way the matters of authorship and canonicity.”<sup>335</sup>

In Metzger’s opinion, however, Eusebius’ confused summary results from a tension between his dual role as a historian and a churchman. He first classifies the books according to their canonicity, that is, canonical or uncanonical. He secondly divides them according to their orthodoxy, that is, orthodox or heterodox. Only orthodox books fall into the *homologoumena* and *antilegoumena* categories, but the *notha* though uncanonical, are not necessarily unorthodox in character. Books containing doctrines regarded as heretical make

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<sup>330</sup> E.H. 3.25.6. “Despite Eusebius’ good intentions, he has been unable to present a tidy listing. Although the correlative terms (‘acknowledged’ and ‘disputed’) are perfectly clear, he mixes with them other categories that belong to a different order of ideas.” Metzger, 204.

<sup>331</sup> Stonehouse, 132.

<sup>332</sup> Goodspeed, 101. His own canon would include some of the books which he lists as “disputed.”

<sup>333</sup> Bruce, *Canon of Scripture*, 199. “The ‘spurious’ books were not generally included in the canon, yet they were known and esteemed by many churchmen. If not canonical, they were at least orthodox.”

<sup>334</sup> *Johannine Corpus*, 462.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*

up an entirely separate category since they have never been accepted or recognized as authoritative by the Church as a whole.<sup>336</sup> Stonehouse believes that this hesitating attitude can only mean that Eusebius was at odds with the Church. Eusebius would prefer to classify Revelation with the spurious books, but he cannot escape the fact that it is generally accepted, not only in the West, but still in the East at this point as well, forcing Eusebius to place it among the acknowledged books.<sup>337</sup> This is the best explanation.

Modern readers are surprised that Eusebius does not place the Apocalypse in the disputed category, because today its apostolic authorship is disputed and a few people, such as Dionysios, disputed it then. But at the time Eusebius made his survey of the canon, the Apocalypse was *not* widely disputed either in the East or the West, but rather, was almost universally accepted as apostolic. This is clearly evident because although Eusebius states that “with regard to the Apocalypse still at the present time opinion is generally divided,”<sup>338</sup> he fails to support this statement by any witnesses, nor has he reported the opinions of anyone other than Dionysios in this regard. Eusebius’ very classification of the Apocalypse among the acknowledged books contradicts his own statement that opinion is “divided.” If opinion were truly divided, the book would be classified with the *antilegomena*. In fact, Eusebius’ categorization of the Apocalypse as universally acknowledged is a clear admission that a general unanimity existed in the Church with regard to Revelation’s apostolic origin, and that it had been passed down *consistently* as an undisputed writing. This is the only reason he would possibly list it along with such books as the gospels and the epistles of Paul, which had also been consistently acknowledged as apostolic. Stonehouse correctly concludes

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<sup>336</sup> “Thus the *notha* occupy a peculiar position, being orthodox but uncanonical. Such an interpretation helps us understand how Eusebius can place the Book of Revelation conditionally into two different classes. As a historian, Eusebius recognizes that it is widely received, but as a churchman he has become annoyed by the extravagant use made of this book by the Montanists and other millenarians, and so is glad to report elsewhere in his history that others considerate it to be not genuine.” Metzger, 204. Metzger follows the opinion of Ernst von Dobschütz in this matter, and cites “The Abandonment of the Canonical Idea,” *American Journal of Theology* 19 (1915) 416-29. Eusebius also presented a fourth list, comprised of works which were not simply spurious but utterly heretical. These works, which had no possibility whatsoever of finding a place in the canon, and had never been under consideration, included the *Gospels of Peter, Thomas, and Matthias*, the *Acts of Andrew* and the *Acts of John*. Eusebius explained that he rejected these books because a book must be of apostolic origin to be considered part of the New Testament, something which is determined by its use by earlier ecclesiastical writers, and that the book must be free of heretical ideas.

<sup>337</sup> “This vacillating attitude is also to be observed in that on a number of occasions he cites the works simply as the Apocalypse of John without any indication that its authority was doubtful, even finding a fulfillment of the prophecy of the New Jerusalem in Constantine’s restoration of the city in Palestine.” Stonehouse, 132.

<sup>338</sup> *E.H.* 3.24.18.

that Eusebius' remarks reveal an effort to *shape* future Church attitude toward the Apocalypse, not simply accurately *reflect* the current state of opinion. Later in that same century, the Apocalypse will *indeed* belong in the "disputed" category, due in no small part to Eusebius' efforts to create suspicions, raise doubts about apostolic authorship and discredit the validity of Papias' witness. But at the time of Eusebius' evaluation of the state of the canon, the only writers who had questioned the apostolicity of the Apocalypse were Gaius and Dionysios of Alexandria, because each had found it more expedient to discredit the Apocalypse to attain a personal objective: the opposition of Montanism and chiliasm.

Eusebius' negative views about the Apocalypse could have no influence on public opinion so long as the Apocalypse was widely considered apostolic. Classifying it among the heretical books would have been considered absurd. Placing it among the disputed books would have been laughable, since it was common knowledge that it had been universally accepted since the early second century. Furthermore, it would have been entirely ineffective to refer to it as "disputed" even if it were doubted by some Christians. To discredit the Apocalypse and destroy its influence, Eusebius would have to downgrade it and include it with the "rejected" and spurious *notha* books and list it as uncanonical.

Stonehouse concludes that Eusebius was biased against Revelation because of the millennialist doctrine, which is partly what motivated his negative characterization of Papias. Regardless of the reason, Eusebius' bias against the Apocalypse forces us to re-examine whether we can consider Eusebius an objective and credible reporter of Papias' statements with respect to the Johannine tradition, which are the earliest tradition on record.

Eusebius' bias against the Apocalypse is evident from the very first time it is mentioned in his work, where it is introduced to the reader as the "so-called Apocalypse of John."<sup>339</sup> To discredit the Apocalypse and its supporters, Eusebius is also forced to criticize and undermine Irenaeus' report that Papias was not only a hearer of the elders, but a hearer of the apostle John himself. Eusebius gives "more prominence to writers who were antagonistic toward the Apocalypse because of their anti-chiliasm. He speaks of Gaius' brilliance and orthodoxy and anti-chiliasm, but fails to mention his attack upon the Fourth Gospel in the very work he is quoting, or that Hippolytus had answered Gaius in a special work."<sup>340</sup> His

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<sup>339</sup> E.H. 3.18.2. ἐν τῇ Ἰωάννου λεγομένη Ἀποκαλύψει.

bias is further evidenced by the prominence he gives to Dionysios' criticism of the Apocalypse and his reporting of the "two tomb" story which is completely unsubstantiated and extremely sketchy even when Dionysios tells it. Lastly, Eusebius entirely ignores and never even mentions Methodios in his *History*, one of the great Fathers of the third century, possibly because of Methodios' strong stance against Origen and because Methodios accepted the Apocalypse and interpreted its images skillfully. It is difficult to draw any other conclusion except that Eusebius held a deep prejudice against Revelation despite an uninterrupted and ancient tradition of apostolic authorship. We can look to Eusebius as the individual most responsible for undermining Revelation's place in the East for centuries and destroying confidence as to the apostolic authorship of the Apocalypse to this day.

### 2.7.3 Constantine the Great and the Fifty Commissioned Bibles

Around the year 332, Constantine the Great commissioned Eusebius to provide fifty of the highest quality copies of the Holy Scriptures for use by the churches in Constantinople. Eusebius was to oversee the production of the bibles and everything necessary for this task was placed at his disposal. Unfortunately, Eusebius does not tell us which books of the Bible were included in these copies or even how many books each bible contained. Was it our present twenty-seven book canon? Harry Gamble thinks the volumes contained only the gospels.<sup>341</sup> Goodspeed believes Eusebius included those books which he personally considered canonical, which would have excluded Revelation.<sup>342</sup> Farmer, on the other hand, believes that Eusebius included the Apocalypse of John because Constantine favored it.<sup>343</sup> Bruce thinks that these bibles contained all the books that Eusebius listed as universally acknowledged, including Hebrews and Revelation and the five minor Catholic epistles – in

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<sup>340</sup> Stonehouse 133-34. Stonehouse writes: "In his *Church History* he entirely ignores Methodius, one of the greatest theologians of his time, probably because of his polemics against Origen and his chiliastic teaching." Stonehouse, 134. Eusebius does ignore Methodius, possibly because of his opposition to Origen, but Methodius was not a chiliast.

<sup>341</sup> Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 159.

<sup>342</sup> Goodspeed, *Formation*, 103.

<sup>343</sup> Farmer and Farkasfalvy, *The Formation of the New Testament Canon* 87-88, fn. 9. Elsewhere, Farmer notes that Constantine favored the Book of Revelation and drew upon apocalyptic motifs. William Farmer, *Jesus and the Gospel: Tradition, Scripture and Canon* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 275, fn 154.



short, our present twenty-seven book canon. Bruce believes that even though we are not told which books were included in these bibles, “the answer is not seriously in doubt.” He assumes that Revelation would have been included because the emperor used it for his propaganda and furthermore, if a book which was believed to be part of the Scriptures was omitted the emperor and others would have reacted negatively.<sup>344</sup>

Metzger believes that Constantine’s bibles helped contribute toward the formation of the canon. “[F]ifty magnificent copies all uniform, could not but exercise a great influence on future copies, at least within the bounds of the patriarchate of Constantinople, and would help forward the process of arriving at a commonly accepted New Testament in the East.”<sup>345</sup> One would *expect* these outstanding copies to have some effect upon settling the canon, but the continued debate over the canon suggests otherwise. Gamble may in fact be correct that these bibles contained only the gospels. Otherwise, how does one explain the continued debate over the canon? Even if certain books were included, their mere inclusion did not change or influence anyone’s opinion as to whether a book *ought* to be included.

Farmer argues that the canon was fixed around the time of Constantine because of the bibles:

“It is of the greatest importance to recognize that the New Testament as it is generally accepted in all branches of Christian Church which accept the Council of Chalcedon was not finally agreed upon until the time of Constantine or shortly thereafter. De facto, of course, all the books finally included in this New Testament were recognized as Scripture in many, if not most, parts of the Church long before. But the status of Hebrews, Revelation, 2 Peter, James, Jude, 2 and 3 John was still being disputed in some important Churches right up until the time of Constantine.”<sup>346</sup>

Farmer implies that little or no discussion or canon controversy existed after Constantine, even with regard to the disputed books. In fact, during Constantine’s era the issue was only *beginning* to become heated. Even in the West, which reached a consensus

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<sup>344</sup> Bruce, *Canon of Scripture*, 204.

<sup>345</sup> Metzger, 207. Many believe that the Codex Sinaiticus was one of these copies.

<sup>346</sup> Emphasis added. Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 9. Farmer makes the same absurd claim elsewhere: “We know that after this time, in the Roman Empire where Constantine and his successors had the power to influence developments, uniformity prevailed more and more until the question, at least for the Chalcedonian Churches, was virtually settled without further dispute.” Farmer, *Jesus and the Gospel*, 187.

about the canon much earlier than in the East, Hebrews was hotly debated for at least another 100 years. Farmer implies that the issue was basically settled and few if any questions remained regarding the composition of the canon after the production of these bibles. If this is the case, why did most of the patristic canonical lists arise *after* Constantine? Why did synods discuss this issue *after* Constantine? The canon was not even considered sufficiently important at the time of Constantine to be discussed at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicea, which had been called by Constantine himself.

Furthermore, if the Constantinian bibles contained our present New Testament canon, they exercised no influence even over bishops of Constantinople who occupied that see long after Constantine.<sup>347</sup> This might be simply because the books of the Bible or even the New Testament did not co-exist in a single volume. Perhaps Gamble is correct that Constantine's "bibles" contained only the gospels. Usually certain books would have been grouped together on a codex, with the gospels forming one codex and the epistles of Paul another. The Catholic epistles were often combined with Acts of the Apostles into a single codex. Revelation did not fit well with these other collections thematically or stylistically, nor does it appear to have been used in the lectionary of the East at this time. In the manuscript tradition it often occupied a separate volume, and in numerous instances it can be found in codices of non-biblical writings and even with collections of profane literature.<sup>348</sup>

Far from being settled in the mid-fourth century, the canon was only then becoming a real issue. Constantine was deeply concerned with doctrinal unity and may have sought a standardization of the canon. If the commissioning of the Bibles was an effort in this direction, it did not begin resolve the question. In a letter written around 414 to a patrician Claudius Dardanus, Jerome notes that Hebrews is received by the Church of the East, but not in the West, just as Revelation is not accepted in the Churches of Greece. Jerome states that he receives both of them on the authority of ancient writers, who quote from both of them as "canonical and churchly."<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>347</sup> Gregory the Theologian of Nazianzus explicitly rejected the Apocalypse from his own canonical list, and we know that John Chrysostom not only rejected the Apocalypse but also most of the catholic epistles, since he never quotes from them. Both of these men served as Archbishop of Constantinople long after Constantine.

<sup>348</sup> Charles Hill also comments on the manuscript witness, noting that two uncials and 147 miniscule manuscripts contain the *entire* New Testament, except for Revelation. *Johannine Corpus*, 463.

Without doubt, it was Jerome's landmark Latin translation of the Bible, the Vulgate, which significantly aided in standardizing the canon in the West, even though disagreement lingered over Hebrews for some time.<sup>350</sup> It is tempting to assume that Constantine's bibles helped move the canonical question toward standardization. These bibles may have influenced the textual tradition, since they would have been more likely to have been copied as exemplars.<sup>351</sup> They may also have influenced the order of books within the New Testament.<sup>352</sup> But in no manner did the Constantinian bibles resolve the issue of the canon.

## 2.7.4 Alexandria, Jerusalem and Cyprus

### 2.7.4.1 Athanasius the Great

Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, was the most important figure in the Alexandrian Church in the fourth century. In his 39<sup>th</sup> Paschal Encyclical in 367, Athanasius expressed disapproval of apocryphal books and warned believers against their use.<sup>353</sup> Complaining that apocryphal works were often intermingled with the inspired writings, he explained that this was the reason he was making the canon the subject of that year's festal letter. Athanasius' explanation supports the view that heresy and schism played a strong part in opinions regarding the canon and motivated a desire to fix the canon. Athanasius' list comports with

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<sup>349</sup> *Ep.* 129. Jerome makes several lists of canonical books, including the most complete one in his *Epistle to Paulinus*, *Ep.* 53. Metzger, 234-6ff.

<sup>350</sup> See Metzger who notes that Hebrews was disputed in the West and even omitted from manuscripts well into the Middle-Ages and the Reformation. Metzger, *Canon*, 238 ff.

<sup>351</sup> Bruce says that these fifty copies were the ancestors of the Byzantine or 'majority' text. "This explains the popularity of this form of text in Constantinople and the whole area of Christendom under its influence from the late fourth century on...." But then Bruce adds that "the New Testament text used by Eusebius himself belongs neither to the Alexandrian nor to the Byzantine type." FF Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, 204. In that case, since Eusebius was responsible for the production of the manuscripts, it is rather difficult to explain why his text type does not match the Byzantine text type.

<sup>352</sup> Other than Amphilochoios, no one except Eusebius placed Paul's letters before the catholic epistles. To make Paul's epistles preceding the catholic epistles the standard order must have required an "influence of great magnitude," which Farmer assumes was the Constantinian bibles. Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 87-88, fn. 9.

<sup>353</sup> *Ep.* 39. Some books were considered useful and permissible for those receiving instruction in the Christian faith, including Sirach, Esther, Judith and Tobias, *Didache* and *Shepherd*. Athanasius had at one time used *Shepherd* frequently and even referred to *Shepherd* as Scripture, but toward the end of his life he decided that while it was useful for Christian instruction it did not belong in the canon. Goodspeed, 108. This highlights one problem with drawing broad and absolute conclusions. We occasionally see what appears to be a contradiction within the writings of a single individual, simply because opinions sometimes change.

our twenty-seven book canon, with the Apocalypse listed last, concluding his list of the canon with καὶ πάλιν Ἰωάννου Ἀποκάλυψις and then adds: ταῦτα πηγαὶ τοῦ σωτηρίου ...μηδεὶς τούτοις ἐπιβαλλέτω μηδὲ τούτων ἀφαιρείσθω τι.<sup>354</sup> In contrast with Eusebius, Athanasius' list contains no designation of *antilegomena*, only “canonical” books. Despite Dionysios' rejection of apostolic authorship of Revelation one hundred years prior, the book remained respected and acknowledged by the Alexandrian Church.

Athanasius' list is often cited as providing *the* date for the fixing of the canon at our present twenty-seven books because was the first time in which we see our present canon listed. However, Athanasius did not create the list because by then everyone had *agreed* upon these books and the canon was fixed, but on the contrary, because there *was no* agreement. Far too much importance has been placed upon Athanasius' canon as the benchmark for settling the canon and far too much influence is attributed to him. Despite Athanasius' ecclesiastical stature, we will see that his opinion did not settle the issue of the canon. Long after Athanasius, the issue remained unresolved in the East, even in Egypt.

Symes writes that Athanasius' canon was not authoritative for the entire church, but at most for the East alone.<sup>355</sup> Even this gives far too much weight to Athanasius. In fact, what Symes *ought* to have said is that at most the Athanasian canon was the standard only in Egypt and only during Athanasius' episcopacy. Another scholar who vastly overstates Athanasius' influence is Stonehouse, who writes that Athanasius saved the Apocalypse when chiliasm, once accepted as orthodox doctrine, became unpopular. “Athanasius, the man of tradition, supported its canonical claims, and thereby *once and for all guaranteed* its right to a place in the New Testament.”<sup>356</sup> Athanasius considered Revelation apostolic and appeared to accept it on that basis.<sup>357</sup> But despite Athanasius' endorsement, no “guarantee” existed. The Apocalypse was only beginning to face its most serious opposition, which it barely managed to survive.

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<sup>354</sup> Périclès-Pierre Joannou, *Discipline générale antique (IVe-IXe s.)* (3 vols. in 4) Vol. 2, *Les canons des Pères Grecs*, Pontificia commissione per la redazione del codice di diritto canonico orientale, series fascicolo IX, (Grottaferrata [Rome]: Tipografia Italo-Orientale, “S. Nilo,” 1963), 75.

<sup>355</sup> John Elliotson Symes, *The Evolution of the New Testament* (London: John Murray, 1921), 304-5.

<sup>356</sup> Emphasis added. Stonehouse, 4-6. “In view of the unique authority of this bishop in the Church at large this expression was bound to be accepted as decisive in a wide area in the Church.” Stonehouse, 142. The evidence simply does not support this conclusion.

<sup>357</sup> Stonehouse, 144.

#### 2.7.4. 2 Didymus the Blind

Didymus the Blind, the famous teacher and head of the school of Alexandria during the second half of the fourth century (d. c. 398), quoted from the Apocalypse and considered it authoritative.<sup>358</sup> Didymus followed Athanasius and reveals for us that Athanasius' opinion as to the canon did not resolve the issue and settle the canon even in Alexandria. Metzger notes that Didymus refers to several Apostolic Fathers as authoritative, including *Barnabas*, the *Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch*, *Didache* and *Shepherd*. The canon was still very fluid during the second half of fourth century in Alexandria. Apparently Athanasius' Pascal Epistle 39 had no authority or influence on Didymus, even so soon after the episcopacy of the celebrated bishop.

#### 2.7.4.3 Cyril of Alexandria

Cyril of Alexandria acknowledged Revelation and is one of the Fathers cited by Andrew as accepting it.<sup>359</sup> However, he rarely appealed to the book, most likely due to his specific theological concerns and the content of his works which focused on the Incarnation and the relationship between the two natures of Christ.

#### 2.7.4.4 Cyril of Jerusalem

In addition to Athanasius, another Father who specifically advised the faithful not to read apocryphal works was Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386). Cyril omitted the Apocalypse from his list of canonical books in his catechetical discourse and counseled against reading non-canonical books at all, even in private.<sup>360</sup> In a passage about the Antichrist, Cyril never even

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<sup>358</sup> Metzger, 213. Though we do not have a specific canonical list from Didymus, a recent discovery in 1941 of a group of papyrus codices dating from sixth or seventh centuries, containing some of his commentaries on the Old Testament give us some insight into his opinion on the canon. Didymus quotes from all of the books of New Testament except Philemon and 2 and 3 John. The absence of Philemon can be explained because of its brevity, which might otherwise be an explanation for 2 and 3 John except that when he refers to 1 John, he calls it *the* epistle of John, not "the *first* epistle of John." Quite noteworthy is that Didymus quotes from 2 Peter as "altogether authentic and authoritative." Metzger goes on to say that this calls for the reassessment of authorship of a commentary attributed to Didymus, extant only in Latin, which flatly rejects 2 Peter.

<sup>359</sup> *On Worship in Spirit and Truth* 6. *Prologue*, Text 10, *Comm.* 11. However, a contemporary of Cyril, Isidore of Pelusium (d. 436), also originally from Alexandria, rejected it.

<sup>360</sup> *Catechetical Lectures* 4.31. See also Swete, cxi, and Stonehouse, 135.

mentions Revelation, but quotes instead from Daniel, Matthew 24 and 2 Thessalonians 2.<sup>361</sup>

#### 2.7.4.5 Epiphanius of Salamis

Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis (d. 403), composed a famous compendium of heresies known as the *Panarion*,<sup>362</sup> by far the most extensive work on heresies at the time. Among the groups described was one which rejected the writings of John, which Epiphanius refers to as the “Alogoi” because of the association of the term “logos” with the gospel of John. The Alogoi took the position that the Johannine writings are so absurd and full of errors that they could not possibly have been composed by the apostle, but rather were the creation of his arch-enemy, Cerinthus.<sup>363</sup> They concluded that the gospel attributed to John is false and therefore uncanonical.<sup>364</sup> Epiphanius seems to have been willing to understand a rejection of the Apocalypse due to its mysterious language, but the Alogoi rejected *both* the Gospel and the Apocalypse.<sup>365</sup> He discussed their criticisms of the Apocalypse, focusing on the imagery which appeared absurd and ridiculous to the Alogoi.<sup>366</sup> Epiphanius accepted the Apocalypse as canonical and held that it must be interpreted spiritually.<sup>367</sup> But more important than his personal opinion is the fact that Epiphanius identifies the rejection of John’s books, including Revelation, as characteristic of a heresy, which implies that the mainstream Church may still have accepted Revelation at that time.

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<sup>361</sup> *Catechetical Lectures* 15.12ff.

<sup>362</sup> Literally, “Medicine chest,” sometimes cited as *Haereses*, written approximately 374-377.

<sup>363</sup> *Panarion* 51:3.6. Among their arguments were the disagreement between John and the synoptics over the number of Passovers celebrated in Jerusalem (*Panarion* 51.22.1) and the different order of events in the gospels. See, for example, *Panarion* 51.16 for the discussion about the sequence of events involving the baptism of Christ, the temptation, the calling of the first disciples and the wedding at Cana.

<sup>364</sup> *Panarion* 51:4ff, 22ff.

<sup>365</sup> *Panarion* 51:3.3, 5. “Now if they accepted the Gospel but rejected the Revelation, we might perhaps say that they did so out of scrupulosity, not accepting an apocryphal book because of the passages in Revelation which are mysterious and dark. But as it is, they do not accept John’s books at all.” *Panarion* 51.3.4-5. *The Panarion of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis*, trans. Philip R. Amidon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 177.

<sup>366</sup> Such as seven angels and seven trumpets, four angels holding back the Euphrates, and armies with breastplates of fire, sulfur and sapphire. *Panarion* 51:32-34. The Alogoi evidently had no appreciation for or understanding of apocalyptic imagery.

<sup>367</sup> *Panarion* 76.

### 2.7.5 The Cappadocians

Cappadocians were divided in their assessment of Revelation. Gregory the Theologian of Nazianzus, (one of the Fathers whom Andrew of Caesarea cites as affirming apostolic authorship of Revelation), did not include it in his famous poem enumerating the canonical books.<sup>368</sup> However, on a few occasions Gregory quoted from Revelation and even cited it alongside Old Testament Scriptures.<sup>369</sup>

On the other hand, two other Cappadocians, brothers Basil the Great (d. 379) and Gregory of Nyssa (d. 394), accepted Revelation and quoted it as Scripture, albeit rarely. Basil quoted Revelation only twice.<sup>370</sup> The same verse is quoted in both instances “I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is, who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”<sup>371</sup> It is highly significant that Basil introduces the quotation by ascribing it to “the Evangelist.”<sup>372</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, the most spiritualizing of the Cappadocians, accepted Revelation as Scripture, just as Origen and Methodios had maintained its apostolicity and canonicity and propounded a spiritual exegesis of Revelation. Gregory also considered John the apostle and Evangelist to be the author of the Apocalypse.<sup>373</sup>

Amphilochios, bishop of Iconium (d. c. 394), composed a canonical list in verse as part of a poetic work known as the *Iambics of Seleucus*. The poem advises Seleucus to pursue a life of virtue and to study the Scripture more than any other text. The poem then continues with a list of the books of the Bible. In addition to listing the books, Amphilochios reports some of the earlier debate regarding Hebrews, the catholic epistles and the Apocalypse. He discusses, accepts and rejects various books. Although he reports the general attitude toward disputed books, Amphilochios does not clearly state his own opinion. After noting that some

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<sup>368</sup> *Poems* 1.12.5 ff

<sup>369</sup> *Orations* 29.17 and 40.45. See Metzger, *Canon*, 212.

<sup>370</sup> *Against Eunomius* 2.14, and 4.2.

<sup>371</sup> Rev. 1:18. When Revelation was quoted in the East during the fourth century, this verse was one of the most popular because the primary issue was Christological doctrine. This verse was cited to support the full divinity of the Son.

<sup>372</sup> *Against Eunomius* 2.14.

<sup>373</sup> *On the Inscriptions of the Psalms* 10, *Against Apollinarius* 37, *Concerning his own Ordination* 1.

wrongly call Hebrews spurious and that some receive only three catholic epistles and others seven, he continues: “And again, the Revelation of John, some approve, but the most say it is spurious.”<sup>374</sup>

Amphilochios is apparently quite satisfied with his assessment of the canon, and concludes that “this is perhaps the most reliable [literally the “most unfalsified”] canon of the divinely inspired Scriptures.”<sup>375</sup> Metzger registers surprise. “In other words, here we have a bishop in Asia Minor, a colleague of the Gregories and of Basil, and yet he seems to be uncertain as to the exact extent of the canon!”<sup>376</sup> But from what we have seen this is hardly surprising. In fact, Amphilochios’ uncertainty is the norm. Farmer states that Amphilochios’ list is the same as that of Athanasius. But Athanasius clearly and unequivocally expressed his opinion. Later Farmer writes that Amphilochios is “*working with* a list identical to Athanasius.”<sup>377</sup> But “working with” is hardly the same as having resolved the canon at least in his own mind. Amphilochios’ personal opinion of the Apocalypse may be unclear, but his comments certainly reflect a decisive shift in opinion regarding the Apocalypse by the end of the fourth century, since he reports that most (in the East) rejected it.

What explains the ambivalence or hesitancy toward the Apocalypse by the Cappadocians? The Cappadocians were admirers of Origen and had no sympathy for chiliasm. They strongly opposed Apollinarius, who was apparently a proponent of a very sensual chiliasm, which might have rendered them less inclined to accept the Apocalypse. After Christianity was legalized, the pressing concern of the Church was not mere survival, but the survival of apostolic doctrine and the formulation and defense of correct dogma. The Apocalypse was not as useful as the other acknowledged Scriptures for this purpose, and may have been one of the reasons why it came to be less favored or even disfavored. It certainly was a compelling reason why the Apocalypse was less quoted. Had Revelation been more useful in doctrinal disputes, one wonders whether it might have engendered more support and less criticism.

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<sup>374</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 314. See also, Goodspeed, 130. Metzger surmises that he appears to reject 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude and “almost certainly rejects Revelation.” Metzger, 213.

<sup>375</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 314.

<sup>376</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 213.

<sup>377</sup> Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 9.



### 2.7.6 The Antiocheans

A smaller New Testament canon had long been the tradition in Antioch. Stonehouse, relying on a quotation from the Apocalypse by Theophilus of Antioch, states that the Apocalypse was “accepted” in Antioch in the second century.<sup>378</sup> But it cannot be inferred that the Apocalypse was widely accepted in Antioch at that time. We can point to many examples in which even the opinion of a respected individual was not shared by the majority in his region.<sup>379</sup> Nonetheless, Theophilus does provide evidence of possible early acceptance of Revelation in Antioch.

While insufficient evidence exists to determine the extent of Revelation’s acceptance in Antioch in the first three centuries, by the fourth century the book was clearly rejected. It is hardly surprising that Revelation was ill-received in Antioch, since the Antiochean tradition of exegesis disliked allegory and insisted that every passage of Scripture has a “literal” sense or historical meaning, a daunting problem when interpreting the Apocalypse. On the other hand, the crassly literal interpretation of the Apocalypse by some chiliasts was just as distasteful to the sophisticated Antiochean exegetes, another important factor which may have contributed to its exclusion from the canon in Antioch.<sup>380</sup>

Even the most illustrious Greek patristic exegete, John Chrysostom, held to the standard Antiochean twenty-two book New Testament canon. Chrysostom’s canon appears to have been the same as the Peshitta, the Syriac version of the New Testament which rejected 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude and Revelation.<sup>381</sup> This is in line with the *Synopsis of*

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<sup>378</sup> Stonehouse, 136.

<sup>379</sup> Stonehouse himself, after making this comment, observes on the very same page that Epiphanius accepted the Apocalypse but most of the bishops of his region at the time did not. Stonehouse, 136.

<sup>380</sup> Stonehouse, 136. It is indeed very likely that the Apocalypse suffered from a poor reputation in Antioch since the scholarly interests of the general population lay in such areas as science, history and archeology, influencing Antiochean exegesis toward a historical-literal orientation and against allegorical interpretation. Simonetti, 54-55.

<sup>381</sup> There is an interesting Ethiopian tradition that the Apocalypse was lost for many years until Chrysostom rediscovered it. It is almost a certainty that Chrysostom rejected the Apocalypse, rendering the Ethiopian story undoubtedly false. However, the Ethiopians accept Revelation in their canon largely on the basis of that tradition. Roger Cowley, *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of St. John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 78. See below, chapter 2.11.6.

*Sacred Scripture*,<sup>382</sup> a canon sometimes attributed to Chrysostom, but probably not his composition. Out of more than 11,000 New Testament quotations in Chrysostom's sermons, no quotations are found from any of the four minor catholic epistles or from Revelation.<sup>383</sup>

It is difficult to determine the canon of Theodore of Mopsuestia, considered by many to be the best of the Antiochean exegetes, since only fragments of his commentaries survive. However, he most certainly would have rejected the Apocalypse.<sup>384</sup> Theodoret of Cyrus, (c. 393-466), bishop of a small town east of Antioch on the Euphrates, is another notable Antiochean exegete. Remembered for removing copies of Tatian's Diatessaron and replacing them with the separate gospels,<sup>385</sup> he also wrote many commentaries and seems to have agreed with Chrysostom in rejecting the minor catholic epistles and Revelation.<sup>386</sup>

Stonehouse postulates that a powerful neighboring Church, the Syrian National Church of Edessa, exerted a negative influence on Theodore of Mopsuestia and Chrysostom against the Apocalypse since the Syriac Bible, the Peshitta, did not include Revelation.<sup>387</sup> But the Peshitta was created *after* the death of Chrysostom. Furthermore, Chrysostom knew only Greek. It was unlikely that he or Theodore were swayed by the Syrian tradition. The greatest influence on their canon must have been their education under Diodore of Tarsus and the historical disposition of the School of Antioch against Revelation due to the difficulty in interpreting it without allegorizing extensively.

Stonehouse proposes that the canon was fixed in the East, (presumably also ending any controversy over the Apocalypse), around the year 500. After 500 "the hesitation evident

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<sup>382</sup> P.G. 56.318-86.

<sup>383</sup> Scholars sometimes disagree as to whether a given work is by Chrysostom or not, since many subsequent compositions were attributed to him. Hence some Scriptural indices for Chrysostom (such as that of R.A. Krupp, *Saint John Chrysostom: A Scripture Index* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984) include citations to 2 Peter, Jude and Revelation. But almost certainly, Chrysostom did not accept these books as canonical and the inclusion of these on Krupp's list is due to spurious works attributed to Chrysostom.

<sup>384</sup> He appears to have rejected James and at least some of the Catholic epistles. Westcott presumes that he accepted 1 Peter and 1 John, but Isho'dad of Merv states that Theodore makes no reference to the three major catholic epistles, and appears to follow the earlier Syrian canon preceding the Peshitta. *Isho'dad, Commentary on the Epistle of James*, ed. M.D. Gibson, *Horae Semiticae X* (Cambridge, 1913), 49 (Syriac), and 36 (English); F.F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, 215, fn. 34; Metzger, 215.

<sup>385</sup> Theodoret, *Treatise on Heresies* 1.20.

<sup>386</sup> Metzger, 215.

<sup>387</sup> Stonehouse, 138.

in the attitude of certain writers in the eastern Church, particularly in the course of the fourth century had been conquered, and the canon of these churches had been conformed to that of Egypt and the West.”<sup>388</sup> But, in fact, the East did not “conform” to the West, and variations in the canon, especially concerning the Apocalypse continued to arise in the East for centuries. Perhaps one reason for the continuing Eastern hesitation over Revelation is that three of the most influential Fathers either did not accept it or rarely referred to it: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom. These three are acclaimed among the Orthodox as “the Three Hierarchs.” Among the three, undoubtedly the greatest hindrance to the incorporation of Revelation into the canon was the absence of references to it by Chrysostom. His sermons fill volumes and were tremendously popular even during his lifetime. His writings remain the most important source for patristic biblical interpretation in the East. Chrysostom’s silent disapproval of the Apocalypse must have weighed heavily against it. Just as Augustine’s support for Hebrews turned the tide toward its acceptance in the West, had Chrysostom accepted Revelation, his influence would have impelled and confirmed Revelation’s place in the canon of the East centuries sooner.

#### 2.7.6.1 The Syriac Tradition

A language barrier and ethnic pride may have caused Syria to develop its own traditions against Greek influences.<sup>389</sup> Syrian writers from Tatian to Ephraim were unreceptive to Greek culture, which may provide one reason why the Syrians generally did not accept the Apocalypse.<sup>390</sup> Tatian had lived in Rome for a number of years prior to his return to Syria in 172 and had been a pupil of Justin Martyr, so he must have heard traditional opinions on the Apocalypse which accepted it. But Marcion, who had a negative view of Apocalypse, was also in Rome during that time and the early Syrian canon was very similar to Marcion’s canon. Later, Eusebius was very popular in Syria, and his influence must have weighed against its inclusion. Finally, since the Apocalypse was not part of the canon in Antioch, from which the Peshitta was translated in the fifth century, the possibility

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<sup>388</sup> Stonehouse, 142.

<sup>389</sup> Stonehouse, 138.

<sup>390</sup> Stonehouse, 139.

of its inclusion into the Syriac New Testament was slim. Ephraim the Syrian (d. 373) who wrote a number of commentaries<sup>391</sup> did not quote Revelation. While he knew of Revelation and the catholic epistles, he did not consider them part of the New Testament.<sup>392</sup>

The earliest Syriac version of the New Testament contained only the Diatessaron, the epistles of Paul and Acts.<sup>393</sup> Rabula, bishop of Edessa from 411 to 435, reportedly produced a version of the New Testament in Syriac and ordered that separate gospels be placed in every church to replace the Diatessaron. This is probably the appearance of the Peshitta New Testament, the standard Syriac version. It contains the four gospels, Acts, three of the catholic epistles – James, 1 Peter and 1 John – and fourteen letters of Paul.<sup>394</sup> The Peshitta represented a compromise of sorts with the Greek canon: it accepted the three longer catholic epistles, but still rejected the minor catholic epistles and Revelation.<sup>395</sup>

But in 508, Philoxenus, bishop of Mabbug in eastern Syria, ordered a revision of the Peshitta according to Greek manuscripts for a more precise translation. For the first time in Syriac, the Peshitta included the four minor catholic epistles and the Book of Revelation. The Philoxenian version was accepted only by the Monophysite Syrians.<sup>396</sup> Two later Syriac writers, Isho'dad of Merv<sup>397</sup> (c. 850) and Ebedjesu (d.1318) both rejected Revelation, but Dionysios Bar Salibi, medieval Syriac exegete and bishop of Amid (1166-1171), wrote a commentary on the Apocalypse and seems to have recognized it as Scripture. Bar Salibi, who wrote numerous other commentaries, is highly regarded among the Syrians and it is very

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<sup>391</sup> On the Diatessaron, and all of Paul's letters, including the apocryphal third epistle to the Corinthians, see Metzger, *Canon*, 219 and 221.

<sup>392</sup> Goodspeed, 119.

<sup>393</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 218.

<sup>394</sup> Goodspeed, 120. Goodspeed notes that a Syriac Old and New Testament canon found at St. Catherine's Monastery on Mt. Sinai, dated c. 400, contains the four gospels, Acts of the Apostles and fourteen epistles of Paul. At the end of the canonical list, the writer added the words, "This is all." Goodspeed, 120.

<sup>395</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 217.

<sup>396</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 219-20.

<sup>397</sup> Isho'dad of Merv, the most important Nestorian commentator, covered both Testaments in his exegetical works, but ignored the four minor catholic epistles and the Apocalypse, none of which are included in the Peshitta. (Swete, cxcvi.) The Jacobite writer Barhebraeus (c. 1286) in his *Ausar Raze* also wrote commentaries on the entire Old and New Testaments excluding the same books as Isho'dad. Swete, cxcvi.

likely that his commentary greatly influenced the eventual general acceptance of the Apocalypse among the Syrians in the same way that Andrew's commentary influenced the acceptance of Revelation among the Chalcedonian Orthodox.

But technically speaking, the canonical position of Revelation and the catholic epistles remained insecure among the non-Chalcedonian Syrians since the Peshitta continued to be copied and read without them.<sup>398</sup> Divergences even from the Peshitta continued to arise for centuries. Two medieval lists, a ninth century Syriac and a ninth century Arabic, omit *all* seven catholic epistles and Revelation and yet another 12<sup>th</sup> century Syriac canon includes *1 and 2 Clement* while still excluding Revelation.<sup>399</sup> The lack of uniformity or consensus at such a late date is striking.

#### 2.7.6.2 The Nestorians

Generally speaking currently the non-Chalcedonian, so-called "Monophysite," Syrians accept Revelation, as do other Monophysites, including the Copts and the Armenians, even if it plays little or no role in their lectionaries. However, non-Chalcedonian Nestorian churches do not accept Revelation. Under the influence of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the Nestorian Assyrian Church rejected not only the Apocalypse but all of the disputed catholic epistles. The Nestorian lectionary contains readings only from the 22 books of the Peshitta, although reportedly some clergy occasionally preach sermons on the texts from the books rejected from their New Testament.<sup>400</sup> Around the mid-sixth century the Nestorian theologian, Paulus, a prominent teacher at Nisibis, a leading theological center at the time, appeared to advocate a deutero-canon for the New Testament, which would have included Revelation. He stated that the books possessing absolute authority were the four Gospels, Acts, fourteen epistles of Paul, 1 Peter and 1 John. Of lower authority, were James, 2 Peter, Jude, 2 and 3 John and the Apocalypse.<sup>401</sup>

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<sup>398</sup> Goodspeed, 122.

<sup>399</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 222.

<sup>400</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 221.

<sup>401</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 220.

## 2.8 The Synodal Canons

The final canon issued by the Synod of Laodicea in 363 C.E., canon 59, forbade the reading of uncanonical books in church: "Let no private psalms nor any uncanonical books (ἀκανόνιστα βιβλία) be read in the Church, but only the canonical ones (τὰ κανονικά) of the New and Old Testament."<sup>402</sup> This decree is found in all accounts of the synod, however, the decree itself did not include a list of the books which the synod considered canonical. The question about which books were indeed canonical remained open. An attempt was made to remedy this obvious shortcoming because a sixtieth canon can be found in some later manuscripts of the synod's proceedings. The so-called 60<sup>th</sup> canon of the Council of Laodicea lists twenty six New Testament books: Revelation is omitted. But this list is missing from most of the Latin and Syriac versions of that council's canons,<sup>403</sup> strong evidence that the list itself may not have originally been among the decisions of that synod. It is difficult to determine whether the list was a relatively early appendix or a significantly later addition. The list may not even reflect the canon that synod participants would have chosen had they composed the list themselves. The canon may in fact be a fourth century list, however it cannot be regarded as the earliest synodal canon of Scripture.<sup>404</sup>

More than three hundred years passed before another Eastern synod would take up the question of the canon. The Council of Trullo was held in 691 and 692 in the domed room (*trullos*) of the palace of Emperor Justinian II in Constantinople. This council is also given the name Quinisext,<sup>405</sup> since it convened for the purpose of completing the work of the Fifth (553) and Sixth (680) Ecumenical Councils. The Quinisext council ratified the canons (that is, church regulations) of a large number of previous synods as well as the canons (that is, spiritual and disciplinary instructions) of a great number of respected Church Fathers. This

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<sup>402</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 210.

<sup>403</sup> Alexander Souter, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), 195, fn 1.

<sup>404</sup> Three early Western synods issued canons: The Council of Hippo, 393, and two synods at Carthage 397 and 419, all of which listed our twenty seven New Testament books as scripture. No doubt the last two were greatly influenced by Augustine. Goodspeed, 126. Although a canon of Scripture was supposedly promulgated at the council held by Pope Damasus in Rome, 382 C.E., (which Souter considers to be the earliest synodal canon (Souter, 195), the so-called "Damasian Canon" is now believed to be a non-papal canon from the sixth century.

<sup>405</sup> Literally "Fifth-Sixth."

council is pointed to by some as finally fixing the canon for the Orthodox because it was the first Ecumenical Council which ratified a canon. But, yet again, we must ask *which* canon?

With regard to the canon of Scripture, rather than creating clarification, the Council of Trullo only compounded the confusion. The question of the New Testament canon of the East remained hopelessly muddled and even contradictory because the Quinisext synod did not compose its own list of canonical Scripture but only ratified earlier decisions, ignoring the fact that the canons of Scripture enumerated by earlier councils and various Fathers were not in agreement, especially with respect to Revelation. For example, Athanasius, Basil the Great and the Synod of Carthage accepted Revelation, while the Council at Laodicea and the 85 Apostolic Canons rejected it. They ratified Amphilochios' canon, but it is unclear whether he accepted or rejected Revelation or the catholic epistles. On the other hand, the 85 Apostolic Canons accepted *1 and 2 Clement* as Scripture, something which earlier synods and the ratified Fathers did not. *All of these* synodal decisions and patristic canons of Scripture were ratified at Trullo. Metzger concludes, and he may be correct, that the representatives at Trullo had not even read all of the texts they ratified.<sup>406</sup> Another possibility is that the synod participants *knew* that the earlier synods and Fathers acknowledged differing canons of Scripture; they simply did not consider these variations to be of critical importance. They may have purposely chosen to issue a blanket ratification of all canons of Scripture, perhaps even with full knowledge that the canons were *not* in complete agreement, for the following reasons:

1. As we have seen, and as the experience of synod participants had shown, people could recognize different canons and still be completely orthodox in doctrine.

2. At this time, the lectionary had already been fixed and the Quinisext participants did not see the need to issue a definitive canon. The clearly uncanonical and heretical books were known to all, and furthermore, they were irrelevant since they had no place in the liturgical life of the Church.

3. By this time, any differences of opinion about the canon would be minor. Probably the only book still at issue was the Apocalypse. Since the Apocalypse was

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<sup>406</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 216.

not even part of the lectionary, there was no need to reach unanimity on the matter. “Official” uniformity was simply not needed, as discussed below in number 4.

4. Eastern Christians are comfortable with ambiguity and do not feel compelled to define and delineate everything. Definitions are usually made only by necessity. Rarely can anything be truly described as the “official” position of the Orthodox Church since a high degree of freedom of opinion is usually allowed and respected, except for dogma (as specified in the Creed) and clear issues of morality.

5. Simply ratifying previous canons of Scripture allowed the Quinisext council to respect and permit regional or individual preferences with respect to the canon without creating unnecessary controversy or appearing disrespectful toward revered, ancient authorities.

Since no Ecumenical Council has fixed a specific canon, it can genuinely be said that for the East the canon of Scripture has never been resolved with finality.

## 2.9 The Later Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Periods

After the patristic “Golden Age,” disagreement regarding the place of the Apocalypse in the canon persisted. An Origenist scholar from Jerusalem, Leontius of Byzantium (d. 543), accepted the Apocalypse and referred to it as the last canonical book of the New Testament. Alexander Souter, noting Leontius’ acceptance of the Apocalypse, triumphantly proclaimed, “At this period, then, the whole Greek-speaking church seems to have been in line with the canon as we know it.”<sup>407</sup> But Souter was clearly wrong. Metzger notes that Westcott lists no fewer than six different canons of Scripture for the Old Testament and New Testaments in the tenth century alone for the Greek Orthodox Church.<sup>408</sup> The place of the Apocalypse was not at all secure and its acceptance remained varied.

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<sup>407</sup> Souter, *Text and Canon*, 188. Souter, like so many other modern writers seems overly anxious to point to a final resolution of the Eastern canon.

<sup>408</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 217. See Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Bible in the Church*, 6th ed. (London, 1889 reprinted, Grand Rapids, 1980), 227. Even in the West, variations occasionally cropped up until the Protestant Reformation when the Roman Catholic Church was forced to take a firm and unequivocal stand and delineated the canon of Scripture at the Council of Trent. Among the Reformers, many differences of opinion existed. Even many Reformers continued to regard Revelation with suspicion, but due to its long history they felt that



Many ecclesiastical writers, such as Maximos the Confessor (d. 662) continued to reject the Apocalypse. In the ninth century Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople (d. 828) composed a canon of Scripture, classifying various books as “canonical” or “disputed.” Revelation was listed as disputed and non-canonical.<sup>409</sup> On the other hand, John of Damascus (8<sup>th</sup> century) accepted Revelation but also listed ‘the canons of the holy apostles by Clement’ as part of the New Testament canon!<sup>410</sup> Photios the Great, Patriarch of Constantinople (d. 891) also accepted Revelation as canonical<sup>411</sup> and Arethas, tenth century bishop of Caesarea, Cappadocia, accepted the Apocalypse and wrote a commentary for it based heavily on his predecessor, Andrew.<sup>412</sup>

Doubts about the canonicity of the Apocalypse persisted in the Eastern Orthodox Church well into the fourteenth century.<sup>413</sup> “The very last of the prominent ecclesiastical historians of Byzantium, Nikephoros Kallistos, finally noted the reversal of Orthodox uncertainty about the Apocalypse and the trend toward its acceptance as canonical.”<sup>414</sup> Yet even then evidence indicates that the Apocalypse occupied a middle ground between the canonical and the clearly uncanonical.

Two historical factors advanced the acceptance of the Apocalypse into the canon of the Eastern Orthodox Church. First, renewal of interest in the book especially with the fall of Constantinople in 1453. It was a watershed moment, even though a good number of Orthodox Christians had already been living under the Ottoman Turks or Arabs for some

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they could not exclude it from the canon. Martin Luther grudgingly allowed it to remain in the canon, but claimed that it was theologically inadequate and refused to recognize it in any meaningful way. Metzger, *Canon*, 242-3. The Swiss reformer, Ulrich Zwingli, refused to base any Christian teaching on Revelation and said it was not a biblical book. John Calvin wrote commentaries on every book of the New Testament except Revelation and 2 and 3 John. Metzger, *Canon*, 245-6.

<sup>409</sup> Goodspeed, 140. Nikephoros’ list has come to be known as the *Stichometry of Nikephoros*, because he recorded the length of each book in *stichoi*, or lines of Homeric length, which was the standard measurement of Greek manuscripts.

<sup>410</sup> John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* 4.17.

<sup>411</sup> Goodspeed, 140.

<sup>412</sup> *PG* 106: 459-806.

<sup>413</sup> *Elizabeth Day McCormick Apocalypse*, (2 vols.) vol. II, “History and Text,” by Ernest Cadman Colwell, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), 142.

<sup>414</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse*, II:142, citing Nikephoros Kallistos, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.45.

time. Most Orthodox Christians, with the exception of the Russians, found themselves in a situation similar to that which their ancestors had faced under the pre-Christian Roman Empire: alienated, powerless and living under a sometimes hostile, non-Christian regime. The treatment of Christians varied depending upon the disposition of the local ruler. At various times and places Christians were permitted to practice their faith, but examples of harsh treatment, forced conversions and martyrdoms under the Arabs and Ottoman Turks are numerous and well known. The persecution and martyrdom of Eastern Christians during this period must have revived Eastern interest in the Apocalypse. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the number of Revelation manuscripts increased dramatically.<sup>415</sup> Several entirely new commentaries on the Apocalypse were penned during this period.<sup>416</sup> It is also during this time that we see the first translation of Revelation into modern Greek as well as the appearance of church frescoes and icons depicting scenes from the Apocalypse.<sup>417</sup>

The second factor which facilitated the creation of a fixed New Testament canon, and a place for the Book of Revelation in it, was the invention of the printing press. It is well known that the first book to be printed was the Gutenberg Bible. Once the Bible came to be printed by press, the biblical text and its contents were fixed, largely resolving the question of the canon *de facto*.<sup>418</sup> In the ensuing centuries, bibles became increasingly affordable and commonplace. Now almost anyone could own a bible and everyone knew which books it contained. Accessibility also led to more interest in the bible and efforts were undertaken to make it available in vernacular languages. New translations were rapidly produced. Eighteen different German bibles based on the Latin Vulgate appeared between 1466 and 1522.<sup>419</sup>

At the same time an explosion in learning and literacy occurred, especially an interest in the classics. With the fall of Constantinople numerous educated Greeks had gone to the West, especially to Italy, for refuge. Many Greek manuscripts found their way to the West

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<sup>415</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse*, II:143.

<sup>416</sup> See Asterios Argyriou, *Les exégèses grecques de l' Apocalypse à l'époque turque (1453-1821)*, Seira Philologike kai Theologike 15, (Thessalonika: Hetaireia Makedonikon Spoudon, 1982).

<sup>417</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse*, II:13-4.

<sup>418</sup> Goodspeed, 147.

<sup>419</sup> Goodspeed, 147.

and were published. The rise of the Renaissance has been partly attributed to this influx of Greek scholars. A sudden interest in the Greek text of the New Testament emerged.<sup>420</sup> Erasmus was the first to publish the Greek text of the New Testament and also supported modern language versions of the New Testament.<sup>421</sup> “[T]he printing of the Greek New Testament formed the most important step for the practical association of the Revelation with the other books of the New Testament.”<sup>422</sup>

But even the printing of the New Testament in the original Greek cannot be said to have secured the place of Revelation in the canon of the East. Most Byzantine New Testaments lacked the Apocalypse and since it formed no part of the lectionary, there hardly seemed any reason to reproduce it. In contrast to the rest of Europe, where the most popular book to translate into the vernacular was the Bible, translation of the Bible into modern Greek was quite unthinkable. For centuries the Greeks had read the Septuagint Old Testament and Greek New Testament in the original. To translate it meant to corrupt and betray the text. Even today, Scripture readings in the Greek Orthodox liturgies are not given in modern Greek but only in the original.

## 2.10 The Impact of the Reformation

By the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century a variety of spiritual writings had been translated into modern Greek. “But it cannot be emphasized too strongly that, in spite of this flood of translations in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, there was no translation of the Bible.”<sup>423</sup> In sharp contrast to the active translation of the Bible in the rest of Europe, only one version of the New Testament was printed in vernacular Greek between the invention of the printing press and the year 1840.<sup>424</sup> The only apparent exceptions to this scriptural translation taboo were the Psalter and the Apocalypse.

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<sup>420</sup> Goodspeed, 149.

<sup>421</sup> Goodspeed, 149. Erasmus began to raise many old questions about the authorship of Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude and Revelation. Erasmus concluded that John the evangelist did not write Revelation. Metzger, *Canon*, 240-41.

<sup>422</sup> Caspar Rene Gregory, *Canon and Text of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1907), 292.

<sup>423</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse*, II:22.

In the seventeenth century, Maximos the Peloponnesian, usually identified as the same individual known as Maximos the Gallipolite (d. 1633), was among those who provided translations of various works into modern Greek primarily for the general public. Among his translations were patristic writings, sermons, a medical encyclopedia, the Psalter, and the Apocalypse.<sup>425</sup> Ernest Colwell astutely observes that Maximos' translation of the Apocalypse indicates that even at that late date Revelation did not enjoy the same status as the rest of the New Testament in the Orthodox Church.<sup>426</sup>

The translation of the Bible into the vernacular began in these areas [the Psalter and the Apocalypse] because of the relation of these books to the canon. The actual (as distinguished from the theoretical) canon of Scripture in the Orthodox church contained the New Testament without the Apocalypse. ...The book of which the most copies were made was the Psalter, and this is due to the role played by the Psalter in the liturgy. In the thought of most of the people the Psalter was a hymn book rather than a part of the Bible. Therefore, the translation of the Psalter into the vulgar tongue was not confronted with the pious resistance which met all attempts to translate Scripture. This is even more true of the Apocalypse than of the Psalter.<sup>427</sup>

Colwell lists a wide variety of works which had been translated into modern Greek by the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century by predecessors and contemporaries of Maximos, but the Bible is not among them.<sup>428</sup> The manuscript witness and the acceptance of a translation of the Apocalypse into the vernacular Greek reflect the attitude which prevailed toward the book:

A further indication of its borderline position is given by the fact that, out of approximately two hundred Greek manuscripts of the Apocalypse listed by Hoskier, forty were bound up with non-canonical material. When, therefore, we find Maximos translating the Psalter and the Apocalypse, he is very much at home in the attitude of his contemporaries toward these semi-canonical books. It is not to be assumed that because of these works he would regard

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<sup>424</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse*, II:25.

<sup>425</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse*, II:21. Maximos translated three manuscripts into the common tongue, the earliest of which is the Apocalypse with commentary. The McCormick codex is a copy of Maximos' commentary. *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>426</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse*, II:22.

<sup>427</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse*, II:22.

<sup>428</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse*, II:23. "It was not a common or ordinary thing for a pious Greek to translate the New Testament." *McCormick Apocalypse*, II: 25.

himself as a translator of Scriptures and would go on inevitably to the translation of the New Testament itself.<sup>429</sup>

In the seventeenth century, Swiss Protestants and the Dutch government intent on spreading Calvinism in the east, convinced the Patriarch of Constantinople, Cyril Lucaris (d. 1638), to permit a translation of the New Testament into the vernacular Greek.<sup>430</sup> It has been alleged that Lucaris himself was very influenced by Calvinism. Greek Orthodox Church leaders and the people did not receive the translation of the Scriptures with enthusiasm. Furthermore, the plan to catechize and convert the Orthodox, establish Protestants schools, and teach the Scriptures was rejected by the Orthodox as an insult, a misguided effort to evangelize an already Christian people with an ancient and apostolic heritage, far more authentic than Protestantism.<sup>431</sup> But the plan was not quickly abandoned by the Dutch Protestants and, although opposed by the Orthodox Church, copies of the vernacular Scriptures were reprinted twelve times and heavily distributed through the efforts of European Protestants, the British Bible Society, and other groups.<sup>432</sup>

Another synod, which is frequently cited as having finally fixed the Orthodox canon of Scripture, is the Synod of Jerusalem in 1672, headed by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Dosithius. The synod was called to renounce Calvinist doctrine and any Protestant-influenced statements attributed to Cyril Lucaris.<sup>433</sup> The synod affirmed Orthodox Christian doctrine and vehemently denied that Cyril had held Calvinist views. This synod also affirmed the Septuagint as the authentic Scriptures of the Old Testament, listed the standard twenty-seven book New Testament canon, including Revelation, but also explicitly confirmed the so-called 60<sup>th</sup> canon of Laodicea, which omits Revelation from the canon, as we have seen.<sup>434</sup> Even if

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<sup>429</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse*, II:22.

<sup>430</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse* II:26-33.

<sup>431</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse*, II:31.

<sup>432</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse* II:32-33.

<sup>433</sup> *The Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Jerusalem*, trans. J. N. W. B. Robertson (London: Baker, 1899). The Synod insisted that Calvinists falsified Cyril's views and forged his "confession," saying that publicly and privately he had always expressed beliefs contrary to Calvinism, was entirely Orthodox, and he had specifically repudiated Calvinism with an oath. They offered numerous quotations from Cyril's sermons. *Ibid*, 16- 60.

<sup>434</sup> Chapter 2.8, page 106.

the Synod of Jerusalem had not affirmed conflicting canons, strictly speaking, it cannot be said that this synod conclusively settled the canonical status of Revelation since it was a local synod, not an Ecumenical Council. As such, it does not have the status of a council such as Trent has for the Roman Catholic Church, which officially, permanently and unequivocally confirmed the canon of Scripture for Roman Catholics. As of yet, an “official” resolution of the canon has not occurred in Orthodox Christianity.

## 2.11 The Current Status of Revelation in the Canon of Eastern Christianity

### 2.11.1 The Eastern Orthodox Church

The Eastern Orthodox Church is an umbrella which encompasses the vast majority of Eastern Christians, including Greek, Russian, Albanian, Romanian, Serbian, Antiochean, Bulgarian Orthodox, etc. They are functionally independent but theologically identical and in full communion with each other. The Orthodox do not perceive themselves as many “different” churches but as a single Church because of their unanimity in doctrine and practice. The Orthodox Church recognizes Revelation as a part of the canon of the New Testament, primarily as the result of a *de facto* situation as outlined above. Revelation still has no place in the lectionary cycle. The date of translation of the Apocalypse into the vernacular languages of traditionally Orthodox countries varies, but the appearance of a translation did not affect the status of the book or reverse its exclusion from the lectionary.<sup>435</sup>

### 2.11.2 East Syrian (Nestorian) Church

The East Syrian Churches, which separated after the rejection of Nestorius by the Council of Ephesus in 431, have a twenty two book canon which excludes Revelation. The canon has nothing to do with the issues or decisions involved in the Council of Ephesus or Chalcedon, but simply reflects an earlier, shorter canon, toward which the Syrian Church was

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<sup>435</sup> For example, Christianity arrived in Georgia in the mid-fourth century. A Georgian alphabet was quickly created and all of the New Testament scriptures were translated into Georgian except for Revelation, which was not translated until the tenth century. Metzger, *Canon*, 224. See chapter 7.2.2.

already predisposed.<sup>436</sup> The split from the Monophysite and Chalcedonian churches simply fixed the Syrian canon as the Peshitta.<sup>437</sup> This was the status of the canon in Syrian areas at the time of the Nestorian controversy. After Ephesus and Chalcedon these churches were no longer in communion with the rest of Christianity and were not influenced to expand the canon, such as happened eventually in Antioch which also had originally accepted only a smaller canon.

### 2.11.3 West Syrian Orthodox (Monophysite) Church

While the East Syrian national church rejects Revelation, the Western Syrian Church, although not in communion with the Antiochean Syrian Orthodox Church because it is Monophysite, accepts Revelation as canonical. This is due to the influence of Philoxenus, bishop of Mabbug in Syria, who commissioned one of his bishops to create a more accurate revision of the Peshitta according to Greek manuscripts. This occurred in 508 and the “Philoxenian” version of the New Testament remains accepted by the Monophysite-branch of the Syrian Church.<sup>438</sup>

### 2.11.4 Armenian Orthodox Church (Monophysite)

By the third century Christianity was already well established in Armenia according to Eusebius.<sup>439</sup> In 301 the Armenian kingdom became the first nation to accept Christianity as its official religion. The Armenian Church is Monophysite and has not been in union with the Chalcedonian Orthodox since the schism after the Council of Chalcedon. The Book of Revelation had been translated into Armenian at some point prior to the twelfth century,<sup>440</sup> but it was not universally accepted as part of the Armenian New Testament until the end of

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<sup>436</sup> Farmer and Farkasfalvy, 9.

<sup>437</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 219.

<sup>438</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 219. See chapter 2.7.6.1, page 104 above, about Philoxenus. On the use of the term “Monophysite,” see page 25, fn 78.

<sup>439</sup> *E.H.* 11.46.2.

<sup>440</sup> Robert W. Thomson, *Nerses of Lambron Commentary on the Revelation of Saint John*, Hebrew University Armenian Studies series, vol. 9 (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 4.

the twelfth century when it was promoted as Scripture by a renowned figure in Armenian Church history, Nerses of Lampron, Archbishop of Tarsus (d. 1198). Under his direction, a new Armenian translation of Revelation was prepared, along with a commentary based on that of Andrew of Caesarea. A synod of the Armenian Church was convened at Constantinople which accepted Revelation as Holy Scripture.<sup>441</sup>

#### 2.11.5 The Coptic Orthodox Church (Monophysite)

The Church in Egypt, originally Greek speaking, soon spread to those who only knew Coptic and eventually became Monophysite. New Testament books as well as apocryphal books circulated freely in Egypt. Some theorize that the Nag Hammadi library of Gnostic texts was hidden in response to Athanasius' Thirty-Ninth Festal Epistle.<sup>442</sup> Athanasius' epistle delineated the canon in both Greek and Coptic. The Coptic Church recognizes Revelation as Scripture and reads from it during worship services on Good Friday.

#### 2.11.6 The Ethiopian (Abyssinian) Orthodox Church (Monophysite)

Since the Ethiopian Church was under the jurisdiction of the Coptic Church until 1959, one would expect its New Testament canon to parallel that of the Copts, but it does not. It is a very ancient Church, and actually has two canonical traditions. The broader canon, the Amharic (vernacular Ethiopian), consists of thirty five New Testament books.<sup>443</sup> A corpus identified by Roger Cowley as the *Andemta* corpus consists of Amharic commentaries on biblical and patristic texts in Geez, (the classical Ethiopian language), including a commentary on Revelation. A narrower canon of twenty seven books also includes the Apocalypse. Cowley identifies two manuscript traditions for the interpretation of the

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<sup>441</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 224. For the full story, see Schmid, *Einleitung*, 99-113, or chapter 7.2.1, page 235-238.

<sup>442</sup> Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 172.

<sup>443</sup> Roger Cowley, *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of St. John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 10-12. See also by the same author, "The Biblical Canon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Today," *Ostkirchliche Studien* xxiii (1974), 318-23.



Apocalypse. He outlines the main features of each and compares them with other exegetical traditions, but both are too late to be considered for our period.

Cowley tells of the Ethiopian tradition, preserved in one of the commentaries, that the Book of Revelation was lost until “rediscovered” by John Chrysostom.<sup>444</sup> Although certainly not historically accurate, the story is interesting and reads as follows:

[I]t is said that when the 318 bishops were gathered in the twelfth year of the reign of Constantine, the orthodox of faith, they collected all the books which the idol worshippers had destroyed during forty years, twenty five years of Diocletian and fifteen years of Maximian, and they sought this book and they did not find (it), because it had not previously been copied. By the will of God, John Chrysostom found it on an island fifty eight years from the great council of Nicea and in the fourth year from the council of Ephesus, when Eudoxia, wife of Arcadius son of Theodosius exiled him, after he had died.<sup>445</sup>

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<sup>444</sup> *The Apocalypse in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*, 166-171.

<sup>445</sup> *The Apocalypse in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*, 78. Translation by Cowley.

## Chapter 3

### Andrew and the Apocalypse Text

The textual history of the Apocalypse is unique among the books of the New Testament. The commentary of Andrew of Caesarea has impacted the transmission of the text of Revelation itself by creating a text type of its own, and by stimulating the production of a large portion of the existing Revelation manuscripts. The Apocalypse textual transmission differs from the rest of the New Testament in several ways, primarily because the text has been generated along two lines of transmission, one of them entirely outside the stream of the biblical manuscript tradition. Since the Apocalypse never became part of the lectionary of the Orthodox Church, it was copied far less frequently and a preferred ecclesiastical text type never resulted. Manuscripts containing the Revelation of John are not only found bound with other books of the New Testament but are located among collections of miscellaneous spiritual writings and even with profane literature. For example, one manuscript containing Revelation also holds the *Acts of Thomas* and various theological treatises, with the Apocalypse found between the life of St. Euphrosyne and a treatise by Basil the Great.<sup>446</sup>

Approximately seven times more manuscripts exist of the gospels than of the book of Revelation and half of the manuscripts of Revelation stand alone, whereas other books of the New Testament are consistently found bound together with similar books.<sup>447</sup> Metzger made a list of the "Greek Bibles that have survived from the Byzantine period," and noted that the gospels exist in 2,328 copies but Revelation exists in only 287 copies. "The lower status of the Book of Revelation in the East is indicated also by the fact that it has never been included in the official lectionary of the Greek Church, whether Byzantine or modern."<sup>448</sup> J.K. Elliott, citing Kurt Aland's 1994 *Liste*, counted 303 manuscripts containing Revelation. He observed that only eleven uncials contain Revelation and only six papyri do, and no papyrus preserves the complete text. The oldest fragments are P<sup>98</sup> in Cairo (2<sup>nd</sup> century), P<sup>47</sup> third century

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<sup>446</sup> Gregory, *Canon and Text*, 291.

<sup>447</sup> Goodspeed, 136-7.

<sup>448</sup> Metzger, *Canon*, 217, citing, Kurt and Barbara Aland, *Der Text des Neuen Testaments* (Stuttgart, 1982).

(Chester Beatty), and P<sup>18</sup> from the third or fourth century. The oldest complete text is Sinaiticus (Ⲙ) from the fourth century.<sup>449</sup> David Aune lists six papyri fragments, eleven uncials and 292 minuscules as textual witnesses, not including patristic quotations and translations.<sup>450</sup> Of the 292 minuscules containing Revelation, 98 are commentaries, mostly copies of Andrew.<sup>451</sup>

A number of peculiarities also exist in the transmission of the actual text of the Apocalypse. First, the reliability presumed for ordinary text-type categories of the New Testament does not apply. Four main text types can be identified for the Apocalypse: (1) A C Oikoumenios, which is considered the most reliable,<sup>452</sup> (2) the textual tradition represented by P<sup>47</sup> and Ⲙ (Codex Sinaiticus), (3) the K (or “Koine”) text, which Nestle-Aland identifies as M<sup>K</sup>, and (4) the Andreas text type, often identified with Ⲙ<sup>a</sup> (the Sinaiticus corrector) and represented in Nestle-Aland siglia as M<sup>A</sup>, or the Majority Andreas type.<sup>453</sup> Approximately one-third of the total Apocalypse manuscripts are the Majority Andreas type. The Nestle-Aland edition favors “A C Oecumenius” as the most reliable text tradition for Revelation. This conflicts with the usual opinion regarding the reliability of these types in the rest of the New Testament, in which Ⲙ is preferred and which considers A C to be inferior witnesses.<sup>454</sup> Lachmann and Hort also regarded A as superior to the other uncials of the Apocalypse because it retains many of the Hebraisms of the author, “resulting in wholly ungrammatical Greek, which later copyists tended either to soften or eliminate.”<sup>455</sup> All of the types can be traced back at least to the fourth century.

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<sup>449</sup> J.K. Elliott, “The Distinctiveness of the Greek Manuscripts of the Book of Revelation,” *Journal of Theological Studies* New Series 48 (1997) 116-124, 120, citing K. Aland, ed. *Kurzgefasste Liste der Griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments*, (Berlin and New York, 1994).

<sup>450</sup> David E. Aune, *Revelation* (3 vols.), Word Biblical Commentary series, vols. 52A, B and C, ([Nashville, TN:] Nelson Reference and Electronic, 1997), 52A:cxxxvi. Although 293 minuscules have been listed containing Revelation, only 292 actually do. The manuscript identified as number 1277 and has been said to contain Revelation in fact does not. See Aune, 52A:cxxxix-cxl.

<sup>451</sup> Aune, 52A:cxxxix-cxl. See Aune 52A:cxxvi - cxlvii for a complete listing of Revelation manuscripts.

<sup>452</sup> “A” is the text type of *Codex Alexandrinus* and “C” is the *Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus*. Both are fifth century uncials and their Revelation text type resembles that of Oikoumenios.

<sup>453</sup> Elliott, 120.

<sup>454</sup> Elliott, 121.

In the twentieth century the work of examining the textual history of the Apocalypse manuscripts was especially undertaken by three individuals: Hermann Von Soden, Herman Charles Hoskier, and Josef Schmid. Von Soden's work was extremely incomplete, since he only catalogued approximately seventy out of more than two hundred Apocalypse manuscripts known at the time. Von Soden did not seriously study the Andreas textual tradition and came to the conclusion that Andrew created his own text, but, according to Marie-Joseph Lagrange, by a kind of "juggling act" Von Soden identified the Andreas tradition with the symbol "I," to indicate Jerusalem, which Lagrange remarked was hardly appropriate for a text created in Cappadocia, as Von Soden had believed.<sup>456</sup>

Hoskier's work encompassed more manuscripts. He divided over 200 manuscripts into about 30 groups, with approximately fifteen remaining which he believed to be unrelated to any family group.<sup>457</sup> However, Hoskier completely excluded the Andreas Apocalypse manuscript family from his project and in fact expressed disdain for the Andreas manuscript tradition.<sup>458</sup> Hoskier was particularly interested in the transmission of the Apocalypse texts "independent of Church 'use' and which owe their freedom from Ecclesiastical standardization to their transmission apart from the documents collected as our New Testament."<sup>459</sup> Hoskier qualified the term 'use' since the Apocalypse does not form any portion of the lectionary of the Greek East. He was referring to Apocalypse texts which were found bound in non-canonical collections, such as with collections of treatises on mystical subjects or sermons. He considered those texts particularly valuable. "Before the official acceptance of the Apocalypse into the Canon, ...especially by those in the East, it circulated

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<sup>455</sup> "R.V.G. Tasker, "The Chester Beatty Papyrus of the Apocalypse of John," *Journal of Theological Studies* 50 (1949) 60-68, 61.

<sup>456</sup> Marie-Joseph Lagrange, *Introduction à l'étude du Nouveau Testament*, Vol. 2 "Critique textuelle, I" Part II "La Critique rationnelle," (Paris: J.Gabalda, 1935), 579.

<sup>457</sup> Hoskier, *Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse*, 2 vols. (London: Bernard Quaritch, Ltd., 1929), Vol. 1, x. It was Hoskier who first published the text of the Oikoumenios commentary in *The Complete Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse*, University of Michigan Humanistic Studies series, vol. XXIII (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1928).

<sup>458</sup> In reconstructing the Apocalypse text, Hoskier considered witnesses from Oikoumenios and from a variety of Latin sources, including Victorinus, Primasius, Cassiodorus, Apringius, Tyconius, Beatus, and pseudo-Ambrose, but did not consider Andreas, Arethas, Haymo or Bede. He expressed a negative opinion of the Andreas manuscript tradition: "There are so many variants in Andreas' commentary manuscripts...that I have been loth (sic) to cite Andreas or Arethas positively." *Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse*, 1:xxv.

<sup>459</sup> Hoskier, *Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse*, 1:xi.

freely from the earliest times among mystical writings, and we find it outside the New Testament included in Collections of Miscellanies....<sup>460</sup> Hoskier noted that more than forty Apocalypse cursives are bound up with other writings, including Hippolytus on Daniel, ascetic sermons of John Climacus, ascetic sermons of Ephraim, sermons of John Chrysostom on false teachers and on the presence of Christ, the Profession of Faith of 318 Fathers at the Council of Nicea, the Martyrdom of the Forty Martyrs at Sebaste, and hagiographies of Sts. Nicholas, Elias, Gregory the Armenian, Simeon the Stylite, George and the holy Archangels.<sup>461</sup>

Hoskier saw the great advantage of having two streams of testimony for the Apocalypse which “never coalesce, but at Athos today side by side we will find the Church standards and the independent texts (in collections of Miscellanies) being copied and re-copied independently.”<sup>462</sup> Hoskier states that the double line of transmission of the Greek Apocalypse text provides a “position of superiority as regards our material compared to the other books of the New Testament, because the Apocalypse – admitted somewhat late into the Canon of Scripture – was transmitted on lines independent of ecclesiastical tenets, dogmas and traditions, and is found in the middle of many Miscellanies on mystical subjects,” providing an additional means to check other authorities.<sup>463</sup>

Hoskier believed that with the help of Sinaiticus, the large number of cursive manuscripts provide excellent witness to the third century, the time of the Decian and Diocletian persecutions. After separating the Greek manuscripts into their respective families, Hoskier identified “twenty or thirty separate lines of transmission, all converging back to the original source.”<sup>464</sup>

In fact and in deed this is very apparent, for we shall not find traces of a mass of copies from which our extant copies were derived, but of one frail witness standing back of them all, for it is very noticeable that in places where this

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<sup>460</sup> Hoskier, *Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse*, 1:xxvi-xxvii.

<sup>461</sup> Hoskier, *Concerning the Text*, 1:xxvii.

<sup>462</sup> Hoskier, 1:xxvii. The same point is made by Aune, *Revelation*, 52A:cxxxvi.

<sup>463</sup> Hoskier, *The Complete Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse*, 4.

<sup>464</sup> Hoskier, *Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse*, 1:xx.

original was faint or difficult to read our principle witnesses falter and labour, and guess at the word, and in these places a variety of half-a-dozen or a dozen variants has resulted, which will be found in our record.<sup>465</sup>

But since Hoskier willfully ignored the Andreas textual tradition, it was left to Josef Schmid to provide the definitive work on the text of the Apocalypse in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>466</sup> After exhaustively examining all of the Apocalypse manuscripts, Schmid identified the main Apocalypse text types as (1) the Andreas text type or *Av*, (2) the Koine or *K*, (3) *A C Oikoumenios*, and, (4) the group which includes *P*<sup>47</sup>, *Sinaiticus* and *Origen*. Schmid's work on the text of Revelation remains unparalleled. As part of his work on the Apocalypse text, Schmid also created and published the critical text of the Commentary on the Apocalypse by Andrew of Caesarea, the subject of the present dissertation.

Schmid's main concern in editing the commentary of Andrew of Caesarea had been to determine one of the chief text types for Revelation, that of Andrew, which he designated "*Av*," for Ἀνδρέας. He wanted to determine whether an early text form of the Apocalypse could be accessed by an examination of the Andreas text type.<sup>467</sup> Schmid determined that all of the *Av* texts go back to one original, either the autograph of the Andreas commentary or a copy of it.<sup>468</sup> However, he also concluded that the Revelation text in the original Andreas commentary is older than the commentary itself, going back to a previously worked over text,<sup>469</sup> and can be found in the *Sinaiticus corrector*  $\aleph^a$ .<sup>470</sup>

After analyzing the Andreas manuscripts along with the other Apocalypse manuscript types, Schmid rejected Von Soden's assertion that Andrew himself had created the Andreas

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<sup>465</sup> Hoskier, *Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse*, 1: xvi.

<sup>466</sup> Josef Schmid, *Studien zur Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypse-Textes*, 3 parts (München: Karl Zink Verlag, 1955-56). Part 1 *Der Apokalypse-Kommentar des Andreas von Kaisareia Text* (1955), Part 2 *Die alten Stämme* (1955), and Part 3 *Historische Abteilung Ergänzungsband, Einleitung*, (1956).

<sup>467</sup> Georg Maldfeld, "Zur Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypse-Textes," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 14 (1958) 47-52, 48.

<sup>468</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 127. G. D. Kilpatrick, "Professor J. Schmid on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse," *Vigiliae Christianae* 13 (1959) 1-13, 3.

<sup>469</sup> Maldfeld, 49.

<sup>470</sup> Kilpatrick, 3.

text-type out of a mixture of several manuscripts.<sup>471</sup> Schmid supported his conclusion not only by his analysis of the relationship between variants found in the texts, but also from the statements of Andrew in the commentary, which indicate that Andrew was following an existing text as well as his comment regarding the need to respect the text, regardless of any violations of proper Attic syntax.<sup>472</sup>

The *K* text exists in a number of archetypes from approximately the ninth century, and can be found in a number of related families. P<sup>47</sup> and Origen are witnesses for the text in the third century and stand in an independent relationship to each other. Where they agree, the presumption is that they preserve a reading older than 200 C.E. They also seem to represent an Egyptian tradition and are associated with Coptic versions. The A C Oikoumenios group contains the best manuscript tradition. The most reliable by far is A, which, although it is from the fifth century, is a better text than Origen's which is two hundred years older.<sup>473</sup>

Schmid concluded that the history of the Apocalypse text can only be traced back to about 200 CE, and that most of the variants occurred in the first one hundred years of the transmission of the text.<sup>474</sup> No actual text type can truly be traced back before 200. We can recover a text of Revelation no later than the middle of the second century but the gap between this stage and the original text cannot be bridged.<sup>475</sup>

At least one reason for the many variants, which J.D. Kilpatrick mentions in his review of Schmid's work, is the language of the Apocalypse. "Even among the writers of the New Testament, some of them with very distinctive styles, the Greek of Revelation stands out. It is eccentric and would invite correction."<sup>476</sup> R.V.G. Tasker, discussing the Chester Beatty papyrus which contains one of the oldest fragments of the Apocalypse (P<sup>47</sup>), concurred: "It is generally recognized that the text of the Apocalypse, a book which gave

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<sup>471</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 125.

<sup>472</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 125. See *Chp. 72, Text 262, Comm. 240*.

<sup>473</sup> Kilpatrick, 4-5.

<sup>474</sup> Kilpatrick, 5.

<sup>475</sup> Kilpatrick, 6.

<sup>476</sup> Kilpatrick, 6.

some offence in certain quarters of the Greek-speaking Church in the second century, was subject from an early date to a series of attempts to improve the very Hebraic character of its Greek.<sup>477</sup>

Schmid observed that the text used by Andrew was older than even the text which influenced the Codex Sinaiticus<sup>478</sup> and that the Koine text and Andreas type are closely related. However, their transmission was quite different. The archetype of *K* was very questionable in places but Koine was extraordinarily closed.<sup>479</sup> The Andreas type splintered, however, and surprisingly, not all manuscripts of the Andreas commentary use the Andreas text type. This is even the case in the most significant commentary which followed Andrew, and the only other patristic exposition of Revelation, the commentary by Arethas, the tenth century bishop of Caesarea. Although he depended heavily on Andrew for the content of the commentary, either copying Andrew word for word or paraphrasing him, Arethas used a different Apocalypse text, that of the Koine.<sup>480</sup> The Koine text can be found in some Andreas commentary manuscripts, but the Andreas text-type was rarely dispersed apart from the commentary.<sup>481</sup> Therefore, while the Koine text influenced the Andreas text type occasionally, the reverse is not true. The Koine type remained free of influence of the Andreas type.

For Schmid this resulted in a benefit for the analysis of text types, since Andrew's commentary and the Apocalypse text were always copied together. Schmid concluded that the text of both *Av* and *K* can be determined with certainty.<sup>482</sup> He believed that Andrew himself may have had some influence on the text of the *Av* type, primarily in the strikingly frequent addition of *καί*.<sup>483</sup> Schmid concluded that Andrew probably added it at least a few times, namely where he concludes a section of commentary and then a section of the text is

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<sup>477</sup> Tasker, 60-1.

<sup>478</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 126.

<sup>479</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 126.

<sup>480</sup> Schmid, *Die alten Stämme*, 96-7.

<sup>481</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 126.

<sup>482</sup> Schmid, *Die alten Stämme*, 44.

<sup>483</sup> Schmid, *Die alten Stämme*, 52.



again inserted.<sup>484</sup> But Schmid also concluded that the Andreas text recension is the work of an earlier man, not Andrew, who had corrected the text through all of the chapters, and that a small portion of the corrections pre-existed this corrector.<sup>485</sup> This text form is inferior to the neutral text of AC Oikoumenios. However, a comparison of the Andreas text with the A C Oikoumenios and the P<sup>47</sup> is valuable for the production of the *Urtext* because it accidentally preserves main witnesses of the neutral text, A C Oikoumenios.<sup>486</sup>

The Andreas manuscripts allowed Schmid to more easily distinguish text types through their preservation in the commentary. The commentary formed a far better basis than the Apocalypse text alone for researching the text history since through the commentary the influences of other types of the Apocalypse text were distinguishable.<sup>487</sup> The many copies of the commentary not only helped to reconstruct the text used by Andrew, but also helped to determine variations. Through details accidentally preserved in the Andreas commentary transmission, Schmid was able to trace various groups back to an older edition and to a common stem and to recognize their relationship to older no-longer extant editions.<sup>488</sup> Schmid also concluded that to create a clear family tree for the Apocalypse manuscript tradition is no longer possible.<sup>489</sup>

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<sup>484</sup> Schmid, *Die alten Stämme*, 52.

<sup>485</sup> Schmid, *Die alten Stämme*, 53.

<sup>486</sup> Schmid, *Die alten Stämme*, 53.

<sup>487</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 128.

<sup>488</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 129.

<sup>489</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 129

## Chapter 4

# The Commentary of Andrew of Caesarea Within the Trajectory of Apocalypse Commentaries

The ambiguous and somewhat tenuous position of Revelation in the canon is exemplified by the fact that not a single major patristic figure, East or West, wrote a commentary on the Book of Revelation. Without a doubt, the lack of commentaries can also be attributed to the sheer difficulty in interpreting such a challenging text and subject matter. Numerous early Christian writers cited and commented on various passages of Revelation, including Justin Martyr (d. c. 165), Melito of Sardis (d. c. 190), Theophilus of Antioch (d. c. 183), Cyprian of Carthage (d. 258), Methodios of Olympus (d. 311), Clement of Alexandria (d. c. 210), Tertullian (d. c. 220), Irenaeus (d. c. 202), Origen (d. 253), and Hippolytus (d. 236). Patristic authors in the second and third centuries appealed to the Apocalypse in response to heresy, to support theological positions, to encourage the faithful during persecution, and to correct misinterpretations and misuse of the book. By the time actual commentaries on the Apocalypse appeared in the West, the book was just beginning to fall out of favor in the East. It had come to be associated with heresy and efforts were launched to discredit it by Dionysios of Alexandria and later by Eusebius. Hence, the earliest Apocalypse commentaries were composed in the Latin West, where acceptance of the book had never seriously wavered. The first Greek Apocalypse commentary did not appear until the end of the sixth century, approximately 300 years after the first Latin commentary.

### 4.1 Earliest Use of the Apocalypse

The earliest citations of Apocalypse passages can be found in Greek Fathers of the second century who cited and expounded upon key sections in the context of discussions on topics such as martyrdom, eschatology, and patience. Justin Martyr made the first direct appeal to Revelation, citing chapter 20 in support of the belief in a literal thousand year reign of Christ on earth.<sup>490</sup> Also in the second century, Melito of Sardis wrote *Περὶ τοῦ διαβόλου*

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<sup>490</sup> *Dialogue with Trypho*, 81.

καὶ τῆς Ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰωάννου.<sup>491</sup> This work is now lost, but it was probably a treatise on the devil in which Melito discussed certain passages from Revelation.<sup>492</sup> Theophilus of Antioch appealed to Revelation in response to the teachings of Hermogenes.<sup>493</sup> Irenaeus, in his famous work *Against Heresies*,<sup>494</sup> expounded upon certain passages from the Apocalypse to support his eschatological views.<sup>495</sup> Clement of Alexandria in his treatise, Ὑποτυπώσεις, reportedly commented on all the canonical books including the *antilegomena*.<sup>496</sup>

In the third century, Hippolytus wrote extensively in defense of the writings of John, including the Apocalypse. Jerome reports that Hippolytus composed a commentary on the Apocalypse: “scripsit nonullos in scripturas commentarios, e quibus haec repperi...*De Apocalypsi*,”<sup>497</sup> but Hippolytus likely never composed an actual commentary on Revelation. It was probably a treatise against the “Alogoi,” the group which opposed the Scriptures attributed to the apostle John.<sup>498</sup> Both Clement of Alexandria and Origen favored the Apocalypse and quoted it occasionally. Origen probably never composed a commentary on Revelation, despite his stated intention to do so.<sup>499</sup> Origen, however, championed the allegorical method of interpretation and thus could affirm the Apocalypse without accepting a literal chiliastic interpretation. Methodios of Olympus, one of the most highly educated and

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<sup>491</sup> According to Eusebius, *E.H.* 4.26.2. Jerome also reports that Melito wrote a book on the Apocalypse. See *On Illustrious Men* 24.

<sup>492</sup> Swete, cxci-iv.

<sup>493</sup> According to Eusebius *E.H.* 4.24.1.

<sup>494</sup> *Heres.* 5.26-36.

<sup>495</sup> According to Swete, the statement of Jerome, “Apocalypsin, quam interpretantur Iustinus martyr et Irenaeus” (*On Illustrious Men* 61) is satisfied by the exposition of certain Apocalyptic passages which are found in those works. Swete, cxciv.

<sup>496</sup> According to Eusebius, *E.H.* 6.14.6.

<sup>497</sup> *On Illustrious Men* 61; Swete, cxciv.

<sup>498</sup> A statue in the Lateran Museum of Rome which depicts Hippolytus seated on a chair, lists the titles of his works in an inscription on the back of the chair. Among the treatises cataloged is one entitled ΥΠΕΡ ΤΟΥ ΚΑΤΑ ΙΩΑΝΗΝ Ε[ΥΑ]ΓΓΕΛΙΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΕΩΣ. The preposition ὑπέρ rather than περί strongly suggests that this is an apology against the Alogoi who rejected both works rather than a commentary on both works.

<sup>499</sup> *Comm. on Matthew* 49. However, Joseph Kelly believes Origen may have delivered homilies on Revelation. Kelly, “Early Medieval Evidence,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 39 (1985), 278. See page 80, fn 299.

influential Greek Fathers of the third century, used Revelation in his only completely extant work in the original Greek, *The Symposium*, and avoided chiliasm by spiritualizing the Apocalypse.

The greatest of the early Latin writers, Tertullian, a chiliast and later a Montanist as well, enthusiastically embraced the Apocalypse and quoted it frequently. Chiliasts based their beliefs upon a literal interpretation of Revelation 20 and 21. Simonetti attributes the greater interest in and support for Revelation found in the West to the fact that chiliasm lingered longer there than in the East.<sup>500</sup> Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, made numerous citations to the Apocalypse. The emphasis in Revelation on remaining faithful and steadfast through tribulations held great appeal for Cyprian, who frequently wrote letters and treatises to provide inspiration and encouragement to the faithful suffering persecution. Cyprian himself was ultimately martyred in 258. It is not difficult to understand why Revelation appealed strongly to him and to others who experienced such ordeals.

## 4.2 Early Latin Apocalypse Commentaries

### 4.2.1 Victorinus

Credit for composing the first commentary on the Apocalypse is usually given to Victorinus, Bishop of Pettau (modern city of Ptuj, Slovenia), the first biblical exegete in the Latin language. He died as a martyr, probably in 304 under Diocletian. Victorinus may have been a Greek by birth who later learned Latin.<sup>501</sup> He wrote several commentaries, but only his commentary on the Apocalypse is extant.<sup>502</sup> Although he is described as having written a “commentary” on Revelation, in fact it is not a complete commentary but consists of explanations of selected key passages throughout the book. Nonetheless, Victorinus is credited with the first commentary because previous use of the Apocalypse was limited to allusions, brief citations, or the explanation of a single passage for a theological treatise.

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<sup>500</sup> Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation*, 97.

<sup>501</sup> This can only be speculation. Scholars have arrived at this conclusion based primarily on Jerome’s observation that Victorinus’ Greek was better than his Latin. Jerome, *Illustrious Men* 74.

<sup>502</sup> *Victorin de Poetovio Sur l’Apocalypse*, trans. M. Dulaey, Sources Chrétiennes series, vol. 423 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997), 20.

Victorinus made the first effort to offer an exposition of the book itself as a whole. He attempted to base his interpretation on Papias, Irenaeus, Hippolytus and especially Origen, upon whom he relied heavily for inspiration.<sup>503</sup> Unlike Origen, however, Victorinus was a chiliast. Although he provided allegorical interpretations of many passages of Revelation, he promoted a literal interpretation of the one thousand year reign and the New Jerusalem.

Victorinus is particularly remembered as the first to use the theory of recapitulation to explain the sequence of events described in Revelation.<sup>504</sup> According to this theory, the Apocalypse does not proceed in a linear fashion but repeats the same events using different imagery. For example, the bowl visions<sup>505</sup> are the same events described in the trumpet visions, but with different imagery.<sup>506</sup> The vision of the New Jerusalem<sup>507</sup> recapitulates the vision of the millennium.<sup>508</sup> Victorinus justified his theory by asserting that:

...although the same thing recurs..., still it is not said as if it occurred twice... We must not regard the order of what is said, because frequently the Holy Spirit, when he has traversed even to the end of the last times, returns again to the same times, and fills up what He had before failed to say.<sup>509</sup>

The theory of recapitulation was later adopted by the Donatist exegete Tyconius in his *Book of Rules*.<sup>510</sup>

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<sup>503</sup> Jerome makes this observation. In *Ep.* 61.2, Jerome specifically says that Victorinus was an imitator of Origen. See also Swete, cxcvii.

<sup>504</sup> Steinhauser, 30. Although Victorinus used the technique, he did not use the terminology.

<sup>505</sup> Rev. 16.

<sup>506</sup> Rev. 8 and 9. Victorinus, *Comm. on the Apoc.* 8.2, *Sources Chrétiennes* 423:87, ANF 7:352. (ANF cites it as Rev. 7:2.)

<sup>507</sup> Rev. 21:2.

<sup>508</sup> Rev. 20:4. Victorinus, *Comm. on the Apoc.* 21.2, *Sources Chrétiennes* 423:117.

<sup>509</sup> Victorinus, *Comm. on the Apoc.* 8.2, *Sources Chrétiennes* 423:87, ANF 7:352. (ANF cites it as Rev. 7:2.)

<sup>510</sup> Tyconius, *Le Livre de Règles*, trans. Jean-Marc Vercauteren, *Sources Chrétiennes* series, vol. 488 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2004). See also *Liber Regularum. Tyconius: the Book of Rules*, trans. William S. Babcock, (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989.) For a succinct list of the rules, see Simonetti, 95-96. Recapitulation is the sixth rule.

Jerome, who described Victorinus' life in *Illustrious Men*,<sup>511</sup> was so impressed with Victorinus' work that he republished Victorinus' interpretation in a version which he edited. Jerome corrected Victorinus' Latin, introduced an improved Latin biblical text for quotations, removed whatever he did not agree with (especially the chiliastic portions), rearranged sections, and finally added his own comments and selections from Tyconius.<sup>512</sup> This improved Victorinus commentary is often referred to as the "Victorinus-Jerome commentary," (and sometimes as "Jerome-Victorinus"), and proved to be extremely popular. Victorinus-Jerome exerted the greatest influence on subsequent Latin commentators.<sup>513</sup> Jerome's reworking of Victorinus was so successful that manuscripts of Victorinus' original work, free of Jerome's editing, essentially disappeared. An unedited Victorinus manuscript was not discovered until the modern era and only published 1916.<sup>514</sup> Previously, Victorinus' work was only known to us through Jerome's recension.

Jerome's revision of the Victorinus commentary reflected the prevailing fourth century attitude which rejected chiliasm.<sup>515</sup> In the West, the Apocalypse was never threatened

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<sup>511</sup> *Illustrious Men* 74.

<sup>512</sup> Steinhauser, 32. Jerome was familiar with Eastern doubts as to the authenticity and canonicity of the Apocalypse. He knew of the story of two Johns in Ephesus, one a presbyter and one an apostle, probably through the writings of Eusebius. Stonehouse, *The Apocalypse in the Ancient Church*, 148. But Jerome was convinced of Johannine authorship of the Gospel, the Apocalypse, and at least the First Epistle. Stonehouse, 148.

<sup>513</sup> Including Caesarius of Arles (early 6<sup>th</sup> century), Primasius (early 6<sup>th</sup> century), Cassiodore (mid-6<sup>th</sup> century), Ambrosius Autpertus (2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century), Beatus of Liébana (2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century), and the Venerable Bede (late 7<sup>th</sup>/early 8<sup>th</sup> centuries).

<sup>514</sup> Published by J. Haußleiter, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* series, vol. 49 (reprint, New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1965.) See also J. Haußleiter "Der chiliastische Schlussabschnitt im echten apokalypsekommentar des Bischofs Victorinus von Pettau," *Theologisches Litteraturblatt* 26 (1895) 193-199. The original commentary is preserved in the Codex Ottobonianus latinus 3288 A. However E. Ann Matter believes that the Victorinus text is still essentially lost since Haußleiter establishes the Victorinus text from fifteenth and sixteenth century manuscripts "which are in any case not overwhelmingly different. The three recensions of Jerome's version show that this text was as unstable as it was popular and that the original is essentially lost." E. Ann Matter, "The Apocalypse in Early Medieval Exegesis," in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, eds. Richard Emmerson and Bernard McGinn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992) 38, fn 1.

<sup>515</sup> Matter notes that Jerome was able to harmonize Victorinus' commentary with a Church that was now at peace with the empire. He saved Victorinus' use of recapitulation and transformed it into a "series of typological events recurring in sacred history from the time of the patriarchs, through the unknown future of the Church on earth, to the *parousia*." "The Apocalypse in Early Medieval Exegesis," 39. Matter's analysis of Jerome's version of Victorinus is quite interesting since her explanation of the basic approach is very similar to that of Oikoumenios: "[T]he interpretation follows the order of the Apocalypse text for the most part, not commenting on every verse, but emphasizing and rearranging for the sake of interpretation." Matter, 40.

with complete rejection. Unacceptable chiliastic explanations were simply replaced with spiritual interpretations. In the East, those opposed to literal chiliasm either accepted a spiritual interpretation of Revelation or rejected the book altogether.

#### 4.2.2 Tyconius

The fourth century North African Donatist writer Tyconius, who flourished around 390, wrote a commentary on the Apocalypse which followed a spiritual rather than literal interpretation.<sup>516</sup> Augustine was highly influenced by Tyconius and informs us that he had once embraced a chiliastic interpretation of Revelation 20<sup>517</sup> but later rejected both a chronological and sensual interpretation.<sup>518</sup> Tyconius' commentary on the Apocalypse was important as "the first attempt in the Western Church to apply a system of exegetical rules to the interpretation of a single biblical book."<sup>519</sup> Despite his Donatism, the Tyconian commentary had a profound and sustained influence on Revelation commentaries in the West. Together with the commentary of Victorinus-Jerome, it formed the foundation for nearly all Latin commentaries into the second millennium. In fact, Tyconius was so heavily quoted by subsequent Latin writers that even though his original commentary is no longer extant, remarkably, his entire work can be reconstructed.<sup>520</sup>

#### 4.2.3 Other Early Latin Commentaries

In the early sixth century, Caesarius, Bishop of Arles,<sup>521</sup> wrote a commentary on the

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<sup>516</sup> Tyconius, *Le Livre de Règles*, Sources Chrétiennes 488: 26-7. Stonehouse, 47.

<sup>517</sup> See *City of God* 20.7.

<sup>518</sup> Stonehouse, 148. Augustine (d. 430) was acquainted with doubts as to the authenticity of the Apocalypse, but held it as canonical and frequently cited it as an authority. Stonehouse, 148. Augustine listed his canon of Scriptures in *De Doctrina Christiana* and it corresponds to our present canon. The issue of the canon was raised at a synod in Hippo in 393 and Augustine's canon was adopted. This was later confirmed by synods at Carthage in 397 and 419. The influence of Augustine at these councils cannot be overstated.

<sup>519</sup> Steinhauser, 2.

<sup>520</sup> By extensive analysis and comparison of subsequent Latin commentators, Steinhauser was able to reconstruct Tyconius' commentary. A few extant fragments of Tyconius' work have been published in *The Turin Fragments of Tyconius' Commentary on Revelation*, ed. Francesco Lo Bue (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1963).

Apocalypse, which for centuries was falsely attributed to Augustine. Caesarius' two main sources were the commentaries of Victorinus and Tyconius, upon whom he depended heavily.<sup>522</sup> Three Latin writers offered commentaries on the Apocalypse during the mid-sixth century: Primasius, Apringius and Cassiodorus. Primasius of Hadrumentum, a bishop in North Africa from 527-565, wrote a very influential commentary which followed Jerome, Victorinus and Tyconius in many respects, but also made some original contributions.<sup>523</sup> Despite its comprehensive quality, it offered little new since it consisted almost entirely, (and often word for word), of passages from Tyconius and Augustine.<sup>524</sup> His contemporary, Apringius, the Bishop of Béja, Portugal, also wrote a commentary during the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>525</sup> The sole surviving manuscript of his work covers only the first five chapters and the last three chapters of Revelation.<sup>526</sup> Cassiodorus was a politician and statesman in Ravenna who left politics to study theology, but probably was never tonsured a monk. He wrote several commentaries and brief notes (*Complexiones*) on the Acts, Epistles, and the Apocalypse. He shows the influence of Victorinus and Augustine and also refers the reader specifically to Tyconius.<sup>527</sup>

#### 4.2.4 Latin Commentaries Subsequent to Andrew

Three additional Latin commentaries on the Apocalypse were composed in the eighth century, by Ambrosius Autpertus, the Venerable Bede and Beatus of Liébana. The first, by the Venerable Bede, appeared approximately one hundred years after Andrew's commentary.

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<sup>521</sup> He became bishop in 502 and ruled his diocese for 40 years. Steinhauser, 45.

<sup>522</sup> Steinhauser, 49-51.

<sup>523</sup> Matter, "The Apocalypse in Early Medieval Exegesis," 44. Arthur Wainwright, *Mysterious Apocalypse*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 39.

<sup>524</sup> Steinhauser, 69. Swete, cxcviii.

<sup>525</sup> Steinhauser, 153. Its influence seems to have been limited to the Iberian peninsula, since the only author to refer to Apringius is the Spanish writer, Beatus of Liébana. Matter, 44.

<sup>526</sup> Matter, 43. Wainwright, 39.

<sup>527</sup> Steinhauser, 89.



Bede's commentary, composed probably between 703 and 709,<sup>528</sup> was heavily dependent upon the Latin Fathers who preceded him, especially Tyconius.<sup>529</sup> Beatus of Liébana, a priest-monk who probably lived in Spain during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, composed a commentary which has been described as a catena of ancient writers.<sup>530</sup> The final Apocalypse commentator of this era was Ambrosius Autpertus, born in Provence around the start of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. He went to Italy, where he became a monk, and died in 784. Ambrosius penned a number of commentaries, but his work on Apocalypse, written around 760, was the longest and most significant. It is a true commentary with lengthy expositions for each verse. His commentary is preceded by an extensive preface about the history of Apocalypse commentaries in the West and a general introduction to the interpretation of the Apocalypse.<sup>531</sup>

## 4.3 The Appearance of Greek Commentaries

### 4.3.1 Oikoumenios

Five centuries passed from the time that John composed the Apocalypse until a commentary appeared in the Greek language. Even long after Millennialism and Montanism had waned, Revelation lingered under a cloud of suspicion and was rarely quoted in the East because of its close association with disfavored forms of Christianity.<sup>532</sup> The honor of writing the first Greek commentary on the Book of Revelation goes to a man whose precise identity eludes us: Oikoumenios.<sup>533</sup> Unfortunately virtually nothing is known about him, fueling

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<sup>528</sup> Wainwright, 40.

<sup>529</sup> Steinhauser, 116 ff.

<sup>530</sup> Steinhauser, 141. Steinhauser has a rather negative assessment of Beatus, concluding that he offered little that was new, and in fact was so unskilled in the use of his sources that he did not even edit the Tyconian passages to remove references to places and events in fourth century North Africa. Steinhauser, 6. Matter is less harsh in her assessment, stating that Beatus "quotes lavishly" from many of his predecessors, including Victorinus-Jerome, Tyconius, Primasius, Apringius, and others. Matter, 45.

<sup>531</sup> Steinhauser, 133.

<sup>532</sup> Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation*, 111.

<sup>533</sup> The commentary, *Ἑρμηνεία τῆς Ἀποκαλύψεως Οἰκουμένιου*, was discovered in a Messina manuscript (cod. S. Salvatore 99, 12<sup>th</sup> century) by Friedrich Diekamp, who described the finding in "Mittheilungen über den neuaufgefundenen Kommentar des Oekumenius zur Apokalypse," *Sitzungsberichte der Königlichen*

conjecture and speculation. Oikoumenios has been frequently misidentified as the bishop of Trikkis in Thessaly,<sup>534</sup> but this is certainly erroneous, the result of an incorrect attribution of the Apocalypse commentary to another Oikoumenios, a 10<sup>th</sup> century exegete and a bishop of Trikkis. From internal evidence in the commentary of Oikoumenios itself and from Andrew's knowledge of it, we know for certain that the commentary is dated near the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century and could not have been composed by the 10<sup>th</sup> century Oikoumenios. The possible identity of Oikoumenios was discussed in chapter 1 and the problems with his exegesis and theology are discussed below in chapter 5, "Evaluation of the Commentary," and chapter 6, "Andrew's Theology," respectively.

### 4.3.2 Andrew of Caesarea

Shortly after Oikoumenios' commentary appeared, the most important Apocalypse commentary of the Eastern Christian tradition was composed by Andrew of Caesarea, Cappadocia, Ἑρμηνεία εἰς τὴν Ἀποκάλυψιν.<sup>535</sup> Andrew wrote his commentary largely in response to Oikoumenios, who preceded Andrew by only a few years.<sup>536</sup> It cannot be said that Andrew stepped into a Greek Apocalypse commentary tradition in the same manner as his contemporaneous Latin Apocalypse commentators. Andrew's only predecessor was Oikoumenios, who was essentially a historical contemporary. Nonetheless, Oikoumenios' commentary frames and forms the context for Andrew's interpretative effort, especially since Andrew unquestionably had the Oikoumenios commentary before him as he composed his own. It is our contention that the deficiencies in Oikoumenios' commentary – perceived or

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*Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 43 (1901) 1046-1056. It was first published by H.C. Hoskier, *The Complete Commentary of Oecumenius*, University of Michigan Humanistic Studies series, vol. XXIII, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1928). A critical edition was published, *Oecumenii Commentarius in Apocalypsin*, *Traditio Exegetica Graeca* series, vol. 8, ed. Marc De Groote, (Louvain: Peeters, 1999), and it was recently translated into English in *Oecumenius: Commentary on the Apocalypse*, trans. John Suggit, *Fathers of the Church* series, vol. 112 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2006).

<sup>534</sup> Most recently by Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, II:937-38. See above, fn 44.

<sup>535</sup> The characteristics of Andrew's commentary are discussed at length in chapters 5 and 6.

<sup>536</sup> Andrew's motive for writing his commentary has been thoroughly discussed above in chapter 1.

actual – induced the composition of the Andreas commentary as well as influencing its content and emphases.<sup>537</sup>

Both Oikoumenios and Andrew used the opinions of earlier Greek authorities to support their views. A huge gap existed, however, between the time period of Andrew and Oikoumenios, in the late 6<sup>th</sup>/early 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the time period of most of the Greek Fathers who made comments about the Apocalypse in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries, to whom Andrew and Oikoumenios looked back for guidance. References to Revelation in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century Greek Fathers were even more meager and even less helpful. During the preceding centuries, little effort had been expended toward understanding the Apocalypse in the East. The resources available to a Greek commentator were extremely limited. Most passages in the Apocalypse had not been discussed by those earlier authorities, and therefore, a great deal of groundbreaking work remained for Oikoumenios and Andrew to do. Nonetheless, both of them felt the need to demonstrate that they stood within the stream of tradition, even if that stream amounted to a mere trickle. Thus, excluding the chiliastic interpretations of earlier Greek writers, Oikoumenios and Andrew together succeeded in presenting basically the entire, albeit scant, Greek interpretive tradition for the Apocalypse. Andrew's commentary became the most important in the East and the standard patristic commentary on the Apocalypse for the Orthodox Church.

#### 4.4 The Duality of the Apocalypse Interpretative Tradition

The Book of Revelation holds a unique position in the New Testament manuscript tradition. It is the only New Testament book with a bifurcated history of transmission: ecclesiastical and non-ecclesiastical.<sup>538</sup> As we have seen, Revelation did not simply circulate as a Church text through ecclesiastical avenues, but it was also copied and transmitted alongside profane literature through secular channels. This dual stream of tradition is mirrored in the history of early Apocalypse commentaries: Greek and Latin. These two interpretive traditions developed and co-existed independently of one another.

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<sup>537</sup> See Chapter 1. Adele Monaci Castagno correctly observes that Andrew uses the Oikoumenian commentary as a point of departure, a sort of “canvas” upon which Andrew begins, but that Andrew sees Oikoumenios’ work as devoid of authority and requiring correction on decisive points. “Il Problema,” 224-246, 246.

<sup>538</sup> See chapter 3 above, “Andrew and the Apocalypse Text.”

Hippolytus, who lived in the mid-second century, was the last Western Father to write in Greek.<sup>539</sup> By the third century, Latin had entirely supplanted Greek as the common spoken language in the West.<sup>540</sup> Numerous Latin translations of the Bible appeared and many ecclesiastical works began to be composed in Latin. Writers such as Tertullian, Ambrose, Hilary, Jerome and Augustine rapidly created an impressive Latin patristic tradition. The Latin fathers of the third and fourth centuries had read and depended upon the Greek tradition.<sup>541</sup> Some Greek Fathers had been translated, but educated men of the West were expected to know Greek in order to access the writings of the outstanding Fathers as well as philosophical and other classical secular works of earlier eras. But the converse was not true: Greek patristic writers indicate no knowledge of Latin nor felt any need to learn it. However, once those eminent Latin writers produced their own works, it was natural that Western Christians who lived after the time of the great Latin Fathers would turn to and depend upon *their* writings, which required no translation and no knowledge of Greek. Latin writers became the theological standard for the West and were unparalleled in their influence, especially Augustine.<sup>542</sup>

## 4.5 Independence of the Eastern Apocalypse Interpretive Tradition

With a wealth of Latin material, Westerners were no longer dependent on Greek authors. The absence of necessity to learn Greek, coupled with the fall of Rome and deteriorating conditions, led to a dramatic decline in Greek literacy in the West. Meanwhile, in the East widespread knowledge of Latin, even among the most highly educated, had never

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<sup>539</sup> F.L. Cross, ed. "Hippolytus," in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, revised, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.)

<sup>540</sup> Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, 4 vols. (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, Inc., 1983 reprint. 4<sup>th</sup> paperback edition 1988. First published 1950), IV:4-5.

<sup>541</sup> "The principal Western theologians, Hilary, Ambrose and Jerome, formed part of a spiritual elite, which moved at ease in Greek culture... This was, however, a one-way street. There was not to be found in the East the same curiosity with regard to the West, even the Christian West. The imperial court established at Constantinople, instead of introducing Latin, was itself Hellenized. Only official documents and works of hagiography came to be translated into Greek. Augustine himself was little known in the East." Quasten, IV:5.

<sup>542</sup> Quasten, IV:7.

existed.<sup>543</sup> The two branches of the Church no longer spoke each other's language.<sup>544</sup> Western commentators read Latin sources and Eastern commentators read Greek sources. While they may have occasionally arrived at the same interpretation or explanation for a particular passage in Revelation, it cannot be presumed that this is a result of direct influence. In many instances commonalities reflect the earliest Christian traditions, shared by both East and West. Otherwise, it is more likely that similar ideas were arrived at independently, due to a commonly rooted ecclesiastical perspective, a common Bible corpus, and common exegetical techniques. This must be the conclusion absent evidence to the contrary.

Arthur Wainwright appears ignorant on this point and makes a rather cynical comment that completely ignores the reality of the state of communication between East and West during these centuries. He observes that the 1,000 year reign of Christ is interpreted as the period between the two advents of Christ by both Augustine and Tyconius in the West and by Andrew and Arethas in the East. Wainwright lauds the long string of Latin commentators who "freely attribute their ideas to Augustine" and even "somewhat grudgingly recognize Tyconius' contributions," even though he was a Donatist.<sup>545</sup> Wainwright insinuates that since the two Greek writers chronologically followed the two primary Latin writers, the Greeks must have taken the idea from the Latins but grudgingly refused to give credit to the Latins because of "parochialism" and a "reluctance to recognize any dependence on Western Christianity."<sup>546</sup>

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<sup>543</sup> Quasten, IV:5-8. George Every explains that even in Constantinople, knowledge of Latin was not common. Although "some attention was paid to Latin, this was apparently limited to what was required for official and legal business. It was not difficult to find a translator for a Latin letter or a controversial treatise, but few if any citizens of Constantinople had any wide knowledge of Latin theological or secular literature before the thirteenth century, when the impact of the Latin conquest made it absolutely necessary to understand the enemy. Only in the fourteenth century was S. Augustine translated into Greek." George Every, *Misunderstandings Between East and West*, (Richmond, VA: John Knox Pres, 1966), 35. See Treadgold, who also concludes that after Justinian, who reigned in the mid-sixth century, knowledge of Latin was rare in the East. Treadgold, *A History of Byzantine State and Society*, 266.

<sup>544</sup> A future pope, Gregory I, when serving in Constantinople as the representative for Pope Pelagius at the end of the sixth century, complained about the difficulty of finding a good Latin interpreter. Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 1:345. On the decline of Latin knowledge after the time of Justinian, see Stratos, 1:344-349.

<sup>545</sup> Arthur Wainwright, *Mysterious Apocalypse* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 44.

<sup>546</sup> Wainwright, 44. Andrew repeatedly demonstrated that he was not averse to crediting his sources and undoubtedly would have used Augustine had Augustine been available in Greek. But in fact, Augustine was not translated into Greek until the 14<sup>th</sup> century, according to George Every. *Misunderstandings*, 35. By Andrew's time, few people in the Eastern parts of the empire had knowledge of Latin, with the exception of those holding

Wainwright fails to establish any actual connection between *any* Western Apocalypse commentary and Andrew's commentary which would indicate a direct dependence and he can hardly support his claims that Andrew refused to credit his sources. On the contrary, Andrew freely acknowledged his sources, except for Oikoumenios, whom he clearly did not recognize as an authority. Wainwright furthermore fails to cite a *single* example of any Greek Father who shows knowledge of Latin or cites a Latin source. No "cross-pollination" can be found in Apocalypse interpretation: Greek and Latin interpreters show no influence upon each other. The only writers who influenced both Greek and Latin commentators were the earliest Greek writers, such as Irenaeus and Hippolytus, none of whom produced complete commentaries but only commented on a few key passages. Their influence on both the Eastern and Western sides of the Church is obvious.

The first complete commentaries on the Apocalypse in the West appeared after the rise of Latin ecclesiastical literature, inaugurating the Latin branch of Apocalypse exegesis, the fruit of which would never find its way to the East. Tyconius and Victorinus, the first to offer systematic expositions on the Apocalypse, became the foundation and primary resource for subsequent Latin commentators. Andrew served the same function for the East, and was joined by Arethas much later. Arethas was less influential because he relied heavily on Andrew and trailed Andrew by approximately three hundred years. By the time Arethas wrote, Andrew's commentary was already well-established and respected. Oikoumenios was entirely eclipsed by Andrew and had surprisingly little impact or influence, although some of his opinions are reported in Andrew and Arethas. It is Andrew of Caesarea who truly begins and shapes the Eastern ecclesiastical tradition of Apocalypse interpretation.

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imperial offices. Wainwright mistakenly presumes that post-Schism attitudes prevailed in 7<sup>th</sup> century relations between the Christian East and West and that hostilities and biases existed between the two branches of Christendom which in fact were centuries away from developing.

## Chapter 5

### Evaluation of the Commentary

#### 5.1 Purpose, Motivation and Orientation

##### 5.1.1 Expressed Purpose and Motivation

Andrew began his commentary by expressing his reluctance to undertake the job of interpreting the Apocalypse, the most challenging of all scriptural texts. He had repeatedly demurred to previous requests and accepted the task only after being pressured to do so by “Makarios,” whose possible identity and motivation were addressed above in chapter 1. Andrew’s initial incentive is simply “obedience.” He perceives himself as *deprived of the prophetic spirit*<sup>547</sup> but resolves to complete the task which had been *assigned* to him, placing his trust on the hope that God *will enlighten* him.<sup>548</sup> This remark by itself provides important insight into his character and motivation. It would be a mistake to either dismiss a reference to obedience as insignificant because Andrew is conceding to a superior, or to consider his mention of obedience to be merely a conventional expression of modesty.

Obedience, especially in an ecclesiastical context or in the monastic life, is an extremely important virtue. Connected to faith and humility, it is regarded as more important than the performance of ascetic exercises. However, it is not obedience alone which motivates Andrew, but also love. Andrew refers twice to his love for Makarios, suggesting great respect and esteem for the *man of God*<sup>549</sup> whose soul Andrew describes as *God-like*.<sup>550</sup> The initial impression we receive of Andrew is of an individual with a strong spiritual orientation. This opinion is only further confirmed by the disposition he reveals throughout the entire content of his exposition and by the tenor of his commentary. Andrew consoles himself about the impossibility of his task by remarking that even the prophets of old, whose writings have been interpreted by so many, remain a mystery, the full understanding of which

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<sup>547</sup> Prologue, Text 8, Comm. 6.

<sup>548</sup> Prologue, Text 8, Comm. 7.

<sup>549</sup> Prologue, Text 11, Comm. 12.

<sup>550</sup> Prologue, Text 8, Comm. 7.

will not occur until the end.<sup>551</sup> He expresses the hope that he will receive rewards for his obedience, but such rewards are spiritual: *Compensate our labor with your prayers.*<sup>552</sup> He perceives another spiritual benefit resulting from this task. Focusing on the Apocalypse will serve as *a form of contempt for the present things, since they are transitory, and (for the purpose of) coveting the future things, since these remain.*<sup>553</sup> This spiritual benefit extends to the reader and Andrew refers to it on more than one occasion. Studying the Apocalypse contributes *not a little to compunction.*<sup>554</sup> It teaches that *death must be despised.*<sup>555</sup> *The book is also worthy for reading by the faithful...It guides those who read it to true life.*<sup>556</sup> *It is holy and God-inspired and guides those who read it to a blessed end.*<sup>557</sup>

Having acknowledged the spiritual benefit derived from studying the Apocalypse and having resigned himself to the challenging task, Andrew finds one additional benefit of his work: it is good mental exercise and will serve as *training for the quick-wittedness of the mind.*<sup>558</sup> This benefit also extends to the reader. The interpretation of the names of the twelve tribes is given *for the exercise of the mind by those who are quick-witted.*<sup>559</sup> After offering numerous possible interpretations of the symbolism of the twenty four elders, he states: *Let the reader be tested.*<sup>560</sup> Explaining the precious stones which describe the heavenly Jerusalem, he remarks that such symbols *serve as training for those pondering enigmas of truth.*<sup>561</sup> We see that Andrew expects the reader to also be actively engaged in discovering the meaning of the text, and not simply engage in passive reading.

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<sup>551</sup> Prologue, Text 8, Comm. 6.

<sup>552</sup> Prologue, Text 11, Comm. 12.

<sup>553</sup> Prologue, Text 9, Comm. 10.

<sup>554</sup> Prologue, Text 11, Comm. 12.

<sup>555</sup> Chp. 4, Text 28, Comm. 35.

<sup>556</sup> Chp. 71, Text 258, Comm. 236.

<sup>557</sup> Chp. 72, Text 263, Comm. 240.

<sup>558</sup> Prologue, Text 9, Comm. 10.

<sup>559</sup> Chp. 19, Text 81, Comm. 94.

<sup>560</sup> Chp. 10, Text 49, Comm. 58.

<sup>561</sup> Chp. 67, Text 247, Comm. 226.



### 5.1.2 Unexpressed Purpose and Motivation

Unexpressed purposes also motivate Andrew. The most important purpose, entirely unexpressed but also extremely obvious, is his response to Oikoumenios' commentary. Andrew would not have made such an obvious effort to reply to Oikoumenios if his only intended reader was Makarios. It is within the context of this unexpressed objective that we recognize that Andrew anticipated a wider readership even if the commentary was addressed to Makarios, the man who had ultimately compelled Andrew to write it. Prior to the request made by Makarios, Andrew tells us that he had been asked *many times by many people...to elucidate the Apocalypse of John*.<sup>562</sup> We also know from comments in an addendum, probably composed by an editor or compiler, that Andrew gave at least parts of the commentary to others to read in draft form.<sup>563</sup>

Two additional clues of a wider audience are evident. First, the elementary explanation of the three parts of Scripture, which Makarios would not have required,<sup>564</sup> and secondly, the expressed purpose of the commentary: for the benefit of the faithful, since it *contributes not a little to compunction through remembrance of both the rewards that will be bestowed on the righteous and the retribution of the wicked and sinful*.<sup>565</sup>

Most likely, Oikoumenios' commentary had been well-received, or at the very least it had aroused a significant amount of attention and interest since it was the only commentary on the Apocalypse available in the Greek language. To Andrew, Oikoumenios' exposition of Revelation was unacceptable, deficient, and misleading. It could not be allowed to stand unanswered. Andrew's motivation in relation to the Oikoumenian commentary has been previously discussed in chapter 1. Various specific deficiencies in Oikoumenios' exposition will be discussed below.

From a pastoral perspective, Andrew may have also been interested in promoting a balanced attitude toward the end times, an outlook which Oikoumenios' commentary had distorted since Oikoumenios interpreted Revelation primarily as a book of past events, as

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<sup>562</sup> Prologue, Text 7, Comm. 6.

<sup>563</sup> Epilogue, Text 267, Comm. 242.

<sup>564</sup> Prologue, Text 8-9, Comm. 7-10.

<sup>565</sup> Prologue, Text 11, Comm. 12.

history which had already occurred, primarily a symbolic re-telling of the life of Christ. Oikoumenios robbed the book of its prophetic power by allegorizing most of the symbols as events in the life of Christ and thus marginalizing the visions. With this perspective, Revelation would not cultivate the appropriate attitude of watchfulness and preparation for the end times, or for one's own end. If indeed Revelation is a vision of completed history, and if most of the destruction it describes is not literal but a metaphor, then why should anyone be concerned? This could have been a spiritual danger which Andrew perceived in Oikoumenios' commentary and which he would have wanted to correct as a pastoral matter.

At the other extreme, Andrew must have been concerned about the many individuals living in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century who were firmly convinced that the end of the world was at hand. After centuries of relative peace and stability in the eastern half of the Roman Empire, the early 600s saw not only revolt, plague, famine and earthquakes, but also civil war, societal chaos, and barbarian invasions with accompanying slaughter on a massive scale, including the wholesale destruction of many cities. The accompanying pessimism of the population could have taken two forms: (1) hedonism, a consequential result of the philosophy "eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die," and (2) fatalism, which would lead to defeatism and hopelessness, inhibiting the vigorous defense of the empire due to the loss of morale.

Part of Andrew's purpose must have been to dissuade the conviction that the end of the world was near. Despite tremendous catastrophes, the combination of which had never been seen before in the Roman Empire or perhaps even in the history of the world, amazingly, Andrew himself does not believe that the end is near. *How could anyone (such as myself), who is deprived of the prophetic spirit, not appear bold by attempting (to explain) these things whose end is not in sight?*<sup>566</sup> Andrew is remarkably stoic and almost dispassionate about the calamities which his generation has witnessed. He is convinced – based on his reading of Revelation – that far worse disasters will accompany the end times, even worse than those which they had recently experienced and were still facing even then. The afflictions which will come with the arrival of the Antichrist will be of *such a sort as we have never known.*<sup>567</sup>

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<sup>566</sup> Prologue, Text 8, Comm. 6-7.

<sup>567</sup> Chp. 18, Text 69, Comm. 81.

Andrew also does not apply the events of his day to Revelation for two primary reasons: (1) it is useless and spiritually harmful to speculate about the time of the end, and, (2) various statements made by Christ and the apostles instruct us that the end time cannot be known by us.<sup>568</sup> Andrew believes that reading the events of one's own times into the prophecy of Revelation is irresponsible and unorthodox. While it may be acceptable to interpret the plagues described in Revelation as specific events to occur at the end,<sup>569</sup> the actual time of the end is not even known by the angels<sup>570</sup> and it is something which one *is forbidden to seek*.<sup>571</sup> Adele Monaci Castagno entirely misreads Andrew. She believes that the differences between the commentaries of Andrew and Oikoumenios are largely due to their views of history and eschatology. She is correct that they differ in that manner, however not because Andrew believes that the end is near while Oikoumenios does not. They differ because their differences in theological education, exegetical skill, interpretive techniques and training, have led them to divergent conclusions about the meaning of the biblical text.

Castagno concluded that Oikoumenios sees Revelation as a book about events which already occurred because he believed that the end was far in the future. But she maintains that Andrew's interpretation differed because he believed the end was very near and the world was rushing toward destruction because of his references to barbarians. Therefore he saw Revelation primarily as a prophecy of the end times and as a key to decipher the tragic and painful events of the present.<sup>572</sup> A true understanding of Andrew's interpretation requires a more careful reading.

It is difficult to comprehend how Castagno arrives at the conclusion that Andrew sees Revelation as a key to deciphering his own tumultuous times since Andrew makes no

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<sup>568</sup> "The hour" will not be known. (Matt. 24:42, 44, 24:50.) It will come like a "thief in the night." (Matt. 24:43, 1 Thess. 5:2, 2 Pet. 3:10.)

<sup>569</sup> *Chp. 45, Text 163, Comm. 161.*

<sup>570</sup> *Chp. 21, Text 86, Comm. 99.*

<sup>571</sup> *Prologue, Text 10, Comm. 10.* This is in reference to certain statements by Christ, such as, "It is not for you to know" (Acts 1:7) and "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only." (Matt. 24:36) Andrew's stance is in keeping with the ancient tradition. Commenting on the last verse, Chrysostom informed his congregation that Christ instructed the disciples that "they should not seek to learn what these angels know not and....forbids them not only to learn, but even to inquire." *Hom. on Matthew 77.1. Chrysostom: Homilies on Matthew*, trans. George Prevost, ed. Philip Schaff, Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 1<sup>st</sup> series, vol. X (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprint 1989), 445.

<sup>572</sup> "I Commenti," 426.

references to recent outbreaks of plague, the civil war or earthquakes, and only hints at famine. It is inconceivable that he would be silent on such matters if in fact he was attempting to interpret the *events* of his own times and *apply them* to Revelation. But in fact Andrew is interpreting the text of Revelation, not his times. He does not apply the events of his day to the text, although a less skilled interpreter probably would have. In light of the upheaval of his era, including the Persian invasion of his own city, it is truly remarkable that Andrew does not read current events into Revelation, even though he ascribes to a literal interpretation of most of the destruction described in the visions. This is a great testament to Andrew's exegetical skill and his theological education but also speaks to his spiritual maturity and depth.

Calming fears among the populace that the end was approaching may also have been a motivating factor for Makarios, as discussed above in chapter 1.4.4. Andrew is certainly sincere in his belief that *the end is not yet in sight*, but what is his motivation in publicizing this view? It would have been easy for him – and one might argue even spiritually beneficial for the faithful – to encourage a belief that the end is near. He could have justified such a stance in his own mind. After all, he himself wrote that the Apocalypse prompts compunction.<sup>573</sup> Wouldn't the Apocalypse have greater impact – greater repentance, baptisms, church attendance, almsgiving, etc. – if people believed that the end was at hand? He could have at least left a window partly open to the *possibility* that the end *might* be near. But he does not. This also is a very strong indicator of his integrity and the fact that he respects the text and does not manipulate it by distorting or exaggerating the message.

Instead of engaging in fear mongering or fanning the flames of anxiety, Andrew uses Revelation for an appropriate spiritual purpose: as a message of encouragement and hope. This may appear paradoxical in the context of the common perception of the Apocalypse and the related adjective “apocalyptic,” but in fact, Revelation's original message and purpose (its σκοπός)<sup>574</sup> was one of hope and perseverance through tribulation. Andrew's commentary promotes and preserves the original purpose of Revelation: to encourage the reader to persevere and remain faithful, and hopefully to live a spiritually improved life. Revelation offers no promise of deliverance from tribulation, but hope always remains because of Christ.

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<sup>573</sup> Prologue, Text 11, Comm.12.

<sup>574</sup> See below for a discussion on σκοπός, chapter 5.6.3, page 175.

A very telling detail illuminates Andrew's unexpressed purpose in this respect. Christ's message to the church of Smyrna in Rev. 2:10 warns them that "the devil is about to put some of you into prison." Christ encourages them to be faithful until death because the tribulation will only last "for ten days." Andrew uses this instruction to encourage his readers, and his paraphrase of Christ's words is very revealing: *Do not fear the tribulation from the enemies of God through afflictions and trials, for (it will last only) ten days and not (be) long-lived.* Andrew's paraphrase does *not* reflect what the *Smyrnaeans* faced. The biblical text speaks of the *devil* putting them into *prison*. Andrew's language reflects what *his* community faced: *afflictions and trials* caused by the *enemies of God*. He encourages them to persevere, since these hardships will not last long: *For this reason, death must be despised, since in a little while it grants the "unfading crown of life."*<sup>575</sup>

Andrew's exposition offered a balanced view of the Book of Revelation. It countered the fear that the end had arrived, but also combated the threat to the other extreme, that of indifference, a hazard bolstered by Oikoumenios' interpretation. Andrew's unexpressed purpose is to encourage spiritual vigilance, but also to temper apocalyptic expectations and calm fears. The commentary neither promoted indifference nor fueled hysteria, but struck an appropriately balanced note in its attitude toward the end times.

### 5.1.3 Andrew's Orientation

#### 5.1.3.1 A Pastoral Orientation

A notable quality of Andrew's commentary is his pastoral disposition. His expectation that reading Revelation will result in spiritual benefit by prompting compunction may be the most noteworthy characteristic of Andrew's orientation and is closely connected to his purpose. *I think it contributes not a little to compunction through remembrance of both the rewards that will be bestowed on the righteous and the retribution of the wicked and sinful.*<sup>576</sup> He hoped the commentary would lead to *contempt for the present things, since they*

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<sup>575</sup> Chp. 4, Text 28, Comm. 35.

<sup>576</sup> Prologue, Text 11, Comm. 12.

*are transitory, and (for the purpose of) coveting the future things, since these remain.*<sup>577</sup> Revelation teaches that *death must be despised.*<sup>578</sup> *It guides those who read it to true life*<sup>579</sup> and it *guides those who read it to a blessed end.*<sup>580</sup>

Andrew's purpose and tone are consistently pastoral, whereas Oikoumenios' tone could be described as "scholarly," or "philosophical." Andrew's role as a devoted shepherd of souls shines through in the style and content of the commentary. His tone is never one of "hell-fire and brimstone," not even of admonition, warning, threats, or scolding. There is no elaboration on the description of sufferings, only a discussion of what the text of Revelation itself already contains. Rather, Andrew emphasizes the love of God for all people, their freedom to choose between right and wrong, and God's desire that *all be saved and come to knowledge of the truth.*<sup>581</sup> Just as Andrew does not resort to manipulative or inflammatory language to motivate people with warnings that the end is near, he does not dwell on the suffering or destruction described in Revelation to frighten his audience into action. Instead, Andrew's comments are consistently and remarkably positive and affirming. This is the mark of a true pastor and shepherd, not to mention the mark of an experienced, genuine and gentle spiritual father.

His pastoral orientation is evident in the difference between Andrew and Oikoumenios on the matter of unrepentant sinners. Oikoumenios might remark about the punishment of sinners, simply noting their lack of repentance, something which is also found in the text of Revelation itself. But Andrew repeatedly and actively encourages the repentance and reformation of all, including himself, and emphasizes that it is within the power of all to choose to be saved.

The commentary has a gentle tone which is reflected even in the way that Andrew responds to Oikoumenios, who is never named. Andrew has nothing negative to say about

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<sup>577</sup> *Prologue, Text 9, Comm. 10.*

<sup>578</sup> *Chp. 4, Text 28, Comm. 35.*

<sup>579</sup> *Chp. 71, Text 258, Comm. 236.*

<sup>580</sup> *Chp. 72, Text 263, Comm. 240.*

<sup>581</sup> *Chp. 59, Text 211, Comm. 196-7; Chp. 72, Text 267, Comm. 242.*

any opponents, not even the Persians.<sup>582</sup> Compare this to Oikoumenios' descriptions of the "Greeks" (i.e., pagans) as "accursed and God-forsaken."<sup>583</sup> Nestorius and Eutyches are described by Oikoumenios as "abominable."<sup>584</sup> Nestorius is "accursed" and Eutyches is "hated by God."<sup>585</sup> The Manicheans are "accursed and disgusting,"<sup>586</sup> and Nicolaus, (founder of the Nicolaitan sect), is a "blasphemous and disgusting heresiarch."<sup>587</sup> But Andrew does not use the commentary as an opportunity to attack pagans or heretics. The only hint of any use of the commentary other than as a purely pastoral message directed at the flock might be found in one instance in which Andrew is promoting doctrinal orthodoxy, probably in response to Oikoumenios, a Monophysite.<sup>588</sup> Although at times he expresses puzzlement about Oikoumenios' conclusions, there is never any antagonism toward Oikoumenios nor toward anyone with whom Andrew disagrees.

Even when Andrew contradicts Oikoumenios, he is not very harsh in his criticism. In Andrew's strongest rejection of Oikoumenios' opinion, he simply describes Oikoumenios' conclusion as "incongruous"<sup>589</sup> with the context. But Andrew rarely rejects Oikoumenios' conclusion entirely except where he believes it is baseless, spiritually unprofitable, harmful, or misleading. With great generosity of spirit, in a gentle and self-assured manner, he offers the interpretation of Oikoumenios first, usually allowing it to stand, but then provides his own opinion afterwards in addition to other possible interpretations.

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<sup>582</sup> He does refer to the Persians as "barbarians," however this was not a pejorative term in the Greek language, but was the generic term to refer to anyone who did not know Greek. It came to be identified with people who were not cultured because the Greeks closely identified the Greek language with culture. The Greek use of the term "barbarians" is comparable to the catch-all term "gentiles" or "the nations" which biblical authors used to refer to all those who were not Jewish.

<sup>583</sup> Oik. 10.11.1, Suggit 160.

<sup>584</sup> Oik. 1.3.3, Suggit 21.

<sup>585</sup> Oik. 2.13.2, Suggit 46.

<sup>586</sup> Oik. 2.13.2, Suggit 46.

<sup>587</sup> Oik. 2.3.9, Suggit 37.

<sup>588</sup> In response to Oikoumenios' comment that the Trisagion hymn, ("Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us") refers to Christ, Andrew explained how it refers to all three members of the Trinity. See below, chapter 5.6.6, page 183.

<sup>589</sup> *Chp. 23, Text 91, Comm. 103.*

### 5.1.3.2 A Liturgical Orientation

A second feature of Andrew's orientation is its liturgical character. The commentary contains many liturgical references and allusions which are not immediately obvious. Andrew does not only quote Scripture to support his conclusion, but to evoke a familiar prayer or a hymn in the mind of the reader which happens to contain that bit of Scripture. Often, it is not a direct quotation but an allusion to a passage as used in the life of the Church. Examples can be found in the many references to prayer as incense rising up to God, which would remind the reader of an extremely well-known vespers hymn based on Ps.141:2: *Let my prayer arise in your sight as incense*. Andrew's reference to "leaving one's father's house"<sup>590</sup> would instantly remind the reader of a well-known *prokeimenon* (a responsorial refrain) as well as its meaning in the spiritual life.<sup>591</sup> Commenting on Rev. 7:16 "They will no longer hunger nor thirst," Andrew remarks, *Naturally. For they will have the "heavenly bread" and the "water of life."*<sup>592</sup> "Heavenly bread"<sup>593</sup> is an expression from a hymn in the Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts, which we know was in use in Andrew's time. The reference to those words would evoke in the reader the entire hymn, especially the phrase "heavenly bread and cup of life, taste and see that the Lord is good."

Such allusions are very subtle and would easily pass unrecognized by those who are not active in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Orthodox Church. Of course, Revelation inherently contains many liturgical references: hymnody, incense, altar, prayers and worship. But we know that Andrew's interpretation of these details was influenced by his liturgical orientation because the comments he makes and the conclusions he arrives at are not obvious from the text itself but clearly arise out of his liturgical life. Andrew's exegesis is influenced by the prayers and hymns of the Church. For example, he remarks that the hymn of the Cherubim *holy, holy, holy*, can be applied to each member of the Trinity

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<sup>590</sup> *Chp. 19, Text 77, Comm. 89 and Chp. 19, Text 80 and Comm. 92-3.* "Hear, O daughter, and consider and incline your ear; forget your people and your father's house, and the king will desire your beauty." (Ps. 45:10)

<sup>591</sup> The verse was interpreted by the Fathers as an allegorical call to the soul, (a feminine noun in Greek), to make herself attractive to her king, God.

<sup>592</sup> *Chp. 20, Text 85, Comm. 97.*

<sup>593</sup> ἄρτον οὐράνιον.



separately. In support of this, he cites two passages from Scripture, one in which the hymn is applied to the Son and the other to the Holy Spirit, but he supports his exegetical conclusion about the Father by citing a prayer in the Divine Liturgy.<sup>594</sup> He assumes that the biblical text can never be properly understood apart from an ecclesiastical context. Just as the biblical text shapes the Church – its doctrines, prayers, hymns, sacraments, etc. – the Church, through the entirety of its life and expression, provides the context for understanding the biblical text.

One of the interesting historical details in Revelation is the mention of an early martyr from Pergamum, Antipas (Rev. 2:13). Andrew would have certainly commemorated Antipas in the course of the liturgical year<sup>595</sup> and he tells us that he has read the account of Antipas' martyrdom.<sup>596</sup> Oikoumenios does not even mention Antipas but passes over the detail of a named martyr in the Bible without any comment.<sup>597</sup> This also indicates an entirely different orientation for the two men.

One of the most consistent liturgical themes in the commentary, besides the many references to incense and hymnody, involves the activity and participation of the angels in prayer and petitions. Angels offer prayers up as incense<sup>598</sup> and even co-liturgize with people.<sup>599</sup> During the "smaller entrance" (a procession with the Gospels during the divine liturgy of St. John Chrysostom), the priest prays: "...cause that with our entrance there may be an entrance of holy angels serving with us..." In his many comments about the angels in Revelation, Andrew reflects the entire Eastern liturgical tradition which has many references to angelic participation in worship, references to angels in hymns and prayers, and the artistic representation of angels on liturgical objects, in iconography, etc.

But perhaps the most striking, and yet also the most subtle liturgical allusion, is Andrew's interpretation of the throne, the dominant image of God in Revelation, as a place of "repose" rather than as a place of power, rule, authority and judgment. Andrew

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<sup>594</sup> *Chp. 1, Text 15, Comm. 19.*

<sup>595</sup> His feast day is April 11.

<sup>596</sup> *Chp. 5, Text 29, Comm. 36.*

<sup>597</sup> *Oik. 2.7.*

<sup>598</sup> *Chp. 21, Text 87-88, Comm. 100.*

<sup>599</sup> *Chp. 20, Text 83, Comm. 96.*

consistently describes the throne as “repose.”<sup>600</sup> The altar in an Orthodox Church is called the “throne of God,” yet the symbol does not usually evoke the image of a judgment seat but a place of rest. His consistent reference to the throne as “repose” reveals Andrew’s liturgical perspective and may have been inspired by two of the most important prayers which a priest recites in the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. During the *Trisagion* hymn<sup>601</sup> the priest stands before the altar and reads the prayer which begins, “Holy God, who *rests* in thy holy place....” And during the Cherubic hymn, the people recall the presence of the angels and represent them in their chanting<sup>602</sup> as the priest prays to God, “Borne on the throne of the Cherubim and Lord of the Seraphim and King of Israel, who alone art holy and *rests* in the Holy Place...”

### 5.1.3.3 A Sacramental Orientation

Andrew’s commentary also evinces a strong sacramental orientation. For example, his use of the phrase *garment of incorruption*<sup>603</sup> to describe the white robes of the Christians of Sardis (3:4) is an allusion to the baptismal service which uses this phrase multiple times. The expression *garment of incorruption* also occurs in a prayer during the Divine Liturgy said for the catechumens preparing for baptism. Rev. 7:11 states that the twenty four elders, the four animals, the angels and the saints *encircle* the throne of God, but Andrew makes the startling comment that they *dance* around the throne!<sup>604</sup> It is difficult to imagine how such an image could have come to his mind except in connection with a circular ceremonial “dance” which takes place at the sacraments of baptism and marriage.<sup>605</sup> These two sacraments begin

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<sup>600</sup> *Chp. 9, Text 45, Comm. 54; Chp. 10, Text 47, Comm. 56; Chp. 10, Text 50, Comm. 60; Chp. 20, Text 82, Comm. 95; Chp. 64, Text 227, Comm. 211; Chp. 68, Text 253, Comm. 232.*

<sup>601</sup> “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.”

<sup>602</sup> “We who mystically represent the cherubim and sing the thrice-holy hymn to the life-giving Trinity, let us lay aside all earthly care, that we may receive the King of all, invisibly upborne by angelic hosts.”

<sup>603</sup> *Chp. 7, Text 37, Comm. 46.*

<sup>604</sup> *Chp. 20, Text 82, Comm. 95.*

<sup>605</sup> At a baptism the participants process three times around the baptismal font, and at a wedding they walk three times around the altar table in front of which the couple was married. The “dance” is more akin to a ceremonial walk, but it is accompanied by joyful chanting. The hymns sung during these “dances” include images found in Revelation. The word can also refer to forming a chorus, but many images from Revelation and themes in Andrew’s commentary are closely paralleled in the hymns sung during these “dances.” See *Comm. 95, fn 447.*

with an invocation of the kingdom of heaven, exactly as the Divine Liturgy begins,<sup>606</sup> reminding the participants that they are now participating in the kingdom of heaven. This is a very striking detail because there is no reference to dancing in the Book of Revelation and the scene in Revelation 4 describes the kingdom of heaven and the individuals around the throne are standing in a circle.

When Christ promises the *hidden manna* in the letters to the churches (Rev. 2:17), Andrew associates this promise with Eucharist. *The "Bread of Life" is the hidden manna, the One who descended from heaven for us and has become edible.* Andrew connects manna to the Eucharist through the Bread of Life statements in John 6 which is strongly Eucharistic (John 6:35 and 48). Compare this to Oikoumenios who blandly concludes that the hidden manna represents "spiritual and future blessings."<sup>607</sup> Another example of Andrew's sacramental orientation is that he consistently connects water images with the Holy Spirit. When the opening vision describes Christ's voice "like the sound of many waters," (Rev. 1:15b) Oikoumenios simply remarks that it was a loud sound. But Andrew sees a connection to baptism and the *rivers of living water* promised by Christ (John 7:38). In another instance, commenting upon Rev. 7:17, ("For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will shepherd them, and he will guide them to springs of waters of life"), Andrew again interprets the water as the Spirit.<sup>608</sup> Oikoumenios does not even mention the water reference, let alone connect it to the Spirit. Likewise, in Rev. 22:1 the "river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb" is the Holy Spirit for Andrew and it *hints at a baptism of regeneration being activated through the Spirit.*<sup>609</sup> But Oikoumenios makes no sacramental association, saying that the river is "the rich and abundant graces of Christ."<sup>610</sup>

Still another example of a baptismal interpretation is the woman wrapped in the sun with the moon under her feet (Rev.12). For Andrew, the moon represents baptism, a classic patristic interpretation of moon imagery because of its association with tides, hence with

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<sup>606</sup> "Blessed be the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages."

<sup>607</sup> *Chp. 5, Text 31, Comm. 37-8.* Compare to Oikoumenios 2.7.5, Suggit 41.

<sup>608</sup> *Chp. 20, Text 85, Comm. 98.*

<sup>609</sup> *Chp. 68, Text 250, Comm. 229.*

<sup>610</sup> Oik. 12.7.3, Suggit 195.

water. It is under her feet because baptism is the foundation of the Church. Baptismal references dominate Andrew's interpretation of that section of Revelation.<sup>611</sup> Again, the contrast with Oikoumenios' orientation is striking: for Oikoumenios the moon is the Law of Moses,<sup>612</sup> which is waning.

Another very striking and surprising difference between Andrew and Oikoumenios, highlighting their differing orientations, is the interpretation of the faithful who have a "seal" on their foreheads (Rev. 7:3). Andrew makes an immediate and obvious connection between the seal on the forehead and the sacrament of Chrismation ("Confirmation" in the West). Oikoumenios makes no connection at that point between the seal and Chrismation. Later, in Rev. 9:1-4 when the locusts are instructed not to harm those who are sealed on the forehead, Andrew again connects this to Chrismation and writes that the people who are harmed are those *who had not been sealed with the divine seal on their foreheads and (who do not) shine round about with the enlightenment of the life-giving cross through the Holy Spirit.*<sup>613</sup> Commenting on the verse, in that particular instance Oikoumenios connects the seal with baptism, however, his conclusion is extremely peculiar and creates theological problems.<sup>614</sup>

Like Andrew, Oikoumenios is also an Eastern Christian and occasionally associates Revelation's imagery with the sacraments and the liturgy. However, such connections are not as consistent, as frequent, or as specifically liturgical as those found in Andrew's commentary. A good example of this can be seen in the concluding doxologies found in each commentary. Both Andrew and Oikoumenios close each chapter with a doxology. Oikoumenios' commentary contains twelve chapters. Ten doxologies are directed to Christ, one is directed to "God"<sup>615</sup> and one to the three members of the Holy Trinity.<sup>616</sup> Oikoumenios' formula is very simple, typically: "to him [Christ] be the glory forever, amen." (ὡς ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.) Andrew's doxologies, however, are more elaborate and

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<sup>611</sup> Chp. 33, Text 121-3, Comm. 126-28.

<sup>612</sup> Oik. 6.19.3.

<sup>613</sup> Chp. 26, Text 97, Comm. 108-9.

<sup>614</sup> See Comm. 108, fn 514, and the discussion below in chapter 6.1, page 198-200.

<sup>615</sup> At the end of chapter 7. See Suggit, 122.

<sup>616</sup> At the end of chapter 5. See Suggit, 94.

specifically liturgical in style and tone. Andrew's commentary has twenty four doxologies and each includes all three members of the Trinity, as doxologies in the Orthodox Church always do. The doxologies mention Christ first, with the description of Christ varying depending upon the theme of the preceding exposition, followed by a reference to the Father, (usually "together with the Father"), continuing with a reference to the "Holy" or "All-holy" or "Life-giving" Spirit, and ending in a classic liturgical style, "now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen." (νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. ἀμήν.)

## 5.2 Structure, Style and Characteristics

### 5.2.1 The Structure of the Commentary

Andrew informs the reader in his prologue that he will divide his commentary into twenty four sections (λόγους) and seventy two chapters (κεφάλαια).<sup>617</sup> The twenty four sections stand for the twenty four elders who symbolize all *those who have pleased God from the beginning to the end of times*. The further division of each section into three parts or "chapters" stands for the three part existence of each elder: body, soul and spirit.<sup>618</sup> The seventy two chapters are numbered sequentially from one through seventy two and each chapter has a heading informing the reader of the subject matter of that chapter.

The presentation of the commentary is extremely orderly and easy to follow. Andrew usually quotes one or two verses from the text of Revelation and then comments upon the text, although frequently he does not quote an entire verse but only a small portion before explaining it. Occasionally he quotes larger sections of Revelation text, up to four or five verses, but this is unusual. In this respect, except for the division into seventy two chapters, the presentation of his analysis is very similar to what a modern commentator would do. It is clear that he is handling the text according to what is required for an effective exposition. After he has concluded his explanation of all the chapters, Andrew offers a summary of the interpretation as a review of the entire commentary.<sup>619</sup>

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<sup>617</sup> Prologue, Text 10, Comm. 11.

<sup>618</sup> Andrew has already identified humans as possessing these three components. Prologue, Text 8, Comm. 7.

<sup>619</sup> Chp. 72, Text 263-67, Comm. 240-242.

## 5.2.2 Style and Characteristics

Andrew's style of writing is concise and not wordy. At times he is too brief and the exposition would have benefited from more elaboration. But he presents his ideas in a careful, thoughtful and straightforward manner. Andrew is very confident and comfortable with the text and he is very consistent in his interpretation. He lacks egoism and does not feel the need to make displays of knowledge. He stays on task and is not distracted from his purpose, neither straying to make doctrinal proclamations, nor to denounce heretics, nor to make unrelated historical observations. He will make a comment on Christology or other doctrine when such a comment is called for by the text under consideration. Stylistically and methodologically, Andrew stands firmly within the patristic tradition.

Andrew cites other Fathers and quotes from them on a number of occasions, but his commentary is not in any respect a catena. Too little exegetical tradition existed in the East for Andrew to be able to rely entirely on pre-existing interpretations. He is not reluctant to embrace more than one interpretive option for a given detail or passage. This does not indicate weakness or indecisiveness on his part. Rather, Andrew recognizes a richness in the text that allows for more than one level of meaning. When a verse is controversial or has a number of possible interpretations, Andrew reports the various possibilities and the opinions of others. Since his view is not always immediately evident, one must usually read to the end of the discussion to know which is Andrew's opinion, if indeed he prefers one over another. A sloppy reading of Andrew will result in reporting Oikoumenios' views or the view of someone else as the opinion of Andrew.<sup>620</sup> Andrew is remarkably flexible and inclusive in his reporting of other interpretations and usually does not reject the other ideas outright. For example, he gives five possible interpretations of the symbolism of the four animals of Rev.

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<sup>620</sup> For example, Andrew is typically reported as saying that Rev. 1:4 ("Grace to you and peace from the One who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before his throne") refers to the Holy Trinity. This mistake is found in the two books which have published excerpts in English from Andrew's commentary: *Revelation*, ed. and trans. William Weinrich, Ancient Christian Commentary series, vol. XII, ed. Thomas C. Oden (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 3, and *Apocalypse*, Archbishop Averky Taushev, trans. Seraphim Rose (Platina, CA: Valaam Society of America, 1985), 44. In fact, in that statement Andrew is reporting the opinion of Oikoumenios, with whom he disagrees. Andrew believes the particular statement *theologically* can be applied to each member of the Trinity individually, but specifically the statement in Rev. 1:4 is made with respect to the Father alone. See *Chp. 1, Text 13-16, Comm. 16-20*. See fns 62 and 64 of the *Commentary*, but especially see *Chp. 1, Text 15, Comm. 18* where he points to the subsequent reference "and to Jesus Christ" as proving that the earlier statement was made about the Father.

4,<sup>621</sup> four possibilities for the image of the sky rolled up like a scroll (Rev. 6:14),<sup>622</sup> and five options for the symbolism of the feet in the vision of Christ in Rev. 1:15.<sup>623</sup>

Andrew often signals optional interpretations with, *It is either this, or.....* He respects the reader's intelligence and is confident enough in his own opinions to report various alternatives. He allows other interpretations to stand if he finds nothing especially objectionable in them. If he includes a variety of opinions, Andrew's opinion is usually last. He may signal his disapproval of a foregoing opinion and introduce his own with a variety of expressions such as, *This may be understood differently...*,<sup>624</sup> *either this or perhaps...*,<sup>625</sup> *more suitably...*,<sup>626</sup> *more correctly...*,<sup>627</sup> or *much more.....*,<sup>628</sup> and then continues by very matter-of-factly supporting his interpretation and leading the reader to realize why his view is to be preferred and the other is less acceptable.

We find many of the same characteristics displayed by Andrew in the expositions of an earlier era, during the "golden age" of the Fathers. Chrysostom, for example, also quoted the text approximately one verse at a time and commented upon it before moving on to the next verse. Chrysostom also occasionally referred to the opinions of others without naming them, using the same type of expression which we see in Andrew: *some say*. Augustine did likewise. Augustine and Chrysostom also often gave more than one meaning of a difficult passage.

### 5.3 Oikoumenios' Presentation

The presentation of Andrew's commentary stands in marked contrast to that of Oikoumenios whose exposition has an entirely different character. Oikoumenios divides his

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<sup>621</sup> *Chp. 10, Text 51-52, Comm. 60-62.*

<sup>622</sup> *Chp. 18, Text 70-71, Comm. 82-83.*

<sup>623</sup> *Chp. 2, Text 21, Comm. 25-26.*

<sup>624</sup> *Chp. 1, Text 14, Comm. 17.*

<sup>625</sup> *Chp. 10, Text 49, Comm. 57.*

<sup>626</sup> *Chp. 10, Text 49, Comm. 58.*

<sup>627</sup> *Chp. 19, Text 78, Comm. 90.*

<sup>628</sup> *Chp. 19, Text 73, Comm. 85.*

commentary into twelve sections, but does not explain the reason for the division. The chapters are basically equal in length, and it appears that the chapter ends when the chapter is long enough, not at a logical point based on content, theme or sequence of thought. For example, Oikoumenios discusses six of the seven letters to the churches in his chapter 2, but leaves his explanation about the last letter for his chapter 3 and discusses it along with the vision of heaven. Oikoumenios makes one comment which confirms that his chapter divisions are determined by length rather than by anything else.<sup>629</sup> Also in contrast to Andrew, Oikoumenios typically quotes fairly large sections of text, several verses at a time. He refers back to the particular details he wishes to explain and then ignores the rest.

Not only is Oikoumenios less methodical in his approach, he tends to heap Scripture quotations and explanations to support his interpretation of the text. Oikoumenios has far more Scripture quotations than Andrew but they are not as well-considered and his exposition is not carefully crafted. As already noted in the Introduction, in the original Greek manuscripts Oikoumenios' commentary is extremely difficult to follow, with no easy differentiation between what is text and what is comment.<sup>630</sup> His exposition flowed continuously without structure except for the chapter divisions. It took the work of Hoskier, (who first published Oikoumenios and expressed great frustration with his presentation in this regard) and De Groote who published the critical text, to sift through Oikoumenios, separate his own words from the Scripture quotes and create a readable and more organized commentary. Hoskier noted:

[I]t is not always easy to differentiate between what is text and what is commentary. In the volume now before the reader this may not appear to be the case, but that is because we have been at considerable pains to make the matter clear. In the original document the commentary sweeps along without halting between the sections of text and is without the slightest mark to guide the reader as to what is text and what commentary.<sup>631</sup>

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<sup>629</sup> See Oikoumenios' introductory comments to chapter 6 (Suggit 95) in which Oikoumenios comments that he did not finish the exposition about the seven churches in the previous chapter because the chapter was becoming too lengthy.

<sup>630</sup> This was explained above in chapter 1.3.2.2, page 20, discussing the characteristics which made Oikoumenios' commentary unacceptable or, in this instance at least, less "user-friendly."

<sup>631</sup> *The Complete Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse*, 4.



Oikoumenios believed that he stood within the tradition of the Church and proudly aligned himself with it.<sup>632</sup> Oikoumenios was certainly a Christian scholar, but not a clergyman. His interpretation is more explanatory than ecclesiastical in tone. He makes references to the sacraments and to Scripture, but his commentary has a strong philosophical flavor. Suggit noted that Oikoumenios frequently draws a distinction between that which can be perceived by the senses and that which can be perceived by the intellect, the *nous*. Suggit concluded that this indicates Origen's influence on Oikoumenios.<sup>633</sup> In fact many, if not most of the Fathers, including Andrew, made such distinctions which had been popularized by the Cappadocian Fathers. Such categories are often expressed in theological and spiritual writings, although rarely with frequency in a commentary, such as we see in Oikoumenios. Rather than indicating a dependence on Origen per se, Oikoumenios' use of such terms shows a philosophical rather than ecclesiastical inclination. Other hints of Origenism are present in Oikoumenios, however, and are discussed below in chapter 6.

Oikoumenios gives many clues that his orientation is primarily philosophical rather than ecclesiastical. References to being "wise," and to "wisdom" in general are found four times in his introductory comments alone.<sup>634</sup> Most striking and highly unusual are the references to St. Paul as "wise,"<sup>635</sup> "most wise,"<sup>636</sup> and "very wise."<sup>637</sup> Only twice is Paul simply called "the Apostle,"<sup>638</sup> which is the usual Eastern mode of reference for Paul. Methodios is "very wise,"<sup>639</sup> Moses is also described as "very wise,"<sup>640</sup> and even the prophet Daniel is "the wisest Daniel."<sup>641</sup> Oikoumenios' effort to interpret Revelation seems to be an

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<sup>632</sup> Oik. 1.1.4 and 5.19.2.

<sup>633</sup> But not to the extent of subordinating the Son to the Father. Suggit 10.

<sup>634</sup> Oik. 1.1.1, 1.1.3 (twice) and 1.1.6.

<sup>635</sup> 3.3.3, 6.11.3, 10.9.5, 11.3.3, 12.7.4.

<sup>636</sup> 1.3.1, 3.3.15, 10.9.3. Also 2.11.2, which Suggit translates as, "Paul, in his great wisdom..." Suggit 44.

<sup>637</sup> 8.21.2, 12.13.10.

<sup>638</sup> 11.12.12, 11.14.4.

<sup>639</sup> 1.1.5.

<sup>640</sup> 2.7.3.

<sup>641</sup> 12.7.11.

intellectual challenge to unlock the “mystical” message of the book.<sup>642</sup> Oikoumenios alludes to Homer, Hesiod, and the Greek belief that prophecy contained three levels.<sup>643</sup> By this time in the patristic tradition, an appeal to Greek learning would have been rather unthinkable, certainly for one who holds ecclesiastical authority, which is yet another indication that Oikoumenios does not.

Oikoumenios feels comfortable with Christian philosophers such as Clement of Alexandria, and he cites Clement.<sup>644</sup> He cites the *Shepherd of Hermas*<sup>645</sup> as well, also very unusual for the late sixth century. It seems unlikely that *Shepherd* would be considered Scripture by anyone at such a late date, and even if he does not consider it Scripture, its citation represents a lack of discrimination among sources on the part of Oikoumenios, which also does not speak well of his training. Also surprising is his citation of the “all-knowledgeable Evagrius,” a known Origenist.<sup>646</sup> Oikoumenios interprets the four animals by the throne as representing the four elements of creation, a common Greek philosophical concept.<sup>647</sup> Oikoumenios argues in favor of the reality of the general resurrection against philosophers who maintained that decomposed bodies could not be resurrected because of the separation of the four elements within the body.<sup>648</sup> Andrew entirely ignores this and is not the least interested in defending the resurrection against philosophers.

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<sup>642</sup> There are two references to the general “mystical” character of the book (1.1.2 and 6.11.5). Later, the one hundred forty four cubit measurement of the city is described as a “mystical” number, but Oikoumenios does not explain it (12.1.5), and the garb of the high priest is said to convey “mystical” symbolism (12.1.10).

<sup>643</sup> 1.1.2.

<sup>644</sup> 3.7.5. This is also rather unusual. Clement of Alexandria is not regarded as a Church Father in the East.

<sup>645</sup> 2.11.2. He refers to “Scripture” and then cites Paul and *Shepherd*. It is not clear whether Oikoumenios considered *Shepherd* to be Scripture. He does not introduce either Paul or *Shepherd* with any formulaic statement, such as “it is written...,” which might have provided us with a clue.

<sup>646</sup> 6.3.12. Some have used the presence of this citation to support an earlier date of the commentary, arguing that Oikoumenios would not have cited Evagrius, who was condemned at the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553 (also known as the Second Council of Constantinople), if he wrote the commentary after that date. But this is not persuasive since Oikoumenios was a Monophysite, and he would not have recognized that Council, or any Ecumenical Council after Ephesus in 431. Even if Oikoumenios were not Monophysite, given the rather eclectic nature of his commentary and unorthodox style and conclusions, it can hardly be argued that Oikoumenios would have felt bound to conform to such conventions. See also the discussion in footnote 820 below.

<sup>647</sup> 3.9.3.

<sup>648</sup> 11.10.1-9. Castagno believes that Oikoumenios is echoing the objections to the concept of the resurrection raised by two of the Origenist interlocutors found in Methodios’ *Symposium*. “I Commenti,” 351.

While Andrew recognizes that Revelation supplies training for the mind, he sees its benefits as almost exclusively spiritual. Oikoumenios refers to the suffering befalling sinners who refuse to repent, or he speaks occasionally of the love of God for humanity, but there is no hint within Oikoumenios' commentary that he bears responsibility for souls. He was most certainly neither a presbyter nor a bishop. He refers to sacraments, and sometimes finds sacramental overtones in Revelation imagery, but even in this he reveals his lack of exegetical training and makes surprising departures in his conclusions. Obvious symbols for which one would expect a sacramental connection to be drawn, Oikoumenios does not, but then he finds sacramental allusions where they are inappropriate due to the context.<sup>649</sup> Many matters do not appear to be well-considered, and will be discussed below, while other observations are not well-placed. For example, rather than concluding authorship or canonical issues as a preliminary matter, Oikoumenios' defense of the inspiration and apostolic authorship of Revelation can be found both at the beginning<sup>650</sup> and at the very end of the commentary<sup>651</sup> and its placement there makes for a rather awkward ending.

Oikoumenios also becomes easily distracted in his exposition and deviates from the interpretation to comment on other matters unrelated to the text of Revelation. For example, because of the phrase "the beginning of creation" (Rev. 3:14) in the description of Christ, he digresses to address Arianism.<sup>652</sup> This could arguably be related to the interpretation of the text, but another episode occurs a little later when he stops to comment on "an error among the Jews" and why this results in a certain statement found in Isaiah.<sup>653</sup> Oikoumenios also expends a significant amount of effort attacking Greek ideas about the gods, for example how Greeks defended their belief in many gods by comparing it to the Christian belief in angels.<sup>654</sup>

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<sup>649</sup> For example, he interprets Rev. 7:14 in which the saints "washed their robes in the blood of the lamb" as a Eucharistic symbol, rather than explaining that this meant that they had died as martyrs. Oik. 5.3.7.

<sup>650</sup> 1.2.4-6.

<sup>651</sup> 12.20.1-6.

<sup>652</sup> 3.3.2-4.

<sup>653</sup> 3.9.2, Suggit 57.

<sup>654</sup> 10.11.3-6.

Oikoumenios makes lengthy statements about Christian doctrine which are distracting, unnecessary, not directly related to the exposition of the text.<sup>655</sup> One is forced to ponder whether they serve more as a recitation of his theological prowess, a defense of his orthodoxy, or simply reflect a lack discipline or training. His exposition of Rev. 1:1, for example, includes a Christological statement which does not seem to be offered for the purpose of illuminating the meaning of the text. After noting that John's presentation of Christ in the Fourth Gospel is more focused on his divinity, whereas the Apocalypse is more appropriate to Christ's humanity, Oikoumenios makes a lengthy digression.<sup>656</sup> This type of aside is not uncommon when a commentary was actually a series of sermons, but it is not expected when a commentary was never extemporaneously delivered.<sup>657</sup>

Oikoumenios' commentary contains many inconsistencies, such as the interpretation of Babylon. When the image is first presented (Rev. 14:8), it is both a figurative and a literal interpretation. Oikoumenios concludes that Babylon is either the "confusion of the present life" or the actual Persian city.<sup>658</sup> But later, Oikoumenios believes that a second reference to

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<sup>655</sup> Castagno believes that Oikoumenios is primarily reading Revelation in light of the theological issues of his day and uses the text to support his theological views. "I Commenti," 319. Biblical interpretation necessarily reflects the interpreter's theological opinions. But if Castagno is correct, this may explain why Oikoumenios promulgates such statements which are unrelated to the exegesis. She later writes that for Oikoumenios, Revelation serves as a kind of *Summa Theologica*. *Ibid*, 392. In that case, Oikoumenios' purpose would not be to interpret the text but to use it as a springboard or a platform to discuss theology. However, the commentary has only a few discussions of doctrine, not enough to indicate that it was intended to be anything other than a commentary, or that Revelation was anything other than history or prophecy.

<sup>656</sup> "It is a sign of genuine theology to believe that God the Word has been begotten from God and the Father before all eternity and temporal interval, being co-eternal and consubstantial with the Father and the Spirit, and joint-ruler of the ages and of all spiritual and perceptible creation, according to the saying of the most-wise Paul...(citing Colossians 1:18 and 16)...But it is also a sign of genuine theology to believe that in the last days he has become for us and for our salvation a human being, not by divesting himself of his divinity, but by assuming human flesh, animated by a mind. In this way, he who is Emmanuel is understood to have been made one from two natures, divinity and humanity, each being complete according to the indwelling Word and according to the different specific characteristic of each nature, without being confused or altered by their combination into a unity, and without being kept separate after the inexpressible and authentic union." 1.3.2-3, Suggit 21.

<sup>657</sup> Castagno believes that Oikoumenios was driven to find the internal logic of the Book of Revelation. "I Commenti," 304. Hence, what appear to be inconsistencies are not, and his return to previous themes already discussed are efforts to find coherence in the text. *Ibid*, 330. But she gives Oikoumenios far too much credit and does not succeed in demonstrating this internal coherence which she says Oikoumenios sought and presumably found, if this was as important to his exposition as she claims. Furthermore, Castagno does not even explain how she arrived at the opinion that Oikoumenios was pursuing this internal coherence by pointing to details in the commentary to support her conclusion. In fact, Oikoumenios ignores logical sequence and even dismisses it, such as by saying that John "is often shown the first things last and contrariwise the last first." 9.5.3, Suggit 142.

<sup>658</sup> 8.11.1, Suggit 128.

Babylon (Rev. 17) refers to a *different* city, Rome, and he interprets the text to mean the absolute destruction of Rome.<sup>659</sup> Andrew, however, concludes that Babylon is probably not Rome because the text describes a city with world-wide domination, and long ago Rome lost that type of dominance.<sup>660</sup>

A simple, but greatly illustrative example can be found in Oikoumenios' interpretation of the seven churches. Throughout his exposition, Oikoumenios almost without exception interprets the number "seven" as a symbol of perfection.<sup>661</sup> But in the opening vision in which John is instructed to write to the seven churches, an image which easily lends itself to an interpretation of fullness or perfection, Oikoumenios concludes that John wrote to these seven because those were the cities converted by him.<sup>662</sup> By the late sixth century, the seven churches of Asia and the seven churches to which Paul had written had been interpreted for hundreds of years as symbolic of the entire Church. It is difficult to imagine how Oikoumenios either could not know this tradition or would not have arrived at such a conclusion on his own, considering the abundant references to "seven" in Revelation and his usual interpretation of the number as a symbol of perfection.

#### 5.4 Andrew's Exegetical Education and Skill

Andrew preserves a rich tradition of interpretation. He consistently gives various possible interpretations, sometimes referring to other "teachers," "fathers," or otherwise hinting at unnamed sources. Oikoumenios only seems to refer to unnamed sources on three occasions.<sup>663</sup> Andrew uses exegetical terms of art, and even when he does not use the terminology, one can see the application of the technique. He has a good familiarity with the Scripture, which will be discussed below, and he knows how to apply it appropriately.

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<sup>659</sup> 9.15.1.

<sup>660</sup> *Chp. 53, Text 181, Comm. 173.*

<sup>661</sup> 5.3.5.

<sup>662</sup> 1.25.

<sup>663</sup> Castagno concludes that Oikoumenios, whom she admires for his originality and theological richness, almost entirely ignores the Eastern patristic tradition which Andrew's commentary recovered and preserved. "I Commenti," 426.

Andrew's exegetical training can be seen in his initial reference to basic concepts and methodology. He begins his exposition by expressing the classic patristic understanding of Scripture as having three levels.<sup>664</sup> Oikoumenios, on the other hand refers to three levels of prophecy – past, present and future – something with which Andrew strongly disagrees and which is not part of the mainstream patristic tradition.

#### 5.4.1 Knowledge of Manuscript Variations

Andrew is aware of well-known manuscript variations and comments upon them. This was to be expected of a skilled interpreter. For example, Andrew is aware that Rev. 3:7, "These things says the Holy One, the True One, who has the key of David," has a common variant, "key of Hades." He interprets the passage according to what he believes to be the better reading, "key of David," but then offers an alternative interpretation in case this is not the original reading: *Since in some manuscripts instead of "David," "Hades" is written, (this would mean that) through the key of Hades, the authority over life and death has been confirmed in Christ.*<sup>665</sup> Elsewhere he comments on another well-known variation in Rev. 15:6 which describes the angels dressed in pure "linen," but some manuscripts read "stone." *From out of this temple the angels will come dressed in clean "linen" or "stone," as some copies have, on account of the purity of their nature and their closeness to the Cornerstone.*<sup>666</sup> Oikoumenios does not comment on any manuscript variations in Revelation, although he is at least aware of differing translations of the Old Testament.<sup>667</sup>

#### 5.4.2 Knowledge of the Canonical Status of Revelation

In his prologue Andrew dismisses any objection to the status of Revelation as Scripture by stating: *Concerning the divine inspiration of the book* (τοῦ θεοπνεύστου τῆς

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<sup>664</sup> Prologue, Text 8-9, Comm. 7-10. See chapter 5.5.1 below.

<sup>665</sup> Chp. 8, Text 38, Comm. 47.

<sup>666</sup> Chp. 45, Text 162, Comm. 160.

<sup>667</sup> He references the Greek translation of the Old Testament by Aquila (8.17.2, Suggit 131), which was an alternative to the Septuagint.

βίβλου) *we believe it superfluous to lengthen the discussion.*<sup>668</sup> Makarios accepts Revelation as Scripture or he would not have asked Andrew to write the commentary. Andrew does not discuss the authorship or inspiration of Revelation, nonetheless, he feels the need to defend its canonical status, a matter which must be addressed before he can proceed further. Oikoumenios also faces the same concern and takes it up twice, both at the beginning and at the end of his commentary.<sup>669</sup> Oikoumenios provides an interesting detail when he notes that the *majority* believes that Revelation was written by “some other John,” not the apostle.<sup>670</sup>

### 5.4.3 Knowledge of Other Traditional Scripture Interpretations

Regardless of his self-confessed limitations and professions of inadequacy, Andrew nonetheless proves himself well-qualified for the task. He demonstrates knowledge of previous traditional explanations, employs well-known techniques of patristic interpretation and skillfully handles the text. Clues that he had exegetical training abound. For example, Andrew knows the traditional interpretation that the seven churches addressed in Revelation 2 and 3 signify all churches everywhere.<sup>671</sup> Oikoumenios, as already mentioned, says that John only wrote to seven churches because those were the cities converted by him<sup>672</sup> and probably did not know of the tradition that seven represented all, an interpretation which had been applied to Paul’s epistles as well.<sup>673</sup> Andrew is also aware of traditional explanations that resolve problems found in the gospels. Regarding the two differing genealogies of Christ in Matthew and Luke, Andrew shows that he knows how the problem was resolved in the interpretative tradition.<sup>674</sup> He is also aware of a well-known problem raised by John 7:38 and

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<sup>668</sup> *Prologue, Text 10, Comm. 11.*

<sup>669</sup> 1.1.4-6 and 12.20.

<sup>670</sup> 12.20.4.

<sup>671</sup> *Chp. 1, Text 13, Comm. 15.*

<sup>672</sup> 1.25, *Suggit 28.*

<sup>673</sup> See *Comm. 15, fn 53.*

<sup>674</sup> *Chp. 10, Text 51, Comm. 62, fn 269.*

shows that he knows the traditional resolution of that problem also, which is based on the punctuation of the text.<sup>675</sup>

Andrew is also aware of the etymology of certain Hebrew words, such as “Satan,” meaning “adversary,”<sup>676</sup> and “amen,” meaning “let it be so.”<sup>677</sup> Although these particular details are absent from Oikoumenios, he shows some knowledge of other traditional etymologies, but not to the extent shown by Andrew.

Two general characteristics distinguish Oikoumenios’ unique commentary. The first is that he states peculiar and surprising conclusions. The second, and equally surprising feature, is that a large number of interpretations go *unmentioned*. It is through examination of these particular features in Oikoumenios that Andrew’s training and skill are most evident.

Andrew knows what is expected of him as an interpreter and what is important for him to comment upon. For example, Andrew explains the meanings of people and place names, (such as the names of the twelve tribes), information acquired either from written compilations (*Onomastica*) or from an oral exegetical tradition. Oikoumenios does *not even write down* the names of the tribes as he copies those verses in the *text of Revelation* itself into his commentary, let alone explain them.<sup>678</sup> This would have been a very surprising omission at the time and would have signaled a lack of exegetical training. Another example of a traditional explanation missing from Oikoumenios is the interpretation of the twelve types of precious stones which decorate the New Jerusalem in Revelation 20. Oikoumenios ignores any symbolic meaning behind the different gems, simply remarking that the precious stones represent virtue. A spiritual explanation of the stone symbolism would have been of great interest to early readers and would have been expected from any interpreter.

It is impossible to explain the glaring omissions from Oikoumenios’ commentary without concluding that he lacked specific exegetical skills and an extensive knowledge of the interpretive tradition. He does show awareness of some traditional interpretations, such as

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<sup>675</sup> See *Chp. 20, Text 85, Comm. 98*, fn 461.

<sup>676</sup> *Chp. 34, Text 130, Comm. 134*, fn 661.

<sup>677</sup> *Chp. 1, Text 17, Comm. 21*.

<sup>678</sup> *Oik. 5.2-3, Suggit 79-81*.



the traditional belief that the two witnesses of Rev. 11:3 are Enoch and Elijah,<sup>679</sup> some knowledge of traditional Hebrew etymologies and the discussion about the meaning of 666 given by Irenaeus, although Oikoumenios does not cite him,<sup>680</sup> which may indicate that he is not aware that this interpretation came from Irenaeus.

Andrew provides many classic patristic explanations of famous passages, and Oikoumenios' silence about these interpretations is so surprising that it strongly suggests that Oikoumenios either did not know them, or he did not deem them important, probably the former. For example, Oikoumenios does not mention the opinion that the four animals of chapter 4 represent the four evangelists, probably Revelation's most famous and enduring patristic interpretation of all. Oikoumenios does not interpret the various animal components which constitute the beast of the sea (Rev. 13:1-2) as representing successive kingdoms, which Andrew and many Fathers before him had done. Instead, Oikoumenios gives a rather naturalistic interpretation, assigning qualities to the beast based on the physical characteristics of those animals.<sup>681</sup>

Andrew interprets the twenty four elders as representing all those who have pleased God in the old and the new covenants, an obvious and well-known interpretation because of the twelve tribes and twelve apostles in the Bible. But Oikoumenios believes they are actual persons whom John "saw" in his heavenly vision, and he actually names them, after first admitting that he is guessing as to who they might be. Oikoumenios does not associate the white hair of Christ in the opening vision with the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:9) but explains it as the "age-old intention of God."<sup>682</sup> He does not associate the Lamb, the dominant image of Christ in Revelation, with sacrifice but offers a very weak explanation that the lamb is a symbol of "guilelessness and ability to provide," such as providing wool.<sup>683</sup> Many other examples could be offered and some will be discussed below, but it is clear that Oikoumenios

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<sup>679</sup> 6.11.3.

<sup>680</sup> 12.20.5.

<sup>681</sup> 7.11.8-9.

<sup>682</sup> 1.27.9, Suggit 30.

<sup>683</sup> 3.13.11, Suggit 62.

was not as technically trained nor as steeped in the interpretive tradition as was Andrew and their commentaries reflect this difference.

## 5.5 Methodology

Andrew is reluctant to undertake an exposition of Revelation, a task which *befits a great mind and (one) enlightened by the Divine Spirit*.<sup>684</sup> He knew that *the exact knowledge of these matters lies within the sphere of God, who alone knows the times in which these prophesized things will come to pass, which is forbidden to seek*.<sup>685</sup> Furthermore, on a personal level, he is well aware of his limitations and sees himself as spiritually unqualified since he is *deprived of the prophetic spirit*<sup>686</sup> and *inadequate to explain the things which are secretly and mysteriously seen by the saints*.<sup>687</sup> As explained above in chapter 1, when faced with the interpretation of Revelation, this is hardly a conventional expression of modesty. Nonetheless, Andrew proves himself fully qualified for the task and Makarios' confidence in him is justified. Andrew states that he does not wish to engage in "conjecture"<sup>688</sup> and with little existing patristic guidance for Revelation Andrew must have drawn up his theological education. The commentary demonstrates that Andrew was well-trained in patristic methodology and the existing techniques of biblical interpretation. Since he begins by remarking that "many people" had asked him to undertake this effort, Andrew must have been a known expert in the Scriptures.

### 5.5.1 The "Three Parts" of Scripture

It is a sign of a good interpreter to begin his commentary by explaining his methodology, which is exactly what Andrew does, even though he expresses what he knows to be obvious to Makarios: *as you yourself well know, since there are three parts to a human being, (body, soul and spirit) all divinely inspired Scripture has been endowed with three*

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<sup>684</sup> Prologue, Text 8, Comm. 6.

<sup>685</sup> Prologue, Text 10, Comm. 10.

<sup>686</sup> Prologue, Text 8, Comm. 6.

<sup>687</sup> Prologue, Text 8, Comm. 6.

<sup>688</sup> Prologue, Text 9, Comm. 10.

*parts by divine grace.*<sup>689</sup> He continues to explain how each level of meaning corresponds to the spiritual state of the reader. This statement reveals a fundamental belief about Andrew's view of Scripture and its interpretation: at least three layers of meaning are already present. It is for the reader to discover them and his/her ability to do so is entirely dependent upon the individual's level of spirituality, reflected by that part of the individual acting as the dominant operative. This is why Andrew has no difficulty accepting many possible meanings for the text, and commonly offers three and four possible interpretations. Although Origen popularized the idea that Scripture contained three parts, by the time of Andrew this perspective was widely accepted and so deeply in-grained in the patristic tradition that it was no longer identified with Origen and was not considered "Origenistic."

### 5.5.2 History and Typology

The first and lowest level of meaning, represented by the body, is ἱστορία, the historical or literal narrative. This can be the actual historical event described or simply refer to the plain meaning or literal meaning of the text. This first level *is like the letter and like history established according to sense perception.*<sup>690</sup> ἱστορία is the level of understanding that one might expect from those *guided by the Law,*<sup>691</sup> that is, those who would observe the mere letter of biblical injunctions or who limit their interpretation to the historical meaning of a pericope. Although originally Christian identification of this level of interpretation arose in the polemical debates with Judaism, the reference here by Andrew to "the Law" is certainly not suggesting a Jewish interpretation of Revelation. It is a comment about those who do not see a level of meaning in Scripture beyond the literal or the historical event because of their low level of spirituality.

Andrew hints that he is well-aware that Revelation had a historical context and audience when he states in the opening line of the commentary that he has been asked to *adapt the prophecies to the time after this vision.*<sup>692</sup> He recognizes that certain events already

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<sup>689</sup> Prologue, Text 8, Comm. 7.

<sup>690</sup> Prologue, Text 8, Comm. 8.

<sup>691</sup> Prologue, Text 9, Comm. 8.

<sup>692</sup> Prologue, Text 7, Comm. 6.

took place in fulfillment of the prophecy during John's time and during the intervening centuries between John's era and Andrew's, and that the remainder will occur in the future. He explains that the first verse "The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him, to show to his servants that which must come to pass soon" (Rev. 1:1) indicates that *some of the predictions concerning them are to come to pass immediately thereafter.*<sup>693</sup>

However, the literal sense alone is inadequate since it is a bare recitation of history, even if it is a foretelling of future events. More important are the moral and spiritual lessons to be derived from these prophecies. But Andrew does not denigrate the literal sense. In fact, he often insists upon the reality of the literal sense against Oikoumenios' allegorization. Andrew realizes that the literal sense is important for the prophecy to be true. He is very aware of those passages which ought to be interpreted literally, such as the letters to the churches (Rev. 2-3) and the destruction occurring after the seven trumpets (Rev. 8:7-9:21), and what must be understood spiritually, such as the opening vision (Rev. 1), the vision of heaven with the twenty four elders (Rev. 4), and the woman wrapped in the sun (Rev. 12).

A great weakness of Oikoumenios is that he allegorizes what ought to be understood literally<sup>694</sup> and elsewhere he gives a literal interpretation of something that is clearly symbolic.<sup>695</sup> For example upon the blowing of the first trumpet, a third of the earth and one third of the vegetation are burnt up (Rev. 8:7). Oikoumenios states: "if one takes this quite literally, he will not find the true meaning."<sup>696</sup> Oikoumenios then entirely allegorizes the destruction: "When the text says trees and grass were burnt up, it refers allegorically (ὁ λόγος τροπολογεῖ) to sinners because of their folly and the insensibility of their soul, their woodenness all ready for burning."<sup>697</sup> On the other hand, the 1,260 days that the woman wrapped in the sun remained in the desert is interpreted literally as the amount of time the Virgin Mary hid in Egypt with the Christ child.<sup>698</sup> This, despite the fact that twice before

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<sup>693</sup> *Chp. 1, Text 11, Comm. 13.*

<sup>694</sup> Such as the plagues and devastation caused by the four horsemen (4.7.1-17.10) and the seven trumpets (5.9.1-5.23.12).

<sup>695</sup> Such as the twenty four elders (3.7.1) and the escape of the woman into the desert (7.9.2-3).

<sup>696</sup> Oik. 5.9.3, Suggit 84.

<sup>697</sup> 5.9.4, Suggit 84.

<sup>698</sup> 7.3.10.

Oikoumenios acknowledged that 42 months is a “figurative” amount of time.<sup>699</sup> One wonders whether he realized that 42 months amounts to 1,260 days. When the woman wrapped in the sun cries out with birth pains, the *pains* are not interpreted literally by Oikoumenios, (for theological reasons), but her *cries* are.<sup>700</sup> The cries are actual, but the labor pain is not.

In the patristic tradition, historical events in the Bible were not considered mere history, but often were seen as a *foreshadowing* (τύπος) that *anticipates the truth*.<sup>701</sup> By this comment, Andrew shows that he must have used typology in his interpretation of the Old Testament. Yet because he mentions it in connection with ἱστορία we know that he understands typology as firmly connected to the historical event, and not a purely allegorical elaboration. For example, he refers to the tabernacle of the Hebrews in the wilderness as a type of the heavenly altar, of which *the foreshadowing was shown to Moses on the mountain together with the tabernacle*.<sup>702</sup> The persecution of the Jews under Antiochus IV “Epiphanes” was also seen by Andrew as historical typology: *Daniel prophesied about Antiochus as being a type of the coming of the Antichrist*.<sup>703</sup> Three levels of typology are expressed when the heavenly Jerusalem comes down and a voice proclaims to John, “Behold, the dwelling of God is with men...” (Rev. 21:3). Andrew explains that the type of this “dwelling” or “tabernacle” (ἡ σκηνή), which will be revealed later in its fullness, is the Church today, and furthermore, the tabernacle which Moses saw (Exod. 25:9) was the pre-figuration of the type (προτύπωσις).<sup>704</sup> Typology was an exegetical technique greatly favored in the patristic tradition, however we see little application of typology in this commentary since typology usually would have been applied in an analysis of the Old Testament.

The literal sense can refer to past history where appropriate, such as in the letters to the churches, or to future events, or to both at once. For example, commenting on Rev. 3:10-

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<sup>699</sup> 6.9.8 and 6.11.5.

<sup>700</sup> 6.19.7-8. His theological reason is that Mary could not have experienced pain in childbirth because labor pains are punishment for the sin of Eve and Christ was born entirely free from sin. Oikoumenios says that Mary literally cried, not from labor pains but because Joseph initially believed that she had been unfaithful to him. However, Rev. 12:2 specifically states that they were labor pains.

<sup>701</sup> Prologue, Text 9, Comm. 9-10.

<sup>702</sup> Chp. 21, Text 87, Comm. 100.

<sup>703</sup> Chp. 33, Text 126, Comm. 130.

<sup>704</sup> Chp. 65, Text 234, Comm. 216.

11 (“Because you have kept the word of my patience, I will keep you from the hour of trial which is coming on the whole world”), Andrew remarks that this was said *either (in reference to) the persecution by the impious kings of Rome against the Christians which will come immediately at that particular time, from which he promises she (the church) is to be delivered; or (it refers to) the world-wide movement at the end of the age against those who believe in the Antichrist, from which he promises to free her zealous ones....*<sup>705</sup>

### 5.5.3 The Moral Sense

The second level, τροπολογία, known as the “figurative” or “moral” sense, corresponds to the soul and relates to the moral lesson to be derived from the text. Andrew explains that this type of interpretation is applied to Scriptures which contain *proverbial advice and other such pedagogical uses.*<sup>706</sup> This level is appropriate for those who have risen from the basic level of understanding, (the literal sense, represented by the body and the Law of Moses), and are able to draw a moral message from the Scripture. This part corresponds to the soul and leads the reader *from that which can be perceived by the senses to that which can be perceived by the intellect*<sup>707</sup> and occurs when one is *governed by grace,*<sup>708</sup> presumably those who are active in the life of the Church. Such people can extract the moral message of the Scripture as well as its historical meaning. This is an important level for Andrew who consistently expresses the moral lesson in Revelation as basic pedagogy about the Christian way of life, such as the importance of performing good deeds, despising death, pursuing virtue, etc.

The term τροπολογία engenders some confusion and, due to the inconsistent use of this term, it may indicate either the “figurative sense” or the “moral sense.” The problem arises because τρόπος means “behavior,” hence the “moral” sense of the Scripture meaning that which relates to one’s manner of life. But τρόπος also means “a figure of speech,” hence Andrew’s application of τροπολογία to understanding proverbs as figures of speech. Because

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<sup>705</sup> Chp. 8, Text 40, Comm. 48-9.

<sup>706</sup> Prologue, Text 9, Comm. 10.

<sup>707</sup> Prologue, Text 8, Comm. 8.

<sup>708</sup> Prologue, Text 9, Comm. 8.

of its relationship to figurative speech in proverbial sayings, *τρόπος* was often applied in a manner practically synonymous with allegory. Compounding the confusion, *τροπολογία*, *ἀλληγορία* and even *ἀναγωγή* (see below) have all been referred to as the “figurative sense.”

When the literal sense was difficult to accept, or conflicted with a pre-determined conclusion or previously made observations, it was not uncommon for the literal sense to be discounted or disregarded by stating that the words have a “figurative” meaning. Thus, the text was basically allegorized. We consistently see Andrew fighting against this propensity in Oikoumenios who frequently allegorizes by referring to the text’s “figurative” meaning. Oikoumenios is willing to concede that the tribulations of the bowls (Rev. 16:2-7) might occur literally or physically (*αἰσθητῶς*) but believes they might also be describing events allegorically (*ἀλληγορικῶς*).<sup>709</sup> In fact, Oikoumenios’ exposition on the bowls is entirely allegorical. For example, referring to the fourth and fifth bowls poured out, resulting in a scorching hot sun and darkness, Oikoumenios states: “It is not difficult to explain all this by means of the rules of metaphor.”<sup>710</sup> He continues to explain that the scorching sun is simply drought<sup>711</sup> and the darkness poured out on the throne of the beast means that when the tyranny of the Antichrist comes to an end “those who are under his command....will experience darkness in their reasoning.”<sup>712</sup>

Usually the word employed by Oikoumenios is *τροπικῶς*,<sup>713</sup> but he also uses a variety of related expressions, such as *τροπολογία*,<sup>714</sup> *τροπικότερον*,<sup>715</sup> *τροπή*,<sup>716</sup> *τροπικόν*,<sup>717</sup> and *ὁ λόγος τροπολογεῖ*.<sup>718</sup> He also uses the term “metaphor” (*μεταφορά*) to

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<sup>709</sup> Oik. 8.25.1.

<sup>710</sup> τοὺς τῆς τροπῆς λόγους. 9.1.3, De Groote 212, Suggit 140.

<sup>711</sup> 9.1.3.

<sup>712</sup> 9.1.3, Suggit 141.

<sup>713</sup> 1.15.2, 3.13.1, 4.17.9, 5.9.3 (twice), 5.13.2, 7.11.2, 11.10.15, 11.12.12.

<sup>714</sup> 5.13.3.

<sup>715</sup> 11.10.10.

<sup>716</sup> 5.11.3; 9.3.1.

<sup>717</sup> 8.19.8.

<sup>718</sup> 5.9.4.

signify allegory<sup>719</sup> as well as other terms to indicate a symbolic meaning, including αινίττεται,<sup>720</sup> αινιττόμενοι<sup>721</sup> and ἀναγωγή.<sup>722</sup> Oikoumenios appears to use these words interchangeably.

Andrew never uses the word μεταφορά and rarely uses τρόπος to indicate figurative meaning. Oikoumenios' frequent use of these terms demonstrates that his commentary highly allegorized the Apocalypse and that his background and training was probably literary and philosophical rather than theological and exegetical. On one occasion, Oikoumenios refers to the literal narrative<sup>723</sup> but he never seems aware of the "three levels" of Scripture, never explains his basic interpretive approach or the reason for the division of his commentary. His use of terminology does not suggest technical expertise. Andrew accurately understands τρόπος and τροπολογία as related to proverbs as figures of speech, but not because a proverb has *symbolic* meaning, but because the proverb expresses a *moral* lesson and relates to morals and proper behavior.

#### 5.5.4 The Spiritual Sense: Θεωρία and Ἀναγωγή

The highest level of meaning corresponds to the spiritual level and relates to *the future and higher things*.<sup>724</sup> Although Andrew does not expressly bifurcate this level, it is clear that he perceives the spiritual level as encompassing two parts: θεωρία ("the higher things") and ἀναγωγή ("the future things"). Like τροπολογία, at times ἀναγωγή also suffers from misunderstanding. Ἀναγωγή means "to raise up," hence it is sometimes perceived as synonymous with θεωρία and ἀλληγορία because of the perception that it raises the mind upward, which people assume refers to "spiritual things" in general. But Andrew is using the term with precision: the "future" orientation of ἀναγωγή refers to heaven. Specifically, ἀναγωγή is an interpretation related to the afterlife, or life in the kingdom of God. Andrew

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<sup>719</sup> See for example 8.13.2, 8.19.4, and 8.23.1.

<sup>720</sup> 4.17.4, 8.21.4.

<sup>721</sup> 8.19.6.

<sup>722</sup> 5.11.3.

<sup>723</sup> το γράμμα της ιστορίας, 7.11.2.

<sup>724</sup> Prologue, Text 8, Comm. 8.



demonstrates a precise understanding of these terms and is very accurate in their application. This shows that he had a good education and training in interpretation as well as the expertise to know the difference between θεωρία and ἀναγωγή, just as he does not confuse a symbolic or metaphorical meaning with τρόπος as a technical exegetical term.

The spiritual level is the most difficult level of interpretation to attain and the insights at this level are acquired by few, only those who live a life *in which the Spirit governs*.<sup>725</sup> Andrew recognizes the wealth of meaning to be found in Revelation on this third level, because God ordered Revelation to be proclaimed *to those who are more perfect in knowledge*.<sup>726</sup> He arrives at this conclusion, having compared Revelation to other prophecy, (meaning the Old Testament), which exhibited primarily the first two levels: *the spiritual part, (is) to be found especially abundant in the Apocalypse of the Theological Man; on the one hand, lavishly seen with historical form and figurative speech in the other prophets, whereas, here, (in the Apocalypse), (the spiritual part) is especially seen in abundance*.<sup>727</sup> We can surmise from this comment that Andrew sees Revelation above all as a prophetic book and primarily future-oriented. This drives his interpretation.

Origen had identified the spiritual understanding as the highest level, but used the term ἀλληγορία. One famous Cappadocian, Gregory of Nyssa, greatly enjoyed and promoted allegory. However, our Cappadocian bishop appears to follow the example of his celebrated predecessor on the episcopal throne of Caesarea, Basil the Great, who rejected allegory as an attempt “by false arguments and allegorical interpretations to bestow on the Scriptures a dignity of their own imagining....[T]heirs is the attitude of one who considers himself wiser than the revelations of the Spirit and introduces his own ideas in pretense of an explanation. Therefore, let it be understood as it has been written.”<sup>728</sup>

Andrew’s reluctance to engage in allegory can be seen not only in his avoidance of the term itself, but also because his commentary is devoid of an excessive allegorization of numbers or a pre-occupation with the interpretation of numbers. He explains numbers which are clearly symbolic, such as 666, 7 or 24, but he neither dissects them nor engages in

<sup>725</sup> τῆ μακαρία λήξει, ἐν ἣ τὸ πνεῦμα βασιλεύει. *Prologue, Text 9, Comm. 9.*

<sup>726</sup> *Prologue, Text 9, Comm. 10.*

<sup>727</sup> *Prologue, Text 9, Comm. 10.*

<sup>728</sup> *On the Six Days of Creation, Hom. 9.1. Basil: Exegetical Homilies*, trans. Agnes Clare Way, Fathers of the Church series, vol. 46 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1963), 135-6.

explanations of their properties or their components, such as what makes 10 a perfect number, or other such discussions which we find in Fathers who delighted in allegory.<sup>729</sup>

We can conclude that Andrew is more closely aligned with the Antiochean style of interpretation,<sup>730</sup> which is not surprising since geographically Antioch was in relatively close proximity, approximately 240 km from Caesarea. Andrew understands and interprets symbols, but does not engage in pure allegory, and in fact never uses the word, preferring θεωρία and ἀναγωγή to explain the spiritual level of interpretation. This is very much in keeping with the Antiochean School, which allowed for a spiritual interpretation when specifically called for by the symbolic language in a text (such as in the interpretation of parables), but disfavored the word ἀλληγορία. The imaginative allegorical interpretation engaged in by Oikoumenios is clearly disapproved by Andrew.

Oikoumenios does not use the techniques of ἀλληγορία, typology, ἀναγωγή, θεωρία, τροπολογία, σκοπός, sequence (ἀκολουθία) or context. In fact, the technical use of such terminology is entirely absent from Oikoumenios. Although occasionally one of these *words* may be used it, is not applied *technically*. For example, Oikoumenios frequently takes note of “figurative” language in Revelation, as discussed above, but no more so than anyone else who is familiar with the basic analysis of literature. On one occasion Oikoumenios used the term ἀλληγορικῶς,<sup>731</sup> but it is identical to his use of τροπικῶς or μεταφορά and is used to describe figurative language, rather than as an exegetical technique or term of art.

## 5.6 Technique

### 5.6.1 Andrew’s Limitations

Andrew admits that he is incapable of fully understanding Revelation, certainly not on its highest level,<sup>732</sup> but also not even on its most basic level.<sup>733</sup> But *since it has been*

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<sup>729</sup> Such as Augustine. See his discussion of the allegorical meaning of the 153 fish caught by the disciples in John 21:11. *Question 57. Augustine Eighty Three Different Questions*, trans. David Mosher, Fathers of the Church series, vol. 70, ed. Hermigild Dressler (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1977), 99-103.

<sup>730</sup> See Paul Ternant, “La θεωρία d’Antioche dans le cadre des sens de l’Écriture,” *Biblica* 34 (1953) 135-158, 354-383 and 456-486.

<sup>731</sup> 8.25.1.

<sup>732</sup> *We ourselves do not understand the entire depth of the hidden spirit within it. Prologue, Text 9, Comm. 10.*

ordered by God to be proclaimed to those who are more perfect in knowledge,<sup>734</sup> he will attempt to explain it. He claims that he will not state conjectured things,<sup>735</sup> which may be a comment directed at Oikoumenios who engages in a significant amount of imaginative interpretation and even admits to “guessing” at the identity of the twenty four elders on the thrones.<sup>736</sup> Andrew may not resort to guessing and conjecture, but his task is difficult since he has so little interpretive tradition about Revelation to draw upon. He turns for help to the techniques of interpretation in which he was trained.<sup>737</sup>

### 5.6.2 Andrew’s Use of Scripture

Andrew was very well versed in the Bible and used the Scripture effectively, making numerous quotations. He quotes from the Old Testament approximately 180 times and from the New Testament approximately 325 times.<sup>738</sup> Quotations were carefully chosen, and are never part of a string of quotations in the form of a proof text. In addition to actual quotations, Andrew refers to many additional scriptural persons, events and concepts in the form of countless allusions without actually quoting directly from the Bible. Both Andrew and Oikoumenios commonly used Scripture to interpret Scripture. That is, they used one passage of Scripture to explain another, especially by word association. The technique of scriptural “word association” is discussed below.

### 5.6.3 Σκοπός

Σκοπός is the goal, purpose or aim of the biblical writer. Every book of the Bible has a σκοπός and this is the first observation an interpreter is expected to make. We see this

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<sup>733</sup> *We neither dare to understand everything according to the letter. Prologue, Text 9, Comm. 10.*

<sup>734</sup> *Prologue, Text 9, Comm. 10.* Probably a reference to Rev. 22:10 “Do not seal up the words of prophecy in this book.”

<sup>735</sup> τῶν ἐστοχασμένων. *Prologue, Text 9, Comm. 10.*

<sup>736</sup> 3.7.1.

<sup>737</sup> Faced with the same problem, Oikoumenios, on the other hand, turns to other arenas, such as philosophy, medicine and physics. Castagno draws the same conclusion. “I Commenti,” 327.

<sup>738</sup> This is a conservative estimate. It is difficult to decide what constitutes a true “quotation,” since frequently Andrew only quotes a word or two, while making an obvious allusion to a scriptural text. These have not been counted as quotations.

practiced by Chrysostom, for example, who consistently begins his exposition of a given book with an explanation of the biblical author's purpose for writing, the author's σκοπός.<sup>739</sup> Although σκοπός is an ordinary word meaning "goal" or "end," it is also an exegetical term of art. The awareness of σκοπός and its consideration when making interpretive decisions was regarded as fundamental and basic. Σκοπός is extremely important for understanding the overall message of the book as well as the meaning of individual pericopes. The interpreter is expected to constantly bear in mind the purpose of the book as a general framework for the evaluation of a passage. Exegetical conclusions which conflict with the author's purpose must be reconsidered and are probably incorrect. Individual passages or details within a pericope also have a σκοπός and were expected to prompt the interpreter to ask why the biblical author included that detail. Andrew's faithfulness to the σκοπός of Revelation is evident in his exposition. He mentions a spiritual purpose at the end of the commentary:

*Starting from these things by the vision and the enjoyment we might, by ardent yearning through keeping the divine commandments, acquire these in long suffering and meekness and humility and purity of heart. From which (heart) unsullied prayer is born free of distraction and offers to God, the Overseer of all hidden things, a mind devoid of every material thought uncorrupted by demonic deception and attacks.<sup>740</sup>*

The original historical purpose of Revelation was to encourage hope and perseverance through tribulation, and this σκοπός was not lost on Andrew. His awareness of the σκοπός drives his interpretation on many unexpressed levels which bring him into direct conflict with Oikoumenios. He sees the purpose of the book as spiritual: to encourage repentance, vigilance, and perseverance. If the σκοπός is perseverance through tribulations or a warning of future punishments, then the disasters described by the bowls or the seven trumpets must be interpreted literally, and ought not be allegorized as Oikoumenios does. Furthermore, Andrew sees the σκοπός of Revelation as prophecy, therefore it must relate primarily to the future, and events such as the seven seals cannot be an allegory of the life of Christ, as Oikoumenios believes.

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<sup>739</sup> See for example, Chrysostom's introductory argument to Paul's Epistle to the Romans, or his discussion of Paul's reasoning in 1 Cor. 15. *Hom. on 1 Cor.* 39.8. He also analyzes the sequence of the argument.

<sup>740</sup> *Summary* following *Chp. 72, Text 266, Comm. 242.*

#### 5.6.4 Context

The first example of Andrew's application of context as an interpretive technique is seen in his treatment of "the one who is, was, and is to come" (Rev. 1:4). Oikoumenios believes the phrase represents the Trinity: the one "who is" being the Father (who said "I am" to Moses), the "one who was" is the Son, (the Logos "who was in the beginning" John 1:1) and the one who "is to come" refers to the Paraclete. But Andrew concludes that this phrase *in this specific context* can *only* be referring to the Father since the very next verse mentions *Jesus Christ*. Therefore, the Son *cannot* be included as the one "who was."

*For here the addition of "and from Jesus Christ" appears to confirm the understanding we have presented. For it would be unnecessary if he were talking about the only Logos of God and the person of the Son to immediately add "and from Jesus Christ" in order to show him (as distinct) from the other one....*<sup>741</sup>

Andrew points out that *later* in Revelation "the one who is, was and is to come" is also said of Christ alone (Rev. 1:8), and that the same words could also be said of the Spirit alone, because all three persons of the Trinity share the same divine essence. But specifically there, in Rev. 1:4, Andrew insists that the phrase can only refer to the Father. Andrew does not use the words for "context" (συμφράζω or τα συμφραζόμενα), but the force of his argument is entirely contextual. Oikoumenios also notices that Christ is referenced in the next verse, but rather than considering the context and conforming his interpretation to reflect that, Oikoumenios adheres to his Trinitarian interpretation of the expression *is, was and is to come*, and decides that this second reference to Christ must be to his "human nature." This creates yet another problem because such a statement appears Nestorian, since Oikoumenios could be accused of separating Christ's divinity from his humanity. But again, rather than realizing that his initial interpretation was incorrect due to the context, Oikoumenios quickly dismissively defends himself against any suspicion of Nestorianism<sup>742</sup> and moves on.

Another example of Andrew's attention to context is the differing interpretation of something as simple as the "white garment" imagery found throughout Revelation.

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<sup>741</sup> *Chp. 1, Text 15, Comm. 18.*

<sup>742</sup> "He [John] does not separate him [Christ] into two," 1.11.1, Suggit 24.

Oikoumenios usually interprets the white garment as a symbol of purity, regardless of the context. But Andrew's interpretation of the white garment always depends on the context. For example, the white robes of the twenty four elders in Rev. 4:4 represent purity for Oikoumenios, as usual. But because the scene describes the elders in heaven, Andrew concludes that *the white clothes are symbols of the brilliant life and the unending feast and gladness*,<sup>743</sup> thinking probably of banquet parables of the kingdom.<sup>744</sup> The white robes worn by the crowd of Rev 7:9 are again a symbol of purity for Oikoumenios, but of martyrdom for Andrew because a few verses later the text states that they have come out of "great tribulation" and "washed their robes in the blood of the lamb" (7:14). Oikoumenios notices the detail of the "blood of the lamb" but he yet again maintains that the white robes represent purity,<sup>745</sup> as though he is applying a stock explanation rather than doing actual exegesis. He dismisses the "blood of the lamb" detail as a reference to their participation in Eucharist.<sup>746</sup>

#### 5.6.5 Sequence

Early patristic interpreters were also conscious of sequence in the biblical text (ἀκολουθία) and considered it when reaching exegetical conclusions. Sequence as an interpretive technique was applied by noting the logical progression of historical events, a biblical author's line of reasoning or the order in which statements were made. Sequence by its nature is closely related to context.<sup>747</sup> Sequence was very important to Andrew and is one of Oikoumenios' greatest problems. In the Book of Revelation, the sequence of events can be especially problematic. Andrew effectively manages the text by engaging in basically a straight historical progression through the book. As will be discussed below, Andrew believes that because Revelation is prophecy, it can only be referring to the present (meaning the present time when the Revelation was received by John, which would be the past for us),

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<sup>743</sup> *Chp. 10, Text 49, Comm. 58.*

<sup>744</sup> *Matt. 22:1-10; 25:1-13.*

<sup>745</sup> *Oik. 5.3.2.*

<sup>746</sup> *5.3.7.*

<sup>747</sup> See Chrysostom's *Hom. on Rom. 6* for an analysis of Rom. 3:1-7, with many references to context and sequence.

or the future, (that which was in the future for John, but which could be past, present or future for us). But Andrew perceives a definite shift in Revelation into the eschatological future, which he believes has not arrived yet. This shift into the eschatological future occurs during the “seven seals” section and is represented by the earthquake which occurs upon the opening of the sixth seal.<sup>748</sup> Everything prior to that moment has or may have take place between the time in which John received the Revelation and the beginning of the eschaton. Most of the descriptions were of persecutions endured under the Romans, but the images may also have included other historical occurrences. Once the shift occurs with the sixth seal, an eschatological scenario is being described. After that, one cannot interpret a *subsequent* passage by relating it to the times *before* the end which came with that seal and earthquake.

The sequence of events described by Revelation has long puzzled interpreters, some of whom, such as Tyconius and Victorinus, applied the theory of “recapitulation,” that the same events were described using differing imagery. (The seven bowls were the same occurrences as the seven trumpets, etc.) Oikoumenios has tremendous difficulty with sequence. He does not exactly practice “recapitulation” because he does not engage in an orderly re-telling of events and he does not see an inherent structure in the book, something which recapitulation presumes. Instead, whenever Oikoumenios’ interpretation does not fit the context because his explanation conflicts with the sequence, he concludes that the image is referring back to prior events, in what we would call a “flashback.” The scene that follows might very well require him to “flash forward,” which he does, only to immediately “flash back,” according to whatever is expedient for his interpretation. Oikoumenios’ exposition is extremely difficult to follow as he jumps back and forth in time. This creates a logical and sequential inconsistency in Oikoumenios and even theological problems, which will be discussed below.<sup>749</sup>

Sequence, context and σκοπός are interrelated. In the seven seals section (Rev.6),

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<sup>748</sup> Chp. 18, Text 68-9, Comm. 81.

<sup>749</sup> Castagno concluded that Oikoumenios intended to demonstrate the continuity and internal coherence of the text of Revelation rather than interpreting it as an unrelated series of images. “I Commenti,” 330. If indeed that was his wish, he either did not accomplish his goal or did not articulate a coherent understanding of Revelation. Andrew would object that Oikoumenios strains the text in order to arrive at his interpretations. Castagno recognizes that Oikoumenios’ interpretation does not see Revelation as progressing in a linear fashion, but she believes that Oikoumenios understands Revelation as the story of salvation in code form, frequently returning to themes already treated. “I Commenti,” 334-6.

Oikoumenios understands the seals to represent the life of Christ.<sup>750</sup> When the fifth seal is opened “the souls of people who had been slain on account of the word of God and for the witness which they had borne” cried out for vengeance (Rev. 6:9). They were told to be patient until the completion of the number of martyrs in the future. Considering the context of Revelation alone – its original σκοπός being to support and encourage Christians during the persecution of Domitian<sup>751</sup> – the souls under the altar would *have* to be understood as Christian martyrs, not to mention the historical association of altars with the relics of martyrs.

But Oikoumenios had wedded himself to an exposition of the seven seals as the life of Christ. The death of Christ does not even occur until the sixth seal, he believes, and Christian persecutions certainly could not occur before the death of Christ himself. Therefore, Oikoumenios must conclude that the souls crying out for vengeance in the fifth seal are martyrs of the *Old* Testament who object to the treatment of the Christ during his Passion.<sup>752</sup> Andrew points out that Oikoumenios’ sequence is not logical and therefore his conclusions are strained and violate the plain meaning of the text. Referring to Oikoumenios’ interpretation, Andrew remarks:

*If anyone forces (the meaning) of the loosening of the four seals to apply to the foregoing acts of dispensation by Christ, he will naturally adapt this to the previously fulfilled prophets and the rest of the saints who cry out loud because of the divine forbearance which He endured being insulted by the Jews unto the cross.<sup>753</sup>*

Andrew argues that it makes more sense (*it is fitting*) to understand the souls as Christian martyrs and the seals as referring to persecutions still to take place in the future (the future from the historical perspective of John), and that this is the ecclesiastical tradition:

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<sup>750</sup> The first seal is his birth (4.7.3), the second is his temptation (4.8.2), the third is his teaching and miracles (4.10.1-3), the fourth is the blows and wounds suffered before Pilate (4.11.2), the fifth is the reaction of the “souls under the altar” to the abuse of the Lord (4.13.3), and the sixth is the cross, death, resurrection and ascension (4.15.2).

<sup>751</sup> This detail was well-known, even by Oikoumenios who thrice refers to the Apocalypse having been composed during the reign of Domitian. 1.21.1, 2.13.9 and 12.20.6.

<sup>752</sup> Oik. 4.13.3-4. Oikoumenios’ mistake here interpreting Christian martyrs as Jewish martyrs is particularly egregious since his manuscript contained a peculiar variation. Instead of reading that the souls were people slain on account of the witness (μαρτυρία), his manuscript read that they were “slain on account of the *Church*” (ἐκκλησία), which Oikoumenios dismissed by saying that it meant “synagogue.” Oik. 4.13.5. See Suggit 71, fn 31. Every detail in the text pointed to a different interpretation than what Oikoumenios concluded.

<sup>753</sup> *Chp. 17, Text 66, Comm. 78.*



*And if any take these things to mean a foretelling of future events according to the teachers of the Church, he will suppose that such a thing is fitting, that those who were killed for Christ will cry out against their persecutors.*<sup>754</sup>

Oikoumenios continues to struggle with the problem of sequence throughout his exposition. For example, after interpreting the first trumpet (Rev. 8:7) as the return of Christ and the end of the world, (because of the association of the word “trumpet,” to be addressed below), Oikoumenios faces problems. Since the first trumpet is the second coming of Christ, he is forced to explain how it is that the two witnesses, who actually are to come *before* the return of Christ to help people oppose the deception of the beast (Rev. 11:3-10), appear in Revelation *after* the second coming of Christ was supposedly announced by the first trumpet. Oikoumenios concludes that this was something John had “set aside” and has now gone back to explain. But then, according to Oikoumenios, John returns to his description of the future reward of the saints in the next scene (Rev. 11:15ff).<sup>755</sup>

The problem with sequence grows much worse in his discussion of the chapter which follows, Revelation 12. Oikoumenios returns to his practice of interpreting Revelation as events in the life of Christ. First he interprets the woman wrapped in the sun (12:1-2) as the Theotokos.<sup>756</sup> But the rise of the Antichrist requires the explanation of Satan’s fall from heaven (12:3-4a) which occurred long before the birth of Christ, even before recorded time, so chronologically we must go far back into the past. Then the birth of Christ is described (12:4b-6), returning us to the first century, then quickly Oikoumenios’ explanation goes back to a period before recorded time, to the war in heaven between Michael and Satan (12:7-9). Then the dragon’s pursuit of the woman (12:13-17), which Oikoumenios believes represents the flight to Egypt, returns us again to the first century and to the life of Christ.<sup>757</sup>

We see Oikoumenios having the same problem elsewhere. The Antichrist appears again in the text after Oikoumenios had already interpreted a prior passage as describing the *final destruction* of the Antichrist. Oikoumenios’ explanation for why the Antichrist appears

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<sup>754</sup> Chp. 17, Text 67, Comm. 78.

<sup>755</sup> Oik. 6.17.1.

<sup>756</sup> 6.19.2.

<sup>757</sup> 7.3.10.

in the text again after he had already been destroyed is very weak: “For all that the evangelist sees are a vision, and he is often shown the first things last and contrariwise the last first.”<sup>758</sup> This excuse allows Oikoumenios to do with the text whatever he wishes. Rather than re-evaluating the soundness of his previous interpretation, Oikoumenios simply interprets the images as he finds them and makes no attempt to discover coherence in John’s presentation. He completely ignores the sequence.

Oikoumenios creates many confusing reversals in the course of his commentary. The final destruction of devil and the Antichrist in the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20) is a scenario for the future eschaton.<sup>759</sup> But commenting on the very next verse, (Rev. 20:2-3a) after the final destruction of the devil has already been described, Oikoumenios immediately jumps back to the past when he interprets the binding of the devil for a thousand years as the Incarnation. Oikoumenios then returns to the future, (our times), with the loosening of the devil “for a little while” which represents the present age between the ascension of Christ and his second coming.<sup>760</sup> Then in the next sentence (a continuation of the *very same verse*, 20:3) he returns back again to the period of the earthly life of Christ. At this point, even Oikoumenios realizes the problematic nature of his exposition and he implores the reader to try to continue to follow his exposition.<sup>761</sup>

The loosening of the devil represents the present age, but with the next vision (“I saw thrones...and judgment” (Rev. 20:4-5), remarkably Oikoumenios goes back to the earthly life of Christ when Satan was “bound.” His dominant interpretation of Revelation as the life of Christ continues to be tremendously problematic. For Oikoumenios the thrones cannot refer to the last judgment because the previous image – the binding of Satan – represents the Incarnation in which Satan’s activities are restricted. So the thrones are the authority promised to the apostles, and were already given to them during Christ’s earthly ministry.<sup>762</sup>

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<sup>758</sup> 9.5.3, Suggit 142.

<sup>759</sup> Oikoumenios says that it is devil and the Antichrist, but the text actually says it is the beast and the false prophet, 10.15.7.

<sup>760</sup> 10.17.10.

<sup>761</sup> τὴν συνέχειαν ὡς περ φυλάττων τοῦ λόγου. (10.15.7, De Groot 247.) Note that the word is συνέχειαν “continuation” or “progression,” not the technical term which would be used by an exegete, ἀκολουθία. He is not aware of any sequence or he does not seem to know the word as an exegetical term.

<sup>762</sup> 11.3.2.

His disregard for sequence and context wreaks havoc on Oikoumenios' interpretation and illustrates his lack of exegetical skill. The judgment scene in Revelation 20 explicitly describes "the souls of those who had been beheaded for their *testimony to Jesus*." But Oikoumenios is tied to his life-of-Christ interpretation, so those beheaded for Jesus cannot mean actual Christian martyrs who lost their heads, since Christ himself has not yet died in his scenario because the binding of Satan represents the ministry of Christ in his Incarnation. This requires Oikoumenios to entirely allegorize the martyrdom as the abuse suffered by those who believed in Christ during his lifetime when they were expelled from the synagogue and lost their possessions.<sup>763</sup> This significantly dilutes the prophetic power of the text, its emotional and inspirational impact and entirely ignores its σκοπός.

### 5.6.6 Word Association

Word association was probably the most common technique of patristic exegesis. When interpreting a passage of Revelation, both Andrew and Oikoumenios identify a word or idea in the passage and then look for the same word or concept elsewhere in the Bible. They use the meaning or understanding of the word in another location to explain its meaning in Revelation. This is acceptable if done correctly and this is also practiced by modern interpreters, especially to determine the use or meaning of a word by looking at its use in another passage or book by the same author. We see Andrew's application of word association in his awareness of apocalyptic imagery, such as earthquakes, the sky being "rolled," the sun becoming dark and the moon turning to blood (Rev. 6:12-13). Even though he does not identify this imagery as "apocalyptic," Andrew is aware of the symbolic use of such language and interprets it according to the context and according to how such images were used in other apocalyptic passages found in the Old Testament.<sup>764</sup>

A very interesting and careful use of word association by Andrew can be seen in the discussion concerning the identity of "the one who is, was and is to come" in which he uses the technique to support a theological point. He has explained that the description "is, was and is to come" in Rev. 1:4 can only refer to the Father because of the context. However,

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<sup>763</sup> 11.3.3. "They came to life and ruled with Christ for a thousand years" refers to their faith in Christ during his earthly ministry.

<sup>764</sup> *Chp. 18, Text 68-9, Comm. 81-2.*

*theologically* the same statement can be made of all three members of the Trinity because they share the same properties of divinity. He continues by giving an example of another characteristic which applies to all three members of the Trinity, holiness, and cites a point of contention between the Chalcedonians and the Monophysites: the Trisagion Hymn (“Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.”) The hymn had long been considered Trinitarian, emphasizing the equality of all three Persons, and was based on the hymn of the Seraphim in Isaiah 6:3: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty.”

To affirm the real union of the divinity and humanity in Christ, the Monophysites stressed that the Logos suffered in the flesh (“theopaschism”) and Severus of Antioch inserted a phrase into the Trisagion Hymn which altered it to apply to Christ alone: “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, who was crucified for us, have mercy on us.” The Monophysite theology of Oikoumenios is seen by his reference to the holiness of Christ proven through the hymn of the Seraphim. While commenting on Rev. 3:7, (“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: “These things says the Holy One, the True One”), Oikoumenios cannot pass up the description of Christ as the “Holy One” without supporting the Monophysite position on the Trisagion Hymn: “The holy one is the Son of God, so also he receives witness from the Seraphim, who combine the three acclamations of holy in the one lordship...”<sup>765</sup>

Andrew is no doubt responding to Oikoumenios’ challenge and supports the Chalcedonian view entirely by a skillful use of word association. Andrew maintains that the hymn of the Seraphim “Holy, Holy, Holy” is applied to all three Divine Persons. First, he remarks that *we learn that in the Gospel the hymn of the Seraphim is said about the Son.*<sup>766</sup> Such a statement, surprising to modern readers because the angelic hymn is not found in the gospels, is only possible through word association. Andrew concludes that “holy, holy, holy” was said about the Son because after the hymn of the Seraphim in Isaiah, Isaiah receives his commission (Isa. 6:9-10) in which the Lord tells him, “Go and say to these people, ‘Keep listening but do not comprehend, keep looking but do not understand. Make the mind of this people dull and stop their ears and shut their eyes so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed.’” This

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<sup>765</sup> Oik. 2.13.1, Suggit 46.

<sup>766</sup> Chp. 1, Text 15, Comm. 19.

leads Andrew to connect that passage with its quotation by *Christ* in Matthew and Mark.<sup>767</sup> The quote associates the hymn with its original setting in Isaiah and is found “in the Gospel.”

Then Andrew finds that the hymn of the Seraphim was also said “about the Spirit” in another similar tour de force by linking it to the words of Paul at the close of Acts of the Apostles.<sup>768</sup> Finally, Andrew establishes that it was said about the Father, but this time not in the Bible, but through a prayer in the Divine Liturgy. While the congregation sings yet another hymn, not the *Trisagion* but a different hymn inspired by the words of the Seraphim, “Holy, holy, holy Lord of Sabaoth...”, the priest quietly recites a prayer to the Father which begins, “With these blessed powers, we also, O Master who loves mankind, also say: Holy art Thou and all-holy, thou and thy only-begotten Son and thy All-Holy Spirit...” Word association for Andrew is not limited to words in the Bible, but encompasses the entire experience of the Church, including prayers and hymns. This reflects the patristic view that one can fully understand the Bible only within the life of the Church.

Word association is Oikoumenios’ primary technique, and as a matter of fact it is the only type of methodology he expressly articulates. “We must examine whether any such description occurs in another text, so that one might be able to form a judgment by comparing similar terms.”<sup>769</sup> But word association can be applied poorly, resulting not in a clarification but in a distortion of meaning, especially when a word is interpreted without regard for its use in the context or the sequence of the passage being interpreted. This is exactly what happens in Oikoumenios’ commentary on numerous occasions. For example, in the case of the earthquake, Oikoumenios would be just as likely to look for a corresponding historical earthquake rather than a symbolic meaning of the word or symbol of “earthquake.” The earthquake and cosmological signs accompanying the opening of the sixth seal (Rev. 6:12-13) are interpreted by Oikoumenios as having historically occurred at the crucifixion of Christ, despite the reference in Revelation to the moon becoming like blood or the stars falling from the sky, events which did not occur during the crucifixion of Christ. Andrew, on

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<sup>767</sup> Matt 13:13-15, Mark 4:12.

<sup>768</sup> “So, as they disagreed among themselves, they departed, after Paul had made one statement: ‘The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet, “Go to this people and say, You shall indeed hear but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive...” ’” (Acts 28:24-5).

<sup>769</sup> Oik. 3.9.2, Suggit 50.

the other hand, takes note of the cosmic signs, finds where they occur in the prophetic books of the Old Testament and what they mean in that context, and applies that meaning to understand the text of Revelation.<sup>770</sup>

The application of word association can also be seen in Oikoumenios' exposition of the judgment scene of Revelation 20. Oikoumenios had primarily applied this section to the life of Christ, as we have seen, therefore those dead who were described as "beheaded for Jesus" could not be interpreted as those physically martyred for Christ because such things did not happen in Christ's lifetime. When the next verse (20:4) states that "the *rest* of the dead did not come to life" Oikoumenios ignores the reference to "the rest," ignores the context of the statement, and uses word association – the word "dead" – to interpret the meaning of "dead" in Rev. 20:4. Oikoumenios finds the word "dead" in Christ's statement, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead" (Matt. 8:22) and interprets the dead in Rev. 20:4 as those who did not accept the preaching of Christ during the time of his Incarnation.<sup>771</sup> But the text of Revelation refers to the "*rest of the dead*," meaning that those dead mentioned before, who had been beheaded for Christ, had actually died, contrary to Oikoumenios' allegorical explanation. Or, if the beheaded ones were not physically dead, then they would be among those who had *not* accepted Christ, (which is what Oikoumenios had taken the word "dead" to mean according to his application of word association), because the words "*rest of the dead*" presumes that the word "dead" also applies to those who were mentioned previously.

Another misapplication of word association which creates significant problems for Oikoumenios occurs when he interprets the first trumpet (Rev. 8:7) as the second coming of Christ because of the association of the word "trumpet." Rather than understanding the trumpet as a symbol, he notes that the word "trumpet" is also found in Paul's description of the Parousia in 1 Thess. 4:16, in which the second coming of Christ is heralded by the blowing of a trumpet. Therefore, Oikoumenios concludes, this blowing of a trumpet in Revelation must symbolize the second coming of Christ at the end of time. This creates a tremendous problem with the sequence. Oikoumenios must explain the appearance later of the two witnesses, who are to come *before* the end to oppose the deception of the beast (11:3-

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<sup>770</sup> Chp. 18, Text 69-70, Comm. 81-82.

<sup>771</sup> Oik. 11.3.6.

10), when the end has *already* come with the blowing of the first trumpet. Far worse is Oikoumenios' strained interpretation of the subsequent trumpets which bring afflictions upon the sinners in an effort to prompt them to repentance, which is what the text of Revelation itself says is the purpose of the afflictions (Rev. 9:20-21). Since Christ has *already* come with the blowing of the first trumpet, Oikoumenios is forced to allegorize all of the afflictions poured out upon the earth and say that they represent the sufferings of the sinners in hell.<sup>772</sup> This becomes an insurmountable problem and even a theological one when the locusts are described as torturing people for "only five months" (Rev. 9:5) and, according to Oikoumenios, the locusts which bring the tortures upon the sinners in hell symbolize angels. Oikoumenios' creative "solution" and his theological error will be described below.

Word association, sequence and context require a coordinated application. An effective use of word association can be seen in Andrew's analysis of the reward promised to the Church of Thyatira, "And I will give him the morning star" (Rev. 2:28). Oikoumenios relies on word association and a stock interpretation of Isaiah 14:12, which refers to the "morning star" which fell from heaven. Church tradition had routinely identified the fallen star in Isaiah with Satan. Andrew reports this as a possibility, (most likely because Oikoumenios is expressing a traditional interpretation), but Andrew arrives at an alternative interpretation which he prefers and better fits the context: *Christ* is the morning star.<sup>773</sup> We know that Andrew prefers this interpretation because he offers support for this view. Christ as the morning star is more appropriate based on the context, since elsewhere in Revelation Christ is described as the "bright morning star" (Rev. 22:16) and in the letters to the churches the rewards consistently promised at the end of each letter are Christ himself.

## 5.7 Andrew's Use of Sources

### 5.7.1 Oikoumenios

It has been said by others that Andrew "relies on" Oikoumenios, probably since he reports the opinions of Oikoumenios. But he does not *rely* on Oikoumenios, although he

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<sup>772</sup> 5.9.1-2, 5.13.1-2. The theological implications of this and other problems created by Oikoumenios' interpretations are discussed in chapter 6.

<sup>773</sup> *Chp. 6, Text 34-5, Comm. 43-44.*

certainly utilizes him, especially in the earlier portions, when Oikoumenios' interpretations are more sound and less quirky. As will be seen below, Andrew cannot fairly be said to rely on Oikoumenios since he consistently demonstrates his superior exegetical skill and since he departs from Oikoumenios on so many critical points. Andrew would have arrived at many of their shared conclusions without ever having read Oikoumenios. It may appear that there is a reliance on Oikoumenios to a certain extent simply because they shared a common Bible, a common language and a common Eastern tradition. Since both men derived many of the interpretations by searching for the same word elsewhere in the Bible, they would unavoidably arrive at some of the same conclusions independently of each other.

When Andrew presents the opinion of Oikoumenios, it is usually offered first. The opinion is usually allowed as a possibility followed by an alternative, indicated by words such as *it is either this or...*<sup>774</sup> If he dislikes an interpretation or believes another is better, he signals it with statements of mild disapproval, such as *this may be understood differently...*<sup>775</sup> *more suitably...*<sup>776</sup> *more correctly...*<sup>777</sup> or *much more...*<sup>778</sup>

### 5.7.2 Unnamed Sources and Oral Traditions

Andrew refers to certain "teachers" without naming them, and occasionally offers a traditional interpretation which would otherwise have been unknown to us. He stands firmly within the patristic tradition and draws from a depository of traditional interpretations with which he is very familiar. One difficulty in identifying Andrew's influences is the fact that a great many books were lost in the years immediately following the composition of this commentary in the destruction accompanying the Persian and Arab conquests.<sup>779</sup>

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<sup>774</sup> Some "either...or" examples are in *Chp. 10, Text 49, Comm. 57; Chp. 1, Text 17, Comm. 21; Chp. 5, Text 29, Comm. 36; Chp. 7, Text 36, Comm. 44; Chp. 24, Text 93, Comm. 104-5; Chp. 52, Text 178, Comm. 171.*

<sup>775</sup> *Chp. 1, Text 14, Comm. 17.*

<sup>776</sup> *Chp. 10, Text 49, Comm. 58.*

<sup>777</sup> *Chp. 19, Text 78, Comm. 90.*

<sup>778</sup> *Chp. 19, Text 73, Comm. 85.*

<sup>779</sup> Far more books were "in circulation from the fifth to sixth centuries AD than survived into the ninth, and of the latter group a good portion has since been lost." Cyril Mango, "The Revival of Learning," *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, ed. Cyril Mango (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 219.



Eighteen unnamed teachers or unknown sources of interpretive tradition are clearly referred to or can be discerned in the commentary:

1. About the warning made to the Church of Ephesus, that their lampstand would be removed, Andrew comments: *Some understood the removal of the lampstand (to refer to) the archpriest's throne of Ephesus, because it was moved to the seat of the King.*<sup>780</sup> This is not mentioned by any other known interpreter.

2. Andrew cites an interpretation of the four animals of Rev. 4:6 as representing the mastery over things in heaven and on earth and in the sea.<sup>781</sup>

3 He also mentions an interpretation of the four animals as the “four virtues,” represented by the four gospels. Earlier interpreters had identified the gospels with animals based on characteristics of the gospels not with virtues, but Andrew combines them. This interpretation, or at least the number four representing a particular set of virtues, must have been well-known to his readers at the time.<sup>782</sup>

4. Andrew reports that the four animals represent the four gospels according to Irenaeus, but adds that this has *been well-stated by others.*<sup>783</sup> The reference to “others” here cannot mean only Irenaeus but that many interpreters subsequent to Irenaeus held the same opinion and that this opinion was well-known in exegetical circles. This is confirmed by Augustine, who was also aware that this opinion was widely held.<sup>784</sup>

5. After reporting the opinion of Irenaeus that the four animals represent the four evangelists, Andrew lastly mentions a purely Christological interpretation, which probably came from an unnamed earlier source or tradition.<sup>785</sup> Andrew may have arrived at this interpretation himself, since he does not specifically refer to this as a tradition. But he was probably reporting an existing opinion, since other purely Christological interpretations of

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<sup>780</sup> *Chp. 3, Text 25, Comm. 31.*

<sup>781</sup> *Chp. 10. Text 51, Comm. 61.*

<sup>782</sup> *Chp. 10. Text 51, Comm. 61.* The idea of four primary virtues was popular from Stoic philosophy, but not everyone agreed upon which virtues they were. See *Comm. 61, fn 265.*

<sup>783</sup> *Chp. 10, Text 51, Comm. 61.*

<sup>784</sup> See *Comm. 61, fn 266.*

<sup>785</sup> *Chp. 10, Text 51-2, Comm. 62-3.*

the four creatures were also reported by Augustine, Ambrose, and Gregory the Great.<sup>786</sup> They most likely predate the fourth century and could have come from an early Eastern tradition.

6. Concerning the opening of the fifth seal, (in which the souls under the altar who have been slain for their witness cry out for justice in Rev. 6:9-10), Andrew points out the distorted nature of Oikoumenios' interpretation that the seven seals refer to past history and events in the life of Christ.<sup>787</sup> Oikoumenios' interpretation continues to strain the text because now he is forced to interpret the souls under the altar as martyrs of the Old Testament protesting the abuse and crucifixion of Christ.<sup>788</sup> Drawing a contrast between Oikoumenios and himself, Andrew argues for a more natural interpretation appropriate to the historical sequence and hints that he is in line with the earlier tradition: *And if any take these things to mean a foretelling of future events according to the teachers of the Church, he will suppose that such a thing is fitting, that those who were killed for Christ will cry out against their persecutors.*<sup>789</sup> This comment not only shows that Andrew sees himself as in line with "the teachers of the Church," but that he is following a line of tradition that interpreted this sequence of events, the seven seals, and that they represented the future for John.

7. He reports that "some of the teachers" said that the great mountain (Rev. 8:8) represents the devil.<sup>790</sup>

8. Commenting on the instruction given to John, "You must again prophesy" (Rev. 10:11), Andrew remarks that it might mean *that he has not yet tasted death but he will come in the end to hinder the acceptance of the Antichrist's deception.*<sup>791</sup> Andrew is not only referring to the legend that John would not die, but to a second legend, also known in the West, that John would return in the end times with the two witnesses to hinder the Antichrist's effectiveness and preventing people from being led astray.<sup>792</sup>

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<sup>786</sup> See *Comm.* 63, fn 273.

<sup>787</sup> *Chp.* 17, *Text* 66-67, *Comm.* 78.

<sup>788</sup> *Oik.* 4.13.3-5.

<sup>789</sup> *Chp.* 17, *Text* 67, *Comm.* 78.

<sup>790</sup> *Chp.* 23, *Text* 92, *Comm.* 103-4.

<sup>791</sup> *Chp.* 29, *Text* 110-111, *Comm.* 118.

<sup>792</sup> See *Comm.* 118, fn 562.

9. About the identity of the two witnesses (Rev. 11:3-4), Andrew remarked: *Many of the teachers understood these (to be) Enoch and Elias,*<sup>793</sup> including Irenaeus and Hippolytus, but Andrew does not cite them as authorities, which may indicate that he is referring to a long line of tradition which we know includes Irenaeus and Hippolytus and may even predate them, but which certainly includes a number of other interpreters as well.

10. Regarding the beast of the earth (Rev. 13:11), Andrew reports that some interpreters believed its two horns represent both the Antichrist and the false prophet.<sup>794</sup> This opinion is found in Hippolytus, but Andrew does not appear to limit it to Hippolytus and does not cite him.

11. Andrew relates a story he had read taken *from narratives profitable to the soul* about the joy of a guardian angel over a man who had repented.<sup>795</sup>

12. An otherwise unknown interpretation of the millennium is mentioned. The *one thousand years some explain as the three and a half years from the baptism of Christ until his ascension into heaven*. Andrew may be misreading Oikoumenios, who believed that the millennium represented the entire earthly life of Christ, but this is unlikely, since more than once Oikoumenios says that the millennium is the Incarnation<sup>796</sup> and he does not mention Christ's baptism. It is more likely that Andrew is relating yet another ancient interpretation of the millennium: the years of Christ's ministry.<sup>797</sup>

13. On the destruction of Babylon in Rev. 18:21, Andrew comments that to identify this Babylon with ancient Rome, (as Oikoumenios does) *seems to be somehow contrary to the interpretation concerning this by the ancient teachers of the Church, who spoke against making an analogy of Babylon with the Romans by these things being prophesied on account of the fourth beast with the ten horns that had been seen.*<sup>798</sup>

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<sup>793</sup> Chp. 30, Text 113, Comm. 120.

<sup>794</sup> Chp. 37, Text 140, Comm. 143. Hippolytus, *On Christ and Antichrist* 49.

<sup>795</sup> Chp. 48, Text 168, Comm. 164.

<sup>796</sup> 10.17. 4, 6 and 7.

<sup>797</sup> Chp. 63, Text 221, Comm. 206.

<sup>798</sup> Chp. 39, Text 202, Comm. 188, referring to Dan. 7:7, 20. The "ancient teachers" are more than simply Irenaeus (*Heres.* 5.26), who associated the visions of Daniel with Revelation. This opinion was widely held.

14. On Rev. 19:6, "Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters," Andrew states that *some perceived the waters to be those waters above the heavens, with which both the entire assembly of the righteous and the fullness (of creation) glorifies the Creator.*<sup>799</sup>

15. Concerning Rev. 19:20, that the beast and the false prophet would be thrown into the lake of fire, Andrew comments that *it is to be found in a saying of a certain one of the teachers that some are to be living after the destruction of the Antichrist.*<sup>800</sup>

16. After noting that the birds gorged on flesh (Rev. 19:21), Andrew allegorizes this to mean the end of "fleshy things." He supports his interpretation with the following statement: *In addition to this, as some say God says through Isaiah, "You have become loathsome to me" (Isa. 1:14), so also to the saints every fleshy activity is disgusting, grievous and loathsome.*<sup>801</sup> He seems to be referring to a specific prior or traditional interpretation of that verse in Isaiah.

17. Regarding the identity of Gog and Magog (Rev. 20:7-8), Andrew reports three interpretations which attribute Gog and Magog to completed historical events which occurred in the history of Israel and Judah, which *some of the interpreters took (to mean) the fall of the Assyrians with Sennacherib, having occurred many years ago at the time of Hezekiah (during) the prophecy of Ezekiel (Ezek. 39:9) but on the other hand, some (interpret it as) the destruction of the nations, attacking those who undertook to rebuild Jerusalem after her capture by the Babylonians, first Cyrus the Persian, and after him Darius having commanded so to the governors of Syria. And some (see) the powers of Antiochus having been defeated by the Maccabees.* However, Andrew relies on other texts to conclude that the figures of Gog and Magog will come at the end time.<sup>802</sup>

18. Regarding the measurements of the heavenly city amounting to a cube with sides measuring 12,000 stadia (Rev. 21:14), Andrew seems to report that the 12,000 stadia were converted into miles. He also appears to include a traditional interpretation of the number of miles: *For the aforementioned thousands of stadia constitute signs, the so-called one*

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<sup>799</sup> Chp. 56, Text 204, Comm. 189.

<sup>800</sup> Chp. 59, Text 213, Comm. 198.

<sup>801</sup> Chp. 59, Text 214, Comm. 199.

<sup>802</sup> Chp. 63, Text 224, Comm. 208.

*thousand seven hundred and fourteen miles, the one thousand signifying the perfection of the endless life, the seven hundred being the perfection in (eternal) rest, and the fourteen being the double Sabbath of soul and body, for two sevens are fourteen.*<sup>803</sup>

### 5.7.3 Recognized Fathers

Another strong indicator of his exegetical training is how Andrew uses and cites earlier patristic sources. With respect to recognized Fathers, Andrew shows that he writes in an era when it had become especially important to align oneself with earlier authorities. Although Fathers in prior ages also felt strongly motivated to align themselves with apostolic tradition, by the time of Andrew, appeal to apostolic tradition was accomplished through citations of the Fathers.

Andrew cites Gregory the Theologian, Cyril of Alexandria, Papias, Irenaeus, Methodios, and Hippolytus in his prologue as witness of the trustworthiness (τὸ ἀξιόπιστον) of the Apocalypse,<sup>804</sup> to authenticate its apostolic authorship. But Andrew also cites other patristic authorities in the course of his interpretation: Pseudo-Dionysios (whom he calls Dionysios “the Great”), Basil, Justin Martyr, Epiphanius, and Antipater of Bostra. Also mentioned are Eusebius of Caesarea and Flavius Josephus, but only as historical sources. Andrew remarked that he has taken *many starting points from them*,<sup>805</sup> but he was fully aware that he cannot rely on them since very little Greek interpretive tradition for Revelation preceded him. “Starting points” were all that they could offer, but it was a beginning. Where there was no established patristic tradition, Andrew relied on his exegetical training and techniques, as discussed above.

Andrew cites the opinions of Fathers over thirty times, and often quotes from them, sometimes at length. But what strikingly distinguishes his use of these sources from Oikoumenios is that Andrew cites them to support his *exegesis* in almost every instance. Oikoumenios, by contrast, almost exclusively cites the Fathers to support theological arguments he makes within the course of his commentary. Both Eusebius and Josephus are

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<sup>803</sup> *Chp. 67, Text 242, Comm. 222.*

<sup>804</sup> *Prologue, Text 10, Comm. 11.*

<sup>805</sup> *Prologue, Text 11, Comm. 11.*

used for historical reference by both men and not for theology or exegesis. Andrew very effectively demonstrates, and at times explicitly points out, that his interpretation is more consistent with the patristic tradition because he aligns himself with the Fathers in his interpretation of the *text*. Having proven that the “One who is, was and is to come” is the Father in Rev. 1:4, and that the Trisagion hymn refers to the Trinity, he states (*We say*) *these things to show that our own understanding does not contradict the patristic voices.*<sup>806</sup> Later, to prove that Oikoumenios’ interpretation of the seven seals as events in the life of Christ was neither logical nor a traditional understanding of prophecy, he wrote: *But we have agreed with Methodios...: “John is speaking with authority concerning the present and future things.”*<sup>807</sup> Later, he draws attention to Oikoumenios’ departure from the most accepted patristic interpretation of the woman wrapped in the sun (Rev. 12:1). Andrew observes that “some say,” referring to Oikoumenios, she is the Theotokos, *But the great Methodios took (it) to be (referring to) the holy Church.*<sup>808</sup>

Oikoumenios does not indicate that he is aware of other exegetical traditions. He rarely mentions the opinions of others who came before him on interpretive points and rarely gives alternative explanations. Oikoumenios also appeals to pagan learning,<sup>809</sup> which Andrew never does. All of these factors indicate that Oikoumenios primarily offered his own individual interpretation of Revelation and largely stood outside the stream of exegetical opinion, rather than continuing in a course of existing tradition. It was left for Andrew to conclusively establish that tradition.

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<sup>806</sup> *Chp. 1, Text 16, Comm. 20.*

<sup>807</sup> *Chp. 13, Text 60, Comm. 72.*

<sup>808</sup> *Chp. 33, Text 121, Comm. 126.*

<sup>809</sup> *Oik. 1.1.2.*

## Chapter 6

### Andrew's Theology

#### 6.1 Doctrine

By all indications Andrew was Chalcedonian orthodox in doctrine, and not a Monophysite. Both Andrew and Oikoumenios sprinkle their commentaries with occasional hints of their particular theological positions. In two places<sup>810</sup> Oikoumenios makes rather lengthy Christological statements which clearly indicate that he is Monophysite,<sup>811</sup> but they have the character of extraneous creedal proclamations rather than theological comments prompted by his exegesis. Andrew does not engage in a doctrinal duel to directly refute Oikoumenios theologically, with the exception of his comments on the *Trisagion* hymn, which had become a symbol of the disagreement between Chalcedonians and Monophysites. The words of the ancient and well-known hymn are: "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us." Monophysites inserted the phrase "who was crucified for us" to emphasize that the Logos, which they insisted was "one nature after the union," had suffered in the flesh.

The hymn had been primarily regarded as Trinitarian in Chalcedonian circles. Even though the exact words of the *Trisagion* are not found in Rev. 4:8, the Fathers considered it located there, as well as in Isaiah 6:3, in the hymn of the angels "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty." Andrew expends much effort justifying the Chalcedonian view that the *Trisagion* hymn is properly said of all three members of the Trinity by finding scriptural links between each person of the Trinity and the *Trisagion* hymn through word association.<sup>812</sup> What is noteworthy is that he does not wait until Revelation chapter 4 to make these observations, but includes this discussion as part of his exegesis of the phrase "the one who is, was and is to come." (Rev. 1:4) He concludes his excursus with the comment: (*We say*) *these things to show that our own understanding does not contradict the patristic voices.*<sup>813</sup> When he arrives

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<sup>810</sup> Oik. 1.3.3 and 12.13.6.

<sup>811</sup> See chapter 1.4.3.

<sup>812</sup> *Chp. 1, Text 15-16, Comm. 18-20.* See above, chapter 5.6.6, pages 183-85.

<sup>813</sup> *Chp. 1, Text 16, Comm. 20.*

at chapter 4, he repeats his earlier conclusion. *These holy powers do not rest, never ceasing the divine hymnody and offering the three-fold blessing to the tri-hypostatic divinity. And "the who is and who was and who is to come" we said means the Holy Trinity.*<sup>814</sup> He affirms that the phrase, as well as the quality of holiness properly belongs to all three, despite the fact that he recognized that in its initial appearance the phrase described the Father only<sup>815</sup>

Andrew's rationale that the hymn and statement "who is, was and is to come" can be properly said of all three members of the Trinity is based upon their possession of identical divine nature while retaining their distinction as persons. This disappointingly brief dogmatic statement only gives us the barest suggestion of Andrew's theological knowledge, but it is concise, correct, and he uses a technical theological term for "relationship" (σχέσις). The overall tone is one of relaxed familiarity with doctrinal matters.

*[T]he expressions which befit God equally honor and are appropriate to each of the divine persons (ἐφαρμοζουσῶν ἐκάστη θεϊκῇ ὑποστάσει), and are common to the three, except for their distinctive properties, that is to say, the relationships (τῶν ιδιοτήτων ἡγουν σχέσεων) (between them), as said by Gregory the Theologian, and except for the Incarnation of the Logos.*<sup>816</sup>

The only other strongly doctrinal passage is inspired by the description of Christ in Rev. 19:12-13. Andrew presents an impressive list of scriptural and theological adjectives applied to Christ. Commenting on Rev. 19:12, "He has a name inscribed which no one knows but himself," Andrew writes:

*The unknown name refers to his incomprehensible essence (τὸ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ σημαίνει ἀκατάληπτον). For by many names is the divine condescension (known), as good (ἀγαθός), as shepherd (ποιμὴν), as sun (ἥλιος), as light (φῶς), as life (ζωή), as righteousness (δικαιοσύνη), as sanctification (ἀγιασμός), as redemption (ἀπολύτρωσις). And likewise in the apophatic sense as incorruptible (ἄφθαρτος), invisible (ἀόρατος), immortal (ἀθάνατος), immutable (ἀναλλοίωτος), ineffable and incomprehensible in his essence (τῆ οὐσία ἀνόνημος καὶ ἀνέφικτος.), being known only to himself together with the Father and the Spirit.*<sup>817</sup>

<sup>814</sup> Chp. 10, Text 52, Comm. 64. He also refers to the Tri-hypostatic divinity in Chp 56, Text 203, Comm. 189.

<sup>815</sup> Chp. 1, Text 15-6, Comm. 18-20.

<sup>816</sup> Chp. 1, Text 15, Comm. 18.

<sup>817</sup> Chp. 58, Text 208, Comm. 193-94.



Regarding verse 13, “the name by which he is called is the *Word of God*,” Andrew remarks:

*Through these things is confirmed that which had been expounded before. How is He who is inexpressible and in every sense unknowable here called “Word”? Either to show the filial hypostasis (τῆς υἱικῆς ὑποστάσεως) and impassible begottenness from the Father (τῆς ἀπαθοῦς ἐκ πατρὸς γεννήσεως) just as our word (which we are about to speak) exists beforehand in the mind, or that he carries in himself the principles for all things in existence, or he is the Messenger (τὸ ἐξαγγελεὺς) of the Paternal wisdom and power.<sup>818</sup>*

Although Andrew does not engage in a great deal of theological reflection, from what he does reveal, his theological education and stance appear sound and entirely orthodox. He never suggests any view which would place him outside the mainstream tradition of the Church in the slightest respect. Oikoumenios, despite his two lengthy Christological statements, occasionally reaches conclusions which are innovative and very questionable theologically, at least in the Eastern tradition, whether Chalcedonian or Monophysite.

Above and beyond Oikoumenios’ Monophysite statements, he makes certain observations which suggest at least an inclination toward Origenism. First, he cites and quotes Evagrius, a known Origenist but also a highly regarded spiritual writer whom Oikoumenios describes as “all-knowledgeable.”<sup>819</sup> Origenism had been condemned at the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553, a council which Oikoumenios, being a Monophysite, would not have recognized.<sup>820</sup> This may explain his willingness to cite Evagrius but does not justify his Origenism. Oikoumenios is inconsistent regarding the matter of eternal

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<sup>818</sup> *Chp. 58, Text 209, Comm. 194.*

<sup>819</sup> Oik. 6.3.12.

<sup>820</sup> It is rather surprising that Suggit and Lamoreaux refer to Oikoumenios’ use of Evagrius as evidence that Oikoumenios was writing prior to 553, because they believe he would not have cited Evagrius otherwise. (Lamoreaux “The Provenance of Ecumenios’ Commentary on the Apocalypse,” 101-108.) This cannot be a basis for dating Oikoumenios since as a Monophysite he would not have recognized *any* Ecumenical Council after Ephesus. Suggit writes: “In view of Oikoumenios’ insistence on his own orthodoxy...it is unlikely that he would refer to Evagrius in such terms after 553.” (Suggit 5-6.) Again, this ignores the issue of *whose* orthodoxy Oikoumenios is representing. Likewise, Adele Monaci Castagno also amazingly interprets Oikoumenios from her own historical or religious perspective and ignores the perspective of Oikoumenios himself. She concludes that Oikoumenios was not Monophysite because he attempts to align himself with the theological position of “the Church.” (“I Commenti,” 324). She seems oblivious to the fact that the Monophysites and Oikoumenios himself certainly considered themselves as part of “the Church” or even comprising the *only* Church. Those who did not conform to Monophysite views – including the Chalcedonians – were the ones outside the Church.

punishment, something which Origenists famously denied. On the one hand, Oikoumenios expressly aligns himself with the Church and states that punishment must be eternal, because this is the tradition of the Church. Yet on other occasions he hints that perhaps punishment is *not* eternal. We will discuss below Oikoumenios' vacillation on the matter of eternal punishment and how Andrew responds to these concepts.

Oikoumenios' interpretation of Rev 9:1-5, (the blowing of the fifth trumpet resulting in the plague of locusts), leads into this discussion. Oikoumenios had earlier concluded that the first trumpet represents the return of Christ,<sup>821</sup> because Paul describes the Second Coming as heralded by the blowing of a trumpet,<sup>822</sup> to be followed by the righteous being raised and meeting the Lord in the air. Once Oikoumenios reached this conclusion regarding the *first* trumpet, he placed himself in a position in which the subsequent six trumpets, and the plagues which they inaugurate, *must* represent the sufferings of sinners, first on earth in some intermittent period prior to the final end, and then in Gehenna. In Rev. 9:1-2 an angel opens the shaft of the abyss. Smoke billows out, which Oikoumenios naturally concludes must represent hell, and the plagues which follow allegorically describe the sufferings of sinners in hell. Immediately this becomes impossibly problematic and results in one of his most unique and theologically troublesome conclusions. The text of Rev. 9:3-5 reads:

<sup>3</sup>And from out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth, and they were given power, like scorpions having power on the earth. <sup>4</sup>They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any greenery or any tree, but only those people who have not the seal upon their foreheads. <sup>5</sup>They were allowed to torture them for five months, but not kill them, and their torture was like the torture of a scorpion when it stings a man.

Oikoumenios faces two problems with this passage: the reference to those who do not have a "seal upon their foreheads" and the "five months" duration. A distinction is being made between those who are sealed with baptism and those who are not. But he had *already* concluded that the righteous were taken up to heaven to be with the Lord when the *first* trumpet sounded. Now Oikoumenios must explain how it is possible that some of those who are sealed remained behind, and he must answer the question of whether they are also in hell.

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<sup>821</sup> Oik. 5.9.1.

<sup>822</sup> 1 Thess. 4:16-17.

He concludes that those previously mentioned sealed ones were “holy and pure” and are with Christ “in sight of the divine throne.” However, *these* sealed ones are the ones who were baptized but are “less holy,” yet have not “gravely defiled themselves.” These are “midway between good and evil, remain upon earth but escape punishment.”<sup>823</sup> Oikoumenios thus divides humanity into thirds: one third is in heaven with the Lord, one third is baptized but not entirely holy and remains on earth, and a final third is those who will go to eternal punishment, consisting of serious sinners and the unbaptized.<sup>824</sup>

This is a unique and fascinating interpretation, but not one which he arrives at to solve an existing problem in the text, but one which arises out of a problem which *he* has *created* due to his interpretation of the first trumpet. Oikoumenios has created a permanent “limbo” scenario for the one third who will not be punished in Gehenna and instead will remain on earth. But they also will never be with the Lord. He does not speculate regarding what possible type of existence this could be because he turns immediately to the next problem: that in this passage the duration of punishment is limited to five months.

Oikoumenios repeats his idea of a tri-partite afterlife when contemplating Rev 9:20, “And the rest of humankind who were not killed by the plagues did not repent.” In this part of the commentary, Oikoumenios discusses the need for repentance in *this* life, but *still* allegorizes the passage to refer to the *afterlife*, rather than recognizing that the plagues are sent by God for repentance *before* the end.<sup>825</sup> Hence, those “killed by the plagues” are those *spiritually* dead, that is, in hell. The other third are those who have been caught up into the clouds to be with the Lord. Oikoumenios’ thoughts return at the end of his commentary’s chapter five to consider what happened to the final third, those who were neither saved nor damned according to his analysis. He arrives at no solution and only vaguely remarks that “they eternally live out their life with the wicked, unless of course they will be punished by something worse, which he [John] has prudently passed over in silence...”<sup>826</sup>

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<sup>823</sup> Oik. 5.17.7.

<sup>824</sup> 5.17.9.

<sup>825</sup> 5.25.3.

<sup>826</sup> 5.25.3, Suggit 94. By the end of this section, Oikoumenios realizes that his interpretation is problematic because the text of Revelation states “The rest of humankind who were not killed by these plagues, and did not repent...” (9:20) He attempts to say that this does not mean repentance after death, which is not possible, “but those who were still living and who did not repent of their various unlawful deeds after hearing and seeing what

It is within the context of this unresolved problem regarding the fate of moderate sinners that Oikoumenios reveals his openness to Origenist ideas. He wonders whether this is why “*some* of the fathers accepted the restoration (ἀποκατάστασις) of sinners, saying they were to be chastised so far but no further, as they had been cleansed by their punishment.” Then, he immediately asks “what is to be done when *most* of the fathers say this, but the accepted Scriptures say that the punishment...is everlasting?”<sup>827</sup> As a possible solution, he suggests:

One must combine the opinions of both. I say this as a suggestion, not as an affirmation; for I associate myself with the teaching of the church in meaning that the future punishments will be everlasting...<sup>828</sup>

It is fascinating that Oikoumenios considered restoration of sinners to be the *majority* opinion among the Fathers, and that he associates the opposing stance with the Church and the Scriptures, presumably placing the majority of the Fathers in conflict with the Scriptures and the Church. He returns to his suggestion that a “middle path” be taken between each view, (despite the fact that compromises on fundamental doctrinal matters are usually unthinkable), and states that the “five months” must have a mystical meaning in which:

sinner will be most severely punished as if stung by a scorpion; but after this we shall be punished more gently, though we shall certainly not be entirely unpunished, to such an extent that we shall seek death and not find it.<sup>829</sup>

Although he states that he is inclined to believe the Scriptures and those in the Church who affirm everlasting punishment, we see hints in Oikoumenios of a belief in a purgatorial type of “cleansing fire” elsewhere as well, or he expresses doubts about everlasting punishment since the mercy of God will be greater than his wrath at the last judgment. For

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the future holds.” 5.25.3, Suggit 94. But it is clear in his next sentence that he is still referring to the period of time *after* the second coming of Christ in the eschaton. “By this aforesaid plague, perhaps they will not die the spiritual death – calling punishment death – while they eternally live out their life with the wicked...” It is one example out of many which demonstrates the inconsistency of Oikoumenios’ exposition.

<sup>827</sup> 5.19.1, Suggit 89. Emphasis added.

<sup>828</sup> 5.19.1-2, Suggit 89.

<sup>829</sup> 5.19.3, Suggit 89-90.

example, he interprets the “sea of glass mingled with fire,” alongside which those who had conquered the beast stand in Rev. 15:2, as a purgatorial fire. Both the sinners and righteous will be tested by fire, he states, and the glass is “mixed with fire because of the purging and cleansing of all uncleanness, since even the righteous need to be cleansed.”<sup>830</sup>

Another interesting indication of Origenist sympathies can be found in Oikoumenios’ explanation of the cup of God’s wrath which is pure and unmixed.<sup>831</sup> Ordinarily the pure and unmixed wrath is understood to mean *untempered* anger: no mercy is to be shown. Oikoumenios arrives at the opposite conclusion. The “pure” wrath of God means that, in fact, it *includes* mercy.

For the wrath of God is mixed with loving kindness and goodness; it is purely mixed. For there is no equivalence between his wrath and his goodness, but his loving kindness is many more times abundant.<sup>832</sup>

To reconcile this view with his professed concurrent belief in eternal punishment, Oikoumenios surmises that the goodness of God means that people will not be punished according to what they deserve, and they will not suffer physically, but will only be deprived of “a share in God’s bounty.”<sup>833</sup> Elsewhere, Oikoumenios identifies different levels of punishment in hell, with a more mild punishment for “medium sinners.”<sup>834</sup> Oikoumenios’ inconsistencies in interpretation and peculiar comments may reveal not only a lack of exegetical training but possibly also a weakness in theological education, despite his doctrinal statements. If not lacking theological education, Oikoumenios possibly lacked firm convictions. He certainly had an inclination toward Origenism.<sup>835</sup> His comments,

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<sup>830</sup> 8.21.4, Suggit 135.

<sup>831</sup> Rev. 14: 10.

<sup>832</sup> 8.13.3, Suggit 129-30.

<sup>833</sup> 8.13.7, Suggit 130.

<sup>834</sup> 11.10.12; Suggit 182.

<sup>835</sup> Castagno agrees that Oikoumenios does not demonstrate direct dependence on Origen. However, he is influenced by Origen in a general sense, in terms of a cultural milieu which carries certain sensibilities which led one to discuss and debate the relationship between God’s love and his justice, between human freedom and God’s economy. Oikoumenios participated in this general spiritual atmosphere and this condition is reflected in the commentary, according to Castagno. “I Commenti,” 356-7.

particularly on the opinion of the Fathers, also call into question his knowledge of the patristic tradition, or raises the question of precisely *which* tradition he has identified as that of “the Fathers.”

## 6.2 View of Prophecy

Andrew’s first disagreement with Oikoumenios concerns their differing views of prophecy. In his opening comments, Oikoumenios explains that it “is the mark of consummate prophecy, to encompass three periods,”<sup>836</sup> past, present and future.<sup>837</sup> Oikoumenios does not provide any support for that notion, and only cites the pagan tradition. “For even those who are not Christians introduce their own seers who knew the events of the ‘present, the future and the past’.”<sup>838</sup> Andrew never expresses a position on whether prophecy can *ever* refer to the past. Rather, his opinion on the function of prophecy in Revelation appears based upon his reading of the text itself. Revelation only refers to the present, (which would be the visionary’s present), and the future because the text says so. Citing Rev. 1:2, he remarks:

*And (this is) clear from what he says: “those which are and those which will come to pass.” These are descriptions of both the present time and of the future.*<sup>839</sup>

Immediately, we see that Andrew is more likely than Oikoumenios to arrive at the meaning of a passage through interpretation of the text itself and by established ecclesiastical tradition. Andrew was very influenced by Methodios, a mid-third century Father who frequently addressed symbols from Revelation in his work, *The Symposium*. Methodios wrote: “Remember that the mystery of the incarnation of the Word was fulfilled long before

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<sup>836</sup> 1.1.2.

<sup>837</sup> Castagno, noting that Oikoumenios’ three fold view of prophecy emphasizes the interpretation of Revelation in terms of past history, remarks that the effect is to dull the more colorful and fantastic elements of the book in favor of a more rational or logical presentation of the events. “I Commenti,” 304. Oikoumenios does not leave much room in his commentary for the element of wonder, or of the terrifying, Castagno notes. The plagues either refer to the distant past, the sufferings of sinners after the judgment or they are minimized by allegorization. “I Commenti,” 350. She is correct in this assessment.

<sup>838</sup> Oik.1.1.2, citing Homer, *Iliad* 1.70. See also Hesiod, *Theogony* 38.

<sup>839</sup> *Chp. 1, Text 12, Comm. 13.*

the Apocalypse, whereas John's prophetic message has to do with the present and the future.<sup>840</sup> Andrew never deviates from this prophetic framework.

### 6.3 View of History

Andrew believes he is living in the seventh age and he reveals this orientation early in the commentary. After explaining that John wrote to seven churches (Rev. 1:4), *mystically meaning by this number the churches everywhere*, he immediately adds that the number seven *also corresponds to the present day life, in which the seventh period of days is now taking place.*<sup>841</sup> He repeats this idea when the seven churches are mentioned again in Rev. 1:11, *the aforementioned number seven coming down to the Sabbath period of the future age.*<sup>842</sup> This is Andrew's standard interpretation of the number seven and he believed that it was also John's symbolic meaning.

*Often the number seven is taken by this saint (John) as corresponding to this age and to the Sabbath rest and the repose of the saints. Therefore, here by the loosening of the seventh seal through which is meant the loosening of the earthly life....*<sup>843</sup>

The same rationale is later applied to the seven bowls poured out upon the earth. *Everywhere he refers to the number seven, showing those offenses undertaken in the seven days of the present age are to be restrained by means of the seven plagues and seven angels.*<sup>844</sup>

Different conceptions of world history existed in the early Church. Many Fathers divided history into six "days." A highly popular notion in early Christianity was that the earth would exist for as many thousand year periods as days in which God took to create it. The end of time would occur on the seventh day, the time of eternal repose, corresponding to

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<sup>840</sup> *Symp. 8.7. The Symposium: A Treatise on Chastity*, trans. Herbert Musurillo, Ancient Christian Writers series, vol. 27 (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1958), 112.

<sup>841</sup> *Chp. 1, Text 13, Comm. 15.*

<sup>842</sup> *Chp. 2, Text 19, Comm. 23.*

<sup>843</sup> *Chp. 21, Text 86, Comm. 98-9.*

<sup>844</sup> *Chp. 45, Text 159, Comm. 158.* For Oikoumenios, seven almost always represents perfection. For example, see Oik. 3.13.3, 3.13.13, and 5.3.5.

the Sabbath on which God rested. This interpretation arose as early as the *Epistle of Barnabas* and was influenced by the scripture verse which states that a thousand years is like a day to God.<sup>845</sup> If a day is like a thousand years, then six days of creation meant the earth would last for six thousand years. Irenaeus and Hippolytus, both among Andrew's important sources, held this belief.<sup>846</sup> "For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years shall it be concluded...in six days created things were completed; it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousandth year."<sup>847</sup> But when the earth did not end in the 6,000<sup>th</sup> year, Church writers began to modify the model, keeping the concept of "six" but rather than representing literal one thousand year periods, the "six" was identified with ages or historical epochs. Augustine seems to have adopted this view. He wrote that the day of judgment:

will be the seventh day, just as if the first day in the whole era from the time of Adam to Noe; the second, from Noe to Abraham; the third, from Abraham to David, as the Gospel of Matthew divides it; the fourth, from David to the Transmigration into Babylon; the fifth, from the Transmigration to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sixth day, therefore, begins with the coming of the Lord, and we are living in that sixth day. Hence, just as in Genesis, [we read that] man was fashioned in the image of God on the sixth day, so in our time, as if on the sixth day of the entire era, we are born again in baptism so that we may receive the image of our Creator. But, when that sixth day will have passed, rest will come after the judgment, and the holy and just ones of God will celebrate their Sabbath.<sup>848</sup>

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<sup>845</sup> Ps. 90:4.

<sup>846</sup> Castagno concluded that the differences between the commentaries of Oikoumenios and Andrew were largely due to their views of history and prophecy and that they aligned themselves with the exegetical principles and perspectives of key ecclesiastical figures. Andrew follows Methodios' view of prophecy and is in line with the interpretive tradition of Irenaeus and Hippolytus. Oikoumenios, however, was largely influenced by Eusebius' view of history and Origen's exegesis. "I Commenti," 304, 306. She believed that Oikoumenios' exegesis was even influenced by Eusebius' reluctance to confront issues of the end times (*Ibid*, 384) and his rejection of the eschatological interpretation of Scripture in favor of a historical one. *Ibid*, 388. Castagno points to Eusebius' historicized interpretation of Daniel's period of seventy weeks as an interpretation which inspired Oikoumenios' perspective. *Ibid*, 385-6.

<sup>847</sup> Irenaeus, *Heres. 5.28.3*, in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, trans. and eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, Ante-Nicene Fathers of the Church series, vol. I (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted 1989), 557.

<sup>848</sup> *Serm. 259.2. Augustine Sermons on the Liturgical Season*, trans. Mary Sarah Muldowney, ed. Joseph Deferrari, Fathers of the Church series, vol. 38 (New York: The Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1959), 370. See also Augustine, Question 57.3. *Augustine: Eighty Three Different Questions*, trans. David Mosher, ed. Hermigild Dressler, Fathers of the Church series, vol. 70 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1977), 105.



But others, Andrew included, believed that the present era was the seventh day. According to Jean Daniélou, the Jewish-inspired notion which associated the seventh day with repose seems to have been combined with the Hellenistic concept of the “cosmic week.”

Thus a system is arrived at in which seven millennia constitute the total time of the world, a scheme quite foreign to Judaism, in which the duration of the world is *six* days, the seventh day representing eternal life... So then there is a Jewish contribution, the repose of the seventh day, and a Hellenistic one; the seven millennia. In the passage in *Barnabas* a third element intervenes – the eighth day.... Christ rose on the day after the sabbath, and thenceforward the eighth day is the day of the Resurrection. *Barnabas* kept the Hellenist notion of the seven millennia as constituting the sum of history, the Jewish idea of the privileged character of the seventh day as a time of rest, and, from Christianity, the conception of the eighth day as eternal life.<sup>849</sup>

Why does Andrew adopt a “seventh day” conception of the present rather than maintaining a “sixth day” view with the seventh day being the eschaton, as did Augustine and others? The key may lie in Andrew’s interpretation of Rev. 17:10:

They are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he comes he must remain only a little while.

Hippolytus believed that the kings represented thousand year periods, but Andrew believed that the kings represented a succession of kingdoms which had world-wide domination. At the time John wrote the Revelation, five “had fallen” and “one is,” meaning that five worldwide kingdoms were past – the Assyrians, the Medes, the Babylonians, the Persians and the Macedonians. The current reigning kingdom (the one which “is”) at the time John received the Revelation was the pagan Roman Empire.<sup>850</sup> Andrew believed that the Christian Roman Empire under Constantine and the New Rome was “the other” king, the seventh king which had “not yet come” at the time of John’s vision but was still in existence during the time of Andrew.

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<sup>849</sup> Jean Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, trans. and ed. John A. Baker, vol. 1 of *The Development of Christian Doctrine Before the Council of Nicea* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co, 1964), 396-8. Andrew never mentions the “eighth day,” but it is clear that he considers the future life in the kingdom to represent the eighth day since the present life on this earth is described as the seventh day.

<sup>850</sup> *Chp. 54, Text 186-7, Comm. 177-78.*

How can the seventh age represent both the present time *and* the future repose of the saints, as it does for Andrew? This seventh age consists of both the present and the future repose because the resurrection of Christ opened the kingdom of heaven which is partially realized already, to be enjoyed by all the faithful in its fullness upon Christ's return. The saints are *already* in repose and reign with Christ during this thousand year period<sup>851</sup> between the binding of the devil<sup>852</sup> and the battle with Gog, Magog and the forces of evil at the end of the thousand years.<sup>853</sup> This is explicitly shown to be Andrew's view when he remarks that the martyrs *already* rule with Christ because they are *venerated by pious kings and faithful rulers, and manifesting God-given power against every bodily ailment and demonic activity.*<sup>854</sup> They will *co-reign* with Christ *until his second coming, afterwards enjoying these divine promises to an even greater degree.*<sup>855</sup>

## 6.4 Eschatology

### 6.4.1 The End is Not Near

Andrew believes he is living in the seventh age, however he does not believe that the end of the world is near. In fact, he states that the end is *not in sight*,<sup>856</sup> despite the calamities which had befallen the empire in recent years, since these catastrophes did not begin to approach the scale of destruction described by Revelation. The opening of the sixth seal<sup>857</sup> will inaugurate the end times and the afflictions which will occur at that point are *of which sort as we have never known.*<sup>858</sup> In discussing the "wormwood,"<sup>859</sup> which caused one third of

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<sup>851</sup> Rev. 20:4.

<sup>852</sup> Rev. 20:1-3.

<sup>853</sup> Rev. 20:7-8.

<sup>854</sup> Chp. 61, Text 218, Comm. 202-3.

<sup>855</sup> Chp. 61, Text 219, Comm. 203.

<sup>856</sup> Prologue, Text 8, Comm. 7.

<sup>857</sup> Rev. 6:12.

<sup>858</sup> Chp. 18, Text 69, Comm. 81.

humanity to die because the water became bitter, he comments *bitter things will happen to those who find themselves (living) before the end*,<sup>860</sup> clearly distinguishing his times from those of the end.<sup>861</sup>

From a spiritual perspective, however, the end times are always near. This orientation was central to Andrew's interpretation of Revelation and the purpose of his commentary. Interpreting Christ's admonition in Rev. 1.3, "the time is near," Andrew explains that it means *the time of the distribution of prizes, on account of the brevity of the present life in comparison to the future*.<sup>862</sup> He repeats the same idea near the end of the commentary: *The "I am coming soon"*<sup>863</sup> *either meaning the shortness of the present time compared to the future or the sudden and quick end of each (person's life). For to each human being the departure from here is his end.*<sup>864</sup>

Andrew presents a typical Eastern Christian and patristic eschatology, one which refrains from engaging in predictions regarding the time of the end and instead emphasizes the time of one's own death.<sup>865</sup> For each of us "the end is near," since our interval on this earth is very short compared to eternity. Andrew quotes Christ in this context, "Work while it is day,"<sup>866</sup> that is, do what is necessary to acquire a place in the kingdom of heaven while you have the opportunity. This intersects with another of Andrew's frequent themes: the need for

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<sup>859</sup> Rev. 8:11.

<sup>860</sup> *Chp. 24, Text 93, Comm. 105.*

<sup>861</sup> Manlio Simonetti could not be more mistaken on this point. He wrote that Andrew opposes Oikoumenios' "more generous chronological reference with his own more rigid version which refers the text to the last times which, for him are very near." *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, trans. John Hughes, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 112. As previously mentioned, Castagno also erroneously arrives at this opinion based on a shallow reading of Andrew. "I Commenti," 426. As already noted above, the same mistake has been made by others. See page 24, fn 77.

<sup>862</sup> *Chp. 1, Text 13, Comm. 14.*

<sup>863</sup> Rev. 22:7.

<sup>864</sup> *Chp. 69, Text 255-6, Comm. 234.* Statements such as this may have led Simonetti and others to conclude that Andrew believed the end of the world was near. It highlights that fact that a careful reading of Andrew is necessary to determine his true opinions.

<sup>865</sup> This is a typical view for Eastern Christians and is held by Oikoumenios as well. Castagno noted the same attitude in Oikoumenios, who also did not find in Revelation imminent signs of the end. "I Commenti," 339.

<sup>866</sup> John 9:4. *Chp. 1, Text 12-3, Comm. 14.*

continual effort and strenuous exertion in the spiritual life in order to acquire heavenly rewards. This will be discussed below.

#### 6.4.2 The Millennium

By Andrew's time, millennialism had long been discredited in Church circles and the Bishop of Caesarea expressed the typical view regarding its rejection. He interprets the binding of the devil for one thousand years as *the restraint of his evil activity*<sup>867</sup> but he recognized that the number is symbolic and not a literal period of years.

*By the number one thousand years, by no means is it reasonable to understand so many (years). For neither...are we able to count out these things as ten times one hundred, rather (they are understood) to mean many (generations). Here also, we infer the number one thousand to indicate either a great many or perfection. For these things require many years for the purpose of preaching the gospel everywhere in the entire world and the seeds of piety to take root in it... The one thousand years, therefore, is the time from the year of the Incarnation of the Lord until the coming of the Antichrist.*<sup>868</sup>

Andrew reports other interpretations of the thousand years, including the classic justification historically given for millennialism:

*Others said that after the completion of the six thousand years, the first resurrection of the dead is granted only to the saints, so that in this earth, in which they displayed endurance, they will enjoy delight and honor for one thousand years, and after that the universal resurrection will occur, not of the just only but also of the sinners.*<sup>869</sup>

He does not dwell on millennialism but rejects it tersely: *It is unnecessary to note that the Church has accepted none of these.*<sup>870</sup> Andrew indicates that his interpretation of the thousand year reign is the accepted ecclesiastical view, not simply his personal preference. In support of the Church's view, Andrew cites *the Lord saying to the Sadducees that the*

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<sup>867</sup> Chp. 60, Text 216, Comm. 200.

<sup>868</sup> Chp. 60, Text 216, Comm. 200-01.

<sup>869</sup> Chp. 63, Text 222, Comm. 206.

<sup>870</sup> *Ibid.*

*righteous will be like "angels of God in heaven"<sup>871</sup> and the Apostle who said, "The kingdom of God is not food and drink."<sup>872</sup>*

### 6.4.3 Andrew's End-time Scenario

Andrew did not believe in interpreting the symbols of Revelation to apply to specific events or occurrences in order to *predict* the end, although they may describe events *at* the end. *If anyone attaches each of the plagues to things to be found at the end time, he will not entirely miss what is suitable.*<sup>873</sup> Andrew did arrive at certain general conclusions regarding the end-time, however. The end may not be at hand, but it also might not be too far off in the future because the seventh king, which he understands to represent the present age or era, is described as remaining "a little while."<sup>874</sup> The other kingdoms had lasted for hundreds of years. At the time Andrew wrote this commentary about three hundred years had elapsed since the rise of Constantine the Great. The New Roman Empire is the seventh kingdom, and it will probably not last as long as those other kingdoms, he surmised, because it is to remain only "a little while." On the other hand, it might last just as long as the others and "a little while" might only indicate the brevity of this life in comparison to the duration of eternal life.

*The Blessed Hippolytus understood these to mean ages, of which five have passed by, the sixth still stands, during which the apostle saw these things and the seventh, which is after the 6,000 years, "has not yet come," but coming it "must remain a little while"... the statement about the world-wide Babylon would well be accomplished in the capital city until the Antichrist, reigning for a little while, as compared to the previous (kingdoms), some of which ruled more than five hundred years, and others more than one thousand. After all, every chronological number is short compared to the future everlasting kingdom of the saints.*<sup>875</sup>

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<sup>871</sup> Matt 22:30, Mark 12:25, Luke 20:36.

<sup>872</sup> Rom. 14:17. *Chp. 63, Text 222, Comm. 206-07.*

<sup>873</sup> *Chp. 45, Text 163, Comm. 161.*

<sup>874</sup> Rev. 17:10.

<sup>875</sup> *Chp. 54, Text 188-9, Comm. 179-80.*

In accordance with his understanding of the present era as the seventh age, Andrew believed that the Antichrist would come as king of the Romans,<sup>876</sup> that is, he would arise from the empire to which Andrew belonged. Andrew did not identify the Antichrist with any living individual. He had already indicated that the end could not be near since the catastrophes described in Revelation had not yet begun to take place. Nonetheless, the prophecy was clear. The Antichrist is one of the seven because the seven leading kings represent the entire rule of that kingdom, the last of which is New Rome. Therefore, he will come as king of the Romans:

*The beast is the Antichrist; as the eighth he will be raised up after the seven kings for the purpose of deceiving and desolating the earth. "From the seven" (since) as one of them he will spring forth. For he will not come from another nation, along (the lines) of the things we have already said, but he will come as King of the Romans...*<sup>877</sup>

Andrew identifies the beast upon which the harlot Babylon rides as the devil.<sup>878</sup> The beast is red and the woman is drunk with the blood of the saints,<sup>879</sup> so it must represent a ruling power which had persecuted the saints. Andrew does not believe the city to be ancient Rome, although he considers that along with various other possibilities:

*either...one chooses to understand it as the one ruling in the time of the Persians, or the old Rome or the New, or taken generally as the kingdom in one unit, as it is said. For in each of these (cities) various sins had been born and blood of the saints poured out, some more, some less, we have been taught. And the blood the martyrs shed (in the former Rome) under Diocletian or the torments of those (martyrs) in Persia, who could enumerate them? These things were endured under Julian secretly and the things they dared to do in the time of the Arians against the orthodox in the New Rome, the histories present to those who read.*<sup>880</sup>

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<sup>876</sup> Chp. 54, Text 189, Comm. 180.

<sup>877</sup> Chp. 54, Text 189, Comm. 180.

<sup>878</sup> Rev. 17:3. Chp. 53, Text 182, Comm. 174.

<sup>879</sup> Rev. 17:6.

<sup>880</sup> Chp. 54, Text 184, Comm. 176.

After surveying the options, Andrew does not identify Babylon with the city of Rome, explaining the classic description of “seven hills” or mountains as representative of seven ruling kingdoms, *seven places standing out from the rest in worldly prominence and power, these upon which we know were established in due season the (ruling) kingdom of the world.*<sup>881</sup> This comports with his view of history as seven ages. The seven mountains stand for seven heads or seven kings, which periphrastically represent the entire period of supremacy of that particular kingdom.<sup>882</sup> *Nino of the Assyrians, Arbaces of the Medians, Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonians, Cyrus of the Persians, Alexander of the Macedonians, Romulus of ancient Rome and Constantine of the New (Rome).*<sup>883</sup>

The hills upon which Babylon sits may not represent an actual place, but instead probably signify “ranks of glory”:

*So therefore, through seven heads femininely showing cities and through the seven mountains in due season seven heights surpassing the rest of the body of the earth in neuter, this is not a specific place among the nations but relates to ranks of glory. And by “king” we have understood, so to speak, as either the places which have been honored with royal administration, or those who first reigned in each of the aforementioned, periphrastically defining the entire reign...*<sup>884</sup>

Andrew also decides against identifying the city of ancient Rome with Babylon, despite the association of seven hills with Rome, because the Babylon of Revelation is described as a city which has world wide dominion and *ancient Rome from long ago lost the power of its kingdom.... for the Apocalypse says, “The woman which you see is the great city having dominion over the kings of the earth.”*<sup>885</sup> He does not identify it with the current Roman capital of Constantinople either, although it is doubtful that he would completely rule it out as a possibility if Constantinople were to acquire world-wide dominion and also were

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<sup>881</sup> *Chp. 54, Text 186, Comm. 177.*

<sup>882</sup> *Chp. 54, Text 188, Comm. 179.*

<sup>883</sup> *Chp. 54, Text 188, Comm. 179.*

<sup>884</sup> *Chp. 54, Text 187-88, Comm. 179.*

<sup>885</sup> *Chp. 53, Text 181, Comm. 173.*

to become morally depraved. *How did the present Babylon "water the nations with the wine of her own fornication?" By becoming altogether the leader in all these transgressions and by her sending to the cities subject to her, through the gifts, rulers who were the enemies of truth and righteousness.*<sup>886</sup> But Andrew gives no hint that he views the current capital in such a spiritual state or that he perceives Constantinople, or any current city, as possessing that level of world domination. Therefore, he expects the time of the end to be in the future.

Babylon might represent Rome to the extent that New Rome, the seventh kingdom, is a historical continuation of the former Roman Empire, which he describes as the kingdom "*in one unit.*" Even though the actual Persian Babylon was identified with sorcery and had actually martyred many saints, he concluded that "Babylon" cannot represent the actual Persian city because the Babylon of Revelation comes as the fourth in a succession of kingdoms and has ten kings under its subjugation, symbolized by the ten horns. This conviction on Andrew's part, in line with a traditional patristic interpretation of Daniel that the ten horns represent ten kingdoms under the domination of the world-wide Babylon, ruled out any existing city since during his time none possessed that level of worldly power:

*But it seems to be somehow contrary to the interpretation concerning this by the ancient teachers of the Church, who spoke against making an analogy of Babylon with the Romans by these things being prophesied on account of the fourth beast with the ten horns that had been seen, that is in the rule of the Romans, and from her (Babylon) the one sprouted uprooting the three and subjugating the rest, and to come as a king of the Romans, on the one hand coming on the pretext of fostering and organizing their rule, and on the other hand (coming) to work in reality toward the perfect dissolution. Wherefore, as it is said, someone who would truly take this to mean this (Roman) kingdom originally in one unit that has ruled until now, that poured out the blood of the apostles and prophets and martyrs, would not be led astray from what is appropriate. For just as also this is said about one chorus and one army and one city even if they exchange each of those (individuals) constituting them, likewise in the same way the kingdom is one, even though in many times and places it is divided.*<sup>887</sup>

*Daniel also previously saw these "ten horns" of the Antichrist. After the accursed one has uprooted three he will make the rest subject to him.*<sup>888</sup>

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<sup>886</sup> Chp. 55, Text 193, Comm. 183.

<sup>887</sup> Chp. 55, Text 202, Comm. 188.

<sup>888</sup> Dan 7:7-8. Chp. 54, Text 190, Comm. 181.



In his comments on this point, Andrew reveals how much his interpretation of this passage in Revelation and his eschatological scenario is influenced by ecclesiastical tradition, going back to Hippolytus, regarding the vision in Daniel 7 of the four beasts which come out of the sea. This view was widespread and the same conclusions are expressed by Jerome in his commentary on Daniel.<sup>889</sup> The first beast, like a lion, was traditionally understood to represent the Babylonians, the second, the bear, was the Persians, the third, the leopard, was the Macedonians and the fourth and most terrible beast was the Romans. We also see Andrew's reliance on this tradition in his earlier interpretation of Rev. 13:2 in the description of the beast of the sea, which in Revelation is one beast that combines characteristics of the three animals of Daniel: "And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth."

*The leopard means the kingdom of the Greeks, the bear that of the Persians, the lion is the kingdom of the Babylonians over which the Antichrist will rule, coming as king of the Romans, and abolishing their rule when he sees the clay toes of the feet, through which is meant the weak and fragile division of the kingdom into ten.*<sup>890</sup>

Andrew, like the other Fathers, was also influenced by certain details found in 2 Thessalonians and incorporated them into his end-times scenario, especially that the "man of lawlessness" (identified with the Antichrist) would sit in the Temple and demand to be worshipped as God. We see this at work in his remarks on the millennium. After the symbolic one thousand year period, which Andrew understands as the time necessary for the preaching of the gospel, he explains that "*the son of perdition, the man of lawlessness*" will come.<sup>891</sup> Just prior to the destruction of all the forces of evil, including Gog and Magog, they will gather in Jerusalem and:

*they say, the Antichrist will sit in the temple of God, either in the Judaic one, the old divine temple, which was destroyed on account of the recklessness against Christ, and is (still) expected by the God-fighting Jews to be rebuilt by him, or in the real divine temple, (that is) in the catholic Church, usurping*

<sup>889</sup> *On Daniel 7.1-7. Jerome's Commentary on Daniel*, trans. Gleason L. Archer, Jr., (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1958), 72-76.

<sup>890</sup> *Chp. 36, Text 136-7, Comm. 140.*

<sup>891</sup> *2 Thess. 2:3. Chp. 63, Text 222, Comm. 207.*

*that which is inappropriate for him and "representing himself as being God," according to the divine word of the Apostle.*<sup>892</sup>

This reveals Andrew's tendency to follow the typical patristic end-time scenario, which combines Revelation and 2 Thessalonians, because the expression "man of lawlessness" does not occur in Revelation, nor does Revelation describe the Antichrist as sitting in the Temple.

Andrew is very consistent with his identification of the dragon with the devil, also known as Satan, and the beast of the sea with the Antichrist who receives his power and authority from the devil. The beast of the land is the spokesperson of the Antichrist, hence, he is the false prophet. *We think it is not absurd to understand that the dragon is Satan, that "the beast rising out of the sea" is the Antichrist, and that the one present, according to the opinion of the Blessed Irenaeus is...the false prophet rising out of the earth.*<sup>893</sup> Oikoumenios, on the other hand, becomes hopelessly confused with the various evil personas. Satan is the serpent, chief of the demons and the beast of the sea.<sup>894</sup> The beast of the earth is the Antichrist,<sup>895</sup> but the false prophet could also be the Antichrist.<sup>896</sup> Later Oikoumenios says that the Antichrist is simultaneously the Devil who is seen in the beast of Revelation 17.<sup>897</sup> Oikoumenios never clears up the confusion and perhaps his last attempt is the most muddled explanation of all. He first identifies three separate figures to be destroyed in the fire of Gehenna: Satan, the Devil and the Antichrist,<sup>898</sup> classifying Satan and the Devil as *separate* personages. He also conflates the Antichrist with the false prophet, but then immediately identifies Satan as one individual who is also called the Devil and the serpent.<sup>899</sup>

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<sup>892</sup> Chp. 63, Text 225-6, Comm. 209-210.

<sup>893</sup> Chp. 37, Text 140-41, Comm. 143.

<sup>894</sup> 7.11.1-2. He is also identified with the serpent by Oikoumenios in 7.3.3.

<sup>895</sup> 8.3.1.

<sup>896</sup> 9.5.2.

<sup>897</sup> 9.11.3-4.

<sup>898</sup> 9.6.2.

<sup>899</sup> 9.6.3.

#### 6.4.4 Andrew's After-life Imagery

Andrew frequently attempts to encourage his readers with inspirational after-life imagery drawn from biblical motifs. He offers no description of the situation faced by those enduring eternal punishment beyond references to torment and fire. The contrasting delights of the faithful are repeatedly referenced, however, usually expressed in terms of prayerful desire, with the descriptions of paradise preceded by “may we...”, often preceding the doxology found at the end of each major section. If believers are diligent and faithful they will enjoy citizenship in the *Jerusalem above*,<sup>900</sup> *the dwelling place of the Royal Trinity – for (the Trinity) dwells in her and walks about in her as it has been promised.*<sup>901</sup> They will acquire *the wages, the glory from God, the “well done, good and faithful servant.”*<sup>902</sup> It will be a place of *blessings*<sup>903</sup> and *reward*,<sup>904</sup> of *joy*,<sup>905</sup> *the dwelling place of all gladness*<sup>906</sup> and of future eternal *rest when pain, sorrow and groaning have fled away.*<sup>907</sup> They will rejoice, *illuminated by “the light of the countenance of Christ” our God,*<sup>908</sup> and enjoy *the eternal blessings that have been prepared for the saints “from the foundation of the world.”*<sup>909</sup> It is a place of *heavenly mansions*,<sup>910</sup> of *glory, repose and spaciousness*,<sup>911</sup> where they will *co-reign*

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<sup>900</sup> Chp. 54, Text 192, Comm. 182.

<sup>901</sup> Chp. 65, Text 234, Comm. 216.

<sup>902</sup> Chp. 69, Text 256, Comm. 235.

<sup>903</sup> Chp. 15, Text 64, Comm. 76; Chp. 18, Text 73, Comm. 84; Chp. 54, Text 192, Comm. 182; Chp. 60, Text 217, Comm. 202; Chp. 63, Text 227, Comm. 211; ; Chp. 66, Text 237, Comm. 219, etc.

<sup>904</sup> Chp. 3, Text 26, Comm. 33; Chp. 27, Text 101, Comm. 111; Chp. 33, Text 128, Comm. 133.

<sup>905</sup> Chp. 20, Text 84, Comm. 98; Chp. 65, Text 234, Comm. 216; Chp. 69, Text 257, Comm. 235.

<sup>906</sup> Chp. 21, Text 89, Comm. 101.

<sup>907</sup> Chp. 20, Text 84, Comm. 97; Chp. 57, Text 207, Comm. 191; Chp. 65, Text 235, Comm. 216.

<sup>908</sup> Chp. 57, Text 207, Comm. 192.

<sup>909</sup> Chp. 54, Text 192, Comm. 182.

<sup>910</sup> Chp. 27, Text 101, Comm. 111.

<sup>911</sup> Chp. 36, Text 140, Comm. 142.

*eternally with Christ.*<sup>912</sup>

In a particularly beautiful passage, Andrew explains the terms used to describe heaven in the Scriptures:

*The "supper" of Christ is the festival of those who are saved and the all-encompassing harmony in gladness, of which the blessed ones who will attain (this) will enter together into the eternal bridal chamber of the Holy Bridegroom of clean souls. For the One who promised this does not lie. Many are the blessings in the future age and all surpass understanding, and the participation in these is declared under many names, sometimes the "kingdom of heaven" on account of its glory and honor, sometimes "paradise" because of the uninterrupted banquet of all good things, sometimes "bosoms of Abraham" because the repose of the spirits of the dead is there, sometimes as a "bridal chamber" and "marriage" not only because of the unceasing joy but also because of the pure and inexpressible union of God to his servants...*<sup>913</sup>

Not surprisingly, the "marriage feast" imagery is especially strong, not only because of its parabolic use by Christ, but also its use in Revelation.<sup>914</sup> Andrew encourages the faithful to remain steadfast: *let us enter into the everlasting bridal chamber of joy.*<sup>915</sup>

*[W]ith joyful torches of the virtuous manner of life, adorned with sympathy, offering ourselves with the clean and blameless wedding garments of holy souls, let us enter together into the bridal chamber of Christ our God...*<sup>916</sup>

*[H]aving decorated our beloved souls as for a wedding, we will present them to the king for a union.*<sup>917</sup>

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<sup>912</sup> Chp. 20, Text 84, Comm. 97; Chp. 24, Text 94, Comm. 105; Chp. 37, Text 140, Comm. 142.

<sup>913</sup> Chp. 57, Text 205-6, Comm. 190.

<sup>914</sup> Rev. 19:7 and 21:2.

<sup>915</sup> Chp. 45, Text 164, Comm. 161.

<sup>916</sup> Chp. 51, Text 176, Comm. 170.

<sup>917</sup> Chp. 9, Text 46, Comm. 55.

Andrew considered marriage an appropriate image because it expressed union with God. The true nature of life with God transcends comprehension, however, since it will be an unimaginable union, the:

*pure and inexpressible union of God to his servants, (a union) so greatly transcending the communion of bodies one with another, as much as light is separate from darkness and perfume from stench.*<sup>918</sup>

Not only will the faithful enjoy the blessings of the future age, but so will all of creation, which also was adversely affected by the Fall of Adam. The plagues resulting in the destruction of nature in Revelation are easily explained by Andrew:

*Creation, having come into being for us, when we are chastised partakes with us in the afflictions, likewise therefore it will rejoice with the saints who are glorified.*<sup>919</sup>

Andrew cites Paul, who said that due to human sin “creation is subject to corruption”<sup>920</sup> and at the end time, creation will also be renewed along with us. “[I]t will be made anew with us in the glorious freedom of the children of God”<sup>921</sup> being renewed to a more radiant (existence) and remaining, not to a complete disappearance.<sup>922</sup> Andrew also quotes Methodios, Isaiah and the psalms for the concept of the renewal and transformation of the earth.

*Therefore, the creation which came into being for us is to receive with us the way of life changed for the better, not proceeding to non-existence just as neither will we (have no existence) after death.*<sup>923</sup>

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<sup>918</sup> Chp. 57, Text 206, Comm. 190.

<sup>919</sup> Chp. 19, Text 75, Comm. 86.

<sup>920</sup> Rom. 8:20.

<sup>921</sup> Rom. 8:21.

<sup>922</sup> Chp. 64, Text 227, Comm. 211.

<sup>923</sup> Chp. 64, Text 229, Comm. 213. See also Chp. 65, Text 232-3, Comm. 215.

## 6.5 Angelology

Andrew is highly impressed with the descriptions of angels in Revelation and frequently comments about their duties and comportment. Andrew notes the *purity of their nature*,<sup>924</sup> their piety,<sup>925</sup> their virtue,<sup>926</sup> and their *purity and honor and limitlessness in service*.<sup>927</sup> They have a *flow of fiery divine love in them and pure wisdom and knowledge*.<sup>928</sup> He also notes the “good order” (εὐταξία) in heaven.<sup>929</sup> Andrew’s understanding of the role of angels in Revelation is either influenced or confirmed by one of his favorite sources, Pseudo-Dionysios (whom Andrew calls “Dionysios the Great”), who composed *The Celestial Hierarchy*. Andrew observes that angels have ranks and a hierarchy and that they are always:

*receiving the knowledge of the works to be done in heaven, to be conveyed always from the first ones to the second ones, according to Dionysios the Great.*<sup>930</sup>

Angels have responsibilities over creation:

*From this we learn that the angelic powers have been assigned to created things, some to water, some to fire, and to some another part of creation. So we learn that this one was assigned to the punishment by fire.*<sup>931</sup>

Angels not only have responsibilities over creation, but they also function liturgically:

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<sup>924</sup> Chp. 45, Text 162, Comm. 160.

<sup>925</sup> Chp. 21, Text 86, Comm. 99; Chp. 70, Text 257, Comm. 235.

<sup>926</sup> Chp. 10, Text 48, Comm. 57; Chp. 28, Text 106, Comm. 114.

<sup>927</sup> Chp. 45, Text 162, Comm. 160.

<sup>928</sup> Chp. 21, Text 88, Comm. 100.

<sup>929</sup> Chp. 13, Text 59, Comm. 71; Chp. 21, Text 86, Comm. 99. See Chp. 67, Text 241, Comm. 221 for the good order of the heavenly Jerusalem and Chp. 19, Text 74, Comm. 85, for the “good order” of creation.

<sup>930</sup> Chp. 45, Text 162, Comm. 160.

<sup>931</sup> Chp. 44, Text 156, Comm. 156. Andrew was commenting on Rev. 14:18, “Then another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has power over fire...”

*The angel stood at this (altar) and (holds) the incense holder, that is, the censer containing incense, holding the prayers of the saints offered as incense to God.*<sup>932</sup>

*[T]he angelic powers...carry up our prayers and spiritual whole burnt offerings, which, we have heard, "they are sent for service for the sake of those (who are) to inherit salvation."*<sup>933</sup>

Having broken down the wall of separation between us, Christ has created a Church that is human and angelic, Andrew remarks. Since the coming of Christ, *angels and human beings have become "one flock" and one church.*<sup>934</sup> On another occasion, Andrew exclaims, *Behold, one church of angels and humans!*<sup>935</sup>

Angels not only demonstrate orderliness, but perform specific functions and roles assigned to them, just as people perform specific roles and functions according to a hierarchy in the Church.

*The angel is representative of each hierarch, as a mediator between God and men, both raising up their entreaties and bringing down his propitiation, converting the sinners either by spoken word or strict discipline.*<sup>936</sup>

Angels also offer great assistance to humans, even when they administer the plagues. Andrew sees the events of the seven trumpets as literal descriptions of the sufferings to befall sinners in the end times. The angels carry out the plagues hoping for the repentance and salvation of unrepentant people. But Oikoumenios, having concluded that the second coming of Christ has already occurred with the description of the first trumpet,<sup>937</sup> is forced to interpret the plagues which follow as representing sufferings in Gehenna,<sup>938</sup> not plagues on earth during the end times. This means that the angels would be responsible for the suffering

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<sup>932</sup> Chp. 21, Text 87, Comm. 99.

<sup>933</sup> Chp. 48, Text 167, Comm. 164, quoting Heb. 1:14.

<sup>934</sup> Chp. 12, Text 58, Comm. 70.

<sup>935</sup> Chp. 20, Text 83, Comm. 96.

<sup>936</sup> Chp. 21, Text 88, Comm. 100.

<sup>937</sup> Rev. 8:7. Oik. 5.9.1-3.

<sup>938</sup> Oik. 5.17.3, Suggit 89.

in hell. This is especially evident in Oikoumenios' interpretation of the sixth trumpet which releases the four angels bound at the Euphrates. He interprets them as heavenly powers and believes the images of the terrifying army – horses with lion's heads, sulfur and smoke – describe angels.<sup>939</sup>

But Andrew cannot accept this interpretation. Angels will not be involved in the eternal punishment of sinners in Gehenna. At the time of judgment they will *perform the harvest of the exceedingly impious*<sup>940</sup> and inflict whatever chastisement sinners will experience at the time of "harvest." However, their function is not to perform eternal punishment. Instead, Andrew's conception of the angels is that they are characterized by God-like love and care. They assist people by strengthening them before the coming of trials,<sup>941</sup> and when angels bring chastisements against sinners it is because the sinners need affliction to bring about repentance for their salvation.<sup>942</sup>

*Through these it is shown that not only the angels apply distressing wounds, but they are like doctors, on one occasion cutting and on another pouring on assuaging medicines.*<sup>943</sup>

Andrew also compares the angels to doctors elsewhere:

*The angels serve these (people) as sympathetic doctors imitating Christ, healing those weak from the sickness of sin severely by cauterization and surgery or more moderately for the lazy, lightening the future punishments in whatever manner they thankfully receive it.*<sup>944</sup>

The angelic powers feel pain over those who fall from the faith as if they will have some kind of twisting on account of sympathy and sorrow.<sup>945</sup> Just as God punishes for the hope of the salvation of sinners, likewise, by the woes the angel pronounced:

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<sup>939</sup> Rev. 9:13-19. Oik. 5.23. Andrew believes the four angels bound at the Euphrates are fallen angels, that is, demonic powers. *Chp. 27, Text 101, Comm. 111.*

<sup>940</sup> *Chp. 44, Text 156, Comm. 156.*

<sup>941</sup> *Chp. 19, Text 75, Comm. 86.*

<sup>942</sup> *Chp. 21, Text 86, Comm. 99.*

<sup>943</sup> *Chp. 67, Text 238, Comm. 219.*

<sup>944</sup> *Chp. 21, Text 89, Comm. 101.*

<sup>945</sup> *Chp. 18, Text 70, Comm. 83.*



*is also shown the sympathy and philanthropy of the divine angels imitating God, pitying those sinners being punished, even much more those who do not see the afflictions for the purpose of returning (back to God).<sup>946</sup>*

The *spiritual powers rejoice and celebrate over those who return from repentance to salvation, but grieve over those who turn aside from the straight path.*<sup>947</sup> In this context, Andrew mentions the guardian angel assigned to each individual, who *without saying any word, instructs us in the things we must do, as if a mind invisibly speaking to our own mind, rejoicing at those who listen to his counsels, but sorrowing in imitation of God over those who disobey.* Andrew briefly recounts a beautiful story of the joy of a guardian angel over the repentance of a sinner under his care.<sup>948</sup>

## 6.6 Salvation

### 6.6.1 Synergy

Contrary to Oikoumenios, Andrew's end-time scenario does not include any possibility for the restoration of sinners after the judgment, but instead he consistently affirms that *this* life is the time for repentance and for striving to attain salvation. Toward this end, Andrew affirms the classic Orthodox idea of "synergy," frequently misunderstood and maligned in the West as the heresy of "semi-pelagianism."<sup>949</sup> Synergy is the *cooperation* of a person with God to achieve that individual's salvation. The concept is found throughout the New Testament and the term was used specifically in 1 Cor. 3:9.<sup>950</sup> Andrew mentions this concept early in his exposition when he encourages the reader to assist fallen brethren. *Becoming co-workers (synergists) with God, we will delight forever in his blessings, by the grace and philanthropy of our Lord, Jesus Christ.*<sup>951</sup> Humans also co-operate with the angels

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<sup>946</sup> Chp. 25, Text 95, Comm. 106.

<sup>947</sup> Chp. 48, Text 167, Comm. 164.

<sup>948</sup> Chp. 48, Text 168, Comm. 164. He also mentions guardian angels in Chp. 67, Text 240, Comm. 220.

<sup>949</sup> Suggit also misunderstands the Eastern understanding of free will and synergy. "Oecumenius's understanding of human free will at times seems to approximate to that of Pelagius." Suggit 7.

<sup>950</sup> "We are God's fellow workers." θεοῦ γὰρ ἑσμεν συνεργοί.

<sup>951</sup> Chp. 15, Text 64, Comm. 76.

to do the work of God, just as the guardian angels of the twelve apostles were co-workers with them in spreading the gospel.<sup>952</sup>

Synergy is the affirmation of human free will and the recognition of God's respect for human freedom. God did not do only what was minimally necessary for our salvation, but in fact he did not neglect anything for our salvation. But having been saved, we are not deprived of our free-will. God respects our choice to have a relationship with him or not, to receive the gift of salvation or to reject it. Synergy embraces what appear to be two opposites: First, the belief that God alone is entirely responsible for our salvation and that salvation can in no way be earned, and secondly the equally firm belief that we completely maintain our free will and are entirely answerable for our response to God.

Embracing the paradox and tension between these two beliefs has never been a problem for the Eastern mind. Since Eastern spirituality and theology are not based upon philosophy or deductive reasoning, the Eastern mentality does not require "either-or" paradigms. All of this is evident in Andrew's remarks. He affirms that God alone is Savior, with the complete absence of predestination, while simultaneously holding humans entirely responsible for their individual salvation, with the complete absence of any concept of "merit." Salvation is a gift, but one must choose to accept it and prove worthy of it. Commenting on Rev. 22:17b, "And let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price," Andrew writes:

*For thirst is necessary for the drink of life for the firm possession of the one who has acquired it, especially because it is also granted as a gift, not to those who did not toil at all, but to those who offered not things worthy of the greatness of the gift but only a genuine and fiery resolve instead of gold and silver and pains of the body.*<sup>953</sup>

## 6.6.2 God's Will

Absolutely fundamental to Eastern theology, and frequently stated or presumed in Andrew's theology, is the will of God that all people be saved. The tension between the

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<sup>952</sup> *Chp. 67, Text 240, Comm. 220.*

<sup>953</sup> *Chp. 72, Text 261, Comm. 239.*

roles of the human and divine partners for the salvation of the individual (that is, synergy) is succinctly expressed by Andrew:

*On the one hand, the aforementioned will of God, which is called both "well-pleasing"<sup>954</sup> and greatly desired "supper,"<sup>955</sup> is that "people be saved and come to knowledge of the truth"<sup>956</sup> and that they "return and live,"<sup>957</sup> and on the other hand secondly (the will of God) is the punishment of those who themselves pursue punishment.<sup>958</sup>*

The biblical verse "God wills that all be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth,"<sup>959</sup> is a favorite in the Orthodox Church and can be found in many prayers. God does not simply desire our salvation, he *thirsts for our salvation*.<sup>960</sup> Despite the ardent desire of God, he honors human free will and no room exists for predestination. The responsibility for one's salvation falls squarely on the human being. The faithful will receive *angelic assistance* and help *through the seal of the Spirit*, but help is:

*given to us and manifesting our own power according to the amount of work we have put into it. The rest will remain without help, for by their own will they will not be helped.*<sup>961</sup>

### 6.6.3 Free Will

The entire purpose of life in this world is to acquire eternal life. *For to be born or not to be born is not up to us, but to struggle and to be victorious (against) evil demons and to gain the eternal blessings is for us.*<sup>962</sup> Therefore, it is the will of God that all be saved, but

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<sup>954</sup> εὐδοκία. Matt. 11:26, Luke 10:21.

<sup>955</sup> Rev. 19:17.

<sup>956</sup> 1 Tim. 2:4, 2 Tim. 2:25, 3:7.

<sup>957</sup> Ezek. 18:23, 32.

<sup>958</sup> Chp. 59, Text 211, Comm. 196-7.

<sup>959</sup> 1 Tim. 2:4.

<sup>960</sup> Chp. 66, Text 236, Comm. 218.

<sup>961</sup> Chp. 19, Text 75, Comm. 86-7.

<sup>962</sup> Chp. 50, Text 172, Comm. 167.

those who chose to be punished by rejecting salvation, will be punished. Andrew accepts the idea of a fire of renewal to cleanse all of creation, but he does not believe that everyone will endure a purgatorial type of cleansing fire for the removal of sin. He rejects the analogy some people made to gold, including Oikoumenios, and the belief that “purification” by fire was necessary for all. Andrew responds that in the case of gold:

*the filth is included by its nature, but it (the filth) was intentionally united (to the soul) by the reason-endowed (human beings) rather than having been born within them.*<sup>963</sup>

Gold, by its nature, has contaminants, but no excuse exists for human beings who intentionally choose to sully their souls. Whatever filth humans add to their souls can and should be removed by them. No purgatorial fire is necessary. Andrew’s comment reveals not only human responsibility for salvation but also displays a fundamentally positive regard for human nature, typical of the Eastern view. Even after the Fall, human beings are not sinful by nature, only by choice. God respects that choice and *each one...will receive the wages befitting the labors done.*<sup>964</sup> *The wages of sin are rendered to those deserving and to those who reached a decision chosen by them.*<sup>965</sup>

Andrew often expressed the belief that the punishments of sinners will reflect the nature of their sin. *Whoever sins through them (in that manner) is also be punished through them (in that manner).*<sup>966</sup> When the blood flowing from the winepress is described as reaching as high as the horses’ bridles,<sup>967</sup> Andrew remarks:

*Since the lawbreakers have become (like) horses, mad for women (and) devoted to pleasure, they will be unharnessed in torments up to the height of the bridles, for they knew no bridle in their pleasures.*<sup>968</sup>

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<sup>963</sup> Chp. 50, Text 172, Comm. 167.

<sup>964</sup> Chp. 36, Text 139, Comm. 142.

<sup>965</sup> Chp. 45, Text 163, Comm. 161.

<sup>966</sup> Chp. 42, Text 151, Comm. 152, quoting Wisdom of Sol. 11:16.

<sup>967</sup> Rev. 14:20.

<sup>968</sup> Chp. 44, Text 158, Comm. 157.

Andrew's repeated emphasis on the *voluntary* nature of the punishment in hell is striking: each *human being receiving that which his deeds desired, either the kingdom or punishment.*<sup>969</sup> On Rev. 22:11, "Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy," he comments:

*It is not as though urging wrong doing and filth that he said these things presented – may it not be so – but as (expressing) the non-compulsion, of keeping one's own will, as though he said, "Each one may do as he likes. I do not compel free choice," showing for each pursuit the corresponding end to follow "when I come to render to each the wages of the things for which he has labored."*<sup>970</sup>

Contrary to the Origenistic view, Andrew believes in eternal punishment because it is the result of one's free choice, an entirely voluntary decision which God does not inhibit:

*I surmise that in no way would he either threaten or strike those worthy of endless condemnation if he knew the condemned ones had not already repented and hated the evil which they freely chose to commit. For it is not through necessity, but voluntarily that they are punished.*<sup>971</sup>

The purpose of this life is to acquire the kingdom of heaven, which requires great effort. Andrew typically uses the imagery of work, ("wages," "labor," etc.), warfare ("weapons," "enemies," "drafted," etc.) and athletic metaphors ("crowns," "contest," "arena," etc.) to describe the exertion necessary and the rewards which await those who persist and prevail.

Perhaps the most common image Andrew utilizes for this life is the comparison to an athletic contest taking place in the arena, a very common image in the patristic writings. *[T]he stadium is open to all for the contest. For what the stadium is indeed for the contestants, such is the passage to this life for all.*<sup>972</sup> The official presiding over the contest is

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<sup>969</sup> Chp. 59, Text 212, Comm. 197.

<sup>970</sup> Chp. 71, Text 258, Comm. 236.

<sup>971</sup> Chp. 50, Text 171, Comm. 166.

<sup>972</sup> Chp. 50, Text 172, Comm. 167.

God and the opponents are the spiritual powers of darkness, *the evil demons who have been prepared for the war against us.*<sup>973</sup>

*May the Great Official, "who does not allow anyone to be tested beyond his strength,"<sup>974</sup> deliver us from this, granting us steadfast disposition and manly strength in the assaults against us, so that "legitimately contending"<sup>975</sup> "against the principalities and powers of darkness"<sup>976</sup> we might be adorned with the "crown of righteousness"<sup>977</sup> and receive the rewards of victory.<sup>978</sup>*

Even though Andrew believes the sufferings at the end-times will be real and physical, the images of Revelation have a present meaning and message. Warfare is required, even for those who are living before the era of the Antichrist, but it is a spiritual warfare. Physical martyrdom is not required, and since the contest is entirely spiritual the contest is taking place *now* for all of us. Andrew affirms the truth of Rev. 14:13, "*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth.*" Not *all* of the dead are blessed, he says, but

*those who die in the Lord, having been put to death in the world... the prizes of those prevailing much greater in measure than the contests, which the contestants of Christ our God achieved against the invisible powers.*<sup>979</sup>

When the Church tries to flee because of the attacks of the devil, *behind her will come a river of water, that is, ungodly men or evil demons or a multitude of various temptations against her that he might enslave her.*<sup>980</sup> But the earth assists her, by the length of the journey and the dryness of the desert *preventing impulses of evils, and swallowing up*

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<sup>973</sup> Chp. 26, Text 98, Comm. 110. This is how Andrew interprets the locusts of Rev. 9:7, whom Oikoumenios believes are angels bringing eternal punishment.

<sup>974</sup> 1 Cor. 10:13.

<sup>975</sup> 2 Tim. 2:5.

<sup>976</sup> Eph. 6:12.

<sup>977</sup> 2 Tim. 4:2.

<sup>978</sup> Chp. 33, Text 128, Comm. 132-33.

<sup>979</sup> Chp. 42, Text 153, Comm. 153-4.

<sup>980</sup> Chp. 35, Text 134, Comm. 138.

*the river of the temptations.*<sup>981</sup> Some will flee to *the desert* (the monastic life), and the Antichrist will turn instead to attack those *drafted in Christ in the world...finding them vulnerable in the occupations of life.*<sup>982</sup> Yet, the members of the Church can be victorious in many ways, through bravery,<sup>983</sup> *constancy and steadfastness in doing good,*<sup>984</sup> lowliness of mind,<sup>985</sup> virtue,<sup>986</sup> by the genuine love of Christ,<sup>987</sup> and by having a heavenly orientation.

Andrew frequently contrasts an earthly mindset with a heavenly mentality. Those who think in an *earthly manner* “breathe dirt” instead of Christ, *the Myrrh which was emptied out for us.*<sup>988</sup> Those who have *hearts dwelling entirely on the earth* will be deceived by the Antichrist.<sup>989</sup>

*“Woe to those” who dwell on the “earth”<sup>990</sup> that is, to those who do not have “(citizenship) in heaven,”<sup>991</sup> but have their citizenship on earth. For many of them on the earth are victorious over the enemy and will be victorious.... Wherefore, it is necessary to deplore those who have their “minds on earthly things”<sup>992</sup> and who are tossed by the waves in the sea of life here.<sup>993</sup>*

Difficulties in this earthly life are nothing but opportunities for those with a heavenly

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<sup>981</sup> Chp. 35, Text 134, Comm. 138.

<sup>982</sup> Chp. 35, Text 134-5, Comm. 138.

<sup>983</sup> Chp. 20, Text 82, Comm. 95.

<sup>984</sup> Chp. 50, Text 173, Comm. 168.

<sup>985</sup> Chp. 35, Text 134, Comm. 138.

<sup>986</sup> Chp. 45, Text 160, Comm. 158.

<sup>987</sup> Chp. 35, Text 135, Comm. 138.

<sup>988</sup> Chp. 25, Text 95, Comm. 106.

<sup>989</sup> Chp. 37, Text 142, Comm. 145.

<sup>990</sup> Rev. 12:12.

<sup>991</sup> Phil. 3:20.

<sup>992</sup> Phil. 3:19.

<sup>993</sup> Chp. 34, Text 132, Comm. 136.

mindset. *For those who have "citizenship in heaven"*<sup>994</sup> *difficulties become the starting point of unfading crowns and trophies.*<sup>995</sup> We must be vigilant and prepared for the end

*wherefore, we are commanded "to be watchful and gird our loins and to have burning lamps"*<sup>996</sup> *in the way of life according to God, and giving light to our neighbors*<sup>997</sup> *let us unceasingly supplicate God with a contrite heart to "rescue us from all who persecute us,"*<sup>998</sup> *lest having been defeated by them they will take possession of our souls, and will seize them unprepared as if there were "none redeemed and none saved,"*<sup>999</sup> *lest by chains of base and earthen affairs the soul of each has been entangled....*<sup>1000</sup>

#### 6.6.4 The Purpose of Afflictions

In accordance with Andrew's view of the purpose of life and his view of synergy, afflictions play a positive role for both the sinners and those who are actively struggling to be saved. Christ even accepted his own affliction for our benefit:

*[H]e will exhort us not only through words, but also through deeds and the affecting of sufferings. For it does not suffice for him only to use good and evil for encouragement or discouragement and after this either for punishment and honor of those deserving glory or punishment. He did not even refuse to go through the Passion for our sakes, so that he neither destroyed the free exercise of our own power (of choice) nor did he appear to overlook the cure and correction for our sakes.*<sup>1001</sup>

Since God loves humanity and yet respects human free will, he uses afflictions to prompt repentance. Just as a bit and bridle give a horse direction, *God who loves humanity,*

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<sup>994</sup> Phil. 3:20.

<sup>995</sup> *Chp. 25, Text 95, Comm. 106.*

<sup>996</sup> Luke 12:35.

<sup>997</sup> Matt. 5:16.

<sup>998</sup> Ps. 7:1.

<sup>999</sup> Ps. 7:2.

<sup>1000</sup> *Chp. 68, Text 256, Comm. 234.*

<sup>1001</sup> *Chp. 66, Text 237, Comm. 218.*



*compels the jaws of those who do not approach him in order that they might know repentance.*<sup>1002</sup> Andrew frequently observes and also notes that despite the encouragement from God, usually the afflicted sinners described in Revelation do not repent, *just as even now it is possible to see many unwilling (to repent), blaming the Divine Goodness for the unspeakable misfortunes encircling us by barbarian hands.*<sup>1003</sup> Rather than repent, often the sinners curse God instead. *But not even after this (do) they turn towards repentance, but toward blasphemy.*<sup>1004</sup> Andrew compares such individuals to Pharaoh in Exodus, and in fact he concludes that these sinners are worse than Pharaoh. *When the plagues were sent by God at least he was more pliant, confessing his own impiety, and they blaspheme during punishment*<sup>1005</sup> Salvation remains a matter of choice, with humans making a choice and God also choosing to do as he promised. *Just as the power of God saves those well-pleasing to him, in the same manner (it) also punishes those unrepentantly sinning against Him.*<sup>1006</sup>

The torment can even be in the conscience.<sup>1007</sup> However, Andrew generally does not allegorize the punishments, unlike Oikoumenios. Punishments will be both physical and spiritual for the reprimand and improvement of the soul.<sup>1008</sup>

*[S]inners and transgressors are very much tormented both here and in the future, or on account of the soul and body from which the deed (done) was common to both of them and against which the punishments will be.*<sup>1009</sup>

The afflictions are beneficial for all, although not everyone will recognize that. Sinners who avoid sufferings *will delight at escaping from the afflictions which are brought for reform*, not recognizing that God has sent them for their improvement *so that even if in*

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<sup>1002</sup> Chp. 49, Text 169, Comm. 165.

<sup>1003</sup> Chp. 49, Text 169, Comm. 165.

<sup>1004</sup> Chp. 50, Text 170, Comm. 166.

<sup>1005</sup> Chp. 52, Text 180, Comm. 172.

<sup>1006</sup> Chp. 55, Text 196, Comm. 184.

<sup>1007</sup> Chp. 55, Text 195, Comm. 184.

<sup>1008</sup> Chp. 46, Text 164-5, Comm. 162, and Chp. 49, Text 169, Comm. 165.

<sup>1009</sup> Chp. 55, Text 195, Comm. 184.

*this manner, by necessity, they might return to the straight road, from which, being deceived, they had strayed.*<sup>1010</sup>

Andrew contrasts the disposition of unreformed sinners with the attitude expected of the faithful who ought to recognize sufferings as spiritually beneficial:

*But we must pray to the Lord, saying: "It is good for me that you humbled me that I might learn your statutes"<sup>1011</sup>....For we are judged by you, the Master who loves mankind, "we are chastened in order that we may not be condemned along with the world"<sup>1012</sup> but with a few afflictions we might escape eternal punishment.<sup>1013</sup>*

Elsewhere he advises his readers to judge themselves and to recognize that afflictions are for their benefit, thereby avoiding the judgment of God:

*Therefore, if we do not wish to be judged we must examine ourselves, according to the divine Apostle – "for if we judge ourselves, we will not be judged"<sup>1014</sup> – judging ourselves, corrected by the Lord, thankfully receiving the pains which are brought (upon us), just as we see the grateful ones among the sick in body bearing with patience the surgery and cauterization by the doctors because of their willingness to be healed.<sup>1015</sup>*

At times, Andrew seems to suggest that the righteous will not suffer the punishing plagues. Three times he quotes the verse, *The Lord will not allow the rod of the sinners to be upon them.*<sup>1016</sup> They will not suffer the chastisements of the "harvest" and possibly the trials at the end times will be shortened for their sakes. But since even creation suffers and is adversely affected by the plagues, the righteous will also encounter difficulties and sufferings which they are expected to endure and from which they too can benefit, *some being*

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<sup>1010</sup> *Chp. 30, Text 116, Comm. 122.*

<sup>1011</sup> Ps. 119:71.

<sup>1012</sup> 1 Cor. 11:32.

<sup>1013</sup> *Chp. 30, Text 116, Comm. 122-23.*

<sup>1014</sup> 1 Cor. 11:31.

<sup>1015</sup> *Chp. 24, Text 93-4, Comm. 105.*

<sup>1016</sup> Ps. 125:3. *Chp. 44, Text 158, Comm. 157; Chp. 50, Text 172, Comm. 167; Chp. 58, Text 210, Comm. 195.*

*tormented on account of sin, others endure these difficulties patiently in a test of virtue.*<sup>1017</sup>  
Those who are blameless will acquire *endurance in sufferings.*<sup>1018</sup>

### 6.6.5 Eternal Punishment

Punishment will be eternal but even if the sinners for whom the plagues were intended to prompt repentance do not repent, they will nonetheless benefit from them by suffering a little less in the next life because they suffered somewhat in this one, *towards a moderation, at any rate, of the payment in full by those who had sinned themselves.*<sup>1019</sup> Elsewhere Andrew also suggests that punishment here might mean a *milder punishment in the future because they are being afflicted in part here,*<sup>1020</sup> but he never retreats from his position that the final punishment is eternal.<sup>1021</sup>

A purgatorial type of situation is out of the question for Andrew, who rejects the analogy which some made to gold, as discussed above. He repeats their argument that just as gold is purified by fire, *how much more so (would God spare) these if He knew they put aside the filth in the fire, in accordance with the likeness gold, which some have understood as a paradigm in this situation?*<sup>1022</sup> The analogy is to be rejected because gold has impurities by its nature, but we *reason-endowed* human beings *intentionally* add the filth to our souls.<sup>1023</sup> Since it has been added by the person, it ought to be removed by him. The gold has an excuse, but we do not. There will be no point in having regrets later; it will be too late. In this life we have been given the help of the Holy Spirit to avoid future eternal punishment, but it will not be available to help us later. *For it is necessary that those who have been defeated*

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<sup>1017</sup> Chp. 52, Text 179, Comm. 172.

<sup>1018</sup> Chp. 55, Text 194, Comm. 184.

<sup>1019</sup> Chp. 45, Text 163, Comm. 161. *Since we are taught by the words in the gospels that the spiritual powers rejoice and celebrate over those who return from repentance to salvation, but grieve over those who turn aside from the straight path, and that they give thanks to God for the punishment of those transgressing against the divine commandments, so that they might make partial payment of their debts...* Chp. 48, Text 167, Comm. 164.

<sup>1020</sup> Chp. 55, Text 200, Comm. 187, also Chp. 27, Text 102, Comm. 112.

<sup>1021</sup> Chp. 50, Text 170-1, Comm. 166; Chp. 56, Text 203, Comm. 189; Chp. 58, Text 210, Comm. 195.

<sup>1022</sup> Chp. 50, Text 171, Comm. 166-67.

<sup>1023</sup> Chp. 50, Text 172, Comm. 167.

*feel regret for these things and lament in vain, ... Moreover, the help of the Holy Spirit will no more accompany those who have been condemned as it does now.*<sup>1024</sup>

There is certainly no hope for the devil who, knowing full well his impending punishment, not only has refused to cease his evil activity but has intensified it since the coming of Christ. Andrew directly refutes those who insist that eternal punishment will be abolished. It is impossible:

*It had been said by the blessed Justin the martyr (that) after the coming of Christ and the decree against him (to send him) to Gehenna, the devil is to become a greater blasphemer even (to the extent that) he had never before so shamelessly blasphemed God.<sup>1025</sup> ... And if the expectation of punishment makes him even more evil, then how if being punished, either himself or his workers, how are they to be cleansed of the filth of sin in Gehenna through the fire? Since they have not attained this (the Devil's ceasing from wickedness), how will they have an end of the punishment against those who have vain thoughts?*<sup>1026</sup>

Andrew rejects the Origenist position that God will save everyone. God is good but he is also righteous, therefore not all will be saved. Andrew compares this to athletic competitions sponsored by kings. Even earthly kings who host athletic contests know that not all will be crowned victors, but the contest is nonetheless open to all.

*Wherefore, those who set the goodness, foreknowledge and power of God as an impediment to eternal punishment, let them also attach righteousness to these (qualities), as being distributive to each of them according to what is due, and in no way will they see an overturning of the divine sentence.*<sup>1027</sup>

God's express promise to punish the wicked only reinforces the truth that those who will be punished deserve it because they "volunteered" for punishment, having freely chosen to do evil and repeatedly rejecting the compassion and forgiveness offered by God.

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<sup>1024</sup> Chp. 50, Text 172, Comm. 167.

<sup>1025</sup> This quotation of Justin is taken from his lost writings. This exact statement is also quoted by Irenaeus in *Against Heresies* 5.26.2 and by Eusebius of Caesarea in *Ecclesiastical History* 4.18.9.

<sup>1026</sup> Chp. 34, Text 131, Comm. 135.

<sup>1027</sup> Chp. 50, Text 172, Comm. 167.

*But I myself, hearing (of) eternal punishments, I cannot disbelieve what has been declared. Knowing his readiness toward compassion and goodness, I surmise that in no way would he either threaten or strike those worthy with endless condemnation if he knew that condemned ones had already repented and hated the evil which they freely chose to commit. For it is not through necessity, but voluntarily that they are punished.<sup>1028</sup>*

#### 6.6.6 The Love of God: Φιλανθρωπία

Despite his assertion that punishment is eternal, Andrew's overriding message is about the love of God. The frequency with which he refers to the love of God for humanity is perhaps the most striking characteristic of his commentary and gives the commentary a positive tone overall and a quality of hope and encouragement. He refers to the love of God in many ways and many times. In no fewer than fifteen instances he uses the word *φιλανθρωπία*,<sup>1029</sup> "love for humanity," to describe God, a word frequently found in the prayers of the Eastern tradition. The passage below is typical of the affirmative tone of the commentary, both toward the love of God and for human self-determination.

*In every way, God, who thirsts for our salvation, exhorts us for the inheritance of his blessings through both goodness and misfortunes, by leading us to see the splendor of the heavenly Jerusalem and the dark and grievous gloom of the Gehenna of fire. So that either by yearning for eternal glory or by fear of endless shame, since there is (still) time, we will work to effect the good, along with renouncing all the rest...let us not receive the grace of God in vain but let us make his benefits productive through repentance and showing good deeds that we might attain the promised blessings in Christ himself...<sup>1030</sup>*

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<sup>1028</sup> *Chp. 50, Text 171, Comm. 166.*

<sup>1029</sup> *φιλανθρωπία*, literally, "the love for humankind," is found either as a noun or as an adjective describing God's disposition toward humans in *Chp. 2, Text 20, Comm. 24; Chp. 3, Text 27, Comm. 33; Chp. 5, Text 30, Comm. 37; Chp. 9, Text 44, Comm. 53; Chp. 9, Text 46, Comm. 55; Chp. 15, Text 64, Comm. 75 and 76; Chp. 18, Text 72, Comm. 84 (twice); Chp. 21, Text 89, Comm. 101; Chp. 45, Text 163, Comm. 161; Chp. 49, Text 169, Comm. 165; Chp. 54, Text 191, Comm. 182; Chp. 55, Text 195, Comm. 184; Chp. 66, Text 236, Comm. 217.* Twice Andrew uses *φιλανθρωπία* to describe the love of angels for human beings in *Chp. 25, Text 95, Comm. 106 and Chp. 72, Text 264, Comm. 241.*

<sup>1030</sup> *Chp. 66, Text 236-7, Comm. 218-19.*

## Chapter 7

### Posterity and Contributions of Andrew of Caesarea

#### 7.1 Andrew's Posterity: Subsequent Commentaries

##### 7.1.1 Arethas of Caesarea

In the late 9<sup>th</sup> or early 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, Arethas, the episcopal successor of Andrew to the very same see of Caesarea, Cappadocia, also wrote a commentary on Revelation.<sup>1031</sup> Arethas depended heavily on Andrew, often quoting him word for word, and in other sections paraphrasing Andrew rather than literally reproducing the passage.<sup>1032</sup> In the passages in which Arethas copies Andrew word for word, Schmid observes that one can easily recognize the text type of the Andreas manuscripts which Arethas used.<sup>1033</sup> The commentary of Arethas is the second most significant commentary on the Apocalypse in the Greek tradition after that of Andrew.

##### 7.1.2 Maximos the Peloponnesian

In the early 17th century, Maximos the Peloponnesian created Greek translations of various writings for use by the average laymen and priests in the ἀπλή γλῶσσα (plain language), or vernacular Greek. The educated classes did not need translations of the ancient authorities, but most spiritual writings were inaccessible to the ordinary person. Maximos' translations included the writings of Basil, miscellaneous sermons, a medical encyclopedia, the Apocalypse of John and the Psalter.<sup>1034</sup> Along with his translation of the Apocalypse he

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<sup>1031</sup> Συλλογή ἐξηγήσεως ἐκ διαφόρων ἁγίων ἀνδρῶν, or according to another manuscript Ἐκ τῶν Ἀνδρέα ...πεπονημένων σύνοψις σχολικὴ, παρατεθεισα ὑπὸ Ἀρέθα. Swete, cxcī. Arethas is printed in Migne, P.G. 106:487-806. See also Josef Schmid, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypsetextes I. Der Apokalypse-text des Arethas von Kaisareia und einiger anderer jüngerer Gruppen. Texte und Forschungen zur byzantinisch-neugriechischen Philologie*. Num. 27 (Athens: Verlag der Byzantinisch-neugriechischen Jahrbücher, 1936).

<sup>1032</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 97.

<sup>1033</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 97.

<sup>1034</sup> See Ernest Cadman Colwell and H.R. Willoughby, *The Elizabeth Day McCormick Apocalypse*, (2 vols.) vol. I, *A Greek Corpus of Revelation Iconography*, by H.R. Willoughby, and vol. II, *History and Text*, by Ernest Cadman Colwell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), 2:4.

created an accompanying commentary. Maximos began the commentary as a combination of the best of Andrew and Arethas, but by the time he reached middle of his exposition he primarily relied on Andrew and only occasionally included additional points taken from Arethas.<sup>1035</sup>

### 7.1.3 Anthimos of Jerusalem

Anthimos of Jerusalem, who served as Patriarch of Jerusalem from 1788-1808, also wrote a commentary on the Apocalypse, the inscription of which indicates its dependence on Andrew and Arethas: Ἑρμηνεία ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἱεροσολύμων Ἀνθίμου συλλεγεῖσα παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων Ἀρέθα καὶ Ἀνδρέου εἰς τὴν ἱερὰν Ἀποκάλυψιν τοῦ ἁγίου ἐνδόξου καὶ πανευφήμου ἀποστόλου καὶ εὐαγγελιστοῦ Ἰωάννου.<sup>1036</sup>

## 7.2 Andrew's Posterity: Translations of the Commentary

Andrew's commentary was translated into four ancient languages: Latin, Armenian, Old Slavonic and Georgian. It may have been translated into Latin by the 12<sup>th</sup> century, as we will see below in the description of a discovery of the commentary in a Latin monastery by the Armenian bishop, Nerses. But what is more remarkable is that Andrew's commentary is credited with the eventual acceptance of Revelation into the New Testament canon of the Churches of Armenia, Georgia and Russia. This dissertation is the first translation of the complete commentary into any modern language.

### 7.2.1 The Armenian Translation

Schmid recounts how the Andreas commentary was translated into Armenian on the impetus of the famous Armenian figure, Nerses of Lampron, Archbishop of Tarsus (d. 1198),

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<sup>1035</sup> Elizabeth Day McCormick *Apocalypse*, II:120 "Maximos began his work with the intention of blending the best of Andreas and Arethas and increasing the scriptural element; that blending decreased as the work progressed, with the result that the dominant source for most of the commentary is that of Andreas." McCormick *Apocalypse*, 2:42. The same observations are made by Schmid who discusses the content and manuscripts of Maximos in *Einleitung*, 97-8. The Maximos commentary survives in four manuscripts.

<sup>1036</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 99.

and that the commentary impacted the New Testament canon for the Armenians.<sup>1037</sup> Although Armenian translations of the Apocalypse existed prior to the time of Nerses, Revelation was not widely accepted as Scripture. Nerses' translation of the Andreas commentary bolstered Revelation's acceptance among the Armenians and both Revelation and the commentary are preserved in many manuscripts.<sup>1038</sup>

The Nerses text includes a foreword which recounts the reception of the commentary by an Armenian synod held in Constantinople under "Thetalios" of Constantinople.<sup>1039</sup> The date of the synod is not clear, nor the precise participants, nor the identity of "Thetalios." Nonetheless, the statement of Nerses is quite interesting. He begins the foreword by stating: "On the demand of the general synod held in the God-Preserved city of Constantinople, the Revelation of John was recognized as canonical, but also the investigation about it which happened through the bishops of Caesarea." Nerses then quotes the words of Thetalios in support of Revelation:

This writing of the Revelation of John has been received among the other apostolic writings which the Church possesses on the basis of the testing and determining of my brothers and holy-collaborating bishops. And it is without mistake and is to be accepted because it contains the wisdom of God which brings the greatest help or usefulness to those who consider it with the eyes of the spirit as a true gift of the Holy Spirit which one may not disregard. It is however, also not un-genuine, as it was supposed by some wicked men. Much more, it is really by the Son of Thunder, that is St. John, because if we believe the words of Athanasius of Alexandria, the great patriarch....<sup>1040</sup>

Thetalios then lists several other patristic witnesses and the writings in which they use the Apocalypse or in which they confirm it, including Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory the Theologian, Cyril of Alexandria, Hippolytus, even though, "We do not want to make a lot of words, although we have still other witnesses that agree with them among the holy Fathers

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<sup>1037</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 99.

<sup>1038</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 100, footnote 1. The groundbreaking work in the area of the Armenian text of Revelation was done by Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare. See F.C. Conybeare, *The Armenian Version of Revelation and Cyril of Alexandria's Scholia* (London: Text and Translation Society, 1907).

<sup>1039</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 102. Footnote 2 states that the name "Thetalios" is found in patristic certifications in an Armenian list of translations published in Constantinople in 1717 of the works of Cyril of Alexandria and that Thetalios is also mentioned in a letter by Nerses.

<sup>1040</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 102. I am indebted to John Fendrick for the translation of these first two Nerses quotations.



who confirm that this Revelation is by the Evangelist John” including Irenaeus and others before him, and even the “thrice-ailing Origen.”<sup>1041</sup> Thetlios then gives his rationale for accepting Revelation:

If we approach this Revelation with mistrust then we despise the saints who cleansed the world of bad schisms, and they have made a testimony about it. For if these are seen to be rejected by us then also those who have accepted it would have to be rejected. Far be it to think this!....Therefore, I also, the poor Thetlios and the holy synod that was with me, have accepted this Apocalypse into the catholic Church with honor as also a true revelation, but that also the examination of the explanation which was composed by Andreas the archbishop of Caesarea was accepted by this synod, not out of himself but on the foundation of the Fathers he made the construction of his words and whose gift of the Spirit he has taken as his guide and witness in his investigations. Therefore this investigation, which the bishop of Caesarea has made concerning the Revelation, has been taken into our catholic Church on the conclusion and witnessing of the general synod.<sup>1042</sup>

As Nerses’ foreword continues, it reveals that he did not merely translate Andrew’s commentary, but he considerably reworked it. The title given in the foreword is: “The Apocalypse of the Evangelist John, a short explanation of our holy father Andrew, blessed Bishop of Caesarea, Cappadocia, and with him Arethas, bishop of the same city.”<sup>1043</sup> Schmid explains how the translated portions are a translation of the Andreas commentary, but also notes places where Nerses offered his own interpretation in addition.<sup>1044</sup> Although the title mentions Arethas, not a trace of Arethas is to be found in the commentary, therefore, Schmid concludes that the inclusion of the name of Arethas in the title does not go back to Nerses himself.<sup>1045</sup>

An epilogue written by Nerses offers even more information about the circumstances of his discovery of the commentary:

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<sup>1041</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 103.

<sup>1042</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 103-4.

<sup>1043</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 104.

<sup>1044</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 109-110. Robert Thomson discusses these features in greater detail in his recent translation and publication of the Nerses commentary.

<sup>1045</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 110.

I, Nerses, poor in Christ and slothful among the lovers of study, offspring of the last and miserable time, on the reading of the Revelation of John was distressed at not knowing the solution to its amazing words. Hunting here and there for a commentary on the same in our own language, I did not find any. Afterwards I had occasion to visit the great Antioch; and as I was going around the monasteries of the Romans and Franks which were there, this desire burned in my mind. After investigation, I found among the books of the famous monastery of Saint Paul in that city the commentary on Revelation in the Lombard language, in the same script which the Franks use, composed by two authors.<sup>1046</sup> Desiring to translate it, I found no one who could turn it from that language into Armenian. Then, going out of the city to the holy mountain on the north side, in one of the monasteries of the Romans which is called Bet'ias, I found locked up with one of the reclusive monks called Basil what I desired in the Greek language and script, well written and elegant, which had belonged to Athanasios, patriarch of that city. I requested it with entreaties from that well-disposed man, and on receiving it hastened with the book to the patriarchal throne, to my lord Catholicos, the saintly Grigorios. When he was informed of this he greatly rejoiced, and ordered it to be translated by the metropolitan of Hierapolis, Konstandeay, who was staying there under the auspices of the patriarch. With the help of God and of the holy Lord [Grigorios] we began – he to translate and I to write; and we dedicated this wonderful and divine commentary on Revelation to the studious children of the Armenian church....This commentary to the divine Revelation was translated in 628 [1179] of the Armenian era...But it was corrected from the copy in literary style...by the hand of the humble bishop of that metropolis Tarsus, the miserable Nerses, through the grace and mercy of Christ, who is blessed for ever. Amen.<sup>1047</sup>

### 7.2.2 The Georgian Translation

Just as in the case of the Armenians, who did not accept Revelation into the canon until the time of Nerses of Lampron and his production of the Andreas commentary in Armenian, the Apocalypse was similarly excluded from the canon of the Georgian Church until the translation of the text and the commentary by Andrew into the Georgian language by St. Euthymios (Ekwthime),<sup>1048</sup> one of the founders of the Georgian monastery Iwiron on

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<sup>1046</sup> Thomson explains that Nerses had found a copy of Arethas' revision of Andrew's commentary, presumably in Italian. But the Greek copy which Nerses eventually found was the commentary of Andrew. Thomson, 17, fn 80. Note that Nerses refers to the Greek monastery as "Roman." See *Commentary*, page 85, fn 369.

<sup>1047</sup> Translation by Thomson, *Nerses of Lambron Commentary*, 17-19. The story is also told by Schmid. *Einleitung*, 107-9.

<sup>1048</sup> D. M. Lang "Recent Work on the Georgian New Testament." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1. (1957), 82-93, 86.

Mt. Athos (d. 1028). Euthymios is also credited with revising the old Georgian gospel text according to Greek manuscripts and completing the Georgian New Testament.<sup>1049</sup>

Euthymios used a manuscript with the Andreas commentary as the basis for his translation of Revelation and translated both of them into Georgian.<sup>1050</sup> This translation is preserved in several manuscripts and the two oldest were probably copied out of the original itself, according to Schmid.<sup>1051</sup> Euthymios' work on the Book of Revelation would have been completed sometime before 987, which is the date of the earliest known Georgian manuscript of the Apocalypse.<sup>1052</sup> According to Robert Blake, the Apocalypse, "strictly speaking, never became canonical among the Georgians."<sup>1053</sup>

The oldest Georgian copies, as old as the oldest Greek copies, may preserve a form of the commentary no longer extant in the Greek tradition. J. Neville Birdsall noted that the Georgian version gave the entire text of Revelation first, followed by a lemmatized version of the commentary, such as the type with which we are familiar in the Greek manuscripts. None of the Greek manuscripts in existence have a prefaced continuous text of Revelation. They only present the text of Revelation in the lemmatized form section by section, just before Andrew's comments. Birdsall believes that the Georgian tradition preserves an earlier Greek form of the commentary, which must have been in front of Euthymios when he translated the commentary. This is entirely possible since the text of Revelation is already preserved in the lemmata. It is hardly surprising that later copyists would see the prefixed continuous text as superfluous and unnecessary and would not make copies which included the prefixed text.<sup>1054</sup>

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<sup>1049</sup> Metzger, *Canon of the New Testament*, 224.

<sup>1050</sup> Euthymios' work is not an actual translation but an abbreviated translation or paraphrase of Andrew. See J. Neville Birdsall, "'Revelation' by Euthymus the Athonite," *Beda Kartlisa* 41 (1983) 96-101, 99.

<sup>1051</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 113.

<sup>1052</sup> Metzger, *Canon of the New Testament*, 224.

<sup>1053</sup> "The Caesarean Text of the Gospel of Mark," *Harvard Theological Review* 21 [1928] 287. Metzger, *Canon of the New Testament*, 224, fn. 37. Blake did not explain what he meant by the comment, but if by "canonical" Blake meant "read during Church services," the same can be said of the status of Revelation for all of the Orthodox Churches.

<sup>1054</sup> Birdsall, 98.

### 7.2.3 The Slavonic Translation

The impact of the acceptance of Revelation in the Slavic tradition can be seen by the fact that the oldest extant Slavic manuscript of Revelation contains a translation of Andrew's commentary in a condensed version.<sup>1055</sup>

The Church Slavonic translation of the Andreas commentary is available in two printed editions, the latter of which is a literal copy of the older one. The heading of the older edition reads:

Our holy father Andreas, Archbishop of Caesarea, Cappadocia's Interpretation of the Apocalypse of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist of Christ, John the Theologian, from the Greek into the Slavic language has been translated and ordered through the will and the effort and with the blessing of the most worthy and orthodox illustrious father Cyril Zacharais Kopistenskij, through God's grace, Archimandrite of the Cave Monastery in Kiev. Printed for the first time and issued in the Holy Great Cave Monastery at Kiev, of the Stavropege of the holy Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, in the year of the creation of the world 7133, since the appearance of the Word of God 1625 in the 9<sup>th</sup> Indiction.<sup>1056</sup>

The second edition, dated 1768, contains the commentary of Andrew along with homilies by John Chrysostom.<sup>1057</sup> The first forward is dedicated to the bishop Gregory Dolmat, as was the foreword in the first edition, but a second foreword found in the second edition is dedicated to the reader.<sup>1058</sup> This second foreword discusses the content, the author and the value of the Apocalypse as well as the occasion for the publication of the translation. It presents different views of the Fathers on the authorship of the Apocalypse, and also

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<sup>1055</sup> *The Nikol'skij Apocalypse Codex*, dated mid-thirteenth century. To create the abbreviated version many of the patristic quotations were removed as well as the motivational comments and doxologies at the end of each of Andrew's sections. The commentary and text of Revelation follow Andrew's divisions into twenty four main sections and seventy two smaller chapters. Thomas Hilary Oller, "*The Nikol'skij Apocalypse Codex and its Place in the Textual History of Medieval Slavic Apocalypse Manuscripts*," (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1993.)

<sup>1056</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 114. Translation by John Fendrick.

<sup>1057</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 115.

<sup>1058</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 116.

mentions the opinion that Revelation was written by the heretic Cerinthus. The forward concludes:

The views of those explainers are acceptable to the Church, which holds fast to the authorship of the apostle John. One of these is Andreas of Caesarea. The book was printed so that it might work with the homilies of the blessed John Chrysostom through its content for the Orthodox Church. It is useful then for every Orthodox Christian.<sup>1059</sup>

### 7.3 Andrew's Posterity: Artistic Depictions of the Apocalypse

Andrew's commentary was so influential that it even impacted an unexpected arena: the artistic representations of the Apocalypse. The *Elizabeth Day McCormick Apocalypse* is an illustrated 17<sup>th</sup> century manuscript of the commentary by Maximos the Peloponnesian which Maximos wrote to accompany his translation of the Apocalypse in the Greek vernacular.

The manuscript contains the most extensive set of Greek images of Revelation, sixty-nine miniature scenes in all. Most titles of the scenes are taken from the chapter headings of Andrew's commentary.<sup>1060</sup>

Russian illustrated Apocalypses also reflect influence from the Andreas commentary. The Russian series of scenes were planned and organized to employ the same chapter headings as those of Andrew and to illustrate those headings and divisions.<sup>1061</sup> For almost every one of the McCormick miniatures, a thematic counterpart exists in the Russian Apocalypse manuscripts.<sup>1062</sup>

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<sup>1059</sup> Schmid, *Einleitung*, 116. Translation by John Fendrick.

<sup>1060</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse*, II:143-4.

<sup>1061</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse* I:160-161.

<sup>1062</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse*, I:161, citing F.I. Buslaev, *The Russian Illustrated Apocalypse* (in Russian, Moscow, 1884), and *An Apocalypse with Three Exegeses*, (Old Believers Printing Shop, Moscow, 1910).

## 7.4 Andrew's Contributions

### 7.4.1 Preservation of the Greek Apocalypse Interpretive Tradition

Andrew's broad outlook and inclusive style has resulted in a commentary which preserved the entire Eastern tradition of Apocalypse interpretation. He reported opinions with which he did not agree, including the classic justification given for millennialism.<sup>1063</sup> Had Oikoumenios' commentary not survived, Andrew would have preserved many of Oikoumenios' opinions as well. Andrew preserves many anonymous opinions and traditional views, some of which would have otherwise been entirely lost.<sup>1064</sup> Andrew preserved a fragment of Papias regarding the fall of some of the angels,<sup>1065</sup> and other patristic comments and traditions regarding the end times, the Antichrist, etc.<sup>1066</sup>

### 7.4.2 Preservation of Witness to Apostolic Authorship of Revelation

But more importantly, Andrew preserves Papias as the earliest witness to the apostolic authorship of the Apocalypse, since Andrew cites Papias as one of the authorities who accepted the Johannine authorship of Revelation.<sup>1067</sup> Particularly noteworthy about the list of authorities Andrew provides for the "trustworthiness" of Revelation – Gregory the Theologian, Cyril (of Alexandria), Papias, Irenaeus, Methodios and Hippolytus – is that the list is not a list of those who accepted the book as Scripture, but those who specifically state that the book was composed by John the Apostle and Evangelist. The inclusion of Gregory the Theologian is at first surprising because Gregory does not include the Apocalypse in his canon, and only cites Revelation on a couple of occasions, something which Andrew must have known. Nonetheless, Gregory is included among those who attest to the trustworthiness of the book, (trustworthy because it is apostolic), because in one of his rare references to

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<sup>1063</sup> *Chp. 63, Text 222, Comm. 206.*

<sup>1064</sup> See chapter 5.7.2, which lists eighteen unidentified sources or traditional opinions preserved by Andrew.

<sup>1065</sup> *Chp. 34, Text 129-130, Comm. 134.*

<sup>1066</sup> For Andrew's preservation of Hippolytus traditions, see Pierre Prigent and Ralph Stehly, "Les fragments du De Apocalypsi d'Hippolyte," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 29 (1973) 315-333, 315-16.

<sup>1067</sup> *Prologue, Text 10, Comm. 11.*

Revelation he mentions John as the author. It is in this context that the inclusion of Papias on the list is especially important, since Papias' work *Exposition of Dominical Oracles*, which contained many early and apostolic traditions, is no longer extant. Yet, Andrew had a copy of it, and because Andrew cites Papias as supporting Johannine authorship, through Andrew we have the earliest attestation of apostolic authorship of Revelation.<sup>1068</sup>

### 7.4.3 Facilitation of Acceptance of Revelation into the Canon

The greatest contribution which Andrew made was to pave the way for the unanimous acceptance of Revelation into the Eastern canon. Even centuries after Andrew's commentary was penned, the Book of Revelation remained largely unaccepted in the East. Nikephoros, the Patriarch of Constantinople (d. 829) did not list it among the canonical books of the New Testament.<sup>1069</sup> The first evidence that the tide had finally turned in favor of the Apocalypse comes as a notation by the Byzantine historian Nikephoros Kallistos in the fourteenth century.<sup>1070</sup> Renewed interest in the Apocalypse was evident in Orthodox circles after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the subjugation of Eastern Christians under Ottoman Turkish rule. "[O]nce the Greeks under Turkish rule found themselves in a social and political position comparable to that of the early Christians under Roman rule, their attitude toward the Revelation of John changed entirely. Late-Greek interest in the Christian Apocalypse suddenly became as keen and vivacious as it had earlier been dull."<sup>1071</sup> The number of Apocalypse manuscripts sharply increased during this period, "followed by vernacular translations of the Revelation of John into the modern Greek of the times," beginning with the commentary of Maximos the Peloponnesian.<sup>1072</sup>

Certainly, the experience of persecution and martyrdom lived by Greek Orthodox Christians under Turkish rule stimulated interest in the Apocalypse. But that interest alone

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<sup>1068</sup> This is supported by a Papias fragment prefixed to a manuscript on the gospel of John, which Benjamin Bacon believed to have been originally intended for Revelation, "Adhuc in Corpore Constituto" *Harvard Theological Review* 23 (1930) 305-307. His arguments are very persuasive.

<sup>1069</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse*, I:93.

<sup>1070</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse*, I:93, citing Nikephorus Kallistos, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.45.

<sup>1071</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse*, II:143.

<sup>1072</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse*, II:143.

may not have been enough to result in unquestioned acceptance of Revelation as Scripture were it not for the commentary of Andrew. It is questionable whether historical circumstances alone would have propelled the Apocalypse, long viewed with suspicion, indisputably into the New Testament canon without support by a patristic authority. Andrew made the Book of Revelation acceptable by providing a sober, sound and patristic interpretation, entirely orthodox in doctrine, spirituality and style, which led to its ultimate acceptance.

## 7.5 The Pre-Eminence and Importance of Andrew's Commentary

Hoskier, who brought Oikoumenios' commentary to light and published it in a massive work, believed Oikoumenios' contribution to be highly significant, if for no other reason than its rarity. Oikoumenios, as the first Greek author of a commentary on Revelation, is unquestionably significant. Hoskier simply dismissed Andrew's commentary as "terribly commonplace" and did not even consider the Andreas text-type of Revelation worthy of being catalogued.<sup>1073</sup> But Andrew's commentary is "commonplace" because it was popular. Recognized as a well done and effective exposition of a difficult book, it was copied and recopied. The commentary circulated along with the text of the Apocalypse in a large portion of the Greek Apocalypse manuscripts because it was useful, sensible, orderly, ecclesiastically and theologically sound, orthodox in thought as well as style. The dramatic disparity between the number of surviving manuscripts of Oikoumenios and Andrew – only one complete manuscript of Oikoumenios versus more than eighty-three of Andrew – is ample demonstration of the quality of Andrew's work and the esteem with which it was held in the Orthodox Church for centuries.

Andrew's commentary is thoughtful and academic, yet also spiritual and ecclesial in demeanor. Andrew exudes an air of episcopal dignity and demonstrates a commendable respect for the text. His division of the commentary into twenty four main sections, each

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<sup>1073</sup> Hoskier, *The Complete Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse*, 4. "[A]nyone who is at all familiar with Andreas, whose commentary is terribly commonplace, will soon accord to Oecumenius a superior position in these studies. Oecumenius, although most uneven in the value of his expositions, is always vigorous, and at times very interesting." *Ibid*, 4-5.



ending in a doxology, along with his emphasis on the spiritual lesson in a passage, gives the work the flavor of a series of sermons. Despite the serious and sober nature of the Book of Revelation and the many descriptions of disasters and punishments, the commentary succeeds in conveying a positive tone of hope and optimism. His emphasis is on the love of God for all humankind and his conviction that everyone is capable of choosing to be saved shines brilliantly. Ever mindful of his responsibilities as a pastor, he takes the opportunity to offer not only didactic but also paranelical comments aimed at the spiritual edification and improvement of the reader. At times he seems genuinely inspired by the text and in turn he inspires the reader.

No other Orthodox commentaries on the Apocalypse appeared after Arethas until the Ottoman Empire.<sup>1074</sup> It has rightly been noted that Andrew's work, for all practical purposes, was the last Greek patristic commentary, since Arethas was heavily dependent on Andrew, and Arethas is considered to be of distant secondary importance. Later commentaries consisted almost entirely of selections taken from Andrew with a few modifications and additions from Arethas.<sup>1075</sup>

We have established that in spite of the existence of an earlier complete commentary on the Book of Revelation by Oikoumenios, Andrew's commentary gained a pre-eminence in the East that remains unparalleled among any scripture commentaries on Revelation or any other commentary in the Eastern tradition, for that matter, since it is unrivaled in its impact and influence. No single commentary has so decisively impacted the interpretation and acceptance of any single of book of the Bible. In fact, no other ancient commentary on Revelation exists for the Orthodox Church. In time, Andrew's commentary was translated into Latin as well as Armenian, Georgian and Slavonic, and was considered responsible for the increased acceptance of Revelation and its eventual acceptance into the canon in those countries as well as its eventual acceptance into the canon of the Greek East. The importance of Andrew's commentary for the East cannot be overstated. Its popularity even influenced the manuscript tradition of the text of Revelation itself. At least one third of all existing

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<sup>1074</sup> Savvas Agourides, *Ἡ Ἀποκάλυψις τοῦ Ἰωάννου*, Ἑρμηνεία Καινῆς Διαθήκης series, vol.18 (Thessalonika: Pournaras Press, 1994), 60-65.

<sup>1075</sup> *McCormick Apocalypse*, 1:96.

manuscripts of Revelation contain Andrew's commentary.<sup>1076</sup> The large number of Andreas commentary manuscripts helped Schmid define the text of the Book of Revelation.

Andrew wrote his commentary to support the canonical acceptance of Revelation. Andrew wrote to provide an orthodox alternative to Oikoumenios' commentary, either motivated by his own concerns or by those of Makarios. He wrote because he believed that the lessons of Revelation were spiritually beneficial for the faithful and so that the Apocálypse would be read by them. Andrew not only accomplished these goals, but in fact he was far more successful than he could ever have imagined.

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<sup>1076</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, *Canon of the New Testament*, 217. According to Metzger, the Book of Revelation exists in 287 manuscripts and fragments. Of these, approximately 96 manuscripts contain the commentary of Andrew of Caesarea in its complete form or an abbreviated form.

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EUGENIA SCARVELIS CONSTANTINO

**ANDREW OF CAESAREA AND THE APOCALYPSE  
IN THE ANCIENT CHURCH OF THE EAST**

**Part 2:  
Translation of the Apocalypse Commentary  
of Andrew of Caesarea**

Thèse présentée  
à la Faculté des études supérieures de l'Université Laval  
dans le cadre du programme de doctorat en théologie  
pour l'obtention du grade de Philosophiae Doctor (Ph.D.)

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## FOREWORD TO THE SECOND VOLUME

This volume is the second part of the dissertation entitled, "Andrew of Caesarea and the Apocalypse in the Ancient Church of the East: Studies and Translation." Part 1 consisted of the thesis itself, "Studies on the Apocalypse Commentary of Andrew of Caesarea," which was an analysis of the commentary. Part 2, presented in this volume, "Translation of the Apocalypse Commentary of Andrew of Caesarea," is a translation based on the critical text of the commentary produced by Josef Schmid, *Der Apokalypse-Kommentar des Andreas von Kaisareia*, vol. 1 of *Studien zur Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypse-Textes*, 3 parts (München: Karl Zink Verlag, 1955-56).

## ABBREVIATIONS

ACW	Ancient Christian Writers series
ANF	Ante-Nicene Fathers series
<i>Barn.</i>	<i>Epistle of Barnabas</i>
<i>Cel. Hier.</i>	Pseudo-Dionysios, <i>The Celestial Hierarchy</i>
<i>Chp.</i>	Chapter. Numerical divisions created by Andrew for the commentary
<i>Chr. and Ant.</i>	Hippolytus, <i>On Christ and the Antichrist</i>
<i>Comm.</i>	Commentary. <i>Comm.</i> with a page number indicates the present translation
CWS	Classics of Western Spirituality series
De Groote	<i>Oecumenii Commentarius in Apocalypsin</i> , ed. Marc De Groote.
<i>Dial.</i>	Justin Martyr, <i>Dialogue with Trypho</i>
<i>E.H.</i>	Eusebius of Caesarea, <i>Ecclesiastical History</i> .
<i>Eccl. Hier.</i>	Pseudo-Dionysios, <i>The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	Epistle
fn	footnote
FC	The Fathers of the Church series
<i>Heres.</i>	Irenaeus, <i>Against Heresies</i>
<i>Hom.</i>	<i>Homily</i>
KJV	Bible, King James Version.
LF	Library of the Fathers series
<i>Marc.</i>	Tertullian, <i>Against Marcion</i>
<i>Morals</i>	Gregory the Great, <i>Morals on the Book of Job</i>
NIV	Bible, New International Version
NKJV	Bible, New King James Version
NPNF 1 <sup>st</sup>	A Select Library of the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, first series
NPNF 2 <sup>nd</sup>	A Select Library of the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, second series
<i>Oik.</i>	Oikoumenios, <i>Commentary on the Apocalypse</i>
<i>On Dan.</i>	Hippolytus, <i>Commentary On Daniel</i>
<i>Or.</i>	Oration
<i>Prin.</i>	Origen, <i>On First Principles</i>
RSV	Bible, Revised Standard Version
<i>Serm.</i>	<i>Sermon</i>
Suggit	<i>Oecumenius, Commentary on the Apocalypse</i> , translated by John Suggit.
<i>Symp.</i>	Methodios of Olympus, <i>The Symposium</i>
<i>Text</i>	Schmid, Josef, <i>Der Apokalypse-Kommentar des Andreas von Kaisareia, Studien zur Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypse-Textes</i>
<i>Vic.</i>	Victorinus, <i>Commentary on the Apocalypse</i> .
[27]	Square brackets enclosing a number in bold type indicate page numbers in Schmid's critical edition
[ ]	Square brackets enclose those words bracketed in the critical text by Schmid to indicate questionable text from a critical or textual perspective.
( )	Parentheses indicate words supplied by the translator for clarity. Parentheses also indicate the Septuagint number of a psalm.

[1]

Table of the Chapters of the Interpretation  
of the Apocalypse  
of Saint John the Apostle

Section 1

- Chapter 1      Apocalypse of Jesus Christ
- Chapter 2      Vision in which the Lord was seen
- Chapter 3      The things that had been written to the angel of the church of the Ephesians

Section 2

- Chapter 4      The things declared to the angel of the church of the Smyrnaeans
- Chapter 5      The things declared to the angel of the church in Pergamum
- Chapter 6      The things declared to the angel of the church in Thyatira

Section 3

- Chapter 7      The things declared to the angel of the church in Sardis
- Chapter 8      The things declared to the angel of the church in Philadelphia
- Chapter 9      The things declared to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans

Section 4

- Chapter 10     About the door that will be seen in heaven and the twenty four elders and what follows these things
- Chapter 11     About the small scroll sealed with seven seals which no one who has created nature is able to open
- Chapter 12     And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four animals

Section 5

- Chapter 13     Loosening of the first seal
- Chapter 14     About the second seal

[2] Chapter 15     Loosening of the third seal

Section 6

- Chapter 16     Loosening of the fourth seal showing the plagues which befall the impious

- Chapter 17 Loosening of the fifth seal, meaning the saints crying out to the Lord about the end of the world.
- Chapter 18 Loosening of the sixth seal signifying the upcoming plagues at the end of time
- Section 7
- Chapter 19 About the 144,000 saved from the plague (inflicted) by the four angels
- Chapter 20 About the innumerable crowd of those clothed in shining garments from the nations
- Chapter 21 Loosening of the seventh seal meaning the angelic powers bringing the prayers of the saints to God as incenses
- Section 8
- Chapter 22 About the seven angels whose first blow of the trumpet brings hail, fire, and blood on the earth.
- Chapter 23 About the second angel and the destruction of living things in the sea
- Chapter 24 About the third angel and the river water being made bitter
- Section 9
- Chapter 25 About the fourth angel and the darkening of the stars
- Chapter 26 About the fifth angel and the mental locusts and the variety of their form
- Chapter 27 About the sixth angel and the loosening of the angels on the Euphrates
- Section 10
- Chapter 28 About the angel wrapped in a cloud and a rainbow who is foretelling the end of the world
- Chapter 29 How the Evangelist took the tiny scroll from the angel
- Chapter 30 About Enoch and Elias
- Section 11
- Chapter 31 How those who were destroyed by the Antichrist will be raised
- Chapter 32 About the seventh trumpet and the saints praising God at the future judgment



- [3] Chapter 33 About the prior persecutions of the churches and about the Antichrist
- Section 12
- Chapter 34 About the war of the angels and the demons and the fall of Satan
- Chapter 35 About how the dragon does not cease persecuting the Church
- Chapter 36 About the beast with ten horns and seven heads
- Section 13
- Chapter 37 About the false prophet
- Chapter 38 About the name of the Antichrist
- Chapter 39 About the lamb and the 144,000
- Section 14
- Chapter 40 About the angel proclaiming the proximity of the future judgment
- Chapter 41 About the angel announcing the fall of Babylon
- Chapter 42 About the angel securing the faithful that they might not accept Antichrist.
- Section 15
- Chapter 43 How the one sitting in the cloud by the sickle brings the growing things on earth to an end
- Chapter 44 About the angel harvesting the vine of bitterness
- Chapter 45 About the seven angels bringing the plagues upon men before the end of the world and about the sea of glass
- Section 16
- Chapter 46 How the first bowl poured out became wounds on the apostates
- Chapter 47 The second plague against those in the sea
- Chapter 48 How through the third (bowl) the rivers are turned to blood
- Section 17
- Chapter 49 How through the fourth (bowl) people are burnt
- Chapter 50 How through the fifth (bowl) the kingdom of the beast is darkened
- Chapter 51 How through the sixth (bowl) the road through Euphrates is opened to the kings from the east.

## Section 18

- Chapter 52 How through the seventh (bowl) hail and earthquake come against the people.
- [4] Chapter 53 About the one of the seven angels showing the blessed John the destruction of the city of the harlot and about the seven heads and ten horns
- Chapter 54 How the angel interpreted the mystery seen by him

## Section 19

- Chapter 55 About another angel, declaring the fall of Babylon and [about] the heavenly voice commanding the flight from the city and about the loss of the delights which she had before.
- Chapter 56 About the praise of the saints and the triple "Alleluia" which they sing for the destruction of Babylon
- Chapter 57 About the mystical marriage and the supper of the lamb

## Section 20

- Chapter 58 How the Evangelist saw Christ on horseback with the angelic powers
- Chapter 59 About the Antichrist and those cast with him into Gehenna
- Chapter 60 How Satan was bound since the crucifixion of Christ until the end time and about the one thousand years

## Section 21

- Chapter 61 About the thrones prepared for those who undeniably kept the confession of Christ
- Chapter 62 What is the first resurrection and what is the second death
- Chapter 63 About Gog and Magog

## Section 22

- Chapter 64 About the one sitting on the throne and the common resurrection and judgment
- Chapter 65 About the new heaven and earth and the heavenly Jerusalem
- Chapter 66 About what was said by the one sitting on the throne

## Section 23

- Chapter 67 About the angel pointing out to him the city of the saints and the measuring of its walls and gates
- Chapter 68 About the pure river appearing to flow from the throne
- Chapter 69 That the God of the prophets is Christ and Master of the Angels

[5]

## Section 24

- Chapter 70 Concerning the trustworthiness of the things seen by the apostle.
- Chapter 71 How he was called not to seal but to preach the Apocalypse
- Chapter 72 How the Church and the Spirit in it are invited to the glorious manifestation of Christ and about the curse by which those who falsify the book are thrown down.

[7] THE INTERPRETATION OF THE APOCALYPSE  
 OF JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN  
 BY ANDREW,  
 ARCHBISHOP OF CAESAREA, CAPPADOCIA

To my lord brother and co-celebrant:

Having been asked many times by many people — who out of love (for me) have a greater opinion of my abilities (than is warranted) — to elucidate the Apocalypse of John the Theologian<sup>1</sup> and to adapt the prophecies to the time after this vision,<sup>2</sup> I was putting off this undertaking, [8] knowing that to explain the things which are secretly and mysteriously seen by the saints which will happen in the future time<sup>3</sup> befits a great mind and (one) enlightened by the Divine Spirit. Despite the fact that the books of the prophets of old have been explained by many, still the depth of the mysteries in them are kept invisible until that day in which the *partial knowledge*<sup>4</sup> will be abolished and the perfect knowledge will be disclosed. Although most of those matters concerning the first epiphany of *our great God and Savior*<sup>5</sup> have been preached, if there was some confusion over those matters concerning his second coming, how could anyone (such as myself), who is deprived of the prophetic spirit, not

<sup>1</sup> In the Eastern Christian tradition John “the Evangelist” is referred to as “John the Theologian.” The title “theologian” is very restricted in the East and the designation “Doctor of the Church” is not used at all. The appellation “Theologian” is a special title employed by the Orthodox Church for only three saints: John the Theologian (the Evangelist), Gregory the Theologian (of Nazianzus), and St. Symeon the New Theologian, (a spiritual writer and abbot of the monastery of St. Mamas in Constantinople, who died in 1022). Elsewhere in this commentary, Andrew also refers to John as “the Apostle.” Generally speaking, however, when an Eastern Father, including Andrew, refers simply to “the Apostle,” with no other context provided and no indication of a specific apostle, it is a reference St. Paul. For example, see Andrew’s comment on the next page, in which he refers to simply “the Apostle” while quoting Romans and 1 Corinthians.

<sup>2</sup> This comment indicates Andrew’s preliminary stance toward the Book of Revelation. He understands that the Apocalypse was initially received and understood in a specific historical context and it is within this context that the prophecies had their first function. An original audience was intended for the book and an understanding of the historical context of the book is essential and foundational.

<sup>3</sup> This indicates that Andrew accepts Revelation not only as a historical document but one with an eschatological component as well.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. 13:9.

<sup>5</sup> Titus 2:13.

appear bold by attempting (to explain) these things whose end is not in sight?<sup>6</sup> But since *obedience is better than a sacrifice*<sup>7</sup> and, according to the Apostle (Paul) *hope does not bring to shame*<sup>8</sup> and *love never fails*<sup>9</sup>, through which (love) I am connected to your God-like soul, O Makarios,<sup>10</sup> I hope through this (treatise) for both the completion of the deficiencies and (to receive) the wages of obedience,<sup>11</sup> which I have known is the fruit of love, and I will shortly fulfill this (task) that was assigned to me, with (the help of) God who will enlighten me.

First, therefore, as you yourself well know, since there are three parts to a human being,<sup>12</sup> *all divinely inspired Scripture*<sup>13</sup> has been endowed with three parts by divine grace.

<sup>6</sup> This is our first indication, among many, that Andrew does not seem to believe that the end of the world is near.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Sam. 15:22. These words are the response of the prophet Samuel to King Saul when Saul tried to justify himself by performing a sacrifice rather than by obeying God. Is Andrew jokingly suggesting that this project will result in the neglect of his liturgical or episcopal duties?

<sup>8</sup> Rom. 5:5.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Cor. 13:8.

<sup>10</sup> This word could also be employed here as a form of address meaning, "O Beatitude," or "Blessed One," rather than a proper name. Most likely it is functioning here as a title or an expression of esteem.

<sup>11</sup> It is unclear here whether Andrew has experienced the rewards of his obedience to "Makarios" specifically or whether he is speaking generally about the spiritual benefit derived from obedience, especially to one's spiritual father or ecclesiastical superior. Notice how he combined these ideas, found in the previous sentence, and refers again to hope, love and obedience.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Thess. 5:23. St. Paul's comment that the human being consists of body, soul and spirit was paired by Origen with Prov. 22:20 which advises one to hearken to the words of wisdom and, "record them threefold (LXX: τρισῶς) for yourself on the table of your heart for counsel and knowledge." These two verses inspired Origen to identify three levels of meaning in the Scriptures: literal, moral and allegorical. (*Prin.* 4.2.4.) Origen exercised unparalleled influence upon Christian interpreters for centuries. In presenting his methodology, Andrew does not use the term ἀλληγορία, a Greek word which literally means "to say other things." Allegory was variously understood by the Fathers. Usually it meant the mystical, symbolic or spiritual meaning underlying a word, a hidden meaning about which even the author of the book could be entirely unaware. A preference for allegory characterized exegesis at the "school of Alexandria." On the other hand, the "school of Antioch," the other great center of Christian learning in antiquity, confined allegorical interpretation to those passages which specifically indicated that an underlying symbolic meaning was intended, such as parables. The Antiocheans preferred the word θεωρία to describe the underlying spiritual message of a text but insisted that the spiritual meaning must be directly based on the literal meaning and not sprung out of one's imagination. (See Paul Ternant, "La θεωρία d'Antioche dans le cadre des sense de l'Écriture," *Biblica* 34 (1953) 135-158, 354-383 and 456-486.) Andrew's apparent preference for the term θεωρία instead of ἀλληγορία may hint at an exegetical orientation leaning toward an Antiochean approach. It might also hint at a desire to distance himself from Origen, whose writings and teachings were ultimately condemned by the Church at the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553, a few decades prior to this commentary, due to certain theological errors. Or perhaps here we simply see the beginning of Andrew's effort to correct and to conscientiously differentiate himself from Oikoumenios. Oikoumenios, who composed the first complete Greek commentary on Revelation in the late 6<sup>th</sup>

And by this (grace), the body is somewhat like the letter and like history<sup>14</sup> established according to sense perception. In like manner, the soul is the figurative sense,<sup>15</sup> guiding the reader from that which can be perceived by the senses to that which can be perceived by the intellect. Likewise the spirit has appeared to be the anagogical sense<sup>16</sup> and the contemplation<sup>17</sup> of the future and higher things, so that the first level moreover [9] is appropriate to the ones *guided by the Law*,<sup>18</sup> the second (is appropriate) to the ones who are

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century, not infrequently departed from ecclesiastical tradition to arrive at rather imaginative conclusions. (The first critical edition was *Oecumenii Commentarius in Apocalypsin*, ed. Marc De Groote, *Traditio Exegetica Graeca* series, vol. 8 [Louvain: Peeters, 1999], hereinafter “De Groote.” The English translation is *Oecumenius Commentary on the Apocalypse*, trans. John N. Suggit, *Fathers of the Church* series, vol. 112 [Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2006], hereinafter “Suggit.”) In his reluctance to employ the word “allegory” Andrew may also be following a tradition established by his famous fourth century predecessor in the see of Caesarea, Basil the Great, who disapproved of allegory and “[those] who have attempted by false arguments and allegorical interpretations to bestow on the Scriptures a dignity of their own imagining...[T]heirs is the attitude of one who considers himself wiser than the revelations of the Spirit and introduces his own ideas in pretense of an explanation. Therefore, let it be understood as it has been written.” (*On the Six Days of Creation* 9.1. *Basil: Exegetical Homilies*, trans. Agnes Clare Way, *Fathers of the Church* series, vol. 46 [Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1963], 135-6.) Although a belief in three levels of meaning in Scripture was popular in the East, some interpreters, including John Cassian, Augustine, and Gregory the Great, identified four levels of Scripture: literal (the historical event), allegorical (the underlying spiritual or theological meaning), tropological (the moral instruction or message), and anagogical (the truth or message about the future life and Christian expectation).

<sup>13</sup> θεόπνευστος, (2 Tim. 3:16). This is a common patristic adjective to describe the inspiration of the Bible. For example, see Chrysostom’s use of this term in *On Genesis, Hom. 8*, (trans. Robert C. Hill, *Fathers of the Church* series, vols. 74, 82 and 87 [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1986-1992], 74:109.) See also Robert Hill, “Chrysostom’s terminology for the inspired word” in *Estudios Biblicos* 41 (1983) 367-373. Andrew also uses this term in his prologue. See *Text* 10, line 9.

<sup>14</sup> ἱστορία, sometimes referred to as the “literal sense,” can mean the actual historical event described in Scripture or simply the plain meaning of the text.

<sup>15</sup> Τροπολογία, sometimes referred to as the “moral sense” of the Scripture, is often understood as the interpretation which provides guidance for Christian behavior. However, the term *tropology* can also be used to indicate a “figurative” meaning.

<sup>16</sup> Ἀναγωγή, or the “anagogical sense,” could be used in a general manner to indicate the spiritual meaning underlying the literal or historical aspect of the text, but ἀναγωγή is also a term employed for a more specific type of spiritual interpretation which indicates a truth or interpretation related to the future resurrected life or the way of the life in the Kingdom of Heaven. We see that understanding at work here since Andrew links ἀναγωγή to “the future things” and differentiates it from the “higher” things. Andrew sees both θεωρία and ἀναγωγή as occupying the “third level” because they provide a “spiritual” interpretation of the text, as opposed to a moral lesson or historical explanation.

<sup>17</sup> Θεωρία. This term signified the deeper spiritual meaning in a text. Here θεωρία is that which Andrew calls the “higher” things.

<sup>18</sup> Andrew is alluding to Gal. 3:24: “The Law was our guide (παιδαγωγός) until Christ came so that we might be justified by faith.” Andrew identifies the lowest level of scripture interpretation as observance of the mere letter or an understanding which was limited to the passage’s historical meaning. A literal or historical

governed by grace,<sup>19</sup> and the third (is appropriate) to those who exist in the blessed condition in which the Spirit governs,<sup>20</sup> having subordinated to it all carnal thoughts and motions.<sup>21</sup>

The first is suited to the histories of things which have already occurred, even though in many places this too has been adorned in no small degree by the foreshadowing<sup>22</sup> that

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interpretation alone was regarded as methodologically “Jewish.” The impetus for this understanding began with Paul: “For it is written in the Law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.’ Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Or does he not speak entirely for our sake?” (1 Cor. 9:9-10 RSV) Paul’s rationale for his views on the Law of Moses is the primary subject of his epistles to the Romans and Galatians and it is no accident that Andrew alludes to Galatians here. Early Christian interpreters identified the literalism of Jewish exegesis with the Old Covenant and contrasted it with the New Covenant: the Christian life and an understanding illumined by the Spirit. Ἰστορία was perceived as practically synonymous with “literalism” and considered far inferior to allegory or a spiritualized interpretation. The literal-historical type of exegesis, originally disfavored among Christians for that reason, was later popularized in Antioch where the subjective quality of allegory evoked great concern. As early as the *Epistle of Barnabas* and Justin Martyr’s *Dialogue with Trypho*, the Fathers commonly used typology and allegory to show how Old Testament events, prophecies, and regulations of the Mosaic law were fulfilled and superseded by Christ. (See *Barn.* 7, 8, 10) Jewish apologists vigorously argued against Christian claims and naturally rejected this interpretation in favor of a literal understanding of events and insisted that the Mosaic Law was obligatory rather than symbolic in nature. Christian authors responded by criticizing Jewish exegesis as too literal, and hence, not “spiritual.” Origen wrote that “they understand Scripture not according to the spiritual meaning but according to the sound of the letter.” (*Prin.* 4.2.2. See also 4.2.6.) The same concept is expressed by Methodios (*Symp.* 9). Irenaeus argued that only Christians can truly understand the Scriptures since they alone have the key of salvation. The Jews cannot understand the hidden truths in the Old Testament since they rejected God’s divine plan. (*Heres.* 4.26.1; See also Justin *Dial.* 38.) Legal regulations (i.e., dietary rules, circumcision, etc.) which Jews interpreted and applied literally were seen by Christians as pointing to a deeper, spiritual meaning and purpose whose time had come. The time for the Mosaic Law was past and its literal observance was to be abandoned. This too was seen as fulfillment of prophecy. Hippolytus wrote: “It was meet and necessary that the things spoken of old by the prophets should be sealed to the unbelieving Pharisees, who thought that they understood the letter of the law, and be opened to the believing. The things, therefore, which of old were sealed, are now by the grace of God the Lord all open to the saints.” *Comm. On Daniel* 2.19. *Extant Works and Fragments of Hippolytus*, trans. S.D.F. Salmond, Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. V, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1990), 181.

<sup>19</sup> πολιτευομένοις ἐν χάριτι. That is, those who are baptized and presumably follow a higher morality rather than observing mere outward legalism. Ordinary members of the Church can understand and benefit from both the literal meaning and the moral lesson in scripture.

<sup>20</sup> τῇ μακαρία λήξει, ἐν ἣ τὸ πνεῦμα βασιλεύει.

<sup>21</sup> His point is that very few Christians attain such a level of spirituality that they can properly understand the mystical meaning underlying the Scripture.

<sup>22</sup> Τύπος refers to the application of a technique which today we have entitled *typology*, one of the most common forms of interpretation in the early Church, especially for Old Testament. Typology was based on the belief that the person of Christ and the events of the New Testament were prefigured in Old Testament persons and events. The interpreter perceived an analogous relationship between the original person or event in the Old Testament, the “type,” and a later person and event in the New Testament, the “anti-type.” This technique is first seen in the New Testament itself. For example Paul offers an interpretation of Hagar and Sarah as types of the Old and New Covenants (Gal. 4:24-26). Jesus himself even employs typology when he refers to his coming resurrection as the “sign of Jonah” (Matt. 12:39-40). Here Andrew follows a long-standing tradition which recognized typological interpretation. Notice, however, that he sees typology as linked to history and not as purely allegorical.

anticipates the truth. The second part suits proverbial advice and other such pedagogical uses, as for instance, *Thorns are sown in the hand of a drunkard*,<sup>23</sup> and “*Shame on you, Sidon*,” it says, *said the sea*,<sup>24</sup> and things similar to these. The third part, that is to say, the spiritual part, (is) to be found especially abundant in the Apocalypse of the Theological Man; on the one hand, lavishly seen with historical form and figurative speech in the other prophets, whereas, on the other hand here, (in the Apocalypse), (the spiritual part) is especially seen in abundance since it has been ordered by God to be proclaimed to those who are more perfect in knowledge. Therefore, even though we ourselves do not understand the entire depth of the hidden spirit within it, we too will elucidate what was seen by the blessed one (John).<sup>25</sup> We neither dare to understand everything according to the letter,<sup>26</sup> nor state that which we have conjectured. But rather we will expound (these things) as if supplying a training<sup>27</sup> for the quick-wittedness of the mind and as a form of contempt for the present things, since they are transitory, and (for the purpose of) coveting the future things, since these remain, [10] having left behind the exact knowledge of these matters to divine wisdom, which also knows the times in which these prophesized things will come to pass, which is forbidden to seek (as we have learned) through the apostles.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Prov. 26:9. Origen also quotes this exact verse as an example of a passage which does not allow for a literal interpretation in *Hom. On Genesis* 11.6. Andrew’s citation of this same verse may suggest that it was a stock example employed in Christian exegetical instruction.

<sup>24</sup> Isa. 23:4.

<sup>25</sup> Andrew agrees to expound on the Apocalypse, even though he lacks perfect understanding, because God has ordered that the message within it be preached (Rev. 1:19, 22:10).

<sup>26</sup> Andrew confesses that he does not even entirely understand Revelation’s meaning on a historical level.

<sup>27</sup> γυμνασία is the root of the English words “gymnasium” and “gymnastics.” Interpreting Revelation is “mental gymnastics,” according to Andrew, and serves as a “workout” for the mind.

<sup>28</sup> Acts 1:7, 1 Thess. 5:1. Having acknowledged that he cannot explain all of Revelation even on the historical level, Andrew excuses himself from this task by focusing on the spiritual message (“found especially abundant” within the text), since this present life is “transitory,” and the historical meaning, is therefore less important. The effort however, will serve as an exercise to train the higher faculties (νοῦς) or to direct one toward the future life. This statement is crucial to understanding that Andrew’s “commentary” is essentially homiletic in style and purpose, rather than strictly exegetical. His intent is spiritual and inspirational. As he also notes below at the conclusion of his prologue, the value of his work is to prompt contrition from the faithful and to remind them of the “rewards that will be bestowed on the righteous and the retribution of the wicked and sinful.” (*Text* 11; *Comm.* 12.) Citations to Andrew’s commentary will include the chapter number according to Andrew’s divisions “*Chp.*,” followed by the page number in Schmid’s critical text, given as “*Text*,” and lastly, the location of a passage within the present translation will be cited as “*Comm.*” followed by the page number.) That we are “forbidden to seek” knowledge of the future was also a point made by Chrysostom. *Hom. on Matt.* 72.1



Out of obedience<sup>29</sup> we have performed this (task), and have divided the present treatise into twenty four sections, seventy two chapters for the three part existence<sup>30</sup> of body, soul and spirit of the twenty four elders, through whom is symbolized the whole body of those who have pleased God from the beginning to the end of times, as will be explained in what follows. Concerning the divine inspiration of the book we believe it superfluous to lengthen the discussion,<sup>31</sup> since its trustworthiness is witnessed by the Blessed Gregory the Theologian,<sup>32</sup> Cyril,<sup>33</sup> in addition to the more ancient fathers, Papias,<sup>34</sup> Irenaeus,<sup>35</sup> Methodios<sup>36</sup> and Hippolytus.<sup>37</sup> From them we have also [11] taken many starting points,<sup>38</sup>

<sup>29</sup> This is Andrew's third reference to his acceptance of this task out of "obedience."

<sup>30</sup> ὑπόστασις

<sup>31</sup> Andrew does not wish to embark on a discussion of the canonical status of the book, nor the arguments concerning its apostolic authorship. He dismisses any concerns as to its canonicity and authenticity by citing these notable Fathers. However, if it were *truly* "unnecessary to discuss" he would not have mentioned the issue at all nor cited witnesses to confirm its "divine inspiration." Far from being "unnecessary to discuss," in fact Andrew has shown his awareness of the book's uncertain canonical status and feels the need to give at least some perfunctory references to support its apostolic authorship before he goes any further. It is somewhat surprising that Andrew does not cite his predecessor, Basil the Great, nor does he mention Epiphanius, whom he will cite shortly (*Chp.1, Text 15, Comm. 17*), or Justin Martyr, whom he will cite later (*Chp. 34, Text 131, Comm. 123*).

<sup>32</sup> This is Gregory Nazianzus. See footnote 1 about title "Theologian." In *Theological Oration 29.17* Gregory quotes the phrase from Rev. 1:8, "he who is, was and is to come," to support the full divinity of Christ. In *Or. 42.9*, Gregory seems to acknowledge apostolic authorship of Revelation by his statement, "as John taught me through the Apocalypse," which is the evidence to which Andrew refers here. However, Gregory does *not* include the Apocalypse in his New Testament canon of Scripture which he expounded in poetic verse (*Poem 1.12.5ff*), a fact of which Andrew may be aware, but has conveniently ignored.

<sup>33</sup> Cyril of Alexandria, *The Adoration and Worship of God in Spirit and Truth* 6.

<sup>34</sup> While Andrew cites Papias as an early witness, ironically Andrew himself becomes a witness to Papias' statements about the Apocalypse. The works of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, an early second century Father, are no longer extant with the exception of a few fragments. Andrew's commentary itself preserved one of these fragments which would have otherwise been lost (*Chp. 33, Text 129, Comm. 134*). In this instance, Andrew cites Papias as providing the earliest written testimony to the tradition that the apostle John was the author of the Apocalypse in his work, *Exposition of Dominical Oracles*. Despite the fact that the work itself is no longer extant, we know from Andrew's citation here that Papias provided important attestation to the early Church tradition of the apostolic authorship of Revelation.

<sup>35</sup> Irenaeus frequently cited the Apocalypse, especially in his work *Against Heresies*. (See *Heres. 1.26.3; 4.14.2; 4.17.6; 4. 18.6; 4.20.11; 4.11.3.*) Irenaeus was a chiliast, as were Papias and Justin Martyr, all of whom relied on Rev. 20 for their views.

<sup>36</sup> Bishop of Olympus in Lycia, reportedly martyred in 311, according to Socrates' *Ecclesiastical History* 6.13. Methodios was one of the most important writers of his day. He frequently cited the Apocalypse, for example in his works *On the Resurrection* 2.28, and *Symposium* 1.5; 5.8; 6.5; 8.4-13. Despite his early date and the

coming into this (task), as well as reciting their sayings in certain places. And you, *O man of God*,<sup>39</sup> compensate our labor with your prayers, as I think it contributes not a little to compunction<sup>40</sup> through remembrance of both the rewards that will be bestowed on the righteous and the retribution of the wicked and sinful.

## SECTION 1, CHAPTER 1

*Rev. 1:1 (The) Apocalypse of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him, to show to his servants that which must come to pass soon.*

An apocalypse is the manifestation of hidden mysteries when the intellect<sup>41</sup> is illuminated<sup>42</sup> either through divine dreams or according to waking visions from divine enlightenment.<sup>43</sup> To be *given to Christ*, it says,<sup>44</sup> making this statement about him especially with respect to his human (nature), since in the gospel he (John) above all other (Evangelists)

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tendencies of the times, Methodios was not a chiliast, preferring a spiritual interpretation of the Revelation to the literal belief in an earthly kingdom.

<sup>37</sup> A very prolific writer of the early Church, Hippolytus was the last Christian author in Rome to write in Greek. He died as a martyr in 235. Among his writings were a treatise *On Christ and Antichrist* and also a *Commentary on Daniel*, the oldest extant and complete Scripture commentary. Hippolytus is also remembered for aggressively responding to the attacks by Gaius and the "Alogoi" against the writings traditionally attributed to the Apostle John. Hippolytus defended the Johannine writings and fought the efforts of Gaius and others to attribute the books to a heretic, Cerinthus. To this end, Hippolytus made a careful comparison of the reputed contradictions between the Synoptics, John's Gospel, and the Apocalypse to demonstrate that the signs of the end times described in the Apocalypse do not contradict the rest of Scripture. He also refuted the literal interpretation of Apocalypse which Gaius had used to discredit the book.

<sup>38</sup> Andrew "starts" with them but knows that he cannot *rely* on them since sufficient patristic guidance for his interpretation of the Apocalypse simply does not exist.

<sup>39</sup> 1 Tim. 6:11.

<sup>40</sup> κατάνυξις. The nuances underlying this word, a very common word in the patristic tradition, can fluctuate, but the word entails more than simply remorse for one's sins or a sorrowful state. It suggests tears and repentance, considered a gift of God, and implies a type of spiritual stimulation moving the individual to a new state of mind and changed way of life. *Θρησκευτική και Ἠθική Ἐγκυκλοπαίδεια*, (12 vols.), ed. A. Martinos (Athens, 1962-68), 7:445-446.

<sup>41</sup> ἡγεμονικός. This is the principle part of the soul, that which is created by God for the apprehension of spiritual truths, visions and revelations, and for the indwelling of Christ. *A Greek Patristic Lexicon*, ed. G.W.H. Lampe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 600.

<sup>42</sup> καταναζομένου.

<sup>43</sup> ἐλλάμψεως.

<sup>44</sup> φησὶν. This word, used with extreme frequency by Andrew, can either mean "he says" (John) or "it says" (the biblical text). It is difficult to determine which of these Andrew intends or whether he even distinguishes between them at all. The word will be translated according to what appears appropriate for the context.

dwelt on the sublime and the things befitting God. And here, the magnitude of the divinity of Christ is shown through the attending angel, and through the name of the teaching servants, for *all things are his servants*.<sup>45</sup> The *must come to pass soon* means that some of the predictions concerning them are to come to pass immediately thereafter, [12] and the things regarding the end are not to be delayed, because *one thousand years to God is like yesterday's day, which is reckoned as having (already) elapsed*.<sup>46</sup>

*Rev. 1:1b-2* <sup>1b</sup> *And he made it known through the sending of his angel to his servant John, <sup>2</sup> who bore witness to the word of God and the witness of Jesus Christ, all that he saw, both those things which are and those things which must come to pass afterward.*

“Christ”, he says, “declared these things to me through an angel, as the Master to a household servant, as I had born witness to my confession to him,” of which, on the basis of the visions (he is) to bear witness and, in view of the return (to God) of those who hear, to preach both the things which are and which escape understanding and the things which will occur in the future, for prophetically, he had seen them both.<sup>47</sup> And (this is) clear from what he says: *those which are and those which must come to pass*.<sup>48</sup> These are descriptions of both the present time and of the future.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Ps. 119 (118):91. τὰ σύμπαντα δοῦλα σά. (For convenience of reference, the number of a psalm will follow the standard modern enumeration with the Septuagint number provided in parentheses.) For Andrew, this phrase might easily come to mind because of its presence in a priestly prayer recited in the liturgy of St. Basil. Andrew’s recollection of this liturgical phrase perfectly fits the context both here and its liturgical setting. In the context of the liturgy, the phrase within the prayer is followed by references to the many angels surrounding the throne of God and the prayer is followed by the singing of the hymn, “Holy, Holy, Holy,” which is the hymn of the angels in Rev. 4:8.

<sup>46</sup> Ps. 90(89):4.

<sup>47</sup> Andrew sees prophecy as operating on two planes: the present and the future. This is clearly opposed to Oikoumenios who believed that John’s visions also spoke about the past. “For this is the mark of consummate prophecy, to encompass three periods. For even those who are not Christians introduce their own seers who knew ‘the events of the present, the future and the past’ though they have, I think, been held in distain by our prophets.” (Oik.1.1.2, Suggit 19) Oikoumenios’ observation regarding three levels of prophecy among “even those who are not Christians” refers to Homer (*Iliad* 1.70) and Hesiod (*Theogony* 38).

<sup>48</sup> Andrew easily supports his understanding of prophecy against that of Oikoumenios by citing the very words of the Apocalypse itself here: that its prophecies relate to the present and future. This shows Andrew’s sensitivity to the text and his tendency to search for the meaning of a passage within the text itself and within a more established ecclesiastical tradition rather than introducing concepts foreign to or contradictory to the text.

<sup>49</sup> Oikoumenios interpreted many portions of Revelation as an allegory of the life of Christ. Andrew not only bases his opinion on the explicit statement of Rev. 1:2, but also on Methodios’ conclusion expressed in the

*Rev. 1:3 Blessed is the one who reads and the ones who hear the words of the prophecy and the ones keeping the things which have been written in it. For the time is near.*

He blesses those who read and hear through the actions, *for the present time is near*, through which it is possible to acquire the blessing, for the work is laid open to all. As the Lord says, *work [13] while it is day.*<sup>50</sup> And elsewhere, *the time is near,*<sup>51</sup> the time of the distribution of prizes, on account of the brevity of the present life in comparison to the future.<sup>52</sup>

*Rev. 1:4 John, to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from the One who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before his throne.*

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*Symposium.* Methodios, writing in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, remarked: "Remember that the mystery of the incarnation of the Word was fulfilled long before the Apocalypse, whereas John's prophetic message has to do with the present and the future." Methodios *Symp.* 8.7. *The Symposium: A Treatise on Chastity*, trans. Herbert Musurillo, Ancient Christian Writers series, vol. 27 (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1958), 112.

<sup>50</sup> John 9:4, i.e., show vigilance and perseverance.

<sup>51</sup> Rev. 1:3.

<sup>52</sup> Here is another indication that Andrew does not perceive himself as living in the end-times. The end is near not because Andrew anticipates the end of world to occur shortly, but because each of us will face the end of our own lives very soon in comparison to eternity. Andrew expresses a typical interpretation of the function of Revelation in the East and the typical eschatological stance of the Orthodox Church which has historically refrained from interpreting Revelation according to present historical events or engaging in predictions regarding the end. The time of the end of the world is not known, but for each of us an end will arrive quickly enough. Augustine shared this view and eloquently expressed the practical purpose for this stance while commenting on 2 Thess. 2:2: "But those to whom the Apostle said 'Be not easily moved from your mind...as if the day of the Lord were at hand' evidently loved the Lord's coming, and the purpose of the Doctor of the Gentiles in saying this was not to break them away from the love which burned in them; rather, he did not want them to put their faith in those from whom they heard that the day of the Lord was at hand, lest, perhaps, when the time had passed within which they had thought He would come, and they saw that He had not come, they might think the other promises made to them were also false, and might despair of the mercy of faith itself. Therefore, it is not the one who asserts that He is near nor the one who asserts that He is not near which loves the coming of the Lord, but the one who waits for Him, whether He be near or far, with sincere faith, firm hope and ardent love." *Ep.* 199.15. *Augustine: Letters*, (5 vols.), trans. Wilfred Parsons, Fathers of the Church series, vols. 12, 18, 20, 30 and 32 (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc. 1953), 30:367.

Due to the existence of many churches, he sent (letters) to only seven, mystically meaning by this number the churches everywhere,<sup>53</sup> also corresponding to the present day life, in which the seventh period of days is (now) taking place.<sup>54</sup> For this reason also he

<sup>53</sup> This is a very common patristic interpretation of this verse. The number seven was said to symbolize perfection and completeness, hence early interpreters understood the number of churches addressed by John and Paul as signifying the universality of the message. The Muratorian Canon states: "It is necessary for us to discuss these one by one, since the blessed apostle Paul himself, following the example of his predecessor John, writes by name to only seven churches... It is true that he writes once more to the Corinthians and to the Thessalonians for the sake of admonition, yet it is clearly recognizable that there is one Church spread throughout the whole extent of the earth. For John also in the Apocalypse, though he writes to seven churches, nevertheless speaks to all." Bruce Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: its Origin, Development and Significance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 306-307. The same concept is expressed by Augustine, who remarks, after noting that Paul wrote to seven churches, that "John also writes to the seven Churches which he mentions as established in those places, by all of which we understand that the Church is commended by the number seven." Augustine *Ep.* 49, FC 12:236. See also Victorinus, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 1.7, (trans. Robert Ernest Wallis, *The Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries*. Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. VII, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1975], *Cyprian Exhortation for Martyrdom* 11, (*The Treatises of Cyprian*. Treatise XI, *Exhortation to Martyrdom, Addressed to Fortunatus*, trans. Ernest Wallis, *The Fathers of the Third Century: Hippolytus, Cyprian, Caius, Novatian*, Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. V, eds. Alexander Robertson and James Donaldson. [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1990]), Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 5.17 (*Against Marcion*, trans. Peter Holmes, *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian*. Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. III, ed. Alan Menzies. [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprint, 1989]). and Gregory the Great, (a contemporary of Andrew), *Morals on the Book of Job*, 17.29(43) and 35.9(18) (trans. Members of the English Church, Library of the Fathers series, vols. 18, 21, 23 and 31 [Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1844-50]).

<sup>54</sup> Early church literature expressed different conceptions of time. Some writers considered their present time as the "sixth" day, with the end of time being the seventh day, the time of eternal repose. See, for example, Augustine, *Question 57.3, Augustine: Eighty Three Different Questions*, trans. David Mosher, ed. Hermigild Dressler, Fathers of the Church series, vol. 70 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1977), 105. See also Augustine's *Sermon 259 (Augustine, Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons*, trans. Mary Sarah Muldowney, Fathers of the Church series, vol. 38 [New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1959], 370), in which the day of judgment is the seventh day. Irenaeus believed that the world would come to an end when it was 6,000 years old, ushering in the millennial age in a classic chiliastic understanding. "For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years shall it be concluded... in six days created things were completed; it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousandth year." (Irenaeus, *Heres.* 5.28.3; *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, eds. and trans. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. I [Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted 1989], 557.) But others regarded world history as divided into seven "days" or "periods" of time, in which the age of the Church occupied the seventh period, which was expressed as the "seventh day" or the "seventh age." As we will see below, Andrew believes the millennium to be the age of the Church and the "eighth day" represents the end time. Jean Daniélou notes that Irenaeus and Methodios (both of whom are sources for Andrew) have allusions to the millennium as the seventh day, "a designation which is connected with speculations on the cosmic week." This was a departure from the traditional conception of time within Judaism in which the seventh age is that of the Sabbath repose, the eschaton. Daniélou notes that the first Christian writing in which the doctrine of the seventh millennium can be found is in the *Epistle of Barnabas*, and quotes the passage in which the six days of creation are interpreted to mean that "in six thousand years the Lord shall bring all things to an end, for with him a day is as a thousand years....And, He rested on the seventh day, means this; when His Son shall come, and shall abolish the time of the Lawless One, and shall judge the ungodly, and shall change the sun and the moon and the stars, then shall He rest gloriously on the seventh day...when I have set all things at rest I will make the beginning of the eighth day which is the beginning of another world."

mentions seven angels and seven churches, to whom he says, *Grace to you and peace* from the Tri-hypostatic<sup>55</sup> Divinity. For by the “*who is*” the Father is signified, who said to Moses *I am He who is*,<sup>56</sup> and by the “*who was*” (is signified) the Logos, *who was in the beginning with God*,<sup>57</sup> and by the “*who is to come*” the Paraclete<sup>58</sup> who always enlightens the children of the Church through holy baptism, more completely and more strongly in the future. It is possible to understand the seven spirits as the seven angels who were appointed to govern the churches,<sup>59</sup> not [14] counting them equal to the most divine and royal Trinity, but mentioned

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(*Barn.* 15.3-8). “By contrast,” Daniélou observes, “the conception of the ages of the world as a series of millennia seems to be an idea foreign to Judaism.” Daniélou believes the “cosmic week” is Babylonian in origin, from the circle of the “Hellenized Magi,” which “sees seven cosmic periods as each dominated by a planet. Thus a system is arrived at in which seven millennia constitute the total time of the world, a scheme quite foreign to Judaism, in which the duration of the world is *six* days, the seventh day representing eternal life... So then there is a Jewish contribution, the repose of the seventh day, and a Hellenistic one; the seven millennia. In the passage in *Barnabas* a third element intervenes – the eighth day.... Christ rose on the day after the sabbath, and thenceforward the eighth day is the day of the Resurrection. *Barnabas* kept the Hellenist notion of the seven millennia as constituting the sum of history, the Jewish idea of the privileged character of the seventh day as a time of rest, and, from Christianity, the conception of the eighth day as eternal life.” Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, trans. and ed. John A. Baker, vol. 1 of *The Development of Christian Doctrine Before the Council of Nicea* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co, 1964), 396-8.

<sup>55</sup> τρισυποστάτου.

<sup>56</sup> Exod. 3:14. As we will see below, this is Oikoumenios’ interpretation (1.7.1-3), which Andrew does not accept because of the context. Furthermore, the identification of the “I am” with the Father would be rather unusual for patristic writers, who tended to apply such Old Testament theophanies to the Son. See, for example, *Heres.* 4.20.9 in which Irenaeus explains that it was the Logos who spoke to Moses in Exodus and whose back Moses saw (Exod. 34:6-7). See also John Chrysostom *Hom. on Matthew* 43.2, (*St. Chrysostom: Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*, trans. George Prevost, Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 1<sup>st</sup> series, vol. X, ed. Philip Schaff [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprint 1989]) in which Chrysostom explains Christ’s words “The men of Ninevah shall rise up and shall condemn this generation” (Matt. 12:41) as Christ’s justification of future punishment. Chrysostom states that this was in keeping with the character which *Christ* demonstrated in the *Old Testament*, including Christ’s justification to Abraham and Lot prior to the destruction of Sodom, his justification to Noah for the destruction of the world, and his justification to Ezekiel and Jeremiah for the destruction of Jerusalem. Recognition of Christ in the Old Testament required that one acknowledge the Old Testament as Scripture, which was very important in the early Church. In fact, Chrysostom cites these Old Testament situations revealing the activity of the pre-incarnate Logos as an express refutation of Marcionism. This application of Old Testament theophanies to Christ, and not to the Father, is also made by Justin Martyr, who stated his rationale in *Dial.* 126-7.

<sup>57</sup> John 1:1.

<sup>58</sup> The Holy Spirit.

<sup>59</sup> The identification of the *three* members of the Trinity present in the description of the “one who is, who was and who is to come” and the interpretation of the seven spirits as seven angels is that of Oikoumenios (1.7.1-3 and 1.9). Note that Andrew initially seems to adopt Oikoumenios’ interpretation, but he simply is indicating that he does not completely reject it, since he introduces Oikoumenios’ opinion about the seven spirits with the words, “it is possible....” It will become clear that this is *not* Andrew’s preferred interpretation when Andrew offers his own, differing opinion below and defends his interpretation (*Chp.* 1, *Text* 15, *Comm.* 17-18).



as servants, just as the divine Apostle said: *I call upon you in the presence of God and the chosen angels.*<sup>60</sup> This may be understood differently:<sup>61</sup> *the one who is and who was and who is to come* meaning the Father,<sup>62</sup> who contains in Himself the beginning, middle and end of all that exists, and the seven spirits (meaning) the activities of Life-giving Spirit, following Christ God who became man for our sake.<sup>63</sup> For in many places each divine person is indifferently placed and arranged by the Apostle.<sup>64</sup> For this (reason) he says here:

*Rev. 1:5a And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth.*

He is the one who witnessed to Pontius Pilate,<sup>65</sup> *faithful* to his word in all things, *the firstborn of the dead* as life and resurrection, for those whom he governs will no more see death, like those who were dead before and rose, but will live eternally.<sup>66</sup> *Ruler of the kings, as King of kings and Lord of lords*, equal in power with the Father and consubstantial (with

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Victorinus actually interprets *all* of verses 4 and 5 to refer to Christ, even the “seven spirits,” which to him recalls Isaiah 11:2. Like Oikoumenios, Victorinus sees the statement “and from Jesus Christ” as a reference to the incarnate human nature of Christ (Vic. 1.5, ANF 7:344).

<sup>60</sup> 1 Tim. 5:21.

<sup>61</sup> Andrew is now about to give *his* opinion. This is not recognized in a recent translation which attributes Oikoumenios’ opinion to Andrew and presents only part of Andrew’s interpretation. *Revelation*, ed. William Weinrich, Ancient Christian Commentary series, vol. XII (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 3.

<sup>62</sup> It is tempting to identify the Trinity in the statement “who is, was and is to come,” as Oikoumenios has done, (Oik. 1.7.1-3) but Andrew’s exegetical skill leads him to easily recognize the flaw in Oikoumenios’ interpretation: it does not fit the immediate context of the passage. The verse states that the revelation is from the One who is, was and is to come, *and* from Jesus Christ. The Son cannot be the “one who was,” as Oikoumenios claims, since he is about to be introduced by the words “and from Jesus Christ.” The identification of the seven spirits with the Holy Spirit is very common in the patristic tradition, but not Oikoumenios’ identification of them as angels.

<sup>63</sup> Christ has not been introduced in the text as of yet, but he is about to be. Andrew anticipates this.

<sup>64</sup> The Trinity is represented here, but not in the usual order. Andrew accepts that all three members of the Trinity *give* the Revelation, but disagrees that all three persons are expressed specifically here with the term “is, was and is to come,” as Oikoumenios claims. Oikoumenios explains the upcoming reference to “Jesus Christ” as a reference to Christ’s incarnate nature, whereas “who was” is a reference to his eternal nature. To avoid being accused of Nestorianism, Oikoumenios hastens to add that “he (John) does not separate him (Christ) into two.” (Oik. 1.11.1, Suggit 24) But perhaps Oikoumenios’ explanation remained too Nestorian for Andrew, providing Andrew with yet another reason to reject Oikoumenios’ interpretation, in addition to Oikoumenios’ disregard for the context of the verse.

<sup>65</sup> An allusion to John 19:37. “Pilate said to him, ‘So you are a king?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.’” (RSV)

<sup>66</sup> An allusion to John 5:24 and 8:51.

the Father). Elsewhere, *ruler of the kings of the earth* is also said (in reference to his mastery over) earthly desires. If, according to the Blessed [15] Gregory (the Theologian), this usage of *he who is, who was and who is to come, the ruler of all* refers to Christ<sup>67</sup> then it is not unreasonable (to think) that words similar to those which will be said shortly after refer to him,<sup>68</sup> to which also *the ruler of all*<sup>69</sup> is attached and without the repetition or introduction of another person. For here the addition of “*and from Jesus Christ*” appears to confirm the understanding we have presented. For it would be unnecessary if he were talking about the only Logos of God and person of the Son to immediately add “*and from Jesus Christ*” in order to show him (as distinct) from the other one, (since) the expressions which befit God equally honor and are appropriate to each of the divine persons,<sup>70</sup> and are common to the three, except for their distinctive properties, that is to say, the relationships<sup>71</sup> (between them), as said by Gregory the Theologian,<sup>72</sup> and except for the Incarnation of the Logos. (This is)

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<sup>67</sup> *Or.* 29.17.

<sup>68</sup> *Rev.* 1:8.

<sup>69</sup> παντοκράτωρ, sometimes translated “the Almighty.” Παντοκράτωρ is an important title for Christ in the Eastern Christian tradition and it is also the name specifically designated for the icon which depicts Christ in the dome or on the ceiling in most Orthodox Churches overlooking the faithful in the nave.

<sup>70</sup> Andrew confirms that the description of the “One who is, who was and who is to come” can be used of any of the three members of the Trinity since they are equally God and share the same divine nature. However, defending his interpretation against that of Oikoumenios, he notes that *here specifically* the context indicates that the phrase is used for the Father alone.

<sup>71</sup> σχέσεων, possibly thinking of Gregory’s *Oration* 29.16 (PG 36, 96B. See also *Or.* 29.12, PG 36 89C, and 29.5 PG 36, 80B). The word σχέσις “relationship” was used by Gregory and other Fathers to distinguish the persons of the Trinity. The three members of the Trinity are one God because they have the same nature, however, they are recognized as three distinct “persons” based on their “relationships.” That is, the Father alone is “Unoriginate” and the “Source” of the Godhead. This is what distinguishes him as “Father” since all three are in every respect equal in divinity. The Son is “begotten” of the Father. This relationship to the Father is that which makes him the “Son.” The Spirit “proceeds” eternally from the Father, which is the Spirit’s distinctive property. The “confusion” of these relationships by the introduction of the Filioque is what underlies the debate about the Filioque between the Christian East and West. “Filioque,” Latin for the words “and the Son,” is a phrase which was added to the Nicene Creed in the Latin West, changing the Creed to state that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father *and the Son.*” Orthodox Christians not only object to the fact that something was added to the Creed, but also object because the phrase changes the Trinitarian theology, confusing the “relationships” and resulting in the members of the Trinity losing their “distinctive properties.” The Filioque was not an issue in Andrew’s time, however, his use of the terminology of “relationships” demonstrates how fundamental this concept was in Eastern theology and how his knowledge of theology interacts with his exegesis.

<sup>72</sup> *Or.* 30.19, (PG 36, 128C), “The personal name of the Unoriginate is ‘Father,’ of the eternally begotten, ‘Son,’ [and] of what has issued, or proceeds without generation, ‘the Holy Spirit.’” *Faith Gives Fullness to*



also clear<sup>73</sup> from the things from which we learn, that in the Gospel thrice-holy hymn of the Seraphim<sup>74</sup> is said about the Son;<sup>75</sup> in the speech of Paul in the Acts (it is said) about the Holy Spirit,<sup>76</sup> and, then in the offering of the awesome mysteries (it is said) about the Father, to whom we are accustomed to say this prayer,<sup>77</sup> as the blessed Epiphanius [16] says in his

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*Reasoning: Five Theological Orations of Gregory Nazianzen*, trans. Frederick W. Norris, Lionel Wickham and Frederick Williams (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), 275.

<sup>73</sup> Andrew continues his argument explaining how “is, was, and is to come” refers to all three members of the Trinity. Even though he has rejected the interpretation by Oikoumenios here, by the examples which follow, he explains how such expressions are properly applied to all three persons together and also apply to each one individually because they share the same nature and because of the unity of the divine will and purpose. What follows is a very good example of patristic exegetical technique. Because the phrase can be *theologically* applied to all three, he had allowed Oikoumenios’ interpretation to stand, shown by not plainly rejecting it and by prefacing the interpretation of the seven spirits with the words “it is possible.” (*Chp. 1, Text 13, Comm. 14*)

<sup>74</sup> τρισάγιον. The *Trisagion* hymn to which Andrew refers is “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.” The *Trisagion* is used with great frequency as a hymn and as a spoken prayer in nearly every type of service in the Orthodox Church and is based on Isa. 6:3, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty.” The word παντοκράτωρ is not used of Christ until Rev. 1:8, which Andrew knows but anticipates here. The reference in 1:5 to Christ as “ruler of the kings of the earth” leads Andrew to anticipate the reference to Christ as Ruler of All – παντοκράτωρ – in 1:8. Then, by word association, this brings him to the passage in Isaiah referring to the thrice-holy hymn. The hymn of the seraphim in the book of Isaiah is followed by the call of Isaiah (6:9-10) in which the Lord tells him, “Go and say to these people, ‘Keep listening but do not comprehend, keep looking but do not understand. Make the mind of this people dull and stop their ears and shut their eyes so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed.’” This leads Andrew to the quotation of that Isaiah passage by *Christ* in Matt. 13:13-15 (Mark 4:12). In this way, Andrew links the two passages together and applies the thrice-holy hymn and the title παντοκράτωρ to Christ. Although in fact, the phrase *holy, holy, holy* is not literally “in the gospel,” Andrew has “found” it there implicitly, having linked the Isaiah passage to the gospel by this chain of word and concept associations, a common patristic technique.

<sup>75</sup> Matt. 13:13-15 (Mark 4:12), as explained in the previous footnote.

<sup>76</sup> Again, it is evident how word association results in this explanation. Near the end of the Acts of the Apostles, Paul states, “The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah...” (Acts 28:25) and then quotes Isa. 6:9-10 (see above in fn 74) as fulfilled prophecy. Andrew again links this passage from the call of Isaiah to the hymn of the (*holy, holy, holy*) which precedes it in Isaiah, thereby attributing the hymn of the seraphim to the Holy Spirit.

<sup>77</sup> This is an even more interesting example of patristic technique since Andrew makes his case by alluding to a prayer during the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. It is easy to forget that Andrew is still explaining how the words “is, was and is to come” apply to all three members of the Trinity separately. Here, Andrew makes the case that the phrase can apply to the Father alone, not from any *scriptural* word association, but from a *liturgical* association, because liturgically the prayer accompanying the hymn *Holy, Holy, Holy* is addressed to the Father. While the choir sings the hymn which begins, “Holy, holy, holy Lord of Sabaoth...”, the priest quietly recites a prayer to the Father which begins, “With these blessed powers, we also, O Master who loves mankind, also say: Holy art Thou and all-holy, thou and thy only-begotten Son and thy All-Holy Spirit. Holy art Thou and all-holy and magnificent is Thy glory...” This prayer is recited in anticipation of the Words of Institution which come immediately thereafter and which are followed by the prayer of *Epiclesis*, in which the priest prays that the offered bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ, the “awesome mysteries,” to which Andrew refers. With this Andrew has concluded his demonstration that the term “is, was and is to come” can apply to Christ and to the Spirit, but maintains that it is not being said of them *here*, in verse 4.

Homily “*On the Holy Spirit*.”<sup>78</sup> (We say) these things to show that our own understanding does not contradict the patristic voices,<sup>79</sup> and also, with God’s help, we continue.

*Rev. 1:5b-6 To the one who loved us and freed us from our sins by his blood,<sup>6</sup> and made us kings and priests to God and his Father. Glory and dominion to him to the ages of ages. Amen.*

The glory belonged to him, it says, who freed us through love from the bondage of death, and (who) washed the stains of sin through the outpouring of his life-giving blood and water.<sup>80</sup> And he has made us *a royal priesthood*,<sup>81</sup> instead of (offering) irrational sacrifices (of animals) we have offered *rational worship*<sup>82</sup> as a living sacrifice to the Father.

<sup>78</sup> Andrew cites a work by Epiphanius which is no longer extant. A great many books were lost after the sixth century in the Persian and Arab invasions. (See Cyril Mango, “The Revival of Learning,” *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, Cyril Mango, ed. [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002], 219.) The reference here to the *Trisagion* hymn and Andrew’s defense of it as an acclamation to the Holy Trinity, a view which he supports by referencing Epiphanius’ work, is most certainly a response to Oikoumenios’ statement that the *Trisagion* hymn is directed toward Christ alone (2.13.1). This was a point of contention between the Monophysites and the Chalcedonian Christians. See *Thesis* 1.4.3.

<sup>79</sup> Andrew is extremely careful not to appear to be contradicting established patristic opinion, unlike Oikoumenios, he implies.

<sup>80</sup> Interestingly, Andrew adds a reference to “water,” which is not found in the verse on which he is commenting. It is most likely linked to John 19:34, describing the piercing of Christ’s side with a spear, “out of which flowed blood and water.” This was traditionally interpreted as a sign of Baptism and Eucharist, both of which are understood as bestowing forgiveness of sin, which is probably the reason for the connection in Andrew’s mind here.

<sup>81</sup> 1 Pet. 2:9. See also 1 Pet. 2:5, which Andrew no doubt has in mind, since in 1 Pet. 2:5 these two concepts are expressly linked: “Be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God.”

<sup>82</sup> λογικὴν λατρείαν (Rom. 12:1). Early in the history of the Church, Christians sharply contrasted their liturgical practices with the animal sacrifices of the Jews prescribed by the Law of Moses. Since Christian worship never involved the sacrifice of animals, the Christian liturgy was said to be a “rational” sacrifice, that is, a “spiritual sacrifice” as opposed to the bloody, physical sacrifice of animals. Thus, the Christian “sacrifice” was often referred to as the “bloodless” sacrifice. This tradition began early and is clearly reflected in Hebrews. (See Heb. 7:26-27, 8:3-6, and 9:11-15.) Christians considered their “spiritual worship” superior to that of the Jews, believing that Jewish worship, characterized by the complex regulations of the Mosaic Law and the slaughter of animals, belonged to the Old Covenant which had been fulfilled and superseded by Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. Christian worship represented the “new dispensation.” Christians believed that the destruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 C.E. was confirmation that the New Covenant had been inaugurated, as well as the fulfillment of both Christ’s prophecy of its destruction (Matt. 24:2, Mark 13:2, Luke 21:6) and his statement to the Samaritan woman that in the future people would worship God “in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:23)

[17] *Rev. 1:7 Behold he comes with the clouds and every eye will see him, and the ones who pierced him, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over him. Yes, Amen.*

Here, it says, he who has been slain as a lamb will come upon the clouds as a judge in the Fatherly glory.<sup>83</sup> Either the bodiless powers<sup>84</sup> are implied by the clouds,<sup>85</sup> or those (clouds) which covered him on Mount Tabor with his holy disciples.<sup>86</sup> When he comes in glory every eye will see him. Those who pierced him and all the tribes of earth which persisted in their unbelief will mourn. *Yes, amen*, instead of “by all means.”<sup>87</sup> Thus he meant the same thing both in the Greek and Hebrew tongue, for “*amen*” is translated “let it be so.”<sup>88</sup>

*Rev. 1:8 I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, says the Lord God, the one who is, and who was and who is to come, the ruler of all.*

Christ is shown here both as God<sup>89</sup> and as the ruler of all things, both beginningless and at the same time endless, existing now and existing before and having no end, since he is

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<sup>83</sup> See Matt. 24:30-31, “Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call...” (See Luke 9:26, 21:27, Matt. 16:27, Mark 13:26 and Matt. 25:31 for similar references to Jesus coming in glory with the angels in an eschatological context. See Matt. 26:64, Mark 14:62 for a comparable statement by Jesus at his trial.) The *Didache* also expresses the early Christian belief in this eschatological scenario: “The Lord shall come and all his saints with Him. Then shall the world see the Lord’s coming upon the clouds of heaven.” *Didache* 16.3-8. *The Apostolic Fathers*, eds and trans. J.B. Lightfoot and J.R. Harner (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, reprinted 1989), 235.

<sup>84</sup> The angels are often referred to in patristic prayers and literature as the “bodiless powers.” Here in Rev. 1:7, there is no reference to the angels, but the numerous instances which refer to the presence of both angels and clouds in the appearance of the Son of Man (see footnote 83 above) may have led to this association in which the clouds are the angels, as opposed to the clouds representing of the presence of God, which is the case in the biblical theophanies. God is also described in the Old Testament as “riding” on the angels. See Ps. 18(17):10 and Ezek. 1:4.

<sup>85</sup> This is Oikoumenios’ interpretation, which he arrives at allegorically (1.15.2).

<sup>86</sup> This conclusion is probably drawn from the context in which two of the references above appear. Matt. 16:27 and Mark 8:37 contain a prediction by Jesus that the Son of Man will come in glory with the angels. The statement is made just prior to the transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor in which the voice of the Father spoke out of a cloud (Matt. 17:5, Mark 9:7).

<sup>87</sup> Πάντως

<sup>88</sup> Γένοιτο. Oikoumenios simply remarks that it means the same thing as “yes.” In other words, it also expresses assent. Andrew is more exacting and actually translates the word “amen” for his reader to its Greek equivalent.

<sup>89</sup> Now the phrase *is, was and is to come* is applied to the Son, not to the Father. Because of its powerful potential in Christological debates, this particular verse was among the most popular citations of Revelation by the Fathers. The Apocalypse was cited far less frequently than other New Testament books because of its

[18] coeternal with the Father, and on account of this he will render to each one the wages of deeds done.<sup>90</sup>

*Rev. 1:9 I, John, your brother and co-participant in the tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the witness of Jesus.*

“In as much as (I am) *your brother*,” he says, “being also a *co-participant in the tribulations* on account of Christ, I naturally have acquired trustworthiness among you. Being condemned to live on the island of Patmos *on account of the witness of Jesus*, I will announce to you the mysteries seen by me on it.”

## CHAPTER 2

### The Vision in Which He Saw the Lord in the Midst of the Seven Golden Lamps Clothed in a Long Robe

*Rev. 1:10-11 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet <sup>11</sup>saying, "I am the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, and [19] write what you see in a book and send (it) to the seven churches in Ephesus and in Smyrna and in Pergamum and in Thyatira and in Sardis and in Philadelphia and in Laodicea.*

Having been possessed by the Holy Spirit and having a spiritual ear on the Lord's day, even though this (day) was being honored by him on account of the resurrection, he heard a voice that seemed like a trumpet due to the loud sound — *the sound of their voice*

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unusual content. However, this verse was among the most popular especially in dogmatic works defending the divinity of Christ. For example, Origen cited this verse to prove that Christ was with the Father in the beginning and shares the glory of the Father. “And that you may understand that the omnipotence of Father and Son is one and the same, as God and the Lord are one and the same with the Father, listen to the manner in which John speaks in the Apocalypse: ‘Thus saith the Lord God, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.’ For who else was ‘He who is to come’ than Christ?” (*Prin.* 2.10, trans. Frederick Crombie, *Fathers of the Third Century*, Ante-Nicene Fathers of the Church series vol. IV [Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted 1989], 250.) It was in this context that Gregory the Theologian cited this verse as part of a string of verses supporting the divinity of the Son against the Arian heresy (*Or.* 29.17). Other favorite Apocalypse passages in early Christian writings were Rev. 14:4, (the reference to “the 144,000 virgins who follow the Lamb wherever he goes”), not uncommonly found in patristic writings lauding virginity, and Rev. 4:6-7, the description of the four animals by the throne which came to be identified with the four evangelists.

<sup>90</sup> Having linked the clouds to the angels in the previous verse through Matt. 16:27, this naturally leads Andrew to the concept of judgment which will occur with after Christ returns with the angels: “For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father and then he will repay everyone for what he has done.” The general concept of “repaying” each person for his/her deeds is found in many places in the Bible, including Ps. 62(61):12, Prov. 24:12, Wisd. of Sol. 16:14, Rom. 2:6, and 1 Cor. 5:10.

went out to all the earth<sup>91</sup> — declaring the beginninglessness and endlessness of God signified by the Alpha and Omega. By it he was commanded to send out his visions to the seven churches, because of the aforementioned number seven coming down to the Sabbath period of the future age.<sup>92</sup> For this reason also the great Irenaeus had written that the seven heavens and seven angels leading of the rest of them had been created by God first.<sup>93</sup>

*Rev. 1:12-13 And I turned to see the voice which had spoken to me. And turning I saw seven gold lampstands, <sup>13</sup>and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man clothed in a long robe and around his breasts a golden belt.*

[20] That the voice which he heard was not sensory he signifies (by) saying, *I turned*, not to hear it, but *to see the voice*, for spiritual hearing and seeing are the same.<sup>94</sup> *I turned*, he says, and *I saw seven lampstands* — which he understood as representing the

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<sup>91</sup> Ps. 19(18):4, Rom. 10:18b.

<sup>92</sup> This is the second time that “seven churches of Asia” have been mentioned (previously in Rev. 1:4), yet Oikoumenios again was silent about the strong ecclesiastical tradition identifying the seven churches with the Church in its entirety, as detailed in footnote 53 above. Oikoumenios passes over the important detail that John is addressing “the churches” and instead only remarks, “There are more cities in Asia than these, but he is ordered to write to those converted by him, and which had already received the faith of Christ.” (Oik. 1.25, Suggit 28.)

<sup>93</sup> Josef Schmid has footnoted here in the critical text (*Chp. 2, Text 19, line 12-13*) that what Andrew seems to be reporting as the opinion of Irenaeus, (which would later be copied by Epiphanius), is really the teaching of the Valentinians. Schmid cites Irenaeus *Heres. 1.5.2* as the passage Andrew has in mind. But Schmid is incorrect. Andrew is not erroneously citing Valentinian teachings as those of Irenaeus. In the passage which Schmid believes Andrew to be referencing, Irenaeus does indeed discuss the Valentinian belief that there are seven heavens which the Valentinians believe to be intelligible beings, that is, seven angels. But the Irenaeus passage which Schmid ascribes as Andrew’s citation contains many references to Gnostic terms, such as Achamoth, Pleroma, Ogdoad, Demiurge, etc. It would be impossible for Andrew to have read this passage and confused the teachings of Irenaeus with those of Valentinus, especially with so much Gnostic terminology present. It is obvious here that Andrew is not equating the heavens with angels. He is simply stating a common Christian belief in the existence of seven heavens and seven leading angels. Andrew is probably referencing a different passage of Irenaeus than the one Schmid cites, *Proof of Apostolic Preaching 9*, which mentions seven heavens and various types of angels serving God. This is confirmed later when Andrew refers back to this passage and refers only to the “seven angels who surpass the others or the activity of the life giving Spirit, which Isaiah had recalled.” This is exactly what Irenaeus is discussing in *Proof 9* and there Irenaeus also quotes from Isaiah, further demonstrating that this is the passage which Andrew had in mind. (See *Chp. 10 line 4, Text 50, Comm. 59, fn 257.*)

<sup>94</sup> Even here, in a passage which easily lends itself to a literal interpretation, Andrew refrains from suggesting that John experienced a corporeal event. Andrew understands that the text is expressing an entirely spiritual occurrence with language drawn from familiar sensory experiences.

churches — and in their midst Christ, resembling a man<sup>95</sup> — because he is also God and not a mere man — clothed in a long garment<sup>96</sup> as a high priest of the things above, according to the order of Melchizedek.<sup>97</sup> A golden belt was wrapped around him, not on the hip like other men as in the era of hedonisms — the divine flesh is inaccessible to these — but on the chest by the breasts (to show) also how the boundless and righteous divine anger is restrained by love for mankind.<sup>98</sup> The truth is shown in the girding of the Master's breasts, that is, the two testaments, through which the faithful are nourished.<sup>99</sup> The belt is gold on account of honor, purity and genuineness.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Although the text reads “like a *son of man*,” Andrew does not mention the words “son of” in his interpretation nor its obvious parallel to Daniel 7:13 which also uses the expression “like a son of man.” (LXX: ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου.) The entire description here in Revelation is influenced by Dan. 7:9-10. It is possible, and it seems to be the case, that Andrew ignores the words “son of” because he knows that the expression “son of man” from the Old Testament means simply “human being.” (See Ezekiel, where the expression is frequently used in that manner, for example, Ezek. 2:1, 3:1, 4:1, 11:2.) Perhaps because of this, Andrew focuses more on the word ὁμοιον, “resembling” or “like,” insisting that “like” does not mean that Christ was not *in fact* a man, only that he was not *merely* a man.

<sup>96</sup> Literally, “to the feet.” Irenaeus interprets the description of the long robe as a reference to the priesthood of Christ. *Heres.* 4.20.11.

<sup>97</sup> Ps. 110(109):4. “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” The patristic interpretation of this psalm as a messianic prophecy may derive from Jesus himself having cited it in his disputes with the Pharisees. (See Matt. 22:44, “The Lord said to my lord, ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.’”) The psalm, although short, combines images of kingship, judgment, authority, and priesthood. Andrew’s comments also allude to Hebrews, which depicts Christ as the high priest in heaven, although Hebrews does not specifically describe Christ’s appearance.

<sup>98</sup> φιλανθρωπία. The unusual placement of the belt, which symbolizes self-control, expresses the love of God, restraining his judgment against humanity. Jerome interprets the placement as expressing the need for the inner restraint of the thoughts, which is something Christ expects from all, not simply the avoidance of sinful deeds. Recalling the leather belt worn by John the Baptist, Jerome states that to wear the belt around the waist represents the Law, since Jews believed that to sin by action was the only type of sin. “On the other hand, in the Apocalypse of John, our Lord Jesus, who is seen amidst the seven lamp stands, also wore a girdle, a golden girdle, not about his loins, but about the breasts. The Law is girdled about the loins; but Christ, that is, the Gospel and the fortitude of monks, is binding, not only in wanton passion, but also in mind and heart. In the Gospel, it behooves one not even to think evil; in the Law, the fornicator is accused for judgment.” (*Hom.* 75.1, “On the Beginning of the Gospel of Mark.” *Homilies of St. Jerome*, vol. 2, trans. Marie Ligouri Ewald, Fathers of the Church series, vol. 48 and 57, [Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1964-66], 57:125-26.) Jerome may have been influenced by Victorinus, (“the golden girdle bound around His breast indicates the enlightened conscience...” Vic. 1.13, ANF 7:344), and both of them seem to have influenced Gregory the Great: “For to ‘gird up the loins’ of the flesh is to withhold lust from accomplishment, but to ‘gird up the loins of the mind’ is to restrain it from the imagining thereof as well. Hence it is that the Angel who addresses John is described as being ‘girt above the paps with a golden girdle.’ For because the purity of the New Testament puts restraint upon lust of the heart likewise, the Angel who appeared therein, came ‘girt’ in the breast.” *Morals* 21.2(5), LF 21:518.

<sup>99</sup> The modern reader might find such a conclusion surprising, but it is hardly so. A number of factors combine to lead Andrew to conclude that the breasts represent the Scriptures and the milk by which Christ feeds the faithful. First, the symbolic meaning of the number two, which is frequently interpreted by the Fathers as a



*Rev. 1:14 His head and his hair were as white wool, as snow, and his eyes as a flame of fire.*

For even though he is recent amidst us, nonetheless he is ancient, rather, he is before time. His white hair is a symbol of this.<sup>101</sup> And *his eyes are as of fire*, on the one hand, illuminating those who are holy and, on the other hand burning the sacrilegious.

*Rev. 1:15a And his feet were like glowing brass, red-hot as in a furnace.*

[21] The divine Gregory<sup>102</sup> also understood that the feet meant the divine condescension<sup>103</sup> through the flesh. For his feet by treading on the divinity achieved our

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reference to the Old and New Testaments. (See *Comm.* 27, fn 113 for Rev. 1:16 below, in which the “two-edged sword” is routinely interpreted as the two Testaments.) Secondly, the association of this passage with Hebrews contributes to this interpretation. After Hebrews introduces the concept of Jesus as the great high priest (4:14) it compares divine teachings (the “oracles of God”) to milk (Heb. 5:12). The Scriptures are often referred to as the “oracles of God” by the Fathers, because of Paul’s comment “In the first place, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God.” (Rom. 3:2) An example of how easily this association is made is observable in Clement of Alexandria. Explaining what it means to be children of God, he begins by citing scriptural references to “milk” and its allegorical meaning as spiritual food. Despite Paul’s use of “milk” as a metaphor to suggest *immaturity* in the faith (“I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food.” 1 Cor. 3:2), Clement concludes that if infancy is the beginning of faith in Christ, then milk cannot be disparaged as childish and imperfect. Therefore, milk stands for perfect spiritual nourishment, simple, true and natural. Since Paul is teaching the Corinthians about Christ, he is “nourishing” them with Christ, the milk of the Word and Clement combines this with a rather improbable quotation from Revelation, but one which implies perfection: “Rightly, therefore, the Lord again promises milk to the righteous, that the Word may be clearly shown to be both, ‘the Alpha and Omega, beginning and end’ the Word being figuratively represented as milk.” *Instructor* 1.6. *The Instructor*, trans. William Wilson, *Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus and Clement of Alexandria*, Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. II, eds. Alexander Robertson and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1989), 218. See Victorinus, who also interpreted the breasts as the two testaments. (Vic. 1.13, ANF 7:344)

<sup>100</sup> Oikoumenios also interprets the description of the long robe and belt as a depiction of Christ as the high priest, but he focuses on how the girdle is composed of gold rather than the embroidered cloth belts worn by Jewish priests. He concludes that this represents “the difference between the shadow of the law and the truth shown by the new girdle.” (Oik. 1.27.8, Suggit 30.) Oikoumenios does not comment on the unusual placement of the belt around the chest.

<sup>101</sup> The similarity of this figure to the “Ancient of Days” in Daniel 7:9 is very obvious, and the association was clearly intended by the author of Revelation. Although not specifically referenced by Andrew, his comments show that Andrew has the Daniel passage in mind. This correlation is entirely missed by Oikoumenios, along with the proper understanding of the white hair, which Oikoumenios interprets as God’s secret purpose and intention in Christ which had been kept hidden through the past ages. (Oik. 1.27.9) Victorinus offers a very peculiar interpretation: “in the white hairs is the multitude of abbots like to wool, in respect of simple sheep; to snow, in respect of the innumerable crowd of candidates taught from heaven.” (Vic. 1.14, ANF 7:344) Caesarius of Arles expands on this and believes the white hair represents the newly baptized, who are the sheep of Christ. *Exposition of the Apocalypse Hom. 1. L’Apocalypse expliquée par Césaire d’Arles*, trans. Joël Courreau, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1989), 37-8.

<sup>102</sup> This reference may be to Gregory Nazianzen, but the precise passage Andrew has in mind cannot be determined.

<sup>103</sup> οἰκονομία.

salvation. The feet are also the foundations of the Church,<sup>104</sup> *like glowing brass*,<sup>105</sup> which doctors say is a sweet-smelling incense, which they called masculine incense.<sup>106</sup> Or otherwise: On the one hand, meaning the human nature by the glowing brass, and on the other hand the divine nature by the incense, through which is also shown the sweetness of the faith and the unconfused union (of the two natures of Christ). Or the fine brass signifies the beautiful melody of the gospel proclamation<sup>107</sup> and the incense (is) the return of the nations by which the bride is summoned.<sup>108</sup> And the feet of Christ are also the apostles<sup>109</sup> who have been tested by fire in the furnace of trials in imitation of their Teacher.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Oik. 1.27.12-13.

<sup>105</sup> χαλκολιβάνω. The first half of the word, χαλκός, means “copper” or “brass.” The verb form, χαλκεύω, means “to forge.” The second half of the word, λίβανος, means “incense” or “frankincense.” The combination of these two unlikely components into one word accounts for Andrew’s multiple and varied interpretations.

<sup>106</sup> Also noted by Oikoumenios (Oik. 1.27.12) and Dioscorides (*De materia medica*, 1.68). Dioscorides, (also spelled “Dioscurides”), a first century Greek physician, wrote an extensive treatise, *Περὶ Ἰατρικῆς*, consisting of five books describing the pharmacological effects of more than 700 plants, 1,000 drugs and other substances used by medical practitioners in his time for healing based on his clinical observations. It was translated into Latin and remained in use until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Ludwig Edelstein, “Pedanius Dioscorides,” *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., eds. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 483.

<sup>107</sup> κήρυγμα, the typical word for both the preaching of gospel and the basic message itself. Brass is connected in Andrew’s mind to the proclamation of the gospel because bronze or brass was used to manufacture bells. From large church bells down to the twelve tiny bells found on liturgical objects such as censers and on the robes of a bishop, liturgically bells symbolize the apostolic preaching. The verse “Their voice has gone out over all the earth” (Ps. 19:4) is often quoted in recollection of the kerygmatic work of the apostles in Orthodox prayers and hymns.

<sup>108</sup> Song of Sol. 4:8, “Come from Libanus, my bride.” (LXX: Δεῦρο ἀπὸ Λιβάνου νύμφη.) As explained above (fn 105) the word χαλκολιβάνον, meaning “fine brass” or “glowing brass,” contains components from the words for both “burning brass” and “incense.” Combining these, Andrew is reminded of burning incense and an interpretation of the Song of Songs. Many Fathers interpreted the Song of Songs allegorically as a love poem between God and the soul, which here is metaphorically described as a bride. The bride is also the Church (Rev. 21:2, Eph. 5:32) by which the nations come to God. Gregory of Nyssa interprets the bride’s perfume as the gospel preaching. “[T]he mystery of truth presented by the Gospel is alone sweet smelling to God. It transcends every scent of the Law because no longer being hidden by symbol nor shadow, it openly yields the good scent of truth”. *Hom. 9* (on Song of Sol. 4:10). *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, trans. Casimir McCambley (Brookline, MA: Hellenic College Press, 1987), 173.

<sup>109</sup> The “feet” of Christ are the apostles since the apostles carried the gospel message to the world by walking from place to place. “As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace.” (Eph. 6:15) “How are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news.’” (Rom. 10:15, citing Isa. 52:7.)

<sup>110</sup> 1 Pet. 4:12.



*Rev. 1:15b And his voice (was) like the sound of many waters.*

Naturally. His voice is in common with that of the Spirit from which *rivers of living water flowed from the belly* of the faithful and made a penetrating sound over all the earth.<sup>111</sup>

*Rev. 1:16 And having in his right hand seven stars and coming out from his mouth a sharp, double-edged sword and his appearance (was) like the sun shines in its power.*

[22] Farther down, he says, the seven stars are the seven angels of the churches. The *sharp double-edged sword*<sup>112</sup> means his decision against the wicked, *sharper than any two-edged sword*, or the sword of the Spirit circumcising our inner man.<sup>113</sup> *Like the sun* his face shines, not in a splendor (appearing) to the senses, but (appearing) to the intellect. For he is the *sun of righteousness*<sup>114</sup> shining with his own power and authority, not

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<sup>111</sup> John 7:38. Oikoumenios sees the “sound of many waters” as an image of power due to the loud volume (Oik. 1.15). Andrew disagrees however, and relates it to the “rivers of living water” which in the gospel of John is identified with the Holy Spirit (John 7:38-39). A time-honored patristic tradition routinely identified water with the Holy Spirit because of their close association in the sacrament of baptism. “The many waters are understood to be many peoples, or the gift of baptism that He sent forth by the apostles.” (Vic. 1.15, ANF 7:345) Irenaeus likewise identifies the water with the Spirit: “[A]lso does John declare in the Apocalypse, ‘And His voice as the sound of many waters.’ For the Spirit [of God] is truly [like] many waters.” (*Heres.* 4.14.2 ANF 1:479)

<sup>112</sup> In Heb. 4:12, the word of God is a sharp two-edged sword which judges thoughts and intentions.

<sup>113</sup> In Eph. 6:17 the “sword of the Spirit” is the word of God. (See Rom. 2:29 for the “spiritual” circumcision of the heart.) Tertullian commented: “Now the Apostle John, in the Apocalypse, describes a sword which proceeded from the mouth of God as a ‘doubly sharp, two-edged one.’ This may be understood to be the Divine Word, who is doubly edged with the two testaments of the law and the gospel – sharpened with wisdom, hostile to the devil, arming us against the spiritual enemies of all wickedness and concupiscence, and cutting us off from the dearest objects for the sake of God’s holy name.” (*Marc.* 3.14, ANF 3:147.) “By the twice-sharpened sword going forth out of His mouth is shown, that it is He Himself who has both now declared the word of the Gospel, and previously by Moses declared the knowledge of the law to the whole world. But because from the same word, as well of the New as of the Old Testament, He will assert Himself upon the whole human race, therefore He is spoken of as two-edged.” (Vic. 1.16, ANF 7:345) Fulgentius, an early sixth century ecclesiastical writer, actually uses this passage to support the Latin doctrine of the Filioque, associating the sword with the Spirit, coming from the breath of Christ out of his mouth: “Hold most firmly and never doubt that the same Holy Spirit, who is the one spirit of the Father and the Son, proceeds from the Father and the Son....The one son of God himself, showing who the Spirit of his mouth is, after his resurrection, breathing on his disciples, says, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’ (John 20:22). ‘From the mouth,’ indeed, of the Lord Jesus himself, says John in the Apocalypse, ‘a sharp, two-edged sword came forth.’ The very Spirit of his mouth is the sword itself which comes forth from his mouth.” (Fulgentius, *To Peter on the Faith*, 11.54. *Fulgentius: Selected Works*, trans. Robert B. Eno, ed. Thomas P. Halton. Fathers of the Church series, vol. 95 (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 1997), 93-94.

<sup>114</sup> Mal. 4:2. The “sun of righteousness” (ὁ ἥλιος τῆς δικαιοσύνης) was a well-known title for Christ in the ancient tradition, and remains common among Eastern Christians especially in the hymnology of Christmas. Christians identified Christ with the sun especially as a challenge to the worship of the sun god, Sol Invictus, (“Invincible Sun”), a popular deity in the Greco-Roman world during the third and fourth centuries. Christians

like the sensory sun which (shines) as a created object by God-given power and divine command.

*Rev. 1:17-18a And when I saw him I fell down at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me saying, "Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last,<sup>18</sup> and the living one. And I became dead, and behold I am living unto the ages of ages. Amen.*

Christ revived the Apostle himself who had died through the weakness of human nature like Joshua son of Nun<sup>115</sup> and Daniel<sup>116</sup> by saying to him, "Do not fear, for I have not come near to kill you, since I am beginningless and endless, having become dead for your sakes."

*Rev. 1:18b And I have the keys of Hades and of death.*

[23] Instead (of being dead), he has authority over bodily and spiritual death.

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asserted instead that *Christ* is the Sun, but moreover a Sun of Righteousness, no doubt inspired by the Fourth gospel which describes Christ as "the true light which enlightens everyone who comes into the world" (John 1:9). (See Cyprian, for example, *Treatise On the Lord's Prayer* 35. *The Treatises of Cyprian*, treatise IV, *On the Lord's Prayer*, trans. Ernest Wallis, *The Fathers of the Third Century: Hippolytus, Cyprian, Caius, Novatian*. Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. V, eds. Alexander Robertson and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1990), 457.) Many factors led to this association of Christ as the Sun of Righteousness. Christ was identified with wisdom and enlightenment, and baptism was usually referred to as "Holy Illumination." Christians customarily faced east to pray, the place where the sun rises, hence, the place of light. Constantine the Great, originally a devotee of Sol Invictus, set aside the first day of the week for worship and called it *Sunday*, which was also the day on which Christians gathered to remember the resurrection of Christ. (About early Christian use of sun and moon imagery, see *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery*, Hugo Rahner, Brian Battershaw, trans. [New York: Harper and Row, 1963].) Oikoumenios and Andrew both connect this description to the concept of Christ as the Sun of Righteousness, however Oikoumenios interprets the depiction of the sun shining "in its power" to mean that Christ is spiritually perceived (Oik. 1.27.20). Andrew agrees that "in its power" is not a literal description, but contends that it is a reference to the divinity of Christ. Christ shines by virtue of his own power as the uncreated God, who is Light, unlike the physical sun which is a created object and not the ultimate source of light. The same sentiment was expressed by Andrew's predecessor, Basil the Great: "If the sun, subject to corruption, is so beautiful, so grand, so rapid in its movement, so invariable in its course; if its grandeur is in such perfect harmony with and due proportion to the universe: if, by the beauty of its nature, it shines like a brilliant eye in the middle of creation; if finally, one cannot tire of contemplating it, what will be the beauty of the Sun of Righteousness? If the blind man suffers from not seeing the material sun, what a deprivation is it for the sinner not to enjoy the true light!" (*On the Six Days of Creation* 6.1. *Basil: Letters and Select Works*, trans. Bloomfield Jackson, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Church 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vol. VIII (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, reprinted 1989), 224.)

<sup>115</sup> Josh. 5:14.

<sup>116</sup> Dan. 8:17, 10:9-12.

*Rev. 1:19 - 20* <sup>19</sup>Write, therefore, what you saw, the things that are and the things that are to come in the future after these things. <sup>20</sup>The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.”

Since Christ is the *true light*,<sup>117</sup> because of this, those abundant with his light are lamps as they shine in the night of this present life. Naturally, the churches are called *lampstands*, which as the luminaries *have the word of life*<sup>118</sup> according to the Apostle.<sup>119</sup> The lamps and lampstands are gold due to the honor and purity of the faith in them. An angel has stood guard for each of these (churches), just as the Lord says.<sup>120</sup> And, Gregory the Theologian had understood the present chapter: he figuratively called them “stars” due to the brightness and clarity of their nature.<sup>121</sup>

[24]

## CHAPTER 3

The Things that had been Written to the Angel of the Church of the Ephesians

*Rev. 2:1* To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: “Thus says the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.

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<sup>117</sup> John 1:9.

<sup>118</sup> Phil. 2:16.

<sup>119</sup> Andrew identifies the churches themselves as luminaries like the stars because the Church illumines the darkness, the “night” of this life. He arrives at this interpretation by associating stars and light here with Paul’s reference to the faithful as stars due to their devotion to the ‘word of life,’ Christ. “[B]e blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world. It is by your holding fast to the word of life that I can boast...” (Phil. 2:15-16)

<sup>120</sup> Matt. 18:10. “Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven.”

<sup>121</sup> *Or.* 42.9. There is no reference to “stars” in Gregory’s comments, but Andrew makes the connection because of the association of angels with the churches. Gregory stated: “And to the presiding Angels, for I believe, as John tells me in his Revelation, each Church has a guardian.” *Select Orations of St. Gregory Nazianze*, trans. Charles Gordon Brown and James Edward Swallow, eds. Phillip Schaff and Henry Wace, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vol. VII (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1989), 389.

He discourses with the Church through the angel<sup>122</sup> just as if he were an educator (speaking) to the one being instructed. For the teacher is familiar with the things produced by the student, and states either the grounds for complaint or the achievements, as he urges the student to imitate himself. By the seven stars, the decoration lying in the right hand of Christ that is, is probably meant the angels, the seven rational orders in heaven,<sup>123</sup> (as) in the statements by the blessed Irenaeus and Epiphanius,<sup>124</sup> in which *he is also walking*<sup>125</sup> *in the ends of the earth*<sup>126</sup> and *in the midst of the churches* according to his familiar promise.

*Rev. 2:2-5a* <sup>2</sup>*I know your works and your toil and your patience and that you cannot bear evil, and you have tested those calling themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them false.* <sup>3</sup>*And you have endurance and patience on account of my name and did not grow weary.* <sup>4</sup>*But I have against you that you have left your first love.* <sup>5a</sup>*Remember, therefore, [25] from where you fell and repent and do the works (you did at) first.*

Accepting the church in two ways, he reprimands it in one way. He has put the one (reprimand) in the middle and the achievements on either side.<sup>127</sup> He praised the hard work

<sup>122</sup> Oikoumenios believes the “angel” of each church is a metaphor for the church itself, reasoning that none of the angels have committed sins for which they need to be reprimanded (Oik. 2.3). Augustine also believed that the “angels” of the churches cannot be actual angels for the same reason: angels do not require reprimand, such as “you have left your first love” (v. 4). (*Ep.* 41, FC 12:201) Andrew, however, perhaps recalling the original meaning of the word “angel” as “messenger,” understands the word in its ordinary sense. Each angel is entrusted with the message of Christ for the congregation. Some Fathers interpreted the “angels of the churches” to mean the bishop or leader of that congregation. This may be the context of Gregory the Theologian’s reference in his Farewell discourse, “[F]or I believe, as John teaches me in his Revelation, that each Church has its guardian.” (*Or.* 42.9, NPNF 2<sup>nd</sup> 7:389) Gregory may have been influenced by Origen: “More than the apostles, the angels work for the increase and spread of the Church; and that is why certain rulers of the churches are called ‘angels’ by John in Revelation.” (*On Prayer* 11.3, trans. Rowan Greer, Classics of Western Spirituality series [New York: Paulist Press, 1979], 103.) See also, Gregory the Great: “But because Holy Scripture is frequently accustomed to designate the preachers of the Church, by the name of ‘Angels’ because they announce the glory of the heavenly country, we can in this place understand ‘Angels’ to mean holy preachers. For this cause it is that John, in the Apocalypse, writing to the seven Churches, speaks to the Angels of the Churches, that is, to the preachers of the peoples.” *Morals* 34.7(14), LF 31:629.

<sup>123</sup> It is peculiar that Andrew gives an interpretation here for the seven stars as the seven *orders* of angels, since the meaning of the seven stars was already given in 1:20: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.

<sup>124</sup> Irenaeus, *Heres.* 1.5.2; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.18.8.

<sup>125</sup> Lev. 26:12. “I will walk among you and be your God and you will be my people.”

<sup>126</sup> Ps. 95(94):4.

<sup>127</sup> Other Fathers noted the recurring theme of praise and censure in the Letters to the Seven Churches section of the Apocalypse. For example, Gregory the Great writes, “Thus the Lord scans those ways with exact scrutiny,

and patience for the faith and estrangement from the wicked ones, because, not believing every spirit,<sup>128</sup> she (the Church) tested the false apostles and, having determined them to be false, dismissed them, and besides this because he has hated the works of the shameful Nicolaitans.<sup>129</sup> He complained that the love of neighbor and beneficence had grown lukewarm, and he called her to return to this (love) by those (words) which follow,<sup>130</sup> on account of which he says, *do the works you did at first*.

*Rev. 2:5b- 6* <sup>5b</sup>*If not, I will come to you soon and I will move your lampstand from its place, if you do not repent.* <sup>6</sup>*But this you have: that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*

The movement of the church (means) to deprive them of divine grace,<sup>131</sup> by which he brings down upon them swells and waves of evil spirits and evil men ministering to them. Some understood the removal of the lampstand (to refer to) the archpriest's throne of Ephesus, because it was moved to the seat of the King (the imperial capital).<sup>132</sup> [26] Anyone

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that in each one of us He should neither pass over those good points that are for Him to recompense, nor leave without rebuke the evil things, that are doubtless displeasing to Him. For hence it is that the Angel of the Church of Pergamos He at once commends in somethings, and in some rebukes, saying, 'I know thy works... 'And a little while after 'But I have a few things against you...' Hence it is said to the angel of Thyatira, 'I know thy works...but I have this much against you...'. Observe how He records good things, nor yet lets go without penance evil things, that require to be cut off, surely because He so views the ways of each, and so takes account of their steps, 'counting them up' that by exact counting He thoroughly estimates both how far each one is advancing to what is good, or how far, by deviating to what is evil, he may contravene his advances. For the increase of merits, which is heightened by the aims of a good life, is very often held back by a mixture of evil; and the good which the mind builds up by practicing, it overthrows by committing other things." *Morals* 21.5(10), LF 21:521.

<sup>128</sup> 1 John 4:1. "Do not believe every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they are from God."

<sup>129</sup> It is impossible to identify the false apostles with certainty, but Andrew identifies them as the Nicolaitans because of the context: the Nicolaitans are about to be mentioned in verse 6. See footnote 133 below. On the other hand, Oikoumenios surmises that "those calling themselves apostles but are not" are the followers of Cerinthus, the infamous enemy of the apostle John in the ancient Christian tradition. See Eusebius, *E.H.* 3.28.

<sup>130</sup> Andrew arrives at his interpretation based on the context of the remark. Because the admonition to return to their *first works* follows the reprimand that they had lost their *first love* he concludes that the works to which they must return are the love of neighbor.

<sup>131</sup> Andrew interprets the removal of the lampstand as the deprivation of grace. Oikoumenios understands it as the complete abandonment of the community by God. Perhaps this struck Andrew as too severe.

<sup>132</sup> This opinion is not expressed by Oikoumenios. In 451, the Fourth Ecumenical Council issued the 28<sup>th</sup> canon of Chalcedon formalizing what had previously been a *de facto* situation in which the bishop of Constantinople exercised authority over the bishop of Ephesus, contrary to existing canonical regulations. The new canon gave explicit authority to the bishop of Constantinople to ordain bishops in Pontus, Asia, Thrace, as well as in

who comes upon the works of the Nicolaitans,<sup>133</sup> which are hated by God, will know their detested heresy.

*Rev. 2:7 The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*<sup>134</sup>  
*To him who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."*

Every person (has) a carnal ear, but only the spiritual person possesses a spiritual one, which was bestowed on Isaiah.<sup>135</sup> He (Christ) promised to grant to such a victor in the war against the demons to eat from *the tree of life*, that is, to partake of the blessings of the future age, for periphrastically,<sup>136</sup> eternal life is meant by *the tree*. Christ is each of these, as Solomon says and the present apostle (writes) elsewhere; the one (Solomon) concerning

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"barbarian lands." The result was that the "ancient and prestigious primacy of Ephesus disappeared, as also the position of 'exarch.'" John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir Seminary Press, 1989), 183. Here again we see a reluctance on Andrew's part to interpret Revelation according to the historical events of his time. He reports the opinion, but does not endorse it.

<sup>133</sup> Irenaeus wrote about the Nicolaitans in his famous work, *Against Heresies*, but he may have relied on the Apocalypse for his information about the sect: "The Nicolaitans are the followers of the Nicolas who was one of the seven first ordained to the diaconate by the apostles. They lead lives of unrestrained indulgence. The character of these men is very plainly pointed out in the Apocalypse of John [when they are represented] as teaching that it is a matter of indifference to practice adultery, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. Wherefore the Word has also spoken of them thus: 'But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.'" (*Heres.* 1.26.3 ANF 1:352) Irenaeus is the first Christian writer to mention them apart from Revelation itself and, rather than offering independent confirmation, subsequent writers probably relied on Irenaeus for information. Victorinus, for example, also believed that among the characteristics of the Nicolaitans included license to commit fornication and to eat meat offered to idols (*Vic.* 2.6, ANF 7:346). Hippolytus also follows Irenaeus' description and conclusion in *The Refutation of All Heresies* 7.26. Eusebius also referred to this sect, but again, his information largely depended upon Irenaeus (*E.H.* 3.29). It is possible that actual sexual immorality was not part of the sect, but was only a metaphor for unfaithfulness to God by participation in idolatry through eating meat which had been offered to idols. See David E. Aune, *Revelation 1-5* (vol. 1 of 3 vols.) Word Biblical Commentary series, vol. 52A, B and C, ([Nashville, TN:] Nelson, 1997), 52A:148-9.

<sup>134</sup> Ancient manuscripts did not have punctuation marks as we have today. Therefore, it was up to the reader to determine where a quotation began and ended and even where each sentence ended. The statement "he who has an ear let him hear" is well-recognized as a common expression of Jesus in the gospels and for this reason Andrew assumes, since it is Christ who is speaking here, that this phrase is part of the continuing message of Christ to the church of Ephesus. However, Oikoumenios believes that "He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" are *John's* own words which he has interjected, and that "the Spirit" who speaks to the churches is actually Christ. Not surprisingly, differences in interpretation of a given passage were sometimes due to different decisions about punctuation.

<sup>135</sup> Isa. 50:5. "The Lord has opened my ear." (LXX: "The instruction of the Lord, even the Lord, has opened my ears.")

<sup>136</sup> περιφραστικῶς.

wisdom, saying, *It is the tree of life*,<sup>137</sup> and likewise the other (the Apostle John) concerning Christ (says), *He is God and eternal life*.<sup>138</sup> Therefore, if we are allowed to attain them,<sup>139</sup> let us achieve victory over the passions, for the rewards will certainly follow the pains [27] by the grace and philanthropy of our Lord Jesus Christ with whom glory belongs, to the Father together with the Holy Spirit, unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## SECTION 2, CHAPTER 4

### The Things Declared to the Angel of the Church of the Smyrnaeans

*Rev. 2:8 And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: "Thus says the First and the Last, who was dead and came to life.*

*The first as God, and the last as having become man in the latter times,*<sup>140</sup> and opening eternal life to us through his three-day death.

*Rev. 2:9a I know your works and the tribulation and the poverty, but you are rich.*

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<sup>137</sup> Prov. 3:18. "She (wisdom) is the tree of life to all those who lay hold of her." Despite the feminine gender of the word *Sophia*, "wisdom" in the Greek language, the Fathers associated wisdom with Christ. This tradition is very old, and underlies the prologue of John, "In the beginning was the Logos...all things came into being through him." (John 1:1-3) The Jewish tradition had long personified wisdom and associated it with the creation of the world. "The Lord created me at the beginning of his work...when he established the heavens I was there...I was beside him like a master worker..." (See Prov. 8:22-31) The concepts of "wisdom," "beginning," "creation" and the idea of God creating by means of his word, his *Logos*, were easily linked. This naturally coincided in a Hellenistic-Jewish cultural context with both the Greek philosophical concept of Logos as the principle of reason which orders the cosmos and with the apostolic experience of the power in the words and wisdom of Jesus Christ.

<sup>138</sup> 1 John 5:20.

<sup>139</sup> The previously mentioned "blessings of the future age."

<sup>140</sup> This is also Oikoumenios' interpretation. Ambrose interpreted both aspects to indicate Christ's divinity. Comparing the life, birth, and deeds of John the Baptist and Christ, he remarked: "Therefore, John is great, but his greatness has beginning and an end; but the Lord Jesus, the same is "the End and the Beginning," the same is "the First and the Last." Nothing is before the First, nothing is after the Last. And let not the custom of human generation mislead you to think that He is not the First because He is the Son. Follow the Scriptures, so that you cannot err. The Son is said to be First. It is written, too, that the Father 'alone hath immortality, and inhabits light inaccessible.' (1 Tim. 6:16).... He did not say 'I am the former, and I am the latter,' but 'I am the First and I am the Last'. The Son is the First, and thereby co-eternal; for He has the Father with Whom to be eternal...." Ambrose, *Homilies on Luke*, 2.11-12. *Exposition of the Holy Gospel According to St. Luke, and Fragments on the Prophecy of Isaiah*, trans. Theodosia Tomkinson (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1998), 38.



“Affliction and poverty in the bodily things, which you suffer patiently for my sake, being afflicted by the unbelievers and deprived of your possessions, but in spiritual things you are rich, having the *treasure hidden in the field* <sup>141</sup> of your heart.”

[28] *Rev. 2:9b And the blasphemy of those who say they themselves are Jews and are not, but a synagogue of Satan.*

The “*I know*”<sup>142</sup> used (previously is implied here as well.)<sup>143</sup> And (as to) the *blasphemy of the synagogue of Satan*, he says, “*I know*”<sup>144</sup> that they are not that which they are called.” *For the Jew is not the one who is manifest, but is hidden.*<sup>145</sup> For “*Judah*” means confession.<sup>146</sup>

*Rev. 2:10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to put some of you in prison that you might be tested and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*<sup>147</sup>

<sup>141</sup> Matt. 13:44.

<sup>142</sup> Οἶδα.

<sup>143</sup> i.e., it is a zeugma. He already expressed the commonly held belief that the Smyrnaeans are poor, but they were in fact spiritually rich. Andrew then applies the same contrast to the next observation about the synagogue and what makes one a true Jew to highlight the contrast between what is commonly believed – the human perception – versus what Christ “knows” to be the truth.

<sup>144</sup> Ἐπίσταμαι.

<sup>145</sup> Rom. 2:28. “For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart – it is spiritual, not literal. Such a person receives praise not from others but from God.”

<sup>146</sup> ἐξομολόγησις. Oikoumenios explains the connection between “Jew” and “confession” more clearly than Andrew: “Therefore the true Jews and spiritual Israel would be those who confess Christ...Those Jews who remained in unbelief are found to be a blasphemous synagogue under the command of Satan.” (Oik. 2.5.5, Suggit 38-39) Both Andrew and Oikoumenios reach the same conclusion, following a well-established patristic tradition identifying the name “Judah” with the word “confession,” an interpretation which is rooted in the Bible itself. According to Gen. 29:35, Leah “conceived again and bore a son, and said, ‘This time I will praise the Lord,’ therefore she named him Judah.” The name Judah is derived from the Hebrew word for “praise” or to “give thanks.” The word for “I will praise,” found in the LXX version of that verse is ἐξομολογήσομαι, which is the same word found in many other places in the Old Testament in reference to giving thanks, such as Ps. 136(135):1, “Give thanks to the Lord for he is good...,” suggesting “profession” or acknowledgment. The word ἐξομολογήσομαι also means “I will confess,” hence the interpretation of “Judah” as “confession.”

<sup>147</sup> Cyprian of Carthage used this verse to encourage martyrdom, if it should become necessary, because it leads to the crown of life (*Ep.* 36, ANF 5:315). In his treatise, *Exhortation to Martyrdom: Addressed to Fortunatus*, Cyprian uses the first part of Rev. 2:10 to promote courage and quell fear. Cyprian reminds Fortunatus that afflictions and persecutions arise so that we may be tested and tells him not to fear persecutions for the Lord’s



He says, “Do not fear the tribulation from the enemies of God through afflictions<sup>148</sup> and trials, for (it will last only) ten days and not (be) long-lived.” For this reason, death must be despised, since in a little while it grants *the unfading crown of life*.<sup>149</sup>

*Rev. 2:11 He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches: The one who is victorious will not be harmed by the second death.*”

He says, he who hears spiritually and conquers the devil’s evil suggestions, even though he receives the first death through the flesh, he will not be harmed by the second death of Gehenna.<sup>150</sup>

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## CHAPTER 5

### The Things Declared to the Angel of the Church in Pergamum

*Rev. 2:12 and 13a* <sup>12</sup>*And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: “Thus says*

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power to protect is greater than the devil’s power to destroy. God will strengthen the believer and give him eternal life. “And even more strongly the Holy Spirit, teaching and showing that the army of the devil is not to be feared, and that, if the foe should declare war against us, our hope consists rather in that war itself; and that by that conflict the righteous attain to the reward of the divine abode and eternal salvation...And in the Apocalypse, divine protection is promised to our sufferings. ‘Fear nothing of these things,’ it says, ‘which thou shalt suffer.’” (*Exhortation 10*, ANF 5:501-502)

<sup>148</sup> In the text of Revelation, the tribulation consists of imprisonment and martyrdom. But Andrew’s readers had recently confronted many serious afflictions. It was typical for the Fathers to encourage Christians to use the ordinary challenges of life as opportunities for spiritual growth by learning patience and other virtues in times of trouble. Andrew’s flock would have undoubtedly needed such encouragement. Periodic outbreaks of bubonic plague between 541 and 610 had led to a significant loss of population and tremendous disruption in trade and agriculture. (Warren Treadgold, *A History of Byzantine State and Society* [Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997], 276.) A civil war raged between the years 602 and 610, disrupting trade and causing widespread violence and anarchy throughout the Empire. (Andreas Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, vol. 1 [5 vols.] trans. Marc Ogilvie-Grant [Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1968], 79. See also George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. Joan Hussey [New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1957], 77.) The Persians took advantage of the chaos in the Empire to invade the Eastern regions, decimating many cities entirely and departing with booty and captives. Rural populations fled from the advancing armies and took shelter in walled cities, disrupting lives and placing the cities under tremendous strain. Severe famine had resulted from an extremely cold winter in 609 and had even led to riots in Constantinople. (Treadgold, 235) When the invading Persians intentionally burnt cities and fields, an already precarious problem with the food supply became desperate. (J.F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, Revised edition, 1997], 43, and Treadgold, 239.) Andrew poignantly reminds his readers, therefore, that “death must be despised” for it leads to eternal life.

<sup>149</sup> 1 Pet. 5:4. “And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away.”

<sup>150</sup> The “second death” was widely understood in the patristic tradition as hell, or spiritual death. (See Rev. 20:6, 14 and 21:8)

the one who has the sharp two-edged sword: <sup>13a</sup> I know your works and where you dwell, where the throne of Satan is.

Full of idols was this city,<sup>151</sup> towards which he says these things to them, accepting the faithful in it (the city) on account of their patience in temptations. The *two-edged sword* either means the word of the gospel which he says circumcises the heart, separating the faithful and the unbelievers, or the sharp decision against the impious.

*Rev. 2:13b And you keep my name. You did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, that all-faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.*

Antipas, whose name had become known as the bravest martyr in Pergamum, whose martyrdom I have read,<sup>152</sup> the Evangelist now mentioned to point to both their patience and the cruelty of those who had been led astray.<sup>153</sup>

*Rev. 2:14-15* <sup>14</sup>*But I have a few things against you: that you have (some people) there keeping the teaching of Balaam, who in Balaam taught [30] Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat meat sacrificed to idols and to practice fornication.*  
<sup>15</sup>*Thus, you also have those who keep the teaching of the Nicolaitans, which I likewise hate.*

So it seems this city had possessed two difficulties: First, the majority was Greek,<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> The reputation of Pergamum for its idolatrous past was well known and it is hardly surprising that Andrew was familiar with it. Andrew's comments are too vague to reveal to us precisely what he knew about Pergamum as a pagan center of worship, however a number of famous temples were located there, including a gigantic altar dedicated to Zeus *Soter* (*Savior*). (See Aune, 52A:182-3 and 194 for some of the possibilities for the "throne of Satan.") Although pagan worship in the empire had largely, if not entirely, disappeared by the time of Andrew, it had not been gone for long. It was only a few decades before the composition of this commentary that the Emperor Justinian had taken measures to finally erase the last vestiges of paganism in the Empire, including the closure of the School of Athens.

<sup>152</sup> Exactly which martyrdom Andrew had read is unclear. St. Antipas, (whose feast day in the Orthodox Church is listed as April 11 in the *Acta Sanctorum* and the Greek *Menaion*), is said to have been a disciple of John the Theologian and the bishop of Pergamum. The *Great Horologion* states that he was put into a hollow bronze bull, which was a Roman torture device. The individual to be executed was placed inside and the device was heated over a fire until red-hot and the person inside roasted to death. See *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*, (3 vols. in 1) 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, ed. François Halkin, (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1957) 1:48.

<sup>153</sup> The cruelty is a reference to the martyrdom endured by Antipas.

<sup>154</sup> For the early Christians, including the Church Fathers, "Greek" was almost synonymous with "pagan." Even those Christians who were linguistically, culturally or ethnically Greek would not identify themselves as "Greeks" but as "Christians."

and second, among those who were called believers, the shameful Nicolaitans had sown evil tares among the wheat.<sup>155</sup> For this reason he recalled Balaam, saying, “*who in Balaam taught Balak*,”<sup>156</sup> through these words signifying the Balaam of the mind, the devil, by means of the perceptible Balak, to teach the stumbling block to the Israelites, fornication and idolatry. For by means of that pleasure (fornication) they were thrown down into performing this (idolatry) to Beelphegor.<sup>157</sup>

*Rev. 2:16 Repent. If not, I will come to you soon and I will war against them by the sword of my mouth.*

Love for mankind<sup>158</sup> is also in the threat. For he does not say, “against you” but “I will fight against them,”<sup>159</sup> those who are incurably (spiritually) diseased.

*Rev. 2:17 The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches: To the one who is victorious I will give to him to eat from the hidden manna [31] and I will give to him a small white stone, and a new name written upon the stone, which no one knows except the one receiving it.”*

The *Bread of Life*<sup>160</sup> is the *hidden manna*, the One who descended from heaven for us

<sup>155</sup> An allusion to Matt. 13:24-30, the parable of the weeds among the wheat.

<sup>156</sup> Andrew's text, with the words “in Balaam” added, differs from Nestle-Aland's critical text, which reads simply “the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak...” *Novum Testamentum Graece 27<sup>th</sup> ed.*, Nestle-Aland Greek-English New Testament, eds. Barbara and Kurt Aland, et al (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1981), 636.

<sup>157</sup> The Moabite fertility god, “the Baal of Peor.” See Numbers 25, also Deut. 4:3-4 and Ps. 106(105):28-30. Oikoumenios does a better job of giving the historical background to this reference. However, Andrew very effectively and succinctly emphasizes the spiritual lesson of the historical story, aligning Balaam with the devil's temptation in the mind, and Balak with the means by which sin occurs in the physical aspect.

<sup>158</sup> φιλανθρωπία.

<sup>159</sup> In the original story, 24,000 Israelites who had gone astray by practicing idolatry and fornication were killed (Num. 25:9). Those who remained faithful were not punished.

<sup>160</sup> Jesus describes himself as the Bread of Life in John 6:35 and 48. This would have been the most obvious interpretation of this passage, stemming not only from its interpretation in the patristic tradition but from the “Bread of Life” passage in John 6 itself. After Jesus multiplied the loaves for a crowd of thousands in the wilderness, the Jews ask for a sign, saying, “Our ancestors ate manna in the desert, as it is written ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” A lengthy dialogue follows in which Christ describes himself as the Bread of Life which came down from heaven. Hence, Andrew easily associates the “hidden manna” with Christ as the Bread of Life since this connection was already present in the Fourth Gospel.

and has become edible.<sup>161</sup> Figuratively, the future good things are also called manna,<sup>162</sup> inasmuch as they are coming down from above, just as the heavenly Jerusalem.<sup>163</sup> He says those who are victorious against the devil will obtain (these things). And they will receive both *the small white stone*,<sup>164</sup> that is, the victorious being deemed worthy of the right portion, and the new name which is unknown in the present life. *For eye has not seen and ear has not heard and mind has not grasped the good things of the future*<sup>165</sup> and the new name which the saints will inherit.<sup>166</sup>

## CHAPTER 6

### Things Declared to the Angel of the Church in Thyatira

*Rev. 2:18 And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: "Thus says the Son of God, who has his eyes like a flame of fire and his feet are like glowing brass.*

[32] It is said that the fiery (aspect) of the eyes signifies the enlightenment of the righteous and the burning of the sinners.<sup>167</sup> The feet and the glowing brass mean the

<sup>161</sup> Obviously a Eucharistic interpretation is present here, based on John 6, which expresses the Eucharistic beliefs of the early Johannine community. In the gospel, the dialogue moves from Jesus describing himself as "bread from heaven" to instructing the startled listeners that those who eat his flesh and drink his blood will have eternal life (John 6:54). This also accords with the promises of eternal life here in Rev. 2 for those who are "victorious."

<sup>162</sup> This is Oikoumenios' interpretation of "hidden manna," which, although spiritual, is far weaker than Andrew's explanation since the speaker here in Revelation is Christ, who described himself in John 6:33 and 50 as the "bread which came down from heaven." Andrew clearly makes that connection. Yet, Oikoumenios' interpretation is not entirely rejected by Andrew. Nonetheless, the oversight by Oikoumenios is very surprising and may suggest that, although he was well-educated, Oikoumenios may have been less immersed in biblical texts than Andrew.

<sup>163</sup> Literally, "the Jerusalem above" ἡ ἄνω Ἱερουσαλήμ. See Gal. 4:26, Rev. 21:2.

<sup>164</sup> ψῆφον λευκὴν. In ancient Greece, votes were made by depositing either a black pebble to indicate "no" or condemnation, or a white pebble which meant a "yes" vote or an acquittal. In the modern Greek language, the very word for "vote" is the ancient Greek word for pebble, ψῆφος. Aune gives several possibilities, but believes the white stone was probably a type of amulet. Aune, 52A:189-91.

<sup>165</sup> 1 Cor. 2:9.

<sup>166</sup> "The new name is that of 'Christian.'" (Jerome, *Hom. 25* (On Psalm 97/98), FC 48:197.) Jerome is probably dependent on Victorinus who writes: "The hidden manna is immortality; the white gem is adoption to be the son of God; the new name written on the stone is 'Christian.'" (Vic. 2.17, ANF 7:347)

<sup>167</sup> For Oikoumenios the fiery eyes are entirely fearsome, "symbolizing his striking and threatening attitude against sinners." (2.9.1, Suggit 42)

fragrance of the spiritual *myrrh of Christ in those who are saved*<sup>168</sup> and the indivisible and unconfused union of divinity and humanity.<sup>169</sup> For this union, ignited by means of the divine Spirit, cannot be grasped by human reasoning.

*Rev 2:19-20* <sup>19</sup>*I know your works and your love and faith and service and your patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first.* <sup>20</sup>*But I have this very much against you, that you allow the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet, to teach and to lead my servants astray to practice immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.*

“Even if I accept your piety by reason of faith, service to the needy and endurance, yet I justly find fault. For you allow the heresy of Nicolaitans” — clearly identified as ‘Jezebel’ on account of the impiety and licentiousness<sup>170</sup> — “to speak freely, thus placing a stumbling block before my servants through their simplicity of thought and attracting them toward food sacrificed to idols, which they rightly renounced. You are obligated to silence her, also because, animated by an evil spirit, she pretends to be a prophet.”

[33] *Rev. 2:21 I gave her time to repent of her immorality.*

The evil (is) a choice, he says, since having received time to rightly repent she did not use it.

*Rev. 2:22-23a* <sup>22</sup>*Behold, I will throw her on a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.* <sup>23a</sup>*And I will strike her children dead.*

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<sup>168</sup> 2 Cor. 2:15.

<sup>169</sup> Although stated in more specifically theological terms here, Andrew is consistent in his interpretation of this verse with the same concept expressed in Rev. 1:14.

<sup>170</sup> She is “Jezebel” because she imitates the historical Jezebel (1 Kings 16ff). Gregory the Great agreed and discussed how even persons in important positions in the church can be living in darkness. By their actions such people can be compared to evil and perverse historical figures of the past. He commented: “Both times and places separated the Church of Thyatira from the knowledge of Jezebel; but because equal guilt of life had enthralled it, Jezebel is said to dwell therein, and to persist in perverse doings, as the Angel bears witness...Behold, because they could be found, who followed the conduct of Jezebel in their reprobate deeds, Jezebel is said to have been found there; because an agreement of habits make a corrupt body one, even if times or places sever it asunder. Whence it is that every wicked person, who has already gone by, survives in his perverse imitators, and that the author of iniquity, who has not yet come, is already visible in those which do his works.” *Morals* 29.7(15), LF 23:311-12.

He continues (to speak) in that manner, and having likened the gathering of the heretics to an adulteress, he threatens to encompass her with illness and death, and also those perishing with her and those committing fornication against God, if they do not return to him through repentance.<sup>171</sup>

<sup>171</sup> While they each note the call to repentance on the part of the individual churches, neither Andrew nor Oikoumenios uses this section of Revelation either as an opportunity to elaborate upon the value or importance of repentance and return to the Church, or to encourage a return to Christian standards of morality. However, this section of Revelation was very popular for that purpose in the West. The earliest example may be seen in Tertullian (in his pre-Montanist days) who wrote eloquently encouraging repentance using Rev. 2 and 3 as his inspiration: "If any do incur the debt of a second repentance, his spirit is not to be forthwith cut down and undermined by despair. Let it by all means be irksome to *sin* again, but let not to *repent* again be irksome: irksome to imperil one's self again, but not to be again set free. Let none be ashamed. Repeated sickness must have repeated medicine. You will show your gratitude to the Lord by not refusing what the Lord offers you... This if you doubt, unravel the meaning of "what the Spirit saith to the churches... He would not utter comminations to one *unrepentant* if He did not forgive the repentant." (*On Repentance* 7-8, ANF 3:663) The Western Fathers found the letters to the seven churches especially useful in controversies related to rebaptism of heretics and re-admittance of the sinners and "the lapsed." For example, Cyprian used this section to emphasize the need for the repentance of the lapsed, those who had sacrificed to idols or purchased *libelli*, (certificates proving that they had sacrificed.) Cyprian censured those presbyters who wished to receive the lapsed back into the Church quickly and praised those presbyters who delayed, quoting Rev. 2:5, "Remember from where you have fallen and repent." Cyprian maintained that to readmit the lapsed before they have repented with great sorrow and significant penitence would be to show no care for their salvation. Those who had sinned and now seek return to the Church must be patient, because one who is repentant is meek, patient and obedient to the priests. (See Cyprian, *Ep.* 13, ANF 5:293, and *Ep.* 27, ANF 5:306.) After the period of severe penitence, Cyprian required rebaptism for readmission to the Church. Jerome, on the other hand, used this same section to support the Church's position of *mercy*, allowing repentance and return *without* rebaptism. After making the point that Cyprian's beliefs advocating rebaptism of the lapsed did not prevail in the Church, Jerome provides examples from the Scriptures and from Church history in which even serious heretics were encouraged to repent but no requirement was made for rebaptism. "I come to those heretics who have mangled the Gospels, Saturninus, and the Ophites, the Cainites and Sethites, and Carpocrates, and Cerinthus, and his successor Ebion, and the other pests, most of which broke out while the apostle John was still alive, and yet we do not read that any of these men were re-baptized. As we have made mention of that distinguished saint, let us show also from his Apocalypse that repentance unaccompanied by baptism ought to be allowed valid in the case of heretics. It is imputed to the angel of Ephesus that he has forsaken his first love (Rev. 2:4). In the angel of the Church of Pergamum the eating of idol-sacrifices is censured (Rev. 2:14) and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans (2:15). Likewise the angel of Thyatira is rebuked (2:20) on account of Jezebel the prophetess, and the idol meats, and fornication. And yet the Lord encourages all these to repent, and adds a threat, moreover, of future punishment if they do not turn. Now he would not urge them to repent unless he intended to grant pardon to the penitents. Is there any indication of his having said, 'Let them be re-baptized who have been baptized in the faith of the Nicolaitans?' or 'Let hands be laid upon those of the people of Pergamum who at that time believed, having held the doctrine of Balaam?' Nay, rather, 'Repent therefore,' he says, 'or else I come to thee quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth.'" (*Dialogue against the Luciferians* 23-24. *Treatise: The Dialogue against the Luciferians*, trans. W.H. Fremantle, *The Principle Works of St. Jerome*, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vol. VI [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1989], 332-33.) On another occasion, Jerome used this section of Revelation against Jovinianus who taught that true baptized believers are not capable of falling into sin. Jerome replied: "John the apostle, or rather the Savior in the person of John, writes thus to the angel of the Church of Ephesus... 'But I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent'. Similarly He urges the other churches, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, to repentance, and threatens them unless they return to the former works. And in Sardis He says He has a few who have not defiled their garments, and they



Rev. 2:23b-25 <sup>23b</sup> *And all the churches shall know that I am he who searches reins and heart,* <sup>172</sup> *and I will give to each of you according to your works.* <sup>24</sup> *And I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, any who have not learned the deep things of Satan, as they say: I do not lay upon you any other burden;* <sup>25</sup> *Only hold fast to that which you have until I come.*

These things are (addressed) to the deceived heretics and those deceiving others. [34] To the more simple he says: "Since you, through your simple manner, are not able to endure

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shall walk with Him in white, for they are worthy. But they to whom He says: 'Remember from whence thou art fallen,' and, 'Behold the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried,' and, 'I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's throne is,' and, 'Remember how thou hast received, and didst hear, and keep it, and repent,' and so on, were of course believers, and baptized, who once stood, but fell through sin." (*Against Jovinianus* 2.3. *Treatise: Against Jovinianus*, trans. W.H. Fremantle, *The Principle Works of St. Jerome*, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vol. VI. [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1989], 390.) Tertullian, who had previously used this section of Revelation to argue for forgiveness after repentance, later denied this as a possibility when he became a Montanist. He argued that forgiveness for such sins as adultery or fornication is not available to the Christian on this earth. People such as St. Paul were forgiven because they were ignorant, but no forgiveness is possible for those who lapse after baptism. For light sins, one can obtain pardon from the bishop, but for serious sins, only from God. Tertullian refutes objections raised by those who cite Revelation, because John seems to suggest that those who fornicate can repent. Tertullian remarks that "Jezebel" was teaching a heresy, that of the Nicolaitans, and those who discover their heresy can repent and return to the bosom of the Church. This is a matter of faith and discipline between apostles. "Or else, if you are certain that that woman had, after a living faith, subsequently expired, and turned heretic, in order that you may claim pardon as the result of repentance, not as it were for an heretical, but as it were for a believing, sinner: let her, I grant, repent; but with the view of ceasing from adultery, not however in the prospect of restoration [to Church fellowship] as well. For this will be a repentance which we, too, acknowledge to be due much more [than you do]; but which we reserve for pardon, to God." He continues to support his point by referring to Rev. 21:8 which assigns fornicators and other serious sinners to the lake of fire. *On Modesty* 19. (*On Modesty*, trans. S. Thelwall, *The Fathers of the Third Century*, Ante-Nicene Fathers of the Church series, vol. IV [Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted 1989], 95.)

<sup>172</sup> Ps. 7:9 "For the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins." (KJV) Augustine beautifully explains this phrase while commenting on the verse in its original context within the psalm: "How, I ask, is the just man to be directed except by the God who searches hearts and reins, who looks into our thoughts, here designated by the word 'heart,' and our pleasures, here called 'reins'? The Psalmist correctly ascribes to our reins the pleasure we experience in temporal and earthly gifts, for they belong to the lower part of man's nature.... This God, who searches our heart and finds that it is where our treasure is, namely, in heaven, who searches our reins and finds that we do not consent to flesh and blood but take our delight in the Lord, this same God directs the just man in his conscience. No man can penetrate it; it lies open before God, who alone sees what each man thinks and what each man enjoys... He who searches the heart sees our cares; He who carefully searches the reins sees also what enjoyment is the object of our solicitude. And when He finds our solicitude not directed towards the concupiscence of the flesh, or the concupiscence of the eyes, or the pride of life, all of which pass away like shadow, but raised upwards to the joys of things eternal, which know neither change nor decay, then will God, who searches the hearts and reins, direct the just. For what we do by exterior word or deed may be known to men; but with what intention we do these things, or what purpose we hope to attain by means of them, is known only to God, who searches the hearts and reins." *Hom. on Psalm 7.9.* (*Augustine: On the Psalms*, vol. 1, trans. Scholastica Hebgin and Felicitas Corrigan, eds. Johannes Quasten and Walter J. Burghardt. ACW 29. [Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1960], 86.)

the cunning and quick-witted men, inasmuch as you do not know *the deep things of Satan*, as you say, I do not request from you to do battle through words but to safeguard the teaching which you have received, until I will take you from there.”

*Rev. 2:26 -28a* <sup>26</sup>*And he who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, I will give him power over the nations,* <sup>27</sup>*and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as earthen vessels they will be shattered,* <sup>28a</sup>*just as I myself have received (authority) from my Father.*

“To him who does my works,” he says, “I will give authority” *over five or ten cities,*<sup>173</sup> as the Gospel said. Or, by this, he also hints at the judgment of the unbelievers, through which those who have been deceived, being judged by those who are believers in Christ, will be shattered as if they were ruled by a rod of iron, as the Lord said, *The men of Ninevah shall rise and condemn this generation.*<sup>174</sup> And the *even as I received (authority) from my Father* (is said) in terms of his human nature which he has assumed through the flesh.

*Rev. 2:28b-29* <sup>28b</sup>*And I will give him the morning star.* <sup>29</sup>*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*

*Morning star* or, it says, the one about whom Isaiah was saying, *How did he fall from heaven, the bright rising morning star?*<sup>175</sup> whom he promised he will hand over to be

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<sup>173</sup> Luke 19:17.

<sup>174</sup> Matt. 12:41, Luke 11:32.

<sup>175</sup> See Isa. 14:12-15. The identification of the bright morning star with Satan – which Andrew alludes to, but does not specifically state – is the only interpretation of this image offered by Oikoumenios (2.9.8). The fact that Andrew does not feel the need to explain the association is likely due to his audience. “Makarinos” and other educated readers of the commentary would easily recognize the association of the Isaiah passage with Satan, which was well known in the patristic tradition. The belief that Satan was formerly an angel who fell from heaven is taken partly from this particular passage of Isaiah. Origen is an earlier witness to this interpretation. (See Origen, *Hom. on Joshua* 1.6. *Origen, Homilies on Joshua*, trans. Barbara J. Bruce, ed. Cynthia White, Fathers of the Church series, vol. 105 [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2002], 33-34.) Oikoumenios presents additional scripture passages to buttress his interpretation of this passage as referring to Satan, since Revelation does not say that the morning star would be crushed. Nonetheless, Oikoumenios maintains that here the morning star is Satan who would become subjugated to the faithful, who would crush him. Andrew allows this as a possible interpretation however he offers a better alternative in which Christ, not Satan, is the morning star. Although he allows for both explanations, Andrew seems to favor the second interpretation because he does not elaborate on the first explanation, as Oikoumenios does. Andrew is probably correct that the reference here to the “bright morning star” would be to Christ, especially in the context of Revelation, since he is explicitly identified as such later in Rev. 22:16. Andrew’s interpretation also makes sense in the narrower context of the letters to the seven churches in which the rewards promised to the faithful



crushed under the feet of the saints.<sup>176</sup> Or (it is) the One who brings light, as has been said by the blessed Peter, [35] *dawning in the hearts* of the faithful,<sup>177</sup> the well-known illumination of Christ. Also John the Baptist and Elijah the Tishbite (are) designated light bearers.<sup>178</sup> For the one, (John)<sup>179</sup> is discerned as the Forerunner of the first rising of the *Sun of Righteousness*,<sup>180</sup> and the other is the Forerunner<sup>181</sup> of the second.<sup>182</sup> With them, the victors over the devil will have their part, we believe. It is not surprising that we have taken this as referring to two things totally contradictory to each other.<sup>183</sup> For we learn from the

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at the end of each of the letters are Christ himself and eternal life. Victorinus has an entirely different explanation. The morning star is the first resurrection. "He promised the morning star, which drives away the night, and announces the light, that is, the beginning of day." (Vic. 2.28, ANF 7:347)

<sup>176</sup> Rom. 16:20. "The God of peace will shortly crush Satan under your feet." Origen again provides an earlier witness to the exegetical association of this promise in Romans with the fate of Lucifer in Isaiah 14:12. The fall of Lucifer meant the ascent of the followers of Christ who would take his place in heaven. "Or do we not read that Isaiah says of one of them, 'How did Lucifer fall, the one who rose in the morning?' That Lucifer, without a doubt, had a throne in the heavens until he became a fugitive angel. If I should conquer him and set him under my feet, if I should deserve that the Lord Jesus 'crush Satan under my feet,' I shall deserve as a consequence to receive the place of Lucifer in heaven." (*Hom. on Joshua* 1.6, FC 105:33-34)

<sup>177</sup> 2 Pet. 1:19. "Until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."

<sup>178</sup> See John 5:35 where Jesus describes John the Baptist as a "burning and shining lamp." Elijah is connected to John the Baptist because John's appearance and ministry were seen by the early Church as a fulfillment of the Jewish expectation that Elijah would return to earth prior to the appearance of the Messiah to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah. Jesus confirmed that John served this role. "And the disciples asked him, 'Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?' He replied, 'Elijah does come, and he is to restore all things; but I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not know him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will suffer at their hands.' Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist." (Matt. 17:10-13)

<sup>179</sup> The "first rising" of the "Sun of Righteousness" refers the birth of the Messiah, the first coming of the Christ. Andrew is probably thinking of Isa. 9:2-7: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light..." Another possibility is Isa. 11:1-5: "A shoot shall come out of the stump of Jesse...The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him..." This is the prophecy which Jesus read in the synagogue the first time he preached in Nazareth at the beginning of his ministry (Luke 4:18-19). Both passages also contain explicit references to "righteousness" (Isa. 9:7 and 11:5).

<sup>180</sup> Mal. 3:20. On Christ as the "Sun of Righteousness," see *Comm.* 27, fn 114.

<sup>181</sup> It is the custom in the Christian East to refer to John not as "John the Baptist" but as "John the Forerunner" (ὁ πρόδρομος). He is the Forerunner since the role he served in relation to Christ was not primarily as Christ's baptizer, but as the one who prepared the way for the Messiah according to Matt. 3:3, which recalled the prophecy of Isa. 40:3: "Prepare the way of the Lord."

<sup>182</sup> Elijah is here identified as the Forerunner of the *Second* rising or appearance because of the widespread belief that he is to be one of the "two witnesses," along with Enoch, who will return in the end times prior to the Second Coming of Christ. See Rev. 11:3-4. *Comm.* 120, fn 573.

<sup>183</sup> The contradiction is that the "morning star" could be either Satan or Christ.

divine Scriptures that the lion of Judah (is) the Christ,<sup>184</sup> and (the lion) from Bashan (is) the Antichrist.<sup>185</sup> According to what is meant, it is this or the other. It (the morning star) also implies both the dawn of the future day, by which the darkness of the present life will be covered, and also its messenger bringing the good news of this (dawn).<sup>186</sup>

For it (the dawn of the future day) goes before the *Sun of Righteousness*, appearing to the saints and scattering the gloom of the present life, by whose rays may we also be illuminated by the good will of the Father with the All-Holy Spirit, to whom glory belongs unto the ages. Amen.

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### SECTION 3, CHAPTER 7

#### The Things Declared to the Angel of the Church in Sardis

*Rev.3:1 And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: "Thus says the one who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars: I know your works, that in name you live, and you are dead."*

The seven stars, we said previously,<sup>187</sup> are the divine angels, and the seven spirits are either the angels themselves or the acts of the life-giving Spirit, both of which are in the hand of Christ. On the one hand (if the stars represent angels), as the Master, he rules (them); and on the other hand (if they represent the Spirit) He bestows the Spirit, being of the same

<sup>184</sup> Gen. 49:9-10. "Judah is a lion's whelp....the scepter shall not depart from Judah nor the ruler's staff from between his feet." This is considered to be a prophecy that the Davidic monarchy would emanate from the tribe of Judah.

<sup>185</sup> Deut. 33:22. "Dan is a lion's whelp that leaps forth from Bashan." The twelve patriarchs are described in Genesis 49 when Jacob gives final instructions to each of his sons prior to his death, and in Deuteronomy 33 when Moses blesses each tribe individually before his death. "Lion's whelp" is used to describe both the tribe of Judah (in Genesis), out of which would arise the Messiah, and the tribe of Dan (in Deuteronomy), which was believed would be the tribe of the Antichrist. Hippolytus also discussed this apparent contradiction in Scripture, in which both the devil and Christ are described as a lion and as the morning star. *On Christ and Antichrist* 6 and 14. *Extant Works and Fragments of Hippolytus: Dogmatical and Historical*, trans. S.D.F. Salmond, *Fathers of the Third Century*, Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. V (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1990), 206 and 207.

<sup>186</sup> Mal. 3:1-2. "Behold I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me...but who can endure the day of his coming?" Andrew combines the images of the morning star, heralding the start of a new day, with the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2) and the Day of the Lord to come in the future (Mal. 3:2).

<sup>187</sup> Referring to his comments on Rev. 1:16, *Chp. 2, Text 22, Comm. 27*.

essence<sup>188</sup> (as the Spirit). He also reprimands the church for having (only) the bare name of living faith, having become dead with respect to good deeds.

*Rev. 3:2 Wake up and strengthen those things which remain and which were about to die; for I have not found your works being fulfilled in the sight of God.*

“Shake off the sleep of laziness,”<sup>189</sup> he says, “and strengthen your members, who are about to completely die through unbelief.” For it is not the beginning of good works which crowns the worker, but the completion.

*Rev. 3:3a Remember, therefore, what you received and heard, and keep [that], and repent.*

[37] “Keep the tradition which you received from the apostles<sup>190</sup> and repent of laziness.”

*Rev. 3:3b If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you.*

Naturally. For both the death of each one and the common end<sup>191</sup> are unknown to all. For those who are prepared (it will be) rest from pains, but for those who are unprepared, (it will be) like a thief<sup>192</sup> bringing death of the soul.

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<sup>188</sup> ὁμοούσιος.

<sup>189</sup> Andrew attributes the problem in Sardis to laziness, probably because of the command to “wake up.” Oikoumenios attributes it to sin (2.11.2-3), possibly because of the comment “you are dead” in verse 1. Gregory the Great perceived both connotations and effectively combined them: “One who does not vigorously complete the good works which he has begun, imitates in his careless slackness the hand of a destroyer. Hence it is said by the angel to the Church of Sardis: “Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die. For I find not thy works full before my God.” Therefore, because her works were not found full before God, the angel foretold that those which remained, even such as had been done, were ready to die. For if that which is dead in us is not kindled unto life, that which is retained, as though still living, also perishes....” *Pastoral Care* 3.34. *Gregory the Great, Pastoral Care*. trans. Henry Davis, eds. Johannes Quasten and Joseph C. Plumpe, Ancient Christian Writers series, vol. 11 (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1950), 221.

<sup>190</sup> This could be an allusion to 2 Thess. 3:6, “Keep away from believers who are living in idleness and not according to the tradition that they received from us.” Or possibly 2 Thess. 2:15, “So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter.” See also Phil. 4:9 and 2 Tim. 1:13-14.

<sup>191</sup> ἡ κοινὴ συντέλεια, i.e., the end of the universe, associated with the second coming of Christ.

<sup>192</sup> Matt. 24:42-43, Luke 12:39-40, 1 Thess. 5:2.

*Rev. 3:4 You have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.*

You possess this good, he says, that some people, those who have not soiled the garment of the flesh by filthy deeds,<sup>193</sup> will be with me in *the rebirth*<sup>194</sup> brilliantly attired because they have kept the garment of incorruption<sup>195</sup> spotless.

*Rev. 3:5-6 <sup>5</sup>He who conquers shall be wrapped about in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. <sup>6</sup>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."*

He who is victorious in the above-mentioned victory, will shine like the sun in the clothing of his own virtues and his name will remain indelible in the book of the living. [38] "He will be confessed before my Father and the holy powers,"<sup>196</sup> even as triumphant martyrs, just as he says in the gospel, *the righteous will shine as the sun.*<sup>197</sup>

## CHAPTER 8

### The Things Declared to the Angel of the Church in Philadelphia

*Rev. 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: "These things says the Holy One, the True One, who has the key of David, who opens and no one shuts, who shuts and no one opens.*

<sup>193</sup> Oikoumenios writes: "The white garment symbolizes the purity of the body." (2.11.6, Suggit 45.) Gregory the Great concurs: "For what is denoted by the name of 'clothes' save this earthly body, with which the soul is endued and covered, that it might not be naked in the subtleness of its substance? For hence Solomon saith, "Let thy garments be always white," (Eccl. 9:8) i.e., the members of the body clean from filthy acts." *Morals* 9.36(58), LF 18:538. Andrew accepts this interpretation for the "white garment" but adds to it, revealing his pastoral orientation. The white robe is not simply purity in the flesh alone, but the preservation of the purity of the baptismal state. That the white garment is the baptismal robe is obvious from his description. See below, footnote 195.

<sup>194</sup> παλιγγενεσία. Matt. 19:28.

<sup>195</sup> ἀφθαρσίας ἔνδυμα. This expression is used several times in the prayers of the Orthodox baptismal service and in the prayer for catechumens during the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom.

<sup>196</sup> Matt. 10:32, Luke 12:8.

<sup>197</sup> Matt. 13:43.

His kingdom is called *the key of David*, for it is the symbol of authority. The key is also the Holy Spirit, (the key) of both the book of Psalms and every prophecy, through which the *treasures of knowledge*<sup>198</sup> are opened.<sup>199</sup> On the one hand, he receives the first according to his humanity,<sup>200</sup> and on the other hand he possesses the second according to the beginninglessness of his divinity. Since in some manuscripts instead of *David*, *Hades* is written,<sup>201</sup> (this would mean that) through the key of Hades, the authority over life and death has been confirmed in Christ. He is holy and true, as absolute Holiness and self-existent Truth.

<sup>198</sup> Col. 2:3. "Christ himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

<sup>199</sup> This verse of Revelation, not surprisingly, was typically understood as a reference to biblical interpretation. Origen stated that Christ is necessary for the proper interpretation of scripture, as well as for all writing. "[F]or every written work needs the Reason (Logos) which closed it to open it. 'He shall shut and none shall open,' and when he opens no one can cast doubt on the interpretation he brings. Hence it is said that 'He shall open and no man shall shut.'" (*Comm. on John 5.4. Origen's Commentary on the Gospel of John*, trans. and ed. Allan Menzies, Ante-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church series vol. X, [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, reprint 1989], 348.) Jerome used this verse on multiple occasions. In a letter to Paulinus of Nola, Jerome commented that as beautiful as the Scriptures may be on the outside (i.e., the literal meaning), the best part lies within (i.e., the spiritual meaning), but to understand it requires the assistance of Christ. "To the multitudes the Savior spoke only in parables and, to make it clear that His words had a mystical meaning, said: 'he that hath ears to hear, let him hear'. Unless all things that are written are opened by Him 'who hath the key of David, who openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth,' no one can undo the lock or set them before you." (Jerome, *Ep.* 58.9, NPNF 2<sup>nd</sup> 6:122) In a homily on Easter Sunday, Jerome employed this verse to explain to the congregation that "The entire Psalter sings in prophecy of our Lord since, indeed, it is He who 'has the key of David, he who opens and no one shuts, and who shuts and no one opens,' but especially does the psalm that has just been read, the one hundred seventeenth, herald the mystery of his Resurrection." (Our Psalm 24. Jerome was especially referencing verse 7f: "Lift up your heads O gates, and be lifted up O ancient doors that the king of glory may come in", etc.) *Homily 94*, (On Easter Sunday), FC 57:251. Elsewhere, Jerome employs this verse to assert the familiar theme that Christians are the recipients of the Jewish inheritance: "John says in the Apocalypse: 'he who has the key of David, he who opens and no one shuts, and who shuts and no one opens.' This is the key held in the Law by the scribes and Pharisees who the Lord warns in the Gospel: 'Woe to you lawyers! who hold the key of the kingdom of heaven' (Luke 11:52). O you Pharisees, who hold the keys to the kingdom and do not believe in Christ who is the gate of the kingdom and the door, to you, indeed, the promise is made, but to us it is granted." *Homily 66* (On Ps. 88/89), FC 57:66.

<sup>200</sup> Since Christ biologically descended from David in his human nature, he is the Davidic Messiah and King, hence he has the key to the kingdom.

<sup>201</sup> This is the first instance in which we see Andrew commenting on manuscript variations, a real issue in antiquity since all books were hand copied. He does not entirely reject *key of Hades* as a possibly valid reading and offers an explanation for it, just in case it is genuine. Modernly, "David" is considered the preferred reading with "Hades" apparently being a scribal change, probably made "to heighten the clarity of the symbolism." Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Stuttgart: Biblia-Druck, 1975), 734.

*Rev. 3:8 I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut; (I know) that you have little [39] power, and you kept my word and did not deny my name.*

From what has been written<sup>202</sup> we learn that this city is small in size, but great in faith. Therefore he says to it: *I know your works*, that is, “I accept,” even as he says exactly to Moses, “*I know you above all.*”<sup>203</sup> “I opened before you a door of the instructive preaching, which cannot be closed by temptations. I am satisfied with the attitude and I do not demand things beyond strength.”

*Rev. 3:9 Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan — who say that they are Jews and are not, but they lie. I will make them so that they come and bow down before your feet, and they will know that I have loved you.*

As a reward of the confession of my name, he says, you will have the return and repentance of the Jews, who will kneel before your feet, asking for (permission) to approach me for the illumination<sup>204</sup> which comes from me remaining Judaizers in the secret of the heart, not in appearance (only).<sup>205</sup>

*Rev. 3:10-11* <sup>10</sup> *Because you have kept the word of my patience, I will keep you from the hour of trial which is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell upon the earth. I am coming soon.* <sup>11</sup> *Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.*

[40] *At the hour of trial*, has been said either (in reference to) the persecution by the impious kings of Rome against the Christians which will come immediately at that

<sup>202</sup> Andrew is probably not referring to Oikoumenios here, who also notes that Philadelphia is small. Andrew could have also concluded this “from what has been written” in the verse itself, which states “you have little power.”

<sup>203</sup> Exod. 33:12 and 17. (LXX: Οἶδά σε παρὰ πάντας.) Note how Andrew states that it was *Christ* who spoke to Moses in the Exodus. See explanation above, *Comm.* 16, fn 56.

<sup>204</sup> ὁ φωτισμός. In the Eastern tradition, baptism is typically referred to as Holy “Illumination.” Both meanings may be implied here: spiritual enlightenment as well as initiation into the Church.

<sup>205</sup> See the explanation given above, (*Comm.* 34, fns 145 and 146) for Rev. 2:9. The “true” Jew is one who has the “spiritual” circumcision of the heart, not of the flesh. (Rom 2:28-29). The physical circumcision of males was the sign of the covenant between the people of Israel and God, indicating that one was dedicated to God. “Spiritual circumcision” is true, inward dedication to God, a life of complete and deep conformity to God’s will, not merely the observance of outward ritual.

particular time, from which he promises she (the church) is to be delivered; or (it refers to) the world-wide movement at the end of the age against those who believe in the Antichrist, from which he promises to free her zealous ones (the Christians) who were arrested beforehand, through departure<sup>206</sup> at that time, so that *they will not be tested beyond their strength*.<sup>207</sup> He rightly says, *I come quickly, for after the affliction of those days immediately*<sup>208</sup> the Lord will come, as he says. For this reason he suddenly commands (them) to keep the treasure of the faith inviolate, so that no one loses the crown of patience.<sup>209</sup>

*Rev. 3:12a He who conquers I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God; he will never go out of it,*

Naturally. The victor over the opposing powers is established (as) a pillar and a foundation of the truth, having in it, the immovable base according to the Apostle.<sup>210</sup>

*Rev. 12b And I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from my God, and my new name.*

[41] “Upon the heart of such a pillar,” he says, “I will engrave the knowledge of the divine name and of the heavenly Jerusalem, in order to see in her the beautiful things through the eyes of the Spirit, and also *my new name* which will be known by the saints in the future.” He said, *my God* in a human fashion about the Father, since he became flesh for our

<sup>206</sup> ἀνάλυσις, probably implying departure or release through death.

<sup>207</sup> 1 Cor. 10:13. “*God is faithful and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength.*”

<sup>208</sup> Matt. 24:29, Mark 13:24.

<sup>209</sup> Augustine used this verse to make a case for predestination. He argued that the number of persons to be saved is a fixed number, not to be increased or diminished, but one could not be certain and secure of his own personal predestination or salvation. After citing John the Baptist’s warning to the Jews to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance and not simply to say ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ Augustine remarks: “The words show that those who do not bring forth fruit are to be cut off, in such a way, however, that the number [of children] promised to Abraham will not fall short. However, it is more openly declared in the Apocalypse: ‘Hold fast what thou has, that no one receive thy crown’; for if another is not to receive a crown, unless someone first lose it, the number is fixed.” *Admonition and Grace* 13.39. *Augustine, Christian Instruction, Admonition and Grace, etc.*, trans. John Courtney Murray, Fathers of the Church series, vol. 2 (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc. [1947]), 293.

<sup>210</sup> St. Paul, a reference to 1 Tim. 3:15, “the Church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth.”

sake (remaining) unchanged (in his divinity).<sup>211</sup> The *Jerusalem descends* from above, (because) the knowledge of divinity first began from the angels, then (continued) until it finally came down upon us, united to one another through *Christ our head*.<sup>212</sup>

*Rev. 3:13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. "*

Let us pray that we ourselves possess such a little ear.

## CHAPTER 9

### Things Declared to the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans

*Rev. 3:14a And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: "These say The Amen, the faithful and true witness,*

Through faithfulness the truth of Christ is shown, or rather, that He is Truth in its essence.

[42] *3:14b the beginning of God's creation:*

[He is the] *beginning* instead of "kingdom," and the beginning of all that is, as the Master over all created things. For the beginning of creation is the preliminary and uncreated cause.

*Rev. 3:15-16a* <sup>15</sup>*I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you be cold or hot!* <sup>16a</sup>*Thus it is that you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold,*

Gregory the Theologian says "We must live exactly hot or exactly cold."<sup>213</sup> Naturally. For the one who is cold and not tasted the living faith, will often be in hope of attaining it. But the one has been warmed through baptism in the Spirit and has cooled later through laziness, has cut off for himself the hopes of salvation, having condemned the chosen faith.

<sup>211</sup> Oikoumenios also feels compelled to comment on the fact that Christ refers to "my God," but then does not actually explain it (2.13.13).

<sup>212</sup> An allusion to Eph. 4:15. Andrew has completely spiritualized the descent of the heavenly Jerusalem, unlike chiliasts who awaited its immanent physical descent, such as Tertullian, who wrote that the heavenly Jerusalem had actually been seen suspended in the sky (*Marc.* 3.25).

<sup>213</sup> If this is intended to be an exact quotation of Gregory, its source cannot be identified.



For (with respect to) actions, the middle way is not refused,<sup>214</sup> just as a legal marriage is not rejected, being the middle way between virginity and fornication. But in (matters of) faith, the middle way and the lukewarm is worthless.<sup>215</sup>

[43] *Rev. 3:16b-17* <sup>16b</sup> *I intend to vomit you out of my mouth.* <sup>17</sup> *For you say, 'I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing,' and you do not know that you are miserable and wretched and poor and blind and naked.*

“Just as lukewarm water causes people who receive it to vomit,” he says, “hence I

<sup>214</sup> Andrew may have Gregory the Theologian's Oration 32 in mind here, in which Gregory warns against participation in theological discourse by persons who lack the appropriate education and training to engage in such pursuits. In the same oration, Gregory also argues against extremism in behavior. Precision is required in theology, but in Christian practice, moderation is best. Inaccuracy in doctrinal statements and definitions is the characteristic of heretics: “And what provoked all these ideas of theirs? A passion that has no logical foundation and no connection with knowledge and a faith that sails along with no one at the helm.” But soon thereafter he warns: “Unproductive sloth and undisciplined passion are equally useless things” and “Virtue is impaired alike by too much as well as too little, just as any addition or subtraction from a rule. So let no one be wise beyond due measure or more exacting than the law requires...” *Or. 32.5, 6 and 7, respectively. Gregory of Nazianzus, Select Orations*, trans. Martha Vinson, Fathers of the Church series, vol. 107 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 194-95.

<sup>215</sup> John Cassian interprets the “lukewarm” people as those who wish to have spiritual rewards without relinquishing the pleasures of this life. After discussing the contrast between the desires of the flesh and the desires of the spirit, Cassian writes: “Between these two desires, then, the free will of the soul occupies a somewhat blameworthy middle position and neither delights in the disgrace of vice nor agrees to the hardships of virtue. It seeks to refrain from fleshly passions in such a way that it would by no means wish to endure those necessary sorrows without which the desires of the spirit cannot be laid hold of – hoping to obtain bodily chastity without disciplining the flesh, to acquire purity of heart without the exertion of vigils, to abound in the spiritual virtues while enjoying fleshly repose, to possess the grace of patience without the aggravation of any contrariness, to practice the humility of Christ without jettisoning worldly honors, to pursue religious simplicity along with secular ambition, to serve Christ to the accompaniment of human praise and acclamation, to be strictly truthful without the least offense to anyone. Finally, it prefers to pursue future goods in such a way as not to lose present ones. This would never bring us to true perfection but would place us in a very lukewarm state and make us like those who are rebuked by the Lord's reproach in the Apocalypse.” *The Conferences* 4.11.2-12.3. (*John Cassian, The Conferences*, trans. Boniface Ramsey, eds. Walter Burghardt, John Dillon and Dennis D. McManus. Ancient Christian Writers series, vol. 57 [New York: Paulist Press, 1997], 161-2.) Cassian believed that monks are especially vulnerable to this condition “because they are, as it were, freed from this fleshly constraint and consider themselves to stand in no need of either the effort of bodily abstinence or a contrite heart. Weakened by this sense of security, they never really struggle to seek for and possess perfection of heart or even purification from spiritual sins. This condition, which comes from their fleshly state, becomes animal, which is certainly a worse situation. For the person who passes from cold to lukewarm is, in the Lord's words, said to be more detestable.” (*The Conferences* 4.17, ACW 57:166) The same concern, especially for those in monasteries, was expressed by Caesarius of Arles. “This means that it would have been better for you to have remained cold in the world or to be fervent in the monastery.” *Serm. 235.4. (Caesarius of Arles, Sermons*, (3 vols.) trans. Mary Magdeleine Mueller, eds. Roy J. Deferrari and Bernard Peebles, Fathers of the Church series, vols. 31, 47 and 66 [New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1956-73], 66:206-07.) But for Victorinus, the “lukewarm” individual is the person who is “neither believing nor unbelieving, for they are all things to all men.” (Vic. 3.15, ANF 7:347)

too, through a word of my mouth will vomit you like detested food into eternal punishment, for you mingled the thorns of riches with the seed of the divine word<sup>216</sup> in your own poverty by spiritual ignorance, and the blindness of your intelligible<sup>217</sup> eyes and the nakedness of good deeds.”<sup>218</sup>

*Rev. 3:18* I advise you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you will become rich, and that you may put on white garments, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed, and salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see.

“If you would *be rich*,” he says, “to acquire a burning resolve and a willing heart take *refined gold* from me, the Enricher, the instructive Word illumined by the fire of trials,<sup>219</sup> through which you will have the inviolable treasure in the heart and be clothed in the most brilliant garment [44] of virtues through which the nakedness attached to you from sin will be covered.” *Eye salve* (is) also lack of possessions.<sup>220</sup> For if gifts render seeing eyes blind, then by all means, a lack of property<sup>221</sup> will open them.

<sup>216</sup> An allusion to the parable of the sower. (Matt. 13:7, 22, Mark 4:7, 18, Luke 8:7, 14.) The seed of the word of God is choked by the thorns of wealth and worldly cares.

<sup>217</sup> τῶν νοητῶν σου ὀφθαλμῶν, or “your spiritual eyes” or the “eyes of the mind.”

<sup>218</sup> Cyprian exhorted his readers to do good works, especially almsgiving, by appealing to this passage, among others. He encouraged them not to hold on to wealth for vain conceits or out of fear of the future. Their money could not truly offer security (“You keep your money, which, when kept, cannot keep you”) and he reminded them that we can never really *possess* wealth, since it cannot prevent our death and we cannot take it with us. Therefore, “you are mistaken, and are deceived, whosoever you are, that think yourself rich in this world. Listen to the voice of your Lord in the Apocalypse, rebuking men of your stamp with righteous reproaches.” *On Work and Alms* 13 and 14 respectively. (*The Treatises of Cyprian*. Treatise VII, *On Work and Alms*, trans. Ernest Wallis, *The Fathers of the Third Century: Hippolytus, Cyprian, Caius, Novatian*, Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. V. eds Alexander Robertson and James Donaldson. [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1990], 480.) Gregory the Great interprets the instruction in a more general sense to refer to virtue: “He who is elated through pride at his sanctity, declares himself, as it were, to be rich, but is proved to be poor, blind and naked. Poor, assuredly, because he has not the riches of virtues; blind, because he sees not the poverty which he is suffering; naked, because he has lost his first garment, but in a worse way, because he knows not that he has lost it.” *Morals* 34.3(6), LF 31:622-3.

<sup>219</sup> Victorinus interpreted this quite literally, “[I]n whatever manner you can, you should suffer for the Lord’s name tribulations and passions.” (Vic. 3.18, ANF 7:347) For Oikoumenios the gold is the gospel promise (3.3.10) and for Gregory the Great the refined “gold” is wisdom acquired through obedience. “[A]s temporal goods are purchased with gold, so are eternal blessings with wisdom...for we ‘buy ourselves gold’ when we pay obedience first, to get wisdom in exchange, and it is to this very bargain that a certain wise man rightly stimulates in us, in these words, ‘If thou desires wisdom keep the commandments.’ (Eccl. 1:26)” *Morals* 4.31(61), LF 18:228.

<sup>220</sup> For Oikoumenios the eye salve is “cleansing repentance” which makes it possible to see the spiritual light of the Lord (3.3.12). For Gregory the Great the eye salve is “good works.” (*Pastoral Care* 1.11, ACW 11:42)

<sup>221</sup> τὸ ἀδωροδόκητον, literally “no bribery.” Probably an allusion to Exod. 23:8: “And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the officials, and subverts the cause of those who are in the right.” See also Deut. 16:19.

*Rev. 3:19 If I love someone, I reproach and correct (him); Therefore, be zealous and repent.*

Oh, the philanthropy! How much goodness the reproach holds! <sup>222</sup>

*Rev. 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and I knock; if one will hear my voice and will open the door, I will come in to him and I will dine with him, and he with me.*

“My presence is not forced,” he says.<sup>223</sup> “I knock at the door of the heart and rejoice with those who open over their salvation.<sup>224</sup> For I consider this as food and supper, being fed with these things with which they feed themselves and (through which) they will escape the

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<sup>222</sup> Gregory the Great very effectively ties the reproach to the earlier image of blindness. “But for the most part not only we never at all avoid sins that threaten, but we do not even open our eyes to them, when committed. And the mind of sinners is enveloped in the deeper darkness, in proportion as it does not see the deficiency of its own blindness. Hence, it is very often brought to pass, by the bountifulness of God’s gift, that punishment follows upon transgression, and stripes unclothe the eyes of the transgressor, which self-security was blinding in the midst of evil ways... and thus to him the very sharpness of the correction becomes the source of light.” *Morals* 6.23(40), LF 18:342. Caesarius of Arles uses this verse to explain to his congregation why some people commit terrible sins, yet seem to suffer no consequences. “They are not scourged at all in this world, because they are reserved for eternal punishment due to the excessive number of their sins. They cannot be punished in this short time, for they require endless torture.... If he scourges every son he receives, then if he does not chastise a man he does not accept him.” (*Serm.* 5.3, FC 31:35)

<sup>223</sup> Andrew expresses the important theological concept of “synergy” here. The free co-operation of the human partner is necessary for a relationship with Christ. The same observation is made by Origen: Christ is both the guest and the host. Both the person and Christ dine together, but it is the individual who first entertains Him. The human being must allow God to enter because God, who respects human freedom, does not force himself on us. “Christ, too, agrees to stand at the door and knock so as to come in to the one who opens for Him and to eat with him from what he has. And after that, according to His own power as Son of God, He will share His own food with the one who first entertained Him.” *On Prayer* 27.11. (*Origen: An Exhortation to Martyrdom, Prayer and Selected Works*, trans. Rowan Greer, Classics of Western Spirituality series, [New York: Paulist Press, 1979], 143.)

<sup>224</sup> For Andrew the image of eating with the Lord is understood as salvation itself, that one has entered the Kingdom of heaven. He is undoubtedly influenced by the many scriptural references equating the Kingdom with a banquet. (For example, Matt. 8:11 and 22:2-13, Luke 22:29-30 and Rev. 19:9.) Oikoumenios interprets this verse much more narrowly and sacramentally. “The supper with the Lord signifies participation in the holy mysteries.” (3.3.14) Caesarius of Arles’ observation is more broad: “Every man, beloved brethren, feeds either Christ or the Devil at the banquet of his heart. If he is willing to observe justice, peace, chastity, mercy and charity, he doubtless feeds and refreshes Christ within him... Anyone can tell from his actions what kind of a guest he deserves to receive in his heart. It is certain that you will merit to have guests according to the nature of the feast you prepare.” (*Serm.* 79.1, FC 31:363-4) Origen also allegorizes the reference to “supper” to mean one capable of advanced spiritual understanding. “I wonder if perhaps Jesus neither eats breakfast with anyone (for there is no need of an introduction and first doctrines) nor anyone eats breakfast with him, but he who eats with him eats supper only.” *Comm. on John* 32.18. *Origen, Commentary on the Gospel of John, Books 13-32*, trans. Ronald E. Heine, Fathers of the Church series vol. 89 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 345.

*famine of hearing the Divine Word<sup>225</sup> and the the darkness<sup>226</sup> of error.”*

*Rev. 3:21 He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself have conquered and sat with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”*

[45] The kingdom and the repose of the future age are indicated by the *throne*. Therefore he says that “those who have conquered the enemy *will be co-glorified<sup>227</sup>* with me and *will co-reign.*”<sup>228</sup> The *as I myself conquered* is said in human terms for the assumption (of the flesh). For God the Logos did not acquire the kingdom as a reward for virtue, for this he possesses eternally as part of His essence. For if this were not the case, he would not have been able to share it (the kingdom) with others; but according to the Theologian and *Son of Thunder*,<sup>229</sup> he has imparted this to all the saints from *his own fullness.*<sup>230</sup> Therefore he has promised to the Holy Apostles that they will *sit on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel<sup>231</sup>* of the future. Since he became human for our sake, being God and King before the ages, he had partaken of everything that is our own *except sin,*<sup>232</sup> and imparted all that is his to those victorious [46] over the devil, as much as it was possible for people to receive. Therefore, having made the cloud a vehicle for the rise heavenward in his ascension,<sup>233</sup> he also says through the Apostle that the saints will be *caught up in the clouds to meet him,*<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> The double meaning of being “fed” by Christ the Word and hearing the Word in the form of the Scriptures is intentional. Earlier, commenting on Rev. 1:13, Andrew interpreted the breast of Christ as the Scriptures which nourish the faithful. (*Chp. 2, Text 20, Comm. 24, fn 99.*)

<sup>226</sup> An allusion to Amos 8:9-11, in which the Lord threatens that he will send darkness and a famine, not of bread but of the word of the Lord. There is no reference to famine in the Revelation text, but famine is not far from Andrew’s mind. (See *Comm. 35, fn 148.*)

<sup>227</sup> An allusion to Rom. 8:17.

<sup>228</sup> An allusion to 2 Tim. 2:12.

<sup>229</sup> See Mark 3:17 for this nickname that Jesus gave to John and his brother James.

<sup>230</sup> Allusion to John 1:16, “From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace.”

<sup>231</sup> Matt. 19:28, Luke 22:30.

<sup>232</sup> Heb. 4:15.

<sup>233</sup> Acts 1:9.

<sup>234</sup> 1 Thess. 4:17.

and he will come (as) a judge, as creator and master of creation, handing over to the saints to judge those who opposed the truly divine and blessed slavery, as the Apostle says, *Do you not know that we will judge angels?*,<sup>235</sup> that is, the *rulers of darkness*.<sup>236</sup> Since we have such a philanthropist-Judge, let us hurry to gain his favor, fulfilling endlessly Solomon's saying *at all times my garments have been white*,<sup>237</sup> not being stained by evil deeds. For this way, having decorated our beloved souls as for a wedding,<sup>238</sup> we will present them to the king for a union and we will gain the eternal blessings in Him, Christ our God, the Supplier of these (blessings), to whom is due glory, honor and worship with the Father, together with the [all]-Holy Spirit, unto the ages of ages. Amen.

#### SECTION 4, CHAPTER 10

##### About the Door That Will be Seen in Heaven and the Twenty Four Elders and What Follows These Things

*Rev. 4:1 After these I saw, and behold, an open door in heaven! And the first voice, which I heard was like a trumpet [47] speaking to me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you the things which must happen after these."*

The removal of the *door* of the secret mysteries of the spirit means the declaration,<sup>239</sup> and the *trumpet* (means) the great voice of the one revealing, and the *come up here* (means)

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<sup>235</sup> 1 Cor. 6:3.

<sup>236</sup> Eph. 6:12.

<sup>237</sup> Eccl. 9:8.

<sup>238</sup> An allusion to Matt. 22:11-12, the parable of the wedding feast. A guest who was not appropriately attired in a wedding garment was cast out of the wedding feast, which is a symbol of the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>239</sup> Andrew interprets the open door and the entrance into heaven entirely allegorically. Oikoumenios, on the other hand, appears to understand the experience of John somewhat literally, even though he recognizes that it is a spiritual experience. Oikoumenios explains that there is no actual "door" in heaven, but in some manner something was "opened" and sights were actually "shown" to John. "...[T]his is how it was shown to the Evangelist so that he might see the things above the heavens. For when any door is opened, the things inside are necessarily observed." (3.5.1, Suggit 53) Oikoumenios also believes that John was somehow transported to heaven, although the experience was "neither bodily nor perceptible." (3.5.3, Suggit 53) Ambrose agrees with Andrew and understands the open door to symbolize the revelation of mysteries which John received because of his persistent prayer, as did Paul (2 Cor. 12:2). By word association, (the word "door"), Ambrose connects the door in Rev. 4 to the parable persistence in prayer in Luke 11:5ff, in which a man *knocks* on his friend's *door* at midnight to ask for bread and will not be dissuaded until he receives it. Then, through the word "knock", Ambrose links the concept to the statement "knock and the door will be opened to you." (Luke 11:9) He

the complete removal of the mind of the one hearing it from the earthly (realm) to the things happening in heaven.<sup>240</sup>

*Rev. 4:2-3* <sup>2</sup>And immediately I was in the Spirit. And behold, a throne stood in heaven, <sup>3</sup>and one sitting upon the throne who appeared like the stone jasper and carnelian, and a rainbow was around the throne that looked like an emerald.

After hearing the voice and stamped by the Spirit,<sup>241</sup> he says, he saw the sovereign throne, through which is meant the repose in the saints of God, for He is enthroned with these.<sup>242</sup> After that he presents the Father seen here, not attributing bodily characteristics to him,<sup>243</sup> just as in the previous vision of the Son,<sup>244</sup> but he compares Him to precious stones;

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concludes that the heavenly visions were the result of persistent knocking on the metaphorical door of heaven by prayer. "So rise from your sleep that ye may knock on Christ's door, which Paul also entreats to be opened to him... so that the door be opened to him to speak the mystery of Christ. And perchance, it is that door which John saw opened, for he saw and said, "After these things I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven..." so the door was open to John, the door was open to Paul..." (*Hom. On Luke*, 7.89. *Exposition on Luke*, trans. Theodosia Tomkinson, 267-8.) Victorinus completely allegorizes the open door, concluding that the door symbolizes the New Testament (Vic. 4.1, ANF 7:347-8) and the door was open upon Christ's ascension into heaven.

<sup>240</sup> An allusion to Col. 3:2 "Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth."

<sup>241</sup> Andrew's interpretation continues along the lines of his explanation that John did not really "go to" heaven, not even "in the Spirit," words which had been emphasized by Oikoumenios to indicate a mystical "transportation." For Andrew "in the spirit" means that John's mind was "stamped by the spirit" (τυπωθεῖς). The experience was a "complete removal of the mind" from earthly to heavenly places. The vision of the Father here is like the prior vision of the Son. He is not physically described as though he had been "seen" in any manner. Rather, the description, just as that of Christ in chapter 1, is an entirely symbolic depiction which expresses God's inherent qualities. For Victorinus, "in the spirit" means that John's mind was opened by the Spirit. (Vic. 4.2, ANF 7:348)

<sup>242</sup> "The throne set: what is it but the throne of judgment and of the King?" (Vic. 4.2, ANF 7:347) One would naturally expect the throne to symbolize rule or judgment, but Andrew consistently understands it to represent repose.

<sup>243</sup> Interestingly, Andrew writes that by the description John "presents the Father" (emphasis added) as though we too are invited to engage our imagination by the brilliancy of the depiction. As noted above (fn 241) Andrew's understanding of what occurred contrasts somewhat with Oikoumenios who believes that John "went up in the Spirit" to heaven and in some manner "saw" something. (3.5.1-3) Oikoumenios recognizes that this creates a problem. Andrew had also recognized the problem and avoided it completely. But Oikoumenios must quickly clarify how John's vision of God does not contradict those Scriptures which say that God cannot be seen, such as, "No one shall see my face and live" (Exod. 33:20), and even the Evangelist's comment "No one has ever seen God" (John 1:18). Oikoumenios explains that God does not look like precious stones and in fact God was not described at all, since he cannot be seen. What was described, according to Oikoumenios, were the "energies" or "activities" of God (τῶν ἐνεργειῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ, Oik. 3.5.3, De Groote 105). His goodness and creative activities were shown by the green jasper and his awesome nature and punishing power by the fiery carnelian. Suggit has translated the word "energies" or "activities" as the "acts" of God (Suggit 53), but this does not convey the theological importance and usage of the word. Andrew rejects both Oikoumenios'



first, jasper meaning, as pale green, the evergreen at once both the life-bringer and bestower of the food of the divine nature, through which every seed brings forth young sprouts. [48] In addition to this (it indicates that the Father is) fearful to opponents — for they say that *jasper* is fearful to wild beasts and phantoms<sup>245</sup> — and also after this (it means) the therapeutic spiritual healing of those who receive (him). For the great Epiphanius says that when placed upon (someone) this stone (carnelian) heals illnesses and wounds made by iron (weapons).<sup>246</sup> And the *rainbow* like an emerald shows the variety and blooming virtues of the angelic orders.<sup>247</sup>

*Rev. 4:4 And around the throne (were) twenty-four thrones, and sitting on the thrones (were) twenty-four elders wrapped in white garments, and upon their heads (were) gold crowns.*

[49] Someone before us, took these (to be) Abel, and twenty others of the Old (Testament) and three of the New (Testament).<sup>248</sup> Either this or perhaps we must understand

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terminology and his conclusion probably because the word “energies” is too closely associated with the “nature” of God (φύσις). Neither can ever be seen. Andrew avoids any suggestion that either God’s energies or His nature are depicted. Rather, Andrew emphasizes that God is only “compared to” the precious stones rather than being described (ἀλλὰ τιμίους αὐτὸν λίθοις ἀπεικάζει). Victorinus’ interpretation unfolds along entirely different lines. The two types of stones represent God’s judgment because of the connection to the throne. He concludes that since they are the colors of water and of fire, the first represents the prior destruction of the world by the Great Flood and the other symbolizes the future destruction of the world by fire (Vic. 4.3, ANF 7:348).

<sup>244</sup> This confirms that Andrew understands the description of Christ in chapter 1 as entirely symbolic, and in no manner a depiction of a “vision.”

<sup>245</sup> Epiphanius, *περὶ τῶν δώδεκα λίθων 6 (de Gemmis)* P.G. 43 297 D. τοῦτόν φασιν οἱ μυθολογοῖ τοὺς θῆρας τοὺς ἐν ἀγρῷ φοβεῖσθαι καὶ τὰ φάνσματα. See also Plinius, *Nat. Hist.* 37.18 and Dioscurides *De mat. med.* 5.142.

<sup>246</sup> Epiphanius, *ibid.* See also *Chp. 67, Text 245, Comm. 225.*

<sup>247</sup> This is Oikoumenios’ interpretation of the rainbow (3.5.10).

<sup>248</sup> This is the clearest reference to Oikoumenios by Andrew which we have seen thus far. The reference to the singular “another” rather than the typical vague indication “some,” suggests that this is the opinion of Oikoumenios alone. Oikoumenios identifies the twenty-four elders as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Melchizedek, Job, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, David, Elijah, Elisha, the twelve minor prophets combined into one, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, John the Baptist, James the son of Joseph (i.e., “the brother of the Lord”), and Stephen. (3.7.1). Oikoumenios’ explicit identification of specific persons sitting on the thrones confirms that he believed that John “went” to heaven and actually “saw” something. It is not only a far more literal exegesis than Andrew will accept, but Oikoumenios fails to recognize any symbolic significance of the number twenty-four, such as representing the Old and New Israel or all of the people of God. Victorinus identifies them as the twelve patriarchs and the twelve apostles (Vic. 4.8, ANF 7:349). Oikoumenios

it to be indicating those who have been adorned in deeds and speech by twenty four primary elements.<sup>249</sup> Let the reader be tested.<sup>250</sup> To understand it quickly more suitably,<sup>251</sup> by the twelve elders (are meant) those who excelled in the Old (Testament) and by the twelve others those who excelled in the New.<sup>252</sup> For from those were pre-eminent both the twelve leaders of the tribes, also those twelve apostles in the New, to whom the Lord promised to seat on twelve thrones.<sup>253</sup> The white clothes are symbols of the brilliant life and the unending feast and gladness,<sup>254</sup> the crowns of victory which (belong) to those who behaved like men<sup>255</sup> and were successful against the evil demons.

*Rev. 4:5a From out of the throne came flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder.*

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concluded that the twelve apostles cannot be among these elders because Jesus promised that they would sit on twelve thrones “not now, but in the new age” (Matt. 19:28). Oikoumenios concludes that since the new age has not yet commenced, the elders whom John saw cannot be any of the apostles (3.7.2). This supports our contention that Oikoumenios believes that John “saw” something in the present moment. Since Oikoumenios believes that Revelation is also future prophecy, there would be no reason why none of the twelve apostles were among those seated on the thrones unless he believed that John actually witnessed a contemporaneous moment in heaven, rather than a symbolic glimpse into the future.

<sup>249</sup> This points to a tropological, or “moral” interpretation intended for the spiritual improvement of the reader. The twenty four elders could represent virtues. Andrew assumes that the reader knows which twenty-four elements or principles are foundational for appropriate deeds and speech.

<sup>250</sup> This is the first direct invitation for the reader to engage the text. In his introduction Andrew expressed his opinion that the Apocalypse could serve as training for the quickness of the mind (*Text 9, Comm. 10*). He believes the reader should engage his own intellect toward an understanding of the text.

<sup>251</sup> Andrew initially appears to allow the interpretation of Oikoumenios and also a tropological possibility. Having mentioned those alternatives first, he now indicates that he does not prefer them. He opts for something “more suitable” in keeping with the symbolic character of Revelation.

<sup>252</sup> Andrew identifies the twenty-four elders with actual historical persons, but recognizes the greater significance of the number twenty-four as twelve times two, and that these historical leaders of Old and New Israel represent the totality of the people of God.

<sup>253</sup> Matt. 19:28, Luke 22:30.

<sup>254</sup> Note that in this context the white clothes do not denote purity in Andrew’s opinion but wedding garments, because the elders are in the Kingdom of Heaven, which Christ compared to a marriage banquet. (Matt. 22:1-10 and 25:1-13) Earlier the white robes, promised to those in Sardis who had not soiled their garments, represented the baptismal garments (*Chp. 7, Text 37, Comm. 46*). Oikoumenios sees the white garments as symbols of purity and the crowns are signs of their conquest over the passions (3.7.3).

<sup>255</sup> ἀνδρισάμενοι (ἀνδρίζομαι), which means both to behave like a man and also to fight bravely. To “act like a man” is equivalent to “being brave.” Here, it is bravery in spiritual warfare that is rewarded.



And from here is demonstrated the fearful and astonishing (aspect) of God against those unworthy of his long-suffering. To those, however, who are worthy of salvation both (the lightening and thunder) inspire enlightenment, the one to the eyes of the mind and the other to the spiritual ears upon which they have fallen.<sup>256</sup>

[50] *Rev 4:5b - 6a* <sup>5b</sup> *And seven torches of fire burn before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God;* <sup>6a</sup> *and before the throne like a glass sea like crystal.*

We must understand these spirits (are) either, as Irenaeus says, the seven angels who surpass the others,<sup>257</sup> or the activities<sup>258</sup> of the life-giving Spirit, which Isaiah had recalled.<sup>259</sup> I think it is unlikely to be neither of the two. The *glass sea* designates the multitude of the holy powers, and also the clarity, spotlessness and calmness of the future life.<sup>260</sup> Perhaps

<sup>256</sup> To Oikoumenios the dramatic manifestations of thunder and lightening are awesome and fearful to everyone. For Victorinus, the "lightenings signify the Lord's advent, and the voices the announcements of the New Testament, and the thunders, that the words are from heaven. The burning torches of fire signify the gift of the Holy Spirit, that it is given by the wood of the passion." (Vic. 4.5, ANF 7:349)

<sup>257</sup> Here again Schmid cites Irenaeus *Heres.* 1.5.2 in the mistaken belief that Andrew is citing Irenaeus in a passage which describes Gnostic cosmology. (See *Text 19, Comm.* 23, fn 93.) However, what Andrew has in mind is *Proof of Apostolic Preaching* 9. This is especially evident due to the reference in that passage to Isaiah, whom Andrew explicitly cites here. "Now the world is encompassed by seven heavens, in which dwell Powers and Angels and Archangels, doing service to God, the Almighty and Maker of all things: not as though He was in need, but that they may not be idle and unprofitable and ineffectual. Wherefore also the Spirit of God is manifold in (His) indwelling, and in seven forms of service is He reckoned by the prophet Isaiah, as resting on the Son of God, that is the Word, in His coming as man." Irenaeus then quotes Isa. 11:2 (See below, fn 259.) *St. Irenaeus, The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, trans. J. Armitage Robinson (from the Armenian), Translations of Christian Literature series IV, "Oriental Texts" (New York: Society of the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1920), 77-78.

<sup>258</sup> ἐνεργείας.

<sup>259</sup> Isa. 11:2. "The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord." Even though this verse in Isaiah is a messianic prophecy and was interpreted as such by the Fathers, it also greatly influenced the Pneumatology of the early Church. Gregory of Nyssa combined the image of seven lamps in Zech. 4:2 with the seven spirits of Isa. 11:2 in his description of the ark of the covenant. "And if you should hear about lamps which have many branches coming out of one candlestick so that a full and brilliant light is cast all around you would correctly conclude that they are the varied rays of the Spirit which shine brightly in this tabernacle. This is what Isaiah is speaking about when he divides the lights of the Spirit into seven." (*The Life of Moses* 181. *Gregory of Nyssa, The Life of Moses*, trans. Abraham J. Malherbe and Everett Ferguson, Classics of Western Spirituality series, [New York: Paulist Press, 1978], 100.) Oikoumenios, relying on Clement of Alexandria, believes that the seven spirits are angels because Clement writes that there are seven archangels which are like torches of fire. (*Miscellanies* 6.16.143.1) and because of Ps. 104(103):4 "He makes his angels spirits, his ministers a flame of fire." (NKJV) (Oik. 3.7.5)

<sup>260</sup> Both Oikoumenios and Andrew agree that the sea represents the multitude of spirits in heaven, but according to Oikoumenios they are crystal clear because they are pure of every defilement (3.7.6). Victorinus' conclusion

what is indicated by this (glass) is the back of the sky which is covered with the water that is inaccessible to us, according to the psalm.<sup>261</sup> If some had considered it to be the crystal-like nature of the sky, we must also consider whether the substance of the God-trodden surface is meant by this, having both the brightness and clarity. But the search into things beyond the apprehension of the mind is laughable.

*Rev. 4:6b And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, (were) four animals, full of eyes in front and behind:*

The *throne* is shown by this to be signifying the reign and resting place of God, in which and around which he (John) saw the Seraphim,<sup>262</sup> being taught through the multitude of their eyes their ability to see God with regard to the divine light, and also that those (eyes) behind and in front receive light and knowledge from God.

[51] *Rev. 4:7 And the first animal (was) like a lion, the second animal (was) like a calf, the third animal had a face like a man, and the fourth animal (was) like an eagle flying.*

These animals, we think, were also seen by Isaiah,<sup>263</sup> by the four individuals is meant either the four elements of God's creation and maintenance, as some thought,<sup>264</sup> or the

is entirely different. Since the sea is located in front of the throne, the sea represents "the gift of baptism" which was given through the Son "in time of repentance, before He executes judgment. It is therefore before the throne, that is, the judgment." (Vic. 4.6, ANF 7:348)

<sup>261</sup> Ps. 104(103):3, "You set the beams of your chambers on the waters." Andrew expresses the cosmology of his time, (which for the Fathers was greatly influenced by the Bible), that water was restrained above the earth behind the "firmament" of heaven (Gen. 1:6.). See Basil the Great, *On the Six Days of Creation*, Hom. 3.

<sup>262</sup> Andrew has identified them as the seraphim, but the heavenly animals are not identified as such in the biblical text. The Apocalypse combines the description of the seraphim in Isaiah 6 with Ezekiel's vision of the cherubim (1:5-10) which describes four living creatures, each with many eyes and four faces: a lion, a calf, a man and an eagle (Ezek. 1:18).

<sup>263</sup> The most striking aspect of the description is the four faces and the many eyes. Since Isaiah does not mention faces or eyes, one would think that Andrew would identify the animals as the cherubim of Ezekiel's vision. But Andrew concludes they are the seraphim because Isa. 6:2 describes the seraphim as having six wings and singing "holy, holy, holy" (Isa. 6:3), which is the hymn that the animals are about to sing in Rev. 4:8b.

<sup>264</sup> This is Oikoumenios' opinion. "For since every perceptible and earthly body is composed of four elements – fire, earth, air and water – each of the living creatures represents one of these." (3.9.3, Suggit 57-8) For Oikoumenios the lion represents fire, the ox is the earth, the man is air and the eagle is water. They are around

mastery over the things in heaven and earth and in the sea; or the four virtues<sup>265</sup> and the four gospels, as it had been well-stated by others:<sup>266</sup> the *lion* meaning bravery and the gospel according to John, as Irenaeus says,<sup>267</sup> through this signifying the kingdom from before the

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the throne of God because all living creatures on the earth “are worthy of his care and providence.” (3.9.4, Suggit 58)

<sup>265</sup> Andrew presumes that the reader knows the “four virtues,” possibly four principle virtues in Stoic philosophy: courage, justice, self-control and intellectual discernment. It is unlikely that Andrew or the interpreters who held this view were referencing philosophy directly. Rather, many Greek philosophical concepts had permeated the general culture to the extent that they were no longer identified with philosophy per se, but were simply widely accepted societal notions. Sometimes other virtues were listed as the four. Gerhard Podskalsky, “virtue,” *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3:2178.

<sup>266</sup> Oikoumenios’ opinion that they represent the four elements is very surprising since associating the four animals with the four evangelists was a firmly established Christian tradition, possibly the best-known patristic interpretation from the Apocalypse. Oikoumenios does not mention this explanation at all. Generally speaking, the number four in the Christian tradition typically symbolized the gospels. Augustine specifically notes that identifying the four animals with the gospels was a very common interpretation. “*Very many* [of those] who have commented on the mysteries of the holy Scriptures before us have understood the four evangelists in this animal, or rather in these animals.” (emphasis added) *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 36.5.2. (*Augustine, Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 4 vols., trans. John W. Rettig, Fathers of the Church series vols. 78, 79, 88 and 90. [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1988-94] 88:86.) The Fathers often provided lengthy explanations to support their particular interpretations. Associating the four creatures with the four gospels reaches at least as far back as Irenaeus, upon whom Andrew relies here, who may also have been the source of this tradition. (See below, fn 267.) Victorinus is the earliest in the Latin West: “The lion designates Mark...and in the figure of a man, Matthew...Luke...bore the likeness of a calf, John the evangelist, likened to an eagle...” (Vic 4.6-7, ANF 7:348) The specific identification of a gospel with a particular animal varies among the Fathers, although everyone seems to agree that the calf or the ox represents Luke. This is most likely due to Luke’s many references to the temple and because the calf was the only animal among the four acceptable for sacrifice. For Augustine, the lion stands for Matthew, the calf for Luke, the man for Mark, and the eagle for John. (*Tractates on the Gospel of John* 36.5.2., FC 88:86-87). But he also notes elsewhere that “others” (not simply Irenaeus) assign the man to Matthew, the eagle to Mark, and the lion to John. (*The Harmony of the Gospels* 1.6. *St. Augustin: Sermon on the Mount; Harmony of the Gospels; Homilies on the Gospels*, trans. S.D.F. Salmond, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 1<sup>st</sup> series, vol. VI, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprint 1989), 80-81.) But Augustine disagreed with that and stated that the others arrived at this opinion simply by examining the details related to the themes or the style at the beginning of each gospel, which is Andrew’s approach. But for Augustine, those who share Augustine’s “more reasonable” view, have assigned the animals according to the themes appropriate to the gospels in their *entirety*, not simply according to introductory matters. “For, in forming their particular idea of the matter, these latter have chosen to keep in view simply the beginnings of the books, and not the full design of the several evangelists in its completeness, which was the matter that should, above all, have been thoroughly examined.” (*The Harmony of the Gospels* 1.6, NPNF 1<sup>st</sup> 6:80-81.) Jerome disagrees with Augustine, as well as with the tradition expressed by Irenaeus, and sides instead with Victorinus. For Jerome, Matthew is the man, Luke is the ox, Mark is the lion and John is the eagle. (*Hom.* 75.1, “On the Beginning of the Gospel of Mark,” FC 57:121.)

<sup>267</sup> *Heres.* 3.11.8, ANF 1:428. In combating heretics who cited apocryphal gospels or rejected one or more of the four canonical gospels, Irenaeus explained why exactly four gospels were intended by God, not more and not fewer. “For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the ‘pillar and ground’ of the Church is the Gospel and the spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars...” He continues with a lengthy passage explaining how each gospel is symbolized by one of the four creatures of Rev. 4:7. He provides an additional allegorical interpretation: that the four also represent how the Logos conversed with the patriarchs, gave the Law of Moses,

ages. For *in the beginning is the Word*,<sup>268</sup> he preached. The *calf*, in as much as it endures its own pains, signifies righteousness and the gospel according to Luke, as the one providing the legal and priestly genealogy of Christ.<sup>269</sup> The *eagle* is prudence, for this is witnessed by the animal and the gospel according to Mark, as brief and having begun from the prophetic spirit.<sup>270</sup> The *man* (signifies) the intellect as well as the gospel according to Matthew, as he preached the birth of Christ by nature and not by the law.<sup>271</sup> Perhaps through these the Incarnation<sup>272</sup> of Christ is also indicated, through [52] the *lion* as a king, through the *calf* as a priest, perhaps also a sacrifice, through the *man* as being made man for our sake, and through the *eagle* as the provider of the life-giving Spirit which came upon us from

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was incarnate, and sent the Spirit. Lastly, he adds: "For this reason were four principal covenants given to the human race: one, prior to the deluge, under Adam; the second, that after the deluge, under Noah; the third, the giving of the law, under Moses; the fourth, that which renovates man, and sums up all things in itself by means of the Gospel..." *Ibid.*

<sup>268</sup> John 1:1.

<sup>269</sup> This allusion to the genealogy of Christ indicates Andrew's exegetical education and his familiarity with traditional explanations for scriptural problems. One of the most commonly discussed problems in the gospels was the discrepancy between the two genealogies given for Jesus in Luke 3 and Matthew 1. They do not entirely agree. Reconciling this problem, compounded by the patristic understanding of scriptural infallibility, posed a real challenge to early interpreters, especially since the discrepancy provided ammunition to pagan and Jewish opponents who used it to attack and mock not only the gospels, but even to impugn the reputation of the Virgin Mary and the legitimacy of Jesus. The most problematic discrepancy is that two different fathers are named for Joseph. Matthew gives the genealogy of Jesus as descending down from Abraham to David through Solomon to *Jacob*, the father of Joseph. But Luke, traces the lineage backwards, stating that the father of Joseph was *Heli*, and then goes back through Nathan, the son of David. The problem was tackled by Julius Africanus (died c. 240) in his famous *Epistle to Aristides*. He concluded that both men were the father of Joseph due to a levirate marriage. (See Deut. 25:5.) Joseph's mother had first married Heli, but when he died childless she married his brother Jacob. Hence, Heli is the "legal" father of Joseph, as Andrew states, because he is Joseph's father through the Mosaic Law of levirate marriage. However, the biological father of Joseph is Jacob, or his father "by nature, not by law" according to Andrew. Julius' solution to the genealogy problem was well known and widely followed. See Eusebius of Caesarea (*E. H.* 1.7.1-17), Jerome (*Comm. on Matthew* 1.16), Augustine (*Retractions* 2.7 and *Serm.* 1.27 [*Serm.* 51 Benedictine Edition] "Agreement of the Evangelists," *Augustine: Sermons for Christmas and Epiphany*, trans. Thomas Comerford Lawler, Ancient Christian Writers series, vol. 15 [Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1952], 58-59) and Photios (cod. 34.22).

<sup>270</sup> Mark's gospel is the shortest, his introduction is the briefest, and he begins with two quotations from the prophets: Mal. 3:1 and Isa. 40:3.

<sup>271</sup> Andrew's expression echoes the reasoning provided by Julius Africanus: "[I]n Israel the names of their generations were enumerated either according to nature or according to law, according to nature, indeed, by the succession of legitimate offspring, and according to law whenever another raised up children to the name of a brother dying childless." (A reference to Deut. 25:5-10.) *Epistle to Aristides* 2. *Julius Africanus, Epistle to Aristides*, [trans. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, *The Fathers of the Third Century*, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Ante-Nicene Fathers of the Church series, vol. VI. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1989), 125-126.

<sup>272</sup> οἰκονομία.

above.<sup>273</sup>

*Rev. 4:8a And the four animals, each of them having six wings, are full of eyes all round and within,*

This is what Dionysios the Great says.<sup>274</sup> For this reason the *two wings cover the face, the other two cover the feet and (by means of) the middle they fly*, so that their reverence is shown concerning the higher and deeper things of their own apprehension, on account of which they are lighted up towards the divine light by means of their divine middle pair (of wings).<sup>275</sup>

*Rev. 4:8b And they do not rest day and night saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord*

<sup>273</sup> Augustine had also given an alternative, and strictly Christological, interpretation in which *all* of the animals signify Christ: "Our King, however, portraying in Himself alone the four figures of animals mentioned in the Apocalypse of John, was born as a man, rendered service as a lion, was immolated as a calf and flew upward as an eagle." (*Serm.* 210.4 "For the Lenten Season", FC 38:101-102.) As in the case of Andrew, Augustine was following an established Christian tradition, hinted at by his mentor, Ambrose: "Yet very many think that our Lord Himself is typified in the four books of the gospel, in the shapes of the four creatures, because the same is the Man, the same is the Lion, the same is the Calf, the same is the Eagle: the Man because He was born of Mary; the Lion because He is brave (Judges 14:14, 18, Luke 3:16), the Calf because He is a Victim, the Eagle, because He is the Resurrection (Ps. 103[102]:5). And thus, the creature's shapes are typified in every book, so that the content of each gospel seems to befit the nature or the virtue, or the grace, or the miracle of the Creature depicted." (*Hom. on Luke* Prologue 8, *Exposition of Luke*, 5) Gregory the Great also sees Christ symbolized by the four: "Yet these four living creatures can signify Him their very Head, of Whom they are members. For He Himself is both a Man, because He truly took our nature, and a calf, because He patiently died for our sakes; and a lion, because, by the strength of His Godhead, He burst the band of the death He had undergone; and lastly, an eagle, because He went back to heaven, from whence He had come. He is called therefore a man, from His being born; a calf from His dying; a lion from His rising again; an eagle from His ascending to the heavens." *Morals* 31.47(94), LF 31: 495-96.

<sup>274</sup> This is Andrew's first reference to Dionysios, whom he entitles "the Great," (also known as Dionysios "the Aereopagite" and today most commonly referred to as "Pseudo-Dionysios"). Pseudo-Dionysios authored some very popular mystical works in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century. Here the reference is to *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 4.3.8. Andrew's reference to him as "the Great," an epithet used today more commonly for Dionysios, the bishop of Alexandria (d. 265), raises the question of whether Andrew had confused these two Dionysioses. But that is unlikely. Dionysios of Alexandria was well-known for having expressed reservations as to the apostolic authorship of Revelation. Andrew would certainly have known of that from Eusebius (*E.H.* 7.24:6ff) who uses Dionysios' reservations and questions of authorship to ferment doubts about Revelation. The title "Great" also does not necessarily indicate an identification with Dionysios, bishop of Alexandria, because Andrew also refers to "the Great" Justin Martyr (*Chp.* 60, *Text* 215, *Comm.* 200), "the Great" Epiphanius (*Chp.* 10, *Text* 48, *Comm.* 57), and "the Great" Irenaeus (*Chp.* 2, *Text* 19, *Comm.* 23; *Chp.* 18, *Text* 71, *Comm.* 83). The title "Great" is not typically applied to these Fathers today either.

<sup>275</sup> "These are the testimonies of the books of the Old Testament. Thus, twenty and four make as many as there are elders sitting upon the thrones. But as an animal cannot fly unless it have wings, so, too, the announcement of the New Testament gains no faith unless it have the fore-announced testimonies of the Old Testament, by which it is lifted from the earth, and flies." (Vic. 4.8, ANF 7:349)

*God Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come!*"

These holy powers do not rest, never ceasing the divine hymnody and offering the three-fold blessing<sup>276</sup> to the tri-hypostatic divinity. And the *who is and who was and who is to come* we said means the Holy Trinity.<sup>277</sup>

*Rev. 4:9-10a* <sup>9</sup>*And whenever the animals give glory and honor and thanksgiving [53] to him who is seated on the throne, who lives for ever and ever, <sup>10a</sup>the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship Him who lives for ever and ever.*

Through these is signified that the twenty-four elders are also understood by us participating in the hymnody of the heavenly powers, confessing that they have received from God the power of victory over spiritual<sup>278</sup> enemies.

*Rev. 4:10b - 11* <sup>10b</sup>*They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, <sup>11</sup>"You are worthy, Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."*

They say "You, Master, are the cause and the provider of the crowns of victory, and as creatures thanksgiving is due to You from all things."<sup>279</sup>

<sup>276</sup> τρισσὸν ἅγιον, because of the repetition of the word "holy" three times by the angels.

<sup>277</sup> See Andrew's comments on Rev 1:4-5 (*Chp. 1, Text 13-15, Comm. 16-18*) for a more detailed explanation. Commenting on the phrase earlier, Andrew takes the position that in the particular context of Rev. 1:4, the *who is and who was and who is to come* more accurately refers to the Father only, although some believe it refers to the Trinity. He explains that since the three "persons" of the Trinity share the same divine essence, what is said about one applies to the others as well. This is especially demonstrated the acclamation *holy, holy, holy* which Andrew identifies with all three separately in various parts of the Bible through word association. Most likely this is also a statement against the Monophysite understanding of the Trisagion hymn. (See *Comm. 20, fn 78.*)

<sup>278</sup> Τῶν νοητῶν ἐχθρῶν, literally, "the enemies of the *nous*." The word νοῦς is found frequently in the Fathers and means the "mind" or "intellect" as opposed to that which is perceived by the senses. It is difficult to translate the underlying concept especially when used as it is here, as an adjective. In adjectival form it is sometimes untranslated and rendered "noetic" because of the inability to convey the richness of this word in English. Otherwise, it is usually translated as "spiritual," "intellectual," or "intelligible." But it must be understood that the translation "spiritual" does not mean a faculty in opposition to, or apart from, the mind. Likewise, "intellectual" does not suggest knowledge by means of discursive reasoning, and "intelligible" does not mean something which can be completely comprehended. The intellectual capacity in humans is considered by the Fathers to be the human mind at its highest level of operation and the God-given means by which we "know" God. This capacity exists in human beings by virtue of the fact they were created in the image and likeness of God with the intent that they would come to "know" God. However, "knowledge" of God in the Eastern tradition does not consist of that which can be learned by study, far less that which is acquired by human reason, but only that which can be learned by spiritual experience and encounter with God, through the transformation of the *nous* by prayer.



## CHAPTER 11

Concerning the Small Scroll Sealed With Seven Seals  
Which No One Who Has Created Nature is Able to Open

*Rev. 5:1 And I saw in the right (hand) of the One who was seated on the throne a small scroll covered in writing on the inside and outside, sealed with seven seals.*

We think *the small scroll* is the all-wise memory of God, in which, according to David, all things [54] are written<sup>280</sup> and the *abyss of the divine judgments*.<sup>281</sup> The things written on the outside are easily understood according to the literal meaning, but the things inside (symbolizing) the spiritual meaning are very hard to comprehend.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> Other Fathers make similar comments about this scene: “To cast their crowns before the throne of the Lord is to attribute not to themselves but to the Maker the victories of their conflicts, so as to refer the glory of praise to Him, from Whom they know themselves to have received powers for the conflict.” (Gregory the Great, *Morals* 22.9[20], LF 21:565.) Victorinus comments that Christ alone, who had conquered death, was worthy to take the “crown of immortality.” (Vic. 4.5, ANF 7:349) “For when about finally to suffer, our Lord had come to Jerusalem, and the people had gone forth to meet Him, some strewed the road with palm branches cut down, others threw down their garments, doubtless these were setting forth two peoples — the one of the patriarchs, the other of the prophets; that is to say, of the great men who had any kind of palms of their victories against sin, and cast them under the feet of Christ, the victor of all. And the palm and the crown signify the same things, and these are not given save to the victor.” (Vic. 4.10, ANF 7:349)

<sup>280</sup> Ps. 139(138):16 “In your book were written all the days that were formed for me when none of them as yet existed.”

<sup>281</sup> Ps. 36(35):6.

<sup>282</sup> This same idea was expressed by Origen. “For the book here spoken of means the whole of Scriptures and it is written within (literally, “in front”) on account of the meaning which is obvious, and on the back on account of its remoter and spiritual sense.” (*Comm. on John* 5.4, ANF 10:348) In his exposition of the scroll, Oikoumenios’ methodology of interpreting Revelation according to past history manifests its weakness and disadvantages. Oikoumenios first suggests that the scroll contains the names of all people, however, he later specifies that it contains only the names of those who lived before the coming of Christ. The inside of the scroll contains the names of those obedient to the Law and the outside lists the names of those gentiles who were idolatrous (3.13.2). The sealing of the scroll with seven seals shows that it is very securely shut and closed because of the sins of people (3.13.3). The fact that it is sealed at all shows “a lack of free approach [to God] by those whose names were written in the scroll” (3.13.5), which presumably ceased with the coming of Christ. Andrew’s broader understanding allows for a more spiritual perspective than that offered by Oikoumenios. Victorinus believes that the scroll is the Old Testament and opening the scroll means overcoming death. (Vic. 5.2,3, ANF 7:349) Gregory the Great followed that same line of thought: “This book can refer only to sacred Scriptures, for it was opened by no one but Christ our Redeemer, who became man, and by His death, resurrection and ascension opened the way to all the mysteries it contained. No one in heaven opened it, because no angel could; no one on earth opened it, because no man living in the flesh had the power of doing so; no one under the earth was found worthy to open it, because souls separated from their bodies do not have such powers. No one but our Lord could open up the hidden meanings of the sacred word.” *Dialogues* 4.44. *Saint Gregory the Great, Dialogues*, trans. Odo John Zimmerman, Fathers of the Church series, vol. 39 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1959), 253.

The *seven seals*, which no one of created nature is able to loosen, (signify) either the fulfillment of the scroll, which is obscure and unknown to all, or the dispensation of the one *who searches the depths of the Spirit of God*.<sup>283</sup> The scroll also means the prophecy which Christ himself said in the gospel according to Luke had been fulfilled,<sup>284</sup> which things occurring thereafter are to be fulfilled in the last days.

*Rev. 5:2-3* <sup>2</sup>And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and loosen its seals?" <sup>3</sup>And no one in heaven, nor on earth, nor under the earth, was able to open the scroll nor to look at it.

By these is meant that neither angels nor human beings, those [55] existing in the flesh, nor the saints who had departed from the flesh (are able) to grasp the precise knowledge of the divine judgments, except the *lamb of God*,<sup>285</sup> through his presence releasing the obscurity of the things prophesied about him.

*Rev. 5:4* And I was weeping much that no one was found worthy to open and to read the small scroll nor to look at it.

*I was weeping*, he says, perhaps since the most spotless order of the angelic substances fell into ignorance.

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<sup>283</sup> 1 Cor. 2:10. "For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God." Scriptural quotations and allusions such as this are not simply flowery elaborations or inspirational expressions. At first glance, the quotation does not appear to illuminate anything about the verse at hand. But in fact, by quoting this verse here, Andrew demonstrates knowledge of a type of methodology consistent with patristic tradition which links disparate parts of the bible by common words or common concepts, a technique which he has already employed. (See fns 74, 76 and 77. See also fn 239 for the same technique as used by Ambrose.) This was possible because the Fathers considered the Bible a unified whole with a consistent message throughout and believed that the entirety was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, any portion of Scripture could be used to interpret any other portion of Scripture. Here, it is clear that the scroll contains an unknowable divine plan which cannot be comprehended by anyone from the created order. This is linked in Andrew's mind to 1 Cor. 2 which discusses the inability of the human mind and human wisdom to understand "God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages." But this wisdom "God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God." By quoting just a small phrase from this chapter in 1 Corinthians 2, Andrew expects it to evoke in the mind of the reader the entire passage and all of the concepts it expresses.

<sup>284</sup> Luke 4:21. Consistent with his stated opinion in his prologue that Scripture has more than one level of meaning (*Text* 8, *Comm.* 7-8), Andrew allows as a possibility here that the scroll also may signify prophecy already fulfilled by Christ, a literal or historical interpretation.

<sup>285</sup> John 1:29, 36.



Rev. 5:5 *And one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep; Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered; he will open the scroll and its seven seals."*

If the *small scroll* is incomprehensible even to the angels, he says, it is not however to God who became incarnate for human beings, who is the root of David, on the one hand as a Creator on account of his divinity,<sup>286</sup> and on the other coming from the root on account of his humanity.<sup>287</sup>

<sup>286</sup> As part of his divine nature Christ created David, and through his human birth he descended from David. Origen uses this passage to illustrate the need to study the Scriptures zealously, not negligently. "Whence it is shown that we must not only employ zeal to learn the sacred literature, but we must also pray to the Lord and entreat 'day and night' that the lamb 'of the tribe of Judah' may come and himself taking 'the sealed book' may deign to open it." *Hom. On Exodus 12.4. Origen, Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, trans. Ronald Heine, Fathers of the Church series, vol. 71 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1982), 372.

<sup>287</sup> It is rather interesting that neither Oikoumenios nor Andrew seem to be particularly inspired by the dramatically divergent symbols used for Christ here, both a lion and a lamb, or the fact that the devil is also described as a lion in the Scriptures. Oikoumenios does not mention it at all. Andrew discussed the image of the lion earlier and how either Christ or Satan might be referred to as the "morning star" (*Chp.6, Text 35, Comm. 44*), but he does not raise it here. However, this passage inspired many Western Fathers who identified different qualities with each entity. "He who was slain as a lamb has been called a Lion: a Lion because of his courage, a Lamb because of His innocence; a Lion because invincible, a Lamb because gentle. And the Lamb Himself, when slain, by His death overcame the lion who 'goes about seeking someone to devour.' (1 Pet. 5:8)... Who would be safe from the teeth of this lion if the Lion of the tribe of Judah had not prevailed? The Lion [stood] against the lion." Augustine, *Serm. 263 [Serm. 73, Benedictine Edition] (On the Ascension)*, FC 38:392. We also learn secondarily from Augustine by this sermon that this passage of Revelation was read during the liturgy on the feast of the Ascension, "Therefore, the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ was assured when He rose again and ascended into heaven; and that was fulfilled which you heard when the Apocalypse was read: 'The lion of the tribe of Judah...has overcome.'" (*Ibid.*) Elsewhere, Augustine writes: "The one a lion by reason of His strength; the other for his savageness; the one a lion for His prevailing; the other for his injuring." (Augustine, *Serm. 23 [On Matt. 13:19.] St. Augustin: Sermon on the Mount; Harmony of the Gospels; Homilies on the Gospels*, trans. R.G. MacMullen, ed. Philip Schaff, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First series, vol. VI [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprint 1989], 334.) Cassiodorus sees other qualities: "The lion ...shows courage, on account of which it is called the king of beasts. But it also manifests harsh savagery, for which it is labeled fierce. So its courage and power are reasonable compared to Christ's... But its fierceness is aptly associated with the devil..." (*Explanation of the Psalms, Ps. 21.22. Cassiodorus: Explanation of the Psalms [3 vols.], trans. P.G. Walsh, Ancient Christian Writers series, vols. 51, 52, and 53 [New York: Paulist Press, 1990-1991], 52:228.*) Gregory the Great identifies yet other qualities, "...the lion has magnanimity; it has also ferocity; by its magnanimity then it represents the Lord, by its ferocity the devil." *Morals 5.21(41)*, LF 18:272. To Victorinus, Christ is a lion for overcoming death, but a lamb because of his slaughter (Vic. 5.5, ANF 7:350). Caesarius of Arles comments: "The Devil is called a lion and a dragon: a lion because of his violence, a dragon for his treachery. A lion rages openly, but a dragon secretly lies in wait. In the early days the Church fought against the lion; now her battle is with the dragon. But as the lion was conquered, so the dragon is conquered." (*Serm. 69.2, FC 31:325-6*) Augustine also used this verse to instruct his congregation that these images are only metaphors and that the Apocalypse does not suggest that created things ought to be worshipped. "[N]or think, brethren, that the sun ought to be worshipped by some men, because the sun doth sometimes in the Scriptures signify Christ... Then worship the rock also, for it is also a type of Christ. (1 Cor. 10:4)... worship the lamb also, since it is a type of Christ. (Isa. 53:7) ...worship the lion also since it signifieth Christ. Observe how numerous are the types of Christ; all these are Christ in similitude, not in essence." *On the Psalms, 104.27. Augustin: Exposition on the Book of Psalms*, [trans. J.E. Tweed], ed. Philip Schaff, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers

## CHAPTER 12

Concerning the Vision in the Middle of the Throne and the Four Animals.

*Rev. 5:6 And I saw, in the midst of the throne and the four animals and in the middle of the elders, a Lamb standing, as one slain, [56] having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.*

The *seven eyes* and the *seven horns* of the lamb signify the seven spirits of Christ, which Isaiah<sup>288</sup> and Zachariah<sup>289</sup> the prophet recalled.<sup>290</sup> The *as one slain* means his life after the sacrifice, by which he displayed the signs of his passion, as the one who truly had been slain, after rising from the dead.

*Rev. 5:7 And he went and took (the scroll) from the right (hand) of the one sitting on the throne. And when he took the scroll, the four animals and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp and gold bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.*

The *harps* signify the harmonious and beautiful sounding divine glorification, and the *incenses* (signify) the sweet-smelling sacrifice of the faithful being offered through a life of purity, as the Apostle says, *we are a sweet fragrance of Christ.*<sup>291</sup> The bowls symbolize the thoughts out of which come forth the fragrance of good works and pure prayer.<sup>292</sup>

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of the Christian Church, 1<sup>st</sup> series, vol. VIII (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprint 1989), 515. See also Augustine, *On the Psalms* 91.6, *Ibid* 447.

<sup>288</sup> Isa. 11:1-5. Oikoumenios identified the seven eyes with the seven spiritual gifts which Isaiah prophesied would belong to the Messiah, but he believed that the horns symbolize great strength and power (3.13.13). Christ is a lamb because he is guileless and because he provides for all living things, as lambs provide wool (3.13.11). He does not associate the lamb with sacrifice, which is the concept intended by the Johannine image.

<sup>289</sup> Zach. 4:10.

<sup>290</sup> Ambrose uses this verse of Revelation to support his association of the seven spirits with the Holy Spirit and its gifts. *On the Holy Spirit* 1.16.157-8. *Ambrose, Theological and Dogmatic Works.* trans. Roy Deferrari Fathers of the Church series, vol. 44, (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1963) 91-92.

<sup>291</sup> 2 Cor. 2:15. Oikoumenios states that the incense symbolizes the offering of all the nations (4.3.2), which contradicts the explanation in the text of Revelation itself that the incense is the prayers of the saints.

<sup>292</sup> Origen uses this verse in response to Celsus' argument that because Christians "shrink from raising altars, statues and temples" they are "a secret and forbidden society." Origen states, "He does not perceive that we regard the spirit of every good man as an altar from which arises an incense which is truly and spiritually sweet-smelling, namely, the prayers ascending from a pure conscience. Therefore it is said by John in the Revelation,

Rev. 5:9-10 <sup>9</sup>And they sang a new song, saying, "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain [57] and you purchased us for God by your blood, from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, <sup>10</sup>and you made them kings and priests to our God, and they shall reign upon the earth."

Through this the elders are shown to be the ones who have been well-pleasing to God in the Old and the New (Testaments),<sup>293</sup> and the ones who offer thanksgiving on behalf of all the world to the *slain lamb* of God who *purchased us*. The *song* is *new*<sup>294</sup> which the ones illuminated *from every tribe and tongue* had been taught to sing through the Spirit, having been released from the *former stroke*<sup>295</sup> (of condemnation). These will rule the new earth, it says, which the Lord promised to the meek.<sup>296</sup>

Rev. 5:11-13 <sup>11</sup>And I saw, and heard a voice of many angels around the throne and of the animals and of the elders, and their number was myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, <sup>12</sup>saying in a great voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory!" <sup>13</sup>And I heard every creature which is in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all the things which

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'The odors are the prayers of saints.' " *Against Celsus* 8.17. Origen, *Against Celsus*, trans. Frederick Crombie, *Fathers of the Third Century*, Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. IV (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprint 1989), 645.

<sup>293</sup> Andrew supports his previous interpretation that the twenty four elders seated on the thrones represent all of the people of God (*Chp.* 10, *Text* 49, *Comm.* 58) based on his reading and punctuation of the text here. He implies that the ode which is sung by the elders ends with the words "from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." The additional words "you made them kings and priests" are not part of the ode. This supports his interpretation of the twenty four elders because punctuating the verse in this manner would create a description of the elders as kings, because they are enthroned, and priests, because they offer this prayer on behalf of all. Oikoumenios offers two interpretations, one literal/historical and the other metaphorical/allegorical. His literal interpretation is that "kings and priests" are the actual leaders of the church on earth or, metaphorically that kings are "those who control their passions" and priests are "those who present themselves as a 'living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God.'" (4.3.7, quoting Rom. 12:1.)

<sup>294</sup> Andrew does not comment on the "new song," but other Fathers did. "It is a new thing that the Son of God should become man. It is a new thing to ascend into the heavens with a body. It is a new thing to give remission of sins to men. It is a new thing for men to be sealed with the Holy Spirit. It is a new thing to receive the priesthood of sacred observance, and to look for a kingdom of unbounded promise." (Vic. 5,8, 9, ANF 7:350.) "The story of the Son of God crucified is the new song that had never been heard of before." Jerome, *Hom.* 25 (On Psalm 97/98 verse 1, "Sing to the Lord a new song"), FC 48:197.

<sup>295</sup> Rom. 7:6.

<sup>296</sup> Matt. 5:5.

are in them, [58] saying to the one who sits upon the throne and to the lamb, "Blessing and honor and glory and might for ever and ever! Amen."

For God, as the originator of all, is glorified by all things, those known by the intellect, those perceived by the senses, those which are living beings and those which simply exist by the laws of nature. And his only begotten and co-substantial Son (is glorified), as the one who graciously bestows renewal to mankind<sup>297</sup> and to the creation brought into being by him, even though it has been written that he would receive *authority* as a man over those *in heaven and on earth*.<sup>298</sup>

*Rev. 5:14 And the four animals said, "Amen" and the elders fell down and worshipped.*

Through this it is shown (that) angels and human beings have become *one flock*<sup>299</sup> and one church, through (the) Christ of God, who has joined together the things which were divided and has destroyed *the middle wall of separation*.<sup>300</sup> For behold, as we have heard for ourselves, together with the four animals, who are [59] superior to the rest of the angelic orders, those who characterize the fullness of people being saved<sup>301</sup> are also worthy (to offer) the praise and worship of God. May we too be worthy of this in Christ himself, the *Giver of peace*<sup>302</sup> and our God, to whom, along with the Father, together with the Holy Spirit (are

<sup>297</sup> The belief in the renewal of humanity, and even of all creation, through the work of Christ is both ancient and fundamental in the Christian tradition. See Rom. 6:4 and 7:5, 2 Cor. 4:16 and 5:17, Gal. 6:15, Col. 3:10.

<sup>298</sup> Matt. 28:18. He receives authority "as a man" because of his saving work on the cross. He could not have been crucified without having become human. The glory and authority he receives as a result of the cross is well-attested in the Christian tradition, and Andrew may have Phil. 2:6-11 in mind here, which explicitly states that as a result of Christ's humility to the point of death, even a death on the cross: "God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:9-11) This Pauline passage may be the scripture passage Andrew has in mind since it contains all of the concepts Andrew is expressing: the Incarnation of the Son, his glorification and his authority over all creation.

<sup>299</sup> John 10:16.

<sup>300</sup> Eph. 2:14.

<sup>301</sup> From this comment we again see that for Andrew the twenty four elders may represent the leaders of the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles, but they also symbolize the fullness or totality of all those who were saved "from every tribe and tongue and people and nation."

<sup>302</sup> John 14:27, in which Christ said to his disciples, "My peace I give to you."

due) glory, power, unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## SECTION 5, CHAPTER 13

### Loosening of the First Seal

*Rev. 6:1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard one of the four animals saying, with a voice like thunder, "Come!"*

And here the good order of those in heaven is shown, from the first orders coming down to the second.<sup>303</sup> Thus, from the first one of the four-fold appearing animals, that is, the lion, he heard originating from the first voice the "come" being commanded, forming the vision through an angel in a figurative fashion. The first animal, the lion, seems to me to show the princely spirit of the apostles against the demons, about whom it has been said: *Behold, the kings of the earth had been gathered together,*<sup>304</sup> and also, *you will appoint them as rulers upon all the earth.*<sup>305</sup>

**[60]** *Rev. 6:2 And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and the one sitting on it having a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.*

The loosening of the present seal and of all those which follow, some have interpreted<sup>306</sup> as unfolding the dispensation in the flesh of the Logos of God: the first in the birth, the second in the baptism, the third in the divine signs (miracles), the fourth in standing

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<sup>303</sup> "From the first orders down to the second" simply demonstrates a chain of command. By opening the seal the Lamb initiates the action by prompting each animal to issue the command "Come!" It appears that Andrew believes that the command is obeyed by angels who create the ensuing vision.

<sup>304</sup> Ps. 48(47):4.

<sup>305</sup> Ps. 45(44):16.

<sup>306</sup> This "some" definitely includes a reference to Oikoumenios (4.7-15), but others may also have made this interpretation. It is possible that a tradition existed as early as the third century which interpreted at least some of Revelation as symbols of the life of Christ, possibly in reference to this very passage, since Andrew is about to cite Methodios who directly contradicts that opinion. Caesarius of Arles interprets the first rider as Christ along with the Holy Spirit, and the white horse the Church, including the prophets and apostles. *Hom. 5, L'Apocalypse expliquée* 59. Irenaeus may have shared the view that Christ is the first rider. See fn 311.

before Pilate, the fifth in the cross, the sixth in the placing in the tomb and the spoiling of Hades.<sup>307</sup> But we have agreed with Methodios, who said in the text, thus verbatim, that it is not necessary “to think that Christ himself is the one who has been born. For long ago, before the Apocalypse, the mystery of the incarnation of the Logos had been fulfilled.”<sup>308</sup> John is speaking with authority concerning the present and future things,<sup>309</sup> and from there on he gave an explanation about how the fire-red dragon was subdued. Thus we explained the loosening of the first seal as meaning the generation of the apostles,<sup>310</sup> [61] those who bend the gospel message like a bow against the demons, leading them to be fatally wounded by the

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<sup>307</sup> Andrew bases his interpretation of the horsemen by looking at the symbolism of the particular animal who calls forth each horseman by saying “Come!” The opening of each seal triggers an event or action. But for Oikoumenios the scroll is sealed shut to represent the alienation of humans from God which is remedied by the coming of Christ and his saving work. The opening of each seal therefore represents for Oikoumenios an historical event in the life of Christ which negates bit by bit, or seal by seal, the effects of the Fall for “the restoration to the place from which we were banished as a result of Adam’s transgression...” (4.7.3, Suggit 67) Therefore, the loosening of the first seal represents the birth of Christ continuing through the sixth seal which represents his victory over death (4.15.1). Either Andrew misunderstands Oikoumenios’ exposition, or he knows of another similar interpretation. Andrew reports Oikoumenios’ interpretation of fifth seal as the cross, but that is not exactly correct. The fifth seal is the souls under the altar which were objecting to the treatment of Christ, presumably on the cross, but Oikoumenios specifically states that the sixth seal is the cross, death, resurrection and ascension (4.15.2). A similar interpretation of the seven seals as events in the life of Christ became popular in the West during the Middle Ages. (See “The Pseudo-Alcuinian ‘De Septem Sigillis’: An Early Latin Apocalypse Exegesis,” by E. Ann Matter, *Traditio* 36 (1980) 111-137.) Andrew, however, citing Methodios, rejects the idea that the prophecy of Revelation, which was given to John *after* the Incarnation, would refer to events in the life of Christ which *had already occurred* at the time John received the Revelation. Old Testament biblical prophecy foretold the coming of the Messiah, but during the time of the Old Testament prophets the events in Christ’s life were *yet to be* fulfilled. Andrew understands Biblical prophecy to refer to present events first, with some portions destined for future fulfillment. This view of prophecy directly conflicts with Oikoumenios’ interpretation. In Andrew’s opinion Oikoumenios not only arrives at impossible conclusions, but his interpretation deprives the text of its actual prophetic nature, creating at best an allegory of past history. Andrew is not so subtly pointing out that Oikoumenios’ opinion departs from established ecclesiastical tradition. Andrew makes a deliberate effort to offer a correct interpretation and to salvage the character of the Apocalypse as prophecy.

<sup>308</sup> Methodios’ opinion that the incarnation of the Logos was completely fulfilled refers not only to his actual birth, but to all of the work of the Logos, including his earthly ministry, death on the cross, resurrection, ascension and his enthronement at the right hand of the Father.

<sup>309</sup> *Symp.* 8.7.

<sup>310</sup> To interpret the first horseman as the generation of the apostles does not violate the principles of prophecy which Andrew just expressed – that prophecy relates only to the present and the future – because the vision refers to John’s present. Although the apostles were past history for Andrew, at the time *John* received the Revelation some apostles were still alive and preaching, including obviously John himself. According to Irenaeus, John the Apostle lived until the reign of Trajan. (*Heres.* 3.3. See also Eusebius, *E.H.* 3.23, 32.)

saving arrows of Christ, having grasped a crown, through the truth (as a weapon) against them (the demons) they conquered the leader of deception on the hope of a second victory, confessing the name of the Master to the point of (suffering) a violent death. Wherefore it is written, *he went out conquering and to conquer*.<sup>311</sup> For the first victory<sup>312</sup> is the return of the nations,<sup>313</sup> and the second is the voluntary departure from the body<sup>314</sup> by means of tortures<sup>315</sup> on account of it.

## CHAPTER 14

### Loosening of the Second Seal

*Rev. 6:3 And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second animal saying, "Come."*

I think the second animal, the calf, is said to characterize the priestly sacrifice of the holy martyrs,<sup>316</sup> while the first (animal) describes the apostolic authority, as was said.<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Irenaeus believed the white horseman carrying a crown represents Christ. He made this comment in the context of a discussion on Jacob, whom Irenaeus considered to be a type of Christ because he was victorious from birth when he grasped his brother's heel, a sign of victory (Gen. 25:26). Irenaeus quotes Rev. 6:2 in support of this typology: "For to this end [victory] was the Lord born, the type of whose birth he set forth beforehand, of whom also John says in the Apocalypse: 'He went forth conquering, that He should conquer.'" (*Heres.* 4.21.3, ANF 1:493.)

<sup>312</sup> Literally, "the first conquering." The verb used for "conquer" is also the word for victory, *νίκη*.

<sup>313</sup> Or "the gentiles." The apostolic mission is frequently described in these terms. See for example, Acts 11:1, 13:47, 18:6, 21:19, 22:21, 28:28.

<sup>314</sup> i.e., death.

<sup>315</sup> i.e., martyrdom.

<sup>316</sup> The second creature, the calf, calls forth the red horseman, which symbolizes martyrdom and the beginning of the persecution phase in the history of the Church. Oikoumenios believes that the second seal is the temptation of Christ and his victory over temptation. The red horseman, sword and blood represent the fact that Christ came "that he might destroy and cut to pieces the propensity for evil found among the inhabitants of the earth." (4.8.2, Suggit 68) Victorinus does not tie his interpretation of the horsemen to the creatures. For him, the white horse is the preaching of the gospel, and the horsemen which follow are the eschatological prophecies made by the Lord. The red horseman symbolizes war, the black horseman is famine and the pale green horseman represents death. (*Vic.* 6.1-8, ANF 7:350-51)



*Rev. 6: 4 And out came another horse, bright red, and the one sitting [62] upon it was permitted to take the peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another; and he was given a large sword.*

We suppose that this means the second succession of the apostles,<sup>318</sup> which is completely fulfilled through martyrs and teachers, during which, while the remainder of the gospel message was spreading, the peace of the world was abolished, (human) nature having been divided against itself according to that which had been said by Christ, *I did not come to bring peace to the earth but a sword*,<sup>319</sup> through which the slain martyrs were lifted up to the heavenly altar. The fire-red horse (is) a symbol of either the shedding of blood or the flaming disposition of those suffering for Christ. What was written about *the one seated* on (the horse), that *it was permitted to take the peace*, shows the all-wise allowance of God testing the faithful servants through trials.

## CHAPTER 15

### Loosening of the Third Seal

*Rev. 6:5 And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third animal saying, "Come!"*

I think what is stated here by the third animal, the man, is said to signify the fall of people [63] and because of that, torment, on account of the easy fall into sin through the power of free choice.

*Rev. 6:5b-6 <sup>5b</sup>And I saw, and behold, a black horse, and the one sitting on it having a scale in his hand; <sup>6</sup>and I heard (something) like a voice in the midst of the four animals*

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<sup>317</sup> See *Text 60; Comm. 72*, fn 310. Andrew is consciously striving for consistency in his interpretation, defending and distinguishing his approach from that of Oikoumenios. Although the period of martyrdom was past history from Andrew's perspective, John wrote these events down prior to their occurrence. Therefore, Andrew has not violated his principles of prophetic interpretation.

<sup>318</sup> The period after the death of the apostles but before the legalization of Christianity, during which Christians were persecuted but the gospel was still being spread.

<sup>319</sup> Matt. 10:34.



saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm oil and wine!"

It is likely and sensible for famine to occur then, just as it will also be announced by what follows. We think that by the *black horse* is signified the mourning of those who have fallen from the faith in Christ on account of extreme torture.<sup>320</sup> The *scale* is the examiner of those who had fallen from the faith, both through an easily changing mind or vainglory, and on account of weakness of body. The *quart of wheat* worth as much as a *denarius* means figuratively those who *lawfully struggled*<sup>321</sup> and perfectly guarded the divine image which was given to them, and the *three quarts of barley* suits those who, in a manner befitting a beast bowed down before their persecutors on account of cowardice, but accordingly [64] repented later, and washed clean the soiled image with tears. The command *do not harm oil and wine* means to not disregard the healing through returning to Christ,<sup>322</sup> which healed the one who has *fallen among robbers*,<sup>323</sup> in order that those who through long suffering were about to renew the fight would not be carried off by death.<sup>324</sup> Therefore, so that we too will gain, for the disease of our souls, the Physician-God<sup>325</sup> who loves mankind,<sup>326</sup> let us hurry to

<sup>320</sup> For Oikoumenios, the loosening of the third seal is Christ's saving teaching and the black horseman is Christ who brings the destruction of the devil and his judgment, symbolized by the scale (4.10.1-3).

<sup>321</sup> νομίμως ἀθλήσαντας, those who competed (like athletes) according to the rules. See 2 Tim. 2:5, "No one is crowned without competing according to the rules." See also *Comm.* 95, fn 445.

<sup>322</sup> Luke 10:34. The early Church associated oil and wine with healing by Christ, a firmly established tradition evident in the patristic interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Christ represents the Good Samaritan while the injured traveler represents the believer as he travels through life and suffers various wounds. In the parable, the Samaritan healed the traveler by pouring oil and wine on his wounds, which the Fathers interpreted as two sacraments that bring healing. The healing is both physical (by oil, especially in the sacrament of Holy Unction) and spiritual (by wine, especially through the Eucharist). Holy Unction in the Eastern tradition was always a sacrament for the healing of the sick, and never considered "last rites," as it came to be understood in the West until Vatican II. Victorinus' explanation is far simpler. *Do not harm the oil or wine means* "strike not the spiritual man with thy inflictions." (Vic. 6.6, ANF 7:351)

<sup>323</sup> Luke 10:30. This metaphorical reference to "falling among robbers" makes obvious the fact that Andrew has in mind here the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

<sup>324</sup> Those who denied Christ in times of persecution, but later repented could be forgiven. It was too late for those who were "carried off by death" and died defeated, since they did not repent of their apostasy before death took them.

<sup>325</sup> Describing Christ as "the physician of our souls and bodies" is a very common expression in Eastern Christian tradition.

<sup>326</sup> φιλάνθρωπος, *one who loves humanity*, is another extremely common adjective for Christ and the Trinity in the Eastern Christian tradition. God is the ultimate philanthropist, shown by the depth of his love for humankind. This adjective has already been used by Andrew numerous times.

be such for our fallen brothers, by offering to them the oil of sympathy mingled with the wine of exhortation, *in order that the maimed parts not worsen but be healed*,<sup>327</sup> according to the divine Apostle, so that becoming *co-workers with God*,<sup>328</sup> we will delight forever in his blessings, by the grace and philanthropy of our Lord, Jesus Christ with whom glory (is due) together with the Father, with the Holy Spirit unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## SECTION 6, CHAPTER 16

### Loosening of the Fourth Seal Showing the Plagues Which Befall the Impious.

*Rev. 6:7 And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth animal saying, "Come!"*

[65] The *fourth animal*, that is, the eagle, its high flight and keen eyesight coming down upon its prey from above, can signify the wounds from the divinely led wrath of God for the revenge of the pious and the punishment of the impious, unless being improved by these (wounds) they return.

*Rev. 6:8 And I saw, and behold, a pale horse, and the name of the one sitting upon (it) was Death. And Hades follows him; And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill by sword and by famine and by death and by wild beasts of the earth.*

The series (of events) drawn out previously<sup>329</sup> are connected to the present events.<sup>330</sup> For as Eusebius says in the eighth chapter of the ninth book of his *Ecclesiastical History*,<sup>331</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> Heb. 12:13.

<sup>328</sup> 1 Cor. 3:9.

<sup>329</sup> By the first three seals and horsemen.

<sup>330</sup> This seal and horseman. Andrew does not interpret the fourth horse or horseman, but instead speaks with familiarity about what the fourth horseman brings, relating it to past history and to his own times. This horseman is connected to the previous events because the first horseman represented the apostolic preaching, the second represented the era after the apostles, marked by persecution, the third was the spiritual death of those who renounced Christ under torture and now the final horseman represents the suffering and death of the persecutors by famine and plagues which occurred just prior to the legalization of Christianity. Andrew sees the famine and plagues as the punishment sent by God, intended nonetheless for their repentance and salvation, if not saved by their suffering, then perhaps by the example of the Christians, which he describes in the comments which follow. Gregory the Great believes that the fourth horseman is the Devil. "In this place by the title of 'death' we have denoted the enemy of the human race himself, who brought in death, who is set forth by a particular minister of his, of whom it is said to John, *And his name was Death.*" *Morals* 14.17(20), LF 21:129.

in the zenith of the persecutions, during the reign of Maximin the Roman Emperor, innumerable crowds were killed by the coming of famine and plague among them, along with other calamities; and such that (the living) were not able to bury them, and yet, the Christians then generously busied themselves with the burial (of the dead) and many of those who had been deceived,<sup>332</sup> were led to [66] the knowledge of the truth by the philanthropy of the Christians. The Armenians revolted against the Romans, not a few taking up the sword, and the bodies of the dead were eaten by the dogs. Then those remaining who had survived, turned to killing the dogs, fearing lest they too (upon) dying would occupy those living tombs.<sup>333</sup> It is not unlikely that the wild beasts participated in this banquet with the dogs due to the abundance of food. In our own generation we have known each of these happenings.<sup>334</sup>

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<sup>331</sup> E. H. 9.8.

<sup>332</sup> The unbelievers were deceived by the devil because they rejected Christ and persecuted the Christians.

<sup>333</sup> i.e., the dogs' stomachs.

<sup>334</sup> This oblique reference by Andrew to his "own generation" witnessing each of these horrors in turn – an Armenian revolution, plague, famine, and the death of massive numbers of people by the sword – is the strongest evidence that this commentary was composed in the early seventh century. This period formed a critical turning point for the history of the Roman Empire due to numerous and varied catastrophes. James Howard-Johnston notes that the first event in the *History* attributed to the Armenian historian Sebeos is the Armenian revolt of 572, which sparked the fourth Persian-Roman conflict of the sixth century. The conflict lasted until 591. (*The Armenian History Attributed to Sebeos*, trans. R. W. Thomson, notes by James Howard-Johnston, part 1 "Translation and Notes", [Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999] xviii-xxi.) The Eastern Roman Empire had experienced several waves of bubonic plague in the mid to late sixth century which decimated the population, creating labor and revenue shortages which strained the Empire and weakened it considerably. Illness and decreased population also meant that fewer crops were planted and famine resulted. Severe winters in the years prior to the composition of this commentary also contributed to famine. Another blow to the Empire occurred when a usurper, Phocas, murdered the sitting Emperor Maurice, seizing the throne by force for the first time in the history of the Christian Roman Empire. This led to chaos, the breakdown of social order in most cities and then to civil war when Heraclius took up arms against Phocas, defeating him in 610. Bubonic plague also broke out again in 608 (Treadgold, 239), not long before the composition of this commentary. The political and economic upheaval weakened the Empire such that it became vulnerable to invasion, especially by the Persians. Illness and depopulation caused by plague, civil war, and the Persian invasion of 609 exacerbated and prolonged the famine. Only these events, capped off by Persian invasion and death and destruction in his own city, Caesarea, Cappadocia, can correspond to Andrew's poignant reference to witnessing a catastrophe on such a scale that there were not enough survivors to bury the dead. The capture and occupation of Caesarea occurred in 609 and a second conquest and its destruction by the Persians happened in 611. The Persians destroyed numerous other cities in the surrounding areas as well during the first incursion, including Antioch. A few years later they would return to destroy Jerusalem and many more cities, including some of the seven cities of Revelation 2-3 in coastal Asia Minor. However, the second wave of destruction occurred in 614, after the composition of this commentary.

## CHAPTER 17

Loosening of the Fifth Seal Meaning the Saints  
Crying Out to the Lord About the End of the World

*Rev. 6:9-10* <sup>9</sup>And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of people who had been slain on account of the word of God and on account of the witness which they had (made). They cried out with a loud voice, saying, <sup>10</sup>“How long, O holy and true Master, before you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?”

If anyone forces (the meaning of) the loosening of the four seals to apply to the foregoing acts of dispensation<sup>335</sup> by Christ, he will naturally adapt this to the previously fulfilled prophets and the remaining saints who cry out loud because of the divine forbearance which He endured being insulted by the Jews unto the cross.<sup>336</sup> [67] And if any take these things to mean a foretelling of future events according to the teachers of the Church,<sup>337</sup> he will suppose that such a thing is fitting, that those who were killed for Christ will cry out against their persecutors, at which (time) the worthy will return to cut off the impiety of the disobedient at the consummation of the world, so that *the righteous will not stretch out their hands in lawlessness.*<sup>338</sup> For even though already at that time, as it has been said, the ungodly were tested by the divine wrath,<sup>339</sup> nonetheless the relics (of the saints) were asking for punishing or chastising afflictions.

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<sup>335</sup> οἰκονομίατις.

<sup>336</sup> Andrew is referring to Oikoumenios for whom the fourth seal is “the beginning of release from sin resulting from Adam’s transgression” (4.11.1, Suggit 70) caused by “the blows struck on Christ by which we have been set free.” (4.11.2, Suggit 71) The fourth horseman, Death and Hades, represents the destruction of demons (4.11.4). Oikoumenios believes that the fifth seal are the bonds and wounds of the Lord when he was brought before Pilate (4.13.1). Here, Andrew points out that Oikoumenios’ interpretation strains the context because the fifth seal reveals the saints under the altar who cry out against injustice. If the seals represent the life of Christ, and Christ has not even been crucified in that scenario, then the souls cannot represent Christian martyrs. Oikoumenios is forced to conclude that these are the souls of the righteous of the *old* covenant who complain against “the intolerable treatment of the master and of themselves.” (4.13.3)

<sup>337</sup> Clearly, Andrew infers that Oikoumenios’ understanding of prophecy to include events *prior* to when John received the prophecy is *not* according to the teaching of the Church. Therefore, Andrew concludes that the souls under the altar can only be the souls of Christian martyrs.

<sup>338</sup> Ps. 125(124):3.

<sup>339</sup> The “souls under the altar” refer to past history, but for Oikoumenios it is history which had already past even for the author of the Apocalypse, since the seals refer to events in the life of Christ. But for Andrew it is

*Rev. 6:11 And he gave them each a white robe and told them to rest again a little longer, until their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed in the future even as they (had been), completed (their number).*

And by these (words) the saints seem to be asking for the full consummation of the world.<sup>340</sup> Wherefore, they are called upon to endure patiently until the completion of the

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past history because it refers to the period of Christian martyrdom which came after John's vision. The souls of the martyrs cried out for vengeance and the "ungodly were tested by divine wrath" because of the tragedies which befell the Roman Empire prior to the legalization of Christianity were punishments from God, at least according to Eusebius (*E.H.* 9.8.13-15). The purpose of the punishment was to reform the idolaters, some of whom were converted after being impressed by the philanthropy of the Christians, especially burial of the dead. (See *Chp. 17, Text 65-66, Comm. 77.*)

<sup>340</sup> Cyprian uses this verse to caution Christians not to seek revenge for persecutions brought against them, either by Jews, Gentiles or heretics, but rather advises them to wait patiently for God's vengeance. "[A]lso the martyrs, crying out and hastening with grief breaking forth to their revenge, are bidden still to wait, and to give patience for the times to be fulfilled and the martyrs to be completed." (*On the Advantage of Patience* 21. *The Treatises of Cyprian*. Treatise IX, *On the Advantage of Patience*, trans. Ernest Wallis, *The Fathers of the Third Century: Hippolytus, Cyprian, Caius, Novatian*, eds. Alexander Robertson and James Donaldson, Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. V [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1990], 490.) Augustine used this verse when explaining the justice of God. The good man takes no pleasure in the punishment of his enemy but can delight in the justice of the Lord. "Thence is also that cry of the martyrs under the altar of God, that they may be avenged in the judgment of God. Where then is the 'Love your enemies, do good unto them that hate you and pray for them that persecute you'? (Matt. 5:44) Where is the 'Not rendering evil for evil, nor cursing for cursing' (1 Pet. 3:9), and 'unto no man rendering evil for evil' (Rom. 12:17)?... [W]e are to understand that holy men of God have loved their enemies, and have wished no one anything but good which is godliness in this world, everlasting life in that to come. But in the punishments of evil men, they have taken pleasure not in the ills of them, but in God's good judgments." (*On the Psalms*, Psalm 79.14, NPNF 1<sup>st</sup> 8:384-5. See also Augustine's comments on the righteous seeking justice in his *Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount* 1.22.76-77. *Commentary on the Lord's Sermon on the Mount with Seventeen Related Sermons*, trans. Denis J. Kavanaugh, Fathers of the Church series, vol. 11, [New York: Fathers of the Church Inc., 1951] 104-105.) Gregory the Great comments on the reciprocal communication between God and the souls: "In one way God speaks to the souls of Saints, in another the souls of Saints speak to God; whence too it is again said in the Apocalypse of John, *I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God...* for what else is it for souls to utter the prayer for vengeance but to long for the day of final judgment, and the resurrection of their lifeless bodies? For their great cry is their great longing; for everyone cries the less, the less he desires... but in proportion as they cleave to Him with the greater ardour of mind, they also obtain from Him to beseech that of Him, which they know it is His will to do... To say to those longing souls *rest yet for a little season*, is to breathe upon them amid their burning desires, by the very foreknowledge, the soothing of consolation; so that both the voice of the souls is that desire which through love they entertain, and God's address in answer is this, that He reassures them in their desires with the certainty of retribution. For Him then to answer that they should await the gathering of their brethren to their number is to infuse into their minds the delays of a glad awaiting..." *Morals* 2.8(11), LF 18:74-6. Maximus of Turin comments that innocent blood itself speaks even in silence: "It is clear, then that the holy martyrs teach more by their suffering than by their voice, although suffering itself is not without a voice. For we read that their souls cry out from under the altar of God and say: 'When, holy and faithful one, will you take vengeance on our blood?'" (*Rev.* 6:9- 10) And God says to Cain with reference to Abel's blood: 'The voice of your brother's blood cries out.' (*Gen.* 4:10). Innocent blood that has been shed is said to cry out not by words but by its very existence." (*Serm.* 16.3, "On the Anniversary of the Saints." *The Sermons of Maximus of Turin*, trans. Boniface Ramsey, Ancient Christian Writers series, vol. 50, [New York: Newman Press, 1989] 41-2.) And Jerome comments: "Let us not fail in passing to consider that the souls of the just are an altar to the Lord." (*Hom.* 51, On Psalm 141(140), FC 48:365) Jerome opposed

(number of) brothers, so that they will not *become complete* without them, according to the Apostle.<sup>341</sup> The white robes show the blooming brightness of the virtues in which they are vested, even though *they have not yet received the promises*.<sup>342</sup> [68] So at least in the hope of these things, to which they look forward spiritually, having ceased from all earthliness they naturally delight *in reposing in the bosom of Abraham*.<sup>343</sup> For this has been said by many of the saints, that each one will have as one's share a place worthy of each of the worker's virtue through which also their future glory is to be assigned.

## CHAPTER 18

### Loosening of the Sixth Seal Signifying the Upcoming Plagues at the End of Time

*Rev. 6:12-13* <sup>12</sup>And I saw, and when he opened the sixth seal, and a great earthquake occurred; and the sun became black as sackcloth, and the moon became like blood. <sup>13</sup>And the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree casts its winter fruit when shaken by a great wind;

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Vigilantius' use of this verse to support his claim that it is useless to petition the saints to pray for us since their prayers are not heard by God. Jerome responded, "You say, in your pamphlet, that so long as we are alive we can pray for one another; but once we die, the prayer of no person for another can be heard, and all the more because the martyrs, though they cry for the avenging of their blood, have never been able to obtain their request. If Apostles and martyrs while still in the body can pray for others, when they ought still to be anxious for themselves, how much more must they do so when once they have won their crowns, overcome, and triumphed?" *Against Vigilantius* 6. *Treatise: Against Vigilantius*, trans. W.H. Fremantle, *The Principle Works of St. Jerome*, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vol. VI (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1989), 419.

<sup>341</sup> Heb. 11:40. Some Fathers commented on the concept of completing or "filling up" the number of martyrs. "For short periods, and at prescribed times, power has been given to the demons to incite men whom they control to exercise a tyrannical hostility to the City of God. Thus, they are able not only to receive sacrifice from those who offer it and to seek it from those who are well disposed but also to extort it violently from the unwilling by means of persecutions. However, this power is not a menace to the Church but rather an advantage, since it helps to fill up the number of its martyrs. And these the City of God esteems as its most illustrious and honored citizens, just because they have resisted the impious so valiantly..." (*City of God* 10. 21.) *City of God, Books VII to XVI*, trans. Gerald G. Walsh and Grace Monahan, Fathers of the Church, series vol. 14 (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc, 1952), 154.

<sup>342</sup> Heb. 11:39. Victorinus believes that the white robes are the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Vic. 6.9)

<sup>343</sup> Luke 16:22 and 19:9.



Some took all these things to mean the siege of Vespasian, each of these things mentioned having been understood figuratively.<sup>344</sup> It seems to us that here a shift has taken place<sup>345</sup> beginning from the time of persecutions to [69] the time before the arrival of the pseudo-Christ, during which so many afflictions were prophesied to come, and perhaps the people, being practiced in these afflictions, did not renounce the punishments brought upon them by the Antichrist, of which sort as we have never known.<sup>346</sup> The earthquake, which we often find in the Scriptures, certainly (represents) a change.<sup>347</sup> For the *once more I will shake*<sup>348</sup> signifies the change of the things being shaken, as the Apostle says. And in the Old (Testament) it is said, concerning the journey of the Israelites out of Egypt, *the earth was shaken and the heavens dripped*.<sup>349</sup> The darkening of *the sun*, and *the moon* without light and blood-like, shows those who are unenlightened overtaken by divine wrath — for thus many times the blessed Cyril also interpreted these things in this manner<sup>350</sup> — *the falling of the stars* as it already has been written about the ones deceived by Antiochus,<sup>351</sup> (means)

<sup>344</sup> The reference is to Oikoumenios, but the placement of this comment is misleading. For this specific passage, Oikoumenios' interpretation is literal. Interpreting the particular verses in question here, Oikoumenios continues with his exposition that each seal represents events in the life of Christ. He believes that these extraordinary signs prompted by the opening of the sixth seal — the earthquake, darkening of the sun, etc. — actually took place at the time of the crucifixion, according to the description in Matt. 27:51 (Oik. 4.15.3-4). But Oikoumenios describes the passage which *follows* this one, (Rev. 6:15 - 7:6), as figurative.

<sup>345</sup> Andrew expresses his opinion that the events initiated by the opening of the sixth seal have not occurred yet. The opening of the prior seals revealed events beginning with apostolic times. These were future events for the apostle John, but past events for Andrew. Now the content of Revelation identifies events of the prophetic future which have yet to occur, even for Andrew. He interprets the imagery in this passage by recalling the use of the same symbols in the Old Testament and the events they heralded at that time.

<sup>346</sup> The dramatic and tragic events of the late sixth and early seventh centuries (see above, fn 334) led many people in the Empire to believe that the end of the world was near, but Andrew was not one of them. In his opinion, disasters occurring in the end times will be even far worse than anything which they have already experienced.

<sup>347</sup> Judg. 5:4, 2 Sam. 22:8, Ps. 18(17):7, Ps. 68(67):8, Ps. 114(113):7, Acts 16:26.

<sup>348</sup> Heb. 12:26-27, quoting Hag. 2:6. Andrew's citation of this verse is especially appropriate because the context of the statement is a warning about the consequences of rejecting God.

<sup>349</sup> Ps 68(67):8.

<sup>350</sup> Cyril of Alexandria, *Glaphyra on Genesis* 5.33, *On Worship in Spirit and Truth* 9, *Comm. on John* 6.17.

<sup>351</sup> Antiochus IV, "Epiphanes," was a mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.E. Greek king of the Seleucid dynasty, which at that time also encompassed Palestine. He attempted to completely Hellenize the Jews by forbidding Jewish religious practices. He also attempted to force Jews to participate in Greek religious ceremonies, including the worship of Greek gods. Led by a group of brothers nicknamed "the Maccabees," the Jews revolted in 165 B.C.E. and won

also the falling of those who think they are *luminaries in the world*<sup>352</sup> who bend the knee to created things; as the Lord says, *Even the chosen will be deceived, if possible, by the magnitude of the affliction.*<sup>353</sup> For perhaps on account of this also the fig tree is taken as an example of this, like the unripe fruits which had not yet suffered [70] burning temptations and have not yet been sweetened by grace, in which, shaken by diabolical winds, (the fig tree) is thrown down. For in two (ways) we have seen this, taken in a good (way) and a bad (way) shown in the two baskets of Jeremiah of the useful figs and the bad figs,<sup>354</sup> and also from the fig tree dried up by Christ<sup>355</sup> and the one referred to in the Canticle.<sup>356</sup> Whether these will happen perceptibly when Christ the Judge will come in glory, would be known by him who holds the *secret treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*<sup>357</sup>

*Rev. 6:14a And the sky vanished like a scroll that is rolled up,*

The sky rolled up like a scroll hints at either the unknown (time) of the second coming of Christ — because silently and in a moment the scroll is opened — or also that the

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their freedom. Since the oppression of Antiochus IV occurred long before John received his vision, one might wonder whether Andrew is violating his premise that prophecy cannot refer to events prior to the composition of Revelation. However, the key is in Andrew's words "as it is already written." Andrew probably has in mind a parallel passage from Isa. 34:4, which he likely believed was a prophecy given in the time of Isaiah long before and which was fulfilled during the Maccabean revolt in the time of Antiochus IV: "All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the sky rolled up like a scroll, all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree."

<sup>352</sup> Dan. 12:3 "Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky."

<sup>353</sup> Matt. 24:24.

<sup>354</sup> Jer. 24:1-5. Jeremiah received a vision from God consisting of two baskets of figs. One basket contained very good figs but the other contained figs so bad that they could not be eaten. Jeremiah was told that the good figs symbolized those exiles from Judah who would return and be restored because of their return to God. But the bad figs represented the king, his officials and others who remained in Jerusalem and believed they were favored by God, but whom the Lord would curse and destroy with sword, famine and pestilence (Jer. 24:9-10).

<sup>355</sup> Matt. 21:19f and Mark 11:13, 20f describe Jesus cursing the fig tree because it had no fruit. The symbolic act was interpreted in the early Church as a metaphor of God's judgment on the nation of Israel for its failure to bear spiritual "fruit" and as a warning to Christians not to suffer a similar fate.

<sup>356</sup> Song of Sol. 2:13. "The fig tree puts forth its figs." Song of Songs was extensively allegorized in the patristic tradition to refer to the relationship between God and the soul. It was inevitable that Jesus' condemnation of the fig tree for its unfruitfulness in the gospels would lead to the allegorization of the fig tree as the people of God elsewhere in the Bible. See, for example, Origen's comments on this verse. Since in the context of Song 2:13 the fig tree *is* producing fruit, the image is a positive one: "The fig tree, moreover, that puts forth its buds may be taken as the fruit of the whole congregation of the just." (*Comm. on Song of Songs* 3.14, ACW 26:246. See also the explanation by Methodios of fig tree symbolism as the life enjoyed by mankind in paradise before the Fall and as the fruit of the Holy Spirit in *Symp.* 10.2-5.)

<sup>357</sup> Col. 2:3.



heavenly powers feel pain over those who fall from the faith as if they will have some kind of twisting on account of sympathy and sorrow. Through this something else is also meant, that the sky does not endure disappearance, but rather a sort of rolling movement and a change for the better, as Irenaeus said in his fifth discourse *Refutation of False Knowledge*,<sup>358</sup> thus verbatim: “Neither the substance nor the essence [71] of creation disappears — for He who formed it is truthful and certain — but *the form of this world is passing away*,<sup>359</sup> in which the transgression occurred, as the presbyters say.” And Irenaeus the Great (said) these things. We think that we should use the Apostle for (an understanding of) the ancient custom. Because the Hebrews were using scrolls<sup>360</sup> instead of our books, the unrolling of them was not a disappearance but the complete disclosure of what is written,<sup>361</sup> so that the opening of the heavenly body also shows the revelation of the blessings reserved for the saints. And this (verse) we have understood in four ways, as it has been given to us from God. And we continue with the following.

*Rev. 6:14b-17* <sup>14b</sup>And every mountain and island was moved from its place. <sup>15</sup>And the kings of the earth and the great men and the rich and the commanders of thousands [and the strong], and every slave and every freeman, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains,<sup>16</sup> and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; <sup>17</sup>for the great day of his wrath has come, and who can stand?”

Our Lord foretold the future events to the apostles who were asking about the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and about the end of time, as much as they were able to receive.<sup>362</sup> These things already happened to the Judeans who killed Christ in the siege of

<sup>358</sup> Usually simply referred to as *Against Heresies*. *Heres.* 5.36.1.

<sup>359</sup> 1 Cor. 7:31.

<sup>360</sup> ειλιτάριον. The word is an unusual one for “scroll” and a *hapax* in this text.

<sup>361</sup> The rolling up takes place after the scriptural message inside has been read or “disclosed” by being unrolled.

<sup>362</sup> Once more, Andrew distinguishes his method from that of Oikoumenios who interprets the text of Revelation here to refer to the siege of Jerusalem or the suffering of the Jews during the Roman-Jewish war of 66-73 C.E., which occurred approximately twenty-five years before the Revelation on Patmos (Oik. 4.15.10 and 4.17.1). Andrew simply observes that the same language was used by Jesus to predict the fall and destruction of Jerusalem. (Sec Matt. 24:2ff, Mark 13:4ff, Luke 21:7ff.)

Vespasian [72] and Titus, just as the Hebrew Josephus narrates;<sup>363</sup> The end of all things will come to the world with great flourish, so to speak, upon the sojourn of the Antichrist, just as he said, in which the men who exist as the leading men either of ecclesiastical administration or worldly rule are figuratively called 'mountains,' and the churches of *the faithful* are metaphorically called '*islands*,' according to Isaiah *being consecrated before God to their place* they will flee,<sup>364</sup> changing from place to place on account of the pseudo-Christ, by which things we too had been tempted by sin before His coming out of love for humanity. *The kings of the earth*, that is, *those who exercise authority*<sup>365</sup> over her and who possess nothing in the heavens, along with all the great men and rich men who are under slavery of things below and are free of the slavery of Christ, will pray to be covered by the caves and the rocks and the mountains, or to be tested by the divine wrath raining down upon them, or according to (divine) will the afflictions from famine and other plagues in the coming of the Antichrist, or expecting that they will be punished endlessly after the resurrection (of the dead), and especially when the divine wrath justly will *burn as an oven*,<sup>366</sup> those who built upon the *foundation of faith (with) wood, grass and reed (becoming) like food for the fire*<sup>367</sup> consuming them. From this (fate) God who loves mankind [73] redeems us, making us partakers of the eternal blessings which He has prepared for his saints, joining (us) to the total number of those who are saved, by the grace of his only begotten Son, who with the Father deserves glory and worship, together with the Holy Spirit unto the ages. Amen.

#### SECTION 7, CHAPTER 19

##### About the 144,000 Saved from the Plague (Inflicted) By the Four Angels

*Rev. 7:1 And after these I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, in order that no wind blows on the earth nor on the sea nor on any tree.*

<sup>363</sup> Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War* 6.4-5.

<sup>364</sup> Isa. 41:1.

<sup>365</sup> Matt. 20:25, Mark 10:42.

<sup>366</sup> Mal. 4:1.

<sup>367</sup> 1 Cor. 3:12-13.

If some<sup>368</sup> have interpreted these things as having happened to the Judeans under the Romans of old,<sup>369</sup> considering the four divine angels showing that to escape the wrath of those being put to trial either on the earth and on the sea is impossible,<sup>370</sup> much more, this looks forward to the things that will occur in the time of the Antichrist, not (only) in the Judean part of the earth, but in all *of the earth at [74] which the angels stand holding the four corners*, having undertaken to perform a service given to them by God, but which is unknown to us. The season of *the winds* clearly means the loosening of the good order of creation and the inescapability of the evils, for it is through the winds that earthly vegetation is fed and the sea is sailed.

*Rev. 7:2-3a* <sup>2</sup>*And I saw another angel ascending from the place of the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God. And he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom had been given (power) to harm the earth and the sea,* <sup>3a</sup>*saying,*

Just as it had been revealed to Ezekiel long ago<sup>371</sup> about the one dressed in fine linen who sealed the foreheads of those who groan so that the righteous would not be destroyed together with the unrighteous — because the hidden virtue of the saints is unknown even to angels — this (is) also shown here to the blessed one (John), the superior holy power urging the punishing holy angels to do nothing to those who committed offenses before the knowledge of those distinguished by the sealing who serve the truth. If this has partially taken place a long time ago, to the ones who had believed in Christ who had escaped the sack of Jerusalem by the Romans,<sup>372</sup> reckoned as many tens of thousands, according to James the

<sup>368</sup> Oik. 4.17.1. See above, *Comm.* 84, fn 363.

<sup>369</sup> “Of old” is a necessary distinction for purposes of clarification here since Andrew and his readers themselves were part of the Roman Empire. Modern historians may refer to the continuation Eastern Roman Empire as the “Byzantine Empire,” but it is an artificial distinction and such a characterization was never part of the consciousness of those who lived in those lands during those centuries. Even to the present time, Greeks from Constantinople still refer to themselves as Ρομαιοι, *Romaioi*, which means “Romans.” This self-understanding is reflected even in the Turkish designation for the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople as the *Rum patriarkhanesi*, the “Roman Patriarchate.”

<sup>370</sup> Oikoumenios writes that because of the cross and their “madness against the Lord,” the four angels controlled the four corners of Judea “lest any of the Jews deserving of death should escape.” (4.17.2-3, *Suggit* 76)

<sup>371</sup> Ezek. 9:2-11. Ezekiel was sent to mark the foreheads of all those who groan and grieve over sin.

<sup>372</sup> This is Oikoumenios’ contention. (4.17.4-7)

Great who had shown the blessed Paul [75] their great number.<sup>373</sup> But accordingly it is said, this will definitely happen during the time of Antichrist, the seal of the life-giving Cross separating the faithful<sup>374</sup> from the unfaithful, (the faithful) without shame and having been emboldened bearing the sign of Christ before the impious. Wherefore the angel says,

*Rev. 7:3b "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God upon their foreheads."*

Creation, having come into being for us,<sup>375</sup> when we are chastised partakes with us in the afflictions,<sup>376</sup> likewise therefore it will rejoice with the saints who are glorified. Through those we learn also that before the bringing of trials the virtuous need to be strengthened through angelic assistance,<sup>377</sup> through the *seal of the Spirit*<sup>378</sup> given to us and manifesting our

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<sup>373</sup> Acts 21:18-20.

<sup>374</sup> In the early Church, and continuing today in the Eastern Christian tradition, immediately following the sacrament of baptism, the new Christian is "sealed" through the sacrament of Chrismation (i.e., confirmation). The sign of the cross is made by the priest with the oil of chrism on the forehead of the newly baptized while the priest proclaims, "The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit." It signifies the bestowal of the Holy Spirit and marks the individual as belonging to Christ. All members of the Church, therefore, are sealed on the forehead with the cross spiritually and literally "separating the faithful from the unfaithful," as Andrew remarks here. See below, fn 378.

<sup>375</sup> Creation not only exists for the physical needs of human beings but since it displays the glory and wisdom of the Creator, the wise individual can learn moral lessons from it. For a good example of this concept, see Basil the Great's Homily 7 *On the Six Days of Creation* in which he extensively surveyed various types of sea creatures and pointed out moral lessons which can be learned from their behavior, some positive and some negative. "I have seen these wonders myself and I have admired the wisdom of God in all things. If the unreasoning animals are able to contrive and look out for their own preservation, if a fish knows what it should choose and what to avoid, what shall we say who have been honored with reason, taught by the law, encouraged by the promises, made wise by the Spirit, and who have handled our own affairs more unreasonably than the fish?" *Hom. 7.5, FC 46:113.*

<sup>376</sup> See Rom. 8:19-23. The concept that creation itself was adversely affected by the Fall of Adam and that it too will be renewed in the end times was very popular in the patristic tradition.

<sup>377</sup> It is obvious that Andrew, and the book of Revelation itself, do not expect that anyone will escape the trials of the end times, even the virtuous or righteous. The idea of a "rapture," as it is modernly advanced in some Christian circles as a deliverance from the sufferings of the end-times, was foreign to the early Christians. Instead, the emphasis was on patient endurance through tribulations.

<sup>378</sup> "[God] has anointed us by putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit." (2 Cor. 1:21-22) "[Y]ou were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit." (Eph. 1:13) "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God with which you were marked with a seal." (Eph. 4:30) Ambrose compared the seal to a military insignia: "Each individual commander designates such ensigns and gives orders that they be followed... But one who is a loyal soldier follows his own ensigns and does not recognize those of a stranger. Let us consider with some care and attention what these strange ensigns are. Christ has set His sign on the forehead of each one; the Antichrist sets his sign there also, that he may recognize his own... The devil and his servants set up their ensigns, but I did not

own power and according to the amount of work we have put to it. The rest will remain without help, for by their own will they will not be helped.<sup>379</sup>

*Rev. 7:4 And I heard the number of the sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed out of every tribe of the sons of Israel. Twelve thousand sealed out of the tribe of Judah,*

[76] Judah, (means) “confession,” through which are shown the ones being saved through confession to Christ,<sup>380</sup> who is descended from the root of Judah.<sup>381</sup>

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know them because I was not a party to their deceits and I did not agree to their dominion.” *The Prayer of Job and David 7.26-7.27. Ambrose: Seven Exegetical Works*, trans. Michael P. McHugh, Fathers of the Church series, vol. 65 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1975), 409-410.

<sup>379</sup> Clearly, Andrew rejects any notion of predestination. In fact, his words reveal the classic Eastern Christian belief in “synergy” as fundamental for personal salvation: every human being must “co-operate” for his/her salvation. Christ saved everyone all once and for all by his death and resurrection, but it is the responsibility of each individual to respond to that gift by the exercise of his/her free will, which is manifested by one’s relationship to God and in one’s manner of life. God neither forces himself on human beings nor does he favor some and reject others arbitrarily, but rather he initiates and aids the salvation of each individual. Andrew is about to elaborate on how one responds to God and manifests a desire to be “helped” by God by allegorically interpreting the names of the patriarchs to provide examples of the spiritual qualities found in those who are saved.

<sup>380</sup> Andrew means both martyrs and confessors. A “confessor” is one who is tortured for refusing to deny Christ. He/she proclaims (or “confesses”) faith in Christ, but survives the torture. A martyr is one who “confessed” Christ unto death.

<sup>381</sup> This same interpretation of the meaning of “Judah” is found earlier in Andrew (*Chp. 5, Text 28, Comm. 34, fn 146*) and comes from Gen. 29:35. The naming of the twelve tribes here commences a series of interpretations by Andrew based on the perceived etymology of the name of each patriarch. In some instances, the meaning of the name relates to the occasion of the individual’s birth, as found in Gen. 29-30 (the sons of Jacob), or Gen 41:51-52 (the sons of Joseph). Another source of inspiration was Gen. 49 which gives Jacob’s final words to each of his sons. Analyzing the names of notable people and places was a favorite pursuit of pagan, Jewish and Christian writers. Although they were frequently incorrect about the etymology, they believed that the names contained hidden allegorical meanings and that elaboration on the name might encourage spiritual progress. The importance of the spiritual lesson to be learned by the name is shown by the fact that our author expends several pages interpreting the meanings of these names. Since many Church Fathers had an extensive classical education, this also inspired their use of etymology for words and names since this was also practiced by pagan writers. Oikoumenios is silent about the meaning of the names, and even omits verses 5-8 in his text of Revelation itself, the verses which contain the actual names of the tribes. In keeping with his interpretation of Revelation as a metaphor for past historical events, Oikoumenios believes that the 144,000 are those Jews who either believed in Christ or who had no part in his death and because of this they were spared from death during the Roman-Jewish War (4.1). Perhaps Oikoumenios’ failure to discuss the symbolic meaning of the names, information which almost any contemporaneous reader would have expected to be included, is one of those glaring omissions which led Andrew to compose his commentary. Interpreting the names would not have required Oikoumenios to abandon his methodology. He could easily have maintained his opinion that the tribes represented actual Jews from the first century and still articulated desired spiritual qualities implied by the names. Andrew was very much in line with patristic tradition in his interpretation here, following not only an established pagan and patristic tradition, but also a Jewish and rabbinic one, illustrated by Philo Judaeus, a first

*Rev. 7:5 Twelve thousand sealed from the tribe of Reuben*

Reuben, “son of vision,”<sup>382</sup> through which are shown the ones who through cleanliness of heart possessed spiritual vision.<sup>383</sup>

*Rev. 7:5b Twelve thousand from the tribe of Gad*

Gad, “trial,”<sup>384</sup> through which are meant those who are crowned through patience in trials, according to Job.<sup>385</sup>

*Rev. 7:6a Twelve thousand from the tribe of Asher*

Asher (means) “blessed,”<sup>386</sup> through which are shown those who are worthy of the blessings of the master through the way of life, those being judged worthy to stand at the right hand of Christ<sup>387</sup> and famous as *sons of light and of day*.<sup>388</sup>

century Hellenistic Jew of Alexandria. Philo commented frequently on the allegorical meaning of biblical names, especially in his work about name changes in the Bible, *On the Change of Names*. Andrew repeats some of Philo’s interpretations, although it is impossible to know whether Andrew was reading Philo directly or whether Philo’s interpretations had simply been absorbed into the patristic tradition through other writers who preceded Andrew, which is more likely. (A list of Origen’s interpretations of names was prepared by Franz Wutz who compared them to Jerome’s interpretations. *Onomastica sacra: Utersuchungen zum Liber interpretationis nominum hebraicorum des hl. Hieronymus* [1914] See also R.P.C. Hanson “Interpretation of Hebrew Names in Origen” *Vigiliae Christianae* 10 [1956] 103-123.) Eusebius of Caesarea and Jerome both produced “Onomastica,” compilations of the meanings of place names in the bible. The operative presumption underlying this practice was that the Holy Spirit inspired every detail in the Bible, therefore every detail had a hidden spiritual or mystical meaning to be discovered. Origen remarked, “[I]t is for this reason that divine wisdom arranged certain names of locations to be written in the Scriptures to contain a certain mystic meaning. Through these it may be disclosed to us that these things are arranged by very particular reasons and do not happen by chance or accidentally.” (*Hom. on Joshua* 23.4, FC 105:200-201.)

<sup>382</sup> Gen. 29:32.

<sup>383</sup> An allusion to Matt. 5:8, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.”

<sup>384</sup> The meaning given for the name “Gad” differs greatly even in the Bible. Gen 30:11 explains that Gad means “good fortune” whereas in Gen. 49:19 it means “raid.” Philo interprets it as “invasion,” such as by pirates. (Philo, *On Dreams* 2.35. *The Works of Philo Complete and Unabridged*, trans. C.D. Yonge, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1993), 390.

<sup>385</sup> Job 42. At the end of the book, the hero, Job, a righteous man who suffered countless tribulations, is rewarded by God for his patience and faithfulness.

<sup>386</sup> Or “happy.” Gen. 30:13 (LXX reads: μακαρία).

<sup>387</sup> Matt. 25:33.

<sup>388</sup> 1 Thess. 5:5.

*Rev. 7:6b Twelve thousand from the tribe of Naphtali*

Naphtali, “prayer,”<sup>389</sup> through which are designated those who are attached to God through unceasing prayer.<sup>390</sup>

*Rev. 7:6c - Twelve thousand from the tribe of Manasseh*

[77] Manasseh, “forgetfulness,”<sup>391</sup> that is, the ones who forget *the (things) behind*<sup>392</sup> and their fathers’ houses on account of divine love.<sup>393</sup>

*Rev. 7:7a Twelve thousand from the tribe of Simeon*

Simeon, “obedience,”<sup>394</sup> clearly (signifies), the ones who are justified through obedience to divine commandments.

*Rev. 7:7b Twelve thousand from the tribe of Levi*

Levi, “the one received in addition,”<sup>395</sup> through which are meant the ones who have been received in addition by Christ through their reverent way life. Levi is placed eighth because true priesthood became famous on the eighth day, the day of the Resurrection.

*Rev. 7:7c Twelve thousand from the tribe of Issachar*

Issachar, “wages,”<sup>396</sup> that is the ones living virtuously for the sake of the wages from God.

<sup>389</sup> In Gen. 30:8, it is said to mean “prevail.”

<sup>390</sup> Constant communication with God by observing Paul’s admonition to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17) is considered the Christian ideal and an essential pursuit in the monastic life of the Eastern tradition.

<sup>391</sup> Gen. 41:51.

<sup>392</sup> Phil. 3:13.

<sup>393</sup> An allusion to Gen. 12:1, (Abraham’s initial call from God to leave his kindred and his father’s house to go to the promised land), and to Ps. 45(44):10, “Hear, O daughter, and consider and incline your ear; forget your people and your father’s house, and the king will desire your beauty.” This verse, popular in the Eastern tradition and used in certain liturgical services, was interpreted by the Fathers as an allegorical call to the soul, (a feminine noun in Greek), to make herself attractive to her king, God.

<sup>394</sup> In Gen. 29:33, it is said to mean “heard.” Philo interprets it as “listening” (*On the Change of Names* 99 and *On Dreams* 2.34), hence, “obedience.” (*Works of Philo*, 349 and 390, respectively.)

<sup>395</sup> Gen. 29:34, “joined.”

*Rev. 7:8a Twelve thousand from the tribe of Zebulun*

Zebulun, “habitation of strength,” or “sweet fragrance,”<sup>397</sup> through which are meant the ones who are strengthened against the passions by the in-dwelling of Christ<sup>398</sup> and have become his *sweet fragrance*,<sup>399</sup> as Paul says.

*Rev. 7:8b Twelve thousand from the tribe of Joseph*

[78] Joseph, “addition,”<sup>400</sup> that is, the ones who receive in addition to a portion of the kingdom of heaven the things necessary for life, as the Lord said.<sup>401</sup>

*Rev. 7:8c Twelve thousand sealed from the tribe of Benjamin*

Benjamin, “son of grief” or “son of day” or “son of the right (hand),”<sup>402</sup> in other words, *those who have grief of heart*,<sup>403</sup> either the faithful from among the Hebrews who have escaped the captivity of the Romans<sup>404</sup> who complete this number, or more correctly, those saved from among the Jews in the end of time when, as the Apostle says, after *the complete number of Gentiles enters all Israel will be saved*.<sup>405</sup> Neither of these is unacceptable. The precise equality of each tribe, seems to me to show the multiplication of

<sup>396</sup> Gen. 30:16.

<sup>397</sup> In Gen. 30:20 it is said to mean “honor.” Philo states that it means “departure of night” (*On Dreams* 2.34, *The Works of Philo*, 390.) See Hippolytus commenting on Gen. 49, “And Zabulun is, by interpretation, “fragrance” and “blessing.” *On the Six Days of Creation*, Gen. 49.12-15. *Extant Works and Fragments of Hippolytus: Exegetical*, trans. S.D.F. Salmond, *Fathers of the Third Century*, Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. V, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, reprinted 1990), 165.

<sup>398</sup> An allusion to 1 Cor. 3:16 and 2 Cor. 6:16.

<sup>399</sup> 2 Cor. 2:15.

<sup>400</sup> Gen. 30:24. Also Philo, *Change of Names* 92.

<sup>401</sup> Matt. 6:33, Luke 12:31.

<sup>402</sup> Gen. 35:18. Rachel named him *Son of my sorrow* (Ben-oni) because she realized she was dying due to a difficult childbirth. But the same verse in Genesis explains that Jacob named him Benjamin, *Son of the right hand*. Yet Philo interprets the name to mean *Son of day*. (*Change of Names* 92, *Works of Philo*, 349.)

<sup>403</sup> Ps. 94(93):19.

<sup>404</sup> Oik. 4.17.7-8.

<sup>405</sup> Rom. 11:25-26.



the apostolic seed,<sup>406</sup> twelve times by twelve times more along with the perfect number of one thousand, and in this way amounting to the thousands previously stated.<sup>407</sup> [79] For they were the disciples of the Kernel<sup>408</sup> which fell upon the earth out of love for mankind, and bursting forth bearing much fruit of the universal salvation. This should be noted, as the tribe of Dan, since the Antichrist would be born from it,<sup>409</sup> was not included with the rest (of tribes) but instead of it that of Levi, as the priestly (tribe) of old which did not share in the division (of the land of Israel).<sup>410</sup> And from the interpretation of the names it is possible to attach some idea to each of the tribes adduced in the things nearby. It placed Joseph (there) instead of Ephraim his son. This number that was mentioned is appropriate to them, as has been said, because of the twelve tribal leaders of the ancient Hebrews, and because of the sublime apostles who *became rulers over the entire earth*<sup>411</sup> instead of them, as has been written, through whom the Jews of the diaspora of the earth are saved in these last days.<sup>412</sup>

[It is time to fulfill the promise (regarding the interpretation of the names) since many times in the divine Scriptures we find (meaning) under the names of some people, either having been born, or having been named by parents applied to children, as has been written

<sup>406</sup> An allusion to Matt. 13:8, Mark 4:8, and Luke 8:8.

<sup>407</sup> Andrew recognizes that not only are the names of the tribes entirely symbolic, representing spiritual qualities of those who will be saved, but likewise also, the number of those saved is entirely symbolic, the number representing the fullness and perfection as a result of the apostolic preaching. It was a well-recognized principle in patristic interpretation that twelve times twelve (144) symbolized the fullness of those who are saved from among the Old and the New Israel, that the number 1000 was symbolic of a large number of people, and that this was not intended to be understood as a precise number. Origen begins his entire commentary on the Gospel of John with an explanation of the meaning of the number 144,000. Those who comprise the true twelve tribes are the spiritual Israel, the believers. (*Comm. on John*, 1.1) Oikoumenios is either entirely unaware of the symbolic meaning of 144,000, or ignores it because he interprets the passage to refer to the Jews who escaped the Roman persecution. However, even though he does not recognize any significance to the number itself, he states that the equal number of people saved from each tribe is symbolic of the "equally valid zeal and the same understanding of faith [among them all]" (4.17.9, *Suggit* 78).

<sup>408</sup> John 12:2.

<sup>409</sup> Irenaeus, *Heres.* 5.30. 2, relying on Jer. 8:16.

<sup>410</sup> Deut. 10:9, 12:12.

<sup>411</sup> Ps. 45(44):16.

<sup>412</sup> Origen holds basically the same opinion: the 144,000 means that there are Israelites according to the flesh and Israelites according to the spirit. (*Hom. on Exodus* 1.2.) Jerome uses this passage (citing Rom. 11:25-27) to support his statement that in the end all of Israel will be saved (*Hom.* 82.8, *FC* 57: 177). The conclusion that all of the Jews would ultimately be saved was originally expressed by Paul in Rom. 11:26.

about Leah during birth-giving who said, *The Lord saw my humility*<sup>413</sup> and called the child born Reuben, that is “son of vision,” and about the second one to be born she [80] had said, *The Lord listened because I am hated*<sup>414</sup> and called him Simeon, which means “listening,”<sup>415</sup> and about Rachel, who had a hard labor and who called the child from that event “son of grief,”<sup>416</sup> and other such appellations are known to those skilled in the divine sayings.<sup>417</sup> On account of this those who have believed necessary the explanation of the names of the patriarchs, we say of the tribe of Judah, which is interpreted as “confession,”<sup>418</sup> that it alludes to those who are saved through repentance and love toward the Lord, having descended from (the tribe of) Judah who justified the publican,<sup>419</sup> the harlot<sup>420</sup> and the robber.<sup>421</sup> The tribe of Ruben, meaning “the visionary son,” or “the son of vision,”<sup>422</sup> alludes to those who are *pure in heart*<sup>423</sup> and those seeing in the Spirit; the tribe of Gad, which means “test” or “something which tests,” to those who through afflictions and trials are *tested in the fire like gold*<sup>424</sup> and are crowned by the test of faith; the tribe of Asher by which is meant “the blessing,” to those who create the blessedness of eternal praises by keeping ceaselessly the God-taught beatitudes; that of Naphtali, interpreted as “intelligent” or “tree trunk,”<sup>425</sup> to those being supported with intelligence by the trunk of the Master’s cross and with it smash the demons; that of Manasseh, which is interpreted from “forgetfulness,” to those *forgetting the father’s*

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<sup>413</sup> Gen. 29:32.

<sup>414</sup> Gen. 29:33.

<sup>415</sup> Gen. 29:32.

<sup>416</sup> Ben-oni, which Jacob changed to Benjamin, “son of the right hand” Gen 35:16-18.

<sup>417</sup> See footnote 381 above.

<sup>418</sup> Gen. 29:35.

<sup>419</sup> Luke 18:14, the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector), and 19:9 about Zacchaeus.

<sup>420</sup> Luke 7:47, the sinful woman who anointed Jesus’ feet.

<sup>421</sup> Luke 23:43, the repentant thief on the cross.

<sup>422</sup> Gen. 29:32.

<sup>423</sup> Matt. 5:5.

<sup>424</sup> 1 Pet.1:7.

<sup>425</sup> Previously, it was said to mean “prayer” (*Chp. 19, Text 76, Comm. 90, fn 397*).

house on account of Christ, so that the king *will desire their spiritual beauty*<sup>426</sup> and make them worthy of the invitation to the mystical wedding.<sup>427</sup> The tribe of Simeon, which means “hearkening,” alludes to those who hearken to the divine commandments through good deeds. [81] The tribe of Levi, which means “accepted,”<sup>428</sup> to those *elected and accepted by God*, according to the saying of the Psalm, and *those who will dwell in the divine courtyards*<sup>429</sup> in the future as those who will become priests of the eighth week after the present age,<sup>430</sup> for this reason it is placed eighth. For it is also the first, since all of it had not been gained by one continuous road; the tribe of Issachar, which is “wages,” to those who are separated by virtue for the wage of the future prizes, and for this reason, those sincerely pursuing virtues for the good. The tribe of Zebulun, which is interpreted “flow accepted,”<sup>431</sup> to those who give up possession of the liquid wealth for the poor and who are *received by Christ*<sup>432</sup> and those who heal the flow of spiritual fruit which gives birth to vainglory by the memory of the Gehenna of fire; the tribe of Joseph which is “the addition of Iaoth,” the “*Iaoth-*” is the divine name,<sup>433</sup> (alludes) to those who receive in addition a part of the Kingdom of heaven also receiving the necessities of life from the Master who never lies.<sup>434</sup>

<sup>426</sup> Ps. 45(44):10. See fn 393.

<sup>427</sup> Jesus compared the Kingdom of heaven to a wedding banquet. See for example Matt. 22:1-10 and 25:1-13.

<sup>428</sup> Gen. 29:33.

<sup>429</sup> Ps. 65(64):4.

<sup>430</sup> Another indication that Andrew sees his present day as the millennial age, the “seventh day.” (See *Chp. 1, Text 13, Comm. 15, fn 54.*) “Eight” is a number which is identified with Christ for several reasons. The resurrection was frequently said to have taken place on the “eighth day.” It was the first day of the week, but eschatologically it became the “eighth” day because it ushered in a new era of eternal life. Therefore, life in the Kingdom, after the consummation of this world, will be the life of “the eighth day.” The number eight was also considered to be a symbol of Christ, because seven symbolizes perfection, therefore as the ultimate in all things Christ is “eight,” beyond perfection.

<sup>431</sup> Earlier, it was interpreted as “habitation of strength,” or “sweet fragrance” (*Text 77, Comm. 88*).

<sup>432</sup> Rom. 15:7.

<sup>433</sup>  $\text{ια}\omega\theta$ , referring to the Hebrew “Ya-” as in “Yahweh.” This portion of the divine name can also be seen in the anglicized names “Jesus” and “Joshua,” which in Hebrew are *Yeshua*, meaning “God saves.” Rendering “Ya” in Greek as  $\text{ια}\omega\theta$  is unusual, and Andrew most likely found this variation in Irenaeus (*Heres. 2.35.3*), who may have added the “ $\theta$ ” from “Sabaoth” as a title for God. See D.N. Freedman and M.P. O’Connor, “YHWH,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 5, eds. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), 509.

<sup>434</sup> That is, the Master abides by his promise to provide the necessities of life: “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.” Matt. 6:33 (NIV).

The tribe of Benjamin, which is interpreted “son of grief,” or “son of day” (alludes) to those who succeed *through the multitude of the heart’s griefs*,<sup>435</sup> according to the psalmist, and in addition through the excess of bodily pain on account of Christ, are shown to be *sons of light and sons of the day*.<sup>436</sup> And these (taken) from the interpretation of the names, are for the exercise of the mind by those who are quick-witted.<sup>437</sup> We ponder Dan, not only because he was not mentioned on account of the Antichrist since he (the Antichrist) will be born from him, as it has been said,<sup>438</sup> but also because it is difficult to *judge another’s house-servant*.<sup>439</sup> Therefore, the Lord says, *Do not judge that you not be judged*,<sup>440</sup> and as James the Great says, *For One is the Lawgiver and Judge*.<sup>441</sup> For “Dan” is interpreted “judgment.”<sup>442</sup>

[82]

## CHAPTER 20

About the Innumerable Crowd of those Clothed in Shining Garments From the Nations

*Rev. 7:9 -10* <sup>9</sup>*After these I saw, and behold a great crowd which no one could number, from all nations, and tribes and people and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands.* <sup>10</sup>*And crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation (belongs) to our God who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb!”*

Those are the ones of whom David says, *If I should count them they will be more in number than the sand*,<sup>443</sup> both those who had formerly struggled as martyrs for Christ<sup>444</sup>

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<sup>435</sup> Ps. 94(93):19.

<sup>436</sup> 1 Thess. 5:5.

<sup>437</sup> Andrew identified this mental training as one of the benefits to studying Revelation in his prologue. (*Text 9, Comm. 10.*)

<sup>438</sup> See *Text 79, Comm. 91.*

<sup>439</sup> Rom. 14:4.

<sup>440</sup> Matt. 7:1, Luke 6:37.

<sup>441</sup> James 4:12.

<sup>442</sup> Gen. 30:6.

<sup>443</sup> Ps. 139(138):18.

and those who contested<sup>445</sup> as of late with the greatest bravery *from every tribe and tongue* who, by the pouring out of their own blood for Christ, made the garments white by their own deeds, and those destined to make them white;<sup>446</sup> and who hold in their hands the victory-designating branches of the the useful and upright and white-hearted palm trees, dance<sup>447</sup> around the divine throne of the divinely derived repose,<sup>448</sup> and as grateful servants they properly ascribe the victory against the demons to the Provider.

[83] *Rev. 7:11-12* <sup>11</sup>*And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four animals, and they fell down on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, <sup>12</sup>saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might to our God for ever and ever! Amen."*

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<sup>444</sup> Cyprian uses this passage in his treatise *Exhortation to Martyrdom, Addressed to Fortunatus* to argue that martyrdom must not be too difficult since this passage shows that the total number of martyrs is innumerable. (*Exhortation to Martyrdom* 11, ANF 5:505)

<sup>445</sup> ἀθλήσαντες. The Greek verb from which we derive the word "athlete" means "to contest" or "to struggle." Early Christian writings frequently referred to the martyrs as "athletes" and used athletic metaphors to describe their tortures, which was a "contest." Their contest or struggle was against the devil and often literally took place in an arena. If they died confessing faithfully, that is, without denying Christ, they were victorious and received the "crown" of martyrdom, another athletic metaphor based on the crown of laurel leaves, the prize for the victors in athletic competitions. Just as athletes were the idolized as heroes in Greek antiquity because of their strength, bravery, skill and fortitude in the arena, the martyrs became the heroes of the Church for displaying the same virtues. After Christianity was legalized and martyrdoms were less common, athletic metaphors were applied to the spiritual struggle which takes place against the devil within the heart.

<sup>446</sup> Oikoumenios states that the white robes indicate purity (5.3.2), but for Andrew it is the robe of martyrdom, based on the context. Verse 14 below will explain that those in the white robes are those who have experienced tribulation and washed their robes in the blood of the lamb. Andrew understands the vision to include not only those who have been martyred, but those who will be martyred in the future. Oikoumenios explains the reference as participating in the death of Christ through baptism, hence the white robe, and the "blood of the lamb" is a symbol of participation in Eucharist (5.3.7).

<sup>447</sup> Whereas Revelation describes this great crowd only as *standing* before the throne and the lamb, how interesting it is that Andrew imagines, and actually states, that they *dance* around the throne! The word can also mean to "form a chorus." Two sacraments in the Orthodox Church have preserved a type of symbolic, liturgical "dance" which symbolizes the joy of the kingdom of heaven and involves both singing and liturgical "dancing." Although referred to as a "dance," in practice it is a ceremonial walk which occurs during the sacraments of marriage and baptism. At a baptism, the priest and the newly-baptized walk three times around the baptismal font, and at a wedding the priest and a newly-married couple walk three times around the table (which represents an altar) before which the couple was married in what is called "the dance of Isaiah." Two of the three hymns chanted during this "dance" refer to martyrdom, and the second hymn encompasses many of the ideas to which Andrew refers here, including crowns, martyrdom, and the symbolism of athletic "contest." The hymn addresses the martyrs as ἀθλήσαντες. See fn 445 above. The baptismal hymn accompanying the dance alludes to the white baptismal garment, yet another image which is part of the scene depicted here.

<sup>448</sup> Another reference to the throne of God as "repose." Yet, repose does not mean an absence of joy and exultation – or even an absence of dancing – in Andrew's mind.

Behold one church of angels and humans!<sup>449</sup> And (the angels) of old appeared amazing to men (who were) equal to the angels, just as we know through Daniel,<sup>450</sup> then they will become co-celebrants with men,<sup>451</sup> either — according to some of the saints — appearing to them in their own bodies through an immediate impression — or, according to others — as not having the three dimensions, length, width and depth, which is a characteristic of bodies — they do not appear in their own nature, but being figures and forms according to the opinion by God. Standing in a circle around the cherubim and elders they show through the placement the magnitude of honor by which those shown through the number of elders are glorified. Through all of these thanksgiving is sent up to God for his divine dispensations in his creation for our sake.

*Rev. 7:13 Then one of the elders responded, saying to me, "Who are these clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" And I told him, "My lord, you know".*

[84] Through the question, the (elder) who has been seen arouses the blessed one (John) toward an inquiry about the things that were observed. And the one candidly making a show of ignorance is made wise by the seen one (the elder).

*Rev. 7:14-15<sup>14</sup> And he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation and they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup>For this reason they are before the throne of God and worship him day and night in his temple; and He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.*

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<sup>449</sup> It is not surprising that Andrew sees in the Apocalypse a vision of the church, very likely influenced by his liturgical orientation. "De cette profonde influence de l'Apocalypse, et spécialement de ses parties liturgiques, témoignent les données suivantes...le caractère supramondain de la liturgie byzantine, considérée d'une part comme l'antype de la liturgie céleste et, d'autre part, comme une concélébration des Puissances célestes et terrestres, selon le modèle de la liturgie céleste..." Paul Bratsiotis, "L'Apocalypse de saint Jean dans le culte de l'Eglise Grecque Orthodoxe", *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 42 (1962) 117-118.

<sup>450</sup> Dan. 10:7-9.

<sup>451</sup> συλλειτουργοὶ ἀνθρώποις γενήσονται. Among the hagiographies are stories of angels liturgizing with saints. An example of this is an event in the life of St. Spyridon which was incorporated into his *apolytikion*, the primary hymn sung in honor of a saint or for a feast day. The *apolytikion* for St. Spyridon, a fourth century bishop of Cyprus whose feast day is celebrated on December 12<sup>th</sup>, describes an incident in which no one from the town had attended the divine liturgy that day. Spyridon proceeded with the service and the responses were literally sung by an angelic choir (ἀγγέλους ἔσχες συλλειτουργοῦντάς σοι, ἱερώτατε, according to the *apolytikion* of St. Spyridon.) The glorious choir could even be heard outside the church and people reportedly entered to see who was responsible for the magnificent singing. The *apolytikion* uses the same expression that Andrew does here to describe the event, συλλειτουργοί.

Blessed are those who through temporary pains bear fruit for eternal rest, who through *co-suffering with Christ*,<sup>452</sup> co-reign and worship him uninterruptedly. For *day and night*, means here unceasing. For there will be no night there, but a single day, illuminated not by a sensory sun, but by the spiritual (*Sun of*) *Righteousness*.<sup>453</sup> And perhaps by *night* is to be understood the hidden and deep mysteries of knowledge, and by *day* the things which are clear and easy to understand. *His temple* (signifies) all of creation being *renewed by the Spirit*,<sup>454</sup> especially those who have kept the *pledge of the Spirit*<sup>455</sup> whole and unquenched, to whom it has been promised to  *dwell* <sup>456</sup> and *walk*.<sup>457</sup>

[85] *Rev. 7:16 They will no longer hunger nor thirst*

Naturally. For they will have the *heavenly bread*<sup>458</sup> and the *water of life*.<sup>459</sup>

*Rev. 7:16b The sun will not fall upon them, nor any burning heat.*

For they will no longer suffer under trials, which is what is meant by the sun and the burning heat, the time of struggles having passed.

*Rev. 7:17 For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will shepherd them, and he will guide them to springs of waters of life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."*

Those who are shepherded by Christ then, it says, will not be afraid of attacks by wolves, in as much as they (the wolves) will be sent to the *unquenched fire*,<sup>460</sup> but instead

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<sup>452</sup> Rom. 8:17.

<sup>453</sup> Mal. 4:2. Christ is the Sun of Righteousness. (See *Chp. 2, Text 22, Comm. 27* and *Chp. 6, Text 35 Comm. 43*, especially footnote 114 on page 27.) Andrew is correct to interpret "night and day" metaphorically in light of the description of heaven in Rev. 22:5: "And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever." The same idea is expressed in Rev. 21:23.

<sup>454</sup> Titus 3:5.

<sup>455</sup> Τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος, 2 Cor. 1:22 and 5:5. The Nestle-Aland critical text reads ἀρραβῶνα.

<sup>456</sup> 1 Cor. 3:16 and 6:19.

<sup>457</sup> 2 Cor. 6:16.

<sup>458</sup> John 6:31. The expression, ἄρτον τὸν οὐράνιον (*heavenly bread*), is also found in a hymn of the Divine Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts in reference to Holy Communion. This liturgy, one of the oldest, was in use during Andrew's time.

<sup>459</sup> John 4:10, 7:38 and Rev. 22:17.

they (who have washed their robes) will be spiritually shepherded towards the clean and clear fountains of the divine thoughts, being meant by the waters characterizing the already abundant flow of the Spirit, as the Lord has said about *him who sincerely believes* in Him that *out of his belly will flow rivers of living water*.<sup>461</sup> The saints, those watered by it abundantly, will live endlessly in great joy and gladness, the *partial knowledge*<sup>462</sup> [86] being abolished and they will possess perfect (knowledge) and escape the change of corruption.

## CHAPTER 21

### Loosening of the Seventh Seal Meaning the Angelic Powers Bringing the Prayers of the Saints to God as Incenses.

*Rev. 8:1-2* <sup>1</sup>And when he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. <sup>2</sup>And I saw the seven angels who stood before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

Often the number seven is taken by this saint (John) as corresponding to this age<sup>463</sup> and to *the Sabbath rest*<sup>464</sup> and the repose of the saints.<sup>465</sup> Therefore, here by the loosening of

<sup>460</sup> Mark 9:43.

<sup>461</sup> John 7:38. This particular verse in the Gospel of John has been problematic for some interpreters because Jesus appears to quote a line of scripture which does not exist anywhere in the Bible. Andrew's comments here show that he accepts the argument made by St John Chrysostom, and probably others, for a particular punctuation for this verse which resolves the problem. Typically, the verse is punctuated as follows: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" Chrysostom explained to his congregation that the proper punctuation of the passage is: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me as the Scripture has said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water." Chrysostom's point is that statement is not a quotation from the Scriptures but indicates that the Scriptures have identified the Christ, and that if one believes in Christ, as He has been revealed by those Scriptures, his heart shall flow with rivers of living water. It is a statement about the believer, not a quotation of the Scriptures. (See Chrysostom on the Gospel of John, *Hom.* 51) Andrew's comment reflects the same reading of the text – it is what the Lord says about the believer, not what the Scriptures say about the Lord. This detail as well as many others strongly indicate that Andrew stands squarely in the stream of the patristic exegetical tradition and was trained and familiar with traditional interpretations. (See also *Comm.* 32, fn 134 on the absence of punctuation in early manuscripts.)

<sup>462</sup> 1 Cor. 13:9.

<sup>463</sup> Again, we see a very clear expression of Andrew's conception of time. The present is the seventh age, the "Sabbath rest."

<sup>464</sup> τῷ σαββατισμῷ, Heb. 4:9.

<sup>465</sup> This sentence shows that Andrew is drawing exegetical conclusions based on what he has observed as typical of the language and style of the biblical author. Here, he comments how the word or number seven is used elsewhere in Revelation.



*the seventh seal* through which is meant the loosening of the earthly life, the seven angels ministering by chastisements against those people who are in need of education or punishment.<sup>466</sup> The *silence* signifies both the angelic good order<sup>467</sup> and piety, and also that which concerns the second coming of Christ is unknown even to the angels.<sup>468</sup> The *half an hour* of time shows the shortness of time<sup>469</sup> in which the plagues are brought on and the completion of these things on the earth (occur), the kingdom of Christ will appear.

*Rev 8:3a And another angel came and stood at the altar having a golden incense holder;*

[87] Even if the things seen by the saints take form in matter and colors, either the altar or the censer or anything else, yet they happen to be invisible and mental. Therefore, the *angel stood* at this (altar) and (holds) the *incense holder*, that is, the censer containing incense, holding the prayers of the saints offered as incense to God,<sup>470</sup> through which prayers they (the saints) were asking for the universal end of the world with the punishing affliction of the impious and lawless, to lessen the future suffering, by his own coming (Christ) to distribute the wages among those who had labored. And this is shown by what follows.

*Rev. 8:3b And to him was given many incenses, in order to offer the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the throne;*

<sup>466</sup> Oikoumenios believes the loosening of the seventh seal is the second coming of Christ, which creates silence in heaven in anticipation of that event. (5.5.4-5)

<sup>467</sup> εὐταξίαν.

<sup>468</sup> Matt. 24:36, Mark 13:32.

<sup>469</sup> Gregory the Great believes that silence for half an hour signifies the difficulty in creating stillness in the mind. As much as one tries to contemplate heavenly things, “tumultuous noises of thoughts force themselves into the mind against its will, they violently draw the eye of the mind, even when steadily fixed on things above, to view again those of earth.... This silence is therefore well described as having been made not for a whole but for ‘a half hour’ because contemplation is never perfected here, however ardently it be begun.” *Morals* 30.16(53), LF 31:401. Victorinus believes the silence is the beginning of everlasting rest but it is partial and interrupted, otherwise the silence would not end. (Vic. 8.1)

<sup>470</sup> Here, in Rev. 8:3-4, incense *and* prayers are offered. But elsewhere, in Rev. 5:8, the incense *is* the prayers of the saints. The identification of prayers with incense was an easy one for Andrew. In addition to similar imagery in Revelation, Ps. 141(140):2 is one of the best known and most often used Bible verses in the Eastern tradition: “Let my prayer arise in your sight as incense and let the lifting up of my hands be as an evening sacrifice.”

This *altar* is Christ,<sup>471</sup> upon which is established every ministering and holy power and to which the sacrifices of martyrdom are carried, of which altar the foreshadowing<sup>472</sup> was shown to Moses on the mountain together with the tabernacle.<sup>473</sup> The *incenses* are the prayers of the saints, as sweet fragrances to God, as has been said. And *before the throne* [meaning] Christ, clearly the supreme [88] holy powers, as it has been said, on account of the flow of fiery divine love in them and pure wisdom and knowledge. The interpretation of the names of the supreme powers who approach God shows precisely that.<sup>474</sup>

*Rev. 8:4-5a* <sup>4</sup>And the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel before God. <sup>5a</sup>And the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it upon the earth;

The prayers of the saints served and brought forth through the angel, caused the censer to be filled with the punishing fire and to be poured upon on the earth, as it was shown long ago to Ezekiel,<sup>475</sup> from one of the cherubim who took such fire and gave it to the angels sent to cut off the most impious inhabitants of Jerusalem. The angel is representative<sup>476</sup> of each hierarch,<sup>477</sup> as *a mediator between God and men*,<sup>478</sup> both raising up their entreaties and bringing down his propitiation, converting the sinners either by spoken word or strict discipline.

<sup>471</sup> Because prayers are offered to Christ, Christ is metaphorically the altar which receives them. Perhaps Andrew is correcting Oikoumenios who conflates the altar and the censer. "He calls the altar a censer as being receptive of incense." (5.7.1, Suggit 83)

<sup>472</sup> τύπος.

<sup>473</sup> Exod. 25:8-22. The description of the ark of the covenant and worship in the Jewish tabernacle and temple were seen by the Fathers as a foreshadowing of Christian worship. This belief was also inspired by Hebrews 9 and 10. (See also *Comm.* 20, fn 82.)

<sup>474</sup> Andrew may be thinking here of Pseudo-Dionysios, who writes that the word "seraphim" means "fire-makers," and "cherubim" means "fullness of knowledge" or "outpouring of wisdom." (*Celestial Hierarchy*. 7.1.4. *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid, Classics of Western Spirituality series (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 161.

<sup>475</sup> Ezek. 10:6.

<sup>476</sup> τύπος.

<sup>477</sup> See *Chp.* 3, *Text* 24, *Comm.* 29, fn 121 on Rev. 2:1, for the interpretation of "angel of the church" as the bishop or leader of the congregation.

<sup>478</sup> 1 Tim. 2:5.

*Rev. 8:5b-6* <sup>5b</sup> *And there were sounds, and thunders and lightning, and an earthquake.* <sup>6</sup>*And the seven angels holding the seven trumpets made themselves ready to blow.*

All of these things are describing the horrors of the end of the world, just as on Mount Sinai they were symbols which made known the Divine Presence,<sup>479</sup> [89] amazing all and leading the most prudent toward conversion. The angels serve these (people) as sympathetic doctors imitating Christ, healing those weak from the sickness of sin severely by cauterization and surgery or more moderately for the lazy, lightening the future punishments in whatever manner they thankfully receive it. We, who are sealed with the honorable name of Christ and desire the glory of the saints, pray that we escape the grievous future pains of chastisement here. May the Lord, who loves mankind, who educates us, not surrender us to the death of sin, as it was written, but *soothe for us those evil days* of eternal punishments when *the pit is dug*<sup>480</sup> for the inventor of sin, the dark and deepest place of Gehenna; so that in this place, *the dwelling place of all gladness*,<sup>481</sup> we will dwell together with the saints with him, the Savior Christ our God, to whom belongs every glorification, honor and worship together with the Father and the All-Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

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#### SECTION 8, CHAPTER 22

##### About the Seven Angels Whose First Blow of the Trumpet Brings Hail, Fire and Blood on the Earth

*Rev. 8:7* *The first angel blew his trumpet, and there was hail and fire mixed with blood. And it was thrown on the earth; and a third of the earth was burnt, and a third of the trees was burnt, and all of the green grass was burnt.*

Some (commentators) think these things imply in an obscure way the variety of punishment of sinners in Gehenna, figuratively described through physical pains.<sup>482</sup> We

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<sup>479</sup> Exod. 19:16-19.

<sup>480</sup> Ps. 94(93):13.

<sup>481</sup> Ps 87(86):7.

<sup>482</sup> This is a comment about Oikoumenios who interpreted the angels blowing the seven trumpets in 8:6 to refer to the second coming of Christ, based on Paul's description of the Parousia in 1 Thess. 4:16-17 in which Christ will return with the blast of a trumpet. Since the faithful will "meet the Lord in the air" (v. 17), Oikoumenios

however think it does not mean that, especially because not one-third are to be punished in the future out of all the people, but the majority — *for the road is wide and easy that leads to destruction*<sup>483</sup> — that these things mean rather the plagues prior to the final consummation of the world, and hail from heaven means those afflictions that will come according to the just judgment of God, the fire mingled with blood (indicating) the destruction by fire and the daily murders taking place at the hands of barbarians.<sup>484</sup> From these, as we see, not less than one third of all the creatures living on earth will be killed in a perceptible manner,<sup>485</sup> destroying by wars not only people, but also [91] all the things that the earth brings forth. And the blessed Joel strengthens our own opinion regarding the thing set forth, saying that *blood and fire and vapor of smoke* are to come *before the great day*.<sup>486</sup>

## CHAPTER 23

### Concerning the Second Angel and the Destruction of Living Things in the Sea

*Rev. 8:8-9* <sup>8</sup>*The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire was thrown into the sea; <sup>9</sup>And a third of the sea became blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships was destroyed.*

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concludes that the events described in Rev. 8:7ff, after the trumpet blasts, must describe what will happen to the sinners (5.9.1-2, Suggit 84.). While both Andrew and Oikoumenios believe this part of Revelation illustrates events yet to take place, Andrew sees them as a prophetic description of real events to be understood at least somewhat literally while Oikoumenios allegorizes them entirely. For example, to Oikoumenios the fire in v. 7 represents “the distress and deep pain of the sinners when they see the saints ‘caught up in the air to meet the Lord.’ ” (5.9.3) and the burning of grass and trees represents the burning of sinners (5.9.4). Andrew, on the other hand, anticipates actual and significant destruction of all manner of creation before the Parousia, as well as the death of many people, not only sinners. Furthermore, Oikoumenios’ understanding of the Second Coming seems to be that the righteous will be lifted up into the clouds to be with the Lord, but instead of a final judgment following that scenario, the sinners will remain on earth to experience much suffering (5.9.3).

<sup>483</sup> Matt. 7:13.

<sup>484</sup> This is the first specific reference to widespread destruction by fire and murder at the hands of barbarians “as we have seen” is yet another clue to the fact that Andrew composed his commentary when such catastrophes had recently been experienced throughout the Empire. Other references to destruction by “barbarians” are found elsewhere. See *Text*, 103, *Comm.* 113; *Text* 169, *Comm.* 165.

<sup>485</sup> αἰσθητὸν, that is, physically, not figuratively.

<sup>486</sup> Joel 2:30. Andrew not only notices similarities between Joel and Revelation, but he supports his case against the interpretation of Oikoumenios by citing Joel because Joel’s prophecy concerns the end times, or the “day of the Lord.”

According to the opinion of some,<sup>487</sup> we should think that through these things is meant the burning of *the sea* together with all the things in it through the cleansing fire burning after the resurrection,<sup>488</sup> if it was not that the mention of a third is shown to us to be incongruous to that. For those being punished are more than the saved, as was said.<sup>489</sup> Nevertheless, according to the anagogical sense<sup>490</sup> it is not unlikely that the present life, figuratively called “sea,”<sup>491</sup> supports these things and that the third of those in it were consumed by the plagues through the abyss of the divine judgments, which [92] on the one hand punishes quickly, but on the other hand is greatly patient for their return and repentance.<sup>492</sup> We believe that the great *mountain* means the devil, as some of the teachers

<sup>487</sup> Another reference to Oikoumenios. See 5.11.2, Suggit 85.

<sup>488</sup> The physical earth, including the sea, would have to be cleansed by fire, according to Oikoumenios before there could be a new heaven and new earth. *Ibid.*

<sup>489</sup> Andrew’s point is that these events cannot be allegorical descriptions of the suffering of the damned partly because of the detail of “one third.” Andrew believes that one-third of the sea, ships and sea creatures will actually be destroyed. The one-third cannot represent the damned, as Oikoumenios maintains, because such an interpretation would mean that two-thirds of humanity were saved and only one-third would be damned. This is contrary to many statements made by Christ indicating that more people would be lost than saved. For example, “Many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matt. 20:16, 22:14) “For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.” (Matt. 7:14) In the parable of the sower, the majority of seeds do not bear fruit. (Matt. 13:18-23, Mark 4:14-20, Luke. 8:5-15)

<sup>490</sup> ἀναγωγή. Andrew uses the term in a general sense to indicate a preference for a spiritual rather than literal interpretation of the image. (See *Comm.* 8, fn 16.)

<sup>491</sup> Oikoumenios suggests this life as another interpretation for “sea” (5.11.3), which Andrew accepts, since he recognizes that scripture has more than one level of meaning. The turbulence of life on this earth was often compared to a troublesome sea in patristic writings. But Andrew does not accept Oikoumenios’ allegorical elaboration on the sea, for example that the one third of the ships destroyed represents “human beings wriggling in their salty and bitter sins.”(5.11.3, Suggit 85)

<sup>492</sup> Andrew makes numerous references to his belief, which is also the perspective expressed in Revelation, that the plagues and other sufferings are intended to motivate repentance in people to lead them to salvation. This is a very common patristic view of suffering. Both the suffering of the righteous and of sinners is intended for the good of the individual. Gregory the Great effectively expresses the concept: “Therefore all smiting from God is either a purifying of the present life in us, or a commencement of the punishment that follows....For in that case when the wicked man is scourged and amended, to the commandment he would not give ear; to the pain he does.” *Morals* 17.22(35), LF 21:341. “For God in truth bears a long while with him, whom He condemns for ever; and forbears now to bring on His wrath, because He reserves it to be poured forth, hereafter, without end. For suffering is here the portion of the elect, in order to their being trained for the rewards of their heavenly inheritance. It is our portion to receive stripes here, for whom an eternity of joy is reserved.... [A]lthough He patiently endures some wickedness, yet some He punishes even in this life; and He sometimes begins to smite even here, what He intends to destroy with eternal damnation. Therefore He smites some sins, and leaves some unpunished; for if He were to be severe with none, who would believe that God regarded the doings of men? And again, if He were to smite all of them here, for what reason would the last judgment still remain? Some are, therefore, smitten, in order that we may tremble at the attentive care of our Ruler over us. But some are still left unpunished, in order that we may feel that judgment still remains.” *Morals* 26.21(37-38), LF 23:161-162.

thought,<sup>493</sup> by fire his anger burning against us, to be kept for the Gehenna, and in the time of his allowance with his cooperation one-third of the islands in the sea, and the ships and the things that swim in the sea are destroyed, just as he had done during the former time of Job.<sup>494</sup> For he is the enemy and the avenger against the divine righteous sentence. For *whoever is defeated by him becomes his slave.*<sup>495</sup> And if those in the sea of life through words or deeds blaspheme the Trinity, spiritual death is brought upon them, neither a strange nor an unsuitable end.

## CHAPTER 24

### About the Third Angel and the River Water Being Made Bitter.

*Rev. 8:10-11* <sup>10</sup> *The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water.* <sup>11</sup> *The name of the star is Wormwood. And a third of the water became wormwood, and many people died from the waters, because they were made bitter.*

[93] Some say that by wormwood the bitter grief shown happening to the sinners being punished in Gehenna is implied, those who because of their great number naturally are called *the waters*.<sup>496</sup> We think that through these things, the grievous pains are what are signified, according to the time being described.<sup>497</sup> The *star* means either these things which

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<sup>493</sup> No known Greek author provides this interpretation of the mountains prior to this reference in Andrew's commentary. It may be that Andrew is referring to oral teaching which he received. Rather than relying on textbooks, students in antiquity sat around the teacher and listened to their lesson. Since Andrew uses the word "teachers," rather than "Fathers," this more likely indicates an oral tradition rather than a written authoritative source. If it was a written source, it has since been lost.

<sup>494</sup> Andrew is not suggesting that this type of wide-spread destruction occurs in the book of Job, only that Job 1-2 shows that God *permitted* Satan to test Job by inflicting tremendous personal destruction. One concept seen consistently throughout Revelation, which Andrew anticipates here, is that the destruction and the deceit committed by the dragon, false prophet, and the beast, are only possible because they are *allowed* to act by God. The evil entities do not have the authority in themselves to commit such deeds. See Rev. 6:8, 9:3, 5 which clearly indicate that these destructive agents were given permission by God to act.

<sup>495</sup> 2 Pet. 2:19.

<sup>496</sup> Oik. 5.13.1-2.

<sup>497</sup> Andrew is differentiating his interpretation from that of Oikoumenios not only in his insistence that the events are actual and not figurative descriptions, but in the timing of this suffering, which Andrew believes will happen at the end times on this earth, not *after* the end in hell.

come upon men from the heavens, or the devil is signified by this, concerning whom Isaiah says: *How did he fall from heaven, the morning star rising at dawn?*<sup>498</sup> For he, upset, agitated and bitter, makes people drunk through pleasure and conniving to bring chastising punishment on them here, not to everyone, but only the one third, on account of the long suffering of God and causing (people) to not believe in the future reward, bringing spiritual death down upon those who do not endure. For bitter things will happen to those who find themselves (living) before the end, which were seen previously, rather the Lord knew well, anticipating (them from) the beginning.<sup>499</sup> Therefore, if we do not wish to be judged we must examine ourselves, according to the divine Apostle — *for if we judge ourselves, we will not be judged*<sup>500</sup> — judging ourselves, corrected by the Lord, thankfully receiving the pains which are brought (upon us), just as we see the grateful ones among the sick in body bearing with patience the surgery and cauterization by the doctors<sup>501</sup> [94] because of their willingness to be healed; So that we, too, being spiritually healthy and not offering ourselves as wooden food for the Gehenna of fire, might not be condemned together with the world, but rather so that we will *co-reign* eternally *with Christ*,<sup>502</sup> to whom is due glory, honor and worship together with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto the ages. Amen.

## SECTION 9, CHAPTER 25

### About the Fourth Angel and the Darkening of the Luminaries

*Rev. 8:12 And the fourth angel blew his trumpet. And a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them was darkened and a third of the day did not shine, and the night likewise.*

<sup>498</sup> Isa. 14:12. See the discussion of this verse in *Comm.* 42, fn 175.

<sup>499</sup> He is referring here to the predictions made by Christ about the sufferings which people would face in the end times. See Matt. 24:16-22, Mark 13:14-20, Luke 21:20-24. This comment is another clear indication that Andrew does not believe that he is living in the end times.

<sup>500</sup> 1 Cor. 11:31.

<sup>501</sup> Such use of medical metaphors such as surgery and cauterization for beneficial and necessary sufferings which God allows for spiritual healing are very common in the patristic tradition. See, for example, John Cassian, *Conferences* 6.6, Tertullian *Marc.* 2.16. Augustine, *Serm.* 27.3 (On Matt. 15:21) and Chrysostom, *Hom. on Romans* 9 (commenting on Rom. 5:11).

<sup>502</sup> 2 Tim. 2:12.



We think that these things also fit the sayings by Joel about the sun and the moon, which things were already drawn out according to the decision of the Master concerning the end.<sup>503</sup> We say that by the *one-third of the luminaries and stars* and the *one third of the day and night* is shown an interval (of time), so that we might know that, even then, God does not bring unmitigated suffering,<sup>504</sup> but allowing those who have been wounded to suffer the one-third interval of time, [95] (he) imperceptibly encourages the greater portion which remains (to repentance). For who will be able to bear the cup of the divine wrath unmixed?<sup>505</sup>

*Rev. 8:13 And I saw, and I heard one angel flying in mid-heaven saying with a great voice, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, and from the rest of the sounds of the trumpet which the three angels are about to blow!"*

Through these is also shown the sympathy and philanthropy of the divine angels<sup>506</sup> imitating God, pitying those sinners being punished, even much more those who do not see the afflictions for the purpose of returning (back to God), those for whom the "woe" is especially appropriate, dwelling on the earth and thinking in an earthly manner, breathing dirt instead of the Myrrh which was emptied out<sup>507</sup> for us (Christ). For those *who have citizenship in heaven*<sup>508</sup> difficulties become the starting point of unfading crowns and trophies.<sup>509</sup>

<sup>503</sup> Joel 2:10, 31.

<sup>504</sup> He is basing this interpretation on Christ's comment in the gospels that the days of tribulation will be shortened for the sake of the people of God. Andrew already noted above that Christ predicted all these sufferings. (*Chp. 24, Text 93, Comm. 105, fn 499.*) Now he alludes to the Christ's statements that the duration would be limited. "For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days. Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, He is there!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand." Matt. 24:19-23, Mark 13: 20 (NKJV)

<sup>505</sup> That is, undiluted. The usual practice at the time was to add water to wine (οἶνος) since wine was much stronger than wine of today. Wine with water already added to it was known as κρᾶσις, "mixture" or "blend."

<sup>506</sup> Rev. 8:13 contains one of the most common manuscript variations in Revelation. This textual variation, "angel" is found in the Majority Andreas manuscripts. Many manuscripts read *I heard an eagle flying in mid-heaven*, as does Oikoumenios' manuscript, and he interprets "eagle" to allegorically mean an angel. (Oik. 5.15.4) Metzger concludes that the variation was an intentional change made by a scribe "since the function ascribed to the eagle seems more appropriate to an angel." Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 741.

<sup>507</sup> An allusion to Phil. 2:7 and the condescension of Christ who "although he was in the form of God emptied himself and took the form of a servant."

<sup>508</sup> Phil. 3:20.



## CHAPTER 26

Concerning the Fifth Angel and the Mental Locusts and the Variety of their Form

*Rev. 9:1-5 And the fifth angel blew his trumpet; and I saw a star that had fallen from heaven to earth, and the key of the pit of the abyss was given to him. <sup>2</sup>And he opened the pit of the abyss, and smoke rose from the pit like the smoke [96] of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened from the smoke of the pit. <sup>3</sup>And from out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth, and they were given power, like scorpions having authority on the earth. <sup>4</sup>They were told not to harm the grass of the earth nor any greenery nor any tree, but only those people if they do not have the seal upon their foreheads. <sup>5</sup>They were allowed not to kill them but to torture them for five months, and their torture was like the torture of a scorpion, when it stings a man.*

Some said that the star descending upon the earth, that is during the judgment that will be taken place in the valley of Jehosephat, is the divine angel in charge of the punishments.<sup>510</sup> The *pit of the abyss* is the Gehenna and the *smoke* that comes from it causes the sun and the air to be invisible to the suffering ones.<sup>511</sup> The *locusts* (represent) the worms of which the prophet says, *their worm will never die*.<sup>512</sup> They will torment neither the earth nor the grass, but human beings because these (other created) things will escape corruption, which today is in bondage because of us.<sup>513</sup> The *five months of torment* (indicates) some delineated period of time for those being punished intensely, after which [97] (they will

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<sup>509</sup> Notice the athletic metaphor again. See *Comm.* 93, fn 444.

<sup>510</sup> Oikoumenios 5.17.2, basing his opinion on Joel 3:12 and 14. At this point, Oikoumenios has concluded that appearance of this angel signifies the beginning of the torments to take place after the consummation of the world. He explains that the prior torments described were sufferings on this present earth, before the appearance of the new earth and now the trumpet sounding by the fifth angel describes the torments of sinners in Gehenna.

<sup>511</sup> Oik. 5.17.4.

<sup>512</sup> The opinion is that of Oikoumenios (5.17.5). The quote is from Isa. 66:24.

<sup>513</sup> Oik. 5.17.6, recalling Rom. 8:21, "Creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption." Oikoumenios arrives at this inference because of his foregoing conclusion the world has already been renewed. Therefore, the suffering described here must refer to the suffering in hell.

suffer) less violently, but eternally.<sup>514</sup> I agree that *the star* is the divine angel.<sup>515</sup> By divine allowance he (the angel) leads up the evil demons who had been condemned in the abyss, those whom Christ bound when He became man, so that they might do their uncompleted tormenting work before the end. The *smoke* is the gloom which precedes the evil deeds out of their encounters; those will receive authority given to them to torment people. The *darkness* of the sun and air means the spiritual blindness of the people who cut off their light, or the ill-tempered attitude (shown) by them because darkness is considered light to those in pain. And the mental *locusts*, who sting people like scorpions, show the death which is the harm of the soul hiding at the end of evil deeds,<sup>516</sup> to which (death) those are subjected who had not been sealed with the divine seal on their foreheads<sup>517</sup> and (who do not) shine round

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<sup>514</sup> This is a reference to Oikoumenios' interpretation of the five month period (Oik. 5.19.3), which had become a problem for Oikoumenios. The progression of Oikoumenios' interpretation has now put him in a difficult position. Rather than re-thinking his earlier conclusions, he continues to develop the sequence and arrives at most unusual conclusions, as will be seen here and below in fn 517. He had previously interpreted the activities inaugurated by the fourth trumpet as describing the sufferings of sinners on the earth, before the final consummation. So the fifth trumpet must describe what happens *after* the final consummation, presumably the sufferings of sinners in Gehenna especially because of the references to the abyss, smoke and sulfur. With the reference to suffering for "five months," a new problem thus emerges for Oikoumenios: how can their sufferings be only for five months, clearly intended to mean a limited period of time? Oikoumenios affirms proudly that he follows the teachings of the Church, that according to other Scripture passages, the suffering of Gehenna will be eternal. Therefore, he arrives at a novel solution: somehow the sinners will experience very intense suffering for five months, after which they will be punished "more gently." (5.19.3, Suggit 89)

<sup>515</sup> This is the only detail of Oikoumenios' interpretation of this passage with which Andrew agrees.

<sup>516</sup> Spiritual death is the consequence of being "unsealed", i.e., unbaptized. Death is located at the tip of the scorpion's tail, the final result at the end of evil deeds. It comes to those who are not sealed because of their deeds and because they have not been "enlightened" by the cross on their foreheads, which signifies the reception of the Holy Spirit. See *Comm.* 86, fn 378.

<sup>517</sup> Oikoumenios has a very peculiar interpretation here of those who have been sealed. He earlier stated that these events relate to the sufferings in Gehenna and to the time after which the earth has been renewed. But the command to harm only those who do not have the seal on their foreheads creates another perplexity for Oikoumenios: who and where are those who have the seal who are not to be harmed? His interpretation, though not discussed by Andrew, is very peculiar, and possibly even heretical. His solution is that there are three types of people. The first group would be those who are "completely holy and pure" who are "constantly with Christ in sight of the divine throne" (5.17.5, Suggit 88), that is, in heaven. Oikoumenios already concluded that these were already "taken up" at the time of the first trumpet (Rev. 7:9), so by his logic they cannot be included among those not being punished here. Therefore, the two groups remaining are the sinners, who *will* be harmed by the locusts, and those who are sealed on their foreheads, who are *not* to be harmed by the locusts. Oikoumenios concludes that since the first group is those who belong to Christ and are with him by the throne, then the last group, those who are sealed but are to remain unharmed by the locusts, must be those who were baptized but are not holy. These must be Christians who have not "gravely defiled themselves and their baptism," so they are "midway between good and evil." These will not be punished by the locusts but they also are not with Christ either. They "will remain upon the earth but escape punishment" (5.17.5, Suggit 88). What Oikoumenios has created by this scenario is a unique tripartite schema of the afterlife: (1) those who are in the presence of God in paradise, (2) those who are suffering in Gehenna as unrepentant sinners, and (3) those who

about with the enlightenment of the life-giving cross through the Holy Spirit, so that according to the saying of the Master, they *shine their light before men for the glory of the divine name*.<sup>518</sup> The *five months* of their torture, we believe to mean either the shortness of time — *if those days were not shortened, no flesh would have been saved*, according to the statement of the Lord<sup>519</sup> — or (it means) some five-fold (period of) time on account of the five senses,<sup>520</sup> through which sin goes into people, or it means a defined (period of) time known only to God.

[98] *Rev. 9:6 And in those days people will seek death and will not find it; and they will wish to die, and death will flee from them.*

By these is signified the extreme extent of the sufferings. For it is customary to ask for death when in pain. That this (death) without pain does not come to those who ask is due to the divine judgments; it is judged advantageous to them,<sup>521</sup> by the bitterness of pains being brought upon them to make sin hateful to the people, since sin is the mother and cause of these (pains).<sup>522</sup>

*Rev. 9:7-9a* <sup>7</sup>*And the likeness of the locusts was like horses prepared for war, and on their heads were crowns like gold, and their faces like human faces;* <sup>8</sup>*and they had hair*

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are not holy enough to be with God but are also not sinful enough to be condemned to eternal punishment. They occupy the new earth devoid of suffering, in a type of eternal “limbo” situation in which they are neither saved nor damned.

<sup>518</sup> Matt. 5:16.

<sup>519</sup> Matt. 24:22, Mark 13:20.

<sup>520</sup> It was not uncommon for patristic writers to interpret anything with the number five as an allegory of the five senses. Andrew provides three alternative explanations for the five months, but Oikoumenios’ interpretation is not one of them.

<sup>521</sup> Besides the complete novelty of Oikoumenios’ afterlife scenario, this is another reason why Andrew cannot accept Oikoumenios’ interpretation. The purpose of the sufferings, frequently and explicitly stated in Revelation itself, is to encourage repentance and the reform of the sinner. That is why the punishment is limited.

<sup>522</sup> Origen used this verse to defend one concept of the immortality of the soul. “All of us human beings die the ordinary death which we think of as a dissolution. No human soul ever dies this death; for if it did die, it would not be punished after death. *Men will seek death*, it is written, *and will not find it* (Rev. 9:6). For the souls being punished will seek death. They will desire not to exist rather than exist to be punished. This is why *men will seek death and will not find it*. Taken in this sense, every human soul is immortal.” Origen, *Dialogue with Heraclides* 25.31-26.10. Origen: *Treatise on the Passover* and *Dialogue with Heraclides*, trans. Robert Daly, Ancient Christian Writers series, vol. 54 (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 77.

*like hair of women, and their teeth were like lions' teeth,<sup>9a</sup> and they had thoraxes like iron breastplates.*

Through all these and the things which will be said immediately afterwards, some parabolically understood the locusts mentioned to be the punishing divine angels, figuratively interpreting each of the things said,<sup>523</sup> either because of the fearful and astonishing (quality), or because of their speed, or because of the chastisement upon those deserving to be led to the punishment in Gehenna. I think that by these locusts are to be understood, rather, the evil demons who have been prepared for the war against us.<sup>524</sup> [99] *And the crowns upon their heads* like gold bearing their victory over us, by which to us, we think they are to be crowned as conquerors in evil victory when we are defeated by pleasure. The *hair of women* is to imply the love of pleasure and the arousal to fornication. The *teeth of lions* (indicate their) murderous and poisonous (quality), and the *thoraxes* hardheartedness.

*Rev. 9:9b-12<sup>9b</sup> And the sound of their wings was like the sound of many chariots with horses rushing into war,<sup>10</sup> having tails like scorpions, and stingers in their tails, and their authority to harm people for five months;<sup>11</sup> They have over them as a king, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he has the name Apollyon. The one woe has passed; behold, two woes come after these.*

The *sound of the wings* of the mental locusts we believe is compared to the sound of military chariots because of their exalted appearance and swiftness. For [100] *they fight us from above,*<sup>525</sup> as the blessed David says. Their *tails, which are similar to scorpions,* imply the outcome of sins giving birth to spiritual death.<sup>526</sup> For *sin, having been accomplished produces death.*<sup>527</sup> The *five month* torture coming upon people, for us this is taken as both

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<sup>523</sup> Oik. 5.21.1-2.

<sup>524</sup> Oikoumenios said that perhaps there are not only angels who minister to people, but also angels who punish people in the afterlife (5.21.3). Andrew cannot accept this. Torment of human beings comes from the demons, never from angels, who in Andrew's understanding are always loving and helpful, at times describing them as "philanthropic," literally "loving humankind." Even if they carry out the punishments ordered by God, they do so for the repentance and return of sinners, not for their torment. (See *Chp. 25, Text 95, Comm. 106.*)

<sup>525</sup> Ps. 56(55):2.

<sup>526</sup> James 1:15.

<sup>527</sup> James 1:15.

the five senses and the shortness of time compared to the future age, as it is written. It follows that their king is understood (to be) the devil,<sup>528</sup> the one destroying those who are truly persuaded by him. Thus, assuring us that two more woes will come after these, we take up the battle against (the devil) without a truce.

## CHAPTER 27

### Concerning the Sixth Angel and the Loosening of the Angels on the Euphrates

*Rev. 9:13-16* <sup>13</sup>And the sixth angel blew the trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God,<sup>14</sup> saying to the sixth angel who has the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound up at the great river Euphrates." <sup>15</sup>And the four angels were released, who had been held ready for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, in order to kill [101] a third of humankind. <sup>16</sup>The number of the troops of cavalry was twice ten thousand times ten thousand. I heard their number.

Some say that the four angels are Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael who had been bound by the gladness of the divine vision, to be untied on the day of judgment with innumerable angels for the condemnation of the impious, of whom one third are to be destroyed.<sup>529</sup> I myself think that these four angels are the most cunning demons who were bound upon the coming of Christ<sup>530</sup> who, by the divine command coming out of the heavenly altar, which was an image of the ancient tabernacle, were loosened by the divine angel so as to rouse the nations, not only against Christians, but also against one another, so that those tested might become manifest and faithful and shown to be worthy of greater rewards and of the heavenly mansions,<sup>531</sup> or rather (worthy of) barns, like ripe wheat.<sup>532</sup> But those who are like chaff, the impious and the exceedingly [102] great sinners and the

<sup>528</sup> Described in verse 11 as the "angel of the abyss," and Ἀπολλύων, which means Destroyer.

<sup>529</sup> Oik. 5.23.9. Again, Andrew will reject this interpretation. He cannot accept that angels will be responsible for eternal punishment.

<sup>530</sup> The first coming, the Incarnation of the Logos.

<sup>531</sup> John 14:2.

<sup>532</sup> Matt. 13:30.

unrepentant are justly punished here, by these (punishments here) receiving a milder sentence at the judgment. And if they are *bound at the Euphrates*, it is nothing strange.<sup>533</sup> For they have been sentenced by God until the time, some (of them) in the abyss,<sup>534</sup> some among the swine then,<sup>535</sup> some in other places according to the position, bound to be eternally tormented after the completion of their war against human beings. And perhaps by the mention of the *Euphrates* it is shown that Antichrist will come from out of those parts. And it is not necessary to doubt the great number of demons, for the saints are always saying that they fill the air.<sup>536</sup> And what is meant by the one-third of those killed, has already been said.<sup>537</sup>

*Rev. 9:17-19* <sup>17</sup>And this was how I saw the horses in the vision and those sitting upon them having breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of sulfur, and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions, and fire and smoke and sulfur came from their mouths. <sup>18</sup>By these three (plagues) one third of humankind was killed by the fire and the smoke and the sulfur proceeding out of their mouths. <sup>19</sup>For the authority of the horses [103] is in their mouths; For their tails are like serpents having heads, and by them they injure.

I think *the horses*, it is said, are either men who lust after women and behave like beasts, or those who had been subject to and ruled by the demons, and those that are mounted on them are their leaders.<sup>538</sup> For it is customary with them, not only to help one another but also to attack by means of evil people (as) instruments for the harm of the same kind of people. The *breastplates of fire and hyacinth and sulfur* we think are indicative of the aerial nature and burning activity of evil spirits. The *heads of lions* imply their murderousness and

<sup>533</sup> Victorinus believes the four angels signify the four corners of the earth which hold the four winds. (Vic. 9.3)

<sup>534</sup> Luke 8:31.

<sup>535</sup> Matt. 8:31, Mark 5:13, Luke 8:32-3.

<sup>536</sup> Eph. 2:2.

<sup>537</sup> *Chp. 22, Text 90, Comm. 102; Chp. 24 Text 93, Comm. 104.*

<sup>538</sup> Gregory the Great also sees evil men in the imagery here: "For by the 'mouth' is typified the knowledge of the learned, but by the 'tail' the power of men of the world. For by the 'tail' which is behind is designated the temporal condition of this world which must be put behind us... For everything which passes by is behind, but everything which in coming abides, is before. The power therefore of these horses, that is, of most evil preachers, who are hurrying on everywhere by carnal impulse, is in their mouth and their tail. Because they themselves indeed preach perverse things in their persuasion, but, by relying on temporal powers, exalt themselves by means of those things which are behind." *Morals* 33.27(48), LF 31:601.

animalism, and the *fire, smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths* by which a third threaten to be killed, either implies sins inflaming the fruit of the heart by poisonous strikes and instigations,<sup>539</sup> or (it implies) the setting fire to cities led by barbarian hands and the shedding of blood by divine permission, through which, as we see, not less than one-third of people have been destroyed.<sup>540</sup> He says correctly that their *tails* are like snakes, for poisonous sin and spiritual death are at the end of the evil suggestions of the demons.

**[104]** *Rev. 9:20-21* <sup>20</sup>*The rest of the people, those who were not killed in those plagues, neither repented of the works of their hands so as to not worship demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which are neither able to see nor to hear nor to walk;* <sup>21</sup>*and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their fornication nor of their thefts.*

And this has been discussed among the previous (passages). For he said above that by these three plagues *one third of the people are to be destroyed*, and then after this time passed some people continued (to sin). And the rest of the people, who were deemed worthy to be spared, and who, not having been convinced by these things, have remained unrepentant, will submit to them, having renounced neither idolatries nor murders nor fornications nor their thefts, nor the sorceries. It shows that because of these (iniquities), the wrath will be brought down<sup>541</sup> on a global scale. For the varied deceptions inspire frenzy in nations which do not *know the truth*,<sup>542</sup> on the one hand those who worship idols and on the other hand those who (worship) *the creation instead of the Creator*,<sup>543</sup> and even above all,

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<sup>539</sup> For Andrew, the terrifying sights and smells can only be descriptions of evil and the destructive powers of fallen angels. The interpretation of Oikoumenios, however, is strikingly different. Since he interprets the four angels who were released (v. 15) as heavenly angels, the fearful descriptions – sulfur, smoke, heads of lions, etc. – can only be interpreted as an impressive display of power and of colors which are pleasing to God. (Oik. 5.23.10)

<sup>540</sup> Another reference to the Persian invasions which Andrew and everyone in the Eastern areas of the Empire had recently experienced. Previously also mentioned in *Chp.22, Text 90, Comm. 103*.

<sup>541</sup> Rom. 1:18.

<sup>542</sup> 1 Tim. 4:3.

<sup>543</sup> Rom. 1:25.

*those who profess to know God, but deny him, first through deeds<sup>544</sup> and [105] then by wearing the appearance of piety but denying its power,<sup>545</sup> and those who are enslaved by mammon,<sup>546</sup> which the Apostle calls idolatry, saying, and the love of money which is idolatry.<sup>547</sup> May we show the sincerity and genuineness of the faith in Christ in deeds, so that we may not hear that fearful voice, the *Amen, amen, I tell you that I do not know you. Go away from me, you workers of iniquity,*<sup>548</sup> but may we hear the blessed and desirable voice, *Come, all you blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom which has been prepared for you before the beginning of the world,*<sup>549</sup> by the grace and mercies through Christ our God, who voluntarily endured the cross, who with the Father is (worthy of) glory, together with the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.*

#### SECTION 10, CHAPTER 28

##### Concerning the Angel Wrapped in a Cloud and a Rainbow Who is Foretelling the End of the World

*Rev. 10:1 And I saw another mighty angel coming down from [106] heaven, wrapped in a cloud, and a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire.*

The *cloud* and the *rainbow* and the *sun-like* light are seemingly to be understood as (referring to) this holy angel. For through these are shown the heavenly (quality) and variety of virtues and the brightness of the angelic substance and intelligence.<sup>550</sup> The *pillars of fire* mean the fear and punishments against the wicked who have been robbers on the earth and

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<sup>544</sup> 1 Titus 1:16.

<sup>545</sup> 2 Tim. 3:5.

<sup>546</sup> Matt. 6:24, Luke 16:13.

<sup>547</sup> Col. 3:5.

<sup>548</sup> Matt. 7:23.

<sup>549</sup> Matt. 25:34.

<sup>550</sup> This is taken from Oikoumenios (6.3.3-4). Victorinus arrived at an entirely different interpretation. He believed that the mighty angel is the Lord, his face shining like the sun, as in the description of Christ in Rev. 1:16. His feet are the apostles and standing on both the sea and the land signifies that he has placed all things under his feet (Vic. 10.1, 2).



pirates on the sea. For this reason, he placed *the right* (foot on the sea) and *the left* foot (on the land) in order to imply the judgment of each of the two (types of) criminals.<sup>551</sup>

*Rev. 10:2-3* <sup>2</sup>And he had a tiny scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, <sup>3</sup>and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roars; And when he called out, the seven thunders sounded with their own voices.

The *tiny scroll*,<sup>552</sup> it seems to me, even though small and called diminutive, contains the names and deeds of the very worst evil people,<sup>553</sup> those who are thieves on earth, or otherwise wicked people, and those who are pirates on the sea, about whom the angel hints of the punishment by [107] stretching out the legs of fire upon both *the land and the sea*. And the voice of the angel being compared to a devouring *lion*, shows the fearful and irresistible (nature) of his threats. And Daniel is a witness, being unable to behold either the gentle or the threatening appearance of the angel without pain.<sup>554</sup> The *seven thunders* we believe that are to be understood as either seven voices coming from the one angel being described, or seven other holy angels addressing the future, since from here is shown those of the previous angel to be secondary and from there receiving the instigation to prophesize, according to the appointed angelic good order (explained) by the blessed Dionysios.<sup>555</sup>

*Rev. 10:4* And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal the things which the seven thunders have said, and after these write." <sup>556</sup>

<sup>551</sup> Also taken from Oikoumenios, 6.3.7.

<sup>552</sup> βιβλιδάριον. Revelation contains three different words for scroll: βιβλος, for an ordinary scroll, βιβλίον, indicating a small scroll, and βιβλιδάριον, an even smaller diminutive of βιβλος, indicating a very small or tiny scroll. Oikoumenios' text and the Andreas Majority Text read βιβλιδάριον, however the preferred reading is another variation, βιβλαρίδιον. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 743-4.

<sup>553</sup> Oik. 6.3.6. The interpretation is based on the size of the scroll. Since it is described as very small and punishments are about to be announced, the presumption by both Oikoumenios and Andrew is that this scroll is tiny because it contains the names of only the most evil people since fewer people have sunk to such a low level of wickedness.

<sup>554</sup> Dan. 10:5-11.

<sup>555</sup> Pseudo-Dionysios, *Cel. Hier.* 6, describing various hierarchies of angels. See also *Cel. Hier.* 15.2,3,8, explaining various details regarding the descriptions of angels.

<sup>556</sup> Andrew's text implies that the seer is to write down that which occurs after the seven thunders have spoken. "Seal up the things... and after these write." This is a manuscript variation found in the Majority Andreas Text tradition. Nestle-Aland's critical text reads, καὶ μὴ αὐτὰ γράψῃς. "Do *not* write them." The command to "seal

And by these (details) it is shown that now are unclear the things which are to be interpreted through the experience itself and the outcome of these matters, of which the Evangelist learned, from the heavenly voice, on the one hand that the voices are to be impressed in the mind, and on the other hand, that the perfect understanding and the clear explanation of these things are to be stored up [108] until the end time. For words such as these are sealed and confined, as Daniel was also taught.<sup>557</sup>

*Rev. 10:5-6* <sup>5</sup>And the angel whom I saw standing on sea and land lifted up his hand to heaven <sup>6</sup>and swore by the One who lives for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things in it, the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, that there will no longer be time.

God, having no one greater than Himself (by which) to swear an oath, swears by Himself.<sup>558</sup> But the angels, as creatures, (swear) by the Creator, guaranteeing the things being said by them on account of our own unbelief. They swear an oath that there would *no longer be time*, (meaning) either in the future when time is not to be measured by the sun but eternal life which is beyond the measurement of time, or (meaning) there will not be a long time after the six voices when the things prophesied by the angel will be fulfilled. Wherefore it leads into:

*Rev. 10:7* But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he is about to sound the trumpet and the mystery of God will be fulfilled, as he announced to his servants the prophets.

[109] From these is signified, I think, that after the passage of the six ages during the days of the seventh age, meaning the time of the seventh trumpet, the things said by the holy prophets to happen before the end of time will receive their end. The good news is the fulfillment of these things by the preparation of the repose of the saints.

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up" and "do not write" is an example of *hysteron-proteron* (last-first), a common phenomenon in Revelation in which the logical order of events is reversed. The Majority Andreas variation probably occurred because it is peculiar to command that something be sealed before anything had yet been written. Therefore, seems more likely that a scribe changed the text to read "seal up, and after these write." Aune, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 52B:562.

<sup>557</sup> Dan. 8:26; 9:24; 12:4, 9.

<sup>558</sup> Heb. 6:13.

## CHAPTER 29

How the Evangelist Took the Tiny Scroll From the Angel

*Rev. 10: 8 And the voice which I had heard from heaven spoke with me again and said, "Go, take the tiny open scroll in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land."*

Here there appears to be some other superior angelic power giving a command to the Evangelist to receive the knowledge of the things which are foretold by the scroll.

*Rev. 10:9 And I departed from the angel, telling him, "Give me the tiny scroll," and he says to me, "Take and devour it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."*

The *sweetness* to you, on the one hand, he says, refers to the knowledge of the future (events), but *will become bitter in your stomach*, clearly (refers to) the heart containing the spiritual foods, [110] in sympathy for those who are receiving the punishments sent by God according to divine judgment. This is also to be understood otherwise; For since the saint, not having tasted the experience of evil deeds, through the swallowing of the scroll containing the deeds of the wicked, he is taught that in the beginning sin is sweet, but after the deed it is bitter, on account of the recompense.<sup>559</sup>

*Rev. 10:10 And I took the tiny scroll from the hand of the angel and devoured it; it was sweet like honey in my mouth, and when I ate it my stomach was made bitter.*

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<sup>559</sup> Oikoumenios' interpretation is very similar (6.7.1-3). But Origen believed that the eating of the scroll by John here and also by Ezekiel (2:8-3:3) means that the contents are not to be divulged to the unworthy (*Against Celsus* 6.6). However, the idea that the contents are to remain a secret contradicts the image of eating the scroll as a commission to prophecy, which is what John is instructed to do in verse 11, and is generally understood to be the symbolism of this act in the Hebrew Bible. Elsewhere Origen states that since the scroll signifies the Scriptures, the result of eating the scroll is what happens when one begins to read the Scriptures. At first, it is sweet, but it becomes a bitter revelation of oneself through one's conscience (*Comm. on John*, 5.4). Andrew's interpretation here, that John experiences the bitterness of sin which initially seems sweet, is consistent with his opinion that the tiny scroll contains the names of those who are the worst sinners and serves as a prelude to their punishment. Victorinus believed that to eat the scroll is to commit its contents to one's memory, and that it is sweet to the hearers but bitter when one suffers in his lifetime because of his obedience to the commandments (Vic.10.10). To Caesarius of Arles, the sweetness of the scroll represents good Christians while the bitterness represents carnal Christians, to whom the message of God seems bitter. (*Hom.* 8)

The *scroll* is sweet in the preliminary stages because of the joyous things but painful towards the end because of the wounds, just as also sin is sweet to the taste, but bitter in the digestion and return, as has been said. The saints, being sympathetic, *rejoice with those who are joyful and weep with those who are weeping.*<sup>560</sup>

*Rev. 10:11 And he says to me, "You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."*

Through these it shows either that (it is) not immediately after the visions of the divine Apocalypse (that) the things that were seen will receive their end, but that the Blessed One through his Gospel and through the present apocalypse is to prophesy the future things to those who read it until the end of the world, or (it shows) that he has not yet tasted death<sup>561</sup> [111] but he will come in the end to hinder the acceptance of the Antichrist's deception.<sup>562</sup>

*Rev. 11:1-2 <sup>1</sup>And a reed, like a staff, was given to me, saying: "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship in it; <sup>2</sup> And the outer courtyard of the temple take out and do not measure it, for it was given to the nations, and they will trample upon the holy city for forty-two months.*

By this *reed* is shown that all things manifested in heaven and the things inanimate to us are spiritual, just as also the altar, the throne and some others.<sup>563</sup> How was the reed which was given to him saying, *Rise and measure the temple of God?*<sup>564</sup> By this it is shown that the temple of God is measured with angelic intelligence. If anyone says that he received the reed

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<sup>560</sup> Rom. 12:15.

<sup>561</sup> John 21:23. John lived to be very old, thus leading to a notion, reflected in the gospel, that he would not die.

<sup>562</sup> Andrew refers to a legend that the apostle John would never die (hinted at in John 21:23) and that he would return at the end times. This legend must have been quite ancient and clearly was known in both the East and the West. It is discussed extensively by Augustine in *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 124.2-3.

<sup>563</sup> Victorinus believes the reed is a symbol of the Apocalypse itself and the instruction to measure is a command to profess the Christian faith (Vic. 11.1).

<sup>564</sup> Since the text does not specify *who* is speaking, it could be that the reed itself is speaking ("a reed...saying, 'Rise and measure...'",), hence Andrew's comment.

from the same angel, and that he heard from him<sup>565</sup> the *rise and measure this temple*, then we say that the reed signifies the measure of the knowledge which is proportionate to the one receiving it, of which those are deemed worthy who known from God and the divine angels through their good deeds. *For the Lord knows His own*,<sup>566</sup> says the divine word. One must know nonetheless some understood *the temple of God* to mean the Old Testament and the *outside yard* to be the New, on account of the innumerable number of those saved in it.<sup>567</sup> [112] The *forty two months* they<sup>568</sup> took to mean the shortness of time during which the sacraments of the New Testament are to prevail until the second coming of Christ arrives. But we think that the *temple of the living God* refers to the Church,<sup>569</sup> in which we offer rational sacrifices<sup>570</sup> to God; the outside court (is) the gathering place of the unbelieving nations and of the Jews since the unworthiness is measured by the angel through the impiety. *For the Lord knows his own*,<sup>571</sup> as it has been said. It is said that He who is All-knowing does not know the unlawful. The *trampling of the holy city* (is) either the new Jerusalem or the universal church<sup>572</sup> and the *forty two months* by the nations I think means that the faithful and the ones being tested will be trampled upon and persecuted in the three and a half year appearance of the Antichrist.

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<sup>565</sup> Andrew recognizes that, as an alternative to the reed itself speaking, it could be the angel previously mentioned in verse 11 who speaks, so Andrew explains the symbolism of the reed.

<sup>566</sup> 2 Tim. 2:19.

<sup>567</sup> Oikoumenios' opinion. 6.9.1-5.

<sup>568</sup> Oik. 6.9.8.

<sup>569</sup> 2 Cor. 6:16. "For we are the temple of the living God."

<sup>570</sup> See fn 82 for a discussion of the meaning of "rational" sacrifice.

<sup>571</sup> 2 Tim. 2:19.

<sup>572</sup> Although he does not state so explicitly, Andrew's interpretation here may be influenced by Hippolytus' work *Chapters Against Gaius*, of *Heads Against Gaius*, since Hippolytus arrives at the same explanation: the "holy city" to be trampled represents the righteous people of God who will be persecuted. Only a few fragments exist from this work, having been preserved in the Syriac commentary on Revelation by Dionysius Bar Salibi, a twelfth century Jacobite. Dionysius Bar Salibi (also known as Dionysius Syrus and Jacob Bar Salibi), *On the Apocalypse*. trans. I Sedlacek, *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, *Scriptores Syri* series, vol. 101, (Rome: de Luigi, 1910.) Also, *Commentary on Revelation (extracts)*. *Hermathena* vol. 6 (1888) 397-418, vol.7 (1890) 137-150; *The Expositor* 7th series, vol. 1 (1906), 481-495.

## CHAPTER 30

Concerning Enoch and Elias

*Rev. 11:3-4* <sup>3</sup>And I will give my two witnesses (power), and they will prophesy for one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. <sup>4</sup>These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands which stand before the God of the earth.

[113] Many of the teachers understood these (to be) Enoch and Elias<sup>573</sup> receiving time given by God to prophecy in the end time for three and a half years, numbered three hundred and sixty days (each), and showing through the clothing in sackcloth that which is appropriate for sadness and mourning, to those who are deceived at that time and leading those who are then found away from the deception of the Antichrist. (These are the two) whom Zacharias hinted at in the form of the two olive trees and lampstands,<sup>574</sup> to bring forth food for the light of knowledge by the olive oil of God-pleasing deeds.

*Rev. 11:5-6* <sup>5</sup>And if anyone would harm them, fire pours out from their mouth and devours their enemies; if anyone would harm them, thus he must be killed. <sup>6</sup>They have power to shut the sky, so that it does not rain in the days of their prophesy, and they have

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<sup>573</sup> This interpretation of the two witnesses goes back at least as far as Irenaeus (*Heres.* 5.5.1) and was followed by other commentators, including Oikoumenios (6.11.1-4) and Hippolytus, (*Chr. and Ant.* 43, *Comm. on Dan.* 4.35 and fragments preserved by Dionysius Bar Salibi). The same tradition existed in the West, as witnessed by Augustine who wrote of "...Enoch and Elias, who did not die, but were removed in their bodies from contact with men. I pass over the general belief that they will meet death later, for several interpreters of John's Apocalypse refer to the two Prophets what he says without mentioning their names, namely that they will then appear in the bodies in which they now live so that they, too, may die, as other martyrs have died, for the truth of Christ." (*Ep.* 193, FC 30, 295-96) Augustine also found it perfectly logical that Enoch and Elijah would have to return to die since they were human and he believed that original sin demands death as a consequence of sin. "Enoch and Elijah, both dead in Adam and bearing in their flesh the seeds of death, will return to this life, as it is believed, to pay this debt, and after so long a delay will die." (*On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* 9.6.11. *Augustine: The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, trans. John Hammond Taylor, Ancient Christian Writers series, vols. 41 and 42 [New York: Newman Press, 1982], 42:77.) Gregory the Great also seems to refer to the same tradition in *Morals* 9.8(9). However, although he refers to Elijah in connection to Rev. 11:4, he does not specifically state that the other prophet is Enoch. The belief that one of the two witnesses would be Elijah arose from the Malachi prophecy (Mal. 4:5) that Elijah would return before the Day of the Lord, which seems to have been universally accepted among both Jews and Christians. Victorinus is in agreement that definitely *one* of the two is Elijah, but he mentions various options proposed by others for the identity of the second prophet, including Moses and Elisha, both of whom Victorinus rejects because both died and there appears to be no reason for them to return. He settles on Jeremiah because Jeremiah was told that he would be a prophet "to the nations" (Jer. 1:5) and since Jeremiah never prophesied to the nations, the second prophet of Rev. 11:3 must be him because the word of God must be truthful (Vic. 11.5).

<sup>574</sup> Zach. 4:3, 11-14.

*authority over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they wish.*

Oh, the great goodness of God! For he brings healing equivalent to the wound.<sup>575</sup> For since the pseudo-Christ will be manifested in the *many signs and false wonders*<sup>576</sup> [114] by all drugs and enchantments because he (the pseudo-Christ) accepts every diabolical operation, so God will equip these saints by the power of true signs and wonders, so that by the placing of truth and light they will refute falsehood and darkness they will convert those who had been deceived will return, both because of fear of the teachings and because of the chastising blows, by drought and fire and the alteration of the elements and the like, making the Deceiver into an example, and allowing no one to be persuaded, neither by him nor by another, until the completion of their own prophecy.

*Rev. 11:7-8* <sup>7</sup> *And when they will finish their testimony, the beast that ascends from the abyss will make war upon them and conquer them.* <sup>8</sup> *And their corpses will lie in the square of the great city which is allegorically called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.*

After their witnessing, he says, of the escape from deception, the beast, that is, the Antichrist, who comes out from the dark and deep parts of the earth to which the devil has been condemned, will destroy them by divine permission, and will abandon their bodies unburied in this Jerusalem, that is the old and trampled upon (Jerusalem),<sup>577</sup> in which the Lord also [115] suffered. In this (city) he (Antichrist) will establish the kingdoms, so he

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<sup>575</sup> The healing is equivalent to the wound because although the false Christ deceives people with his signs and wonders, the two witnesses also perform signs and wonders so that people would have an equal opportunity to believe their preaching and not be deceived.

<sup>576</sup> 2 Thess. 2:9.

<sup>577</sup> Rev. 11:2. Andrew does not address the surprising allegorical description of Jerusalem here in verse 8 as "Sodom and Egypt." Jerome comments on this in a letter to Marcella who had expressed a sentiment, not uncommon at that time, that Jerusalem was cursed because the land had the Lord's blood on it. Jerome replies that, on the contrary, Jerusalem is a holy city. Jerome describes the great devotion that Christians have shown for Jerusalem since the time of the Apostles as the place of the Lord's crucifixion, the numerous saints who have lived there, the monks who continued to go there to live from all over the world, and the large numbers of pilgrims who have traveled there to see the holy places associated with the Lord's life. He then explains Rev. 11:8 for Marcella: "The apocalypse was written by John long after the Lord's passion, yet in it he speaks of Jerusalem as the holy city. But if so, how can he spiritually call it Sodom and Egypt? It is no answer to say that the Jerusalem which is called holy is the heavenly one which is to be, while that which is called Sodom is the earthly one tottering to its downfall. For it is the Jerusalem to come that is referred to in the description of the beast...The great city which Cain first built and called after his son (Gen. 4:17) must be taken to represent this

thinks, according to an imitation of David,<sup>578</sup> whose son (is) Christ, our true God who was born *according to the flesh*,<sup>579</sup> so as to assure by this that he (the Antichrist) is Christ, fulfilling the prophetic word, saying *I shall restore the fallen tabernacle of David and raise up that which has fallen*,<sup>580</sup> which (is what) the Jews who are deceived understand by that appearance.

*Rev. 11:9-10* <sup>9</sup> *And for three and a half days the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations see their corpses and refuse to let their corpses to be placed in a tomb;* <sup>10</sup> *And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and be glad and they will exchange gifts among themselves, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.*

He says those who at one time before seized upon the lies and portents of the Antichrist and have indelibly written his hateful-to-God name on their hearts, either from among the Jews or the nations; will prevent the holy bodies from being buried. [116] They will delight at escaping from the afflictions which are brought for reform, not thinking that *the Lord disciplines the one He loves, chastising every son He receives*,<sup>581</sup> and *with bit and bridle He will lead them lest they come near to Him*,<sup>582</sup> so that, even if in this manner by necessity, they might return to the straight road from which, being deceived, they had strayed. But we must pray to the Lord, saying: *It is good for me that you humbled me that I might learn your statutes*.<sup>583</sup> *Return us, O God of our salvation*,<sup>584</sup> and do not enter into

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world, which the devil, that accuser of his brethren, that fratricide who is doomed to perish, has built of vice cemented with crime, and filled with iniquity. Therefore it is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt." (*Ep.* 46.6-7. *The Principle Works of St. Jerome. A Select Library of the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vol. VI* [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1989], 62-63.) Victorinus believed the city received these epithets simply because of the persecution of the two witnesses (*Vic.* 11.8).

<sup>578</sup> 2 Sam. 5:9.

<sup>579</sup> Rom. 9:5.

<sup>580</sup> Amos 9:11.

<sup>581</sup> Prov. 3:12, Heb. 12:6.

<sup>582</sup> Ps. 32(31):9.

<sup>583</sup> Ps. 119(118):71.

<sup>584</sup> Ps. 85:4(84:5).



*judgment with your servants,<sup>585</sup> For we are judged by you, the Master who loves mankind, we are chastened in order that we may not be condemned along with the world<sup>586</sup> but with a few afflictions we might escape eternal punishment; For you are rich in mercy, O Christ our God, and to you belongs all glory, honor and worship, together with the Father and the Life-giving Spirit unto the ages. Amen.*

[117]

## SECTION 11, CHAPTER 31

How Those Who Were Destroyed by the Antichrist Will Be Raised

*Rev. 11:11-12a,b* <sup>11</sup> But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. <sup>12</sup> Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in the cloud.

Having been dead for as many days as the years of their prophecy, it says, they will be raised and taken up into heaven in the master's chariot, the cloud,<sup>587</sup> causing fear and trembling to those who see it.<sup>588</sup>

*Rev. 11:12c-13* <sup>12c</sup> And their enemies saw them. <sup>13</sup> And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell, and seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake.

Perhaps on the one hand, these things will take place physically at that time. On the other hand, the *earthquake* we think spiritually means movement of all things that are shaking from the solid and certain (state).<sup>589</sup> [118] The *one tenth of the city to fall* is the error of impiety, and not even one of them became prudent because of the rapture (of the two

<sup>585</sup> Ps. 143(142):2.

<sup>586</sup> 1 Cor. 11:32.

<sup>587</sup> Acts 1:9, Matt. 24:30, Matt. 26:64, Mark 13:26, Mark 14:62, Luke 21:27.

<sup>588</sup> Victorinus writes that after the many deceits worked on the people by diabolical powers, the two witnesses are raised by God on the fourth day so "that none might be found equal to God." (Vic. 11.7, ANF 7:354)

<sup>589</sup> Possibly from Hippolytus. "The shaking (of the earth) signifies the change of things upon earth." *Fragments* (commenting on Prov. 30.21), ANF 5:175.

prophets) like the rest who will be saved. For *the seven thousand* who were destroyed appears to mean those who were given up to the weekly time of the present life, and who were not awaiting the eighth day of the resurrection, those also for whom it was necessary to die the *second death* <sup>590</sup> in Gehenna, the eternal punishment. Or, perhaps the seven thousand will be those among the Jews who were persuaded by the Antichrist.

*Rev. 11:13d-14* <sup>13d</sup> *and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.*  
<sup>14</sup>*The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come.*

When the unbelieving are castigated and the martyrs of Christ are glorified, it says those worthy of salvation will glorify God. After the two *woes*, it says, comes the *third* through the seventh trumpet.

## CHAPTER 32

### About the Seventh Trumpet and the Saints Praising God at the Future Judgment

*Rev. 11:15* *Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has [119] become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."* <sup>16</sup>*And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God,* <sup>17</sup> *saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, that you have taken your great power and begun to reign."* <sup>18</sup>*The nations raged, and your wrath came and the time of the dead.*

And here again it says both the holy angels and those living an angelic life send up thanksgiving to God, for the kingdom which as God he possessed from the beginning, he deigned to receive it for our sake as a man. After being long suffering, finally he inaugurates the judgment against the unbelieving nations, which are angry at this as if it were a recent and strange teaching, wherefore he says:

*Rev. 11:18b* *And your wrath came and the time of the dead to be judged, and to give the wages to your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and to destroy those who harm the earth."*

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<sup>590</sup> Rev. 2:11, 20:6, 20:14, 21:8.

*The time of the dead*, it says, (is) the time of the resurrection of the dead [120] in which each one appropriately is to be given the wages. By *the prophets and the saints and those who fear God* of course is to be understood the three levels of the orders of the apostles, those *bearing fruit one hundred fold and sixty fold and thirty fold*,<sup>591</sup> admittedly (occupying) the first appointed place and established upon the twelve thrones.<sup>592</sup> By *small and great*, we think is meant either the lesser saints and those who greatly surpass them, or the *small* as the scorned sinners whereas the *great* are the righteous.

## CHAPTER 33

### About the Prior Persecutions of the Church and About Those (Persecutions) at the Time of the Antichrist.

*Rev. 11:19 And the temple of God opened in heaven, and the ark of his covenant was seen inside his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, voices and thunders and an earthquake, and large hail.*

By the opening of heaven and the vision of the ark is meant the revelation of the *good things prepared*<sup>593</sup> for the saints, just as all are *concealed*<sup>594</sup> in Christ, *in whom all the fullness of divinity dwelt bodily*, according to the Apostle.<sup>595</sup> At that time they will be revealed, when the awesome sounds of lightening and thunder, the punishments of Gehenna, will come upon the lawless and impious, like hail raining upon them [121] in the transposition of the present things during the earthquake.

*Rev. 12:1 And a great sign was seen in heaven, a woman who had been wrapped in with the sun, and [the] moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars;*

Some,<sup>596</sup> on the one hand, had understood this woman entirely to be the Theotokos<sup>597</sup>

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<sup>591</sup> Matt. 13:23, Mark 4:20.

<sup>592</sup> Matt. 19:28, Luke 22:30.

<sup>593</sup> 1 Cor. 2:9.

<sup>594</sup> Col. 3:3.

<sup>595</sup> Col. 2:9.

<sup>596</sup> Oik. 6.19.1. Epiphanius of Salamis, writing in the fourth century, notes that some unnamed individuals held this view (*Panarion* 78.11). The most consistent interpretation in the Church, however, seems to have been that

before her divine birth was made known to her, (before she) experienced the things to happen. But the great Methodios took (it) to be (referring to) the holy Church,<sup>598</sup> considering these things concerning her (the woman) to be incongruous with the begetting of the Master for the reason that already the Lord had been born long before. It is good to remember also these words of the Blessed Methodios who says in his so-called *Symposium* through the person of the virgin Procle<sup>599</sup> thus: “The woman wrapped in the sun is the Church. That which to us is our garment, to her is light. And that which gold is for us, or glowing gemstones, for her are the stars, the superior and more brilliant stars.”<sup>600</sup> And the following: “*She stood upon the moon.* The moon I regard figuratively (to be) the faith of those who are cleansed of corruption by the washing (of baptism) for [122] the condition of liquid substance is regulated by the moon.<sup>601</sup> She labored and gave birth anew to those carnal-

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expressed by Andrew: the woman represents the Church. This view was held by Victorinus (12.1) and Hippolytus, (*Chr. and Ant.* 61), Gregory the Great (*Morals* 34.14[25]), in addition to Methodios, (*Symp.* 8.5). A thorough comparison of ancient interpretations of Revelation 12 was done by Pierre Prigent, *Apocalypse 12: Histoire de l'exégèse*, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Biblischen Exegese* 2 [Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1959.] Prigent notes that in the mid-fifth century Quodvultdeus combined the ecclesiastical and mariological interpretations to identify the woman as Mary, herself as a figure of the Church (*Ibid.*, 23). He is followed by Cassiodore (d. c. 583) and Ambrose Autpertus (c. 760), with some slight variations on the idea. (*Ibid.* 24)

<sup>597</sup> The “Mother of God,” i.e., the Virgin Mary.

<sup>598</sup> Methodios, *Symp.* 8.5-8.

<sup>599</sup> Andrew is mistaken. This should read “Thecla.” At the beginning of *Symposium* Book 8 it states that Procle had finished speaking. The comments which follow are those of Thecla.

<sup>600</sup> *Symp.* 8.5. Gregory the Great believed that the sun represents “the illumination of truth” and the Church, “because she is protected with the splendor of the heavenly light, is clothed, as it were, with the sun.” *Morals* 34.14(25), LF 31:636. Victorinus believed that being clothed with the sun represents the resurrection (12.1), as did Caesarius of Arles (*Hom.* 9). For Hippolytus, the sun is the Word of the Father, who is brighter than the sun (*Chr. and Ant.* 61).

<sup>601</sup> It was very common in the patristic tradition to associate the moon with the Church and with baptism. Because the moon regulates the tides, it was associated with water, and water is associated with baptism through which one becomes a member of the Church. (See Hugo Rahner, “Mysterium Lunae”, *Zeitschr. für kath. Theol.* 63 [1939] 311 ff, 428ff and 64 [1940] 61 ff, 121 ff. Or see the same author’s *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery*, trans. Brian Battershaw, ([New York: Harper and Row, 1963], chp. 4.) Gregory the Great, however, believed the moon, probably because of its changing phases, represented “the changeableness of temporal things” and for that reason it was under the feet of the Church, represented by the woman, because she despises all temporal things, she tramples the moon under her feet. *Morals* 34.14(25), LF 31:636. For Hippolytus, the description is merely poetic: the moon represents the fact that the woman, the Church, is “adorned with heavenly glory.” (*Chr. and Ant.* 61, ANF 5:217) For Caesarius of Arles the woman is the Church and the moon represents hypocrites and evil Christians whom the Church has placed underfoot (*Hom.* 9). Oikoumenios believed that the moon represented the diminishment of the Law of Moses and Judaism (6.19.3).

*mingled into spiritually minded* <sup>602</sup> and formed and fashioned them according to the likeness of Christ.”<sup>603</sup> And again he says: “We must not think that Christ is him who is to be born. For formerly, before the Apocalypse, the mystery of the Incarnation of the Logos had been fulfilled. John speaks with authority about the present and future things.”<sup>604</sup> And afterwards (he mentioned) other things, (and then says), “Therefore, it is necessary to confess that the Church must be the one in labor and gives birth to those redeemed as the spirit said in Isaiah: *Before she labored to give birth, she escaped and gave birth to a male.*”<sup>605</sup> Whom did she escape? Either the dragon, certainly, in order for the spiritual Zion to give birth to virile people.”<sup>606</sup> And in continuation, “so that in each one Christ is to be born mentally. Because of this the Church is swollen and in great *pain until Christ* having been born might be *formed in us*,<sup>607</sup> so that each one partaking of Christ becomes Christ.”<sup>608</sup> Moreover, the Church has been clothed in the *Sun of Righteousness*.<sup>609</sup> And the legalistic<sup>610</sup> light of the [123] moon which shines by night and the alterable secular life like the moon has been mastered under the feet, and round about upon her head (is) the crown of the apostolic precepts and virtues.<sup>611</sup> Since (it is) from the moon that liquid substance depends, the same one

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<sup>602</sup> 1 Cor. 2:14.

<sup>603</sup> *Symp.* 8.6.

<sup>604</sup> *Symp.* 8.7. Andrew has already cited this as his rationale for not following the interpretation style of Oikoumenios who believed that numerous passages in Revelation told of the life of Christ. Andrew believes this violates the basic concept of prophecy. (See *Chp.* 1, *Text* 12; *Comm.* 13-14, footnotes 47-49.)

<sup>605</sup> Isa. 66:7.

<sup>606</sup> *Symp.* 8.7.

<sup>607</sup> Gal. 4:19.

<sup>608</sup> *Symp.* 8.8.

<sup>609</sup> A poetic reference to Christ based on Mal. 4:2. (See *Comm.* 27, fn 114.)

<sup>610</sup> τὸ νομικὸν φῶς. Another reference to the Christian belief in the superiority of the New Covenant and apostolic teaching over the legalism of the Law of Moses, which was closely tied to the observance of festivals determined by a lunar calendar. (See *Comm.* 8, fn 18.) “From new moon to new moon, and from sabbath to sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, says the LORD.” (Isa. 66:23) But see Col. 2:16, in which orientation toward Jewish Law was already being discouraged: “Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath.”

<sup>611</sup> The crown of twelve stars. This is also the opinion of Hippolytus (*Chr. and Ant.* 61) and Oikoumenios (6.19.6). Andrew offers a variety of opinions. The moon is baptism, but it could also represent the changeability of life in this world, which the Church tramples underfoot.

(Methodios)<sup>612</sup> also says that by *the moon* is meant baptism, figuratively called “sea,”<sup>613</sup> which (is) on the one hand the salvation for those who are reborn and on the other hand ruination for the demons.

*Rev. 12:2 And she being with child she cried out in labor and in anguish to give birth.*

*Labor pains*, as we say, the Church suffers for each of those being reborn by water and the spirit<sup>614</sup> until Christ has been formed in them as the Apostle says,<sup>615</sup> for the miscarried children are those who fell from *the true light of Christ*,<sup>616</sup> and concurrently (fell) from life, suffering death through unbelief.

*Rev. 12:3 And another sign was seen in heaven; and behold, a great fire-red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems upon his heads.*

*Heaven*<sup>617</sup> here we think is to be understood (as) the air, and the *fire-red dragon* is the one whom, after he was created, *was mocked by the angels* of God, as it has been written in Job.<sup>618</sup> He is *fire-red* either because of his murderous nature and delight in bloodshed or

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<sup>612</sup> Methodios, *Symp.* 8.6.

<sup>613</sup> 1 Cor. 10:1-2.

<sup>614</sup> John 3:5. Oikoumenios encounters some difficulty with this detail of the woman crying out in great pain, since the tradition of the Church was that Mary suffered no pain in childbirth because Christ’s virginal conception was by the Holy Spirit and therefore Christ was born without original sin, or as it would be expressed in the Eastern tradition, the “ancestral sin.” Oikoumenios concludes that the cry represents the despondency of the Virgin while Joseph was under the impression that she had been unfaithful (6.19.8).

<sup>615</sup> Gal. 4:19.

<sup>616</sup> John 1:4-9, 8:12, 9:5, 12:46.

<sup>617</sup> Or “the sky,” οὐρανός.

<sup>618</sup> ἐγκαταπαίξεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγγέλων. Ἐγκαταπαίξω means to mock or deride, and its root, παίξω, could also be interpreted as “mocked,” “made sport of,” as well as “played with,” hence the reference in Ps. 104(103):26 to the creation of the sea and of Leviathan to “play” in it. (Job 40:14 and 41:24 in the LXX text only, also refer to the creation of Leviathan, the great sea serpent.) All of Job 41 consists of a fearsome description of Leviathan. The eventual identification of this huge mythical serpent with the serpent of Genesis, and with the devil, was inevitable. Many verses of Job 41 describe Leviathan’s fiery mouth, smoking nostrils and awesome strength, making that passage a rich treasure to be mined by the Fathers for verses and analogies to the devil. For example, see Origen who identifies the sea serpent with the dragon and the devil (see *Prin.* 2.8.2, also *Hom. on John* 1.17), in which Origen discusses the passage in Job describing the creation of the dragon that the angels might mock him. See also Gregory the Great for the same identification. *Morals* 4.9(16).

because of the fiery angelic nature,<sup>619</sup> even [124] though he fell from (among the) angels. The *seven heads* (are) his seven most evil powers and hostile spiritual activities, or the seven spirits as Christ said in the gospel, settling in to dwell in a man whose heart, having been swept clean was empty of good thoughts and deeds,<sup>620</sup> or seven evils which Solomon says are in the heart of the enemy who in a loud voice entreats through deceits those who are persuaded<sup>621</sup> (by him). The *horns* signify either those ten offenses which are the opposite of the ten commandments of the Law,<sup>622</sup> or (they are) the divisions of the kingdom, adorning him because he delights in dissensions. *Seven diadems* (are) on his heads, because those victorious over demonic activities acquire the crowns for themselves from there,<sup>623</sup> wherefore, victory is gained by pain and toil. Concerning these things, Methodios also says thusly verbatim: “The great fiery dragon with the seven heads who is pulling down one third of the stars and who stood watching in order to devour the child of the woman in labor, he is the devil.”<sup>624</sup> Also the following: “But he misses the prey and is unsuccessful (because) those who are reborn are snatched and carried upwards to the heights.”<sup>625</sup> And after a few words, (he writes) “*A third of the stars* [125] it called the portion of those utterly wrong (regarding) one of the Trinity.<sup>626</sup> The desert, into which the Church came to be nourished, is destitute of

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<sup>619</sup> Heb. 1:7. “He makes his angels winds and his servants flames of fire.”

<sup>620</sup> Matt. 12:43-45, Luke 11:24-26. Victorinus believes that the seven heads are the seven kings of the Romans (Vic. 12.3).

<sup>621</sup> Prov. 26:25.

<sup>622</sup> *Symp.* 8.13. Oikoumenios believes the horns signify power, and since ten is a perfect number, ten horns suggest immense power (7.3.5).

<sup>623</sup> *Symp.* 8.13. “Endless glory will be yours if you defeat him and carry off his seven diadems, for this is the prize of our contests...”(ACW 27:119)

<sup>624</sup> *Symp.* 8.10.

<sup>625</sup> *Symp.* 8.10.

<sup>626</sup> Methodios considers the fallen stars to be heretics because “they too, wish to be acquainted with the heavenly ones, and to have believed in Christ, and to have the seat of their soul in heaven, and to come near to the stars as children of light. But they are dragged down” by their false beliefs. He names among them Sabellius, Marcion, Valentinus and the Ebionites (*Symp.* 8.10). Victorinus holds that the fallen one-third of the stars represents either one-third of the believers who will be led astray, or that one-third of the angels were seduced into following the devil (Vic. 12.3). For Gregory the Great, the one-third of the stars which fall are those who “appear to shine” and “seem to be devoted to the pursuit of heavenly life” but are drawn down because of their love of the earth. *Morals* 4.10(17), LF 18:195.

evils and barren of decay.”<sup>627</sup> “The *one thousand*,” he says, “is the perfect and complete number encompassing in it one hundred multiplied by ten.”<sup>628</sup> And the following he says concerning his crowns: “She who had struggled before against the devil and after she had deadened the seven heads of the seven crowns becomes self disciplined (with respect to) virtue.”<sup>629</sup>

*Rev. 12:4 And his tail drags a third of the stars from the sky, and cast them to the earth.*

By these things we believe two things are meant, either his prior fall from heaven,<sup>630</sup> pulling down the angels who rebelled with him through the worst initiative of envy — for first was the pride — or after the crushing of his head,<sup>631</sup> the tail movement which brought down those non-steadfast ones who were not of heavenly mindset, having been figuratively called *stars* [126] on account of the great brightness from baptism. For thus Daniel prophesied about Antiochus as being a type of the coming of the Antichrist.<sup>632</sup>

*Rev. 12:4b And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth to her child, he would devour it.*

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<sup>627</sup> *Symp.* 8.11.

<sup>628</sup> *Symp.* 8.11.

<sup>629</sup> *Symp.* 8.13.

<sup>630</sup> This opinion is shared by Oikoumenios. (7.3.1-6)

<sup>631</sup> Gen. 3:15. It is Christian belief that Christ fulfilled this prophecy by his victory over the devil, thereby crushing the head of the serpent.

<sup>632</sup> Dan. 8:10. (Hippolytus, *Chr. and Ant.* 49) Antiochus IV, so called “Epiphanes” was a Seleucid emperor who attempted to completely Hellenize the Jewish people. He imposed Greek pagan worship and customs and forbade Jewish religious practices. Those Jews who resisted this forced idolatry were tortured and martyred. Some of the stories are told in the Books of the Maccabees which, as part of the Septuagint, Andrew would have considered Scripture. Furthermore, these Jewish martyrs were regarded as saints by Christians, especially Eleazar the scribe and a family of seven martyred brothers and their mother (2 Mac. 6:19-7:41). Sermons given on the occasion of their feast day (August 1), by such Fathers as Cyprian, Ambrose of Milan, Gregory Nazianzus and John Chrysostom, have survived. Hippolytus compares the deeds of Antiochus and his efforts to force Jews to worship Greek gods with the events prophesied in Revelation in which Antichrist will force people to worship him. (*Ibid.*) Although Hippolytus does not call Antiochus a “type,” Andrew understands it as typology. (See also *Chp.* 18, *Text* 69, *Comm.* 81, fn 351.)



For the Apostate (devil) is always preparing himself (to stand) in opposition to the Church, grasping to make those reborn from her (the Church), his own food in due season, moreover, through the Church, also persecuting Christ himself as her head and as taking upon himself the matters of the faithful.<sup>633</sup> Wherefore he also said to Saul, *Why are you persecuting me?*<sup>634</sup>

*Rev. 12:5a She brought forth a male child, one who will shepherd all the nations with a rod of iron,*

Continuously the Church gives birth to Christ through those who are baptized, as if he is being fashioned in them<sup>635</sup> until the completion of (their) spiritual age,<sup>636</sup> according to the Apostle. *A male son* is the people of the Church who are not feminized by worldly pleasures,<sup>637</sup> through whom Christ God shepherded the nations, even already by the powerful iron-like hands of the strong Romans.<sup>638</sup> And he will shepherd also after the resurrection of the dead when he appoints judges [127] who are strong in faith like iron over the fragile and weak vessels of the nations, which did not contain the mystical *new wine*<sup>639</sup> because of unbelief.

*Rev. 12:5b And her child was caught up to God and to his throne,*

For even here the saints *are snatched up* in trials (taken up by death) so that they not be overwhelmed by troubles beyond their power.<sup>640</sup> *They will be caught up in the clouds in*

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<sup>633</sup> *Symp.* 8.10.

<sup>634</sup> Acts 9:4.

<sup>635</sup> Gal. 4:19.

<sup>636</sup> Eph. 4:13.

<sup>637</sup> *Symp.* 8.7-8.

<sup>638</sup> For Andrew the rod of iron is the Christian Roman Empire. For Victorinus, the "rod of iron" is "the sword of persecution." (Vic. 12.5, ANF 7:355)

<sup>639</sup> Matt. 9:17, Mark 2:22, Luke. 5:37.

<sup>640</sup> Oikoumenios believes that the child "caught up to God and his throne" means that Joseph heeded the angel's warning to take the child and his mother to Egypt, foiling Herod the Great's efforts to kill the Christ child. The woman's flight to the desert (v. 6) refers to the refuge which the infant Christ found in Egypt along with his mother (7.3.9-10) and the dragon's effort to devour the child represents Herod's plot (7.3.7).

order to meet the Lord in the air<sup>641</sup> and they will be with God at his throne with the supreme angelic powers.

*Rev. 12:6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God there, so that there they will nourish her for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.*

When, it says, the devil acting through the Antichrist has arrayed himself against the Church, her chosen and supreme ones, who have spit upon the noisy public approbations and the pleasures of the world, will flee to a manner of life devoid of every evil and abundant in every virtue, according to Methodios,<sup>642</sup> and there they will avoid the assaults from both the hostile demons and people. [128] Of course, the actual physical desert will save those fleeing from the plot of the Apostate (devil) in the *mountains and caves and the dens of the earth*,<sup>643</sup> as did the martyrs previously<sup>644</sup> for *three and a half years*, that is the one thousand two hundred sixty days, during which apostasy will prevail.<sup>645</sup> May the Great Official,<sup>646</sup> *who does not allow anyone to be tested beyond his strength*,<sup>647</sup> deliver us from this, granting us steadfast disposition and manly strength in the assaults against us, so that *legitimately contending*<sup>648</sup> *against the principalities and powers of darkness*<sup>649</sup> we might be adorned with

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<sup>641</sup> 1 Thess. 4:17.

<sup>642</sup> *Symp.* 8.11.

<sup>643</sup> Heb. 11:38.

<sup>644</sup> The word "martyr" is also the word "witness," as in one who testifies to faith in Christ or in God. Andrew may be referring to Christians who bore testimony to Christ or who refused to sacrifice to idols during the years of persecution and chose instead to hide in the desert. Or he may be thinking of the saints of the Old Testament, who are those described in the passage from Hebrews, to which he had just alluded.

<sup>645</sup> Oikoumenios believes the 1,260 days is the actual amount of time that Christ and his mother remained in Egypt until Herod the Great died (7.3.10). Andrew gives the period of time a literal interpretation and neither allegorizes the number 1,260, nor believes it is symbolic of an undetermined but limited period of time. Methodios provides an allegorical interpretation and states that it signifies the "direct, clear and perfect knowledge of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in which as she grows, our Mother [the Church] rejoices and exults during this time until the restoration of the new ages..." He then engages in a long and elaborate explanation of the symbolic meaning of each component of the number 1,260 (*Symp.* 8.11, ACW 27:116). Andrew appears to place less importance on complicated number symbolism and chooses to follow Hippolytus on this matter, who gave a literal interpretation. For him, it is the actual period "during which the tyrant is to reign and persecute the Church." (*Chr. and Ant.* 61, ANF 5:217)

<sup>646</sup> ἀγωνοθέτης. This was the official who presided over or judged athletic contests and bestowed the prizes.

<sup>647</sup> 1 Cor. 10:13.

<sup>648</sup> 2 Tim. 2:5.

the *crown of righteousness*<sup>650</sup> and receive the rewards of victory. For to Him is due victory and power through the weak ones routing the strong *aerial powers*,<sup>651</sup> together with the Father and the Life-Giving Spirit unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## SECTION 12, CHAPTER 34

### About the War Between the Angels and the Demons and the Fall of Satan

*Rev. 12:7-8* <sup>7</sup>And there was a war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. And the [129] dragon and his angels fought, <sup>8</sup>and they did not prevail, and there was no longer any place to be found for them in heaven.

And these things (refer) to both the first fall of the devil from the angelic order because of arrogance and envy, and his degradation by means of the Cross of the Lord, which can fit this when, as the Lord said, *The ruler of this world is judged*,<sup>652</sup> and of the ancient tyranny he said, *it is cast out*.<sup>653</sup> Not bearing the arrogance (of the devil), it is likely that the divine angels together with the commander Michael, previously rejected him from their own association, just as Ezekiel said, *He had been cast out by the cherubim from the midst of the fiery stones*<sup>654</sup> — I think (he means) the angelic orders — on account of the wrongs found in him, and during the appearance of Christ, (the angels) ministering to him after the temptation<sup>655</sup> detested him (the devil) again as a dishonored servant. One must know that, as it has been given by the Fathers, after the creation of the perceptible world, this one (the devil) had been cast down on account of his pride and envy, he to whom had first been

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<sup>649</sup> Eph. 6:12.

<sup>650</sup> 2 Tim. 4:8.

<sup>651</sup> Eph. 2:2.

<sup>652</sup> John 16:11.

<sup>653</sup> John 12:31.

<sup>654</sup> Ezek. 28:16.

<sup>655</sup> Matt. 4:11, Mark 1:13.

entrusted the aerial authority, just as the Apostle said.<sup>656</sup> And Papias says thus word for word: “Some of them, that is, the divine angels of old, [130] he gave (authority) to rule over the earth and commanded (them) to rule well.” And then says the following: “And it happened that their arrangement came to nothing.”<sup>657</sup>

*Rev. 12:9 And the great dragon was thrown (down), the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world, he was thrown to the earth, and his angels were thrown (down).*

Naturally. For heaven does not bear an earthly mentality, because *darkness has nothing in common with light.*<sup>658</sup> If it is placed with the article “*the satan*,” it is not as (though) another is being placed alongside the devil — and if it is placed like an overstatement, such as “*the devil and the satan*” — rather he is called by two (names) — the one (the devil) because he slanders<sup>659</sup> virtues and those who desire them and he (slanders) God himself to human beings, as he represented him (God) slanderously to Adam,<sup>660</sup> and the other (Satan), as he is opposed<sup>661</sup> to both the Master<sup>662</sup> and his servants.<sup>663</sup> One must know that the fall of the devil that happened after the cross is not that (of) place, (but) as (a fall to) inefficacy from those former (powers), just as he also confessed to Anthony,<sup>664</sup> the verse of the psalm had been fulfilled in him. *The swords of the enemy he utterly destroyed to the*

<sup>656</sup> Ephesians refers to the devil as the prince or ruler of the evil powers of the air (Eph. 2:2 and 6:12).

<sup>657</sup> Andrew is quoting Papias, one of the earliest Fathers, from a work now lost. This fragment was preserved by Andrew in this commentary.

<sup>658</sup> 2 Cor. 6:14.

<sup>659</sup> “Devil” or in Greek διάβολος *diabolos*, comes from the verb διαβάλλω, “I slander” or “I accuse falsely.”

<sup>660</sup> Gen. 3:5.

<sup>661</sup> Andrew demonstrates that he knows the meaning of “Satan,” which derives from a Hebrew word for “the adversary,” hence one who opposes.

<sup>662</sup> Matt. 4:1-11, Mark 1:13, Luke 4:1-13.

<sup>663</sup> Luke 22:31, Job 1:8-12, 2:3-6, 2 Cor. 12:7, 1 Pet. 5:8.

<sup>664</sup> *The Life of Antony*, by Athanasius the Great, relates an incident in which Satan himself visited St. Anthony in his cell and complained to the monk that he had been weakened. *Life of Antony* 41.

end.<sup>665</sup> Therefore, his fall is the annulment of his evil [131] machinations, after the complete rejection of him from heaven and the rule belonging to him, as it is said. It had been said by the blessed Justin the martyr (that) after the coming of Christ and the decree against him (to send him) to Gehenna, the devil is to become a greater blasphemer even (to the extent that) he had never before so shamelessly blasphemed God.<sup>666</sup> Wherefore, correctly has it been said about him: *His heart was made solid like a stone*<sup>667</sup> on account of his ceaseless evil. And if the expectation of punishment makes him even more evil, then how if being punished, either himself or his workers, how are they to be cleansed of the filth of sin in Gehenna through the fire? Since they have not attained this (the Devil's ceasing from wickedness), how will they have an end of the punishment against those who have vain thoughts?<sup>668</sup>

*Rev. 12:10 - And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.*

Accusation and Slander against human beings [132] are the names he had been called, as had been said, which he is. The angels are delighted about his ejection *for there is nothing in common between a believer and an unbeliever.*<sup>669</sup>

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<sup>665</sup> Ps. 9:6 (LXX text).

<sup>666</sup> This quotation of Justin is taken from his lost writings. This exact statement is also quoted by Irenaeus in (*Heres. 5.26.2*) and by Eusebius of Caesarea (*E. H. 4.18.9*).

<sup>667</sup> Job 41:15 (LXX).

<sup>668</sup> Here Andrew refers to those who teach that, in the end, God will save everyone, even the devil. This belief, known as ἀποκατάστασις τῶν πάντων ("the restoration of all things"), was denounced as heretical at the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553, a few decades before the composition of this commentary. This belief was attributed to Origen, the greatest teacher of the early Church. As a prolific writer and creative thinker, Origen feared, even during his lifetime, that people were slandering him by fraudulently miscopying his books and inserting statements not his own. Nonetheless, Origen does appear to have held views which were later deemed heretical, including possibly the notion that in the end, all would be saved. Although Origen was a monumental figure in the early Church and read by virtually everyone for centuries after his death in the mid-third century, the problems created by some of his erroneous ideas and teachings attributed to him, which came to be known as "Origenism," led to the condemnation of both Origen and his teachings at the Fifth Ecumenical Council, some two hundred years after his death.

<sup>669</sup> 2 Cor. 6:15.

Rev. 12:11-12 <sup>11</sup>And they conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not love their lives even unto death. <sup>12</sup>Wherefore rejoice, Heaven and you that dwell therein! Woe to you, Earth and Sea, for the devil has come down to you with great anger, because he knows that he has little time (left)!"

Those accused by him, it says, the saints and those slandered as (was) Job,<sup>670</sup> in comparison to people persuaded by him, have been victorious over him nonetheless by suffering for Christ. The powers above, following an imitation of God, *rejoice* at his fall and grieve over those who had cleaved to his earthly plot. *Woe to those* who dwell on the *earth*, that is, to those who do not have (*citizenship*) in *heaven*,<sup>671</sup> but have their citizenship on earth. For many of them on the earth are victorious over the enemy and will be victorious. Even though he is now more angered by those who are struggling because of the nearness of his punishment.<sup>672</sup> Wherefore, it is necessary to deplore those who have their *minds on earthly things*<sup>673</sup> and who are tossed by the waves in the sea of life here.

## CHAPTER 35

### How the Dragon Does Not Cease Persecuting the Church

Rev. 12:13-14 <sup>13</sup>And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued [133] the woman who had borne the male child. <sup>14</sup>And two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman in order to fly from the person of the serpent into the wilderness to her place, where she will be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.

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<sup>670</sup> Job 1:9-11, 2:4-5.

<sup>671</sup> Phil. 3:20.

<sup>672</sup> A reference back to Justin Martyr's comment. (See fn 666.) Gregory the Great makes characteristic patristic observations that the dragon, the devil, will become even more angry and vengeful as the time of his punishment grows closer. "He is about, accordingly, to assail the ends of the world with severer temptations, because he becomes more raging in his cruelty, the nearer he perceives himself to punishment. For he considers that he is just about to lose his privilege of most fatal liberty. And the more he is confined by the shortness of time, the more does he spread forth with multiplicity of cruelty." *Morals* 34.1(1), LF 31:619.

<sup>673</sup> Phil. 3:19.

When, it says, the devil after struggling against Christ after the baptism was defeated,<sup>674</sup> he armed himself against the holy apostles and was put to shame seeing (that) they found life through death,<sup>675</sup> and as he (on the contrary) was condemned as a serpent to crawl on the earth and to eat dirt,<sup>676</sup> the earthly thoughts, then he began again to persecute the Church, the brave manly people of God having been born and which are being born, those not emasculated by pleasures. But from the beginning the love towards God and neighbor and the helpful providential care of the Crucified One has been given to her (the Church) for our sake, and the two testaments on account of all these things are symbolized by the *two wings of the eagle*,<sup>677</sup> so that flying away on high into the desert way of life devoid of every dew of pleasure<sup>678</sup> she is to be fed with them (the testaments) always and especially in the coming of the Antichrist, who (is) to rule during the aforementioned time of *three and a half years*, which in many places has been written. During which (time) also those hiding themselves in the actual physical desert in mountains and caves at times will flee.<sup>679</sup>

[134] *Rev. 12:15-16* <sup>15</sup>*The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with the flood.* <sup>16</sup>*But the earth came to the help of the woman,*

<sup>674</sup> Matt. 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13.

<sup>675</sup> Matt. 10:39, Luke 17:33.

<sup>676</sup> Gen. 3:14.

<sup>677</sup> This is the third instance in which the number two is identified with the two testaments, a very common patristic explanation of the symbolism behind the number two. (See *Comm.* 24, fn 98, on Rev 1:13, in which the two breasts of Christ symbolize the Old and New Testaments.) In both verses, the interpretation associates the two testaments with spiritual nourishment. Likewise, the two testaments are commonly perceived in the symbol of the two-edged sword of Rev. 1:16.

<sup>678</sup> Hippolytus believed that the two wings of the eagle are the "faith of Jesus Christ, who, in stretching forth His holy hands on the holy tree unfolded two wings, the right and the left, and called to him all who believed upon Him, and covered them as a hen her chickens. For by the mouth of Malachi also He speaks thus: 'and unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings.' (Mal. 4:2)" (*Chr. and Ant.* 61, ANF 5:217) For Victorinus, the two wings are the two witnesses of Rev. 11:3 (Vic. 12.14). Oikoumenios believed the two wings represent the angel who advised Joseph to take the child and his mother to Egypt (i.e., the desert) to escape Herod (7.9.4).

<sup>679</sup> Hippolytus believes that the period of time 1,260 days is the actual length of time that the "tyrant" will reign and persecute the Church, and that during this period of persecution Christians will literally flee to the wilderness to hide (*Chr. and Ant.* 61, ANF 5:217). This may have been based on Hippolytus' knowledge and experience. Many Christians did flee to the wilderness to wait out periods of persecution. One example is the grandmother of Saint Basil the Great, Macrina the Elder, who spent years hiding in the forest with her husband to escape the persecutions of Diocletian.

*and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river which the dragon had poured from his mouth.*

When the church was fleeing, it says, into inaccessible places (because of) the attack of the deceiver from his mouth, that is, by his command, behind her will come a river of water, that is, ungodly men or evil demons or a multitude of various temptations against her that he might enslave her (the Church). *The earth*, it says, *helped her* on the one hand either by lengthening the way and by the drought and dryness in the places preventing the impulses of evils, and swallowing up the river of the temptations on account of this,<sup>680</sup> or by the humble-mindedness of the saints who say inwardly *I am earth and ashes*,<sup>681</sup> rendering impotent all the snares of the devil, as the angel had spoken to the divine Anthony (the Great).<sup>682</sup>

*Rev. 12:17 And the dragon became angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus.*

When the chosen teachers of the Church and those despising the earth have withdrawn to the hardships in the desert, if those are utterly missed, [135] the Antichrist will declare war against those drafted in Christ in the world.<sup>683</sup> It says he will begin the war, so that, just as when dust thickens the smoothness of oil, finding them vulnerable in the occupations of life, he will put them to flight.<sup>684</sup> But many among them will conquer him (the Antichrist) because they have genuinely loved Christ.

<sup>680</sup> Oikoumenios, continuing his interpretation of this passage as referring to the life of Christ and the Virgin, writes that the river represents the trials that the Virgin endured during the passion of the Lord (7.9.4). The earth swallowing the river means that the earth accepted the trial of the Lord, (that is, his death), but the earth could not contain him since after three days the Lord was restored to life (7.9.5). Victorinus believes that the water symbolizes the people sent to persecute the Church (Vic. 12.15).

<sup>681</sup> Gen. 18:27, spoken by Abraham.

<sup>682</sup> It is unclear which passage Andrew has in mind here. It does not appear to refer to any event recorded in the *Life of Antony*.

<sup>683</sup> The "excellent teachers of the desert" are those who have withdrawn from "the world" by choosing a monastic life. They will be targeted by the devil first, according to Andrew. It is obvious that Andrew has monks and nuns in mind because of the distinction he creates between those in the desert and those "in the world," a common expression for those who are not monastics.

<sup>684</sup> It will be difficult for those who live "in the world" to combat the devil because they are busy and preoccupied with the daily cares of life, unlike the monastics whose chief occupation is prayer.



## CHAPTER 36

About the Beast with Ten Horns and Seven Heads

*Rev. 12:18-13:1 And he stood on the sand of the sea.*<sup>685</sup> *13:1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems upon its horns and a blasphemous name upon its heads.*

Some considered this beast as some kind of secondary ruling power of Satan and of the rest of the demons,<sup>686</sup> that which comes out from the earth after this as the Antichrist. And with Saints Methodios and Hippolytus and others [136] also the present beast has been taken as the Antichrist coming out of the trouble prone and turbulent sea of this life.<sup>687</sup> The ten horns with the diadems and the seven heads hint at the union of the devil with him (the Antichrist) — for these (qualities) were also explained above<sup>688</sup> as belonging to him — both the division into ten of the earthly kingdom at the last days and the the weekly kingdom corresponding to this order of this world, which on the one hand is counted in seven days, and on the other hand (the kingdom) is successively divided into seven (reigns), as will be spoken about in what follows. According to which, he who works in it, Satan, has been called the *ruler of this world*.<sup>689</sup> The *blasphemous name* on his seven heads clearly (means) his defenders.<sup>690</sup> For these since the beginning have not ceased to blaspheme Christ until the

<sup>685</sup> This verse is cited by Schmid and Nestle-Aland as 12:18. However, in some bibles it is numbered as 12:17, and in others as 13:1.

<sup>686</sup> Oik. 7.11.1-3. Oikoumenios seems to distinguish here between Satan as the dragon of Rev. 12:3 and 9, who revolted against God, and Satan the serpent as the chief of the demons. But Oikoumenios is inconsistent and confusing in his references to the three figures. At times the dragon conflated with Satan and the devil, all three as one entity. But elsewhere, a distinction is made between Satan and the devil. (Compare Oik. 7.11.1-3, 7.3.2-3, 8.3.1-4, 9.5.2, 9.11.3-5 and especially 11.6.2-3.)

<sup>687</sup> It is difficult to explain Andrew's mistake here. No such identification can be found in Methodios. Hippolytus actually believes that the beast of the *land* is the Antichrist, not the best of the sea (*Chr. and Ant.*, 48-49, ANF 5:214). It is Irenaeus who believes that beast of the sea is the Antichrist (*Heres.* 5.28.2). Victorinus joins him in this opinion (Vic. 13.1). Gregory the Great considers the beast of the sea to be the Antichrist as well. *Morals* 33.35[59-60], LF 31:610-11. Andrew agrees with Irenaeus that the Antichrist is the beast of the sea probably because of the reference in 2 Thess. to the "man of lawlessness" who would be worshipped as God because Rev. 13:5-6 describes people worshipping this beast.

<sup>688</sup> *Chp.* 33, *Text* 124, *Comm.* 129.

<sup>689</sup> John 12:31.

<sup>690</sup> Those Roman emperors who blasphemed Christ.

accession of Constantine the Great, after whom Julian and Valens became blasphemers of Christ.<sup>691</sup>

*Rev. 13:2a And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth.*

The leopard means the kingdom of the Greeks, the bear that of the Persians, the lion is the kingdom of the Babylonians over which [137] the Antichrist will rule, coming as king of the Romans, and abolishing their rule when he sees the clay toes of the feet, through which is meant the weak and fragile division of the kingdom into ten.<sup>692</sup>

*Rev. 13:2b And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.*

For Satan, the spiritual dragon, will give to the Antichrist all authority by means of false signs and wonders for the destruction of those unstable (in the faith).

<sup>691</sup> None of the Roman emperors recognized Christ as God, until the rise of Constantine the Great. After Constantine, two emperors were "blasphemers." The first, Julian, known as "the Apostate," was the nephew of Constantine and had a brief reign (361-363). He was raised as a Christian but he was very enamored with Greek culture and philosophy and secretly became a devotee of the Greek gods. When he ascended to the throne he openly advocated paganism, reinstated measures to repress Christianity and attempted to revive the worship of the traditional Greek gods. Valens, (who reigned from 364-378), was an Arian who persecuted orthodox Christians, tolerated paganism, and clashed with such notables as Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzus. Although Valens was a Christian, Andrew considers Valens a blasphemer because Valens, being an Arian, did not recognize the divinity of the Son as equal to that of the Father.

<sup>692</sup> Daniel saw a vision of four separate animals, not one beast composed of parts from three animals, as here in Revelation. Andrew relies on Hippolytus' commentary on Daniel for his interpretation of the imagery here and adapts it. Hippolytus saw the beasts as four successive empires: the lion is Babylon, the bear is the Persians, the leopard is the Greeks and the fourth beast, with iron teeth and ten horns, represents the Romans. (*Comm. on Dan.* 4.2) Andrew follows his interpretation for the various parts of the single beast in Rev. 13:1-2. There is no reference to clay toes in Revelation, which is something is found in Dan. 2:41-42. Andrew probably incorporates it into his interpretation because Irenaeus melds the two in his eschatological scenario: "Daniel also says particularly, that the end of the fourth kingdom consists in the toes of the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar, upon which came the stone cut out without hands; and as he does himself say: 'The feet were indeed the one part iron, the other part clay.'" (*Heres.* 5.26.1, ANF 1:556) Andrew also adapts Hippolytus' interpretation of Daniel and believes that the Antichrist (which would correspond to the fourth beast in Daniel) will be the king of the Romans, the Empire to which Andrew himself belonged. The Antichrist's rule will include all of the areas represented by these animals — Greece, Persia and Mesopotamia. Interpreting the animals of Daniel's vision as successive kingdoms was well-known and a common end time scenario in the patristic tradition. John Chrysostom also saw history as dominated by successive kingdoms, which he lists as the Medes, Babylonians, Persians, Macedonians and Romans, with the Romans to be destroyed by the Antichrist. He also believed Nero to be a type of the Antichrist (*Hom. on 2 Thess.* 4, NPNF 1<sup>st</sup> 13:389). Oikoumenios has an entirely different interpretation of the beast of the sea. The leopard aspect represents speed and that it "is quick to devise its plots." The bear's feet show strength "to plot against human beings." The lion's mouth he attributes to its demonic nature because of the Scripture which compares the devil to a lion (1 Pet. 5:8). (*Oik.* 7.11.8-9, Suggit 119.)

*Rev. 13:3a,b And one of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed,*

*A head as if wounded*, it says, is either one of the rulers who will be put to death and who will appear to rise again by him through deceitful sorcery, as Simon Magus had done who was reproached by the leader of the apostles (Peter),<sup>693</sup> or the kingdom of the Romans, having endured some kind of wound by the division will seem to have been healed by the monarchy, after the model of (what occurred in the time of) Caesar Augustus.<sup>694</sup>

*Rev. 13:3c-4* <sup>3c</sup>*and the whole earth (followed) behind the beast with wonder* <sup>4</sup>*and [138] men worshipped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"*

The miracle by the Antichrist will have a reference to the devil who works through him, because through him (the Antichrist), the dragon will be worshipped, appearing to those whose eyes of the mind are disabled that he is both raising the dead and accomplishing miracles.

*Rev. 13:5-6* <sup>5</sup>*And the beast was given a mouth uttering big and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months.* <sup>6</sup>*And it opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name and his dwelling and those who dwell in heaven.*

According to divine allowance, it says, for three and a half years he will have license both for blasphemy against God and the ill treatment of the saints. The *tabernacle of God* and the dwelling of the Logos in the flesh<sup>695</sup> — that is to say, the Incarnation, and the repose

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<sup>693</sup> An apocryphal story from the Acts of Peter 25.

<sup>694</sup> Out of the divisions and civil war, such as occurred in Octavian's time, a new Augustus would arise who would unify the Empire. Octavian assumed more power, changed the Republic into an Empire, and was proclaimed Augustus. Hippolytus made a comparison to Augustus citing this verse with regard to his accumulation of power (*Chr. and Ant.* 49). Victorinus identifies the head that was slain as Nero, who had slit his own throat (Vic. 17.16). He will return in the future as leader with a different name whom the Jews will believe is the messiah, but he will actually have returned from hell. *Ibid.* The mythology that Nero in fact had not died and would return was a well known legend in the Roman Empire.

<sup>695</sup> Andrew understands that this is a reference to John 1:14 because the word "tabernacle" or "tent" (σκηνή) is the same word found in the prologue of John, "And the Logos became flesh and tented among us." This is indisputably an expression of the Incarnation of the Logos, which is why Andrew connects it here with the flesh

in the saints — against which he will certainly direct every blasphemy besides also (directing blasphemy against) the holy angels.

[139] *Rev. 13:7-8* <sup>7</sup>*And authority was given over every tribe and people and tongue and nation,* <sup>8</sup>*and all who dwell on earth will worship it, every one whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain.*

He is to use his wicked power against *every tongue and tribe*, it says, and he will govern those whose names are not written in the book of life.

*Rev. 13:9-10* <sup>9</sup>*If anyone has an ear, let him hear.* <sup>10</sup>*If anyone is to go into captivity, he goes; if anyone slays by the sword, by the sword he must be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.*

Each one, it says, is to receive the wages befitting the labors done. Those who are prepared to do evil to their neighbor will be imprisoned by the devil and will succumb to spiritual death by the satanic dagger, and in those deeds in which *they were defeated, they are to be enslaved*<sup>696</sup> to him, as James the Great says. Those who have pure *faith and immovable patience*<sup>697</sup> in tribulations will not be blotted out of *the book of life* of which also [140] the all-merciful God will show us in fellowship with them, considering *worthless the sufferings of this present time compared to the future glory to be revealed*<sup>698</sup> to the saints and walking bravely on *the narrow way*,<sup>699</sup> so that at its end in the future age, finding glory, repose and spaciousness, we might *co-reign with Christ*<sup>700</sup> to whom and to the Father is due every thanks and worship together with the Holy Spirit unto the ages. Amen.

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of the Logos. Oikoumenios reads the same word “tent,” understands it as a dwelling, and concludes that it refers to the angels because God dwells with them.

<sup>696</sup> 2 Pet. 2:19. They were defeated by the devil because they committed sins, making themselves his slaves.

<sup>697</sup> James 1:3ff.

<sup>698</sup> Rom. 8:18.

<sup>699</sup> Matt. 7:14.

<sup>700</sup> 2 Tim. 2:12.

## SECTION 13, CHAPTER 37

About the False Prophet

*Rev. 13:11 And I saw another beast which rose out of the earth and it had two horns like a lamb, and it was speaking like a dragon.*

This *beast*, some say<sup>701</sup> is the Antichrist, but to others his two horns seemed to hint at the Antichrist and the false prophet.<sup>702</sup> Since it is admitted that the false prophet also is to come in his own person, we think it is not absurd to understand that the dragon is Satan, that *the beast [141] rising out of the sea* is the Antichrist, and that the one present, according to the opinion of the Blessed Irenaeus<sup>703</sup> is to be understood, as the false prophet rising out of the earth, that is out of the earthly and groveling way of life,<sup>704</sup> having *horns like a lamb*, because he completely covers with sheep's skin the hidden murderous character of the wolf,<sup>705</sup> and because of his appearance of piety in the beginning, concerning which Irenaeus says, speaking thus verbatim: "About the *adjutant*<sup>706</sup> which he also calls '*false prophet, he speaks,*' it says, '*like a dragon.*'"<sup>707</sup> To him, it says, will be given the power so that he makes signs and wonders, going before the Antichrist, preparing for him *the way which leads to*

<sup>701</sup> Hippolytus, (*Chr. and Ant.* 49), believes that this figure is the Antichrist, as does Oikoumenios. Oikoumenios' opinion is based on the fact that this beast is a human being who "has horns like a lamb," meaning that he pretends to be the Christ (8.3.1-2). Victorinus, in agreement with Andrew, believes that this beast is the false prophet (Vic. 13.11).

<sup>702</sup> He is not referring to Oikoumenios. Hippolytus believes that the two horns signify the Antichrist and the False prophet (*Chr. and Ant.* 49).

<sup>703</sup> Irenaeus, *Heres.* 5.28.2.

<sup>704</sup> Gregory the Great writes that "to come up from the earth is to boast in earthly glory." *Morals* 33.35(59), LF 31:610. Gregory also identifies the beast of the earth as one who "preaches" about the Antichrist. *Ibid.*

<sup>705</sup> Matt. 7:15. "And it has two horns like a lamb, because through his pretended sanctity he falsely asserts that that wisdom and conduct exist in him." Gregory the Great, *Morals* 33.35(59), LF 31:610.

<sup>706</sup> ὑπαπιστός, literally armor-bearer or shield-bearer, a military "right-hand man".

<sup>707</sup> *Heres.* 5.28.2. According to Hippolytus, this means "that he is a deceiver and not truthful." (*Chr. and Ant.* 49). Gregory the Great writes: "He assumes the appearance of a lamb, in order to perform the works of a dragon." *Morals* 33.35(59), LF 31:610.

*perdition*.<sup>708</sup> The healing of the wound of the beast we said<sup>709</sup> is the apparent union for a short time of the divided kingdom,<sup>710</sup> or the restoration through the Antichrist of the destructive tyranny of Satan for a short time, or the false resurrection from the dead of one of his close associates. This one is to *speak like a dragon*, it says, for he will both act and speak the things of the devil, the source of evil.

*Rev. 13:12-13*<sup>12</sup> *It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its [142] inhabitants in order to worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed.* <sup>13</sup>*And it works great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of men.*

The forerunner<sup>711</sup> of the rebellious false Christ will perform all things, it says, through sorcery for the deception of people, to consider the Antichrist to be God, by the working of these marvels *giving testimony*<sup>712</sup> and receiving indisputable glory in imitation of the Baptist, who brought believers to the Savior. For the lie, to deceive people, strives eagerly to imitate the truth.<sup>713</sup> It is no wonder in the eyes of the deceived, *fire will be seen coming down from*

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<sup>708</sup> Matt. 7:13.

<sup>709</sup> *Chp. 36, Text 137, Comm. 141.*

<sup>710</sup> This was also opinion of Hippolytus. "After the manner of the law of Augustus, by whom the empire of Rome was established, he too will rule and govern, sanctioning everything by it, and taking greater glory to himself." (*Chr. and Ant. 49*)

<sup>711</sup> The word here, πρόδρομος, is the same title used for John the Baptist in the Eastern Christian tradition. He is rarely referred to as "the Baptist," but instead as "St. John the Forerunner," since his primary function was to prepare the way for Christ so the message of Christ would be received by the people. Andrew believes the False Prophet will perform the same function for the Antichrist, hence his use of this term here. The parallel would easily have been made by Andrew's readership because of the terminology he uses.

<sup>712</sup> John 1:19, 32. The false prophet "gives testimony" just as John the Forerunner "gave testimony" about Christ and called him the "lamb of God."

<sup>713</sup> The antithetical parallelism between the Christ and the Antichrist is recognized here by Andrew. Hippolytus explains the deliberate similarities while commenting on Rev. 5:5. "Now as our Lord Jesus Christ, who is also God, was prophesied of under the figure of a lion, on account of his royalty and glory, in the same way have the Scriptures also aforetime spoken of Antichrist as a lion, on act of his tyranny and violence. For the deceiver seeks to liken himself in all things to the Son of God. Christ is a lion, so Antichrist is also a lion; Christ is a king, so Antichrist is also a king. The savior was manifested as a lamb, so he too, in like manner will appear as a lamb, though within he is a wolf. The Savior came into the world in the circumcision, and he will come in the same manner. The Lord sent his apostles among all the nations, and he in like manner will send false apostles. The Savior gathered together the sheep that were scattered abroad, and he in like manner will bring together a people that is scattered abroad. The Lord gave a seal to those who believed in Him, and he will give one in like manner." (*Chr. and Ant. 6, ANF 5:206*)

heaven, since we have learned also in the story of Job<sup>714</sup> that this one (Satan) has slandered and has consumed his (Job's) flocks (by fire) by divine permission and satanic operation.

*Rev. 13:14a And through the signs which were given to him to work in the presence of the beast, he deceives those who dwell on earth,*

He deceives, it says, those who have hearts dwelling entirely on the earth. For those who have acquired *citizenship in heaven*<sup>715</sup> the perception does not deceive, having been made perfectly secure by the prophecy of his coming.

**[143]** *Rev. 13:14b-17*<sup>14b</sup> *Saying to those who dwell on earth to make an image for the beast who has the wound of the sword and (yet) he lived.*<sup>15</sup> *And it was allowed him to give breath to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast should even speak, and to cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.*<sup>16</sup> *Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be given a mark on the right hand or the forehead,*<sup>17</sup> *so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.*

It has often been learned historically, both from Apollonius<sup>716</sup> and others, that demons speak through wooden statuettes, animals, trees and water by means of sorcery, I think **[144]** even through dead bodies just as Simon Magus showed to the Romans a dead person moving in the presence of Peter, even though the apostle refuted the deception to himself

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<sup>714</sup> Job 1:16.

<sup>715</sup> Phil. 3:20.

<sup>716</sup> Apollonius of Tyana, a first century philosopher, whose life was told by Flavius Philostratus in *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*. Origen mentions in passing the view of one "Moeragenes" that Apollonius was not only a philosopher but also a magician (*Against Celsus* 6.41). In the early fourth century, the Roman governor of Alexandria, later Bythina, Hierocles compared Apollonius to Christ in a treatise entitled "To the Christians," in order to discredit Christian claims that the miracles of Jesus proved his divinity. Eusebius of Caesarea countered, remarking that Hierocles "among all those who have ever written against, has produced a formal contrast and comparison of Apollonius with our saviour." (*Against Hierocles* 1.1 *Philostratus: The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, trans. Christopher P. Jones, 3 vols. Loeb Classical Library series, vols. 16, 17 and 458 [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005-6] 3:157. Volume 458 contains the letters of Apollonius, ancient testimonia and Eusebius' treatise, *The reply of Eusebius, pupil of Pamphilus, to the work of Philostratus on Apollonius, concerning the comparison between him and Christ handed down by Hierocles*. Eusebius' attack on the *Life of Apollonius* in his *Reply to Hierocles* specifically ridiculed accounts of talking trees (*Reply to Hierocles* 30 and 38), among other fantastic occurrences. He also argued that Apollonius' miraculous actions, if true, were performed with demonic assistance (*Reply to Hierocles* 31). Victorinus remarked that even in his times magicians were skilled in performing such feats (Vic. 13.13).



show, through those whom he (Peter) raised how the dead were raised.<sup>717</sup> Therefore, there is nothing unreasonable for even the adjutant of the Antichrist, working through demons to make an image for the beast and show it speaking, and to prepare and to destroy those who do not worship it. And the mark of the destructive name of the Apostate he will earnestly endeavor to put on all: on the right hand in order to cut off the doing of good works, and on the forehead in order to teach the deceived ones to boldly speak in error and darkness. But the ones marked with divine light on their faces will not accept it. And he will make it his business to extend the symbol of the beast everywhere, in both buying and selling so that a violent death will be suffered from lack of necessities by those who do not receive it.

## CHAPTER 38

### About the Name of the Antichrist

*Rev. 13:18 Here is wisdom: let him who has a mind reckon the number of the beast, for it is the number of a human. And his number is six hundred and sixty-six.*

[145] The exact sense of the numerical cipher, as well as the rest of the things written regarding this, time and experience will reveal to those who live soberly. For, as some of the teachers say, if it were necessary to know clearly such a name, the one who had beheld it would have revealed it.<sup>718</sup> But divine grace was not well pleased to set down the name of the destroyer in the divine book. As in exercises in logic, many names are to be found contained in this number, according to the blessed Hippolytus and others, both proper nouns and common nouns. First, proper nouns, such as “Lampetis,”<sup>719</sup> “Teitan,”<sup>720</sup> through the diphthong

<sup>717</sup> Apocryphal Acts of Peter 28. (See also *Chp. 26, Text 138, Comm. 141, fn 693*). Peter revealed the trickery.

<sup>718</sup> The opinion of Irenaeus. “If it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision. For that was seen not a very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian’s reign. But he indicates the number of the name now, that when this man comes we may avoid him, being aware who he is: the name, however, is suppressed, because it is not worthy of being proclaimed by the Holy Spirit.” (*Heres. 5.30.3-4, ANF1:559-60*) Also the opinion of Hippolytus: “With respect to his name, it is not in our power to explain it exactly, as the blessed John understood it and was instructed about it, but only to give a conjectural account of it; for when he appears, the blessed one will show us what we seek to know.” (*Chr. and Ant. 50, ANF 5:215*) However, this does not prevent Irenaeus or Hippolytus from speculating about the possible interpretations of 666, which Andrew reports here.

<sup>719</sup> The origin of this name is uncertain. Schmid notes that it could be an erroneous reading arising at the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century and cites F. Diekamp for that opinion. (See Schmid, *Text 145, footnote to line 8, citing Franz Diekamp, Hist. Jahrbuch 18 [1897] 30, A.1*)



τενω̄, forming the future of the verb,<sup>721</sup> according to Hippolytus, and likewise “Lateinos.”<sup>722</sup> just as “Benedict” is interpreted (to mean) “one who is blessed” or “blessed” perhaps in imitation of the truly blessed one, Christ our God. Then common nouns<sup>723</sup> “wicked guide,”<sup>724</sup> “real harm,”<sup>725</sup> [146] “slanderer of old,”<sup>726</sup> “unjust lamb”<sup>727</sup> — these he will be called by those opposing his deception, rendering the appropriate *opinion in shame*.<sup>728</sup>

## CHAPTER 39

### About the Lamb and the 144,000

*Rev. 14:1 Then I saw, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand having his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.*

It is acknowledged that Christ is unambiguously the *lamb*. Standing upon *Mount Zion*, not that of old but the new, which is the *city of the living God*.<sup>729</sup> These thousands

<sup>720</sup> This possibility was suggested initially by Irenaeus *Heres.* 5.30.3, then by Hippolytus (*Chr. and Ant.* 50).

<sup>721</sup> τείνω is the present tense, meaning to stretch, strive, reach.

<sup>722</sup> “The wound of the first beast was healed, and he (the second beast) was to make the image speak, that is to say, he should be powerful; and it is manifest to all that those who at present still hold the power are Latins. If then, we take the name as the name of a single man, it becomes *Latinus*.” (*Chr. and Ant.* 50, ANF 5:215) Although Andrew mentions Hippolytus, the name was suggested first by Irenaeus. (*Heres.* 5.30.3) Hippolytus notes that it could be “an ancient and notable name, or “Evanthas,” for it too makes up the same number; and many others which might be found.” (*Chr. and Ant.* 50, ANF 5:215) Evanthas was also suggested by Irenaeus. (*Heres.* 5.30.3) Hippolytus may have offered as yet another possibility: the word “I deny.” “For even in recent days, by means of his ministers — that is to say, the idolaters — that bitter adversary took up the word *deny*, when the lawless pressed upon the witnesses of Christ with the adjuration, ‘Deny thy God, the crucified One.’” (Hippolytus, *Appendix to the Works of Hippolytus* 28 [possibly spurious], ANF 5:249.) Oikoumenios similarly mentions Lampetis, Benediktos, Titan and “the conqueror” (ὁ νικητής) as adding up to 666 (8.5.6-7). Victorinus offers Teitan, Antemos and Genshrikos (Vic. 13.18).

<sup>723</sup> These are the common nouns used to *describe* him, as opposed to his actual *name*.

<sup>724</sup> κακός ὁδηγός.

<sup>725</sup> ἀληθής βλαβερός.

<sup>726</sup> παλαιβάσκανος.

<sup>727</sup> ἄμνός ἄδικος.

<sup>728</sup> Phil. 3:19.

<sup>729</sup> Heb. 12:22.

signify either the fruitful abundance of the apostolic seed of grace in each one being brought to perfection to twelve thousand, the perfect fruit of faith of those being saved, or those virgins of the New Testament (who are such) according to both *the inner*<sup>730</sup> and *outer person*.<sup>731</sup> For among the ancients, rare is the achievement of virginity, (being) found among very few, wherefore one must suppose therefore these others besides those spoken of before, are assembled by name out of the tribes of Israel [147] in whom virginity had not been witnessed before.<sup>732</sup> The *foreheads* of all these are sealed by the light of the divine countenance, by which venerable ones appear to the destroying angels.

*Rev. 14:2-3a* <sup>2</sup>And I heard a voice from heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice I heard was like the sound of harpers playing on their harps. <sup>3a</sup>And they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living animals and the elders.

*The sound of many waters and of the thunder and of harps* signify the thrilling aspect of the hymns of the saints and their melodious, well-sounding and harmonious song echoing all around the church and the *assembly of those* registered as *first born in heaven*.<sup>733</sup> Just as in the harmony of strings, by means of the symphonic union of the saints, it (the song) is sounded forth which they achieved by *mortifying the desires*<sup>734</sup> of the body. And this (song), it says, no one else is able to learn except them. Wherefore to each one knowledge is given abundantly by the measure of the way of life, just as the manifestation of the mysteries of the Lord is given to the servants of men proportionately according to his favor.

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<sup>730</sup> Eph. 3:16, Rom. 7:22.

<sup>731</sup> 2 Cor. 4:16.

<sup>732</sup> Andrew recognizes that the number 144,000 is symbolic and attempts to explain it. The 144,000 mentioned earlier (Rev. 7:4-8) were those who were "sealed," whom Andrew interpreted to be all those saved from the Old and New Israel, represented on the thrones by the twelve patriarchs of the Old Testament and the twelve Apostles of the New. However, here the group is identified as 144,000 *virgins* (v. 4). Andrew again accepts that the number is symbolic, but nonetheless because it is a large number he cannot apply the same rationale to this group, (that an equal number of virgins will come out of both the Old and New Israel), noting that virginity was uncommon among the people of Israel. Therefore, the twelve times twelve must signify either the perfection of the apostolic teaching, or those who are virgins both inwardly and outwardly (i.e., spiritually and physically).

<sup>733</sup> Heb.12:23, Luke 10:20.

<sup>734</sup> Col. 3:5.

Rev. 3b-5 <sup>3b</sup> No one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who had been redeemed from the earth. <sup>4</sup>These are the ones who have not defiled themselves with women, [148] for they are virgins; it is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as first fruits for God and the Lamb, <sup>5</sup>and in their mouth no lie was found. For they are spotless.

We believe that these, after the aforementioned twenty-four elders, are superior to the rest on account of both virginity and blamelessness in tongue and hand,<sup>735</sup> after the appearance of Christ possessing splendor in virtues through which they are taught the new song,<sup>736</sup> the song which is unknown to the many, not only in the present life but also in the

<sup>735</sup> Andrew continues his exposition which distinguishes the 144,000 virgins from the rest of the multitude (also 144,000) of those who are saved in Rev. 7:4, 9. He does not use this occasion to elaborate on the virtue of virginity, however this passage inspired many Fathers to comment on the superiority of virginity and also on the importance of not merely being virtuous or virginal physically. For example, Methodios writes: "What then did the Lord, who is the Truth and the Light, take in hand when He came down from heaven? He preserved the flesh which He had taken upon Him incorrupt in virginity, so that we also, if we would come to the likeness of God and Christ, should endeavour to honour virginity. For the likeness of God is the avoiding of corruption. And the Word, when He was incarnate, became chief Virgin..." (*Symp. 1.5. Methodius, The Banquet of the Ten Virgins*, trans. William R. Clark, *The Fathers of the Third Century*, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. VI, [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1989], 313.) Also, Augustine: "Where do we think this Lamb goes, where no one either dares or is able to follow, except yourselves? Where do we think He goes; to what heights and what meadows? I think where the delights of rich pasture are – not the empty delights of the world, which are deceitful follies, nor such delights as belong to others, not virgins, in the kingdom of God itself – distance from the portion of delights of all others, the delight of the virgins of Christ, from Christ, in Christ, with Christ, after Christ, through Christ, because of Christ....The special delights of the virgins of Christ are not the same as those of non-virgins, although these be Christ's. There are other delights for the others, but such delights for no others. Enter into these. Follow the Lamb, because the flesh of the Lamb is also virginal. For He preserved in Himself in His manhood what He did not take away from His Mother in His conception and birth. You deservedly follow Him wherever He goes because of your virginity of heart and of body. For, what is it to follow Him except to imitate Him?" (*Holy Virginity 27. Treatises on Marriage and Other Subjects*, trans. Charles T. Wilcox, [et. al.], ed. Roy Deferrari, Fathers of Church series, vol. 27 [New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1955], 174). Jerome remarks: "If virgins are first-fruits, it follows that widows and the continent in marriage, come after the first-fruits, that is, they are in the second and third rank: nor can a lost people be saved unless it offer such sacrifices of chastity to God, and with pure victims reconcile the spotless Lamb. It would be endless work to explain the Gospel mystery of the ten virgins, five of whom were wise and five foolish. All I say now is, that as mere virginity without other works does not save, so all works without virginity, purity, continence, chastity, are imperfect." (*Against Jovinianus*, 1.40, NPNF 2<sup>nd</sup> 6:379.) Caesarius of Arles reminds his hearers that these are not only virgins in body but in mind, since they are not liars (v. 5) "Listen carefully that if anyone boasts about bodily virginity alone, as long as he loves deceit he will not be able to follow Christ along with those holy virgins. For this reason let no virgin presume only upon her physical virginity, because if she is disobedient or gossiping she knows that she will have to be excluded from the bed-chamber of her Heavenly Spouse. Although a virgin possesses a hundredfold and a married woman the thirtyfold, still a chaste and humble married woman is better than a proud virgin." (*Serm.* 155.3, FC 47:346)

<sup>736</sup> Many Fathers had opinions about this new or special song and concluded that it was related to virginity. "To sing a special song to the Lamb means to rejoice with him forever, and before all the faithful, also in the incorruption of the flesh. The rest of the elect can hear this song, but they may not utter it. Though by their love they rejoice in the exaltation of those others, they do not rise to the height of their reward.... Therefore, those

future age. For if *perfect knowledge will come* at that time *abolishing the partial*,<sup>737</sup> according to the divine Apostle, suitably however there will be a manifestation of the divine mysteries in the way of life of the saints here. For (there are) *many mansions in the Father's (house)*<sup>738</sup> and (one) *star differs from another in glory*,<sup>739</sup> just as (there are) many different punishments, from which the Lord of all redeems us, he will reckon us among those who are saved on account of his goodness, not looking at the multitude of our sins, but in his compassion, because of which he had come to earth and poured out his precious blood for us, in order to wash clean our defilements and stains, to bring us to the Father, with whom to him (there) must be, [149] as the *Leader of our Salvation*,<sup>740</sup> together with the All-holy Spirit, glory, dominion and honor, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

#### SECTION 14, CHAPTER 40

##### Concerning the Angel Proclaiming the Proximity of the Future Judgment

*Rev. 14:6-7* <sup>6</sup>*And I saw an angel flying in mid-heaven, with an eternal gospel to evangelize those who dwell on earth, and every nation and tribe and tongue and people,* <sup>7</sup>*saying in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship him who made heaven and the earth and the sea and the fountains of water.*

The *mid-heaven* shows the angel, who appeared to be both high and heavenly, having been sent from above to the people below to lead (them) up into heaven through this intermediate place by his own intercession in imitation of God, so as to unite the *body of the Church to Christ, our head*,<sup>741</sup> and to predefine the *eternal gospel*, as the one of eternity

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who are innocent of sins of the flesh should be admonished to realize that the state of virginity is superior to the state of wedlock." (Gregory the Great, *Pastoral Care* 3.28, ACW 11:196)

<sup>737</sup> 1 Cor. 13:10.

<sup>738</sup> John 14:2.

<sup>739</sup> 1 Cor. 15:41.

<sup>740</sup> Heb. 2:10.

<sup>741</sup> Col. 1:18, 24.

(coming) from God.<sup>742</sup> He says this, on the one hand, *fear God* and do not be afraid of the Antichrist *who does not have the power to kill the soul along with the body*,<sup>743</sup> but [150] to battle against him eagerly for he rules for a little while because of the nearness of judgment and the reward of those who are steadfast.

## CHAPTER 41

### About the Angel Announcing the Fall of Babylon

*Rev. 14:8 And another second angel followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen, Babylon the great! She has watered all nations from the wine of anger of her fornication."*

*Babylon* is the name he significantly gives to the confusion of the world<sup>744</sup> and to the tumult of daily life which, as much as he foretells, is not yet to end. *The wine of anger of fornication* he calls not only the Bacchanalia of idolatry and the alienation of the mind, but also the drunkenness and lack of control which derives from each sin, according to which all those who are unfaithful<sup>745</sup> to God, according to the saying of the Psalmist, will be utterly

<sup>742</sup> In his *Commentary on John*, Origen had made the point that the angels are also evangelists, citing their appearance to the shepherds announcing the birth of Christ (*Comm. on John* 1.13). He continues by referencing this passage in the Apocalypse: "And the angels are not entrusted with but one evangelical ministry, and that a short one, not only with that addressed to the shepherds. For at the end an exalted and flying angel, having the Gospel, will preach it to every nation, for the good Father has not entirely deserted those who have fallen away from him." (*Comm. on John* 1.14, ANF 10:305) Victorinus believed that the angel is Elijah (Vic. 14.6) because he was to return and preach as one of the two witnesses. In chapter 12 Victorinus had interpreted the two wings of the eagle (by which the woman clothed in the sun escaped to the desert) as Elijah and another prophet. "The aid of the great eagle's wings – to wit, the gift of prophets – was given to that Catholic Church, whence in the last times a hundred and forty-four thousands of men should believe on the preaching of Elias." (Vic. 12:6) Victorinus then combined that image with the appearance of the angel in mid-heaven here and the response to the message by 144,000 people. *Ibid.*

<sup>743</sup> Matt. 10:28.

<sup>744</sup> Methodios, *Symp.* 4.3. This interpretation may have its origin in Gen. 11:9, which provides the meaning of the word "Babel" due to the confusion of tongues. It became popular in Christian circles to find meaning in the names of people and places, following the example of writers such as Philo Judaeus. (See *Comm.* 87, fn 381) Eusebius of Caesarea compiled lists of biblical place names, explained the meaning of each name, and described the site for the reader, in a work known as the *Onomasticon*. Jerome later translated this into Latin. Such reference books were very popular and Eusebius' *Onomasticon* would probably have been known to Andrew, although this particular reference may just as easily have come from Methodios, who also knows the tradition. Oikoumenios also reports the same meaning for the word, allegorically interpreting "Babylon" to mean the "confusion of the present life and its vain temptations." (8.11.1, Suggit 128) Victorinus is also aware of the traditional interpretation given to the meaning of the name. "I remember, indeed, that this is called Babylon also in the Apocalypse, on account of confusion." (17.3, ANF 7:357)

<sup>745</sup> πορνεύοντες, literally, to fornicate.

destroyed.<sup>746</sup> Such a Babylon falls finally, and is completely overthrown in the appearance of the Jerusalem above, while the workers of transgression are sent *to the eternal fire*.<sup>747</sup>

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CHAPTER 42

About the Third Angel Warning the Faithful Not to Accept the Antichrist

*Rev. 14:9-10* <sup>9</sup>And another third angel followed them, saying in a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, <sup>10</sup>he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

If anyone, it says, bows down to the beastly Antichrist and pursues the ungodly lifestyle modeling him, and either in word or in deed proclaims him God — for this can be clear by the mark given on the forehead and hand — he also will partake with him of the drink of the cup of vengeance, on the one hand *unmixed* and separated from the divine mercies<sup>748</sup> because of the righteous judgment, on the other hand having been *poured* with various punishments on account of the multiplicity and variety of its self-chosen wickedness. Appropriately is the punishment called *the wine of anger*, being a consequence of the wine of impiety, making drunk those drinking from it, so that *whoever sins through them* (in that manner) *is also punished through them* (in that manner).<sup>749</sup>

<sup>746</sup> Ps. 73(72):27. The sense is best captured by the KJV: "For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee."

<sup>747</sup> Matt. 18:8, 25:41.

<sup>748</sup> Andrew sees this passage as pointing to the ultimate judgment of God and a consequential punishment which is just and deserved. Wine had a very high alcohol content in antiquity and it was always mixed with water. "Unmixed" wine would be too strong to drink. Hence, God's wrath described as unmixed wine indicates the full force of God's wrath upon the sinners. However, interestingly, Oikoumenios arrives at the opposite conclusion from the same concept. He believes that people will *not* in fact suffer according to what they truly deserve, since God's kindness is much greater than his wrath, the cup contains far more goodness than anger (8.13.3-4). They will "be tormented eternally, but not suffer according to one's deserts. How is this? If one deserves fire and darkness, but has been condemned to darkness and is punished only by not being given a share in God's bounty, and suffers pain only in this respect, he is certainly not being physically punished." (8.13.7, Suggit 130)

<sup>749</sup> Wisdom of Sol. 11:16.

[152] *Rev. 14:11a And the smoke of their torment goes up for ever and ever.*

This smoke must imply either the labored breath that comes out along with the groaning of those being punished emanating up from below,<sup>750</sup> or the smoke coming forth from the fire punishing those who have fallen. It is to *ascend forever and ever*, it says, that we might learn that it is endless, just as the bliss of the righteous (will be endless), in like manner also, the torment of the sinners.

*Rev. 14:11b And they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name."*

*Day and night*, not to say that the condition of the future age is measured by the sun, predicting by this not that the impious are to have rest, but (this is said) either according to habit because the present time is counted night and day, or *day* means the life of the saints and *night* the punishment of the profane,<sup>751</sup> which (punishment) will fall upon those who commit evil deeds and pronounce the blasphemies of the apostate beast against Christ depicting (the beast) through the deeds they commit and engraving his name on their own hearts as honorable.

[153] *Rev. 14:12 Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.*

The impious, it says, will be tortured throughout the age in the future, and so the saints here display patient endurance in (which), time quickly slipping away, they preserve inviolate the divine commandments and the faith in Christ.

*Rev. 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth." "Indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors. For their deeds follow them!"*

The heavenly voice does not bless all of the dead, but those *who die in the Lord*, having been put to death in the world, and who *bear in the body the death of Jesus*<sup>752</sup> and

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<sup>750</sup> Oik. 8.13.8.

<sup>751</sup> τῶν βεβήλων, those profane, impure or defiled. The word has a nuance which implies idolatrous worship.

<sup>752</sup> 2 Cor. 4:10.

suffer with Christ.<sup>753</sup> For those, actually, the exodus from the body is rest from toils, the occasion of *unfading crowns*<sup>754</sup> and *rewards of glory*, the prizes of those prevailing much greater in measure than the contests, which the contestants<sup>755</sup> of Christ our God achieved against the invisible powers. *For the sufferings of the present time cannot be compared to the future glory to be revealed*<sup>756</sup> [154] to those who are well-pleasing to God, as the Apostle says, which we must also desire to pray unceasingly to God, saying, *Incline our hearts, Lord, to your testimonies, and turn our eyes away from all vanity,*<sup>757</sup> and *enter not into judgment with your servants for no one living is justified before you*<sup>758</sup> but visit us in your rich mercies, for yours is the dominion and the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

#### SECTION 15, CHAPTER 43

##### How the One Sitting in the Cloud Destroys the Things Growing on Earth By Means of the Sickle.

*Rev. 14:14 Then I saw, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand.*

*Cloud* we understand (is) either a cloud perceptible to the senses that took Christ up from the eyes of the apostles<sup>759</sup> or some angelic power by the purity [155] and loftiness, as the Psalmist says, *and he mounted upon the cherubim and flew.*<sup>760</sup> Through these things we infer Christ to be the one like a Son of Man seen upon the clouds, the *crown* upon him to be indicative of the dominion of both the visible and invisible powers, and this is *golden*

<sup>753</sup> Rom. 8:17.

<sup>754</sup> 1 Pet. 5:4, 1 Cor. 9:24-25.

<sup>755</sup> All of the images employed here are athletic. (See the discussion for *Chp. 20, Text 82, Comm. 95, fn 445.*)

<sup>756</sup> Rom. 8:18.

<sup>757</sup> Ps. 119(118):36-37.

<sup>758</sup> Ps. 143(142):2.

<sup>759</sup> Acts 1:9.

<sup>760</sup> Ps. 18(17):10.



because this material is precious among us, and the *sickle* signifies consummation. For the Lord himself also called the consummation of the world *harvest*.<sup>761</sup>

*Rev. 14:15-16* <sup>15</sup>And another angel came out of the sky, calling with a loud voice to him who sat upon the cloud, "Send your sickle, and reap for your hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth has become dry." <sup>16</sup>And he who sat upon the cloud cast his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

The cry of the angel periphrastically means the supplication of all the powers of heaven, having been permitted to see on the one hand the honor of the righteous, and on the other hand the cutting down of the sinners of lawlessness, upon which the things moving and changing cease and the unmovable and abiding things are manifested. For *the harvest* to be *dry* means the end time has arrived when the seed of piety has ripened like *ripe wheat*;<sup>762</sup> [156] it will be deemed worthy of the heavenly *storehouses*,<sup>763</sup> the fruitfulness being rendered to the *Husbandman*<sup>764</sup> *thirty fold, sixty fold, and one hundred fold*.<sup>765</sup>

## CHAPTER 44

### About the Angel Harvesting the Wine of Bitterness

*Rev. 14:17* And another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and also having a sharp sickle.

Even if Christ is called the *Angel of the Great Counsel*<sup>766</sup> of the Father, nonetheless the present (angel) is shown to be from the *ministering powers*<sup>767</sup> from what follows. First,

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<sup>761</sup> Matt. 13:30.

<sup>762</sup> Matt. 13:30.

<sup>763</sup> Matt. 13:30.

<sup>764</sup> John 15:1.

<sup>765</sup> Matt. 13:23, Mark 4:20.

<sup>766</sup> Μεγάλης βουλῆς ἄγγελος, Isa. 5:6 (LXX), or "Messenger of the Great Counsel".

<sup>767</sup> Heb. 1:14. Because Christ was described one verse earlier (v. 14) as having a sickle, Andrew wants to be sure that we do not come to the conclusion that the one described actually performing the harvest is Christ, even though he is sometimes referred to as an "angel" in patristic interpretation of certain passages in the Old Testament, such as Isa. 5:6, which he quoted above.

coming out of the heavenly temple with a sharp sickle, then performing the harvest of the exceedingly impious.

*Rev. 14:18 And another angel [came out] from the altar, the angel having authority over fire, and he called with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Send your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe."*

And from this we learn that the angelic powers have been assigned to created things, some to water, some to fire, and some to another part of creation. So we learn that this one was assigned to the punishment by fire. It says that, being among the highest angels, with a cry he urged the one with the sickle to reap the clusters of the vineyard of the earth, [157] through which the impious and lawless are depicted, filling the *cup of wrath of the Lord*<sup>768</sup> bearing fruit of *wrath of serpents and wrath of asps*<sup>769</sup> instead of the wine of gladness to the Good Husbandman.<sup>770</sup>

*Rev. 14:19 So the angel cast his sickle on the earth and gathered the vintage of the earth, and threw it into the great wine press of the wrath of God.*

*Wine press of God* is the place of torment which has been *prepared for the devil and his angels*,<sup>771</sup> great because of the multitude of those tormented in it. *For the road to destruction is wide and spacious.*<sup>772</sup>

*Rev. 14:20 And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the wine press, as high as the bridles of horses, for one thousand six hundred stadia.*

For the place of torment of those deserving this is outside the heavenly city Jerusalem. And their blood *reached the height of the bridles of horses to one thousand six hundred stadia* probably means the magnitude of the punishments through the angels, who

<sup>768</sup> Rev. 14:10, Jer. 25:15, Isa. 51:17.

<sup>769</sup> Deut. 32:33.

<sup>770</sup> John 15:1.

<sup>771</sup> Matt. 25:41.

<sup>772</sup> Matt. 7:13.

customarily are figuratively called *horses* in the divine scripture, to *reach* to their *bridles* (means) the lamentations of those being tormented. The bridles are the holy powers [158] who have the divine command by which they hold reins for those things being commanded, as Habakkuk says *You will mount on your horses*,<sup>773</sup> and the Canticles *I likened you to my horse in the chariots of Pharaoh*.<sup>774</sup> And it is possible think otherwise. Since the lawbreakers have become (like) horses, mad for women (and) devoted to pleasure, they will be unharnessed in torments up to the height of the bridles, for they knew no bridle in their pleasures. By the great expanse of *one thousand six hundred stadia* we are taught the *great chasm*,<sup>775</sup> the separation (of) the righteous from the sinners, because of the perfection in evil and abomination in deeds, ten times one hundred signifying the perfect magnitude of wickedness and the six of them<sup>776</sup> are the diligent toil of sin by the abuse of creation which had been made in six days and in Noah's six hundredth year all of the land was deluged.<sup>777</sup>

[The *wine press* will be trampled on *outside the city* of the righteous. For in no way is *the rod of these sinners to be near the inheritance*,<sup>778</sup> according to the prophetic saying. For their habitation will be unmingled (with the righteous), just as their way of life has become. The *blood* being shed from those trodden who are brought to justice is the fair and impartial judgment of God that he has pronounced. [159] For the *blood* of the grape is *wine*.<sup>779</sup> Unmixed *wine* fills the cup of divine wrath, through which it shows the punishment to be received by those deserving it. Reaching *up to the bridles*, like mad horses,<sup>780</sup> because they

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<sup>773</sup> Hab. 3:8.

<sup>774</sup> Song of Sol. 1:9.

<sup>775</sup> Luke 16:26.

<sup>776</sup> Six tens.

<sup>777</sup> Gen. 7:11. Irenaeus makes this argument for identifying the number six with evil, citing the years of Noah before the destruction of the world as symbolic of the height of evil. However, he explains the significance of the number six in connection with the name of the beast as 666 (*Heres.* 5.29.2). Andrew did not explain this symbolism of "six" in connection with the symbolic name of the beast in Rev. 13:18, but he uses Irenaeus here to explain the meaning of the 1600 stadia with six symbolizing evil.

<sup>778</sup> Ps. 125(124):3.

<sup>779</sup> Gen. 49:11, Deut. 32:14, Wisd. of Sol. 39:26.

<sup>780</sup> ὀυλημάτων ἵππων. The expression means literally "mad-for-women horses."

did not know a bridle in pleasures and wickedness. *To one thousand and six hundred stadia* giving themselves up to the perfection of their evil. For the one thousand is the most perfect of the numbers. And by *six hundred* years of Noah we understood the sin deluged in the water. *Six* because they insulted creation, which had come into existence in six days, by means of their evil practices. The number six is a symbol of toil in which (number of days) the world was put together.]

## CHAPTER 45

### About the Seven Angels Setting Loose the Plagues Upon People Before the End of the World and About the Sea of Glass.

*Rev. 15:1 Then I saw another portent in heaven, great and wonderful, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is ended.*

Everywhere he refers to the number seven, showing those offenses undertaken in the seven days of the present age are to be restrained by means of the seven plagues and seven angels, after which is the future way of life of the saints, implied by the sea of glass.

*Rev. 15:2 And I saw (something) like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and its image and its mark and the number of its name, [160] standing upon the sea of glass having harps of God.*

The *sea of glass* signifies, we think, both the multitude of those being saved and the purity of the future condition and the great brilliance of the saints who will shine by means of their sparkling virtue.<sup>781</sup> That which had been written by the Apostle, *the fire will test the type of work of each one*,<sup>782</sup> makes it possible to understand *the fire* mingled there, even if this (fire) is not inflicted on the pure and undefiled, being bifurcated unmixed into

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<sup>781</sup> Victorinus interprets the sea of glass upon which they stand as representing their faith, the foundation of which is their baptism, most likely because of the association of the water of baptism with the reference to "sea." (Vic. 15.2)

<sup>782</sup> 1 Cor. 3:13. Oikoumenios interprets the fire and the words of St. Paul to imply a type of "cleansing" fire needed even by the righteous, since no one is perfect "and even the righteous need to be cleansed." (8.21.3, Suggit 135) But Andrew rejects that view entirely, and following Basil the Great (see fn 784) he separately applies the fire's two distinct properties, burning and light giving, according to the spiritual condition of sinners and the righteous. (See also *Chp.2, Text 20, Comm. 25; Chp.6, Text 32, Comm. 38, and Chp.58, Text 208, Comm. 193*, in which the same interpretation is given for the properties of fire.)

different functions, according to the saying of the psalm,<sup>783</sup> and it will be distributed both burning the sinners and illuminating the righteous, as Basil the Great had realized.<sup>784</sup> It is natural that by the fire both the divine knowledge and the grace of the life-giving Spirit are meant — for in fire God was seen by Moses,<sup>785</sup> and the Spirit was visited upon the apostles in the form of tongues of fire<sup>786</sup> — and *the harps* show the *mortification of members*<sup>787</sup> and the harmonious life in a symphony of virtues plucked by the plectrum of the divine Spirit.

*Rev. 15:3-4* <sup>3</sup>*And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, [161] and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and wonderful are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! <sup>4</sup>Who shall not fear and glorify your name, O Lord? For you alone are holy, for all nations will come and worship before you for your judgments have been revealed."*

From *the song of Moses* we learn the hymnody sent up to God of those justified in the Law before grace, and from the *song of the Lamb* (we learn) of those who conducted their lives piously after the coming of Christ, the unceasing thanksgiving deriving from benevolence and grace coming upon our race, when all the nations were summoned to awareness of him by the divine apostles.<sup>788</sup>

<sup>783</sup> Ps. 28:7 in the LXX: Φωνὴ Κυρίου διακόπτοντος φλόγα πυρός. "The voice of the Lord divides a flame of fire."

<sup>784</sup> *On the Six Days of Creation* 6.3. "...[T]he nature of fire will be divided, and the light will be assigned for the pleasure of the just, but for the painful burning of those punished." (FC 46:87) See also Basil's *Homily* 13, (On Psalm 28): "Although fire seems to human intelligence to be incapable of being cut or divided, yet by the command of the Lord it is cut through and divided. I believe that the fire prepared in punishment for the devil and his angels is divided by the voice of the Lord, in order that, since there are two capacities in fire, the burning and the illuminating, the fierce and punitive part of the fire may wait for those who deserve to burn, while its illuminating and radiant part may be allotted for the enjoyment of those who are rejoicing." FC 46:206.

<sup>785</sup> Exod. 3:1-6, God's appearance to Moses in the burning bush.

<sup>786</sup> Acts 2:3.

<sup>787</sup> Col. 3:5.

<sup>788</sup> Perhaps an allusion to the "Great Commission" (Matt. 28:19, Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8). Oikoumenios interprets this passage literally and historically and states that the song of Moses was the song that was sung when the Egyptian army was drowned in the Red Sea (Exod. 15:1-2). Oik. 8.21.5.

Rev. 15:5-6 <sup>5</sup>And after these things I saw, and the temple of the tabernacle of witness in heaven was opened, <sup>6</sup>and out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues, robed in pure clean linen, and their chests belted around with golden belts.

A *tabernacle* it says here, in the heavens, is in similarity to that which God called upon Moses likewise to pitch as the tabernacle down (here).<sup>789</sup> From out of this temple [162] the angels will come *dressed in clean linen* or *stone*, as some copies have,<sup>790</sup> on account of the purity of their nature and their closeness to *the Cornerstone*<sup>791</sup> Christ and the luminescence of virtues. *The chests are belted in gold* on account of the might of their nature and the purity and honor and limitlessness in service.

Rev. 15:7 *And (one of) the four animals gave the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives for ever and ever.*

The reception (by) the angels of the *golden bowls full of the wrath* of the Lord from *the four living animals*, just as it also says in Ezekiel,<sup>792</sup> signifies receiving the knowledge of the works to be done in heaven, to be conveyed always from the first ones to the second ones, according to Dionysios the Great.<sup>793</sup>

Rev. 15:8a *And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power.*

Through *the smoke* we learn the frightfulness, awesomeness, and chastisement of divine wrath, with which the temple is filled, and in the time of judgment it is to issue out against those deserving of this, and before this (time of judgment it issues out) [163] against those who complied with the Antichrist and those practicing the deeds of apostasy. And this is to be shown by what follows. For it says:

<sup>789</sup> Exod. 25.

<sup>790</sup> Andrew indicates that he is aware of the manuscript variations for this verse. This is a well-known variation in Revelation. "Linen" is λινόν (*linon*), and "stone" is λίθον (*lithon*). Oikoumenios' copy reads "stone" which he interprets as a metaphor for Christ, with whom the angels are clothed (8.23.2). Metzger notes that this variation was widely attested, even at a very early date, however the preferred reading is "linen," since being dressed in "clean stone" is illogical. *Textual Commentary*, 754.

<sup>791</sup> Eph. 2:20, 1 Pet. 2:4-6.

<sup>792</sup> Ezek. 9:8; 20:8; 13:21; 20:13; 20:21; 22:22; 22:31; 30:15; 36:18.

<sup>793</sup> *Cel. Hier.* 8.2; 9.2; 12.2. *Eccl. Hier.* 1.2; 3.14.

*Rev. 15:8b – 16:1* <sup>8b</sup> *And no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the angels ended. 16:1* *And I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go, pour out the bowls of wrath on the earth."*

Hence, we surmise, that until the divine vexation against the impious is separated from the righteous, in no way are the saints of the heavenly Jerusalem to reach their appointed lot, both worship in the temple of God and repose. For it is necessary, it says, for *the plagues* to be *fulfilled*, by which the wages of sin are rendered to those deserving, and those who reached a decision chosen by them, whereupon in this way the dwelling of the heavenly capital is to be given to the saints. If anyone attaches each of the plagues to things to be found at the end time, he will not entirely miss what is suitable, as I think. For God, being one who loves humanity, for the diminishment of endless punishments in the future, in the present life will consent to bring on punishing afflictions to those worthy to be burdened, by both the prophets Enoch and Elijah, and by the innovations of the elements<sup>794</sup> and by the painful casualties of war, towards a moderation, at any rate, of the payment in full by those who had sinned themselves. [164] But we wish to be educated paternally<sup>795</sup> rather, not to be afflicted in a chastising wrath by the Lord — *For there is no healing in our flesh before the face of his wrath*<sup>796</sup> — in this manner *washing our garments*<sup>797</sup> soiled by sins by tears of repentance, and dressed up for a *wedding*,<sup>798</sup> let us enter into the everlasting bridal chamber of joy of Christ our God, to whom is due all glory, honor and worship, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, unto the ages of ages. Amen.

<sup>794</sup> τῆς τῶν στοιχείων καινοτομίας. Humanity has suffered because of the changes on earth even affecting the basic elements of nature. The common belief reaching well back to antiquity was that all of created earth was composed of four "elements" which had their particular properties: fire, water, air and earth. The scenarios presented in chapter 16 introduce disturbing novelties in the natural order, such as seas and rivers turning to blood, a destructive sun, and gigantic hailstones. At this point in Revelation, Oikoumenios also discusses the elements of nature in his commentary (8.25.5), although in a much more philosophical manner.

<sup>795</sup> Heb. 12:6. "The Lord disciplines those whom he loves and chastises every child whom he accepts."

<sup>796</sup> Ps. 38(37):3.

<sup>797</sup> Rev. 7:15 and 22:14, Exod. 19:10.

<sup>798</sup> Matt. 22:11-13.

## SECTION 16, CHAPTER 46

How the First Bowl Poured Out Becomes Sores Against the Apostates

*Rev. 16:2 And the first angel began to pour out his bowl on the earth, and foul and evil sores came upon the men who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.*

Here, *the bowl*, just as *the cup* is to be understood as a chastising activity which, it says, by the pouring out by the angel is to become *evil sores*, implying the throbbing distressful penalty of a discharge in a heart, the occurrence in the hearts of the apostates, when [165] those being afflicted by the plagues sent by God will gain not one cure by the Antichrist whom they have deified. Probably, their bodies are to be physically wounded for the reprimand of their ulcerated soul through the diabolical darts of error by the Deceiver.

## CHAPTER 47

The Second Plagues Against Those in the Sea

*Rev. 16:3 And the second angel began to pour out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a dead man, and every living thing in the sea died.*

It is not impressive for the divine power, for reproof of the weakness of the pseudo-Christ and simplemindedness of the deceived, through the holy prophets Enoch and Elijah<sup>799</sup> to change the *sea into the blood like a dead man*, that is, one who has been slain, and to cause the corruption of those things in it, just as in old times in Egypt (he) had done this through Moses,<sup>800</sup> for the reproof of the stubbornness of Pharaoh and evidence of his own power,<sup>801</sup> so that both those steadfast in faith will be strengthened and those who are not firm will be fearful, seeing creation opposing them during the time when the Destroyer is honored. On the other hand, it is likely that what is meant by this is the slaughters in wars during his (second) coming when Gog and Magog agitate against each other in the four parts of the earth. [166] Moreover, the rulers disobedient to him along with their entire armies will be

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<sup>799</sup> Rev. 11:6.

<sup>800</sup> Exod. 7:14-25.

<sup>801</sup> Exod. 9:16.



cut to pieces, and (because of) the slaughters occurring at these various places, the sea will be contaminated due to the sea battles, and the rivers will be mixed with the blood of those who perished there.

## CHAPTER 48

### How the Rivers are Changed to Blood from the Third (Bowl)

*Rev. 16:4 -6* <sup>4</sup>And the third angel began to pour out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of water saying, <sup>5</sup>“You are just in these your judgments, you who is and who was, O Holy One. <sup>6</sup>For men have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. They are deserving!”

And here is shown that the angels have been placed over the elements, as it had been said above.<sup>802</sup> And of these, it says, the one who is (placed) over the waters praises God for the deserving condemnation He brought upon those who have transgressed, for he gave blood to drink to the ones who stained their hands with the blood of the saints. It is shown through these things either that at that time many standing steadfast in faith are to be worthy of the gift of prophecy, those who were destroyed by the adjutants of the devil, or [167] those turning away from the preaching of the divine prophets and justification of their destruction by the hard-hearted Hebrews<sup>803</sup> to becoming intentional participants in their killing, just as the Lord said to the Jews *that constructing the tombs of the prophets you approved of their killing.*<sup>804</sup>

*Rev. 16:7* And I heard the altar saying, “Yes, Lord God the Almighty, your judgments are true and just.”

*The altar* at some times signifies Christ as in him and through him we offer to the Father our *rational* whole burnt offerings and *living sacrifices*<sup>805</sup> as we have been taught to

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<sup>802</sup> *Chp. 44, Text 156, Comm. 156.*

<sup>803</sup> *Matt. 19:8, Mark 10:5.*

<sup>804</sup> *Luke 11:47-50, Matt. 23:29-31.*

<sup>805</sup> *Rom. 12:1.*

offer by the Apostle. At other times it symbolizes the angelic powers, because they carry up our prayers and spiritual whole burnt offerings, which, we have heard, *they are sent for service for the sake of those (who are) to inherit salvation.*<sup>806</sup> Therefore, from this liturgical altar, it says, the voice is carried off, justifying all the *judgments of God, surpassing every mind and thought.*<sup>807</sup> Since we were taught by the words in the gospels that the spiritual powers rejoice and celebrate over those who return from repentance to salvation,<sup>808</sup> but grieve over those who turn aside from the straight path, and that they give thanks to God for the punishment of those transgressing against the divine commandments, so that they might make partial payment of their debts, let us make haste, granting them (the angels) joy upon our return and [168] great delight, understanding that the divine guardian angel of each of us, without saying any word, instructs us in the things we must do, as if a mind invisibly speaking to our own mind, rejoicing at those who listen to his counsels, but sorrowing in imitation of God over those who disobey. Just as also we know from narratives profitable to the soul<sup>809</sup> about some man, blackened by many transgressions and when entering the church, an angel followed him from afar with a sad countenance.<sup>810</sup> When this man was moved to compunction, and he had declared from his soul to the *One Who Desires Mercy*<sup>811</sup> a change for the better and a rejection of his prior life, coming out from there the angel went before him radiant and rejoicing; but the evil demon, distressed, followed from afar. May our way of life in God become the cause of dejection in the demons and gladness for the angels so that in common with them, in *a voice of gladness and a hymn of acknowledgement keeping festival*<sup>812</sup> we might give thanks for the victory against the wicked demons to Christ our God who with the Father is due glory together with the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

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<sup>806</sup> Heb. 1:14.

<sup>807</sup> Rom. 11:33.

<sup>808</sup> Luke 15:7, 10.

<sup>809</sup> ψυχωφελῶν διηγημάτων, an expression for spiritual readings, especially lives of the saints.

<sup>810</sup> Schmid cites Basil's *Homily on Psalm 33* for this story. The homily contains many of the ideas expressed by Andrew here, but does not tell a story of a man who entered a church and repented.

<sup>811</sup> Mic. 7:18.

<sup>812</sup> Ps. 42(41):4.

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## SECTION 17, CHAPTER 49

How the People Were Burnt By the Fourth (Bowl)

*Rev. 16:8 - 9* <sup>8</sup>And the fourth angel began to pour out his bowl on the sun. And it was allowed to scorch people with fire. <sup>9</sup>People were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues, and they did not repent to give him glory.

Perhaps people will also be physically burnt by the flames of the sun at that particular time.<sup>813</sup> *With bit and bridle*, God, who loves humanity compels *the jaws of those who do not approach him*<sup>814</sup> in order that they might know repentance, even though those who fall into the depth of evil deeds do not turn toward repentance but turn away toward blasphemy and will be carried away by the wickedness of mind. Perhaps by *the sun* it also hints at the course of the day during which the ones deserving chastisements are to be scorched by the burning heat of temptations, it says, so that by painful afflictions they will hate sin, the mother of these (attacks). But the fools, instead of being conscious of their own errors, *will sharpen the tongue*<sup>815</sup> against God, just as even now it is possible to see many unwilling (to repent) blaming the Divine Goodness for the unspeakable misfortunes encircling us by barbarian hands,<sup>816</sup> because he had reserved such great afflictions for our generation.

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## CHAPTER 50

## How the Kingdom of the Beast is Darkened Through the Fifth (Bowl)

*Rev. 16:10-11* <sup>10</sup>And the fifth angel began to pour out his bowl on the throne of the

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<sup>813</sup> Gregory the Great entirely allegorizes this passage. The sun represents the "understanding of the wise." To pour forth a vial upon the sun is in truth to inflict the punishments of persecution on men shining with the splendor of wisdom.... For because many, whom seemed to be resplendent in Holy Church with the light of wisdom, either caught by persuasions, or alarmed by threats, or overpowered by tortures, submit themselves at that time to the power of this Leviathan....so as no longer to shine from above by sound preaching, but to submit to him by obeying him in perverse ways." *Morals* 34.14(25), LF 31:637.

<sup>814</sup> Ps. 32(31):9.

<sup>815</sup> Ps. 64(63):3, 140(139):3.

<sup>816</sup> This is the third reference to barbarians and this one is even more descriptive: the barbarians are "encircling" them. The other references to barbarians are in *Chp.22, Text 90, Comm. 102*, and *Chp.27, Text 103, Comm.113*.

*beast, and its kingdom became darkened.* <sup>11</sup>*Men gnawed their tongues in anguish and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores, and did not repent of their deeds.*

To empty out *the bowl on the throne of the beast*, means such a wrath to be poured out and portrayed as a darkening upon the kingdom of the Antichrist, in as much as it obtains no light by the *Sun of Righteousness*.<sup>817</sup> The *gnawing of tongues* shows the excess of the pain by which those misled by him being afflicted will be overcome by the wounds sent by God so that they might know the one honored by them as God is deceitful and that they might cease the error. But not even after this (do) they turn towards repentance, but toward blasphemy. If those will turn to blasphemy by the application of afflictions and those being stricken by hail as (heavy as) talents will be persuaded in the same manner, — likewise, with the help of God, we interpret that occasion at that point as we are able<sup>818</sup> — and the evil demons through human bodies, which they have used as organs, although afflicted by the holy ones (angels) nevertheless [171] do not refrain from blaspheming those who plague (them), one must ponder (if this is the case) what, then, is necessary for us to realize about the impious being tormented in the Gehenna of fire? How then is evil so innate to the point that they completely cease from the thought of it, or are they only hindered in the carrying out of evil plans into deed, just as evildoers also are put into prison out of necessity yet (they) do not hold back the intentions to harm others?<sup>819</sup> But I myself, hearing (of) eternal punishments, I cannot disbelieve what has been declared. Knowing his readiness toward compassion and goodness, I surmise that in no way would he either threaten or strike those worthy with endless condemnation if he knew that the condemned ones had already repented and hated the evil which they freely chose to commit. For it is not through necessity, but voluntarily that they are punished. For if in the case of Pharaoh even though he (God) knew him to be tempered by the chastisement, but to be hardened again after their removal, nevertheless he judged him worthy of moderate treatment and spared him the chastisements although he was being asked (to do so) by Moses, how much more so (would God spare) these if He knew they put aside the filth in the fire, in accordance with the likeness of gold,

<sup>817</sup> Mal. 4:2. For an explanation of this expression, see *Comm.* 27, fn 114.

<sup>818</sup> The hail as heavy as talents will not occur until Rev. 16:21.

<sup>819</sup> Andrew ponders why the afflictions described in Revelation do not encourage repentance by sinners, as they are intended to do, but rather result in more blasphemy against God. He can only understand it by reasoning that if eternal hell-fire is not sufficient deterrent, then terrible plagues on earth would not reform sinners either.

which some have understood as a paradigm in this situation? But (in the case of) the gold, in as much as it is without a soul, [172] the filth is included by its nature, but it (the filth) was intentionally united (to the soul) by the reason-endowed (human beings) rather than having been born within them. Wherefore, those who set the goodness, foreknowledge and power of God as an impediment to eternal punishment,<sup>820</sup> let them also attach righteousness to these (qualities), as being distributive to each of them according to what is due, and in no way will they see an overturning of the divine sentence. If they are not willing to agree, let them also impute it to the kings of the earth, at least in order that they might agree with themselves, who foresee that not all of the contestants, wrestlers, boxers, runners and equestrians will be victorious, but one and only one from each of these will be crowned,<sup>821</sup> however the stadium is open to all for the contest. For what the stadium is indeed for the contestants, such is the passage to this life for all. For to be born or not to be born is not up to us, but to struggle and to be victorious (against) evil demons and to gain the eternal blessings is for us. For it is necessary that those who have been defeated feel regret for these things and lament in vain, being tormented eternally, *for the one confessing is not in Hades*,<sup>822</sup> according to the psalm verse, moreover, the help of the Holy Spirit will no more accompany those who have been condemned as it does now. For *they will be cut in two*, as the Lord says,<sup>823</sup> they will be divided by the life giving Spirit who had been dishonored by them. We believe the meaning as it was explained previously<sup>824</sup> and as the verse of the psalm hints at: *For the Lord will not allow the rod of the sinners upon the inheritance of the righteous, lest [173] the righteous stretch out their hands in wrongdoing*,<sup>825</sup> since their life is unmixed, not only on account of

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<sup>820</sup> Probably an anti-Origenist comment directed against statements in Oikoumenios' commentary which seem to suggest that punishment may not be eternal. For example, Oikoumenios interprets the phrase "unmixed wrath of God" to include mercy (8.13.3, Suggit 129-30). See Thesis chapter 6.1.

<sup>821</sup> 1 Cor. 9:24. Andrew compares God to the kings of the earth who host athletic contests, even though they know that not all of the contestants will be victorious, but only one from each sport.

<sup>822</sup> Ps. 6:5(6). Rahlfs' LXX critical text has this verse as a question: ἐν δὲ τῷ ᾄδει τις ἐξομολογήσεται σοι;

<sup>823</sup> Matt. 24:51, Luke 12:46.

<sup>824</sup> Referring to the angel with the sickle who reaps the earth, Rev. 14:18. (*Chp. 44, Text 156-57, Comm. 156*)

<sup>825</sup> Ps. 125(124):3. The punishments will be applied to the sinful, and not to the righteous. As the life of the righteous was not "mixed" with sin, the punishment of the sinful will not involve the righteous in any manner.

the purity of their lives and the way of life of each being incongruous (with wrongdoing) but also on account of their constancy and steadfastness in (doing) good, neither being provoked toward sin by deliberately choosing inferior interactions nor by weakness of the flesh abating the joy by changing it to fear, but certainly inheriting the incorruptible in God. And these things up to this point (are enough for now), the discussion about other things continues at a fast pace, as was expressly promised. We will continue with the following.

## CHAPTER 51

### How Through the Sixth (Bowl)

#### the Way by the Euphrates was Opened to the Kings from the East

*Rev. 16:12 And the sixth angel began to pour out his bowl on the great river Euphrates. And the water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east.*

Probably by divine permission the Euphrates is lessened to give passage to the kings of the nations for the purpose of them utterly destroying one another and the rest of humanity, which (kings) we think were set into motion out of parts of Scythia recalling Gog and Magog, according to that which is brought out later in the Apocalypse. Probably the Antichrist also will come from [174] the eastern areas of the land of Persia, where the tribe of Dan originates from the root of the Hebrews,<sup>826</sup> either together with other kings or rulers designated with a royal name, to cross over the Euphrates bringing bodily or spiritual death upon people, upon some (bodily death) through faith and patient endurance, and upon others (spiritual death) through cowardice and weakness.

*Rev. 16:13 And I saw from the mouth of the dragon and from the mouth of the beast and from the mouth of the false prophet, three foul spirits like frogs.*

From these it is shown that the same person is both the devil as a dragon, and the Antichrist as the beast and the false prophet as another (person different) from these, as it is

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<sup>826</sup> The earliest expression of the belief that the Antichrist would arise out of the tribe of Dan can be found in Irenaeus (*Heres.* 5.30.2), who interprets Jer. 8:16 as proclaiming this prophecy. Hippolytus repeats this tradition (*Chr. and Ant.* 14.5-6) and it is firmly established by the time of Andrew. Although it cannot be proven, the tradition may predate the Christian era because of the negative reputation of Dan in the Old Testament. See Aune, 52B:462-3.

mentioned. From these, it says, are going out spirits similar to frogs through their green poison and uncleanness and sliminess and their creeping toward the wet reptilian pleasures of the evil powers which by the commands of the devil and false Christ and false prophet are manifested by mouth, which will show deceitful *signs and wonders*,<sup>827</sup> as we will become aware of by what follows.

*Rev. 16:14 For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, to go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on that great day of God the Almighty.*

[175] The false signs which are operated through the demons, it says, (will cause) those persuaded by them to march into war on *the great and terrible day of God*,<sup>828</sup> *judge of the living and dead*,<sup>829</sup> over which, having been entirely defeated, those fighting against God in vain will lament, bewailing their prior error.

*Rev. 16:15-16* <sup>15</sup>*“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is he who is awake and keeps his garments that he may not walk naked and they see his shame!”* <sup>16</sup>*And they assembled them at the place which is called in Hebrew Armageddon.*

The *watchfulness and guarding the garments* mean vigilance in good deeds.<sup>830</sup> For these are the garments of the saints, of which he who is deprived (of them) will need to be ashamed, since he is naked and full of indecency. (The Hebrew word) *Armageddon* is interpreted as “deep cut” or “that which is cut in two.”<sup>831</sup> For there the nations, being gathered together, being minded to follow and being commanded by the devil, who delights in the blood of people, are to be cut down. Since we have learned from here that it is abominable to be naked of the garments of virtue, and from the gospel parable that the one

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<sup>827</sup> 2 Thess. 2:9.

<sup>828</sup> Joel 2:11, Mal 4:5.

<sup>829</sup> Acts 10:42.

<sup>830</sup> The same opinion was expressed by Gregory the Great. “As garments cover the body so do good works the soul.” *Morals* 16.48(63), LF 21:263.

<sup>831</sup> Oikoumenios also gives this interpretation for Armageddon (9.5.7).

being deprived of this is cast out of the bridal chamber,<sup>832</sup> also from the word of the Apostle who, [176] concerning incorruption, says: *Those of us who have been clothed in this will not be found naked,*<sup>833</sup> that is of good deeds, let us earnestly supplicate our Lord here to *wash out* the robes of our souls so as to be *whiter than snow*<sup>834</sup> according to the verse of the psalm, never hearing, "*Friend, how did you enter here without having a wedding garment?*" and being *bound hand and foot* we will be *thrown into the outer darkness.*<sup>835</sup> But according to the wise Solomon, *garments at all times being white,*<sup>836</sup> and with joyful torches of the virtuous manner of life, adorned with sympathy, offering ourselves with the clean and blameless wedding garments of holy souls, let us enter together into the bridal chamber of Christ our God to whom, with the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, belongs glory, dominion and honor, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## SECTION 18, CHAPTER 52

### How Through the Seventh (Bowl) Hail and Earthquake Come Against the People

*Rev. 16:17-18* <sup>17</sup>*And the seventh angel began to pour his bowl into the air. And a loud voice came out of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"* <sup>18</sup>*And there were flashes of lightning, voices, [177] thunders, and a great earthquake such as never had occurred since people were on the earth, so great was that earthquake.*

The angelic voice from heaven says, "*It is done,*" that is, the divine command is accomplished. The *flashes of lightening, voices, and thunders* mean the amazing nature of these occurrences and the future coming of Christ, just as in ancient times in the descent of God upon Mount Sinai.<sup>837</sup> The earthquake (is) an alteration of all things in existence, as the Apostle had understood, *Again once and for all I will shake not only the earth but also heaven.*<sup>838</sup>

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<sup>832</sup> Matt. 22:11-13.

<sup>833</sup> 2 Cor. 5:3.

<sup>834</sup> Ps. 51(50):7.

<sup>835</sup> Matt. 22:12.

<sup>836</sup> Eccles. 9:8.

<sup>837</sup> Exod. 19:16-19.

<sup>838</sup> Heb. 12:26, quoting Hag. 2:6.



*Rev. 16:19a And the great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the pagans fell,*

A *great city* we take to mean Jerusalem, not great in population and because of great buildings, but the most ancient and greatest in respect to God, also to be contradistinguished from the pagan cities by the sufferings of Christ. This division into three (sections) means, we think, Christians, Jews and Samaritans in it, or, the steadfast believers, [178] and those who pollute their baptism with filthy actions, and those Jews who never accepted the apostolic preaching, all unhindered and boldly asserting the fulfillment of their own preferences, and either the sending forth (to paradise) or the disinheritance into the place appropriate to each of them. For now both Jews and Samaritans, for fear of the pious ones who reign,<sup>839</sup> hide their private wishes and with us they appear to be assigned to their distinct lot, not daring to rebel. Likewise the truly Christians find themselves mixed together with those possessing only the name (of Christian). And when the burning of these temptations will reproach them, then the division of these three will happen, the impious, the pious and the sinners joining those with the same habits and answering as is appropriate for their own fate. The *falling of pagan cities* means either their dissolution or the extinction of the pagan way of life by the coming of the divine kingdom which the saints will take possession of, according to Daniel.<sup>840</sup>

*Rev. 16:19b and the great Babylon was remembered before God, to give to her the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath.*

The populous throng, being confused, it says, by the purposeless distractions of life [179] and having been increased (in size) by wealth from wrongful acts, they will drink from the cup of the wrath of God as though (God), forgetful through longsuffering, comes to remembrance of the trampling upon the righteous and of vengeance of impiety in words and deeds.

*Rev. 16:20 And every island fled away, and no mountains were found.*

*Islands* are the churches and *mountains* are the leaders of them, we are taught to

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<sup>839</sup> This comment creates a clear parameter for dating the commentary. Andrew is writing while Jerusalem is still under the control of Christian Emperors, prior to both the conquest, destruction and occupation of Jerusalem by the Persians in 614, (which lasted until 627 when it was retaken by the Emperor Heraclius), and the Arab conquest of Jerusalem in 637 by the Caliph Omar.

<sup>840</sup> Dan. 7:18, 22, 27.

discern from the divine Scriptures.<sup>841</sup> These flee at the time of attack, being foretold (as) we have heard for ourselves from the Lord, saying: *Then they will flee from the east to the setting sun, and those from the west to the east.*<sup>842</sup> *For there will be great tribulation which had not happened from the foundation of the world, nor ever will be.*<sup>843</sup> Some being tormented on account of sin, others enduring these difficulties patiently in a test of virtue, not only in those difficulties will they be tormented by the Antichrist for the sake of Christ, but also in flights and in the miseries in mountains and in caves which they will prefer to the way of life in the city on account of the preservation of piety.

*Rev. 16:21 And great hailstones, heavy as a hundred-weight (talent), fell on people from heaven. And people cursed God for the plague of the hail, so very great was this plague.*

The *hail*, in that it comes down from heaven, we had discerned to be the wrath sent by God coming down from above; its talent-sized weight (represents) its perfection [180] on account of the extreme (nature) and great weight of the sin, which is characterized as a talent, as Zachariah had seen.<sup>844</sup> Those being afflicted by this do not proceed toward repentance but to blasphemy, proving the hardness and obstinacy of their hearts. Therefore, they will be just like Pharaoh,<sup>845</sup> rather these will be even more stubborn than he was. When the plagues were sent by God at least he was more pliant, confessing his own impiety, and they blaspheme during the punishment.

## CHAPTER 53

### Concerning the One of the Seven Angels Showing to the Blessed John the Destruction of the Harlot's City and About the Seven Heads and Ten Horns

*Rev. 17:1-3 <sup>1</sup>And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke*

<sup>841</sup> Previously expressed in *Chp. 18, Text 72, Comm. 84* concerning his interpretation of Rev. 6:14b.

<sup>842</sup> Andrew offers a biblical quotation here, however the first portion seems to be a variation of Matt. 24:27: "For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of man." It is difficult to know whether this is a manuscript variation in Andrew's text of Matthew's gospel, or whether Andrew was simply recalling a verse from memory and misquoted it.

<sup>843</sup> Matt. 24:21, Mark 13:19.

<sup>844</sup> Zach. 5:7.

<sup>845</sup> Exod. 4:21, 7:3, 9:12, 14:4, 17. Andrew expressed the same idea earlier in *Chp. 50, Text 171, Comm. 166*.

with me saying to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who is seated upon many waters, <sup>2</sup>with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the dwellers on earth have become drunk with the wine of her fornication.” And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, <sup>3</sup>and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was [181] full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.

Some understood this harlot to mean ancient Rome,<sup>846</sup> lying upon seven mountains, the seven heads of the beast which bears her to be the seven most impious kings from Domitian until Diocletian who persecuted the Church.<sup>847</sup> But we, since we are being guided in accordance with the sequence,<sup>848</sup> we would suppose she is either the earthly kingdom in general as (appearing) in one body or the city which is to rule until the coming of the Antichrist. For ancient Rome from long ago lost the power of its kingdom, unless we suppose the ancient rank were to return to her. But if we were to give her this (rank), the one ruling today<sup>849</sup> would be overthrown beforehand, for the Apocalypse says, *The woman which you see is the great city having dominion over the kings of the earth.*<sup>850</sup> And regarding this, in what follows, if God grants, we will express accurately. It is necessary to remark what the

<sup>846</sup> Oik. 9.13.1-5.

<sup>847</sup> Oikoumenios names Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Severus, Decius, Valerian and Diocletian, who “persecuted the Church without restraint.” (9.13.3, Suggit 149)

<sup>848</sup> ἀκολουθία. Andrew refers to a technique by which one arrives at conclusions based upon the correct order or sequence of events. This creates parameters for correct interpretation. Ἀκολουθία was also used to identify the sequence of an argument or orderly progression of a biblical writer’s thought. This was a well-recognized principle in patristic exegesis. Here, Andrew’s objection to Oikoumenios’ interpretation is the violation of the historical sequence, which Oikoumenios felt free to disregard. When his interpretation of a given passage sequentially contradicts an earlier interpretation, Oikoumenios dismisses the inconsistency by explaining that the Apocalypse does not comply with the usual order of events. “For all that the evangelist sees are a vision, and he is often shown the first things last and contrariwise the last first.” (9.5.3, Suggit 142.) “As though in a continual return to the starting point, as already described, the vision now plans to describe an earlier beginning which had indeed been partially mentioned previously....” (7.5.1, Suggit 113). “After many digressions and after reverting from these starting points to previous beginnings, he came to the serious business.” (8.1., Suggit 123) Andrew might have been able to accept that the beast represented the Roman Empire, but it could not represent the “old Rome” and the heads could not be the emperors identified by Oikoumenios. Andrew concluded that the events narrated will occur in the future because the things described – extreme heat, sores, darkness, the Euphrates drying up – have not yet happened. Therefore, if these events are to occur in the future, the beast cannot be Rome and the heads of the beast cannot be first century emperors otherwise the sequence is destroyed.

<sup>849</sup> The dominant city in Andrew’s time was the capital, Constantinople, not Rome. Rome therefore could not be the city described as having dominion over the kings of the earth unless Constantinople was destroyed first.

<sup>850</sup> Rev. 17:18. This detail supports Andrew’s conclusion that the beast cannot be Rome because the woman is described as having dominion over the earth (v. 18), and Rome had lost that level of world-wide supremacy.

(word) *desert* must mean into which one is carried off in the spirit. *Desert* we regard, therefore as the spiritual deserts in every city, or a great throng which is drunk [182] in the soul both by the fornication against God and being charged with other such recklessness. And alternatively one must realize that the Apostle perceives the desolation of the aforementioned harlot as a vision mentally in the spirit, which he saw as womanly because of the luxuriant indulgence toward sin and being without a husband. And she was seated on a red beast, because of the resting upon the murderous and blood-delighting devil and on account of her evil deeds through which the apostate (devil) becomes a coworker in the blasphemy against God. For both the beast and the red color mark his savage cruelty, great ferocity and murderous intention. About the seven heads and ten horns with (the help) of God we will learn from the divine angel in what follows.

*Rev. 17:4a And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls.*

She has been clothed in *scarlet* and *purple* as the symbols of her rule over all. Wherefore she has been adorned with *precious stones and pearls*.<sup>851</sup>

*Rev. 17:4b holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication.*

Through the cup is shown the formerly sweet-tasting drink of evil deeds and by the gold (is shown) the high price (of those deeds), as it is said about Job *drinking up scoffing like water*<sup>852</sup> to show that she is not satiated [183] but in thirsting for her own depravity she pursues wickedness. Therefore, she made her own abominations abundant, that is to say, the loathsome practices against God, by which the sin-loving multitude is given to drink,

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<sup>851</sup> Tertullian used the description of Babylon to encourage Christian women to be modest and to instruct them on the inappropriateness of outward adornment. Citing this description of Babylon, he noted that Rome is described as a prostitute, adorned with gold, purple and scarlet. (*On the Apparel of Women* 12. *Tertullian: On the Apparel of Women*, trans. S. Thelwall, *The Fathers of the Third Century*, Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. IV, [Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted 1989], 24.) Cyprian also used this passage to argue that Christian women should not be adorned in a worldly manner. *Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews* 3.36. (*The Treatises of Cyprian*. Treatise XII: *Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews*, trans. Ernest Wallis, *The Fathers of the Third Century: Hippolytus, Cyprian, Caius, Novatian*, Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. V, eds. Alexander Robertson and James Donaldson, [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1990], 544.)

<sup>852</sup> Job 34:7.

imbibing as a sweet draught, the abominable strong drink of sin and the filth of fornication from God.<sup>853</sup>

*Rev. 17:5 And on her forehead has been written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of harlots and of earth's abominations."*

The writing *on the forehead* shows the shamelessness of the offenders filling up to the measure, and the disturbance of the heart, and the *mother* (means) the fact that she is the teacher of soul fornication to the leading cities, giving birth to transgressions loathsome to God.

## CHAPTER 54

### How the Angel Explained to Him the Mystery that was Seen

*Rev. 17:6-7* <sup>6</sup>*And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs [of Jesus].* <sup>7</sup>*When I saw her I marveled greatly. But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her.*

By the literal meaning it is possible to learn much about the names of the cities applied to them in accordance with their deeds. Wherefore, the ancient Babylon was also given the name *the charming harlot, leader of sorcery*<sup>854</sup> [184] and ancient Jerusalem heard *you have the appearance of a harlot*<sup>855</sup> and the older Rome was addressed as *Babylon* in the epistle of Peter.<sup>856</sup> More importantly, the one having power at the time of the Persians<sup>857</sup> will be called both *Babylon* and *harlot*, and every other city which delighted in homicide and

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<sup>853</sup> i.e., apostasy. The harlot of Babylon represents "the glory of this world," according to Gregory the Great, "And this 'cup' is said to be 'golden,' because while it shows the beauty of temporal things, it so intoxicates foolish minds with its concupiscence, that they desire temporal display, and despise invisible beauties." *Morals* 34.15(26), LF 31:639.

<sup>854</sup> Nah. 3:4. The word for sorcery, φάρμακον, can also mean "poison."

<sup>855</sup> Jer. 3:3.

<sup>856</sup> 1 Pet. 5:13.

<sup>857</sup> The Persian kingdom in the early seventh century included the area which had been that of ancient Mesopotamia and encompassed the actual, historical city of Babylon.

bloodshed. So the Evangelist seeing one of these, having been polluted with the blood of the saints, was amazed and he learned from the angel the things about her, such things as to what extent it is necessary for her holding power to suffer for her offense until the end time of earthly rule, either that one chooses to understand it as the one ruling in the time of the Persians, or the old Rome or the New, or taken generally as the kingdom in one unit, as it is said. For in each of these (cities) various sins had been born and blood of the saints poured out, some more, some less, we have been taught. And the blood the martyrs (shed in the former Rome) until Diocletian or the torments of those (martyrs) in Persia, who could enumerate them?<sup>858</sup> These things were endured under Julian secretly<sup>859</sup> and the things they dared to do in the time of the Arians against the orthodox in the New Rome<sup>860</sup> the histories present to those who read.

*Rev. 17:8a The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is to ascend from the bottomless pit and goes to perdition.*

[185] *The beast is the devil who always seeks to devour someone.*<sup>861</sup> This one, having been slain by the cross of Christ, it is said, will again be revived at the end of the world, performing the denial of the Savior in *signs and wonders*<sup>862</sup> of deception through the Antichrist. Therefore *he was* because he was exerting his power before the cross. *He is not* because after the saving passion he had been enfeebled and his power, which he had held

<sup>858</sup> The extensive martyrdom of Persian Christians, in which reportedly approximately 16,000 Christians were martyred in 343, is described by Sozomen in his *Ecclesiastical History* 2.9-14. Andrew may also be thinking of events closer to his own time in which Persian Christians were martyred under the Persian Emperor Khosrov whose own chief wife and queen was an outspoken and influential Christian. "But when the days were fulfilled and she reached the end of her time, many of the magi who had converted to Christianity were put to a martyr's death in various places." (Sebeos 13, *The Armenian History* 29.) Although there were Christian martyrs during the reign of Khosrov, he was not a very ardent persecutor. (Bernard Flusin, ed. *Saint Anastase le Perse et l'histoire de la Palestine au début du VII<sup>e</sup> siècle*. 2 vols. [Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1992], "Martyrs sous Chosroès", II, 118-27.)

<sup>859</sup> Emperor Julian, "the Apostate." See Socrates *Ecclesiastical History* 3.12-13, 15, 19 and Sozomen *Ecclesiastical History* 5.5, 9-11, 18. (See also *Text* 136, *Comm.* 140, fn 691.)

<sup>860</sup> On the persecution by Arians against the orthodox Christians, including torture, confiscation of property, martyrdom and exile, see Socrates *History* 2.12-16. For the persecutions of the orthodox Christians under Macedonius, the Arian bishop of Constantinople see Socrates *History* 2.27 and 38. For Arian persecutions in Alexandria see 2.28, in which Socrates quotes from Athanasius' *Apology for his Flight* describing the persecutions which occurred in that city.

<sup>861</sup> 1 Pet. 5:8.

<sup>862</sup> 2 Thess. 2:9.

over the nations through idolatry, had been displaced. *He will come* at the end of the world in the manner which we had said *rising up out of the abyss*, or from where he had been condemned — where the demons cast out had beseeched Christ not to be sent, but instead into the swine<sup>863</sup> — or he will come out of the present life which is figuratively called *abyss* because of the depth of the indwelling of sin which is blown and tossed about by the winds of the passions. For thereupon, the Antichrist will come carrying Satan in himself, bringing about the ruin of human beings, going to perdition in the future age.

*Rev. 17:8b And the inhabitants on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will marvel seeing the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.*

They will be amazed, it says, by the coming of the beast on account of the wonders (caused) by trickery, [186] those who had not been written in the book of those living eternally in glory and those not given elementary instruction before about the things unerringly foretold concerning Christ, wondering how he (the beast) regained his former sovereignty.

*Rev. 17:9a Here is a mind having wisdom:*

Since the things said being interpreted are spiritual, spiritual wisdom is needed to understand, and not worldly (wisdom).

*Rev. 17:9b The seven heads are seven mountains upon which the woman is seated and there are seven kings.*

*Seven heads and seven mountains* we think imply seven places standing out from the rest in worldly prominence and power, these upon which we know were established in due season the (ruling) kingdom of the world.<sup>864</sup> The first being the rule of the Assyrians in

<sup>863</sup> Matt. 8:31, Mark 5:12, Luke 8:32.

<sup>864</sup> Many interpreters saw the seven hills or seven mountains as a clear reference to the city of Rome, including Oikoumenios (9.13), but especially those who lived before the legalization of Christianity, such as Victorinus, 17.9 and Tertullian, who wrote: "For this, again, is no novelty to the Divine Scriptures, figuratively to use a transference of *name* grounded on parallelism of *crimes*.... So again, Babylon, in our own John, is a figure of the city of Rome, as being equally great and proud of her sway, and triumphant over the saints." (*An Answer to the Jews* 9, trans. S. Thelwall. *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian*, ed. Alan Menzies. Ante-Nicene

Ninevah,<sup>865</sup> the second the dynasty of the Medes in Ecbatana from the time of Arbaces<sup>866</sup> which dominated the Assyrians, of which it is narrated that Arbaces destroyed King Sardanapalos.<sup>867</sup> After this (came) the rule of the Chaldeans in Babylon over whom ruled Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>868</sup> There upon, after the dissolution of these, the supremacy of the Persians in Susa under Cyrus<sup>869</sup> was established, [187] after this they were brought to an end by Alexander under the kingdom of the Macedonians. After them in the old Rome, (there is) the power of the Romans monarchially ruled under Augustus Caesar after former kings and consuls and controlled by the impious (emperors) up to Constantine, after whose dissolution the imperial offices of Christ-loving kings was transferred to the New Rome. The same idea and the seven kings, we suppose to be indicated by the alternating of genders, in no way hindering the (continuity of) identity of the meaning, even though these *seven heads* are feminine and *seven mountains* are neuter. Here the seven kings were signified. For many times masculine names are found indistinguishably from feminine in the Scripture. And the contrary (as well), such as *Ephraim is a provoked heifer*,<sup>870</sup> and again *Ephraim was a dove*

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Fathers series, vol. III [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprint, 1989], 229.) After the Christianization of the Empire, those who continued to identify the harlot with Rome were forced to give it an allegorical or spiritual meaning. When Jerome writes to Marcella in an effort to convince her to leave Rome and come to live in Palestine, he describes the holy places she could visit and contrasts them with the distractions of Rome. He compares Rome to Babylon, arguing that living there is not conducive to the monastic life. "It is true that Rome has a holy church, trophies of apostles and martyrs, a true confession of Christ. The faith has been preached there by an apostle, heathenism has been trodden down, the name of Christian is daily exalted higher and higher. But the display, power, and size of the city, the seeing and the being seen, the paying and the receiving of visits, the alternate flattery and detraction, talking and listening, as well as the necessity of facing so great a throng even when one is least in the mood to do so – all these things are alike foreign to the principles and fatal to the repose of the monastic life." *Ep.* 46.12. NPNF 2<sup>nd</sup> 6:64.

<sup>865</sup> The Assyrian civilization goes back to the third millennium B.C.E.

<sup>866</sup> The Greek name for the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Median general, also known as "Arbaku" and "Harpagus," who reportedly destroyed Ninevah.

<sup>867</sup> Many identify this Hellenized name with the last great king of Assyria, generally known as Ashurbanipal or Assurbanipal, who reportedly reigned from 668-627 B.C. E.

<sup>868</sup> Early sixth century B.C.E.

<sup>869</sup> Cyrus the Great, who died in 529 B.C.E.

<sup>870</sup> Hos 10:11. Ἐφραὶμ δάμαλις παροιστρῶσα. Rahlfs's critical LXX text reads: Ἐφραὶμ δάμαλις δεδιδαγμένη ἀγαπᾶν νεῖκος. "Ephraim is a heifer taught to love strife." Either way, Andrew's point remains unaffected: Ephraim is a man, but he is described as a female calf. A male heifer would be δάμαλος.



*not having a heart,*<sup>871</sup> and according to the Theologian, *These three bear witness to Christ, the blood, the water and the spirit,*<sup>872</sup> also *They are three,* according to Solomon, *a billy goat, a rooster and a king speaking publicly.*<sup>873</sup> So therefore, through seven heads femininely showing cities and through the seven mountains in due season seven heights surpassing the rest of the body of the earth in neuter, this is not a specific place among the nations but relates to ranks of glory. And by *king* we have understood, so to speak, as either the [188] places which have been honored with royal administration, or those who first reigned in each of the aforementioned, periphrastically defining the entire reign, such as Nino of the Assyrians,<sup>874</sup> Arbaces of the Medians, Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonians, Cyrus of the Persians, Alexander of the Macedonians, Romulus of ancient Rome and Constantine of the New (Rome).<sup>875</sup>

*Rev. 17:10 They are also seven kings. Five of whom fell, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he comes he must remain only a little while.*<sup>876</sup>

The Blessed Hippolytus<sup>877</sup> understood these to mean ages, of which five have passed by, the sixth still stands, during which the apostle saw these things [189] and the seventh,

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<sup>871</sup> Hos. 7:11.

<sup>872</sup> 1 John 5:7-8. All three of these nouns are in the neuter in Greek, however the word "three" which introduces them is either masculine or feminine nominative, τρεῖς.

<sup>873</sup> Prov. 30:29, 31. (LXX) The Hebrew Bible reads "A strutting rooster, a he-goat and a king striding before his people." (NRSV) Regardless of the exact reading, Andrew's point from the LXX again remains unaffected: all three of these nouns are masculine, however, the word "three" which introduces them is in the feminine, τρία.

<sup>874</sup> Herodotus mentions him in *History* 1.7.

<sup>875</sup> On Andrew's recitation of the succession of kingdoms, see *Comm.* 140, fn 692.

<sup>876</sup> Schmid cites this as 9c, and has no verse 10.

<sup>877</sup> Hippolytus cites this verse to explain why the end of the world will take place 6,000 years after the date of creation. Hippolytus believed that Christ was born precisely 5,500 years after the creation of the earth and that it was necessary that the earth complete 6,000 years before it ended. Each 1,000 year period comprised a "day" because of the verse "a day for the Lord is 1,000 years" (Ps. 90[89]:4). This combined with the concept of the end of the world ushering in the Sabbath rest, to occur on the "seventh day," which would commence in the year 6,000. Hence, from the time of Christ, and continuing into the time of Hippolytus, it was still the sixth "day," and five "days" (1,000 year periods) were already completed. In support of this view, Hippolytus quotes from this verse of Revelation "five have fallen, one is, the other is not yet come." *On Dan* 2.4. Andrew lives in the period of time after 6,000 years have already passed, therefore, he lives during the "seventh day." See also fn 878.

which is after the 6,000 years, *has not yet come*, but coming *it must remain a little while*.<sup>878</sup> And these things thusly (are as follows). If, as Irenaeus says, just as seven days had been created, in the same manner also seven heavens and seven angels ruling over the rest,<sup>879</sup> and it seems these things that are said by us are readily received by those hearing them, that also the seven famous kingdoms are the famous ones from the beginning until now,<sup>880</sup> of which five already have fallen and the sixth during which the Revelation was seen, was the one during the old Rome, and the seventh has not yet come, (i.e.) the one in the New; the statement about the world-wide Babylon would well be accomplished in the capital city until the Antichrist, reigning for a little while, as compared to the previous (kingdoms), some of which ruled more than five hundred years, and others more than one thousand. After all, every chronological number is short compared to the future everlasting kingdom of the saints.

*Rev. 17:11 And the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it is from the seven, and it goes to perdition.*

*The beast* is the Antichrist; as the *eighth* he will be raised up after the seven kings for the purpose of deceiving and desolating the earth. *From the seven*, (since) as one of them, he will spring forth. For he will not come from another nation, along (the lines) of the things we have already said, but he will come as King of the Romans for the purpose of the dissolution and destruction of those who were persuaded by him, and after this he will go forth into the perdition of Gehenna.

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<sup>878</sup> The seventh "king" or age, had not yet come at the time of the Apocalypse, nor at the time of Hippolytus, but Andrew believes himself to be living in that age. He is about to explain why the earth did not end when it had completed 6,000 years, as Hippolytus believed it would. Andrew has concluded that the year 6,000 is the beginning of the seventh age, the final "day," which Hippolytus had conceived of as the afterlife. Andrew sees this verse as indicating yet another earthly age beyond the sixth, but it will probably not last very long since "it must remain a little while." Andrew does not accept Hippolytus' interpretation of the "kings" as periods of one thousand years but instead believes they represent a succession of kingdoms, each of which had world-wide domination, with each individual king representing the entire period of domination of that kingdom. Hippolytus lived in the sixth age, because he lived prior to Constantine, who inaugurated the seventh kingdom and the reign of "Christ-loving kings." See *Chp. 54, Text 87, Comm. 178*.

<sup>879</sup> Irenaeus, *Proof of Apostolic Preaching* 9. See *Text 19; Comm. 23, fn. 93*.

<sup>880</sup> Victorinus believed that the seven referred to actual Roman emperors. The five which had fallen were those who reigned between Nero and Domitian: Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Titus, and Vespasian. The one who had not yet come but would only reign for a short time was Nerva (Vic. 17.10).

*Rev. 17:12 And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings [190] who did not yet receive royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast.*

Daniel also previously saw these *ten horns* of the Antichrist.<sup>881</sup> After the accursed one has uprooted three he will make the rest subject to him. *One hour*, it says, is either the shortness of time or the one season of the year, that is to say, a change, clearly three months, after which they will be subjected to the Antichrist as their superior.

*Rev. 17:13-14* <sup>13</sup>*These are of one mind and have given over their power and authority to the beast. <sup>14</sup>They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful."*

Naturally. For *no one can serve two masters.*<sup>882</sup> Therefore, those in agreement with evil and united to the Antichrist will be opposed to Christ. But *he will conquer them, the lamb of God* who was slain for us. For he was not deprived of the reign and lordship over all by becoming man, so that he might acquire his chosen communicants of his own kingdom.

*Rev. 17:15-18* <sup>15</sup>*And he says to me, "The waters that you saw, where the harlot is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. <sup>16</sup>And the ten [191] horns that you saw, and the beast, they will hate the harlot; they will make her desolate, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire. <sup>17</sup>For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and giving over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled. <sup>18</sup>And the woman that you saw is the great city which has dominion over the kings of the earth."*

These things having been explained clearly by the angel, a more detailed elaboration of these things is unnecessary. It is a wonder to me to read how the devil is an enemy and an avenger, because he will operate by directing those ten horns under him, on the one hand to be placed in opposition to the goodness-loving and virtue-loving Christ our God, and on the other hand to devastate the densely populated city which has given itself over to fornication

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<sup>881</sup> Dan. 7:7-8.

<sup>882</sup> Matt. 6:24, Luke 16:13.

from the divine commandments and has diligently served his pleasures and to fill up with her blood (according to) the nature of the blood thirsty beast. When he will lead the burning of this city and the cutting up of human flesh for his own food it will be (for him) an occasion for rejoicing, and he who always rejoices at discord will grant concord to the rebellious ten horns. The fact that the woman being observed is understood as the greatest city which has unquestionable power over the kings of the earth, makes it unambiguous that (here) is prophesied the sufferings of those holding ruling power during those times of the trials, of which God, who loves humanity, redeems us (to take us) to the heavenly capital, the [192] Jerusalem above, in which he will enroll (us), in which *he will be all things in all*,<sup>883</sup> according to the divine Apostle, *when he will destroy every rule — rebellious, that is — and authority and power*<sup>884</sup> and to those who have served him here faithfully and wisely *he gives rest*<sup>885</sup> and *will serve them*,<sup>886</sup> that is to say, he will appoint for them every enjoyment of the eternal blessings that have been *prepared from the foundation of the world*.<sup>887</sup> Let us also be worthy of this, in Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of our souls, with whom is the glory and the power, with the Father together with the Holy Spirit unto the ages of ages. Amen.

#### SECTION 19, CHAPTER 55

##### About Another Angel Showing the Fall of Babylon and a Heavenly Voice Commanding Flight From the City and About the Discarding of the Pleasantries Which it Had Possessed

*Rev. 18:1 And after this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was made bright with his splendor.*

Here is shown the brightness and radiance of the holy powers, a brilliancy surpassing the stars and luminaries by great measure.

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<sup>883</sup> 1 Cor. 15:28.

<sup>884</sup> 1 Cor. 15:24.

<sup>885</sup> Matt. 11:28.

<sup>886</sup> Luke 12:37.

<sup>887</sup> Matt. 25:34.

[193] *Rev. 18:2-3a* <sup>2</sup>And he called out [in] a great mighty voice, saying, "Fallen! Fallen, Babylon the great! And it has become a dwelling place of demons, a habitation of every unclean and detestable spirit. <sup>3</sup>For all nations have drunk of the anger of the wine of her fornication,

Also in Isaiah, concerning the Chaldean capital of Babylon having been seized by Cyrus and the Persians, things similar to these had been foretold,<sup>888</sup> in as much as it was destined to be filled with wild beasts and unclean spirits on account of its complete devastation. For the custom is to banish both the beasts and the evil demons to the deserted places,<sup>889</sup> both on account of the divine Economy having liberated humans from the harm (that comes) from them and on account of their characteristic hatred of mankind. How did the present Babylon water *the nations with the wine of her own fornication?* By becoming altogether the leader in all these transgressions and by her sending to the cities subject to her, through the gifts, rulers who were the enemies of truth and righteousness.

*Rev. 18:3b* and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich with the wealth of her wantonness."

On account of the excesses from unjust riches, it says, extending to that which is far above necessity and behaving insolently toward those in need, it has become a matter of profit to the merchants of the earth.

[194] *Rev. 18:4-5* <sup>4</sup>And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out [of her], my people, lest you take part in her sins, so that you not receive, <sup>5</sup>for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God remembered her iniquities.

As was declared to Lot in Sodom, *Escape, saving your own life,*<sup>890</sup> and in Isaiah *Come out from her and look away, and do not touch the unclean,*<sup>891</sup> likewise he says here. For close association with those who provoke God is shunned.

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<sup>888</sup> Isa. 13:21, 34:13-14.

<sup>889</sup> Matt. 12:43, Mark 5:10, Luke 11:24, Tobit 8:3. It is also customary in prayers of exorcism to order the demons not only to leave but to go to remote, uninhabited places.

<sup>890</sup> Gen. 19:17.

<sup>891</sup> Isa. 52:11.

*Rev. 18:6-7a* <sup>6</sup>*Render to her as she herself has rendered, and repay her double according to her deeds; mix double for her in the cup she mixed.* <sup>7a</sup>*As she glorified herself and was wanton, so give her a like measure of torment [and mourning].*

These things are either those who are blameless and who have suffered under the worst wickedness of those ruling in her, it says, as being the cause, through their endurance in sufferings, of the punishment of those who impose these (sufferings) on them, or it signifies the alteration from [195] roles to roles, from those who have been wronged to some holy avenging powers who through piety have appropriated the sufferings passed on from her wickedness to her co-servants. And the *double cup* it says, is either because the sinners and transgressors are tormented very much both here and in the future, or on account of the soul and body from which the deed (done) was common (to both of them) against which the punishments will be, or because the vastness of divine philanthropy delineated twice both her insufficiencies of pure righteousness on account of having sin (suffering in body) and the torment in their conscience to be endured many times.

*Rev. 18:7b* *In her heart she says that 'I sit like a queen. I am no widow and mourning I will never see,'*

For it is customary for those in abundance to say, if there is no fear of God within them, *I will not be shaken ever,*<sup>892</sup> which also had been witnessed in her.

*Rev. 18:8* *On this account her plagues will come in a single day, her plagues, death, and mourning and famine, and she will be burned down with fire; for the Lord God is mighty who judges her.*

*A single day*, it says, is either the suddenness and brevity of time in which, it says, from both the sword and famine sorrow will come to her, and also from pestilence, [196] to be destroyed and to be burnt down by fire, or (that it is) in the course of this (same) day in which these things prophesied will prevail over her. For after the enemies have taken control of the city, it suffices that in one day all of the evils are to be brought upon the defeated ones and various manners of death. Just as the power of God saves those well-pleasing to him, in the same manner (it) also punishes those unrepentantly sinning against Him.

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<sup>892</sup> Ps. 30(29):6.

Rev. 18:9-10 <sup>9</sup> *And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication with her and were wanton with her, they will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning, <sup>10</sup> standing far off, on account of fear of her torment, saying, "Woe! Woe! The great city Babylon, the mighty city,! In one hour your judgment came."*

Kings here we believe, those rulers are called, as the psalmist says concerning Jerusalem, that *Behold, her kings were gathered together.*<sup>893</sup> Those, it predicts, having committed fornication in her against the divine commandments, on that day will weep both seeing and hearing her consumed by fire and desolation, being struck by amazement at the suddenness of the change, how it happened in such a brief time.

[197] Rev. 18:11-12a <sup>11</sup> *And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for themselves for no one buys their cargo any more, <sup>12a</sup> cargo of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet,*

For those perishing in power and luxury, the purchase and consumption of these is unnecessary.

Rev. 18:12b-13a <sup>12b</sup> *And all kinds of scented wood, all articles of ivory, all articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, <sup>13</sup> and cinnamon, [and spice], and incense, and myrrh, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour and wheat, and cattle and sheep,*

In these are understood the *no one will buy*. We must contemplate in which of the cities is the habitual purchasing of such things, and moreover, in which people the acquisition of superfluous things for boundless self-indulgence is obsessive.

[198] Rev. 18:13b *and horses and chariots, and bodies,*

And the use of these things, it says, will be unnecessary. By "redon"<sup>894</sup> of course chariots<sup>895</sup> are meant, because "redium" is Latin for "chariot." The genitive plural form of this is rediorum<sup>896</sup> which by syncopation became "redon."<sup>897</sup>

<sup>893</sup> Ps. 48(47):4, 2:2.

<sup>894</sup> ῥεδῶν.

<sup>895</sup> τὰ ὀχήματα.

<sup>896</sup> ῥεδιόρουμ, i.e., raedorum.

Rev. 18:13c-14 <sup>13c</sup>and human souls. <sup>14</sup> And the fruit of your soul's desire has gone from you, and all your luxury and your splendor have left you, and is to be found again no longer!"

Neither will they trade the souls of human beings, it says, by enslaving free people, nor will you have enjoyment as (you did) formerly by costly and splendid items.

Rev. 18:15-17a <sup>15</sup>The merchants of these (wares), who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, on account of fear of her torment, weeping and mourning [and saying], <sup>16</sup>"Woe! Woe! for the great city that was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, having been adorned in gold, [199] in precious stones, and in pearls, <sup>17a</sup> that in one hour such wealth was laid waste."

He leads them by this vision to the sufferings of this Babylon, by the lamentations over her describing the magnitude of the calamity which will prevail over her, the very one who formerly boasted of her royal status.

Rev. 18:17b-19 <sup>17b</sup>And every shipmaster and all seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off, <sup>18</sup>and they cried out seeing the smoke of her burning, saying, "What city was like the great city?" <sup>19</sup>And they threw dust on their heads, as they were crying out, weeping and mourning, and saying, "Woe! Woe! The great city in which all who had ships at sea grew rich by her great distinction, that in one hour she was laid waste.

If *the sea*, as had been said,<sup>898</sup> metaphorically is the present life of many waves and the merchants on it are those swimming like lively fish on the billows of life, yet probably also the city (literally) suffering these things by bordering on the actual physical sea will be the cause of sorrow for those conveyed on it [200] by the situation of her own desolation. It is necessary for those merchants of the worldwide Babylon to suffer the same, that is to say, the same disturbance, to lament inconsolably at the end of the visible things, being

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<sup>897</sup> Chariot. Andrew explains why John, who wrote the Apocalypse in Greek, used a Latin word instead of a Greek word for "chariot" in this verse. This explanation may have been taken from Oikoumenios (10.3.2), but the appearance of a Latinism in a Greek text would certainly have been discussed by other Greek expositors long before the time of Andrew and Oikoumenios. Their common explanation may reflect a common Greek interpretive tradition.

<sup>898</sup> Chp. 23, Text 91, Comm. 103; Chp. 34, Text 132, Comm. 136, and Chp. 36, Text 136, Comm. 139.



unwillingly deprived of the pleasures of the present life and being stabbed by their conscience for their own deeds.

*Rev. 18:20 Rejoice over her, O heaven, O holy apostles and prophets, for God judged your charge against her!"*

By *heavens*, it says, either the angels or the saints who have their citizenship in it, with whom he summons the apostles and prophets to be rejoicing, because they have been avenged for what they have been despised for by her, either as having been dishonored oftentimes through the transgression of the divine commandments, as they had uselessly called upon the inhabitants of the aforesaid city, or as having been slaughtered on account of God by the dominion which had been disturbed through the entire earth because they served his words. Wherefore on the one hand, the prophets were killed by the Jews,<sup>899</sup> and on the other hand the apostles were killed by the pagans, to whom especially they preached the word; they rejoice in the bringing on of corrections, not as those rejoicing in misfortunes of others, but as those who have a fiery desire concerning the cutting off of sin; perhaps they who are enslaved to it will meet with a milder punishment in the future because they are being afflicted in part here.

Rev. 18:21-24 <sup>21</sup>*And a mighty angel lifted a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence [201] "will Babylon the great city be thrown down, and will be found no longer. <sup>22</sup>And a sound of harpers and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no longer; and every craftsman of any craft will be found in you no longer; and the sound of the millstone will be heard in you no longer. <sup>23</sup>And the light of a lamp will shine in you no longer; and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no longer; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery. <sup>24</sup>And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth."*

It says, just as the millstone sinks into the sea by violent action, likewise also the demolition of Babylon will be complete, so that not even a trace of her will be preserved afterwards. For this is what is meant by the disappearance of the harp player and the musicians and the rest. The cause, it says, is that all the nations were deceived by her

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<sup>899</sup> Matt. 23:30-35.

particular sorcery and she has become the vessel of the blood of the prophets and the rest of the saints. Possibly what was signified by all these is the impious Persian Babylon, since it received the blood of many saints through various times up to the present, since by both sorceries and trickeries they rejoiced from beginning to end. And this to us is the result of prayer: she is to receive the wages prophesied of her arrogance against Christ and his servants. [202] But it seems to be somehow contrary to the interpretation concerning this by the ancient teachers of the Church, who spoke against making an analogy of Babylon with the Romans by these things being prophesied on account of the fourth beast with the ten horns that had been seen,<sup>900</sup> that is in the rule of the Romans, and from her (Babylon) the one sprouted uprooting the three and subjugating the rest,<sup>901</sup> and to come as a king of the Romans, on the one hand coming on the pretext of fostering and organizing their rule, and on the other hand (coming) to work in reality toward the perfect dissolution. Wherefore, as it is said, someone who would truly take this to mean this (Roman) kingdom originally in one unit that has ruled until now, that poured out the blood of the apostles and prophets and martyrs, would not be led astray from what is appropriate. For just as also this is said about one chorus and one army and one city even if they exchange each of those (individuals) constituting them, likewise in the same way the kingdom is one even though in many times and places it is divided.

## CHAPTER 56

### About the Hymnody of the Saints and the Triple Alleluia, Which They Chanted on the Occasion of the Destruction of Babylon

*Rev. 19:1-4* <sup>1</sup>After these I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! The salvation and glory and power of our God, <sup>2</sup>for true and just are [203] his judgments. He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth in her fornication, and he has avenged the blood of his servants (shed from) her hands." <sup>3</sup>A second time they said, "Alleluia! The smoke [of her] goes up for ever and ever." <sup>4</sup>And the twenty-four elders and the four animals fell down and worshiped God who is seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Alleluia!"

<sup>900</sup> Dan. 7:7, 20.

<sup>901</sup> Dan. 7:8, 19. Irenaeus, and later, other Fathers believed that Daniel and Revelation prophesied that the last kingdom would be that of the Romans, which would supplant those which had come before. *Heres.* 5.26.

The *alleluia* means “divine praise” and the *amen* (means) “truly” or “let it be so,” as is commonly sent up to God three times, it says, from both the angelic powers and people equal to the angels, on account of the tri-hypostatic unified divinity of Father and Son and Holy Spirit, and because *he avenged the blood of his servants from the hand of Babylon* and benefiting her inhabitants through punishment, having been accomplished by the cutting off of sin. And *the smoke rises forever and ever* from the city signifies either the uninterrupted never-to-be-forgotten (nature) of the punishments coming upon her into perpetuity, or the judgments partly rendered to her, to be tormented more fittingly but nevertheless eternally in the future.

*Rev. 19:5 And from the throne came a voice, “Praise our God, all his servants, and those who fear him, small and great.”*

[204] The throne of God is the cherubim and the seraphim, by whom (all servants of God) are called upon to praise him, not only the great but also the small in achievement, each appropriately according to their own power. I think also those presently small in age and immature children being raised as adults will praise the God who does great deeds.

*Rev. 19:6-7a* <sup>6</sup>*Then I heard a voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunders, saying, “Alleluia! For our God the Almighty reigned.* <sup>7</sup>*Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb came,*

*The voice of multitudes and of many waters and of thunders* signifies the thrilling (character) in hymnody of all the angels and heavenly powers who are immeasurable, which some<sup>902</sup> perceived to be those waters above the heavens, with which both the entire assembly of the righteous and the fullness (of creation) glorifies the Creator. Christ reigned (over creation), of whom naturally he was master over as Creator, having reigned over these through the Incarnation, either according to his own will, or suitably by authority both as king and as judge. *The marriage of the Lamb* speaks of the union of the Church to Christ, [205] of which the divine apostles have been the matchmakers through whom the *pledge of*

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<sup>902</sup> This is not Oikoumenios, who does not explain this image. The source of this interpretation is unknown.

*the Spirit was given*<sup>903</sup> to her (the Church), as having regained then the pure face to face union that is due.

## CHAPTER 57

### About the Mystical Marriage and the Banquet of the Lamb

*Rev. 19:7b-9* <sup>7b</sup>*And his Bride has made herself ready.* <sup>8</sup>*It was granted to her to be clothed with fine linen, bright and clean, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.* <sup>9</sup>*And he (the angel) says to me, "[Write this:] Blessed are those who are invited to the supper of the Lamb."* *And he says to me, "These are true words of God."*

The *fine linen* having been put on the Church shows the brightness of virtues and one will understand as the refinement and loftiness in doctrines. For by these [linen threads] the acts of divine righteousness are woven together. The *supper* of Christ is the festival of those who are saved and the all-encompassing harmony in gladness, of which the blessed ones who will attain (this) will enter together into the eternal bridal chamber of the Holy Bridegroom of clean souls. For the One who promised this does not lie. Many are the blessings in the future age and surpass all understanding, and the participation in these is declared under many names, sometimes the *kingdom of heaven* [206] on account of its glory and honor, sometimes as *paradise*<sup>904</sup> because of the uninterrupted banquet of all good things, sometimes as *bosoms of Abraham*<sup>905</sup> because the repose of the spirits of the dead is there, sometimes as *a bridal chamber* and *marriage*<sup>906</sup> not only because of the unceasing joy but also because of the pure and inexpressible union of God to his servants, (a union) so greatly transcending the communion of bodies one with another, as much as light is separate from darkness and perfume from stench.

*Rev. 19:10* *And I fell down at his feet to worship him. And he says to me, "See (here)! Do not (do that)! I am a fellow servant with you and your brethren who hold the testimony of*

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<sup>903</sup> 2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5.

<sup>904</sup> Luke 23:43, 2 Cor. 12:4.

<sup>905</sup> Luke 16:22.

<sup>906</sup> Matt. 9:15, Mark 2:19, Luke 5:34, Matt. 22:1-12, 25:1-13, Rev. 19:7.

*Jesus. Worship God." For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

"Do not worship me," says the divine angel because he was foretelling future events, for the confession of Christ, that is to say, the witness (of faith), is that which provides the spirit of prophecy.<sup>907</sup> And it should be understood in another way, because this prophecy is (given) so that the witness of Christ might be confirmed and the faith be affirmed by the saints. Wherefore he ought not worship a fellow servant but the One who holds dominion over all. And from these we learn of the humble spirit of the holy angels, how they do not usurp the glory of God, contrary to the [207] destructive demons, but rather offer this (glory) to the Master.<sup>908</sup> May we also *honor one another*<sup>909</sup> by humblemindedness, fulfilling the saying of the Master, *Learn from me, for I am meek and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls,*<sup>910</sup> and obtain rest in the future where *pain, sorrow and sighing have fled away,*<sup>911</sup> *the dwelling of all those who rejoice*<sup>912</sup> where the dwelling place of all those

<sup>907</sup> Oikoumenios' opinion. See 10.11.9.

<sup>908</sup> A number of patristic writers commented on the contrast between angels, who refuse to be worshipped by people, and demons, who demand it, citing Rev. 19:10. "The good angel adores the Lord because with upright heart he recognizes the Creator and does not allow himself to be worshipped by men...But wicked angels command that they be adored, as in the gospel Satan said to the Lord Christ when he had taken Him up on the mountain and shown Him the kingdoms of the world." (Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms* 96.7, ACW 52:428.) Augustine, discoursing on Psalm 97, accuses the pagans of devil worship, because idols do not exist, therefore pagans are in fact sacrificing to devils. To those who claimed that they are not worshipping demons but worshipping angels, Augustine responds that he wished they were. "They answer, 'We do not worship devils, we worship angels, as ye call them, the powers and ministers of the great God.' I wish ye would worship them; ye would easily learn from themselves not to worship them. Hear an angel teaching. He was teaching a disciple of Christ, and showing him many wonders in the Revelation of John; and when some wonderful vision had been shown him, he trembled and fell down at the angel's feet; but the angel who sought not but the glory of God said, 'See thou, do it not; for I am a fellow servant'... He is angry with thee when thou has chosen to worship him; for he is righteous, and loveth God. As devils are angry if they are not worshipped, so are angels angry if they are worshipped instead of God." (*On the Psalms*, 97.10. NPNF 1<sup>st</sup> 8:477-8.) Gregory the Great comments that the worship of an angel was not forbidden in the time of the Old Testament, but it was forbidden after the Incarnation because Christ had assumed human nature. "Hence it is, that before His Incarnation we read in the Old Testament, that a man adored an angel, and was not forbidden to adore him. (Gen 19:1, Josh. 5:13-16) But when after the coming of the Redeemer, John had prostrated himself to adore the angel, he heard, 'See thou do it not, I am they fellow servant, and of thy brethren.' For what is meant by the angels first patiently allowing themselves to be adored by man, and afterwards refusing it, except that at first the more abject they knew man to be, who had been given up to carnal corruptions, and was not yet delivered from this condition, the more justly did they despise Him, but that afterwards they could not keep human nature in subjection under them, inasmuch as they beheld it, in their Maker, exalted even above themselves? ...He then, who became lower than the angels for our sake, made us equal to the angels by virtue of His humiliation." *Morals* 27.15(29), LF 23:220.

<sup>909</sup> Rom. 12:10.

<sup>910</sup> Matt. 11:29.

<sup>911</sup> Isa. 35:10, 51:11.

rejoicing is illumined by *the light of the countenance of Christ*<sup>913</sup> our God, to whom belongs all glorification, honor and worship, together with the Father and the Life-Giving Spirit, unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## SECTION 20, CHAPTER 58

### How the Evangelist Saw Christ on Horseback with Angelic Powers

*Rev. 19:11-12a* <sup>11</sup> *Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and he sitting upon it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.*  
<sup>12a</sup> *His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems.*

[208] The heavens opening signifies the appearance of the visible judge to come, just as here, when the curtains of the judges on the earth are drawn back the judgment and sentence come down upon those who are guilty.<sup>914</sup> And the *white horse* is the future joy of the saints,<sup>915</sup> upon which he is carried to judge the nations impartially, I think by his

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<sup>912</sup> Ps. 86:7 (LXX). "The dwelling of all within thee is as the dwelling of those that rejoice."

<sup>913</sup> 2 Cor. 4:6.

<sup>914</sup> Origen discusses this passage at length in his commentary on the Gospel of John. The opening of heaven he interprets as the opening of heavenly truths to the righteous, something which remains closed to the ungodly. "But to the excellent, or those who have their commonwealth in heaven, he opens, with the key of David, the things in heavenly places and discloses them to their view, and makes all clear to them by riding on his horse." (*Comm. on John* 2.4, ANF 10:326) The opening of the heavens is also related to his description as "Faithful and True" because Christ in heaven is the absolute type, and everything else is simply is at best a shadow. He represents the qualities of Faithfulness and Truth in their absolute form, "just as nothing painted or a picture can communicate to the representation all the qualities of the original." (*Ibid.*) "He who sits on the white horse is called Faithful, not because of the faith He cherishes, but of that which he inspires, because He is worthy of faith. Now the Lord God, according to Moses, is Faithful and True (Deut. 32:4). He is true also in respect of his relation to shadow, type and image; for such is the Word who is in the opened heaven, for He is not on earth as He is in heaven; on earth He is made flesh and speaks through shadow, type and image. The multitude, therefore, of those which are reputed to believe are disciples of the shadow of the Word, not of the true Word of God, which is in the opened heaven." (*Ibid.*)

<sup>915</sup> For Oikoumenios the white horse signifies that Christ rests upon "the pure and those unmarked by any stain of sin." (10.13.3, Suggit 163) For Origen, "The horse is white because it is the nature of higher knowledge to be clear and white and full of light." (*On John* 2.4, ANF 10:325) Elsewhere, Origen reports other possible interpretations regarding the horse: "And perhaps somebody will say that the white horse is the body which the Lord assumed... Another, however, will prefer to say that it denotes the life which the Firstborn of every creature took... And someone else will think that both the body and the life together are called the white horse when they have no sin. Fourthly and lastly, somebody will say that it is the Church which is also called His Body, which appears as a white horse, since she, whom He has sanctified for Himself by the laver of water, has neither spot nor wrinkle." (*Comm. on the Song of Songs* 2.6, ACW 26:142)

watchful, providential power throwing out flames of fire, which to the righteous illuminate but do not burn, but to the sinners burn and do not illumine.<sup>916</sup> The *many diadems* implies either his rule over all those in heaven and on earth — for so many are the ranks of angels and so many the royal scepters of the earth, and so many are the congregations of the holy people — or the victory through forbearance against the sinners in every condescension for us.<sup>917</sup> As some holy man says, *and you will be victorious in your judgment.*<sup>918</sup>

*Rev. 19:12b and he has a name inscribed which no one knows but himself.*

The unknown name refers to his incomprehensible essence.<sup>919</sup> For by many names is the divine condescension (known) as *good*,<sup>920</sup> as *shepherd*,<sup>921</sup> as *sun*,<sup>922</sup> as *light*,<sup>923</sup> as *life*,<sup>924</sup> as *righteousness*,<sup>925</sup> as *sanctification*,<sup>926</sup> as *redemption*.<sup>927</sup> And likewise in the apophatic

<sup>916</sup>This is the fourth time the dual qualities of fire have been mentioned. (Previously in *Chp. 2, Text 20, Comm. 25; Chp. 6, Text 32, Comm. 37; and Chp. 45, Text 160, Comm. 158*). Origen gives a spiritual interpretation of the eyes that the “flame of fire is bright and illuminating, but at the same time fiery and destructive of material things, so, if I may so say, are the eyes of the Logos with which He sees, and everyone who has part in him; They have not only the inherent quality of laying hold of these things of the mind, but also that of consuming and putting away those conceptions which are more material and gross, since whatever is in any way false flees from the directness and lightness of truth.” (*On John 2. 4, ANF 10:327*) He judges the nations τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς, literally “by the eyes,” also an idiom which means “impartially.”

<sup>917</sup> Oikoumenios believes that the many diadems show that Christ reigns over many “regiments in heaven and on earth,” (10.13.7, *Suggit 164*) an opinion which Andrew reports here as a possibility. Origen remarks that Christ would have received only one crown if he had only contended against one lie. But since he fought against many lies and conquered them all, and conquered all of the powers which revolted against God, he receives many diadems. (*On John 2.4*)

<sup>918</sup> Ps. 51(50):4.

<sup>919</sup> τὸ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ σημαίνει ἀκατάληπτον. Oikoumenios relates the “unknown name” to the episode in Exodus in which the Lord also did not reveal his name to Moses (Exod. 6:2-3) because, Oikoumenios concludes, the name is incomprehensible to humans (10.13.7). Origen believes the name is known only to Christ because no being existing after him “is able to behold all that he apprehends.” (*On John 2.4, ANF 10:327*)

<sup>920</sup> ἀγαθός. Ps. 34:8, Mark 10:18, Luke 18:9.

<sup>921</sup> ποιμήν. John 10:11-16, Heb. 13:20, 1 Pet. 2:25.

<sup>922</sup> ἥλιος. Mal 4:2.

<sup>923</sup> φῶς. John 1:9, 3:19, 8:12, 12:46.

<sup>924</sup> ζωή. John 14:6.

<sup>925</sup> δικαιοσύνη. 1 Cor. 1:30.

<sup>926</sup> ἁγιασμός. 1 Cor. 1:30.

sense as *incorruptible*,<sup>928</sup> *invisible*,<sup>929</sup> *immortal*,<sup>930</sup> *immutable*,<sup>931</sup> ineffable and incomprehensible in his essence,<sup>932</sup> being known only to himself together with the Father and the Spirit.<sup>933</sup>

[209] *Rev. 19:13 He is clad in a robe having been dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is the Word of God.*

Through these things is confirmed that which had been expounded before. How is he who is inexpressible and in every sense unknowable here called *Word*?<sup>934</sup> Either to show the filial hypostasis<sup>935</sup> and impassible begottenness<sup>936</sup> from the Father, just as our word (which we are about to speak) exists beforehand in the mind, or that he carries in himself the principles for all things in existence,<sup>937</sup> or he is the Messenger<sup>938</sup> of the Paternal wisdom and power.<sup>939</sup>

<sup>927</sup> ἀπολύτρωσις. 1 Cor. 1:30.

<sup>928</sup> ἄφθαρτος. Rom. 1:23, 1 Tim. 1:17.

<sup>929</sup> ἀόρατος. Col. 1:15, 1 Tim. 1:17.

<sup>930</sup> ἀθάνατος. 1 Tim. 1:17.

<sup>931</sup> ἀναλλοίωτος. Mal. 3:6, Ps. 102(101):26-27, Heb. 1:10-12.

<sup>932</sup> τῆ οὐσία ἀνώνυμος καὶ ἀνέφικτος.

<sup>933</sup> All of these concepts have deep theological and patristic roots. For an early and extensive discussion of the meaning of “Logos” by Origen as well as the various images and titles used for Christ, including references to this passage in Revelation, see the beginning of Origen’s *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 1.23-42 and 2.4. For the likely inspiration for this entire passage see the poetic and inspired theological orations of Gregory Nazianzus *Or.* 29.17 (PG 36, 96 C-D) and *Or.* 30.20-21 (PG 36, 129-133).

<sup>934</sup> Λόγος is one of the most complex terms found in the New Testament. It meant not simply “word,” but also “reason,” “message,” “thought,” “deliberation,” “expression,” “reckoning,” “principle,” “definition,” “understanding,” and many other connotations. “Logos” means to Origen, among other things, that “He takes away from us all that is irrational, and makes us truly reasonable...” (*On John* 1.42, ANF 10:319-20) Andrew sees a great mystery and paradox. Considering the incomprehensibility of Christ’s divinity, he ponders how Christ can be called “Word,” which suggests logic, understanding and something which can be communicated and comprehended. Distinctions were also expressed in the patristic tradition between the ἐνδιάθετος λόγος (immanent reason) and προφορικός λόγος (uttered speech).

<sup>935</sup> τῆς ὑϊκῆς ὑποστάσεως.

<sup>936</sup> τῆς ἀπαθοῦς ἐκ πατρὸς γεννήσεως.

<sup>937</sup> John 1:1-3. “In the beginning was the Logos... All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.” “Logos” was also the term used in Greek philosophy to designate the underlying principle governing the created order in the cosmos, hence Origen’s observation that “...the heavens were founded by the reason (λόγος) of God.” (*On John* 1.42, ANF 10:321)



*Rev. 19:14 And the armies of heaven followed him, upon many horses arrayed in pure white linen,*

By this is meant the heavenly ranks splendidly attired by the refinement of their nature and loftiness of their minds and the brilliancy of virtues and by the perfect unity in reference to God.<sup>940</sup>

*Rev. 19:15 From his mouth a sharp sword comes out in order to smite the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, and he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.*

This *sword* signifies the torments that will burden the impious and the sinners in accordance with the just judgment and the command that is proclaimed from the divine mouth, [210] through whom they will be ruled by the unbroken rod of endless torments toward (ensuring) the inactivity of manifold wickedness, about which the saints will remain inexperienced *for the Lord will not allow the rod of the sinners to be upon them*,<sup>941</sup> according to the verse in the psalm. He treads the *wine vat of wrath* (meaning) that the *Father does not judge anyone, but he gave the judgment to him*<sup>942</sup> (Christ) as a human being, which naturally he had possessed from the beginning as the Son.

*Rev. 19:16 On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, King of kings and Lord of lords.*

This name signifies the indivisibility of the divine Incarnation, according to which being God he received flesh and becoming human he is (still) *King of Kings and Lord of*

<sup>938</sup> τὸ ἐξαγγελεῦς, or “the expression of Paternal wisdom and power.” Since “Logos” can also mean “message,” very early in the Christian tradition the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6 was interpreted to identify Christ as “the Messenger of Great Counsel,” ὁ μεγάλης βουλῆς ἄγγελος. “For as with us the word is a messenger of those things which the mind perceives, so the Word of God, knowing the Father, since no created being can approach Him without a guide, reveals the Father whom He knows.” (Origen, *On John* 1.42, ANF 10:320)

<sup>939</sup> 1 Cor. 1:24, “Christ, the power of God and wisdom of God.”

<sup>940</sup> Gregory the Great believes that this heavenly army consists of the saints who “had toiled in this war of martyrdom. And they are said, for this reason, to sit on white horses, because their bodies doubtless were brilliant with both the light of righteousness, and the whiteness of chastity.” *Morals* 31.15(27), LF 31: 446.

<sup>941</sup> Ps. 125(124)3.

<sup>942</sup> John 5:22.

*Lords*. Those who have mastered the passions and acquired authority and dominion over sin as co-workers with Christ also *will rule with him*<sup>943</sup> in the future.<sup>944</sup>

## CHAPTER 59

### About the Antichrist and Those Thrown with Him into Gehenna

*Rev. 19:17a And I saw one angel standing in the sun. And he called [211] in a loud voice to all the birds that fly in mid-heaven,*

This one (angel) we believe to be one of the superior angels who encourages cheerfulness in the rest of the angels upon the punishment of the sinners and the extermination of sin. *Birds* he called the angels, for our clarification, because they fly high and are raised aloft. Fulfillment of the divine will is food to them, in imitation of Christ.<sup>945</sup> *In mid-heaven*, that the assent also be shared by people who are equal to the angels and that the aforementioned joy comes to pass, from which the intercession elevates those below, through which the saints are *taken up to meet the Lord*.<sup>946</sup>

*Rev. 19:17b-18* <sup>17b</sup>“Come, to the supper of the great God, <sup>18</sup>in order to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains of one thousand men, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and the riders on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, and small and great.”

On the one hand, the aforementioned will of God, which is called both *well-pleasing*<sup>947</sup> and greatly desired *supper*, is that *people be saved and come to knowledge of the*

<sup>943</sup> 2 Tim. 2:12.

<sup>944</sup> Oikoumenios believes that it is not the name that represents Christ's flesh, but the robe. The thigh represents his physical birth and shows that despite his physical birth as a human he remained “King of kings and Lord of lords.” (10.13.19) Origen also associates the robe with Christ's humanity because the robe is dipped in blood (v. 13). “Now, in John's vision, the Word of God as he rides on the white horse is not naked; He is clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood, for the Word who was made flesh and therefore died is surrounded with marks of the fact that his blood was poured out upon the earth.” (*On John* 2.4, ANF 10:327)

<sup>945</sup> John 4:34. “My food is to do the will of him who sent me.”

<sup>946</sup> 1 Thess. 4:17.

<sup>947</sup> εὐδοκία. Matt. 11:26, Luke 10:21. After pronouncing woes on the unrepentant cities, Jesus thanked the Father for hiding such things from the intelligent and learned and revealing them to infants, for such was his “good favor” or because such was “well-pleasing” (εὐδοκία) to him. See also Eph. 1:5, 9, Phil. 2:13.

*truth*<sup>948</sup> and that they return and live,<sup>949</sup> and on the other hand, secondly (the will of God) is the punishment of those who themselves pursue punishment. Therefore Christ suitably called the Fatherly will his *food*.<sup>950</sup> This [212] here is called *supper of God*, each human being receiving that which his deeds desired, either the kingdom or punishment. By the *eating of flesh* is meant the abolition of all fleshy things and the disappearance of the names of all those who have authority on the earth. One is reminded of *horses*, not because they will be resurrected but because with them he implies either men who are obsessed with women,<sup>951</sup> or those who had debased themselves in fornication or both, by which those who are mounted upon their horses (implies) those who surpassed (all others) in wickedness. And the one further down he made clear saying *free and slave, great and small*. By *free* and *great* he means the worst ones who sin freely of their own will, and by *slaves* and *small* he means the lesser ones who offend either in accordance with advice or on account of age or weakness.

*Rev. 19:19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who sits upon the horse and against his army.*

He has referred to those campaigning with the devil in the plural because of the many diverse and multifaceted forms of sin, however there are few compared to the angelic powers and humans who are equal to the angels, for those following Christ are expressed by the singular *army* because of the united will and unity of opinion toward pleasing God the Logos.

*Rev. 19:20a And the beast was captured, and with it the false [213] prophet who in its presence had worked the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image.*

Although they, together with those kings and rulers who were obedient to them, marched against the Savior Christ, nonetheless both of them were defeated, the Antichrist

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<sup>948</sup> 1 Tim. 2:4, 2 Tim. 2:25, 3:7.

<sup>949</sup> Ezek. 18:23, 32.

<sup>950</sup> John 4:34. "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me."

<sup>951</sup> θηλυμανής, literally "woman-crazed" or "mad for women."

and the false prophet who had performed signs and wonders, the well-received deceptions, were overtaken by the divine wrath.

*Rev. 19:20b These two will be thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.*

Perhaps these will not die a common death, but in the *twinkling of an eye* those made immortal are condemned to a second death in the lake of fire, as the Apostle says concerning other things: *They will not sleep but they will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.*<sup>952</sup> These likely will go to judgment, those (two) who presented themselves as impious and anti-gods, not into judgment but (directly) to condemnation. If this does not appear (to be so) to some,<sup>953</sup> on account of the statement of the Apostle that the Antichrist is to be *destroyed by the breath* of the divine command,<sup>954</sup> also it is to be found in a saying of a certain one of the teachers<sup>955</sup> that some are to be living after the destruction of the Antichrist, those blessed by Daniel;<sup>956</sup> we say the two (still) living in incorruptible bodies, after their tyranny had by abolished by God, will be delivered to the fire [214] of Gehenna, which to them will be death and destruction by the divine command of Christ.

*Rev.19:21 And the rest were slain by the sword of him who sits upon the horse, the sword which comes from his mouth, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.*

There are two deaths; the first is the separation of the soul and the body, the second is being cast into Gehenna. If (this is applied to) those (who are) together with the Antichrist, it is said they will be led to the first death in the flesh by the sword of God, that is, by his command, and thus afterward the second will follow, if this is correct. If it is not thus, they will (only) participate in the second death, the eternal torment with the ones who had deceived them. And the birds *gorged on their flesh*, (means the same) as was set forth

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<sup>952</sup> 1 Cor. 15:51-2.

<sup>953</sup> Oik. 10.15.5-6.

<sup>954</sup> 2 Thess. 2:8. This verse is the basis for Oikoumenios' argument.

<sup>955</sup> The identity of this particular "teacher" is unknown.

<sup>956</sup> Dan. 12:12. Those who persevere through tribulations.

previously,<sup>957</sup> as now we have understood. In addition to this, as some say, God says through Isaiah, *You have become loathsome to me,*<sup>958</sup> so also, to the saints every fleshy activity is disgusting, grievous and loathsome.

## CHAPTER 60

### How Satan Was Bound From the Crucifixion of Christ Until the End Time, and About the One Thousand Years

*Rev. 20:1-3* <sup>1</sup>*And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key of the bottomless abyss and a great chain.* <sup>2</sup>*And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, [215] who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,* <sup>3</sup>*and threw him into the abyss, and bound and sealed over him, so that he would not deceive the nations, until the thousand years were ended. After these he must be loosed for a short time.*

Here he narrates the destruction of the devil which had taken place during the Master's passion, in which he who appeared to be strong, having bound us (as) his spoils,<sup>959</sup> one stronger than he, Christ our God, redeemed us from his hands, condemning him to the abyss. This is shown by the demons calling upon him not to be cast into the abyss.<sup>960</sup> Demonstrating proof that he has been bound is the disappearance of idolatry, the destruction of the temples of idols and the disappearance of the defilement<sup>961</sup> upon the altars<sup>962</sup> and the

<sup>957</sup> *Chp. 59, Text 212, Comm. 197.*

<sup>958</sup> Isa. 1:14.

<sup>959</sup> Jesus refers to Satan as the "strong man" in Matt. 12:29: "How can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man? Then indeed the house can be plundered." (Also in Mark 3:27.) The same idea is expressed in Luke 11:21, but it is not an exact parallel.

<sup>960</sup> Luke 8:31. Victorinus allegorized the abyss. "Because the devil, excluded from the hearts of believers, began to take possession of the wicked, in whose hearts, blinded day by day, he is shut up as if in a profound abyss." (Vic. 20.3, ANF 7:358) But Andrew interprets the abyss literally, although not necessarily as a physical "place." Origen also cited the Lukan passage which Andrew points to, but Origen seems to have an even more literal understanding. In his exegesis of Gen. 1:2, "darkness was on the abyss," Origen said the abyss indicates a place "where the devil and his angels will be." (*Hom. On Genesis* 1.1. *Origen, Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, trans. Ronald E. Heine, Fathers of the Church series, vol. 71 [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1981], 47-8.) God divided the water and placed the firmament between them. The firmament which is above the earth contains the rivers of living water which spring up into eternal life. But the water below, "is the water of the abyss, in which darkness is said to be, in which 'the prince of this world' and the adversary, 'the dragon and his angels' dwell..." (*On Gen. 1.2, FC 71:50*)

<sup>961</sup> λύθρον, meaning literally filth or "defilement," also "gore." This word was used to indicate blood sacrifices of the type that were performed for pagan gods. Such sacrifices were inherently defiling because they were idolatrous.

universal knowledge of the divine will.<sup>963</sup> And the great Justin says that at the coming of Christ the devil was to first realize that he had been condemned to the abyss and to the Gehenna of fire.<sup>964</sup> It is possible therefore, I suppose, that the sentence of Christ against the devil is understood on account of the aforementioned things that were said before. An angel administers such a sentence, [216] it says, in order to show that he (the devil) is both weaker than these ministering powers in terms of power and that from the beginning in vain he boldly ruled over all. He (John) called the restraint of his evil activity *chain* for our clarification. By the number *one thousand years* by no means is it reasonable to understand so many (years).<sup>965</sup> For neither concerning such things of which David said, *the word which he commanded for a thousand generations*<sup>966</sup> are we able to count out these things as ten times one hundred, rather (they are understood) to mean many (generations). Here also, we

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<sup>962</sup> Altars in pagan temples. That the rise of Christianity produced a rapid decline in blood sacrifice to pagan gods is well documented, even in pagan sources. As early as the famous *Letter of Pliny to Trajan* (early second century) a decline in pagan sacrifice is noted (10.96-7). The decline of the Roman Empire in the third century was attributed to the fact that traditional worship of the Roman gods had been neglected. Cyprian composed a letter in response to Demetrianus, the Proconsul of Africa in the mid-third century, who contended that the wars, famine and pestilence which were then afflicting the Roman Empire were the fault of the Christians who refused to worship the gods. Cyprian argued that the pagans were at fault because they were not worshipping the true God and were persecuted the Christians unjustly. (*An Address to Demetrianus*, 22. *The Treatises of Cyprian*, Treatise V, *An Address to Demetrianus*, trans. Ernest Wallis, *The Fathers of the Third Century: Hippolytus, Cyprian, Caius, Novatian*, eds. Alexander Robertson and James Donaldson, Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. V, [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1990], 464.) After the legalization of Christianity, when Julian “the Apostate” attempted to revitalize the worship of the Greco-Roman gods in the mid-fourth century, he was hard-pressed to find a pagan priest who remembered how to perform a proper sacrifice. (Julian, *Ep.* 20.)

<sup>963</sup> The “divine will,” or “divine desire” is the summarized expression stated above explicitly in *Chp.* 59, *Text*, 211 *Comm.* 196-7. This expression, found frequently in prayers and patristic writings, is a well-known and deeply held theological principle and presumption in the Eastern tradition: God “desires that all people be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth...” (1 Tim. 2:4).

<sup>964</sup> From a work of Justin the Martyr now lost. Justin’s opinion is also known to us through Irenaeus in *Heres.* 5.26.2. Andrew already referred to this statement by Justin earlier. (*Chp.* 34, *Text* 131, *Comm.* 133, fn 666)

<sup>965</sup> Gregory the Great agrees with this interpretation but allegorizes the abyss to mean the hearts of the wicked. “For by the number of a thousand he denoted not the quantity of time but the universality, with which the Church exercises dominion. Now the old serpent is bound with a chain and cast into the bottomless pit, because being tied up from the hearts of the good, while he is shut up in the minds of lost sinners, he rules over them with worse cruelty. And a little while afterwards he is described as brought up out of the hollow of the bottomless pit, in that from the hearts of the wicked which now rage secretly, having then gotten power against the church, he shall break out into the violence of open persecution.” *Morals* 18.42(67), LF 21:368. Interestingly, Victorinus, even though he is a chiliast, also allegorizes the abyss as the hearts of the wicked, but recognizes that the number 1,000 is symbolic and the period began with the incarnation. “Those years wherein Satan is bound are in the first advent of Christ, even to the end of the age.” (Vic. 20:1-3, ANF 7:358.)

<sup>966</sup> Ps. 105(104):8.

infer the number one thousand to indicate either a great many or perfection. For these things require many years for the purpose of preaching the gospel everywhere in the entire world<sup>967</sup> and the seeds of piety to take root in it. They (the one thousand years) indicate perfection because during these (years) being removed from a childish way of life under the Law we have been called into *perfect manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*.<sup>968</sup> The one thousand years, therefore, is the time from the year of the Incarnation of the Lord until the coming of the Antichrist.<sup>969</sup> Thus, the one thousand years that were referred to may be such as what we have explained, either ten times one hundred, as some have thought,<sup>970</sup> or these might fall short (of one thousand years). For it is (left) to God alone, who knows to what extent his forbearance is expedient for us, and in this way he determined the duration of life. After which (binding of the devil) the Antichrist will disturb the entire world, containing in himself the activity of the Originator of Evil, and [217] pouring out the crop of his poisonous wickedness among people, since he sees the unalterability of his own

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<sup>967</sup> Matt. 24:14, “The good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world as a testimony to all the nations; then the end will come.” See also Mark 13:10.

<sup>968</sup> Eph. 4:13.

<sup>969</sup> This opinion, that the millennium represents the era of the Church rather than a specific number of years, has not been found represented in the existing Greek sources prior to Andrew. That is not to say that this opinion was not held by earlier Greek ecclesiastical writers and thinkers. Rather, the fact that this opinion does not appear in earlier Greek writings more likely reflects the disputed and uncertain canonical status of Revelation. During the interval between the second and third centuries, (when millennialism was a commonly held belief among Christians), and the time of Andrew in the early seventh century, Revelation was rarely cited and largely neglected in the East because of the doubts and disputes surrounding it. Origen’s popularity and influence may have helped to end the millennialist view since he offered an entirely spiritual interpretation of the one thousand years in his famous work, *On Prayer*. He remarks that the author of Revelation did not say they would reign for a thousand years *on earth* (*On Prayer* 27.13). Epiphanius supported this view. “Others have claimed that the old man said that in the first resurrection we will complete a thousand year period in which we will live in the same way as now, so that we will observe the law and the other things and all the usages which exist in the world, participating in marriage and circumcision and the rest. Now we do not believe for one moment that he taught this, but some have affirmed that he said this. Now, as is evident, the thousand-year period is written about in the Revelation of John, and most people, including the pious, believe in the book. But most people, including the reverent, when they read the book, since they are familiar with spiritual realities and take [the things that] have a spiritual meaning in it [in a spiritual way], believe indeed that they are true, but that their explanation lies deep beneath the surface of the text. For this is not the only passage whose meaning lies deep; there are many others.” *Panarion* 77, 36.5-6. *The Panarion of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis*, trans. Philip R. Amidon, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). 346-7.

<sup>970</sup> Whether anyone during the time of Andrew maintained the opinion that one thousand represents precisely that actual number of years is unknown. It is not the opinion of Oikoumenios, however, who believes the one thousand years represents the actual period of the Lord’s “earthly residence” during which the “Devil was bound, so that he was unable to oppose the savior’s divine miracles.” (10.17.6-7, Suggit 169)

punishment.<sup>971</sup> From whose deeds the redeeming, all-merciful (Christ) God will rescue us, from the punishment *he has prepared for him and his angels*,<sup>972</sup> and He will show (us to be) partakers of eternal blessings prepared for those *who opposed him (the devil) unto the shedding of blood*,<sup>973</sup> for to Him belongs mercy upon those who rely on Him, and thanksgiving and adoration by all the Holy Powers, together with the Father and the Life Giving Spirit unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## SECTION 21, CHAPTER 61

### About the Thrones Prepared for Those Who Kept the Undeniable Confession of Christ

*Rev. 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they were seated on them, and judgment was given to them, and the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast nor its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or [218] on their hand, and they came to life, and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

Already teaching thrones have been given to the holy apostles through whom the nations have been enlightened. They will be given, according to the divine promise also in the future for judging those who rejected the gospel preaching, as David said, *For there the tribes went up, the tribes of the Lord, to witness for Israel*, and after that, *for there sat thrones for judgment*.<sup>974</sup> And to the rest of the holy martyrs, those who suffered on behalf of Christ and did not accept the mark of the spiritual beast, the devil, the mark, that is, the image of his apostasy, judgment was given, that is to say, authority to judge, through which until now, as we see, *those who are glorified with Christ*<sup>975</sup> will judge the demons, until the consummation the present age, (the saints) being venerated by pious kings and faithful rulers, and

<sup>971</sup> Andrew sees the loosening of the devil's bonds as the period just before the end. For Oikoumenios it is the present day, the period between the end of the Lord's time on earth until now, which is only "a little while" when compared with the past and the future (10.17.10).

<sup>972</sup> Matt. 25:41.

<sup>973</sup> Heb. 12:4.

<sup>974</sup> Ps. 122(121):4-5.

<sup>975</sup> Rom. 8:17.



manifesting God-given power against every bodily ailment and demonic activity. That the devil, the Antichrist and the false prophet act in partnership with each other, just as by their deeds, even so by their names, is clearly shown by the things through which each of them is called *beast*, and from the fact that this *dragon*, that is, Satan, manifests seven heads and ten horns with as many diadems placed on him. And the fact that *the beast coming up out of the sea*, that is, the Antichrist appears in the same form additionally confirms (that he shares) this same will [219] and activity for the destruction of the deceived ones. Those liberated from them by Christ, according to the manner mentioned above, will co-reign<sup>976</sup> until his second coming, afterwards enjoying these divine promises to an even greater degree.

## CHAPTER 62

### What is the First Resurrection and What is the Second Death

*Rev. 20:5-6* <sup>5</sup>*And the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection.* <sup>6</sup>*Blessed and holy is he who has a share in the first resurrection! Over such ones the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him a thousand years.*

From the divine Scriptures we are taught (that there are) two lives and two types of deadness, that is to say, deaths. The first life is the transitory and fleshly one after the transgression of the commandment<sup>977</sup> but the other one is eternal life promised to the saints after heeding the divine commandments of Christ. And in like manner, (there are) two deaths: the one transitory of the flesh and the other (death) through sins leading to the full payment in the age to come, which is the Gehenna of fire.<sup>978</sup> And we know there is a difference among

<sup>976</sup> Oikoumenios understands those on the thrones reigning with Christ as the apostles and the thousand years again to refer to Christ's time on this earth. During that period the apostles were "reigning together with Christ, as they gave orders to demons, cured diseases, and worked countless miracles." (11.3.5, Suggit 172)

<sup>977</sup> After Adam and Eve transgressed against the command of God not to eat the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3), life became transitory because death came into existence. Life became "fleshy" after the introduction of the "ancestral sin," (as Andrew would have referred to it), because humanity became primarily oriented toward the life in this world and not toward the spiritual life.

<sup>978</sup> Andrew expresses the traditional patristic interpretation of the "two deaths." The same position was taken by Augustine. Augustine explained how it can be said that an immortal soul dies this second death: "For, although the human soul is, in a true sense, immortal, nonetheless it, too, can suffer its own sort of death. It is said to be immortal because it can never, in the least degree, cease to live and perceive. The body, on the other hand, is

the dead. For on the one hand, there are those to be avoided concerning which Isaiah says, *The dead will not see life*,<sup>979</sup> [220] that is, those bringing stench and deadness by (their) conduct, and on the other hand, those praiseworthy ones who in Christ *mortify the activities of the body*,<sup>980</sup> who are crucified with Christ and are dead to the world. Therefore those unacceptable dead, those not *buried with and raised with Christ, through baptism*,<sup>981</sup> but those remaining in (state of) death by sins, will not live with him until the completion of the one thousand years, that is, the perfect number extending from the first coming until the second (coming) in glory, as it has been said above, but having been born *from the earth*<sup>982</sup> only and not *by the Spirit*,<sup>983</sup> they will return to the earth.<sup>984</sup> Their death becomes the

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mortal because it can be deprived entirely of life and because, of itself, it has no power to live. Death comes to the soul when God abandons it, just as death comes to the body when the soul departs. There is also a total death for man, a death of body and soul, namely, when a soul, abandoned by God, abandons the body. In this case, the soul has no life from God and the body no life from the soul. The consequence of such total death is the second death, so called on the authority of divine Revelation. The reason why this death of damnation is called a second death is that it comes after that first death which is a divorce of two natures meant to be in union, whether God and the soul or the soul and the body. It can be said for the first death, the death of the body, that it is good for saints and bad for sinners, but of the second that it is certainly good for no one and non-existent for the saints." (*City of God* 13.2, FC 14:299-300. See also *Faith, Hope and Charity* 92-93.) Origen identified three deaths: "I know of three deaths. What are these three deaths? Someone may "live to God" and have "died to sin", according to the Apostle (Rom. 6:10). This death is a blessed one: one dies to sin. This is the death which my Lord died: "For the death he died he died to sin" (Rom. 6:10). I also know another death by which one dies to God. "The soul that sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:4). And I know a third death according to which we ordinarily consider that those who have left their body are dead." (*Dialogue with Heraclides* 25.10-23, ACW 54:76) Ambrose also described three deaths: "One type of death, then, is spiritual, a second natural, and a third penal. But natural death and penal death are not identical. For the Lord did not give death as a penalty, but as a remedy. Hence, when Adam sinned, one thing was prescribed as a punishment" (that Adam would spend his life in toil) "and another as a remedy.... Death has been given as a remedy, as an end of evils" because it marks the end of the cares of this life. *Second Funeral Oration* 37-38 (On His brother Satyrus). *Funeral Orations by St. Gregory Nazianzen and St. Ambrose*, trans. Leo P. McCauley [and others], Fathers of the Church series, vol. 22 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1953) 212.

<sup>979</sup> Isa. 26:14.

<sup>980</sup> Rom. 8:13, Col. 3:5.

<sup>981</sup> Rom. 6:4, Col. 2:12.

<sup>982</sup> John 3:31.

<sup>983</sup> John 3:6, 8.

<sup>984</sup> He is referring to those who are spiritually dead but physically alive. They do not live with Christ now, during the "millennial period" in which Christians await his second coming. Andrew presumes that everyone who dies will be buried. The "return to earth" for those born "from the earth alone" means that they will not later be led up to heaven. Because they rejected life with Christ here on earth, they will not enjoy a future heavenly life. Those who were reborn in Christ through the Spirit, share the eternal life with Christ through baptism now, in this life, and to a fuller degree later. In that respect, they will never return to "the earth," even though their body will physically be buried. Andrew's conception of life and death expresses the classic Eastern

beginning of their future punishment.<sup>985</sup> Those who have a share in the first resurrection, that is, in the rising out of deadening thoughts and mortifying actions, these are blessed.<sup>986</sup> For the second death will have no power over them, that is never ending punishment, but instead, they will exercise priesthood and reign with Christ, as we see it, these things signifying to us (a period of) one thousand years until the loosening of Satan and the deception of the nations, not as being then deprived of the kingship, but as more certainly and very clearly they will possess it by the passage of these temporal things and arrival of eternal things. For the time will be short after the loosening of the devil until the judgment against him and the punishment of Gehenna. Therefore, *they will be priests of God and of Christ* is thought to be a repetition of the [221] foregoing. For things are seen now through the trial and the end result of things, the rewards of the saints and wonders were destined to be then when they had been seen by the Evangelist, as was said. So then, since there are two deaths, it is necessary to understand that there are also likewise two resurrections. First, then, physical death, given as the penalty given for humankind's disobedience, the second, eternal punishment. The first resurrection is being brought to life out of deadly deeds,<sup>987</sup> the second, the transformation from bodily corruption into incorruption.

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Christian theology of baptism, which is rooted in Romans 6:3-11. "If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead will never die again. Death no longer has dominion over him...So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 6:8-9, 11)

<sup>985</sup> A similar position was taken by Fulgentius, in an apparent effort to rehabilitate Augustine. Citing the references in Revelation to the "second death," Fulgentius argued that in fact Augustine did *not* teach predestination, but only the foreknowledge of God. "Therefore, the first death of the soul which a person inflicted on himself, is the cause of the second death. And the second death which God has rendered to the person is the punishment for the first death. And because the unjust person has unjustly inflicted the latter on himself, he has justly received the former from the just judge, so that, because in the latter, the short-sighted sinner willingly sows the seed of wickedness, in the former, unwillingly, he reaps the fruit of punishment.... God has foreknown in the sinners all the future sins of human beings; and, because he did not predestine them to be done, he has justly predestined them to be punished at the judgment." *To Monimus* 1.27.6-7. *Fulgentius: Selected Works*, trans. Robert B. Eno, ed. Thomas P. Halton, Fathers of the Church series, vol. 95 (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 1997), 227.

<sup>986</sup> Oikoumenios' interpretation follows somewhat along these lines. Since the first resurrection comes after the thousand years are ended, which Oikoumenios believes represents the earthly life of Christ, then those who come to life after this period are those who believed in Christ after he had left this earth. The first resurrection is that which occurs by faith and the second is the universal resurrection (11.3.6-12). Similarly, he understands the first death as "the physical death, which separates the soul and the body, but the second death is the spiritual death, resulting from sin." (11.3.14, Suggit 174)

<sup>987</sup> The first resurrection occurs through baptism and living a Christian life. "Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, [i.e., death to sin] we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his." (Rom. 6:4b-5)

## CHAPTER 63

Concerning Gog and Magog

*Rev. 20:7-8* <sup>7</sup>And when the thousand years ended, Satan will be loosed from his prison, <sup>8</sup>and will come out to deceive the nations which are at the four corners of the earth, that is, Gog and Magog, and gather them for battle. The number is like the sand of the sea.

Some, I don't know how, explain the aforementioned time of one thousand years as the three and a half years from the baptism of Christ until his ascension into heaven,<sup>988</sup> after which they conjectured that the devil is to be loosed. [222] Others said that after the completion of the six thousand years, the first resurrection of the dead is granted only to the saints, so that in this earth, in which they displayed endurance, they will enjoy delight and honor for one thousand years, and after that the universal resurrection will occur, not of the just only but also of the sinners.<sup>989</sup> It is unnecessary to note that the Church has accepted none of these.<sup>990</sup> We, therefore, listening to the Lord saying to the Sadducees that the

<sup>988</sup> This precise opinion is not found in any previous author, and it is not exactly the opinion of Oikoumenios (10.17.5-7). Oikoumenios, in accordance with his method interpreting in the Apocalypse as events in the life of Christ, believes that the millennium is the entire earthly life of Christ, from his *birth* until his ascension. Andrew appears to be reporting another unknown, ancient tradition.

<sup>989</sup> This is the classic justification provided for millennialism as found in the early Fathers such as Irenaeus. (See *Heres* 5.32.1 and 5.35.1-2.) Justin Martyr, another millennialist of the early Church, defended this belief based on his reading of the prophets. In *Dialogue with Trypho*, Trypho asks Justin if he really believes that Jerusalem will be rebuilt and that Christians will live there with Christ, along with the patriarchs, prophets, etc. Justin replies, "I have declared to you earlier that I, with many others, feel that such an event will take place. However, I did point out that there are many pure and pious Christians who do not share our opinion. Moreover, I also informed you that there are some who are Christians in name, but in reality are godless and impious heretics whose doctrines are equally blasphemous, atheistic, and foolish....But I and every other completely orthodox Christian feel certain that there will be a resurrection of the flesh, followed by a thousand years in the rebuilt, embellished, and enlarged city of Jerusalem, as was announced by the Prophets Ezekiel, Isaiah and the others." *Dial.*, 80. *The Writings of Saint Justin Martyr*, trans. Thomas B. Falls, Fathers of the Church series, vol. 6 (New York: Christian Heritage, [1948]), 276-77.

<sup>990</sup> Justin expressed the typical millennialist interpretation that the general resurrection would take place after the reign of the righteous with Christ on earth for one thousand years and that this was the teaching of the apostle John. "[T]here was a certain man with us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem; and that thereafter the general, and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place." (*Dial.* 81, ANF 1:240.) One of the most interesting statements in support of millennialism was provided by Tertullian who reported a sighting of the heavenly Jerusalem during the enthusiasm of Montanism. The city had already been seen in the sky: "But we do confess that a kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years in the divinely built city of Jerusalem,... and the apostle John beheld. And the word of the new prophecy which is a part of our belief [Montanism], attests how it foretold that there would be for a sign a picture of this very city exhibited to view previous to its manifestation. This prophecy,

righteous will be like *angels of God in heaven*,<sup>991</sup> and to the Apostle who said, *The kingdom of God is not food and drink*,<sup>992</sup> thus we took the one thousand years to be the time of the preaching of the gospel.<sup>993</sup> For as it had been written above, it is not necessary to understand the one thousand (years) so much by the (literal) number. For neither what is being said in the Canticles, *a man will lay down one thousand pieces of silver for its fruit*, nor, *one thousand to Solomon and two hundred to those who keep his fruit*,<sup>994</sup> meant this number, but (it means) the great quantity and the perfection in harvest, just as here also the harvest of the faith in perfection (is implied) after which *the son of perdition, the man of lawlessness*,<sup>995</sup> will come [223] *in order that all will be judged, those who did not believe the truth but approved of injustice*,<sup>996</sup> according to the Apostle and according to the word of the Lord (who) said *I have come in the name of my Father and you did not receive me. Another will come in his own name and him you will receive*.<sup>997</sup> So then, as it was said, when Satan is loosed from his prison he will deceive all the nations and he will arouse Gog and Magog into war for the desolation of the entire inhabited world.<sup>998</sup> Some think these are the Scythian

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indeed, has been very lately fulfilled in an expedition to the East [a campaign by Severus against the Parthians]. For it is evident from the testimony of even heathen witnesses, that in Judea there was suspended in the sky a city early every morning for forty days. As the day advanced, the entire figure of its walls would wane gradually, and sometimes it would vanish instantly. We say that this city has been provided by God for receiving the saints on their resurrection, and refreshing them with the abundance of all really spiritual blessings, as a recompense for those which in the world we have either despised or lost; since it is both just and God-worthy that his servants should have their joy in the place where they have also suffered affliction for His name's sake. Of the heavenly kingdom this is the process. After its thousand years are over, within which period is completed the resurrection of the saints, who rise sooner or later according to their deserts, there will ensue the destruction of the world and the conflagration of all things at the judgment; we shall then be changed in a moment into the substance of angels, even by the investiture of an incorruptible nature, and so be removed to that kingdom in heaven..." Tertullian *Marc.* 3:24, ANF 3:170.

<sup>991</sup> Matt. 22:30, Mark 12:25, Luke 20:36.

<sup>992</sup> Rom. 14:17.

<sup>993</sup> See also *Chp.* 60, *Text* 216, *Comm.* 200-201.

<sup>994</sup> Song of Sol. 8:11-12.

<sup>995</sup> 2 Thess. 2:3.

<sup>996</sup> 2 Thess. 2:12.

<sup>997</sup> John 5:43. St. John Chrysostom also cites this verse as a reference to the Antichrist in his discussion of the Antichrist figure, "the man of lawlessness" in his homilies on 2 Thessalonians. (*Hom.* 4, NPNF 1<sup>st</sup> 13:389)

<sup>998</sup> Gregory the Great believes that it was ordered that Satan be loosed again so that he might be "recalled for the purpose of an open conflict, that he may be utterly destroyed..." *Morals* 4.9(16), LF 18:195.

nation,<sup>999</sup> the northern most (peoples) or as we call them, the Huns,<sup>1000</sup> who among all the kingdoms on earth, as we see (are) the most populous and warlike, whom only by the hand of God we hinder from seizing the entire civilized world until the loosening of the devil. From the Hebrew language some interpret Gog as “one who gathers” or “gathering” and Magog “proud.” Through the names is to be signified either the gathering of the nations or arrogance.<sup>1001</sup> [224] It must be known that Ezekiel also prophesied that these nations will come in the end times with great power to fall upon the land of Israel and that their weapons are to be burnt for seven years through a great fire,<sup>1002</sup> which on the one hand, some of the interpreters<sup>1003</sup> took (to mean) the fall of the Assyrians with Sennacherib having occurred many years ago at the time of Hezekiah (during) the prophecy of Ezekiel,<sup>1004</sup> but on the other hand, some (interpret it as) the destruction of the nations attacking those who undertook to rebuild Jerusalem after her capture by the Babylonians,<sup>1005</sup> first Cyrus the Persian, and after him Darius having commanded so to the governors of Syria. And some (see) it as meaning the powers of Antiochus having been defeated by the Maccabees.<sup>1006</sup> That the coming of

<sup>999</sup> Josephus states that the Greeks identify Gog and Magog with the Scythians (*Ant.* 1.6.1). Theodore of Mopsuestia identified Gog with the Scythians in the prologue to his *Commentary on Joel*. *Theodore of Mopsuestia, Commentary on the Twelve Prophets*, trans. Robert Hill, Fathers of the Church series, vol. 108 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 104.

<sup>1000</sup> Theodoret also seems to equate the Scythians with the Huns. (*Ecclesiastical History* 5.37.4). Theophanes equates the Avars with the Huns. *Chronogr.* 315 *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, trans. Cyril Mango and Roger Scott, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 446, (de Boor 102, 15f). “Huns” seems to have been a generalized way to refer to various barbarian peoples at that time. See F. Diekamp, *Historisches Jahrbuch* 18 (1897) 17f and J. Darkó, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 21 [1912] 479f.

<sup>1001</sup> Andrew is referring to a traditional explanation interpreting the meaning of these names, but his source is unknown. Both “Gog” and “Magog” are missing from interpretations of names which have been preserved in Onomastica collections.

<sup>1002</sup> Ezek. 39:9. Ezekiel 38 and 39 describe the invasion of Gog and Magog, who will be completely destroyed by the power of God.

<sup>1003</sup> Again, we cannot identify with certainty the interpreters who held this opinion, although Andrew may be referring to a comment by Theodore of Mopsuestia who links the destruction of Gog’s army at the time of the return from Babylon with the fate of the Assyrians at the time of Hezekiah. He describes the events of Hezekiah’s time as a foreshadowing of the destruction that God would bring on the enemies of Israel (Gog) after the return from Babylon at the later date. (*Comm. on Micah* 5, FC 108: 229).

<sup>1004</sup> 2 Kings 19:35, 2 Chron. 32:21.

<sup>1005</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia (*Comm. on Joel* 3, FC 108:121-2, *Comm. on Zephaniah* 3, FC 108:302.)

<sup>1006</sup> Polychronios in Ezek. 38 (A. Mai, *Nova Patrum Bibl.* VII 2, Rom 1854, 121f).



these things is rather appropriate to the end times is clear: First, nowhere has it been written that the Scythian nation is to strike war against the Jews at this particular time but only its neighbors, (enviously) begrudging<sup>1007</sup> their collective prosperity.<sup>1008</sup> Secondly, this had been written about Gog: *He will have been prepared from ancient days and he will come at the end of times.*<sup>1009</sup> Third, in the present (book of the) Apocalypse prophesying the future, [225] it has been written that Gog and Magog will come at the end of this age.

*Rev. 20: 9-10* <sup>9</sup>And they went up over the broad earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire from God came down from heaven and consumed them. <sup>10</sup>And the devil who deceives them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Like wild beasts out of some lairs, thus, it says, they will spread out upon the earth out of their own places, those commanded by the devil and the demons with him, to spread out across the earth, since an army encampment of the saints, that is the Church, is established in the four corners of the inhabited world. They will besiege (the Church) and they will be subdued, not perceiving that not only one angel but many are *encamped in a circle around those who fear God*,<sup>1010</sup> according to the saying in the Psalter, and they will subdue in addition the new Jerusalem, the beloved city,<sup>1011</sup> out of which (came) the divine law, which was taken by the apostles through the inhabited earth. There, (in Jerusalem) they say, the Antichrist will sit in the temple of God,<sup>1012</sup> either in the Judaic one, the old divine

<sup>1007</sup> βασκαίνοντα. The word implies malicious intentions to slander, or cause harm by means of sorcery or an evil eye.

<sup>1008</sup> εὐδαιμονία. The word can mean both “prosperity” and “happiness.”

<sup>1009</sup> Ezek. 38:8.

<sup>1010</sup> Ps. 34(33):7.

<sup>1011</sup> A clear reference to a future subjugation of Jerusalem. Had the Persian capture of Jerusalem in 614 already occurred, such a statement by Andrew would be highly unlikely.

<sup>1012</sup> Andrew is incorporating this detail, taken from 2 Thessalonians, into his end-times scenario. Revelation itself does not describe the Antichrist as “sitting in the temple” but Andrew presumes it because of 2 Thess. 2:3-12, which contains many details similar to Revelation. A “man of lawlessness” will come who will oppose God while exalting himself so that people will worship him as God. He will receive his power from Satan and will deceive people by false signs and wonders. But the Lord will destroy him with the breath of his mouth and the brightness of his Second Coming. Therefore, Andrew ponders whether the Antichrist will sit an actual rebuilt Jewish temple in Jerusalem, or will he present himself somehow within the Church?

temple,<sup>1013</sup> which was destroyed on account of the [226] recklessness against Christ<sup>1014</sup> and is (still) expected by the God-fighting Jews<sup>1015</sup> to be rebuilt by him, or in the real divine temple, (that is) in the catholic Church, usurping that which is inappropriate for him<sup>1016</sup> and *representing himself as being God*, according to the divine word of the Apostle.<sup>1017</sup> But not for long, it says, (for) fire coming down from heaven, either a visible fire as (happened to) the two commanders of fifty men in the presence of Elijah<sup>1018</sup> or the coming of Christ in glory will destroy them *by the breath of his mouth*,<sup>1019</sup> and the aforementioned nations, also devouring their general, the devil, and He (Christ) will deliver (the devil) to the lake of fire together with the Antichrist and the false prophet to be tortured forever and ever. Having

<sup>1013</sup> The opinion of Irenaeus. *Heres.* 5.25.4.

<sup>1014</sup> The Second Temple in Jerusalem, so-called "Herod's Temple" was destroyed in 70 C.E. by the Romans after they had besieged the city for three years. The circumstances of that specific event and a description of the causes and progression of the entire war was provided by Flavius Josephus, a first century Jewish historian, in his famous work, *The Jewish War*. For all practical purposes the destruction of the Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 marked the end of the Roman-Jewish war although a handful of Zealots continued to oppose Roman rule and the war technically continued for another three years. The destruction of the Temple was catastrophic for the Jews since it was the only location where animal sacrifice and other rituals required by the Law of Moses could be performed. Its destruction meant the cessation of the Jewish priesthood, Jewish cultic sacrifice and the end of the biblical form of Judaism. Since that time Judaism has been Pharisaic and rabbinic rather than priestly and sacrificial. Andrew's comment here, that the Temple was destroyed on account of the Jews' "recklessness against Christ" reveals a typical stance among early Christians that the temple was destroyed because the Jews had rejected the Messiah. Furthermore, Christians were convinced that the destruction of the temple signified that the old covenant, along with its bloody rituals, had been superseded and replaced by the New Covenant and its bloodless, spiritual worship. (Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 11.) Christ's prediction to the disciples that the temple would be physically destroyed, not one stone remaining on top of the other (Matt. 24:2, Mark 13:2, Luke 19:44 and 21:6), was remembered along with his statements to the Samaritan woman, "the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem" (John 4:21) and "the hour is coming and now is here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth." (John 4:23)

<sup>1015</sup> Since Andrew is referring here to the physical Jewish temple, this may be an allusion to the attempt by the Jews to rebuild the Second Temple after they had been granted permission and encouraged to do so by the Emperor Julian "the Apostate" in 362. According to the Christian historian Sozomen, Julian even gave public funds for this effort and the rebuilding work was earnestly begun by the Jews, but was halted after a large earthquake occurred before the foundation could even be laid. When work recommenced later, a fire spontaneously erupted from the site, permanently ending the attempt. Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.20.

<sup>1016</sup> τὰ ἀλλότρια σφετεριζόμενον. The adjective means "alien" or "foreign," something belonging to "other peoples." It is used to refer to the ideas or the actions of heretics, apostates and the devil which are contrary to the Christian faith. Here, the "inappropriate things" are that the Antichrist will sit in the temple and insist on being worshipped as God.

<sup>1017</sup> 2 Thess. 2:4.

<sup>1018</sup> 2 Kings 1:9-12.

<sup>1019</sup> Isa. 11:4, 2 Thess. 2:8.



been taught by the Savior Christ to pray that we *not be led into temptation*,<sup>1020</sup> let us earnestly do this, knowing well our own weakness, to deliver (ourselves) from the prophesied trials, neither to see the coming of the false Christ, nor the movement of the aforementioned nations, nor the fatal danger assaulting us to give up the saving faith, but guarding unwounded, if possible, *the witness of conscience*<sup>1021</sup> [227] and (guarding) red-hot the love toward Christ who purchased us by his *precious blood*,<sup>1022</sup> manifesting (our love) through good deeds, let us hope to enjoy the blessings of eternity, being strengthened toward this by the rich mercies of God. May these things be our lot in him, our Savior and Redeemer Christ, with whom the Father together with the Holy Spirit (is due) glory, dominion, honor, now and to the ages of ages. Amen.

## SECTION 22, CHAPTER 64

### About the One Sitting on the Throne and the Common Resurrection and Judgment

*Rev. 20:11 And I saw a large white throne and him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and sky fled away. And no place was found for them.*

By the *white throne* is meant the resting place of God, which he will make in the saints shining by their virtues, being enthroned among them. The flight of heaven and earth is their passing away and renewal into (something) better, in which a place of mutability will not be found. For *if creation is subject to corruption*<sup>1023</sup> on account of us according to the Apostle, *it will be made anew with us in the glorious freedom of the children of God*,<sup>1024</sup> being renewed to a more radiant (existence) and remaining, not to a complete disappearance<sup>1025</sup> [228] just as the Blessed Irenaeus and Antipater<sup>1026</sup> and other saints

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<sup>1020</sup> Matt. 6:13, Luke 11:4.

<sup>1021</sup> 2 Cor. 1:12.

<sup>1022</sup> 1 Pet.1:19.

<sup>1023</sup> Rom. 8:20.

<sup>1024</sup> Rom. 8:21.

<sup>1025</sup> Origen discusses the renewal of the earth in detail in *Prin.* 2.1.1ff.

<sup>1026</sup> Antipater was a mid-fifth century Bishop of Bostra, a city approximately 70 miles south of Damascus, due east of the Sea of Galilee. He was chiefly known for a lengthy composition, known as the *Refutation* which was

supposed.<sup>1027</sup> For the Blessed Irenaeus says, “neither the hypostasis nor the substance of creation utterly disappears — for He who composed it is true and certain — but the *form of this world passes away*,<sup>1028</sup> that is to say, in which the transgression occurred and humanity became old in them, and because of this the form became temporary, all things having been foreseen by God.”<sup>1029</sup> Methodios in the treatise *On the Resurrection* reported thusly: “It is not acceptable to say that it is to be utterly destroyed and that there will not be any earth and air and sky. For the whole world will be consumed in a cataclysm of fire coming down for purification and renewal. It will not come for absolute destruction and ruination.”<sup>1030</sup> And going forward he says, “and Paul testifies clearly saying, *For the earnest expectations of creation awaits the revealing of the sons of God*.<sup>1031</sup> For creation is subject to futility, not willingly, but by the one who subjected it in hope, that it, too, will be freed from the bondage of corruption.”<sup>1032</sup> And things following (that statement). Before these blessed men, Saint [229] David singing a psalm to the Lord was saying, *You send forth your spirit and they will be created, and you renew the face of the earth*.<sup>1033</sup> And Isaiah says, *Heaven will be new and the earth new, and they will not remember the former and it will not come into their mind, but they will find joy and exaltation in it*.<sup>1034</sup> Naturally. For by the excessiveness of the unceasing joy and magnitude of the prizes of the rewards in the struggles they will also forget the pains and labors. And elsewhere the same (prophet) says, *The manner in which the new heaven and new earth, which I make to remain before me, thus will be your offspring and*

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a response to the *Apology for Origen* composed by Pamphilus and Eusebius of Caesarea. Only a few fragments of the *Refutation* remain, preserved in the *Parallels* of John of Damascus. *Refutation* was extremely important and influential during the Origenistic controversies, which were at their height not long before Andrew’s time. Antipater was declared an authoritative Father at the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787.

<sup>1027</sup> See John Chrysostom, *Hom. on Romans* 14, and Origen, *Prin.* 2.1-2.

<sup>1028</sup> 1 Cor. 7:31.

<sup>1029</sup> *Heres.* 5.36.1.

<sup>1030</sup> *On the Resurrection* 1.8.

<sup>1031</sup> Rom. 8:19.

<sup>1032</sup> *On the Resurrection* 1.8, citing Rom. 8:19.

<sup>1033</sup> Ps. 104(103):30.

<sup>1034</sup> Isa. 65:17-18.

*your name.*<sup>1035</sup> Therefore, the creation which came into being for us is to receive with us the way of life changed for the better, not proceeding to non-existence just as neither will we (have no existence) after death.

*Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to their deeds.*

He says *dead*, (meaning) either all people as enduring the death of the body, or those which became *dead by means of transgressions*,<sup>1036</sup> *great and small*, either those being such by age or those who did more or fewer deeds of deadness and accordingly will be punished for the deeds, or *great* being the righteous and *small* being [230] the worthless sinners,<sup>1037</sup> inferior by means of the soul. The *books* having been opened denote the deeds of each and the consciousness of each (person). The one book is (the book) of life, in which are inscribed the names of the saints.<sup>1038</sup>

*Rev 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead in them, and all were judged by what they had done.*

Each body, it says, from out of those (places) where it is dissolved is recomposed and given back, whether it had been surrendered to the earth or the sea.<sup>1039</sup> And *Death* and

<sup>1035</sup> Isa. 66:22.

<sup>1036</sup> Eph. 2:1, 5, Col. 2:13.

<sup>1037</sup> This is the opinion of Oikoumenios (11.8.2).

<sup>1038</sup> Gregory the Great believes the book of life is actually one's own conscience. "For the Book of Life is the very sight of the approaching Judge. In this are written as it were, all His commands, for whoever beholds it, soon understands by the testimony of conscience what he had omitted to do. The books are also said to be opened, because the conduct of just men, in whom the commands of heaven are seen impressed in act, is then made manifest. And the dead were judged out of those things which are written in the Books; because in the conduct of the righteous, which is set forth, they read as in an open book the good which they refused to do themselves, and are condemned on comparison with those who did it." *Morals* 24.8(16), LF 23:60-61.

<sup>1039</sup> Oikoumenios gives a very different explanation here. He defends the Christian doctrine of the resurrection against those who mock it as impossible because it was commonly believed that bodies were composed of the four primal elements: earth, fire, air and water. Having dissolved after death, it was argued by philosophers that bodies could not be reconstituted because the elements separated and returned to their original states. Oikoumenios believes "the sea gave up its dead" refers to the element of water returning its components which had come from humans, and "death and Hades gave up the dead in them" refer to the elements of earth (death) and air and fire (Hades) doing likewise. God will remix the elements at the time of resurrection (11.10.1-9).

*Hades* are not living beings as was written by some,<sup>1040</sup> rather death is a separation of soul and body. To us, *Hades* is an immaterial place, that is to say, invisible, that which receives the souls departing from here. The *dead* are the souls which have pursued deadly deeds. *For the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God*, just as a certain wise man used to say, *and torment will not touch them.*<sup>1041</sup>

*Rev. 20:14-15* <sup>14</sup>*Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.* <sup>15</sup>*And if someone was not found registered in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

[231] That *death and Hades are to be thrown into the lake of fire* shows either that which had been written, *Death, the last enemy is abolished,*<sup>1042</sup> or the evil powers (as) agents of death through sin having their dwelling in Hades and sending there those whom they persuaded to be condemned into the fire. For just as these inhabitants of it are called “city,” thus those responsible for these are (called) *Death and Hades*. For everything which has come into existence by God is *very good;*<sup>1043</sup> things not of that kind that fire will make disappear. It is written *God did not create death.*<sup>1044</sup> Moreover, by this is meant that death or corruption will no longer exist, rather that incorruption and immortality will reign, for if *all those who have not been written in the book of life will be thrown into the lake of fire* one must not be amazed. For also as there are *many mansions in my Father's*<sup>1045</sup> (house) among those saved, thus, here too, there are different places and manners of punishments, those sharper and those milder, by which those not deemed worthy of the book of life will be tried.

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## CHAPTER 65

### About the New Heaven and Earth and the Heavenly Jerusalem

*Rev. 21:1* *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first*

<sup>1040</sup> The persons to whom Andrew refers as holding such opinions are not known. He could be referring to traditions from Greek antiquity or Gnosticism.

<sup>1041</sup> Wisd. of Sol. 3:1.

<sup>1042</sup> 1 Cor. 15:26.

<sup>1043</sup> Gen. 1:31.

<sup>1044</sup> Wisd. of Sol. 1:13.

<sup>1045</sup> John 14:2.

*earth passed away, and the sea was no more.*

Here, too, it does not mean non-existence of creation but a renewal for the better, just as the Apostle says, *This creation will be freed from the bondage of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God,*<sup>1046</sup> and the divine melodist, *You will turn them around and they will be changed.*<sup>1047</sup> For that which has grown old is being renewed, means not a disappearance from existence, but it means the stripping off of old age and wrinkles. It is our custom to say about people that they have become either better or worse. “One has become another.” [233] One must note, that concerning heaven and earth it says that *they passed away*<sup>1048</sup> instead of “changed”<sup>1049</sup> and, just as we (do), he accepted death as some kind of alteration from the former condition and into a better end. About the sea it says that *the sea will be no longer.* For what use (is there) of a sea, when people have no need to sail on it or to provide a cargo of agricultural products found in far away lands? After this also by *the sea* is signified the life of turbulence and many waves, then there will not be any need for it. For not even a remnant of turbulence or fear will be left behind in the saints.

*Rev. 21:2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*

And from this is shown the expression of newness of transformation characteristic of greater joy, which the new Jerusalem will reach, descending from the bodiless powers above onto human beings on account of both sides (human and angelic) having a common head, Christ our God. This [234] city is to be held together by the saints — about whom it is written *holy stones are employed upon the earth*<sup>1050</sup> — having the cornerstone Christ.<sup>1051</sup> It

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<sup>1046</sup> Rom. 8:21.

<sup>1047</sup> Ps. 102(101):26. Augustine remarks: “When we pray that ‘thy kingdom come’ will be fulfilled, what we are praying for is a new heaven and a new earth.” *Retractions* 1.3.2. *Augustine, The Retractions*, trans. Mary Inez Bogan, Fathers of the Church series, vol. 60. (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1968), 14.

<sup>1048</sup> παρῆλθεν.

<sup>1049</sup> ἡλλάγη.

<sup>1050</sup> Zech. 9:16.

<sup>1051</sup> Eph. 2:20, 1 Pet. 2:6.

is called *city* as the dwelling place of the Royal Trinity — for (the Trinity) dwells in her and walks about in her as it has been promised<sup>1052</sup> — *bride* since she is united to the Master being joined to the highest and inseparable union, *adorned*, as if within, according to the Psalmist, having glory and beauty in the varied abundance of virtues.<sup>1053</sup>

*Rev. 21:3-4a* <sup>3</sup>*And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them, their God,* <sup>4a</sup>*and he will wipe away every tear from their eyes,*

From heaven the saint is taught that this tabernacle<sup>1054</sup> is real, which was the type that was shown to Moses,<sup>1055</sup> rather the prefiguration of the type, the type of which happens (to be) the Church today. In this *tabernacle not made by hands*<sup>1056</sup> there will be neither weeping nor tear. For the Provider of everlasting joy will give the unceasing delight to be seen by all the saints.

*Rev. 21:4b and death will be no more, neither mourning nor crying nor pain will be any more. The first things have passed away.*

[235] That is to say, (what) has been written: *pain, grief and groaning have fled away.*<sup>1057</sup> *And the first things have passed away* means that the distress of the saints and the arrogance of the impious has met an end appropriate to each of these.

<sup>1052</sup> Lev. 26:12. "I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people." See also Acts 17:28, "For in him we live and move and have our being."

<sup>1053</sup> The allusion here is probably to Psalm 45(44), concerning the wedding of a king and a beautiful woman, which describes the finery and rejoicing that accompanies the bridal procession. This psalm, a favorite in the Eastern Christian tradition, was interpreted as an allegory in which the king represents the Lord and the bride represents the soul. From their liturgical use, verses 10 and 11 would have been especially familiar to Andrew's audience, and are still today for Orthodox Christians: "Listen, O daughter and see, and incline your ear and forget your people and your father's house and the king will desire your beauty, for he is your Lord."

<sup>1054</sup> ἡ σκηνή. This word has a very rich tradition in Scripture, the history of the people of Israel and the theology of the Church. It can be translated in a variety of ways, including "tent," "tabernacle" and "dwelling." It is used for the tabernacle (Exod. 25:9) which held the ark of the covenant before the Israelites constructed the Temple of Solomon, and as such it was the place where the Lord "dwelt" with his people. It is also the word used to describe the Incarnation of Christ: "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us," (John 1: 14) literally "pitched his tent with us."

<sup>1055</sup> Exod. 25.

<sup>1056</sup> Heb. 9:11, 2 Cor. 5:1.

<sup>1057</sup> Isa. 51:11.

## CHAPTER 66

About the Things Said By the One Sitting on the Throne

Rev. 21:5-6a <sup>5</sup> *And he who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And he says to me, "Write (this), for these words are true and trustworthy."* <sup>6a</sup> *And he said to me, "I myself am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.*

The words are true since they are accomplished by the Truth Himself<sup>1058</sup> and no longer through symbols but they are known through these things themselves.<sup>1059</sup> Christ is *the beginning and the end*, since he is first on account of divinity and last on account of humanity<sup>1060</sup> and extending his own providential care from the first creation of the bodiless ones<sup>1061</sup> until the last of humans.

Rev. 21:6b *To the thirsty I will give from the fountain of the water of life freely.*

To him who *thirsts (for) righteousness*<sup>1062</sup> he promises to give the grace of the life-giving Spirit, which in the gospels he was promising to those who believe in him.<sup>1063</sup> *Freely* because *the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared to the future glory to be revealed*<sup>1064</sup> to the saints, [236] or *freely* because these are not acquired by money but acquired by good deeds and the philanthropy<sup>1065</sup> of the one who will give it (Christ).

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<sup>1058</sup> John 14:6.

<sup>1059</sup> Tertullian uses this image to argue against a heresy created by Marcus and Colarbasus, using the Greek alphabet. He explains that "without those letters truth cannot be found, that within those letters the plentitude and perfection of truth is comprised; for this was why Christ said, 'I am the Alpha and Omega'" *Against all Heresies* 4. (*Against all Heresies*, trans. S. Thelwall, *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian*. Ante-Nicene Fathers series, vol. III. Alan Menzies, ed. [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprint, 1989]), 268.

<sup>1060</sup> Andrew gave basically the same explanation earlier. See *Chp. 2, Text 27, Comm. 33*.

<sup>1061</sup> τῶν ἀσωμάτων, a very common term for the angels.

<sup>1062</sup> Matt. 5:6.

<sup>1063</sup> John 7:37-39.

<sup>1064</sup> Rom. 8:18. This is Oikoumenios' opinion.

<sup>1065</sup> φιλανθρωπία. This word, which means literally, "love for humankind," is an expression of the incomprehensible and inexpressible love of God for all people, not an expression of pity or charity toward a few. Andrew frequently uses this adjective to describe Christ and the Holy Trinity in general.

*Rev. 21:7 He who conquers will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my sons.*

The victor, he says, (in) the war against the invisible demons will obtain these good things, by becoming a son of God, and delighting in the blessings of the Father.

*Rev. 21:8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, as for murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their lot will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."*

In every way, God, who thirsts for our salvation, exhorts us for the inheritance of his blessings through both goodness and misfortunes, by leading us to see the splendor of the heavenly Jerusalem and the dark and grievous gloom of the Gehenna of fire, so that either by yearning for eternal glory or by fear of endless shame, since there is (still) time, we will work to effect the good, along with renouncing all the rest, and those cowardly and unmanly in the contest against the devil [237] he said will be condemned in the second death.<sup>1066</sup> May it be that we, propitiating the *One who desires mercy*<sup>1067</sup> and *not the death of sinners*<sup>1068</sup> rather, wishing to return, to receive of his gifts by good actions, to which (actions) he will exhort us not only through words, but also through deeds and the affecting of sufferings. For it does not suffice for him only to use good and evil for encouragement or discouragement and after this either for punishment and honor of those deserving glory or punishment. He did not even refuse to go through the Passion for our sakes, so that he neither destroyed the free exercise of our own power (of choice) nor did he appear to overlook the cure and correction for our sakes. Therefore, let us not *receive the grace of God in vain*<sup>1069</sup> but let us make his benefits productive through repentance and showing good deeds, that we might attain the

<sup>1066</sup> Tertullian argued that no forgiveness is possible for Christians who commit serious sins after baptism, based on this verse. (See *Chp. 6, Text 33, Comm. 40, fn 171.*) He also cited this verse to encourage Christians not to fear their persecutors, for in the end the persecutors will be cast into the lake of fire. "In the Revelation, he does not propose flight to the fearful but a miserable portion among the rest of the outcast, in the lake of brimstone and fire, which is the second death." (*On Flight in Persecution 7. De Fuga in Persecutione*, trans. S. Thelwall, *The Fathers of the Third Century, Ante-Nicene Fathers of the Church series, vol. IV* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted 1989), 120.

<sup>1067</sup> Mic. 7:18.

<sup>1068</sup> Ezek. 18:23, 32.

<sup>1069</sup> 2 Cor. 6:1.



promised blessings in Christ himself our God, with whom the Father is glorified together with the Holy Spirit unto the ages of ages. Amen.

### SECTION 23, CHAPTER 67

#### About the Angel Showing him the City of the Saints and Measuring its Walls with the Gates

*Rev. 21:9 And one of the seven angels came, who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, [238] and was speaking with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb."*

Through these it is shown that not only the angels apply distressing wounds, but they are like doctors, on one occasion cutting and on another pouring on assuaging medicines. For the one (angel) bringing the wound upon the ones deserving it then, now shows to the saint the great blessedness of the Church. Correctly it says *the bride of the Lamb is wife*, for when Christ was sacrificed as a lamb, he gave himself in marriage by his own blood. For just as the woman was formed out of the sleeping Adam,<sup>1070</sup> taking (her) from (his) side, thus also, Christ having voluntarily slept by death on the cross, the Church, constituted by the pouring out of blood from his side, is given in marriage having been united to the One suffering for us.<sup>1071</sup>

*Rev. 21:10-11a* <sup>10</sup> *And he carried me away in spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the great and holy city Jerusalem [239] coming down out of heaven from God, <sup>11a</sup> having the glory of God,*

To be *carried away in spirit* means to raise up the mindset from the earth through the spirit toward intellectual comprehension of the heavenly things,<sup>1072</sup> upon a *great mountain*

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<sup>1070</sup> Gen. 2:21.

<sup>1071</sup> The mystical interpretation of the piercing of the side of Jesus is widely found in the patristic tradition. See, for example: John Chrysostom *Hom. on Colossians* 6.4 (NPNF 1<sup>st</sup> 13:287) and *Hom. on John* 85 (NPNF 1<sup>st</sup> 14:317); Cyril of Alexandria *Hom. on John* 19.32 (Library of the Fathers series, 2 vols., trans. Members of the English Church, [London: Walter Smith, 1885], 2:645); Tertullian, *On the Soul* 43 (ANF 3:222); Augustine, *Tractates on John* 120.2-3 (NPNF 1<sup>st</sup> 7:434-5), *Serm. on Ps.* 41.9 (NPNF 1<sup>st</sup> 8:131).

<sup>1072</sup> This description is similar to the definition Andrew gave for an apocalypse, the "manifestation of hidden mysteries when the intellect is illuminated." (*Chp. 1, Text 11, Comm.12*) Ambrose used this verse (21:11) to encourage his audience to aspire to such heavenly things. "The manner in which we ascend to heaven is taught by the Evangelist who says, 'And the spirit carried me away to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven.' That is, we may ascend in spirit, since flesh cannot reach her. Let

(means) the exalted and supernatural life of the saints in which the *wife of the Lamb*, the heavenly Jerusalem, will be adorned and glorified by God.

*Rev. 21:11b its luminance like a most precious stone, a jasper, being clear as crystal.*

Christ, the radiance of the Church, on the one hand, being clear as crystal (is described) through jasper as everlasting and life-giving and pure, and through other things he is otherwise described. For it is not possible for one type of example to illustrate his various kindnesses to us in many different ways.

*Rev. 21:12 having a great, high wall, having twelve gates, and at (the gates) twelve angels, and on (the gates) the names have been inscribed, which are (those) of the twelve tribes of Israel.*

The *great wall* of the Church, high and fit for guarding those in the [240] holy city, is Christ, in which the holy apostles are twelve gates through *which we have had access* and *entry to the Father*.<sup>1073</sup> And they are being co-assisted in work by twelve angels, especially those most eminent and closer to God in nearness according to sanctity. For if we have believed that a guardian angel is to be set over each of the faithful, how much more should we realize accordingly that those preeminent among the angels are co-workers with and attending to the founders of the Church and sowers of the word of the gospel? The *names of the tribes of spiritual Israel* have been written upon the apostolic entrances, since the names of the visible (tribes) were written upon the shoulder of the high priest at times in antiquity.<sup>1074</sup> For the writing of these names also now confirms by additional evidence the concern for the faithful by the apostles, just as Paul said he had *concern for all the churches*<sup>1075</sup> and his *heart has been wide open*<sup>1076</sup> *to contain all to whom he gave birth through the gospel*.<sup>1077</sup>

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us, in the interim, rise to heaven so that from heaven this city may later descend to us." *On Virginité*, 14.86. *On Virginité*, trans. Daniel Callam, Peregrina translation series 7 (Toronto: Peregrina Publishing Co., 1989), 43.

<sup>1073</sup> Eph. 2:18. "Why are the apostles and prophets foundations? Because their authority is the support of our weakness. Why are they gates? Because through them we enter the kingdom of God, for they proclaim it to us, and while we enter by their means, we enter also through Christ, Himself being the Gate. And twelve gates of Jerusalem are spoken of, and the one gate is Christ, and the twelve gates are Christ; for Christ dwells in the twelve gates, hence was twelve the number of the Apostles." (Augustine, *On the Psalms*, Psalm 87.4, NPNF 1<sup>st</sup> 8:421.)

<sup>1074</sup> Exod. 28:12.

<sup>1075</sup> 2 Cor. 11:28.

*Rev. 21:13 From the east three gates, from the north three gates, from the south three gates, and from the west three gates.*

The four part scheme of the gates and the three-fold expansion of them means the knowledge of the worship of the Trinity in the four quarters of the inhabited earth, which we have received through the life-giving cross. For the position of the gates is the shape of a cross, [241] according to the figure of the twelve oxen which are holding the sea built by Solomon<sup>1078</sup> characterizing the triple quadrupleness of the apostles who preached the Holy Trinity and the sending forth of the four gospels into the four corners of the earth, through which the mental sea of baptism is represented purifying the world from sins, established by the spiritual Solomon (Christ).

*Rev. 21:14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

The *foundations* of the wall are the blessed apostles, upon whom the church of Christ has been founded, whose names have been inscribed upon them, giving public notice so they can be easily learned by those reading (them).

*Rev. 21:15 And he who was speaking with me had a rod of gold in order to measure the city and its gates and walls.*

The *gold rod* signifies both the dignity of the measuring angel,<sup>1079</sup> whom he saw in human form, and the measured city, whose walls we take to be Christ, which is not measured by humans but by angels through their pure, wise and celestial natures, by which of course both the grandeur and the well-ordered beauty of the heavenly city has been known. The *wall* there we believe implies the divine sacred enclosure and shelter in which the saints will be protected.

[242] *Rev. 21:16 The city lies square, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, twelve thousand stadia. Its length and width and height are*

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<sup>1076</sup> 2 Cor. 6:11.

<sup>1077</sup> 1 Cor. 4:15.

<sup>1078</sup> 1 Kings 7:23-25, 2 Chron. 4:2-4.

<sup>1079</sup> Oik. 12.3.1.

*equal.*

It is *square* because it is firm and solid. For what is equal-sided in depth, length and height, is called by some a cube but is said to mean stability.<sup>1080</sup> The *twelve thousand stadia*, which it says the city has, in like manner is signified probably its great size. For as David says its inhabitants *will be multiplied more than (grains of) sand*,<sup>1081</sup> perhaps in like manner also, by the number of the twelve apostles, it (shows those) through whom it was settled. And the number seven, being mysterious, through some analysis offers a question to be investigated. For the aforementioned thousands of stadia constitute signs, the so-called one thousand seven hundred and fourteen miles,<sup>1082</sup> the one thousand signifying the perfection of the endless life, the seven hundred being the perfection in (eternal) rest, and the fourteen being the double Sabbath of soul and body, for two sevens are fourteen.

*Rev. 21:17 And he measured its wall, a hundred and forty-four cubits, a measurement of a man, that is of an angel.*

The measurement of the depth of the wall is one hundred forty four cubits. The number, composed of twelve times twelve, showing that this number conveys the apostolic teaching.

[243] *Rev. 21:18 The material of this wall was jasper, and the city was pure gold, clear as glass.*

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<sup>1080</sup> Oikoumenios noted the cube-shaped and believed it represented stability (12.3.2). Many Fathers commented on the allegorical meaning of the details, including the shape of the city. Jerome wrote: "Now where there is a square there can be neither length nor breadth. And what kind of measurement is that which makes length and breadth equal to height? And how can there be walls of jasper, or a whole city of pure gold; its foundations and its streets of precious stones, and its twelve gates each glowing with pearls? Evidently this description cannot be taken literally (in fact, it is absurd to suppose a city the length, breadth and height of which are all twelve thousand furlongs), and therefore the details of it must be mystically understood." (*Ep.* 46.6-7, NPNF 2<sup>nd</sup> 6:62-63) Victorinus was inspired by the reference to a square to associate the allegory with the description of Noah's ark. "I say, in respect of the square city, he shows forth the united multitude of the saints, in whom the faith could by no means waver. As Noah is commanded to make the ark of squared beams, that it might resist the force of the deluge, by the precious stones he sets forth the holy men who cannot waver in persecution, who could not be moved either by the tempest of persecutors, or be dissolved from the true faith by the force of the rain, because they are associated of pure gold, of whom the city of the great King is adorned." (Vic. 21.16, ANF 7:359.)

<sup>1081</sup> Ps. 139(138):18.

<sup>1082</sup> Andrew refers to yet another unknown source of information: someone who converted the stadia into miles and gave an allegorical interpretation of the sum.

The *jasper material of the wall* shows the evergreen and unfading life of the saints, as has been said often. Its *gold is pure as glass* because of the radiance and brightness of its inhabitants.

*Rev. 21:19a The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every precious stone.*

The twelve *foundations* are twelve precious stones, of which eight were carried on the breastplate of the high priest in antiquity,<sup>1083</sup> but four have been altered in order to show the harmony of the new with the old and the superiority of those shining through in it. Moreover, the apostles are shown to have been adorned with every virtue through the precious stones.

*Rev. 21:19b The first foundation stone was jasper,*

Through the *jasper*, green in appearance, like smaragdon,<sup>1084</sup> Peter the chief (apostle) is probably signified in as much as he *bore in the body the death of Christ*,<sup>1085</sup> and being shown evergreen and full of youthful spirit in his love toward Him, leading us into *green pasture*<sup>1086</sup> through warm faith.

**[244]** *Rev. 21:19c the second sapphire,*

Through this, similar to the body of heaven, from which they say also takes the azure (color), is to signify I think the blessed Paul, who was *taken up into the third heaven*<sup>1087</sup> and there attracting all those who believe him, (to the place) where he had *citizenship in heaven*.<sup>1088</sup>

*Rev. 21:19d the third chalcedony,*<sup>1089</sup>

<sup>1083</sup> Exod. 28:17-21, 39:8-14.

<sup>1084</sup> Epiphanius, *De duodecim gemmis* 6 (PG 43, 297 B). The entire work is found in P.G. 43, 293-366.

<sup>1085</sup> 2 Cor. 4:10, John 21:18-19.

<sup>1086</sup> Ps. 23(22):2.

<sup>1087</sup> 2 Cor. 12:2.

<sup>1088</sup> Phil. 3:20.

<sup>1089</sup> ὁ τρίτος χαλκηδών, sometimes translated "agate."

This one is not carried on the priestly breastplate, but anthracite,<sup>1090</sup> which is not found here.<sup>1091</sup> One must consider, whether it does not symbolize the saint called “coal” in this way. The blessed Andrew the apostle is “coal” since he was inflamed with the Spirit.

*Rev. 21:19e the fourth, emerald*

By the emerald,<sup>1092</sup> which is of green color and is maintained by olive oil, from which it receives in addition splendor and beauty,<sup>1093</sup> we think is meant the gospel proclamation of the Evangelist John, by the divine oil bringing gladness out of the despondency which comes to us from sins, and also granting us to be evergreen in faith by the very precious grace of theology.

*Rev. 21:20a the fifth onyx<sup>1094</sup>*

[245] By this (stone) having the appearance of a shining human fingernail,<sup>1095</sup> is probably meant James, the first who accepted bodily death for Christ before the others,<sup>1096</sup> which the onyx characterizes (like a nail), being deprived of sensation when it is cut off.

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<sup>1090</sup> ἄνθραξ. Modernly the term “anthracite” would be used, which was believed by the ancients to be similar to coal. The LXX word used for this stone is also literally “anthrax,” the same Greek word that is used for “coal.” Anthracite (ἀνθρακίτης) meant literally “a form of coal,” most likely because it was red in color and was luminous in the dark. It is also referred to as “carbuncle” and “chalcidony”. George Frederick Kunz, *The Curious Lore of Precious Stones*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1913), 162.

<sup>1091</sup> Andrew does not interpret the meaning of chalcidony, which he notes is not found among the precious stones on the high priest’s breastplate. Instead he links it to the first stone on the breastplate which is not found in Revelation, which is ἄνθραξ, anthracite, a very hard, shiny black stone, and derives his interpretation from that. (See also Epiphanius *De gem.* 4 [P.G. 297 A]). Epiphanius’ exposition concerned the gems represented in the high priest’s breastplate. Since some of the gems here in Revelation do not appear in Exodus, Andrew is left to his own devices to interpret them. Here he links the “coal” concept from the glowing red chalcidony in Revelation to the black anthracite in the high priest’s breastplate in Exodus. The ancients enjoyed explaining the various properties and powers of gems, and their explanations can be found in such works as *Περὶ Λιθῶν* by Theophrastus (c. 300 B.C.E.), and Pliny the Elder’s *Naturalis Historia*, Book 37.

<sup>1092</sup> Epiphanius, *Ibid* 3, (P.G. 296 B).

<sup>1093</sup> ὥρα. Literally, hour, time or season, it can also mean youth, grace, as well as prime of life and long life. Perhaps this is an allusion to the tradition that the evangelist John lived for a very long time.

<sup>1094</sup> σαρδόνυξ, a type of onyx.

<sup>1095</sup> Epiphanius, *Ibid* 12 (301 B).

<sup>1096</sup> Acts 12:2.

*Rev. 21:20b the sixth carnelian,*

By the *carnelian*,<sup>1097</sup> in as much as the appearance is (like that) of fire and radiance, having a therapeutic property for inflammations and wounds from iron,<sup>1098</sup> the beauty of the virtue of Philip is represented, I assume, becoming joyfully radiant by the fire of the divine spirit and healing spiritual wounds of those souls who had been deceived, as many (wounds) as had been received by those hurt by the devil.

*Rev. 21:20c the seventh, chrysolite*

By the *chrysolite*, the glitter being similar to gold, perhaps Bartholomew is represented, resplendent by his most precious virtues and divine preaching.

*Rev. 21:20d the eighth, beryl*

By this (stone), being (the color of) the deep sea and thin air, and closely associated with the sapphire [246] perhaps Thomas is symbolized, going abroad far beyond the sea as far as India having been dispatched for their salvation.<sup>1099</sup>

*Rev. 21:20e the ninth, topaz*

The *topaz*, being red and similar to coal<sup>1100</sup> discharging a milky substance, as they say, warding off the pain of those who have eye diseases, can signify the soul of the blessed Matthew, which has been inflamed with divine zeal and has been embellished by his own blood shed for Christ, both freeing from poison by the gospel those who are blind in heart and giving milk to drink to those newly born by faith.<sup>1101</sup>

*Rev. 21:20f the tenth chrysoprase*

By the *chrysoprase* having as its property and appearance a deeper (color) compared to gold, I think Thaddeus is signified, having preached the gospel kingdom of Christ to

<sup>1097</sup> Epiphanius. *Ibid* 12 (301 B).

<sup>1098</sup> Or "sardius." Epiphanius, *Ibid* 1 (293 C). See also *Chp. 4, Text, 48; Comm. 57.*

<sup>1099</sup> Andrew repeats a very old tradition that Thomas traveled to India, where he preached and was martyred. This tradition is reflected in the apocryphal work, *The Acts of Thomas.*

<sup>1100</sup> ἄνθρακτι. Epiphanius, *Ibid* 2 (296 A-B).

<sup>1101</sup> 1 Cor. 3:2.

Abgar, king of Edessa,<sup>1102</sup> which is shown through the gold color, and means his death through its leek-green (color).

*Rev. 21:20g the eleventh, sapphire*

By the sapphire, having a kind of dark blue appearance, that is to say, like the upper atmosphere, probably Simon is signified, as a zealot of the graces of Christ and having a heavenly mindset.<sup>1103</sup>

[247] *Rev. 21:20h the twelfth, amethyst*

By the amethyst, being somehow fiery in appearance, I surmise Matthias is signified, having been deemed worthy of the divine fire in the distribution of tongues and filling again the place of the one who had fallen,<sup>1104</sup> with fiery yearning to be well pleasing to the One who had chosen (him).

We have included<sup>1105</sup> these (interpretations) drawn from those said about the aforementioned stones by Saint Epiphanius and elsewhere adapted (by him) to the leaders of the tribes of Israel, aiming them to serve as training for those pondering enigmas of truth, the precise understanding of which is known only to the one who has revealed (it). The apostles are really the foundations and precious stones, one (pertaining) to this (stone) and one the other, all in common with all (together), preserving the distinctive and remarkable character in the beautiful (stones).<sup>1106</sup> Therefore I pray, please dismiss the complaint about the comparison of these (stones and) thoughts arrayed here as forced. For by the distinctiveness of the virtue of each one of the apostles we did not separate (them) in their communion and

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<sup>1102</sup> Eusebius, *E.H.* 1.13.11-22.

<sup>1103</sup> Col. 3:2.

<sup>1104</sup> Acts 1:26. To replace Judas Iscariot, the eleven remaining disciples chose Matthias by lot. Andrew alludes to God or Christ having chosen Matthias because the outcome of lots was always considered to reflect the will of God.

<sup>1105</sup> Perhaps this is a comment directed toward Oikoumenios, who does not attempt to explain the symbolism of the stones in detail or to associate particular stones with specific apostles. He only remarks that the stones symbolize the virtue of the apostles (12.7.9).

<sup>1106</sup> καλός, which means both beauty and goodness.



solidarity, but through greater distinction of the individuality we were eager to point out their complete identity of content, closely connected to one another like a chain.

[248] *Rev. 21:21a And the twelve gates were twelve pearls. Each of the gates was made from one (single) pearl,*

The *twelve gates*, clearly the twelve disciples of Christ, through whom we have come to know *the door*<sup>1107</sup> and *the way*,<sup>1108</sup> are twelve pearls, acquiring radiance from one *pearl of great price*,<sup>1109</sup> Christ.

*Rev. 21:21b and the wide street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass.*

In one example it is not possible to present the exact (nature) of the good things of the heavenly city. Wherefore *the wide street of the city* on the one hand he viewed as very extravagant and beautifully colored like gold, and on the other hand (it is) clear as crystal, so that for us it is impossible for both (descriptions) to concur in one (image). The saint saw all these things as he was able. Perfect comprehension of the heavenly city surpasses hearing and sight and thought.<sup>1110</sup>

*Rev. 21:22 And I saw no temple in it. For its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.*

For what need is there of a physical temple (in a city) in which God is guard and shelter *in whom we live and move and have our being?*<sup>1111</sup> For He will be this for the saints, both temple and dweller, dwelling in them and moving about just as has been promised,<sup>1112</sup> and *the Lamb*, is the Lamb of God having been sacrificed for us, which clearly by its essence

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<sup>1107</sup> John 10:9.

<sup>1108</sup> John 14:6.

<sup>1109</sup> Matt. 13:46.

<sup>1110</sup> 1 Cor. 2:9.

<sup>1111</sup> Acts 17:28.

<sup>1112</sup> Lev. 26:12: "I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people." See also Acts 17:28: "For in him we live and move and have our being."

is placed together with the life giving Spirit, which he (John) indicated by the river which follows.

*Rev. 21:23 And the city has no need of sun or moon [249] to shine upon it, for the glory of God illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.*

For here (is) the spiritual *Sun of Righteousness*.<sup>1113</sup> (There is) no need of material luminaries. For he is her glory and lamp. And the nations of those who are saved, will walk in her light.<sup>1114</sup> About whom it says:

*Rev. 21:24-25* <sup>24</sup>*And the nations walk by its light. And the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.* <sup>25</sup>*And its gates will never be shut by day. For there will not be night there.*

The nations which are saved, just as it has been said, it says, *in her light they will walk*, those who ruled over the passions on the earth will gain the glory and honor of good deeds in her. That *the gates will not be closed* means either the security and immutability of her inhabitants, or that also there the divine gates of the apostolic teaching are to be open to all for the learning of more perfect things.<sup>1115</sup> It will be day there, and not night. For sinners will have been disinherited from sharing a portion in her.

*Rev. 21:26-27* <sup>26</sup>*And they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.* <sup>27</sup>*But nothing profane will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination and falsehood, those who have not been registered in the book of life of the Lamb.*

[250] The brilliance and the glory of the nations, that is to say, those in them who are well-pleasing to Christ will bear fruit in that city. All that is profane and unclean will not

<sup>1113</sup> This is now the sixth reference to Christ as the "sun of righteousness," found elsewhere in the *Text* 22, 35, 84, 122, and 170 and *Comm.* 27, 43-4, 97, 127, and 166. See *Comm.* 27, fn 114 for an explanation of this image. There will be one further reference to the Sun of Righteousness, in *Text* 267, *Comm.* 243.

<sup>1114</sup> Isa. 60:3 "The nations shall come to your light."

<sup>1115</sup> The idea that spiritual improvement can continue even after death in the kingdom of God was a well-established patristic principle, especially popularized by Gregory of Nyssa. This view was based on Paul's comment in 2 Cor. 3:18, "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord." (NKJV) Gregory wrote that spiritual progress is unlimited (*On the Life of Moses*, P.G. 44.300) and that spiritual growth in the afterlife never ceases (See *About the Soul and Resurrection*, P.G. 46, 105).

enter there. For *what association does light have with darkness?*<sup>1116</sup>

## CHAPTER 68

### About the Pure River Appearing to Flow From the Throne

*Rev. 22:1-2a* <sup>1</sup>*And he showed to me a pure river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb* <sup>2a</sup>*through the middle of her wide street.*

The river flowing out from the Church in the present life hints at a baptism of regeneration being activated through the Spirit,<sup>1117</sup> those cleaned and washed, polished off surpassing snow and crystal.<sup>1118</sup> The river of God, having been filled with waters running through the heavenly Jerusalem, is the life-giving Spirit which proceeds from God the Father and through the Lamb, through the midst of the most supreme powers which are called throne of divinity,<sup>1119</sup> filling the wide streets of the holy city, that is the multitude in her being *increased more than the (grains of) sand*, according to the Psalmist.<sup>1120</sup>

*Rev. 22:2b* *And on one side and the other of the river, the tree of life creating twelve fruits, yielding one each month of its fruit.*

[251] This river, it says, waters the saints planted alongside it, figuratively called the *tree of life* in accordance with the participation of and imitation of the Tree of Life.<sup>1121</sup> *Twelve fruit trees* are bursting forth fruits, that is they will unceasingly burst forth a yield of fruit. For there is no winter of sin there forcing the trees of life to shed leaves as we see

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<sup>1116</sup> 2 Cor. 6:14.

<sup>1117</sup> Ambrose used this verse to support the divinity of the Holy Spirit and the equality of the members of the Trinity. "And what wonder is it, if the Holy Spirit is in the throne of God, since the kingdom of God itself is the work of the Spirit" (*On the Holy Spirit* 3.20.156, FC 44:208-209.) "The Holy Spirit, also, therefore, has participation in the kingdom with the Father and the Son, who is of one nature, of one dominion, also of one power [with them]." (*On the Holy Spirit* 3.20.158, FC 44:209)

<sup>1118</sup> Allusions to Ps. 51(50):10 and Isa. 1:18.

<sup>1119</sup> Jerome explicitly identifies the single throne with the unity of the Trinity. "We believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, that is true, and that they are a Trinity; nevertheless the kingship is one." (*On the Psalms, Hom. 1*, FC 48:8.)

<sup>1120</sup> Ps. 139(138):18.

<sup>1121</sup> Christ.

today, but there will be a fully measured age of fruit-bearing by the saints, which there is referred to as twelve months, perhaps both on account of the custom by us (to think in terms of) the span of a year (and) on account of the preaching of the twelve apostles. It is possible also to interpret the present passage altogether differently. By *the river*, as has been said, the gifts of the life-giving Spirit,<sup>1122</sup> those which (come) through the throne of the Father and the Son, that is the cherubic ranks upon whom God is enthroned, to go out into the *wide street of the city* that is the thickly populated crowd of the saints, as from out the first into the second being derived according to the harmonious arrangement of the heavenly hierarchies. (By) *tree of life* is meant Christ, (whom) we apprehend in the Holy Spirit and in relation to the Spirit. For the Spirit is in him and he is worshipped in the Spirit and is the Bestower of the Spirit,<sup>1123</sup> and through him the twelve fruits of the apostolic choral assembly are granted to us, the unfailing fruit of the knowledge of God through whom the *acceptable year of the Lord [252] and the day of recompense*<sup>1124</sup> is proclaimed to us, having been foretold by the prophet.

*Rev. 22:2c and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

*Leaves of the tree*, that is, of Christ, (are) the most superficial understandings of the divine decrees, as his *fruit* (is) the more perfect knowledge being revealed in the future.<sup>1125</sup>

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<sup>1122</sup> Jerome also identifies the river with the Holy Spirit, but questions how one single tree can be on both sides of the river. "A tree, he says, one lofty tree has been set up. He did not say trees, but only one tree. If there is but one tree, how can it be on both sides of the river? If he had said, I saw trees, it would have been possible for some trees to be on one side of the river and other trees on the other side. Actually, one tree is said to be on both sides of the river. One river comes forth from the throne of God – the grace of the Holy Spirit – and this grace of the Holy Spirit is found in the river of the Sacred Scriptures. This river, moreover, has two banks, the Old Testament and the New Testament, and the tree planted on both sides is Christ." (*On the Psalms Hom. 1, FC 48:9*)

<sup>1123</sup> John 15:26.

<sup>1124</sup> Isa. 61:2.

<sup>1125</sup> Jerome arrives at a similar conclusion: the fruit is the apostolic teaching. But Jerome elaborates on the difference between leaves and fruit, construing the fruit to represent the deeper meaning in the Scriptures, the spiritual meaning, and the leaves as the "plain meaning" of the words, i.e., the literal meaning. "During the year, this tree yields twelve fruits, one for each month, but we are unable to receive the fruits except the apostles. If one approaches the tree through the apostles, he must receive the fruit; he gathers the fruit from the Sacred Scriptures; he grasps the divine meaning which abides within the words. If, therefore, one comes to this tree through the apostles, he gathers its fruit just as we have said. If, indeed, he cannot pluck the fruit, it is because he is still too weak; he is not yet a disciple, but belongs to the throng; he is an outsider, a stranger from the nations. Because he cannot pluck the fruit, he plucks only words, the leaves for the healing of the nations, for it

These *leaves* will be for healing, that is, for the purging of ignorance of those pagans inferior in the activity of virtues, because *the glory of the sun is one thing, the glory of the moon is another and the glory of the stars is something else,*<sup>1126</sup> and *there are many mansions alongside the Father's (house),*<sup>1127</sup> which they will be worthy, the one of a lesser brightness and the other of greater, according to the correspondence of the deeds of each. And one must also understand this differently. *The Tree of Life producing twelve fruits* is the apostolic assembly according to their participation in the true Tree of Life by communion with the flesh, having bestowed upon us participation in his divinity. Their fruits are those which have produced a *harvest one hundred fold.*<sup>1128</sup> The *leaves, (are) those (who bore a harvest of) sixty fold, and thirty fold*<sup>1129</sup> (are) those who will bring forth healing from the nations, those lesser, transmitting the radiance of the divine lights which they received through those who bore a fruit harvest one hundred fold. For whatever difference there is between the leaves and fruit, then such is the difference between those who were saved then, some being glorified less and some glorified more, as has been written. If it is written singularly *the tree* instead of *the trees*, it signifies the unitary [253] life residing together and the concord of the saints. It is customary in scripture in many places instead of many trees to cite *tree* singly,<sup>1130</sup> and instead of horses,<sup>1131</sup> similarly, and instead of other plurals (to give) singular names.

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is written: 'and the leaves are for the healing of the nations.' One who belongs to the nations, who is not a disciple, which is as yet only one of the crowd, gathers only leaves from the tree; he receives from Scripture plain words for a healing remedy." (*On the Psalms Hom.1, FC 48:9-10*) Oikoumenios' explanation is quite different. He does not comment on the fruit nor does he distinguish between leaves and fruit. He simply identifies the leaves "as those dependent on Christ and who hold close to him," "every righteous soul; all these have now found healing for their souls." (12.7.5, Suggit 195)

<sup>1126</sup> 1 Cor. 15:41.

<sup>1127</sup> John 14:2.

<sup>1128</sup> Matt. 13:23, Mark 4:20.

<sup>1129</sup> Matt. 13:23, Mark 4:20. Referring to those after the apostles, lesser in status, who passed on the teachings.

<sup>1130</sup> Gen. 1:11-12 is singular ("Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit *tree* that yields fruit... And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the *tree* that yields fruit"). But Gen. 3:8 describes many trees ("Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the *trees* of the garden"). 1 Chron. 16 verse 32 reads "the *tree* of the field", then in verse 33 "the *trees* of the woods". Eccl. 2:5 reads literally "I planted a *tree* of every kind of fruit" (LXX). Joel 2:22, referring to marvelous *works* of the Lord states "the *tree* bore its fruit."

<sup>1131</sup> Gen. 14:11. The LXX passage reads literally "They took all of the *horse* of Sodom and Gomorrah, and their provisions and departed." (LXX). Similarly, in verse 16 Abram "returned the *horse* of Sodom and returned Lot his nephew." The same is seen also in verse 21. That many horses are intended by the singular is even more

*Rev. 22:3a Everything under curse will not be there,*

The thing cursed is being understood in two ways: first as that which is holy for the multitude being set apart for God alone, and secondly that which is left untouched by all of creation and the holy powers, since it belongs to the devil by his untempered estrangement from goodness. We think *under curse* is said here for emphasis.<sup>1132</sup> For such a nature is not to be set apart but to be put away, being subjugated by the devil and condemned together, since in that city there will not be (anything accursed).

*Rev. 22:3b-4* <sup>3b</sup> *And the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup>They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.*

They become the throne of God, it says, for the resting place of the Master is upon them.<sup>1133</sup> These will be the inhabitants of the city and they will see him *face to face*,<sup>1134</sup> not in riddles but as seen by the holy apostles on the holy mountain,<sup>1135</sup> as Dionysios the Great said.<sup>1136</sup> [254] Instead of the gold tablet, as the ancient high priest was wearing,<sup>1137</sup> they will have the divine name engraved not only on (their) foreheads but also on (their) hearts, signifying steadfast, boldly confident and unchangeable love for him. For the writing on the forehead implies enhancement in confidence.<sup>1138</sup>

obvious in Exod. 14:7, in which Pharaoh took "six hundred chariots and *all the horse* of the Egyptians" (also vv. 9 and 23). When the army of Pharaoh is destroyed it is also described in the singular, literally that "horse and rider" have been destroyed (Exod. 15:1,21). See also Deut. 11:4, 17:16, 20:1.

<sup>1132</sup> Rev. 22:3 uses *κατάθεμα*, an intensified expression for "curse," instead of simply *ἀνάθεμα*.

<sup>1133</sup> Throughout the commentary we have seen that this is the dominant understanding of the throne for Andrew: repose. God "rests" in his saints.

<sup>1134</sup> 1 Cor. 13:12.

<sup>1135</sup> Probably a reference to the transfiguration of Christ at which the three apostles saw him in his divine glory. Matt. 17:1-8, Mark.9:2-8, Luke 9:28-36.

<sup>1136</sup> Pseudo-Dionysios, *The Divine Names* 1.4. "But in time to come, when we are incorruptible and immortal, when we have come at last to the blessed inheritance of being like Christ...[i]n most holy contemplation we shall ever be filled with the sight of God shining gloriously around us as it once shone for the disciples at the divine transfiguration." *Pseudo-Dionysius, The Complete Works*, 52.

<sup>1137</sup> Exod. 28:36-38 (LXX: Exod. 28:32-24).

<sup>1138</sup> *παρρησία*. This word, often translated "boldness," originally meant the rights of a citizen, especially his right to speak openly in the assembly. Its use here alludes to the confidence of one who possesses citizenship in heaven.

*Rev. 22:5 And there will not be night there, and they will not have need of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God lights them, and they will reign for ever and ever.*

If the *righteous*, as Christ says, *will shine as the sun*,<sup>1139</sup> how could there be need of a lamp or sunlight for those who have the *Lord of Glory*<sup>1140</sup> as illumination and king, under whom they will be ruled for ages of ages, rather, they will reign with him, according to the divine Apostle?<sup>1141</sup>

## CHAPTER 69

### That Christ is the God of the Prophets and Master of the Angels

*Rev. 22:6a And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true.*

*Trustworthy and true* since they are brought forth from The Truth.<sup>1142</sup> Up to here the vision of the angel and the interpretation of the things that have been seen were presented alongside each other, the rest he says as from his own self.

**[255]** *Rev. 22:6b And the Lord, God of the holy prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must take place soon.*

If the *God of the prophets* is Christ who sent his angel, the blessed John having seen the vision in the middle (of the book) in order *to show his servants* the future things to come, it is very clear that (it is) by condescension according to the Incarnation by the Son on account of the flesh (that) he said in the proem that (Christ) is said to have been given the Revelation.<sup>1143</sup> For the God of the prophets, also (being) the one who sends the angels as *ministering spirits*<sup>1144</sup> for the manifestation of future things, would not be ignorant of anything, neither the hour nor the day of the consummation,<sup>1145</sup> so that here through the

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<sup>1139</sup> Matt. 13:43.

<sup>1140</sup> 1 Cor. 2:8.

<sup>1141</sup> 2 Tim. 2:12.

<sup>1142</sup> John 14:6.

<sup>1143</sup> Rev. 1:1. See also above, *Chp. 1, Text 11, Comm. 12-13*, where Andrew expresses the same concept.

<sup>1144</sup> Heb. 1:14.

<sup>1145</sup> "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only." (Matt. 24:36, Mark 13:32) That Andrew has this comment by Christ in mind is shown by his defence of Christ against any charge of "ignorance." This statement by Christ in the gospels was used by Arians to argue that the Son is not

Father, the One who holds all *secret treasures of wisdom and knowledge*,<sup>1146</sup> might teach that which now is to be discussed in the person of the Evangelist, saying:

*Rev. 22:7 'Behold, I am coming soon.' Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book. "*

For this is also customary in many places in the prophets to utter the divine things as if from one's own person. The *I am coming soon* either meaning the shortness of the present time compared to the future,<sup>1147</sup> or the sudden and quick end of each (person's life). For to each human being [256] the departure from here is his end. Moreover, since *we do not know which hour the thief comes*,<sup>1148</sup> wherefore, we are commanded *to be watchful and gird our loins and to have burning lamps*<sup>1149</sup> in the way of life according to God, and giving light to our neighbors<sup>1150</sup> let us unceasingly supplicate God with a contrite heart to *rescue us from all who persecute us*,<sup>1151</sup> lest having been defeated by them they will take possession of our souls, and will seize them unprepared as if there were *none redeemed and none saved*,<sup>1152</sup> lest by chains of base and earthen affairs the soul of each has been entangled and not bearing separation from these she<sup>1153</sup> vainly turns back toward them, but she will leave these things behind urged by angelic charge and divine command, (and) will lament the carelessness of the time allotted her. But rather inwardly let us sing the Davidic verse, *I prepared myself and was not terrified, keeping your commandments*,<sup>1154</sup> through the observation of these let us

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equal to the Father. Chrysostom also felt the need to defend Christ against the charge of ignorance because of his statement in Matthew. *Hom. on Matt. 72.1*, NPNF 10:445.

<sup>1146</sup> Col. 2:3.

<sup>1147</sup> Oik. 12.9.2.

<sup>1148</sup> Matt. 24:43, Luke 12:39.

<sup>1149</sup> Luke 12:35.

<sup>1150</sup> Matt. 5:16.

<sup>1151</sup> Ps. 7:1.

<sup>1152</sup> Ps. 7:2.

<sup>1153</sup> The soul, a feminine noun in Greek.

<sup>1154</sup> Ps. 118:60 (LXX.) The Hebrew bible verse reads "I made haste, and did not delay to keep Your commandments." (Ps. 119:60 NKJV)



receive the wages, the glory from God, the *well done, good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over a little, I will place you over much.* [257] *Enter into the joy of your Lord,*<sup>1155</sup> with whom the Father together with the Holy Spirit is due glory, honor, dominion, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## SECTION 24, CHAPTER 70

### About the Credibility of the Things Seen by the Apostle

*Rev. 22:8-9* <sup>8</sup>*And I, John, am he seeing and hearing these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me.* <sup>9</sup>*And he says to me, "See [here]! Do not [do that]! I am a fellow servant with you and your brethren the prophets, and those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."*

And this is characteristic of the apostolic soul: just as he had done in the gospel by saying *and the one who saw (these things) has testified, and his testimony is true,*<sup>1156</sup> in this way also here he himself guaranteed the things seen, confessing to be an ear-witness and an eye-witness of the things prophesied. He showed the piety of the angel who stamped the vision (on his mind), how he did not accept as proper the adoration of a fellow servant, but right-mindedly he assigned (the adoration) to the common Master.<sup>1157</sup>

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<sup>1155</sup> Matt. 25:21, 33.

<sup>1156</sup> John 21:24.

<sup>1157</sup> Gregory the Great ponders why people were permitted to adore angels in the Old Testament (such as Lot in Gen. 19:1 and Joshua in Jos. 5:14), but in the New Testament it is forbidden. He concluded that in Old Testament times the angels despised men because of the weakness of the human body and because of sin. But since the Incarnation, when God took on the weakness of a human body, the angels now bring us peace and honor us as their companions. Because we acknowledged Christ as our King, they acknowledge us as their fellow citizens. When the Lord elevated human nature by assuming it, this led the angels to respect humans as their equals and honor them because they worshipped the Lord who is also a man. "Hence it is that Lot and Joshua worshipped angels and were not prevented from doing so, but [in the Book of Revelation] an angel restrained John from worshipping him when he wished to, saying: 'You must not do that, for indeed I am one of your fellow servants, one of your brothers.' Why was it that before our Redeemer's coming angels were worshipped by human beings and remained silent, but afterwards they shunned it, if it is not that after they beheld our nature, which they had formerly despised, raised up above them, they were afraid to see it ranked beneath them? They no longer dared to reject as weak and beneath them what they honored as above themselves in heaven's king, nor did they disdain to have [as their companion] a human being, when they worshipped the human being who was God above themselves." *Hom. 7 (On Luke 2:1-14). Forty Gospel Homilies*, trans. David Hurst (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1990), 52. See also fn 909 for another explanation by Gregory on this subject, as well as comments by other Fathers.

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## CHAPTER 71

How He was Called Not to Seal but to Preach the Apocalypse

*Rev. 22:10 And he says to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.*

Until these things here, having passed on the angelic words, then he follows with that of Christ in the person of the Master, saying, *Do not seal up the words of the prophecy.* For the book is also worthy for reading by the faithful, for through both the punishment prepared for the sinners and by the repose promised to the saints,<sup>1158</sup> it guides those who read it to true life.

*Rev. 22:11-12* <sup>11</sup> *Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.* <sup>12</sup> *And behold, I am coming soon, and my recompense with me, to repay each one as his deeds will (require).*

It is not as though urging wrong doing and filth that he said these things presented — may it not be so — but as (expressing) the non-compulsion, of keeping one's own will, as though he said, "Each one may do as he likes. I do not compel free choice," showing for each pursuit the corresponding end to follow "when I come to render to each the wages of the things for which he has labored."

[259] *Rev. 22:13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.* "

For neither before me nor after me is there a God. For there is neither anything older than the beginning nor is there an end of the divine kingdom and authority.<sup>1159</sup> Many times it has been said above, Christ is said to be first on account of the divinity and last on account of humanity.<sup>1160</sup>

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<sup>1158</sup> This echoes what Andrew had originally stated as the benefit of the book in his opening comments: "I think it contributes not a little to compunction through remembrance both of the rewards that will be bestowed on the righteous and the retribution of the wicked and sinful." (*Text 11, Comm. 12.*)

<sup>1159</sup> See also *Chp. 1, Text 17, Comm. 21; Chp. 2, Text 22, Comm. 28.*

<sup>1160</sup> *Chp. 4, Text 27, Comm. 33 and Chp. 61, Text 235, Comm. 217.* Origen engages in a discussion regarding this image and the terms found here and he actually uses the verse to reach a theological conclusion regarding the relationship between the Father and the Son. The Son is first, he states, but he is not necessarily the

*Rev. 22:14 Blessed are they who do his commandments,<sup>1161</sup> that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.*

People such as these are truly worthy of blessedness. For they will have authority in the unceasing life, by the Tree of Life, Christ our God, to rest upon him and to delight in beholding him in no way hindered by evil powers; and by the apostolic gates, that is, through their instruction, they will enter into the heavenly city through the True Door,<sup>1162</sup> not leaping over from the other side as the *hired shepherds*<sup>1163</sup> but they will be admitted by the Doorkeeper of Life.

*Rev. 22:15 Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the fornicators and the murderers and the idolaters, and every one who loves and practices falsehood.*

Dogs are not only people who are shameless, faithless and *evil doers among the circumcised*<sup>1164</sup> [260] whom the Apostle lamented, but also those who after baptism *returned to their own vomit.*<sup>1165</sup> Wherefore, with the fornicators and the murderers and the idolaters they will be estranged from the city above.

## CHAPTER 72

### How the Church and the Spirit in it Are Invited to the Glorious Appearance of Christ and About the Curse Which is Put Upon Those Falsifying the Book

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beginning. “[F]irst’ (and ‘last’ are not) the same thing, and it becomes obvious that ‘beginning’ is used for one thing and ‘first’ for another. But since it has been shown that the first is also necessarily the ‘beginning,’ this logically says that he who is ‘first’ is also ‘beginning’: for ‘I am,’ he says, ‘the first and the last, the beginning and the end.’ For inasmuch as he is ‘first-born of all creation’ (Col. 1:25), he is ‘first,’ and inasmuch as he is wisdom, he is beginning. For this is what Wisdom says through the mouth of Solomon: ‘The Lord created me at the beginning of his ways.’ (Prov. 8:22) ... For when the Son is with the Father in his own proper glory (cf John 17:5), he is not said to be *first* for this belongs to the Father alone, for God alone is unbegotten.” *Treatise on the Passover* 10.25-11.5 and 11.15-17. Origen: ‘*Treatise on the Passover*’ and ‘*Dialogue with Heraclides*’, trans. Robert Daly, Ancient Christian Writers series, vol. 54 (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 33.

<sup>1161</sup> A significant textual variation occurs here. This reading (ποιούντες τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ) is found in the Majority Andreas text, as well as Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus. The preferred reading is “Blessed are they who wash their robes” (πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν), which is also the reading in Oikoumenios. Metzger believes the scribal variation occurred because of the similarity in sound and because elsewhere (Rev. 12:17 and 14:12) the author writes of keeping the commandments (τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολάς). *A Textual Commentary*, 765.

<sup>1162</sup> John 10:9.

<sup>1163</sup> John 10:12.

<sup>1164</sup> Phil. 3:2.

<sup>1165</sup> Prov. 26:11, 2 Pet. 2:22.

*Rev. 22:16a* "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify these things to you for the churches.

Here is shown the high status of the Master as the one who has sent the angel. The (word) *to testify*<sup>1166</sup> has been used instead of "to solemnly bear witness."<sup>1167</sup>

*Rev. 22:16b* *I am the root and the offspring of David,*

Christ is the *root of David* as God and also as a descendant springing forth from him according to the flesh.<sup>1168</sup>

*Rev. 22:16c* *the bright morning star."*

He is *the bright morning star*<sup>1169</sup> who has risen in the morning on the third day for us, and who, after the night of the present life, in the morning of the [261] general resurrection will shine upon the saints and will bring the endless day.<sup>1170</sup>

*Rev. 22:17a* *The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let him who hears say, "Come."*

For both the Church and the Spirit in her cry out in our hearts "*Abba, Father!*"<sup>1171</sup> to call for the coming of the *only begotten son of God*.<sup>1172</sup> And every one of the faithful who hears prays to God the Father, just as he had been instructed: *Thy kingdom Come*.<sup>1173</sup>

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<sup>1166</sup> μαρτυρῆσαι.

<sup>1167</sup> διαμαρτύρασθαι.

<sup>1168</sup> This same observation is made in *Chp. 11, Text 55, Comm. 67*, and is explained more completely in fn 286.

<sup>1169</sup> This image is also used in *Chp. 6, Text 34-35, Comm. 42*. See fn 175.

<sup>1170</sup> An allusion to 2 Pet. 1:19. "Until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts." Gregory the Great comments on this verse: "But He made Himself known as the morning star, because He arose in the morn from death, and overcame, by the brightness of His light, the hideous darkness of our mortality, who is well called by John, "the bright and morning star"; because while He furnished us in His own person an instance of resurrection, He pointed out what light comes after." *Morals* 29.33(75), LF 23:356.

<sup>1171</sup> Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6.

<sup>1172</sup> John 3:18.

<sup>1173</sup> Matt. 6:10, Luke 11:2.

*Rev. 22:17b And let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires freely take the water of life.*

For thirst is necessary for the drink of life for the firm possession of the one who has acquired it, especially because it is also granted as a gift, not to those who did not toil at all, but to those who offered not things worthy of the greatness of the gift, but only a genuine and fiery resolve instead of gold and silver and pains of the body.

*Rev. 22:18-19* <sup>18</sup>*I bear witness to every one who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the seven plagues which have been written in this book.* <sup>19</sup>*And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share [262] from the tree of life and from the holy city, which have been written in this book.*

Fearful is the curse against those who falsify the holy scripture,<sup>1174</sup> since their rashness and boldness is able to alienate the stubborn from the good things of the future age.<sup>1175</sup> Indeed, in order that we not suffer, it warns us who hear to neither add anything nor subtract, but to consider the written peculiarities (of the Apocalypse) as more trustworthy and dignified than the Attic syntax and dialectic syllogisms,<sup>1176</sup> since also when someone discovers many things in those (writings) that do not measure up according to the rules, he is guided by the trustworthiness of the poets and authors in them. As far as (finding) a mid-

<sup>1174</sup> This was a serious problem in antiquity, since all books were hand-copied and thus they were subject not only to unintended scribal errors in copying but also to purposeful alteration, either well-intentioned or malicious. This problem especially afflicted the Book of Revelation because of the peculiar Hebraisms found in its Greek. Copyists often attempted to “fix” the text.

<sup>1175</sup> In his work, *On the Inscriptions of the Psalms*, Gregory of Nyssa was inspired by this verse to attempt to interpret what he believed might be a scribal error in a biblical manuscript. Noting an unusual expression “song of diapsalma,” instead of what he expected to find, “diapsalma of a song”, he considered that it might be a scribal error. Nonetheless, he decided to try to understand the expression as he found it, citing this verse in Revelation as his motivation. “However, since it is fitting to keep the decree in the Apocalypse of John before one’s eyes against altering the divine words by addition or subtraction, we shall preserve the sequence which has been handed down to us in this part of the Scripture and attempt to discover what the reason is for the expression ‘song of diapsalma’.” *On the Inscriptions of the Psalms* 2.10.114. *Gregory of Nyssa’s Treatise on the Inscriptions of the Psalms*, trans. Ronald E. Heine, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 162.

<sup>1176</sup> This is probably a comment directed at those who rejected the Apocalypse because of its very poor Greek. See the comments of Dionysios, Bishop of Alexandria, preserved in Eusebius *E.H.* 7.24-26. Dionysios concluded that the Apocalypse could not have been written by John the Apostle because the language of the Gospel was beautiful and grammatically correct. But concerning the author of the Apocalypse Dionysios commented: “I perceive, however, that his dialect and language are not accurate Greek, but that he uses barbarous idioms, and, in some places, solecisms.” (*E.H.* 7.26, NPNF 2<sup>nd</sup> 1:311)

point in matters of opinion between us and them, (it is) even impossible to grasp in the mind. I think there is more (difference) than the difference between light and darkness.

*Rev. 22:20-21* <sup>20</sup>*He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus Christ!* <sup>21</sup>*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints.*

It says, "and I who say these things to you (who is) life (says), '*I am coming*'." And he (John) says, "Be present, Lord." And otherwise, this has been said from the person of Christ: *The one testifying to these things*, that is the One affirming solemnly: *I am coming soon*. From the person of the apostle, the following: the *Come, Lord Jesus Christ*. For the coming of Christ is greatly desired by the saints [263] since he will render the wages of the laborer many times over, wherefore likewise the present book, holy and God-inspired, guides those who read it to a blessed end.

In order to summarize in a few words the advantageous purpose of all the things in it let me provide (this): Through the seven churches we are taught perseverance in trials and the earnestness in good deeds and other such types of virtue. And from these, when one is elevated over all the things upon the earth it is possible to behold with the clear eye of the soul the divine glory in heaven, not its essence, but the divine manifestation being formed either through a variety of precious stones or by the appearance of a multicolored rainbow or by some similar images of divine concessions, and around it the holy bodiless powers and those with a body who well-pleased the Lord, both thunder and lightening relating the divine presence and (it is possible) to hold the incomprehensible divine judgments of the scroll signified by the seven seals of the Spirit and having received the loosening by the Lamb of God, of the things which have occurred and which will occur from his coming until the end of time, and about both the bravery of the martyrs and the double punishment of the faithless and about the harvest of the seed of the gospel and also about the fall of those who have little faith and are cowardly, so that the saints long for the second coming of Christ, and about both the application of evils by the Antichrist and the things dared to do by him against the Christians. In addition to these things it is to be learned from there how the saints are precious to God, since [264] punishment against the impious is suspended before they become known to the punishing angels through the seal. And thereafter, we learn about the seven plagues which will be brought upon those upon the earth in the last (days), so that by

their magnitude, in view of the return, we see also their supplication to God not to be tested. And it shows the philanthropy of the angels through the one holding fast the gospel and preaching to those upon the earth, and of the saints who will come at the consummation to reprove the false Christ, the steadfast and courageous disposition of the soul and the division of Jerusalem and the disappearance of the pagan cities and the thanksgiving for these things by the powers above, and the persecution against the Church and the fall of the devil and the coming of the Antichrist and the deception of the false prophet, and the numerous crowd of the saved and the fall of Babylon and the threshing floor reaping of the entire world and the wine harvest of the bitter clusters (of grapes) and the most pure end of the saints having been likened to a sea of glass, and the pouring out of seven bowls of divine wrath bringing forth evils upon the earth and the sea and the rivers and the rest of the elements on account of the wickedness of human beings, and darkening the throne of the beast leading the adjutants of the devil to the crossing of the Euphrates and reprimanding their weakness, and bringing about to the world the general [265] earthquake of the change of the present things when the harlot and beast-like city also resting upon the devil will receive the destruction befitting her. After which God is praised by the supernatural powers, the Church, the Jerusalem above, is united with Christ for the most perfect union, the winepress of wrath is trampled upon, and the angels and people equal to the angels will partake of the spiritual supper of the disappearance of earthly things, delivering the Antichrist and his adjutant to Gehenna. Next to be learned from here is both the binding of the devil and his temporary loosening and the sending forth into perdition, and the blessedness of the holy martyrs co-reigning with Christ before the coming of the Antichrist, after which the devil is to be loosed for a little while and will disturb Gog and Magog and he will be punished with them when the books of the deeds done by each and the book of life will be opened, and when they on the one hand will suffer the second death, but those on the other hand will be found worthy of the Jerusalem above and of marriage with Christ. From this divine book we also learn by the angel the dimension of the heavenly city, with walls and gates and foundations, as much as is possible, and from the angel we learn also the divine river of the Spirit flowing from there, that no word is able to express the well-ordered beauty of the things above or the unfading glory, into which, urging us [266] he commands saying: "Come," that is the One who will grant these things, just as you have prepared (them) for the saints.

Starting from these things by the vision and the enjoyment we might, by ardent yearning through keeping the divine commandments, acquire these in long suffering and meekness and humility and purity of heart. From which (heart) unsullied prayer is born free of distraction and offers to God, the Overseer of all hidden things, a mind devoid of every material thought uncorrupted by demonic deception and attacks. For the deceiving enemy is allowed in the petitions to God in the heart, adulterously to come into contact with her, scattering corrupting seeds, tearing her away from her divine union, in order that the fire not be kindled by her with care destroying his machinations — *for our God is a consuming fire*<sup>1177</sup> — and the soul conversing with him clearly and undisturbed, even if it becomes chilled by sin, is made warm and fertile by demon-burning fire. Just as the sun strongly shining on a glass vessel full of water will produce heat therein because of some exposure to the light and reflection (of rays), if then we also are a clean temple of the Holy Spirit like glass, not clay or earthenware rather which does not admit the divine Ray, then we will show (this) to the [267] *Sun of Righteousness*,<sup>1178</sup> *who wills all to be saved and come to knowledge of the truth*,<sup>1179</sup> shining upon all the unhindered grace of his own bright beam. He is imparted to each person according to the measure of purity of the spiritual eyes. May the All-merciful One deem us worthy to acquire this pure (light), he who suffered in the flesh for us, Christ our God, to whom belongs every doxology, honor and adoration together with the Father and the life giving Spirit unto the ages of ages. Amen.

One must know that the author of the present book furnished it to those esteemed individuals who asked to study it, then later, giving the book to the hesitant, he did not diligently guard some of the rough drafts but cast them aside, as it happened, again having been asked by others, he combined those of the rough drafts which had been saved, in a few places the thought of the lost (pages) naturally he restored in other words. If some small disagreement may appear in the words, that in no way will create an injurious affect upon those reading them, the meaning remaining the same, and variation of the words (creating only) the slightest deficiency.

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<sup>1177</sup> Deut. 4:24.

<sup>1178</sup> Mal. 3:20.

<sup>1179</sup> 1 Tim. 2:4.